

Meeting of the Children's Services Select Committee –11th March 2024

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Corporate Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 3 (1st October 2023 to 31st December 2023)

Purpose of report

1. To present the Quarter 3 position for Children's Services of the financial year 2023/24 covering the period 1st October 2023 to 31st December 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 3 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%**
Q3 2023/24 position = 17.7%

Workforce Board continues to have a sole focus on the recruitment and retention of social workers. As at end December, the unfilled social work posts remain under 10% and we are reducing our reliance on agency staff (17.7% end December 2023).

Staff feedback evidences that the career progression arrangements, including the role of Advance Practitioner, have been well received.

Staff turnover rates have continued to reduce from a position of 25% at the end of 2022/23 to 18% as at end Q3; this remains above our target of 12%

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

Target = **83**
Q3 2023/24 position = 82.1

Our rates of children looked after has surpassed the target of 83 for the first time this financial year. This is due to a continuing 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**
Q3 2023/24 position = 25.4

Our rates of children subject to a Child Protection Plan has increased slightly since Q2 however, the number is still well below the target of 43. Our rates of children have been on a downward trend over the last 5 years and our rate is still 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%**

Q3 2023/24 position = 96.0%

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.

Q3 2023/24 Summary

Of the five (5) Performance Indicators, four (4) have surpassed their target one (1) remains yet to achieve its target (*PI 1447*) however, this percentage of 17.7% has reduced each quarter towards its target of 15%

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

15. 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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Appendices

- *Appendix 1 – Children's Services overview*