

## **Meeting of the Children's Services Select Committee – 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

### **Report of the Director of Children's Services**

### **Corporate Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 2 (1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023)**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To present the Quarter 2 position for Children's Services of the financial year 2023/24 covering the period 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

#### **Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that the Children's Services Select Committee review the contents of this report and that any identified performance issues are referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

#### **Background**

3. The Quarter 2 performance report incorporates quarterly key performance measures.

Within Children's Services there are five (5) Performance Indicators across two (2) Council Priorities:

Dudley the safe and healthy borough– 4 measures  
Dudley the Borough of Opportunity – 1 measure

#### **Sub-Headings**

4. **Performance Summary**

Dudley the safe and healthy borough

**PI.1447 - % of agency workers**

Target = **15%**  
**Q2 2023/24 position = 18.8%**

Whilst there has been a recent reduction in the proportion of the workforce employed through agency, there are continuing initiatives to tackle this and further develop the workforce for the future. These initiatives include;

- Deployment of Market Forces Supplement to recruit front line roles; effectiveness being seen in substantive recruitment.
- Expanding our commitment to 'growing our own' social workers – recent employment of a number of ASYE social workers..

Note, higher rate of agency staffing during Q1, was as a result of high rates of overall vacancies, where one on four social worker posts were vacant at December 2022.

### **PI.432 - Number of Looked After Children per 10,000 of the child population**

Target = **83**  
**Q2 2023/24 position = 84.2**

Our rates of children looked after are continuing to reduce and are now coming more into line with our target. This is due to a decrease in the number of children entering care alongside an increase in the number of children ceasing.

We are continuing to work with the courts to ensure that SGO applications and care order discharges are progressing in a timely manner to ensure permanency is achieved earlier for our children looked after cohort.

### **PI.433 Number of children subject to child protection plan per 10,000 of the child population**

Target = **43.0**  
**Q2 2023/24 position = 22.4**

Our rates of children subject to a Child Protection Plan have been on a downward trend over the last 5 years and our rate is now lower than that of all of our comparator groups.

Work has been undertaken to ensure that our reduction is appropriate and that the correct children are being made subject to a Child Protection Plan

or that other appropriate services and actions are being undertaken where Child Protection Plans are not being utilised.

**PI. 2250 % of closed Early Help Cases that were not open to Level 4 Services less than 6 months after closure.**

Target = **90%**

**Q2 2023/24 position = 95.5%**

Continued high performance on this measure indicates that families are closed at the appropriate time when there is confidence that any changes made can be sustained without early help support. A consistently high percentage of families do not escalate to level 4 once early help work has closed which indicates effectiveness of early help interventions on tackling concerns at a lower level and prevents escalation into statutory services.

**Q2 2023/24 Summary**

Of the five (5) Performance Indicators, four (4) have shown an improvement when compared to Quarter 1 and one (1) has remained consistent.

Service interventions put in place previously and those that are ongoing during 2023/24 have had a positive impact on performance, with a steady senior workforce contributing to driving improvements across Children Services.

5. There are no alternative options to be made in receiving this report.

**Finance**

6. There are no direct financial implications in receiving this report.

**Law**

7. There are no direct legal implications in receiving this report.

**Risk Management**

8. The current performance reporting period, risk management is contained and reviewed in the performance reporting, however as part of the new risk management framework approved at audit and standards committee, risk reporting will not sit within performance and each directorate will need to develop a risk register for monitoring purposes.

## **Equality Impact**

9. There are no special considerations to be made with regard to equality and diversity in noting and receiving this report.

No proposals have been carried out.

No proposals have been made, therefore does not impact on children and young people.

## **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

10. There are no specific direct human resource issues in receiving this report. In terms of the Council's sickness level and the management of attendance, the HR and OD team continues to work with Directors and Heads of Service to assist and provide support in tackling those areas identified as having high levels of sickness.

## **Commercial/Procurement**

11. There is no direct commercial impact.

## **Environment/Climate Change**

12. There is not impact on the environment or climate change.

## **Council Priorities and Projects**

13. Within Children's Services there are five (5) Performance Indicators across two (2) Council Priorities:

Dudley the safe and healthy borough– 4 measures  
Dudley the Borough of Opportunity – 1 measure



**Director of Children's Services**

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