

Performance Report October 2015

Children's Safeguarding & Family Support

Front Door

- 98% of contacts recorded as screened by qualified practitioner on same working day: consistently at this level for last 5 months
- Increase in contacts received over previous month, but in keeping with previous year's trend/seasonal spikes
- There was a higher than average number of referrals, the highest since January 2015 at 252, 99 higher than the same month in 2014 – this has created pressures in the child protection system
- Cumulative re-referral rate from May 2015 to October 2015 is 22.9%: this compares with all England figure for 2013-14 of 23.4% and statistical neighbours of 23.65%

Assessments

- Performance in completion of initial assessments continues to incrementally improve, reaching a high of 72% in timescales in October
- 43% of core assessments completed in timescale, primary factors are vacancy rates, high caseloads and data recording outcomes
- Action plans now in place to address performance in both initial and core assessments, with an additional 'hub' of SWs focused on supporting this

Child Protection

- 131 strategy meetings convened in July, highest number over past 12 months: this due to high number of child protection referrals
- 30% of strategy meetings held following an initial assessment which supports appropriate application of thresholds

CP Investigations & CP Plans

- October saw 36 children becoming subject to a plan, and 33 removed, a cumulative increase of 3
- This is the second highest number of new plans in 2015, leading from continuing high levels of child protection referrals in the preceding months
- National trend upwards – West Mercia police report 100% increase in CP activity in last 12 months
- Those subject to a second or subsequent plan remains low at 2% as does those on plan 2yrs plus at 3.25%

Looked After Children

- Net increase of 3 children looked after as at 30 October since July
- National trend of increasing numbers of LAC, and highest month of new care proceedings on record
- Good performance in statutory visits to LAC children (98.2%) and reviews of care plans to prevent drift (93.3%)

Timeliness

- 35 initial conferences held: 29 (83%) in timescales: 6 out of timescales due to late notifications from teams – 88% of review conferences in timescales
- 89 LAC reviews held: 83 (93%) in timescales: The 6 out of timescale were due to child / adult availability
- 69% CP visits in timescales largely due workload pressures
- 98% of LAC visits in timescales

Overview

- Mixed picture with some pressure points
- Increased activity in child protection system, with LAC more stable
- Improving performance in timeliness of initial assessments & CP Visits
- High caseloads particularly in children in need service

Action

- Temporary increase in establishment in children in need teams to reduce backlog and meet increased demand
- Securing stability in the workforce in MASH and children in need remains the biggest factor in sustaining improvement

Recruitment 2014/15/16

- Aims by 2016/17
 - Reduce reliance on the use of agency social workers.
 - Reduce the current agency overspend
 - Reach our target staff ratio of 90:10 (permanent : agency) staff for social workers and senior practitioners
 - Provide a safe and robust level of staffing within the service
- Progress
 - Starting to reduce use of agency staff
 - Have reduced financial pressures by circa £600k
 - Have increased infrastructure particularly in 16+, fostering, MASH and children with disability teams
 - Confident correct strategy but still some way to go and may need to strengthen infrastructure further particularly in children in need, with temporary establishment increase to reduce pressure

Recruitment 2014/15/16

- At September 2014
 - Ratio for Permanent : Agency social workers & senior practitioners was **57:43**
- By October 2015
 - Ratio for Permanent: Agency social workers & senior practitioners improving
 - 3 overseas workers recruited and started
 - 8 additional newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) started
 - 8 NQSW's 'passed out' and became qualified social workers s replacing 6 agency staff
 - 10 permanent SWs / senior practitioners since Jan 2015
- By November 2015
 - Ratio for Agency social workers & senior practitioners to permanent **39:61**
 - 1 overseas worker due to start
 - 3 potential permanent staff recruited through new microsite
- By December 2015
 - Second overseas recruitment exercise completed (unsuccessful)
 - New social worker & team manager recruitment campaign underway
- By April 2016
 - Next cohort of NQSWs starts