

**Scrutiny Committee on Children's Services – 25<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

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

**Directorate of Children's Services – Contextual Information regarding Performance in the Following Areas:-**

**Care leavers in employment, education and training**

**% of initial assessments for children's social care carried out in less than 7 working days**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To inform members of the committee about specific performance measures, and factors affecting performance measures, in a small number of specific areas highlighted in the quarterly reporting process.
2. To inform members of actions being taken and which are planned, to improve performance.

**Background**

3. The Directorate of Children's Services reports regularly to Scrutiny Committee on issues where we are performing below target in order to help members understand why this is the case, and what the Directorate of Children's Services and the Children and Young People's Partnership is doing to improve. This report is based upon the performance measures within our Directorate Strategic Plan. In some cases performance measures have not changed since last time as they are based upon data that is only reported annually e.g. examination results.

**Care leavers in employment, education and training**

Our target for this indicator for 2011/12 is 60%. Performance in quarter 2 was 50% which fell from 57.1% in quarter 1.

In 2011/12 there are 58 young people in this cohort. In the context of present economic circumstances and national trends re youth unemployment this target is very challenging. Nonetheless Connexions and the Looked after Children Education

## **Percentage of initial assessments for children's social care carried out in less than 7 working days**

Our target for this indicator for 2011/12 is 67%. Performance in quarter 2 was 58.6% which fell from 59.1% in quarter 1.

Reporting against this indicator is reliant upon data about assessment being entered on completion in very busy social work offices. At the time of compilation of this report not all quarter 2 information was on the system. Performance against the new 10 day timescale has increased from 64.3% to 69.1% and will increase further when data entry is complete.

Recent OfSTED inspections have indicated that where children are at risk of significant harm action is taken promptly to safeguard them. The Safeguarding Board continues to work effectively with all partner agencies.

Key elements of our Improvement Plan are:

- Appointing additional workers to provide capacity to deal with the volume of work
- Publication of guidance on the role of Children's Social Care in relation to the common assessment process in order to safely reduce the numbers of children being referred
- Taking steps to ensure that domestic abuse notifications can be dealt with as "contacts" rather than referrals – this should reduce the conversion rate to initial assessments by 20% and reduce the amount of admin work
- Establishment of the Domestic Abuse Response Team
- Development of regional and local protocols in relation to class A drugs and substance misuse in order to ensure appropriate referral practice
- Extending the Team Around the Child school pilot which is proving successful in meeting early need without referral to Children's Social Care (CSC)
- Meeting with Senior Managers in other agencies to improve referral practice
- Developing multi-agency teams to work with young people and families at an early stage to help prevent the need for referral to CSC, and to increase capacity by workers in these teams remaining engaged should referral become necessary

- Establish a Looked After Children Team so that work can transfer through the system in a more timely manner and create more capacity to deal with initial referrals in a timely manner

### **Finance**

4. Our action plans concerning improvements in these areas are based upon existing budgets.

### **Law**

5. The main pieces of legislation governing these aspects of our work are the Children Act 2004 and the Education and Inspections Act of 2006.

### **Equality Impact**

6. OfSTED judges that Dudley's Services for all children and young people are good but agrees with our self assessment that the progress of children in care and those with learning difficulties/disabilities should continue to be seen as priorities for improvement.

### **Recommendation**

7. That the report be noted by the committee.



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