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**Meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 20th January 2022**

**Report of the Director of Children’s Services**

**Corporate Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 2 (1st July 2021 to 30th September 2021)**

**Purpose**

1. To present the Quarter 2 position for Children’s Services for the financial year 2021/22 covering the period 1st July to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

**Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny 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 six (6) Performance Indicators across two (2) Council Priorities: -
  - One Council – Building a Dynamic and Sustainable Organisation – **1 measure**
  - Strong and Safer Communities – **5 measures**

For 2021/22, two (2) new measures were introduced for Children’s Services and were reported to Children and Young People’s Scrutiny in September.

#### 4. Performance Summary

##### One Council – Building a Dynamic and Sustainable Organisation

##### **PI.2249** - % of social work posts unfilled by permanent or agency staff

Target – **16%**

Q1 position – 11.81%

Q2 position - **12.01%**

*This is a new measure for 2021/22.*

There continues to be local, regional and national challenges regards social worker recruitment, both in relation to permanent and agency staffing. The Workforce Board continues to meet monthly and is focussed on improving the position.

Work is ongoing with Human Resources and Communications and Public Affairs to raise the profile of our job adverts, along with a refresh of our microsite.

A market forces supplement has also been agreed for some social worker posts. This will make posts more attractive to job applicants. Data will be monitored closely to assess impact.

In addition, a team of social workers has been provided by a third party organisation (Innovate). The team have been with Dudley for 3 months from 18/10/21.

##### Strong and Safer Communities

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

Target – **85**

Statutory Neighbour Average – 85.4

Q1 position – 90.06

Q2 position – **86.6**

We had more children exiting care than those who entered care during Quarter 2, 27 children entered the care system and 52 children exited care. 30 of these children turned 18. We have also increased the number of carers who have been granted Special Guardianship Orders – (9 children in total) compared to 2 in Quarter 1). This is a significant improvement from the last quarter where we had less children exiting care. This means that we are progressing children's permanence timely.

We are on track to reduce the number of children who have unnecessarily remained in care, longer than planned. We have recently filed SGO Applications in support of 15 children's carers. We are anticipating that 3 to 4 SGOs will be granted monthly. Feedback from children/young people and their carers is positive. We continue to work with the courts to ensure that discharge of care orders is on track.

There was a positive movement from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 for this measure.

**PI.426** Timeliness of Single Assessments - % Completed Within 45 Working Days  
(Assessment service only)

Target – **86.3%**

Statutory Neighbour Average – 85.5

Quarter 1 position – 77.55%

Quarter 2 position – 90.3%

We have improved our completion rate for assessments within 45 working days by over 12%. This means that 9 out of 10 children are having their needs assessed in a timely way, enabling decisions to be made more quickly about how those needs should be met.

We have introduced a new process for Team Manager oversight, meaning that decision making is taking place earlier and more frequently during the course of the assessment. This has enabled more assessments to be concluded more quickly.

The new process for Team Manager oversight is ensuring that these assessments are concluded and that more of those remaining open are the children who are requiring more detailed assessment to understand their needs.

Last Quarter's report highlighted the measures that the service had put in place which had started to bear fruition and the position for Quarter 2 has shown this to be consistently positive.

Frequent monitoring will ensure that this process continues to be embedded well and continues to have positive impact.

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

Target – **43.7**

Statutory Neighbour Average – 55.1

Quarter 1 position – 34.1

Quarter 2 position – 37.5

Our figures in this area have shown a small increase for 3 consecutive months. These figures remain below the Regional average of 43.7 per 10,000 of the child population.

There has been a continued trend in the reduction of children subject to Child Protection plans (CP) for a period longer than 9 months. In July 66 young people had been subject of a CP plan for 9 months, In August, it was 75 young people and in September it was 58 young people.

The following strategies have contributed to this position:

- The introduction of CP progression panels for children subject to plans over 9 months has helped us to understand why children remained subject to Child Protection plans. It has also helped us to work with the child/family and wider professional networks to determine if a child protection plan is, or has been, effective in reducing risk
- Independent reviewing officers and social workers are using their SMART plans training and Assessment Training to help write plans, reports and minutes in language which makes sense to everyone
- A key cohort of the children subject of Child Protection Plans over 9 months were young people at risk of exploitation. The roll out of the contextualised safeguarding hub and “My Safety Plans” has helped to provide more specialist intervention to young people exposed to risk due to extra familial abuse.

When comparing this measure to our target and statistical neighbours, we consider the figure to be neutral, as without extensive analysis, it is impossible to determine whether an increase/decrease is positive or negative. For example, a decrease in this measure might mean that we are ending plans too early (negative) or that we are making good progress in ending plans where they are no longer necessary (positive).

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

Target – **86%**

Q1 position – 85%

Q2 position – 91.8%

*This is a new measure for 2021/22.*

A total of 3,505 cases were closed in the past 12 months, of which 3,222 (92%) were not referred to Level 4 services.

This data shows that the right intervention at the right time enables de-escalation of concerns with 92% of all families that Family Support works alongside. It shows that



the strength of Early Help Assessments and Family Support Plans enables a targeted approach to support families to build resilience and engage with universal services.

Targeted audits in November 2021 on the 8% referred to Social Care will begin the journey of a deeper understanding of features that lead to the referral and will enable a plan to improve on this 92%.

**PI.2129** % of eligible children who take up a 'Time for Two's' place in the Dudley Borough

Target – **70%**

Quarter 1 position – 63%

Quarter 2 position – 77.7%

98.80% of applications approved against Department of Work and Pensions.

There were more applications approved than families taking up the offer. A focus on those families to identify why they are not using childcare and education provided for 2 year olds is taking place.

Quarter 2 has seen a positive position when compared to Quarter 1 and against the national target.

### **Quarter 2 Summary**

Of the seven (7) Performance Indicators, all but one of the measures have shown a positive movement when compared to Quarter 1 of 2021/22 against the target numerator.

The service interventions being put in are having a positive impact on performance with a steady senior workforce contributing to driving improvements across Children's Services.

The Quarter 1 report highlighted COVID-19 impact and removal of lockdown restrictions would see performance levels improve and this is tangible across the measures.

### **Directorate Service Delivery**

Inclusive to the report the Directorate Service Summary document provides a detailed account of actions against the Children's Services Directorate Plan. Please refer to appendix 1 within the performance report for further information.

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

## **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

12. 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**

13. There is no direct commercial impact.

## **Council Priorities**

14. The Council Plan and the Performance Management Framework enables a consistent approach for performance management across the organisation, aligning the Council Plan, Borough Vision and Future Council Programme and provides that golden thread between them.

Our Council Plan is built around 4 key priority areas. The Council Plan is a 3-year '[Plan on a Page](#)'. Each directorate has a Directorate Plan that aligns to the priority outcomes that the Council is striving to achieve, as outlined within the Council Plan, and includes an assessment of how the service has contributed towards these priorities along with a range of key performance indicators to enable us to keep track of progress.

Performance management is key in delivering the longer-term vision of the Council. Quarterly Corporate Performance Reports are reported and reviewed by Strategic Executive Board, Informal Cabinet, the Deputy and Shadow Deputy Leader and Future Council Scrutiny Committee

This will help to enable the council to deliver the objectives and outcomes of the Council Plan and in turn the Borough Vision



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## Appendices

Directorate Service Summary Key Actions – Children's Services



Childrens Services  
2021-22 Directorate

