

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Children's Select Committee**

**Date 19 June 2018**

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## **Performance & Outcomes for Families & Children's Services (Social Care)**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report gives an overview of the performance and outcomes of children's social care.

### **Background**

2. The Local Authority delivers children's social care in Wiltshire. The performance of the Local authority is inspected by Ofsted. The last inspection was in 2016 and was a Joint Targeted Inspection to examine how local partners, including local authorities, police, probation, and health services, work together to protect children living with domestic abuse. The outcome was positive, recognising many good aspects but JTAI's are not graded. In 2015 the Local Authority was inspected by Ofsted under the Single Inspection Framework which whilst finding a significant number of strengths declared the outcome to be "requiring improvement to be good".
3. Ofsted have revised their inspection framework for Local Authorities to Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) and Wiltshire is expecting to be inspected within the next 6 months and will receive a report with a formal judgment grading.
4. There are a number of statutory returns that the Local authority makes each year which result in the publication of a large amount of statistics which enable benchmarking against comparator areas and England averages.
5. A significant amount of reporting is completed during the year to keep performance under review. This includes information from audits, observations of practice, voice (parents/carers and childrens views), compliments/complaints and data.
6. Information below reviews performance during the 2017/18 year. Statistical neighbour (SN) and England (Eng) comparator figures quoted in this report are the latest available and relate to the financial year 2016/17.
7. On the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018 we had our annual conversation with Ofsted at which we shared our self-assessment for children's social care. This report is an abridged version of the self-assessment.
8. Our future plans are ambitious and wide ranging. We will continue to deliver incremental changes that are fully embedded prior to the next phase of transformation. This extends beyond the local authority and is truly multi-agency across education, health, voluntary sector, police and our own services. We have prioritised social mobility as the key corporate aim and this will be driven by Children,

Education and Skills in partnership with colleagues Council wide ensuring outcomes improve for families and children.

## **Main Considerations for the Council**

### **Data**

9. In October 2017, a new Safeguarding and Support Service was created which expanded the work of the previous social care safeguarding and assessment teams to include resources to support children and families just below the social care threshold - support cases. The number of support cases has risen as the service continues to develop and embed reaching 422 at the end of March 2018. These cases are either new referrals (via the MASH) or from social care as step-downs.
10. Children missing out of education/school are tracked and action taken where appropriate.
11. Children electively home educated by their parents are identified and monitored to ensure they have the best opportunities to achieve.
12. There has been a drop in the rate of referrals into social care which has continued from the end of last year and is being monitored as it below our target range for this year and below comparators. The overall rate (350/10,000) might be expected given the Wiltshire population profile of relatively low deprivation and there is some reassurance that it is appropriate given the re-referrals remains low. (SN 457, Eng 548)
13. Re-referral rates have remained stable and are currently just below 18%. This is low supporting our position that the quality of social work practice and step-down arrangements have improved. (SN 22%, Eng 22%)
14. Numbers of open social care cases remain relatively stable.
15. There has been a continued downward trend in the number of child in need (CIN) cases since 2015. This is the result of improved practice, SMARTer planning and reduced drift. There is quarterly audit of CIN cases over 9 months to regularly check progress.
16. Numbers of child protection plans (CPP) at the end of March was 360, within our target range. When reviewing against the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index, Wiltshire is in line with the national trend and slightly below the south-west line.
17. During the last year, 87% of assessments have been completed within 45 working days. We are extremely proud of the fact that we are the best performing local authority this year in the South West on this indicator (SN 80%, Eng 83%).
18. There has been significant improvement in timeliness of initial child protection conferences (ICPC) during the last year after a significant drop in performance during 2016/17. 90% have been completed within 15 days of the strategy discussion taking place(SN 73%, Eng 77%).
19. The proportion of children who are made subject to a child protection plan for a second time is a potential quality indicator. Last year 20% of children had second plans (SN 23%, Eng 19%). Sample audits are completed to look at the reasons and whether work could have been done to avoid this.

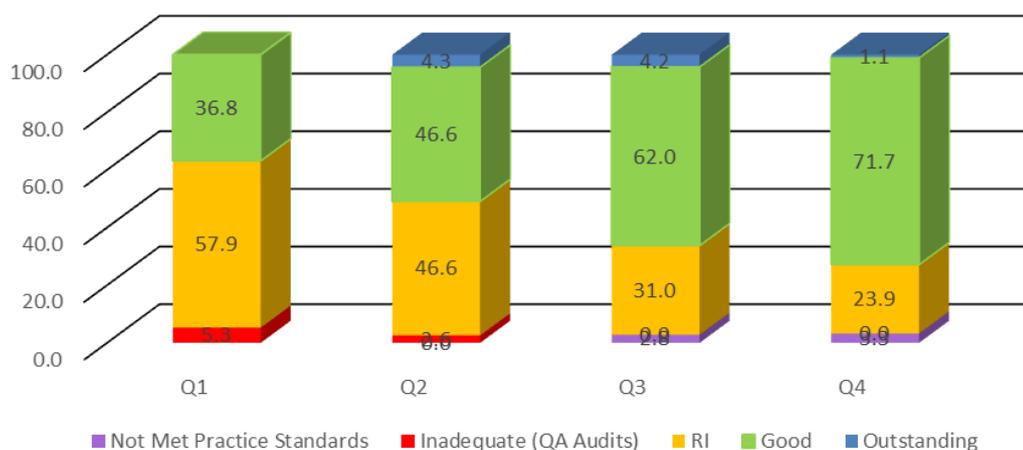
20. Visits to see children on child protection plans are closely monitored. We have a practice standard of at least 2 weekly visits which was measured in April at 89% compliance. There are no national comparator information and some local authorities work within a 4-weekly visit standard.
21. Children who are reported as missing are notified to us. There is an expectation that all of these children receive a return interview to understand the risks and issues faced whilst missing, reduce the risks of future episodes of missing or running away, and equip people with the resources and knowledge of how to stay safe if they do choose to run away again. Interviews were offered to 96% of children in 2017/18 and 43% were taken up.
22. The Emerald Team work with children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation. In March, there were 69 cases open. A risk of CSE tool is used across the partnership.
23. Children's services is well linked into the actions around County Lines work including:- Operational updates and Intelligence, Enforcement/Disruption, Investigations, Safeguarding of Exploited Children, Diversion/Early Intervention and Crime Prevention.
24. The number of looked after children (LAC) at the end of March was 444, this is within our target range. Numbers have been relatively stable; the more recent rise is linked to more unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) – 37 at end March 2018. Given Wiltshire's low levels of deprivation, we would expect the rate of LAC to be below the national average. Our rate of 44/10,000 is below England (62) and SN average (51).
25. The number of LAC who have had 3 or more placements during the year is 12% (SN 12%, Eng 10%). Our longer term placement stability which considers children who have been in care for 2.5yrs and in the same placement for the last two years is 77% (SN 68%, Eng 71%). These indicators remain a priority area and where long-term placements are identified as fragile a senior manager will convene a pre-disruption meeting . We also monitor the percentage of children that have been in care for more than 18-months whom are long-term matched. This has increased from 47% (Sept 2015) to 66% at the end of March.
26. Location of placements is monitored; 28% of children in care are placed out of county (SN 28%, Eng 36%) and 37% are placed more than 20 miles from home (SN 27%, Eng 19%). Sometimes a move away is beneficial but we would like more children to be placed nearer their home and within Wiltshire. We are working to increase our in-house foster carer capacity. There are 36% children placed with our foster carers and we had set a target to increase that to 45% which is proving difficult to achieve.
27. Initial health assessments are expected to be completed within 28 days of a child coming into care. Performance has been poor this year at 41% and we are working with Health partners to remedy this.
28. There are good numbers of children in the adoption system and 22 were adopted in the last year. Nationally 14% of children ceasing care are adopted, Wiltshire's percentages for the last 3 years have been 14%, 22% and 15%.

29. The local authority supports approximately 200 care leavers at any one time. This number will increase given the new statutory responsibilities to offer support up until age 25.
30. Having suitable accommodation and accessing education, employment and training (EET) are key indicators that are tracked for care leavers. Outcomes are mainly within targets but 19-21 year olds are below target for EET.
31. Delivery of good support to children and families is reliant on a good workforce which is enabled to work effectively through appropriate practice standards/tools, good skills and knowledge and reasonable caseload. A new CARE Framework has been introduced during the year to help workers to structure their risk analysis.
32. Social worker caseloads are monitored on a monthly basis and at the end of March averaged 26 in the support and safeguarding service and 20 in the child in care teams . Recruiting good, experienced social workers is a challenge nationally. As caseloads have been increasing we have recently taken the decision to use more agency staff to reduce pressure on our workers. This is a priority area.

## Audit

33. There is a lot of audit activity assessing how good our practice is and how good the outcomes are for children and families. Over 600 cases were audited during 2017/18 either through the quality assurance audit programme or via service deep dives into specific practice areas. In addition, teams will have been completing their own quality audits and individual workers practice is regularly reviewed in supervision with their manager. Any deficits found during audit are addressed appropriately within the individual case and learning is used across the whole service to improve practice.
34. The quarterly results reflect significant improvement and a consistent increase in number of cases judged as good. The small percentage of outstanding cases is to be expected as the bar is set very high but there is an increasing number of good cases. All audits with an overall judgement of inadequate or outstanding plus a random sample of audits judged as good and requires improvement are moderated after each audit. Practice standards are high in Wiltshire.

**Summary of quarterly audit results for 2017-18**



### 35. Learning from auditing has shown:-

#### Strengths:

- Positive outcomes for the child/young person & their family
- Child-focused practice, enhanced relationship and good direct work
- Child/young person experience & wellbeing
- Child-focused, person-centred and whole-family practice

#### Areas for Improvement

- Case records (timely update, better analysis, less descriptive/more, concise)
- Structured analysis of risk, its components, trajectory & evolution.
- Recognising and working with neglect.
- Further embedding of the CARE framework in practice and across services.

36. Particular improvement that can be seen compared to 2016/17 audit outcomes include timeliness and quality of child protection conferences, improvements in use of thresholds and quality of single assessments and timeliness and quality of independent reviewing officer support.

37. Practice observations are completed by a senior managers and team managers. These have shown positively – good team morale; social workers engaging effectively with families; Circles of Safety are being used with families; child protection conference chairs are confident when chairing complex family dynamics; and appropriate professional curiosity is seen at child protection conferences. In contrast – the CARE Framework is not yet consistently used in direct work; completing the child protection plan in the conference is increasing conference time and non-quorate conferences are not consistently escalated.

38. Specific case reviews are completed for both those that reach the “serious case review threshold” and some which are identified as having significant learning and are completed as local learning reviews (single or multi-agency). There have been no serious case reviews published in 2017/18. One has recently been published which has the following key learning points:

- Professionals can feel uncertain about how to respond to the risk from men who view online child sexual abuse images, and as a result this can leave children at continued risk of harm
- Professionals should be alert to uncritically accepting what parents tell them about their children in the mistaken belief that this is “working in partnership”. This can result in an inaccurate description of children’s needs and circumstances which are left unaddressed as a result.
- All professionals should feel confident to challenge decision making where they do not feel this is in the best interest of the child.

#### **Voice**

39. Information is gathered directly from children and young people and from parents/carers through a variety of routes and informs quality of support and learning. These all feed into a view of the service and improvement planning. Examples of findings:

Children and Young People - from “Your Voice” survey Nov 2017:

- I'm satisfied with the service I received (89%)
- They got involved at the right time (87%)
- I was told when a change would happen (84%)
- I got the help I needed (96%)
- I feel safe (93%)

Comments:

- "Spend more time with us at the start"
- "Come to see us to say goodbye and tell us who new social worker is"
- "Explain to me what is going on"

Parents and Carers:

Child Protection Conferences

- My views were listened to (95%)
- I felt respected (100%)
- I felt my child's view was respected (97%).

Adolescent Support Project –

- 73% Very Positive Difference + 9% Positive Difference = 82% Positive Feedback from Families.

Quotes –

"The arguments are less. My family is a unit & no longer broken. ASP made me see that I was the only person who could fix it."

"She made me see things through my child's eyes.... I don't think my family would be where they are now if it wasn't for her."

"The weekly visits and daily contact was excellent & really appreciated, both ASP workers were kind, respectful and supportive. "

**Complaints**

40. Examining the quarterly data for stage 1 and stage 2 complaints demonstrates a downward trend since the 2nd quarter of 2017-18. The comparative examination of the trend line for the stage 1 quarterly complaint data for 2017-18 demonstrate the relative consistency and stability of the adjudication process. The number of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints that were either partially or fully upheld and those that were not upheld in 2017-18 (77) is about 2/3 of the equivalent outcomes (111) in 2016-17. The small number of stage 2 complaints is partially due to the effectiveness of the stage 1 resolution and adjudication processes.

41. Complaint learning themes:

- Need to provide clear, appropriate and timely information sharing.
- Ensure practice standards/procedures are followed and if they are not provide rationale.
- Ensure decisions are followed through.

- Clear communication to ensure a shared understanding of the role of practitioners and services.

## **Compliments**

42. Compliments are collected (61) and these themes have been collated:

- Overall Good Service
- Good Decision Making
- Good & Timely Advice & Information
- Good Communication & Relationship
- Good Outcomes for Children & Family
- Positive Difference in lives of Children & Families

Quotes –

“XXXX is amazing!! She has always been available and works very hard to resolve any issues that arise”

“I am very pleased... to praise the excellent work XXXX has achieved with my son.”

“Thank you for helping me through tough times and being there when I needed you most”

## **Action from Learning**

43. A series of targeted training programmes have been commissioned to address areas of development. This includes specialist training for reflective supervision for all managers and supervisors.
44. Areas of continued challenge such as improvement in risk analysis, timely and more explicit recording of cases, completion of chronologies, and more reflective supervision have been brought to the attention of the Principal Social Worker for further attention.
45. The Structured Risk and Resilience Analysis toolkit should contribute to enhancement of risk analysis in assessments, planning and reports.
46. The NSPCC toolkit for neglect has been purchased and is being implemented across services. This will contribute to better identification and handling of neglect. Furthermore, Wiltshire Safeguarding Childrens Board is reviewing the classification of neglect to ensure a more accurate classification for neglect cases.

## **Safeguarding Considerations**

47. Childrens social care services main purpose is to safeguard children.

## **Public Health Implications**

48. Children’s social care services link directly with public health.

## **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

49. None

## **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

50. Children's Social Care Services delivery takes account of identity and diversity issues.

## **Risk Assessment**

51. Children's Social care services need to be good to effectively safeguard children in Wiltshire. Poor outcomes for children or a poor inspection report have significant reputational risks.

## **Financial Implications**

52. The outturn report for the 2017/18 financial year in Families and Children's Services showed an underspend against childrens social care services of £0.932million (due to vacancies and difficulties recruiting following the launch of the new service) and an overspend in of £1.6million for SEND services. Numbers of children with Education Care and Placement Plans in place (EHCP) have been rising and this has led to increased costs. As a result growth of £3.240million to support placement and transport for current and anticipated children has been added to the SEND service for 2018/19 financial year. It is anticipated that the service will now be able to operate within the increased financial envelope.

53. Pressure on the Council's resources continues and savings targets totalling £1.240million have been assigned to Families and Childrens Services for 2018/19. Through the FACT (Families & Childrens Transformation) work streams, there are RAG rated plans in place to deliver these however, it is a significant sum and plans will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain on schedule.

## **Legal Implications**

54. The service complies with statutory requirements and works to relevant legislation.

## **Conclusion**

55. In Wiltshire, we have continued to focus on our improvement as evidenced in the 2015 inspection which found services to be requiring improvement but also noted the progress we had made. Our improvements have been incremental and are fully embedded in the culture and practice of the organisation.

56. Our work is child and family focussed with a strong ethically based leadership that runs through the entire staff group. We were extremely proud with the outcome of the 2016 JTAI which confirmed that the quality of our services had continued to improve with many good outcomes for children and families. We believe this to remain the case today despite continued challenges and that our performance remains strong with clear evidence of improving outcomes. Our Families and Children Transformation Programme will continue to develop this work and improve the impact we have.

## **Proposal**

57. The committee is asked to note this report.

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4 June 2018

**Appendix – Data Set**

## Appendix – Data Set

Indicator	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 (provisional)	2017/18 Target	Eng avg	SN ( good +)	Performance Trajectory
% referrals within 12 months of a previous referral at end of period	19%	19%	18%	17-19%	22%	22% (25%)	
% single assessments completed by 45 days	80%	90%	87%	90-95%	83%	80% (80%)	
% Section 47s which recommended initial conferences	50%	48%	49%	48-52%	41%	44%	
% initial CP conferences within 15 days	64%	50%	90%	85%	78%	73% (82%)	
% conferenced that led to child protection plan	82%	90%	90%	10-13%	13%	13%	
% children subject of child protection plan within 2 years of last plan	8%	10%	12%	5-9%	na	na	
% children subject of child protection plan for second time	17%	18%	20%		19%	23%	
% CPP plans ended under 3 months	20%	26%	22%	15-20%	20%	18% (20%)	
% children who ceased child protection plan of over 2 years	3%	3%	3%	2-4%	3%	4% (5%)	
% RCPCs within timescales	94%	94%	92%	95%	92%	84%	
% CP visits on time against 2 weekly practice standard		74%	89%	90-95%	na	na	
% of Section 20 LAC	26%	30%	22%	20-25%	27%	34% (33%)	
% placed in foster care	73%	73%	77%	75%	74%	73% (72%)	
% LAC reviews on time	91%	92%	96%	95%	na	na	
% LAC participating in reviews	95%	97%	97%	95%	na	na	
% LAC placed more than 20 miles from home	33%	33%	37%	28-33%	22%	25% (32%)	
% LAC placed out of County	24%	26%	28%	23-27%	36%	27% (31%)	
% LAC with 3+ placements during the year	8%	10%	12%	9-12%	10%	11%	
% LAC for at least 2.5 yrs in same placement for at least 2 years	61%	64%	77%	68-72%	68%	71%	
% LAC statutory visits on time against practice standard		78%	89%	90%	na	na	
% pathway plans in place for 16-18 year olds	100%	100%	87%	95-100%	na	na	
% of current LAC should be placed for adoption	11%	12%	11%	10%	na	na	
Number of children adopted	22	33	22	26	-	-	
% of those leaving care who were adopted	13%	22%	15%	10%	14%	14% (13%)	

Indicator	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 (provisional)	2017/18 Target	Eng avg	SN ( good +)	Performance Trajectory
% adopted who were placed within 12 months of SHBA	96%	91%	86%	80-90%	na	na	
Avg time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days) A1 single year	378	445	326	400	na	na	
Avg time between a local authority receiving a court order to place a child and the local authority deciding to match an adoptive family A2 single year	138	224	132	121	na	na	
% of LAC who have been in care 18months+ who are not in long term arrangements		45%	34%	35-40%	na	na	
% Initial health assessments within 28 days	78%	72%	41%	85-90%	na	na	
% LAC had health check in last year	93%	97%		85-90%	90%	87% (90%)	
% LAC had dental check in last year	91%	99%		85-90%	84%	74% (86%)	
% LAC immunisations up to date	93%	98%			83%	n/a (97%)	
LAC average SDQ score and % of cohort	15.5 72%	14.1 55%	15.6 92%		14.0	14.9 (14.6)	
% LAC looked after for at least a year permanent exclusions	0	0	1	0	na	na	
LAC Key stg 2 RWM expected level (Ac Yr)	7%	11%			25%	27%	
LAC Key stg 4 attainment 8 (Ac Yr)	28%	25%			22%	23%	
% Care leavers 17-18 in EET	69%	68%	71%	60-70%	62%	57% (52%)	
% Care leavers 19-21 in EET	55%	46%	40%	50-60%	50%	47% (46%)	
% care leavers in appropriate accommodation 17-18yr olds	85%	98%	92%	85-90%	88%	81% (76%)	
% care leavers in appropriate accommodation 19-21yr olds	81%	83%	85%	85-90%	84%	80% (78%)	
Safeguarding social worker avg case load at end of period			26		na	na	
Agency social workers in safeguarding and children in care teams at end of period	20	13	5		na	na	