



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Young People's Scrutiny Committee 26 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2014

<u>Item</u>
<b>10</b> <u>Public</u>

## QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

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### 1. Summary

- 1.1 The report summarises the latest performance indicators in relation to Social Care for Children and Young people (Appendix A) as at quarter 3 2013/14. Outcomes are broadly in line with those reported last quarter.
- 1.2 Despite continuing trends of increasing levels of demand especially with regards to the levels of looked after children and children with a child protection plan, many of the indicators remain strong in relation to local standards, statistical neighbours and national comparator group.
- 1.3 The report includes information from the quality assurance process especially from the monitoring activity undertaken by the Independent Reviewing Officers capturing qualitative information with regards to the processes and outcomes achieved.

### 2. Recommendations

Scrutiny Committee Members to identify topics for further detailed scrutiny.

## REPORT

### 3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 Poor performance could have implications for vulnerable people (including children) who are supported by Council services and the economic growth in Shropshire. In turn, there may be significant financial, legal and reputational risk to the Council, Schools (including

Academies), and partners from across the public and voluntary and independent care sectors.

- 3.2 Effective monitoring and follow-up against key measures of success provides the opportunity to manage risks and ensure that Children and Young People in Shropshire remain safe and achieve their desired outcomes. Increasingly, performance reporting will focus on the impact of commissioning decisions by the Council, linking directly with the management of contracts and how effective the Council is at delivering its outcomes.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 This report does not have any direct financial implications, but presents service information to support decision making. Accountable officers, senior managers and key decision makers may use the information to inform actions or interventions for improving service performance and the prioritisation and use of resources.

#### **5. Background**

- 5.1 The trend of increasing demand on our Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Teams has continued. The rate of LAC per 10,000 under 18 years olds has seen a further increase from 41.4 per 10,000 in September to 44.8 at the end of December 2013. The rate is closer to the average level for similar local authorities (49.6) but well below the national average (60.0). As part of the service redesign activity it is planned to put more social work and residential social work provision into the edge of care and to support sustained rehabilitation to parental care aiming to reduce the need for children being looked after by the local authority.
- 5.2 More children are also becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) from 35.0 per 10,000 under 18 at the end of September to 35.7 in December 2013. The proportion of under 18s per 10,000 population subject to a CPP remains above the average of similar councils (33.7) maintaining this comparative position since August 2012.
- 5.3 Following a reduction in October from the level (15.6) reached in quarter 2, the percentage of Children with a 2nd or subsequent CPP within 2 years of the previous one ceasing has increased during quarter 3 back to 15.4%. This is an area under more focused monitoring since quarter 2. Audit and quality assurance activity is continuously undertaken to confirm that there has been a robust response to those cases, particularly those that have had a period of re-registration within a short (under 2 years) timeframe, including initiating pre proceedings processes.

- 5.4 Implementation of the Public Law Outline and specifically the use of pre proceedings to highlight to parents the level of concern and potential for proceedings if the children continue to suffer significant harm, as well as the more timely care proceedings process, are being monitored and we will evaluate the impact of this on the child protection process.
- 5.5 A priority development is the “Think Family” a solution focused approach to working with children in need of support earlier and for longer offering a range of options that meet the needs of the child, young person and family. These developments will impact on the offer of support before and in step down from children social work services, promoting sustained change in improved outcomes for children and young people and as such reducing the need for repeat social work assessments and repeat child protection plans.
- 5.6 Over the last three quarters, revised operational decisions at ICT (Initial Contact Team) regarding recording of contacts have resulted in a significant increase (doubled) in the number of referrals for social work intervention (1677 referrals to Dec 2013 compared to 845 to Dec 2012) whilst the number of assessments increased by only 33% (726 Assessments to Dec 2013 compared to 546 to Dec 2012). The new approach aims to ensure even more clarity regarding the application of thresholds especially in relationship with partner organisations. The Munro reports and Working Together 2013 highlight the importance of professional social work advice being made available to all those working with children and families in universal services and Early Help. We are providing this advice and guidance to support professionals to identify and manage risk indicators whilst promoting the offer of early help to families. Changes in the Referral outcome on Care first to identify this work are being made so we can better quantify this activity at the front door. Better feedback is provided to the other professionals working with children and young people in understanding the outcomes of referrals they are making.
- 5.7 Another consequence of the operational decisions at ICT is the sustained increase in the number of referrals recorded from agencies and the proportion of them resulting in no further social work action (NFA). Such referrals resulting in no further action from all key partner organisations are now higher than they have been for at least the last 12 months, with Health and the Police leading the trend with 47% and 44% respectively resulting in NFA.
- 5.8 The proportion of LAC with three or more placement moves during the year (placement stability 3+ moves) at 5.1% continued to perform better than the expected level of maximum 9% for the end of December 2013. Following the downward trend in performance during quarter 2 the long term placement stability (2.5 years long term LAC in the same placement over the last two years) was placed under an increased level of monitoring to understand if the evolution was due to a particular sub-group of the cohort ceasing to be LAC or if there was an underlying cause of deterioration in performance. The third quarter has seen an

improvement in long term placement stability with the results at the end of December 70.8% exceeding the expected threshold of 70%.

- 5.9 Another area under increased level of monitoring was the % of new LAC placed more than 20 miles from home. Increased number of LAC and a significant increase in the connected persons assessments (i.e. relatives and/or friends stepping up to foster LAC) impacted on more LAC placed more than 20 miles from home (actual 46.1 against a target of 40%). An additional analysis is underway to identify how many children are placed still in Shropshire but above the 20 miles threshold distance and how many just over the borders. This remains an area of focus for the next quarter.
- 5.10 Starting October 2013 the Council uses one assessment to identify the level of risk to a child in accordance with latest legislation. The data for the first three months since implementation shows that the timeliness of single assessments (96.7% completed within 45 working days) continues the very good performance achieved regarding the timeliness of the previous assessments arrangements (99.3% initial assessments completed within 10 working days and 97.1% of core assessments completed within 35 working days).
- 5.11 Shropshire compared favourably (at 7.1% reaching the second best in the similar authorities' group) regarding the end of year results for adoptions (as a percentage of the cases that ceased to be looked after). During the last two quarters this level of performance was maintained but quarter three has seen a reduction in the number of children adopted (9 children adopted during quarter 1 and 2 but only 2 children adopted during quarter 3).
- 5.11 Our three residential homes for children continue to provide effective assessment and support enabling children to either return home or remain looked after in a stable placement. Ofsted inspections have rated the Rowans Children's home as 'Good', Havenbrook as 'Outstanding' and Chelmaren as 'Outstanding'.
- 5.12 The information monitored as part of the quality assurance framework shows good results in a number of areas such as review reports providing evidence based analysis and with clear, outcome based recommendations, agencies following the child protection plans and conferences with key family members present. As previously reported, more was being done to enhance the voice and participation of the child in child protection conferences and a consultation form (similar to that used for LAC Reviews) has been designed with the help of young people. Over Quarter 3 there has been a steady increase of children attending their child protection conference rising from 30- 42%. The measure will change to demonstrate the participation of children rather than the pure attendance of children in Child Protection Conferences at the end of the year.

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)**

Cllr Ann Hartley

**Local Member**

All Members

**Appendices**

Appendix A – Children’s Social Care Indicators