

Children's Services Performance Report

Children's Health, Social Care and Education

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 6th July 2016

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Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report provides the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Committee with an update of performance and key issues relating to Children Services. It is a high level summary of the key messages from the detailed performance report which is attached in the Appendix. Please refer to the Appendix for the actual data and performance context. This report highlights the areas of performance to be noted by the Board.
- 1.2 A key purpose of Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee is to hold Commissioners of Children's Health and Social Care Services to account.
- 1.3 Any Commissioner of Children's Health and Social Care Services in Swindon is required to provide information on the planning and provision of children's health and social care services within the Borough and consult with the Committee on any planned substantial changes or developments to service provision.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the key performance messages from the detailed performance information in the Appendix.
- 2.2 Identify any areas of concern that require further investigation.

3. Key Performance Messages

- 3.1 This report presents year end performance for Children's Services. It shows good progress has been made in delivering the priorities for 2015/16. More detailed performance information is provided in the Appendix but key performance messages have been highlighted below, based on current strengths and challenges.
- 3.2 Children's Services continue to face significant pressure from increased demand and the challenges of securing permanent suitably qualified and experienced staff. There has been a rise in the number of Children in

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Care, fewer children benefitting from stable placements, and more children than we would ideally want receiving repeat experiences of the social care system with the numbers of re-referrals and repeat child protection plans. Inevitably high workloads can impact on the timeliness and effectiveness of some interventions. However, the latest social worker vacancy rate has reduced to 15% and permanent staff have been recruited to all Social Care Team Manager and Independent Reviewing officer posts. A more stable workforce, alongside the caseload analysis exercise being undertaken to review the quantity and complexity of cases to ensure staff have manageable workloads, should improve the timeliness and quality of the work.

- 3.3 Despite ongoing pressures from demand and workforce capacity, there are areas of good performance including improved timescales for initial child protection conferences and legal proceedings and fewer children and young people entering the youth justice system for the first time.
- 3.4 During the year we have continued to strengthen our Quality Assurance Framework to scrutinise performance and drive improvement to deliver better outcomes for children and their families.
- 3.5 We continue to progress our Early Help offer to ensure support is available to children, young people and their families as soon as problems start to emerge or when there is a strong likelihood that problems will emerge in the future. This year, the children's workforce has completed more Early Help Assessments and Plans, and Health Visitors, Family Nurse Partnership Practitioners and Targeted Mental Health Service are working with more children and families to ensure they receive the support they require.
- 3.6 The level and rate of fixed term exclusions from Swindon schools remains high in comparison with other authorities, whereas permanent exclusions are now in line or below our comparators. The Education Strategy Board, chaired by the Regional Schools Commissioner, is monitoring progress against the strategies that have been put in place to work with schools to reduce the level of exclusions and support pupils and families at risk of exclusion.
- 3.7 Work is ongoing to embed the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms. Swindon continues to have a higher percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) compared to England and statistical neighbours. However, this year there has been a 22% reduction in the number of new plans issued. The service is undertaking a "Turning the

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Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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Curve" exercise to look at ways to reduce the number of children with statements/ EHCPs as well as improve the timeliness in issuing plans.

- 3.8 This year performance in both primary and secondary school absence has improved and is in line with national absence rates, however, persistent absenteeism amongst secondary pupils is higher than average. Latest performance is good and above the national average for the percentage of pupils attending good or outstanding primary schools (89%), but remains low for the percentage of secondary pupils attending good or outstanding secondary schools (49%).
- 3.9 Compared to last year, there is a reduction in the Youth Unemployment rate (16-24s) and a slight improvement with our NEET figures overall (young people not in education, training and employment), but fewer young people are participating in learning activities and there are more young people with 'unknown' post-16 activities. Although there has been a significant increase in the percentage of Care Leavers in Education, Employment and training (EET), there are still too many Care Leavers who are NEET compared to other authorities. The high number of Care Leavers who have a disability, are pregnant or have parenting responsibilities have proved challenging for routes to EET. However, Swindon has a good track record for keeping in touch with Care Leavers so there are very few Care Leavers whose learning destination post 16 is unknown.
- 3.10 The prevalence of breast feeding in Swindon remains high compared to other authorities with health visitors playing an active role in supporting new mothers. Swindon continues to perform well in the uptake of immunisation. The prevalence of obesity for both Reception and Year 6 children in the 2015/16 has decreased compared to previous years reflecting the good partnership working that has taken place to target improvement in this area.
- 3.11 Supporting Information
- None

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 None

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Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 6th July 2016

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The budget in 2015/16 for Children, Families and Community Health was £20.932m. The final outturn was £23.114m, an over-spend of £2.182m. There have been a number of pressures within this service area. The main areas have been agency social workers which have improved throughout the year - £893k, increase demand for placements - £932k and increase in Legal costs £347k. These have been partially offset by savings in other areas £112k.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) requires every Local Authority to establish an overview and scrutiny function to hold the Executive to account, undertake policy development and review, monitor and improve performance report.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 There are no other direct implications arising as a result of this report. Any further implications will be identified when a topic is reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and in any recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is required at this stage as this report proposes no changes to services. Any DIA that is required during a review of topics included within the work programme, will be identified at the appropriate stage.

Risk Management

- 5.5 No risk management issues have been identified at this stage. Any risk management issues will be identified at the appropriate time when a topic is under review by the Scrutiny Committee and if it makes any recommendations.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

Children's Services Performance Report

Children's Health, Social Care and Education

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7. Background Papers

7.1 None.

8. Appendices

8.1 Children's Services Performance Report 6th July 2016.