

COUNCIL
12 MAY 2022

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Performance Indicators Quarter 3 2021/22

2. Children's Services Quarter 3 (Oct 2021 to December 2021) performance information was presented to the December meeting which highlighted the following areas of good practice:
 - (a) 10.8 per cent of the children referred during this quarter had been re-referred to Children's Social Care within 12 months of a previous referral which was positively below the internal target of 18 per cent;
 - (b) 100 per cent of children with a Child Protection (CP) plan and 100 per cent of Children in Care (CiC) had an allocated social worker;
 - (c) No child had ceased to be subject to a CP plan who had been subject to the plan for two or more years, and continue to positively perform below the target of five per cent;
 - (d) 92.1 per cent of Initial Child Protection Conferences were held within 15 working days from the strategy meeting/Section 47 being initiated during this quarter;
 - (e) The number of Children in Care (CiC) was 271 by the end of December 2021, which was a reduction when compared with the number of children at the end of December 2020 (284) and work continues to safely reduce the number of children coming into care;
 - (f) 100 per cent of Children in Care (CiC) had been allocated a qualified social worker and 98.4 per cent of the reviews had been completed within the required timescales;
 - (g) 89.8 per cent of statutory CiC visits were completed within timescale during Q3 inline with the target of 90 per cent;
 - (h) 10.0 per cent of our Children in Care, as of December 2021, had 3 or more placements within the previous 12 months and performance was positively below the internal target of 10 per cent;
 - (i) 73.5 per cent of Children in Care aged under 16 (who have been looked after for at least 2.5 years) had been in their current placement continuously for at least two years, in line with the internal target of 68 per cent;

- (j) 6.1 per cent of Children in Care had been placed 20 or more miles away from home as of December 2021 below the target of 10 per cent;
 - (k) 82.7 per cent of children due a review health assessment year to date had one completed and 80.4 per cent of Children in Care that were due a dental check assessment by December 2021 had had one completed; and
 - (l) 17.6 per cent of Care Leavers were not in employment, education or training (NEET) at the end of December 2021, which was positively below target of 30 per cent and 100.0 per cent were in suitable accommodation.
3. Areas highlighted for focus were in respect of :
- (a) Social workers completed 80.0 per cent of the C&F assessments within timescale which falls below the target of 90 per cent and is similar to the 85.4 per cent for the same period last year;
 - (b) 67.7 per cent of referrals were screened and completed within 1 day by the end of Q3, below the target of 90 per cent and 7.7 per cent of the referrals took over three days to complete;
 - (c) At the end of December 2021, the percentage of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time within two years of the previous plan ending was 8.0 per cent, above the 6 per cent target, however this was a reduction from 9.8 per cent as at the end of Q2 2021/22; and
 - (d) 82.3 per cent of children received a statutory CP visit within 10 working days during Q3 below the target of 90 per cent.

Vulnerable Pupil Panel Review

- 4. We received a report on the work and impact of the Darlington Vulnerable Pupil Panel, the multi-agency panel of which the Local Authority is a part.
- 5. The Panel was created in 2019 to replace the previous arrangements of the School Behaviour and Attendance Partnership and since its inception has formed a dynamic multi-agency partnership which aims to avoid children disengaging from education due to any cause.
- 6. This Panel has seen a reduction in permanent exclusion and persistence absence has improved above the national figure and for disadvantaged pupils this is now better than the national figure. The work of the Panel has shown a reduction in the gap between all children and vulnerable groups.
- 7. As part of a review Members of this Scrutiny are currently undertaking we met with some members of the Parent Carer Forum on 16 March and discussed issues and concerns and requested that the Forum members provide us with their top priorities.

Work Programme

8. Members gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during 2021/22, and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.
9. Members also discussed the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2021/22 which was reported at the Scrutiny meeting held on 21 February 2022 and agreed to examine the finance available to nurseries in the most deprived wards to gain a better understanding and to discuss the best way to investigate this issue going forward.

Councillor Paul Crudass
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee