

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES & TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 8
10 NOVEMBER 2014	Public Report

Report of the Executive Director of Children’s Services

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DIRECTOR’S REPORT FOR SOCIAL CARE PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to continue to update the committee on sustained performance in Children’s Social Care.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the progress made to achieve an OfSTED rating of good/outstanding.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy identifies “Improving Health” and “Supporting Vulnerable People” as priorities. A quality Children’s Social Care service is key to delivering the right support for vulnerable children and families.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Following an Ofsted Inspection in August 2011, the Council has engaged in a programme to secure rapid improvement. This improvement will be driven by three key elements:

- Self Assessment document (for use with OfSTED)
- The Children’s Services Single Delivery Plan
- The Ofsted Action Plan which focuses effort on what we must prioritise
- The leadership of Members and officers in delivering the required changes

- 4.2 The Council’s progress is closely monitored by this Committee and the Internal Improvement Board.

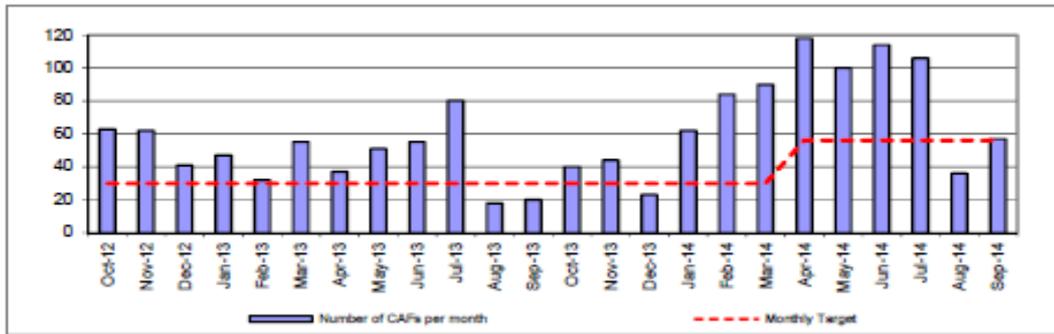
5. KEY ISSUES

5.1 Highlights (as of September 2014)

- Early help assessments at all-time high
- Thresholds applied appropriately in respect of referrals
- High number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan/Child Protection enquiries
- Agency rate increased – proposals for an Academy to CMT

5.2 CAFs (Early Help Assessments)

57 CAFs were completed with a rolling rate of 194.2. This has already exceeded the target by 31.3%.



5.3 Number of Contacts

928 contacts came into the service, of which 257 went on to referral. This is a conversion rate of 27.7% which is higher than last month. Year to date conversion is 25.2% which is similar to last year. There is no comparative local authority data either nationally or regionally.

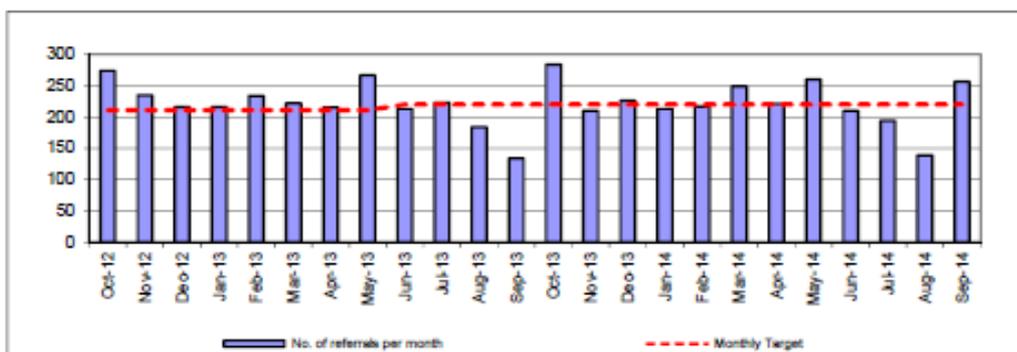
The content of the referrals is predominantly '101's from the police mainly concerning Domestic Violence which needs recording on our database.

Of the 724 contacts in August, 284 (39%) came from the police and, of these, just 22% progressed to referral. '101' notifications are generated by individual officers and PCSOs and cover a wide range of issues. Some are very detailed whilst others are not. There were 68 contacts from Housing in August. These were mostly notifications from Cross Keys that they were issuing a warning or eviction notice. This is an agreed process but we know that there was an administrative error in August which resulted in notifications occurring twice in some instances. This was addressed with Cross Keys and hasn't occurred since.

5.4 Number of Referrals and Re-referrals

There were 257 referrals in September, which is higher than the previous month of 139, partly due to the school holidays. . The rate of referrals at 595.6 is just 1% below target and favourably compares with our regional comparators – 634% and closer to the national average of 520.7 % in 2012-13. This means that we are effectively managing the front door workflow through from the contact centre.

This conversion rate is above target and higher than the national and regional rate at 77.9% and 74% respectively. This means that our conversion rate is spot on and thresholds being applied correctly.



There are nine cases which did not progress from referral to assessment. One case has a Liquidlogic issue and the manager is waiting for this to be rolled back. The other eight cases (two families of five children and three) are children who are subject to Child Protection plans in other local authority areas and a request has been received by Peterborough for an incoming Child Protection Case Conference. The process when a family move into Peterborough from another area and their children are subject to a Child Protection plan is that the requesting local authority retains case responsibility until the Child Protection case conference has taken place. This

request for a case conference generates a referral. Five of the above children have, until recently, been residing in Scotland and there has been a delay in transfer conference taking place due to uncertainty about the family remaining in this area. It has now been confirmed that they are securing a tenancy in Peterborough and the transfer process has commenced. Peterborough Children's Services have undertaken a number of safeguarding visits on Scotland's behalf in the interim period. The other three children are being managed by their current local authorities and these cases have been allocated to a social worker in Peterborough who will pick up full responsibility at the Child Protection conference.

The year to date re-referral rate at 19% is lower than at the same time last year (23.3%) and lower than our outturn position for last year which was 21.9%.

This rate compares very favourably with our statistical and national authorities at 24.3% and 29% respectively.

There were 49 re-referrals which relate to 33 families. In summary the majority of the re-referrals centre around domestic violence incidents, parents' mental health, parental drug and alcohol misuse, a lack of engagement in the CAF process and homelessness.

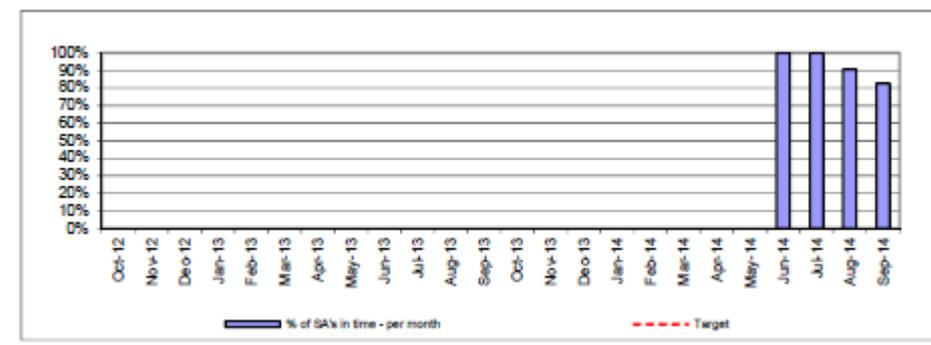
5.5 Initial and Core Assessments

There are no open initial and core assessments, having continued to their conclusion.

5.6

Single Assessments

There were 231 single assessments completed during September. 90.6% of single assessments completed up to the end of September have been completed in timescale.



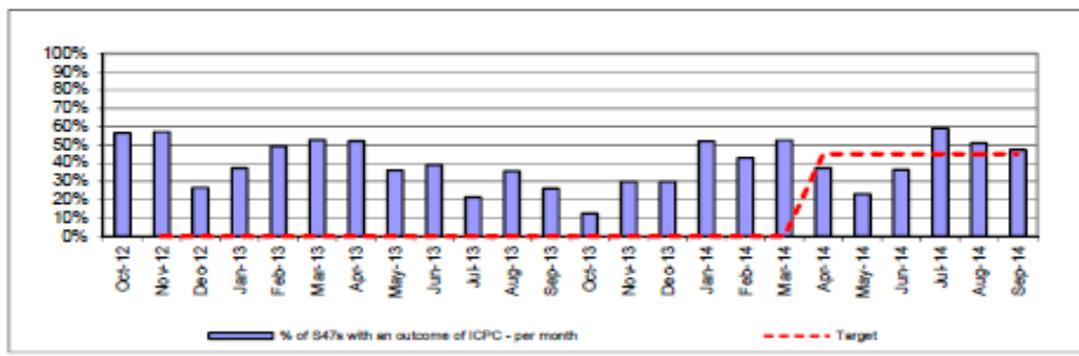
There were 40 Single Assessments that were not completed within time which relate to 25 families. Two of these assessments were not completed as the family had left the area and the case was transferred to the new local authority. Two children were not seen until The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) had undertaken their investigation and visited the family prior to any social work involvement. In all other cases a number of social work visits were completed and information gathered from agencies within timescale although the assessment was not completed on the system to evidence the work undertaken. As a result of this the assessment shows as out of timescale. The Head of Service is making it clear that a discussion between the Team Manager and Social Worker following the first visit needs to take place to ensure the assessment response is commensurate with the content of the referral and takes place within timescale.

5.7

Section 47 Enquiries

74 Child Protection enquiries were completed during September and 35 of them (47.3%) had the outcome of a Child Protection Conference. The year to date figure is higher than this time last year, but remains too high a conversion rate. The number of Child Protection enquiries is too high

denoting a protectionist, as opposed to a more supportive approach.



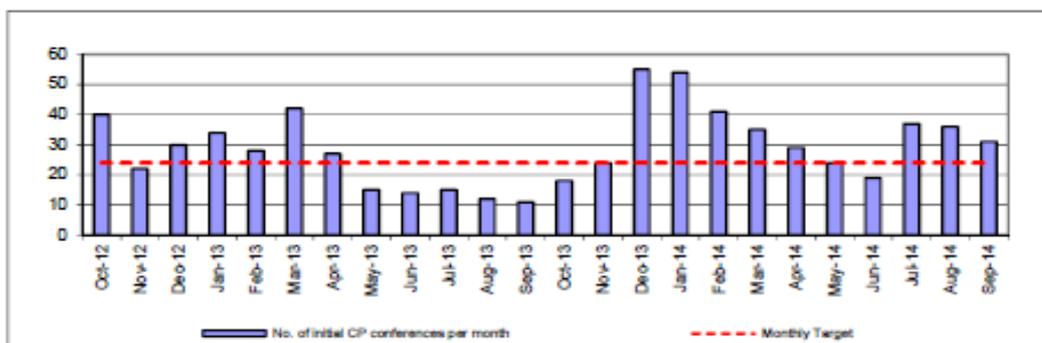
(April 2014, was the first time a target was set for conversion rates.)

Some dip sampling of these cases identified that there were 39 children (22 families) who were subject to S47 enquiries that did not proceed to Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) - 2 related to disclosures made by children who were already looked after children, 1 child became looked after as a result of the S47, 1 child did not reside within the Peterborough area. In 6 of the cases mother took appropriate action to ensure the children were safeguarded, 2 did ultimately proceed to ICPC. In 5 of the cases allegations were not substantiated and in the remaining 18 the child was not deemed to be at risk following the outcome of the S47. The S47 investigations were deemed as appropriate by the manager as meeting threshold. These cases will be audited by the DCS.

5.8

Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC)

The number of children having a Child Protection Conference remains too high and is 38.6% above target.

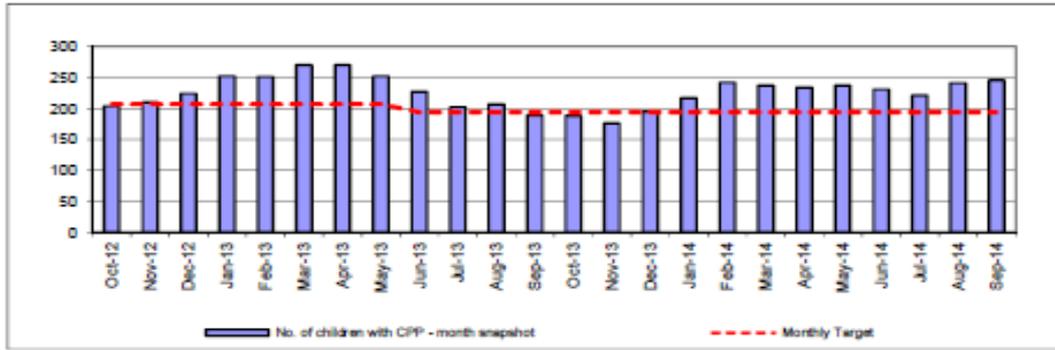


5.9

Number of Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

The number increased for a second consecutive month to 246 at the end of September. The rate per 10,000 at 54.7% is 26.8% higher than the target and over the rate of our statistical neighbours and the overall England result (43.1% and 37.9% respectively). The target translates to 194 children.

Similarly the rolling rate of children subject to a plan at 71.5 (per 10,000) is considerably higher than our statistical and national neighbours.



There were 39 children from 20 families who commenced Child Protection registration during the month of September.

5.10 Child Protection visits in timescale

91.8% of children with a Child Protection Plan received a statutory visit within timescale. This is an improvement on the low performance in the corresponding month last year (September 2013) of 83.8%.

We have reasons for all these cases where there has been delay. This is a mixture of children returning to their country of origin, unborn babies and data input error.

5.11 Number of Looked After Children

At the end of September, 379 children were looked after: a net increase of 3 since the last report.

The number of looked after children remains relatively high compared to previous years and is currently equivalent to a rate of 84.2% per 10,000. We have audited all children subject to Section 20 to see if there is any drift and are now checking out the findings. Early indicators are that few have drifted and plans are clear.



Placement Orders:

There are 75 children and young people with Placement Orders (as at 1st October). These are:

- 21 children placed for adoption
- 20 children have active family finding plans or linked with adopters
- 34 children need their Placement Order revoking

Additional resources and management support have been arranged to increase the speed of rescinding Placement Orders where the plan has moved away from adoption. The Head of Service will be tracking the progress of this work and supervising a social worker who will be brought in specifically to progress these cases through the Court. In addition, the adoption service

will progress six applications.

Good performance: Placement Stability

70.2 % of children aged under 16 who have had a placement for more than two years remains steady.

Review Timescales

From 1st April there have been no children who have a statutory Looked After Children review out of timescale.

Adoptions

There have been 15 adoptions which is equal to the number at the same time last year and this is good performance.

5.12

Update on MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)

The MASH will operate from two bases, one at Godmanchester in Cambridgeshire and the other from Bayard Place in Peterborough. There will not be a discrete new team at Peterborough, but as now, the core function and business of the MASH (primarily the conduct of Section 47 Strategy Discussions and Enquiries) will be met by the First Response teams. The key changes that are to come into effect in the near future that will significantly enhance the information sharing and decision-making processes will be the co-location and integration of other key partners.

Plans are in place to remodel the First Response teams at the front door of Children's Services to create a dedicated screening team by end of October 2014. This team will include the four Child Sexual Exploitation social workers and colleagues from partner agencies are planned to relocate from current locations within Bayard Place to this team on the 2nd floor of Bayard Place.

A CAF/Connecting Families coordinator has been recruited. Cambridgeshire Constabulary have two colleagues from their Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Persons team at Bayard Place to further strengthen and develop the relationship with our own CSE/Missing children resources, and Peterborough City Council Adults Service are also committed to joining the MASH.

Agreement in principle has been reached for Peterborough Women's Aid to locate a support worker at Bayard Place, which will contribute to Section 47 discussions, and also to aid the provision of early assistance to victims of Domestic Abuse at a lower level than might otherwise be picked up by other existing services. A funding bid has been placed with a decision expected in December 2014, although it is anticipated that a part-time resource will be available (3 half days) from early November.

Agreement has been reached for Children's Social Care and Health to jointly fund and recruit a new full-time Health Practitioner to sit within the First Response Dictated screening / MASH team at Bayard Place and a job description has been agreed with a recruitment plan to follow.

Stronger links too are being developed with colleagues in the Housing Department, Integrated Offender Management Service and other agencies such as drug and alcohol services, so that in addition to those co-located services, there is a network of single points of contact with other agencies and services that can be called upon, as required, to contribute to strategy discussions and risk management strategies.

The MASH Project Board continues to meet and has produced a development plan that pulls together, in one document, the different strands of activity that are currently underway. The Head of Service (First Response) is a vice-chair of the Board. The MASH operational management group also meets regularly and is focussed on developing practice and processes to improve consistency and outcomes. A First Response team manager is a member of this group.

The structure chart for Children's Social Care is attached as Appendix 1.

5.13

Update on CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation)

- Stephen Rimmer, Director General of the Home Office, visited Peterborough on 16th October to learn about the ways in which we have dealt with CSE. His feedback was very positive and full of praise for the CSE team.
- The work on CSE is being presented to the All Party Policy meeting on 23rd October and to the Eastern Region Children's Improvement Board on 17th November (as at the time of writing this report).
- The four dedicated CSE social workers are co-located as part of the screening/MASH team based in Bayard Place. As at 14th October, the team are working with 67 children.
- Recommendations from the Jay report have been taken into consideration and actions implemented.
- The work of the CSE team is being presented to All Party Policy at their meeting on 23rd October 2014.

5.14

- A lessons learnt document was presented by the police at the LSCB Partnership Gold Group (Operation Erle) meeting on 16th October 2014.

5.15 Workforce

This item is being covered by a separate report to Scrutiny Committee entitled Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers.

Raising Quality of Practice / Achieving Outstanding

- Focus on Children in Need – consultant working alongside social workers to close off children in need cases open for more than 6 months to reduce pressure on the front line
- 5.16
- Quality assuring legal documentation and working alongside social workers to ensure robust analysis of work
 - Measuring CSE activity against the Jay report recommendations
 - Focus on chronologies

Early Intervention Activity

An external audit of the Early Help Assessment and Team Around the Child processes was completed in September. This followed the same framework as an OfSTED inspection, concentrating on the journey and experience of the child or young person as they are supported by targeted early help services. The overall outcome of this audit was very positive, mostly identifying good practice with a number of outstanding features. The recommendations within the audit have now all been captured as part of an action plan, which is in the process of being implemented by the appropriate managers in the Communities and Children's Services directorates.

The council has successfully published a 'Local Offer' of services to children and young people and their families who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in line with our responsibilities under the Children and Families Act 2014. We have also developed procedures and templates relating to the assessment and delivery of Education, Health and Care plans and a policy covering Personal Budgets. Development of these reforms has been co-produced with parents throughout, with Family Voice playing a lead role.

There is still more to do. The Local Offer website will be redesigned in the coming months to make it more user friendly, while the implementation of policies around Education, Health and Care plans and Personal Budgets will require continued monitoring to ensure that systems are working well. Family Voice remain involved and are supporting us with this continuing work.

Until the last quarter, the local performance for breast-feeding continuation at 6-8 weeks in Peterborough has been consistently below target. Improving our performance in this area has therefore been the focus of concerted activity by all those involved, most notably, midwives and health visitors. Local performance is now above 47%, compared with a national target of 45%. This is a significant improvement on average performance in the preceding 12 months which was typically around or just below 40%.

The quality of our early years' settings continues to improve; the most recent data on child-inspected by OfSTED indicates that 77% are good or outstanding, which places us in the middle of our statistical neighbours. This is an improvement from previous local performance of 69% of child-minders achieving these results. This reflects the impact of a new focus on the provision of targeted advice and guidance being offered to all child minders achieving an inspection outcome less positive than good.

A similar programme of advice and targeted interventions has been provided to our non-domestic childcare settings, 83% of which are assessed as good or outstanding compared with a national average of 82%. The one inadequate setting was provided with an intensive period of support and challenge and has now achieved a 'Good' rating in its most recent inspection.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Sustained improvement.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Partner agencies, parents and children are well engaged in all the social care activity.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 This Committee will continue to receive a regular update on progress.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 9.1
- Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding: Peterborough 6th September 2011
 - Ofsted Unannounced Inspection of contact referral and assessment arrangements 3rd March 2011
 - Ofsted Safeguarding and Looked after Children Inspection: Peterborough 21st May 2010
 - Ofsted Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children: inspection report 8 March 2013

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix 1: Children's Social Care structure chart.