



Northumberland

County Council

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 5 SEPTEMBER 2019

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

Report of Cath McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Wayne Daley, Executive Member for Children's Services

Purpose of report

To consider current performance and the budgetary position for services within the Committee's terms of reference.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee notes the current performance and identifies any areas for further scrutiny.

Link to Corporate Plan

The performance management information covers services in Education and Skills and Children's Social Care and is available via the Council's website. The Council's performance management arrangements overall are particularly relevant to 'Developing the Organisation'.

Key issues

This report is for discussion.

Background

1. The Council approved its current Corporate Plan in February 2018. Each year, Service Directors prepare a Service Statement which sets out priorities for their service in delivering the Corporate Plan over the coming twelve months together with a performance framework covering past performance levels and future targets. The performance measures are captured on a web-enabled system and current performance is updated regularly so that the most recent information is available to Members, officers and the public. Like the rest of the Council, Children's Services has reviewed the performance indicators it is reporting on in this system so that they reflect current areas of focus and underpin the service statement priorities. Therefore, some indicators have been added and some removed, although the latter continue to

be monitored internally. All performance information is available via the Council's website to promote openness and accountability.

2. The Appendices to this report show the current performance information, commentary and actions for services within the Committee's terms of reference. The key issues are summarised briefly below. Members should note that this committee has recently received additional information about performance in the form of the Care Proceedings report, Safeguarding Activity Trends, whilst the Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Advisory Group receives bi-monthly performance reports on data relating to looked after children and care leavers, and Audit Committee receives 6 monthly reports on action planning in response to external inspections.
3. The data in appendices A and B shows the position in June and July to reflect the quarter 1 updates. Data is not yet available in relation to 2019/20 for the following new Performance Indicators (PI's): exclusions of pupils with SEN (special educational needs); choice of school; social work staff turnover; sustained engagement with children's centres and school placement moves for Looked After Children (LAC), nor is it available for the annual education outcomes (due in September/ October).
4. **Education and Skills:** With reference to Appendix A, performance is good and above the national average, in relation to all measures on destinations and outcomes for those aged 16 and over (PI numbers: 16, 18 & 19), and take up of early education entitlement (PI number 1). Although still a concern, the rate of permanent exclusions from schools (PI numbers 9 & 14) has abated and is better than the previous school year. The percentage of primary school pupils who attend a school judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding (PI number 2) is just below the national average and that gap has closed considerably in the 2018/19 school year. However, the large gap remains for secondary schools (PI number 12), although that is expected to improve in light of the better education outcomes being seen at key stages 4 and 5 in 2018 and, we anticipate, in 2019.

The timeliness of education and health care plans (PI number 17) has varied in the last six months and is being closely monitored. Whilst it is just short of target in the latest reporting period (July 2019), it is still significantly better than the national average, and the focus is more on achieving better quality, for example, through a greater social care and healthcare contribution to the development and reviewing of the plans.

Detailed comments and the actions being taken for PIs that are short of target can be seen in Appendix A. Members are also urged to refer to the Director's Annual report for the additional context.

5. **Children's Social Care:** With reference to Appendix B, performance is good in relation to the relatively small number of LAC who move three times or more (PI number 12) and time scales for those who are adopted (PI number 1), although time scales for care proceedings have increased recently (PI number 2). Northumberland's rate of LAC (PI number 17) is fairly consistent although it has risen slightly in August; it is significantly below the regional average.

With regards to young offenders, there are currently more in employment, education or training (PI number 6), but just short of target and the number re-offending (PI number 4) remains low and therefore good, having been high and poorer than the national average a year ago.

The volume of early help family worker plans achieving their desired outcomes (PI number 11) is a new indicator and is performing well.

The rate of children subject to a child protection plan (PI number 16) had reduced considerably by the end of June, from 76 per 10,000 population in December 2018, to 63 in June. However, it has increased in July and is currently at 75. This is monitored through the LSCB and analysis of the influencing factors is regularly undertaken within the local authority. Although improved compared with the position 3-6 months ago, performance remains just short of target in relation to the balance of social worker caseloads (PI number 15) due to current pressures in some teams. This issue is monitored at senior manager level on a weekly basis so the need for intervention can be highlighted and acted upon swiftly.

The percentage of long term LAC who have been with the same carer for two years or more (PI number 3) is just below the national average and we have set targets to continually improve (to 1% above the national average by March 2020, and 2% by 2021). This issue is high on the agenda for scrutiny by the Multi agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) and the Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Advisory Group (S&CPAG).

Whilst the Supporting Families programme (PI number 7) continues to perform well at identifying families who could benefit from it, we need to increase the number of claims where there has been significant and sustained progress or continuous employment (PI number 8). The Ministry of housing, communities and local government (MHCLG) has recently written to the Director, stating Northumberland's performance is 2nd in the region and that it is positive about our ability to achieve the remaining targets up to March 2020.

Detailed comments and the actions being taken for PIs that are short of target can be seen in Appendix B. Members should note the self-assessment reported to this

committee in February provides further evaluation of the effectiveness of practice in Children's Social Care.

6. Children's Services - £2.029 million forecast overspend

2019/20 Budget	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Revenue Budget
	£m	£m	£m
Children's Services	82.299	(21.852)	60.447

YEAR TO DATE			FULL YEAR		
Profiled Budget	Actual Expenditure	Variance	Current Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
13.649	9.475	(4.174)	60.447	62.476	2.029

The summary below highlights the variances within each area:

Variations	£m
Early Intervention and Prevention	(0.251)
Purchase Budgets	3.429
Looked after Children	(0.369)
Social Work Teams	(0.507)
Other Children's Social Care headings	(0.402)
Total Variations in Children's Social Care	1.900
Special Educational Needs & Disability	0.097
Other Education & Skills headings	0.032
Total Variations in Education & Skills	0.129
Total Variations in Children's Services	2.029

The key pressure with Children's Services continues to be linked to the purchasing budgets which are forecast to overspend by £4.529 million. As with previous years this is mainly due to the overall cost of out of county residential care placements. This pressure also includes additional care staff required to support short term placements in emergency accommodation. There are currently 36 placements of this type of which 34 are anticipated to remain for the full year.

This pressure is offset by underspends across a number of teams on staffing due to vacancies and turnover. The other main area of offset is an expected £1.1 million additional contribution in relation to jointly funded care packages from Northumberland CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group).

The only other variance of significant note is within Kylee House secure unit which is forecast to underspend by £0.262 million, mainly due to higher than budgeted income from Other Local Authorities purchasing placements at the unit.

Ring-fenced Accounts - Dedicated Schools’ Grant (DSG) - Nil forecast variance

In 2019/20, the Council expects to receive £141.735 million Dedicated Schools’ Grant, which is ring-fenced and will be passported through to fund schools; with an element retained centrally by the Council to provide a range of support to Schools. Schools that have transferred to academy status receive their funding directly from the Department for Education – this amounted to a further £90.787 million in 2019/20.

In conjunction with Schools’ Forum, further work is ongoing to mitigate against further rises by reviewing the demand for special schools places and the use of independent special schools, provision of alternative learning provision and resource base funding.

Due to reductions in schools’ funding, and inflationary pressures, the level of schools financial surpluses have reduced and many of the Northumberland schools will need to devise and implement an action plan and undertake a programme of change in order to ensure a balanced budget position for 2019/20.

7. Appendices - Scorecards for services within the Committee’s terms of reference:

- A. Education and Skills
- B. Children’s Social Care

8. Implications

Policy	n/a
Finance and value for money	Many of the measures included in the framework have a value for money component. At the end of June 2019 the Children's Services Directorate has forecast an overspend of £2.029 million for the financial year 2019-20.
Legal	The report refers to the time scales for care proceedings.

Procurement	n/a
Human Resources	Having enough experienced social workers is essential for a high performing Children's Social Care service.
Property	n/a
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	n/a
Risk Assessment	n/a
Crime & Disorder	The performance framework includes measures on offending.
Customer Consideration	The framework includes a number of measures relevant to providing services to customers
Carbon reduction	n/a
Wards	All

9. Background papers:

Details of the County Council's performance management arrangements including access to the Northumberland web-enabled performance system can be found at:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Policy/Performance.aspx#corporateperformancemanagementarrangements>

10. Report sign off.

Monitoring Officer/Legal	Liam Henry
Service Director Finance and Interim Section 151 Officer	Alison Elsdon
Relevant Executive Director	Cath Mcevoy-Carr
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Wayne Daley

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