

# Children's Performance Summary Quarter 3 17/18

## Children's Health, Social Care and Education

### Overview and Scrutiny

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> March 18

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Wards:	ALL
Locality Affected:	ALL
Parishes Affected:	ALL

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#### 1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This performance summary provides an overview of performance in children's services based on the position at the end of quarter 3. The detailed performance overview is attached in Appendix 1 and should be referred to for detailed numbers and trends over time. This report captures the key headlines from the appendix and notes significant aspects of performance information including the impact of this for the service overall during the year to date. It also gives comparator data performance from the "Children's social care in year benchmarking group". This is essential information in relation to current trends in other Local Authorities and consideration of how our activity compares in relation to Social care.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee need oversight of Children Service's performance in order to scrutinise and hold the service to account. The report highlights areas of performance which are positive as well as areas where there are challenges. The Committee also need an understanding of the areas of performance where Swindon is compared with others, and how that information is used by external bodies such as the Department of Education and OFSTED.
- 1.3 Children services performance contributes to the Council's corporate priority in terms of protecting the vulnerable. Partnership working is key to improving outcomes for children and this report helps to indicate areas where stronger partnership working would be of benefit.
- 1.4 The Swindon Challenge Board is a key driver in helping to raise attainment standards within Swindon's schools. This report provides an overview of attainment and attendance, as well as fixed term and permanent exclusions and how Swindon compares with others in this area.
- 1.5 Early help services are key to providing effective interventions that can prevent children from needing help from more specialist and statutory services such as social care. Swindon is uniquely placed with an integrated community health, early help, education support and social care service delivery model. This report provides a performance overview of these services.

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#### 2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the key performance messages from the detailed performance information in the Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Recognise and acknowledge where and how improvements are being made and successes achieved.
- 2.3 Identify any areas of concern that require further scrutiny and investigation. These will be owned by the Head of Children, Families and Community Health, and the Head of Education depending on the areas of performance that the concerns relate to.

#### 3. Detail

Key Performance Headlines: Quarter 3 2017/18:

- 3.1 The Early Help Offer from our SBC locality teams continues to show clear signs of increasing demand and activity. The multi-disciplinary case management system in Swindon ensures that professionals have a good understanding of who else is working with children and families and this enables better information sharing and joint working. For example, when stepping up to social care service provision, as well as stepping down cases from social care to early help following successful interventions. 50.5% of referrals had a previous early help involvement. The performance in delivering the Healthy child programme by our Health Visiting teams has continued to show the impact of significant capacity issues and staffing challenges in the last two quarters and this is reflected in the coverage of visits.
- 3.2 As at 31/12/2017 the Family Service was working with 487 children (217 families). Half (253) of these children have an Early Help Record and Plan, a third are a Child in Need (157), 13% (61) are on a Child Protection Plan and 1% (6) are Looked After. Of the 551 outcomes recorded in the year-to-date, 90.6% (499) were positive, this exceeds the 80% target set when the service was set up. The number of children and families the Family Service have worked with has remained fairly consistent. The Family Service are evidencing that the work they are completing is sustainable with 84.6% of families not receiving another referral to Social Care within 6 months of closing to the service. The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub data evidences that the service is referring safeguarding concerns appropriately. Within the last quarter the New Beginnings Project launched, which is hosted within the Family Service. This new Service is now working with 5 women who have previously had their children removed. The service is working to reduce the chance of these women having further children

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removed. In addition to this the Family Service is also reviewing the Family Group Conferencing Service to consider how to grow this Service throughout Swindon, especially in relation to domestic abuse and criminal exploitation.

- 3.3 Children and their families are consistently and efficiently identified when eligible for the Troubled Families programme, and an increasing number have a dedicated lead professional allocated. There has been a considerable emphasis on demonstrating the outcomes for this vulnerable group, and this has resulted in an increase in the number of claims. Positive work in this area was acknowledged by the recent Troubled Families Spot Check, undertaken by the Department of Communities and Local Government, (DCLG). The feedback was positive both in relation to the practice linked to working with these families and the consolidated data approach. The work being undertaken by the Troubled Families taskforce with Early Help colleagues in SBC and partners is delivering a much greater number of claims. This ensures benefit from the transformation fund for Swindon families, linked to this national programme as well as demonstrating that children services are working effectively in helping families to make sustainable changes.
- 3.4 The number of contacts and referrals to Children's services MASH, has continued to show an increase during the third quarter of the year. Overall, the service is still averaging 1240 contacts each month, compared with 1092 monthly average for the same period in the previous year. Referrals are mainly from the police, schools and health professionals.
- 3.5 Of those statutory assessments that are completed the duration has remained good, taking on average 28 days between April and December 17. This is good performance in the national context. There are an increasing number of overdue assessments open within the assessment and child protection team and these will have an impact on duration average once completed. The spike in referrals experienced in November 17 is a contributory factor here, alongside continued capacity pressure due to overall increased demand during the year. This capacity issue has been addressed with additional social worker resources committed to the assessment and child protection team, but there is likely to be an increase in the duration of completed assessments once these arrangements are embedded and assessments are closed. All open assessments are consistently risk assessed routinely and prioritised according to level of need. All child protection concerns are prioritised in this context and progressed to statutory assessment.
- 3.6 The number of children on a child protection plan has continued to increase during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 17/18, with 382 reported at the end of December 17. The data shows that Swindon has a higher number of child protection investigations than other local authorities, and of these a higher number progress to child protection conference. A higher proportion are also made the subject of a child

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protection plan as a result of the conference. Audits and softer operational intelligence indicates that agencies and partners have confidence in the local authority child protection processes and therefore are encouraging the child protection approach to ensure the most robust service provision. Following the revision of child protection thresholds and procedures, review work is underway to test the application of the threshold to ensure that it is applied consistently between teams and partner agencies. Work is also underway to prevent progression to child protection plans wherever appropriate. This piece of work is key in managing demand going forward and achieve sustainable outcomes.

- 3.7 341 children were looked after at the end of December 17, or 68.6 per 10,000 population aged under 18. Swindon is slightly above the national and statistical average (62). There continues to be signs of stability in the level of increase in children becoming looked after during 17/18, but with high numbers on child protection plans, it is inevitable that a proportion of these will need to become looked after in the best interests of the child. Thirty three children have experienced 3 different placements between April and December 17, this equates to 10% and is in line with national and statistical neighbour average. The long term stability is not strong in the comparator context, and this is linked to the lack of capacity in our in house provision for children demonstrating challenging behaviours. This leads to the commissioning of specialist placements, which causes instability for children as well as significant budgetary pressures. There were 21 unaccompanied asylum seekers at the end of December 17. These factors have contributed to an increase in the use of commissioned placements which now accounts for 41.3% (141 out of 341), of the children looked after population. Participation of children in the looked after children process remains consistently robust and above national comparator which is positive.
- 3.8 The number of children being adopted is still below the national average with 11 children adopted between April and December 17. This represents 10% of children ceasing care. A further 20 children became the subject of special guardianship in the reporting period, and this is higher than others in the national context, and forms part of our story in relation to a lower adoption rate. Timeliness of adoption has improved with an average of 600 days between a child coming into care and being placed for adoption. Although still higher than national and statistical neighbour average, the gap is now only 50 days. As Swindon has relatively small numbers adopted due to its population, it is important to note this measure is easily impacted by small numbers when an adoption is delayed, even if the delay is in the best interest of the child.
- 3.9 The proportion of care leavers engaged in education/employment/training has continued to improve during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter with 64.5% (78 out of 121 young people), reported in December 17. This is above national average. Eighty nine percent, (108 out of 121), of our care leavers are in suitable accommodation

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which is also stronger than national comparators. The service knows the young people who need suitable accommodation and are actively working to improve their situation.

- 3.10 Police National Computer (PNC) and Youth Justice Board (YJB) figures from 2016 show that over 80% of First time entrants are dealt with by the police under their pre court processes, with no Youth Offending Team (YOT) involvement. A joint initiative with the police is exploring ways in which the YOT can contribute to their prevention strategy to reduce this figure and stop them committing more crime (and entering the youth justice system). The number of first time entrants into the youth justice system has reported a decrease which is welcome. The YOT is also working with other partners such as Wiltshire Council and the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, (OPCC), in creating a pan Wiltshire protocol to reduce criminalisation of children and young people in care; recognising that this particular cohort is, (along with others from a BME background), overrepresented in the youth justice system.
- 3.11 Under the Ministry of Justices' (MoJ) new quarterly measures re-offending rates have increased from 36.7% in quarter 2 to 46.3% in quarter 3, slightly above the national average. This data is historical with a two year time lag. The increase was expected both locally and nationally and is in part explained by the changing methodology the MoJ use; however it also reflects the fact that the Youth Offending Team (YOT), is now working with smaller, but more complex numbers of children and young people who have multiple issues and risks associated with their offending behaviour. The YOT is exploring new methodologies in working with such young people; including the Trauma Recovery Model and also is using the Youth Justice Board 'Live tracker' tool to give contemporaneous data to inform interventions and better react to emergent trends (including knife crime and domestic burglary).
- 3.12 For children requiring an education/health and care plan, there has been a significant improvement in the timeliness of completion from 69.4% in December 16 to 93% in December 17. This has been achieved with a combination of new EHCP processes and content embedded into a clear follow up and monitoring system of each phase of statutory assessment process. In addition, staff training within the team and focussed supervision and prompt decision making have all played a contributing factor. Improvements have also been made in other areas of operation in order to improve compliance. This is a key measure monitored by the Department of Education. Alongside grant funding has been to provide additional staff.
- 3.13 The number of young people engaged in education/employment and training as at December 2017 was 92%, just above the national average of 91.3% and above the statistical neighbour figure of 89.3%. The NEET rate, (those not



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engaged in education/employment/training), is 1.8% and again, Swindon is performing better than the national average of 2.7% and statistical neighbour figure of 2.9%. The raising participation/NEET plan is currently being reviewed and refreshed in light of the overall ambitious target of achieving 95.4% in learning by March 2018.

- 3.14 Fixed term exclusions continue to be a priority focus for the Swindon challenge board. The number of children receiving a fixed term exclusion has increased overall, but that is due to secondary school exclusions as opposed to primary. The data reported in this report (2123 exclusions in 16/17, compared with 1946 in the previous year), includes special schools and those educated other than at school, (EOTAS). Permanent exclusions are at a higher level than in previous years with 53 reported during 16/17 compared with 24 in 15/16.
- 3.15 Primary outcomes have improved significantly this year with outcomes at Key Stage 2 at the expected level being the most improved in the country. Phonics outcomes are now at the national average and a letter has been received from Nick Gibb, Minister of State for School Standards congratulating Swindon on having one of the highest rates of improvement in the country (see Appendix 1). Pupils are now assessed as being at the expected level or having a high score/working at greater depth. The assessments are tested by exam, in all subjects bar writing which is teacher assessed. The focus for primary schools this year, as discussed with head teachers and the Swindon Challenge board, is improving outcomes at the higher standard/greater depth whilst continuing the improvement at the expected level across all subjects.
- 3.16 90% of primary schools in Swindon are currently judged by Ofsted to be good or better which is in line with the national average. For inspections of early year's settings, 98% of settings are good or better which is higher than the national average (93%).
- 3.17 The number of children in elective home education has increased to 197 at the end of December 17, and this is up from 174 at the end of December 16.

### Alternative Options

- 3.18 There are no alternative options for consideration within the context of this report.

## 4. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 4.1 For 2017/18, the budget for Children, Families and Community Health is £26.9m. Based on the January monitoring position, the service is reporting a projected

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overspend of £3.7m. The service has experienced significant demand pressures which is impacting on staffing budgets, placement budgets and legal costs.

- 4.2 The 2017/18 Skills and Attainment Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget is £84.9m. Based on the January monitoring position, the DSG is projected to be £0.127m over budget. The main pressures are due to increases in demand which impacts on a number of High Needs budgets including external placements and High Needs Top ups. The pressures are partially offset by funding recouped from schools and academies for Permanently Excluded Pupils and by savings in the pupil growth budget and following a reduction in demand for home tutors.
- 4.3 The 2017/18 Core Skills and Attainment budget is £1.939m. Based on the January monitoring position, the service area is reporting a projected overspend of £0.065m, which is mainly due to the service area's share of redundancy costs plus school improvement projects.

#### Legal and Human Rights Implications

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)

- 4.4 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

- 4.5 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

- 4.6 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.

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#### **5. Consultees**

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

#### **6. Background Papers**

- 6.1 None

#### **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix 1: Key Performance Indicator Overview Social Care and Education.