

Meeting date: 26th September 2018
Report to: Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children,
Education & Skills
Subject/report title: Children, Education & Skills Performance Report Quarter 4 2017-18 &
Quarter 1 2018-19
Report from: Director of Children's Services and Skills
Report author/lead contact officer: Ritesh Kansara



Wards affected:

All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: N/A

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to share with Cabinet Member a range of the latest national and local performance headlines for Children's Services for quarter 4, 2017/18 and quarter 1, 2018/19.

2. Decision(s) recommended

2.1 Cabinet Member is requested to note quarter 4, 2017/18 and quarter 1, 2018/19 performance for Children's social care performance (Appendix 1) and request any further information on any aspect of performance arising from this report.

3. What is the issue?




3.1 Solihull's Children's Services performance framework incorporates a number of national statutory performance measures submitted through statutory returns by all local authorities to Department for Education (DfE) annually after the end of the financial year end in March. This information informs Ofsted inspections of local authority Children's Services and enables benchmarking against national averages, against statistical neighbours and other local authorities across a range of children's social care services.


- 3.2 Solihull gathers data on a monthly and quarterly basis, so that performance can be monitored and reported throughout the year to ensure services are being managed efficiently and to meet statutory requirements. In addition, a number of local key performance measures are also monitored. All performance measures are used for various purposes including: statutory returns; evidence for Ofsted inspections; reporting to Directorate and Corporate Leadership and to Members; to support peer challenges; safeguarding; corporate parenting; to measure progress of our Council Priorities for Children; and to enable services / teams and individuals to understand their performance. Performance is used in business planning and the Children's Directorate plan each year.
- 3.3 Attached in Appendix 1 is Q4, 2017/18 and Q1, 2018/19 key performance measures which are reviewed at Directorate Leadership Team meetings monthly / quarterly and to Cabinet Member.
- 3.4 The key performance measures have been reviewed and refreshed in order to reflect the need of the service and assist managers to monitor and improve practice where necessary.
- 3.5 Performance measures are calculated cumulatively and in quarter where appropriate to closely monitor how the service is operating and to enable further scrutiny when needed.
- 3.6 Performance targets are reviewed routinely with Senior Management Team (SMT) to ensure they are in line with statistical neighbours and reflect practice in the service area. This is measured via tolerance levels enabling a firmer grip on key performance indicators.

3.7 **Key Performance Headlines for Quarter 4 2017/18 and Quarter 1 2018/19**


- Numbers of Looked after Children (LAC) increased at the end of the year in quarter 4 2017/18 to 413 compared to 383 at the end of March 2016/17. This has continued to increase at the end of quarter 1 2018/19 to 418.
- The 418 LAC in quarter 1 consists of 363 local children and 55 unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). UASC figures have remained stable.
- DfE Children Looked After in England 2017 statistics publication reports a 3% increase in LAC nationally.
- Solihull's LAC numbers remain higher than the national average. For Solihull to be in line with our statistical neighbours, LAC numbers (excluding UASC) would need to decrease to 273.
- Solihull's LAC rate is 92 per 10,000 and significantly higher than the statistical neighbours which is 59.9 per 10,000.

3.8 **Quarter 4 2017/18 and Quarter 1 2018/19 figures indicate performance is meeting target and is good for the following measures:**

- **ECS 01b**  **Children Looked After allocated to a qualified social worker** is at 100% at the end of quarter 4 2017/18 and quarter 1 2018/19 which means all cases were allocated to a qualified social worker.
- **NI 62**  **Percentage of children looked after at 31/3 with 3 or more placements during the year.** A lower number of placement moves for a child is better for the child as stable placements provide better outcomes for looked after children. Solihull's performance for the number of placement moves was 11% at the end of quarter 4 2017/18 and 8% in quarter 1 2018/19. This is within the tolerance target of 8% to 12% for the year. A permanence panel reviews all children with 3 or more moves to improve the stability of placements and to ensure children are safe. Solihull continue to increase the menu of suitable provision for children with complex needs to ensure they receive the right placements for them at right point and prevent placement breakdown and changes for them.
- **NI 63**  **Percentage of Children Looked After aged 16 and under who had been looked after for 2.5 years in the same placement.** Higher numbers indicate good performance as this is a measure of the stability of children's placements.

At the end of quarter 4 2017/18 there were 75% of LAC in the same placement, exceeding the target of 72%. In quarter 1 2018/19, this good performance has been sustained at 74%. Solihull is performing better than our statistical neighbours whose average is 69% and above the all England average of 70%.
- **ECS 02**  **Percentage of Child Protection cases allocated to a qualified social worker.** 100% of child protection cases were allocated to a qualified social worker in quarter 4 2017/18 and quarter 1 2018/19.

3.9 **Quarter 4 2017/18 and Quarter 1 2018/19 figures indicate performance is not meeting the target or performance concerns for the following measures:**

- **ECS 138**  **Percentage of social work assessments completed within the 45 day timescale.** This is a cumulative measure showing the proportion of all social work assessments completed within the 45 day timescale.


At the end of quarter 4 2017/18, 84% of all assessments were completed within the 45 day timescale. This is an increase in performance from 81% for the previous year. The improvement in performance is due to significant changes implemented to address the completion of assessments within timescale. This includes the signs of safety module being incorporated in the assessment framework and better management oversight in teams to improve turnaround of assessment.

At the end of quarter 1 2018/19, 79% of all assessments were completed within the 45 day timescale. The decline in performance for quarter 1 2018/19 was due to delays in managers signing off assessments due to capacity. This does not mean children were at risk as the social work enquiry had been completed and sent to a manager for authorisation within timescales. The assessments were not however authorised within


timescales as CAT managers needed to cover significant periods in MASH and staff sickness was also a factor.

These issues have been resolved and more robust management oversight has been implemented within the team. The social work assessment is also being refreshed to be more streamlined and easier to complete to ensure performance is improved and maintained.


3.10 **Quarter 4 2017/18 and Quarter 1 2018/19 performance measures for information purposes and monitoring trend for the following:**

- **NI 68**  **Percentage of referrals to children's social care going on to a Social Work assessment (S17) or S47** is measured cumulatively. This measure has an upper tolerance level of 75.2% and a lower tolerance level of 77%.

In quarter 4 2017/18 75% of referrals went on to a S17 or S47. Performance in quarter 1 was 61% and below the lower tolerance level of 77%. Of those referrals going to social work assessment, 65% were under section 17 assessments. The reduction in quarter 1 indicating referrals are appropriately screened and examined in the MASH setting and are receiving appropriate level of social work response. The reduction in referrals is also attributable to partner agencies managing families in their own service and utilising Early Help and Engage.


- **ECS 14a**  **Percentage of referrals that are repeat referrals within 12 months.** A lower percentage is good performance and indicates referrals are dealt with appropriately. Performance is measured cumulatively to benchmark with statistical neighbours and with the national average at the end of the year.

However, repeat referrals is also measured as a total in the quarter to ensure the service is able to review performance in the quarter in order to respond to any key issues that arise. In quarter 4 2017/18 performance was 21% and within the higher tolerance target. In quarter 1 2018/19 performance was 19% and within tolerance levels. Work is being undertaken by MASH to look at reasons for referral, to understand if the reason for the repeat referral is the same as the original referral or for a different reason. However, 0% would be a concern as it could indicate referrals are not being dealt with appropriately in relation to the application of thresholds.

- **NI 65a**  **Children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time.** This measures the percentage of children who have started a child protection plan within the last 12 months who have previously been on a child protection plan and have been made subject to a child protection plan again within 2 years of their original plan. Good performance is a lower percentage as this indicates that the quality of the original child protection plan for the child was appropriate. However, 0% would be a concern as it could indicate insufficient monitoring of plans. It is not possible to benchmark this measure as it is not measured nationally. The West Midlands average is 11%.

This measure is calculated as a rolling year and at the end of the financial year (Apr 17 – Mar 18) this indicator was below target at 19% against a target of 6%. This has improved slightly in the latest quarter (July 17 to June 18) to 18%. There are a number of sibling groups in this cohort who have protection plans and this does affect the performance. This performance indicator is based on a rolling 12 months so rate of

change is likely to be gradual.

- **ECS 133**  **Length of time on a child protection plan.** A lower percentage indicates good performance; however, some child protection plans will exceed 18 months due to the complexity of the case. Quarter 4 2017/18 and quarter 1 2018/19 figures show zero children were registered with a Child Protection Plan for over 18 months. This is within acceptable parameters and is reflective of proactive case management by the social work service and wider partnership group.
- **Outcomes for Care Leavers in suitable accommodation and in Education, Employment and Training (EET) (including 18 year olds).**

88% of all care leavers at end of quarter 1 2018/19 were in suitable accommodation compared to 85% in Quarter 4 2017/18.

Care leavers in Education, Employment and Training (EET) was 60% in quarter 4 2017/18 reducing to 46% in quarter 1 2018/19 and does not accurately reflect the actual numbers of young people in EET. This is due to the timeliness of recording of this information following care leaver visits. All outstanding information has now been updated and this will be reflected in quarter 2 performance.

The priority still remains to work with Solihull Housing in relation to a strategy to improve options for 16-25 year olds accommodation, work with partners and providers to develop EET offer, develop work experience and apprentice opportunities, communicating our 21+ offer to care leavers, including advice and support; data sharing with Home Office in relation to UASC care leavers who have all rights exhausted (ARE), and continue to record data accurately and ensure it is maintained up to date.

- **Welfare Return Interviews for Children Missing from Home or Care April 2017 – March 2018**

During April 2017 – March 2018 a total of 89 children were known to have been missing from home or care. Of those 89 children, 33 went missing from home, 40 missing from care and a further 16 had unauthorised absences from care. Some children go missing more than once and of those 89 children missing there was a total of 263 times (episodes) of when they were known to be missing.

When a child or a young person is missing from home or from care a welfare return interview (WRI) is undertaken by Children's Services. This is monitored at a local level to ensure these interviews are undertaken and completed within 72 hours of the child / young person returning. A WRI should be offered after each episode where a young person goes missing from care or home.

244 out of 263 episodes led to an offer of a WRI. This equated to 93% of WRI's being offered.

95 out of 263 episodes resulted in a WRI being completed (36%).

149 out of 263 episodes resulted in a WRI being offered and refused (57%).

12 WRI's (4.5%) were not required as they were not appropriate and the 7 (2.5%)

outstanding were followed up by the appropriate team.

- **Welfare Return Interviews for Children Missing from Home or Care 1st April 2018 – 30th June 2018 (Qtr1)**

During April 2018 – June 2018 a total of 35 children were known to have been missing from home or care. Of those 35 children, 13 went missing from home, 15 missing from care and a further 7 had unauthorised absences from care.

48 out of 57 episodes led to an offer of a WRI. This equated to 84% of WRI's being offered.

27 out of 57 episodes resulted in a WRI being completed (47%).

21 out of 57 episodes resulted in a WRI being offered and refused (37%). The 57 episodes related to 35 children.

4 WRI's (7%) were not required as they were not appropriate and the 5 (9%) outstanding are being followed up by the appropriate team.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

4.1 N/A

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

5.1 N/A

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 Delivery of the Council's priorities:

How will the options/proposals in this report contribute to the delivery of Council Priorities (*select which priority/priorities and also specify which key programme/s*):

Improve Health and Wellbeing -

Managed Growth -

Build Stronger Communities -

Deliver Value -

6.2 Implications for children and young people, vulnerable groups and particular communities:

Reporting on performance includes a range of children's services and considers potential impacts on children and young people, safeguarding and vulnerable children. Reviewing performance enables opportunities to identify any safeguarding concerns, key issues and risks relating to these groups as part of the council's role as a

corporate parent.

6.3 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.3.1 N/A

6.4 Financial implications:

6.4.1 N/A

6.5 Legal implications:

6.5.1 None identified for the purpose of this report.

6.6 Risk implications:

6.6.1 Reporting on performance within the Council's Performance Framework enables performance to be considered at all levels of the organisation from team level to Directorate and Corporate Leadership Team and Cabinet Member. This adds rigor to performance and as a result enables risks to be identified. Directorate risks are managed through Solihull Council's JCAD system and discussed at Directorate Leadership Team meetings together with performance reports. This report highlights areas of good performance and, where there are concerns, explains how those areas of concern / risk are being managed to ensure improvement. There are no specific additional risks identified as part of this report

6.7 Statutory Equality Duty:

6.7.1 N/A

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix 1 Q4 2017-18 & Q1 2018-19 Performance Report to Children, Education & Skills Cabinet

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 N/A

9. List of other relevant documents

9.1 N/A