

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 APRIL 2024

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 3 2023/24

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update on performance against key performance indicators.

Summary

2. This report provides performance information (October 2023 – December 2023) in line with an indicator set agreed by Monitoring and Coordination Group on 2 July 2018, and subsequently by Scrutiny Committee Chairs.
3. It is suggested monitoring focuses on issues and exceptions, and relevant Assistant Directors will attend the meeting to respond to queries raised by the committee regarding the performance information contained within this report.
4. Where indicators are reported annually, quarterly updates will not be available.

Where are we performing well?

5. 1.9% of referrals in Q3 2023/24 took over 3 working days to be completed, exceeding our target of 5%.
6. The Building Stronger Families Team continues to increase their work with our families, with 221 families (452 children) engaging at the end of Q3 2023/24. Additionally, external agencies were supporting 37 families (72 children).
7. In Q3 2023/24, all children who had gone missing (excluding children from other authorities) had been offered a Return Home Interview (RHI) with 87.5% being offered within 72 hours. 71.4% of the children engaged in their RHI, which is similar to Q3 2022/23 (72.2%) and an increase when compared with Q3 2021/22 (47.9%).
8. 142 children were subject to a Child Protection plan (CP) as at the end of December 2023 (a rate of 63.8 per 10,000 population). This is an increase on the rate of 42.9 for the 97 children who were subject to CP at the end of December 2022. The increase in active CP plans contrasts the reduction of the current number of children in care.
9. 100% of Child Protection Cases were allocated to a qualified social worker and 100% of Child Protection reviews have been completed within the required timescales.
10. Of the 65 children who became subject to a CP plan in Q3 2023/24, 1 was for a second or subsequent time within 2 years of the previous plan ending, which equates to 4.2% and remains below the 6% target.

11. 327 children were in care as at December 2023; 21 (6.4%) of which are unaccompanied asylum-seekers. 13 children from 10 families came into care in Q3 2023/24, a further 5 young people came into our care as UASC through the NTS. This is a substantial reduction compared with 43 children (excluding UASC) who came into care in Q3 2022/23.
12. 45 children and young people, from 30 families ceased to be in care in Q3 2023/24. This is a large increase when compared with the 21 children ceasing in Q3 2022/23. The proportion of children who returned home to their parent(s) continues to increase when compared with previous quarters.
13. 100.0% of Children in Care (CiC) were allocated to a qualified social worker. 90.5% of the reviews have been completed within required timescales at December 2023.
14. 85.2% of children due a review health assessment by December 2023 have had one completed.
15. 98.4% of our care leavers (aged 19-21) and 96.3% (aged 22-25) were in suitable accommodation at the end of December 2023. At the end of December 2023, the percentage of care leavers who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) continues to be less than the 30% target at 25.8% for care leavers aged 19-21 and 20.4% for those aged 22-25. 24.2% of the young people, aged 19-21, were engaging in education (including studies beyond A level) and 50.0% of the young people were in training or employment (including apprenticeships). 7.4% of the young people, aged 22-25, were engaging in education (all of which are in studies beyond A level) and 72.2% of the young people were in training or employment (including apprenticeships).

Where do we need to improve?

16. In Q3 2023/24, 82.5% of children had their referral completed within 1 working day. This is below our 90% target although there was an increase in both timeliness and referrals when compared to the last quarter (78.9%). 1.9% referrals took over 3 working days to be completed in Q3 2023/24 which is achieving our target of 5%.
17. 358 Early Help Assessments (EHA) were started in Q3 2023/24, only 10.1% (36) of which were initiated by external agencies. This is less than Q3 2022/23 where 456 EHA's were started (12.3% led by external partners).
18. We have continued to see an increase in re-referrals with 25.1% of the referrals received so far this year having had a previous referral within the past 12 months. This has, in part, been due to the increase in contacts being made; it was expected that the number of children referred will increase. However this means that we have exceeded our internal target of having no more 18% of referrals being re-referrals. Re-referrals are being scrutinised during the weekly WRM meeting to ensure best practise and learning outcomes are shared.
19. 437 children had a C&F assessment completed in Q3 2023/24. This is slightly lower when compared with Q3 2022/23 (447) but an increase on Q3 2021/22 (247) and Q3 2020/21 (215). Of the 437 C&F assessments completed in Q3 2023/24, 63.8% were

completed within timescale. This is far below the target of 90% and a lot of work has been carried out by the social workers and managers to address the outstanding assessments and improve timeliness of their completion. Although the year to date timeliness at the end of December 2023 was 57.5% data captured since then indicates an improvement from January 2024.

20. In Q3 2023/24, 70.2% of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) were held within 15 working days from the strategy meeting / section 47 being initiated (excluding children who were transferred-in). Work continues to reduced late requests for conferences.
21. 1 family (4 children) ceased to be subject to a Child Protection plan in Q3 2023/24 after being subject to the plan for 2 or more years. This has taken us just above target with 5.1% at the end of December.
22. 70.5% of Child Protection statutory visits were completed within 10 working days in Q3 2023/24 with a total of 91.4% being completed within 15 days. When compared with Q3 2022/23, the number of visits carried out has increased (from 609 to 767 visits) due to the increased number of children on a plan. Reviews of the new locality allocations for the A&S teams have occurred and where appropriate are amended to ensure a fair and even distribution of allocation and workloads.
23. 80.7% of statutory visits for Children in Care (CiC) were completed in timescale in Q3 2023/24. This is an increase when compared with Q3 2022/23 when there were 78.5% of visits completed in timescale, but still below target (90%). Reviews of the new locality allocations for the A&S teams have occurred and where appropriate are amended to ensure a fair and even distribution of allocation and workloads.
24. Currently, 66.7% of our Children in Care aged under 16 (who have been looked after for at least 2.5 years) have been in their current placement continuously for at least 2 years. This is below our 68% target, however, there has been an improvement since the start of the year due to targeted work to help support carers and children before a move is required.
25. 13.8% of Children in Care (CiC), as of December 2023, have had 3 or more placements within the previous 12 months. This is not meeting the internal target of 10% but is a reduction compared with the last quarter.
26. 51.8% of children due a dental health assessment by December 2023 have had one completed.
27. 12.4% of our Children in Care have been placed 20 or more miles away from home as of December 2023, which exceeds our target of 10%. Although care is taken to avoid this, on occasion a young person may need to be placed in residential care due to their disability / placed with family / or placed for adoption, and this provision is not available within 20 miles.

Recommendation

1. It is recommended:

- a) That performance information provided in this report is reviewed and noted, and relevant queries raised with the appropriate Assistant Director.

James Stroyan
Director of Children and Adult Services

Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Sharon Raine Head of Performance and Transformation: Extension 6091

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report supports the Councils Crime and Disorder responsibilities
Health and Well Being	This report supports performance improvement relating to improving the health and wellbeing of residents
Sustainability	This report supports the Council's sustainability responsibilities
Diversity	This report supports the promotion of diversity
Wards Affected	This report supports performance improvement across all Wards
Groups Affected	This report supports performance improvement which benefits all groups
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) by involving Members in the scrutiny of performance relating to the delivery of key outcomes
Efficiency	Scrutiny of performance is integral to optimising outcomes.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report may have an impact on their emotional and physical health, social development, education, and future employment.