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Northumberland
County Council

Families and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
Date: 5th July 2018

Safeguarding Benchmarking Trends - Annual Report 2017-18

Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services: Cath McEvoy

Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Councillor Wayne Daley

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1. Purpose of report

To inform members of how Northumberland is likely to compare with other areas in 2017/18 based on provisional data in the field of children in need and child protection.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1) **Members acknowledge the data is provisional and subject to change**
2) **Members identify any issues for further scrutiny**

3. Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the feeling safe, healthy and cared for priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

4. Key Issues

With reference to the tables in Appendix A:

1. The report presents benchmarking data for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 years. The latter is provisional and only available for the local authorities in the region; the national data is not yet available for 2017/18.

2. Northumberland has higher numbers of Child in Need (CIN) cases than the national average in 2016/17, but is not out of sync regionally (B1).

3. Between March 2017 and March 2018, the numbers subject to child protection plans (CPP) have increased from 40 per 10,000 aged under 18 to 67 per 10,000. As the latest available national average was 43 per 10,000 at March 2017, that increase in CP numbers in 2017/18 takes us from just below the national average to significantly above it by March 2018 (D1). Increases have also been seen across the region in the last year. Based on the regional figures for March 2018, Northumberland ranks 6th lowest out of 11 authorities, with 6 of those authorities having shown an increase since the previous year. Of children who were made subject to a child protection plan during 2017/18, 3 authorities had higher numbers starting a CPP, 2 the same and 5 had lower.

    A comprehensive audit of 27 children who recently became subject to child protection plans showed that decision-making and application of thresholds were sound overall. In a very small minority of the cases (4), it was judged that the children could have been supported in an alternative way, such as through children in need plans.

4. Northumberland is still higher than the national average on the rate of referrals and assessments completed (C1; C2). This is also the case when compared against the 2017/18 regional averages, but, for s47 enquiries (C4), Northumberland now equals the regional average. Our practice regarding which referrals convert to assessments and which assessments convert to service provision is being reviewed.

5. Northumberland re-referral rates have reduced and now compare well to the national and regional averages (C1).

6. Timeliness for completing assessments and undertaking Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) in 2017/18 compare well against the latest available national averages. The regional averages are distorted by a couple of outliers who appear low on the provisional 2017-18 data (C2; C4).

7. A recurring theme is that Northumberland seems to keep cases open for longer than the national average (B4; B5), although when compared to the regional averages, the picture is more equal.

8. The percentage of second or subsequent CP plans (D3) has increased markedly in Northumberland from a low level, a trend also reflected in the latest regional average for 2017/18.

5. BACKGROUND

5.1 Members of this committee receive regular reports on Safeguarding Activity Trends. At June's meeting, a request was made for an annual report and this report provides that information for 2016/17 and 2017/18.   It compares

Northumberland against the national and regional average for 2016/17 and against the provisional regional averages for 2017/18.

5.2 The provisional data will be finalised by each local authority by the end of July when they return their CIN census data to the Department for Education. Any significant changes in that information will be brought back to this committee.

5.3 Appendix A provides this annual benchmarking, and the Key Issues in section 4 outline the main messages for Northumberland. From left to right, Appendix A describes the indicators; distinguishes between PREVALENCE / ACTIVITY and PERFORMANCE for the Northumberland (ND) data against national average. It denotes if we are higher, equal to or lower than it, RAG rating it if the indicator is about performance, e.g. CP reviews in time scale, or not applying a rating if it is about prevalence or activity, e.g. duration cases are open. In the two far right columns, it shows Northumberland (ND) data for 2016-17 and partially for 2017-18 against regional average (provisional). It provides RAG ratings and ranks where Northumberland is placed amongst the north eastern local authorities.

6. IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

Policy:	Comparing Northumberland's position assists with the reviewing of local thresholds.
Finance and value for money:	Analysing such comparative data helps identify potential efficiencies.
Legal:	None
Procurement:	None
Human Resources:	Social worker caseloads are reflected herein
Property:	None
Equalities Impact Assessment: NA	
Risk Assessment:	None
Crime & Disorder:	None
Customer Considerations:	None
Carbon Reduction:	None
Wards:	None

7. CONSULTATION
The Executive Director of Children's Services has been consulted about this report.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS
Children in Need census 2016/17 statistical release

9. Report sign off

Executive Director of Children's Services	CM
Portfolio Holder(s)	WD

Report Author: Alan Hartwell, Senior Manager, Performance: Education and Safeguarding, (01670) 623589   Alan.Hartwell@northumberland.gov.uk
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Appendix A

Ref.	Measure	Northumberland (ND) Prevalence : National 2016-17			Northumberland (ND) Performance : National 2016-17			ND : Region 16-17 and rank / 12	ND : Region 17-18 and rank
		Higher	Equal	Lower	Green	Amber	Red	RAG rating	RAG rating
B1	Rate per 10K of CiN at end of period 2016/17						421 : 330	5/12 421 : 451	4/11 343 : 378
B4	Duration case open: <3 mths		27 : 27					27 : 23	Not Yet Available (NYA)
	3-6 mths		12 : 12					12 : 12	
	6-12 mths			13 : 15				13 : 14	
	12-24 mths	16 : 15						16 : 17	
	24 mths +	33 : 31						33 : 34	
B5	Duration of ended episodes: 3 mths			41 : 47				41 : 38	
	3-6 mths	18 : 17						18 : 19	
	6-12 mths	18 : 15						18 : 17	
	12-24 mths		12 : 12					12 : 14	
	24 mths+	12 : 9						12 : 12	
C1	Referral rate					558 : 548		6/12 558 : 600	9/11 609 : 570
	% children with a re-referral						24 : 22	10/12 24 : 20	6/10 17.2 : 17.3
	% which resulted in NFA				0.7 : 11			2/12 0.7 : 11.0	NYA
	% resulting in assessment & child was assessed not to be in need					30 : 28		8/12 30 : 29	
C2	Rate per 10K of completed assessments						734 : 515	9/12 734 : 603	10/11 738 : 589
	% assessments completed in 45 wkg days				93 : 83			3/12 93 : 83	3/11 89 : 83

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		Higher	Equal	Lower	Green	Amber	Red	RAG rating	RAG rating
C4	Rate per 10K of S47 enquiries						168 : 157	4/12 168 : 187	5/11 209 : 211
	Rate of ICPCs						77 : 65	4/12 77 : 91	NYA
	% ICPCs in 15 wkg days						74 : 77	11/12 74 : 86	7/10 85 : 79
D1	Rate per 10K of CPPs starting						62 : 56	3/12 62 : 79	6/10 87 : 78
	Rate per 10K of CPPs ending				83 : 56			5/12 83 : 79	8/10 59 : 75
	Rate per 10K of CPPs at any time						122 : 98	4/12 122 : 138	NYA
	Rate per 10K of CPPs at year end				40 : 43			3/12 40 : 61	6/11 67 : 65
D3	% CPPs which were second or a subsequent plan				7 : 19			1/12 7 : 14	2/11 16 : 20
D6	CPRs in timescale				96 : 92			8/12 96 : 95	
D7	Duration of CPPs ending: < 3 mths			14 : 20				14 : 19	
	3-6 mths		12 : 12					12 : 12	
	6-12 mths	43 : 41						43 : 41	
	12-24 mths			22 : 24				22 : 25	
	24 mths +	9 : 3						9 : 4	

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