



**REPORT TO: MORAY INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD AUDIT, PERFORMANCE AND RISK COMMITTEE ON 29 FEBRUARY 2024**

**SUBJECT: QUARTER 3 (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2023) PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK AND JUSTICE SERVICES**

**BY: CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER/HEAD OF SERVICE**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

1.1 To inform the Committee on performance as at Quarter 3 (October to December 2023).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1 It is recommended Committee consider and note:**

- i) the performance of local indicators for Quarter 3 (October to December 2023) as presented in the Performance Report at APPENDIX 1; and**
- ii) the analysis of the local indicators that have been highlighted and actions being undertaken to address performance that is outside of acceptable target ranges as detailed in APPENDIX 1.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 The purpose of this report is to ensure the Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) fulfils its ongoing responsibility to ensure effective monitoring and reporting on the delivery of services.

3.2 **Appendix 1** identifies local indicators for the MIJB and the functions delegated by NHS Grampian and Moray Council to allow wider scrutiny by the Committee.

**4. SUMMARY**

4.1 Work is underway to develop a data dashboard to record local and national data, together with refreshing our performance indicators.

4.2 **Appendix 1** provides a summary and the historical trends. A summary of performance for each of the reporting categories is provided below.

- Social Work team caseloads
  - Referrals into the service
  - Social Work team activity
- 4.3 During the pandemic, thresholds were removed which resulted in high requests for support. The service has been working to re-establish thresholds following the Covid pandemic and this is evidenced by the case numbers becoming more regular.
- 4.4 Referrals directly from the Police are recorded on a Vulnerable Person Database (VPD) following attendance at an incident when they wish to raise a concern about children at risk of harm. A VPD records a reference number related to an incident which may relate to more than one child. Numbers had reduced in previous quarters in 2023 but are now steadily increasing.
- 4.5 At the end of this Quarter 3, 71 children were registered on the North East Child Protection Register (CPR) at a rate of 3.9 per 1,000 of 0-17 population. At the end of March 2023, 5 children were registered for neglect concerns. By the end of Quarter 3 this had increased to 22, a 450% increase (some were family groups). The rising number of Child Protection registrations has been recognised and has been referred to the multi-agency partnership for further investigation and analysis.
- 4.6 At the end of Quarter 3, there were 424 young people open to Justice services of whom 28 are care experienced young people (CEYP) (6.6% of open cases are CEYP).
- 4.7 The number of CEYP in both Justice Service and Youth Justice has been on a reducing trend from 13% at the end of March 2021. At the end of Quarter 3, 44 of 465 (9.5%) were care experienced children within the justice systems (Youth Justice = 16, Justice Social Work = 28). This has consistently remained below 12% throughout 2023/24. Work continues to identify and support care experienced young people within the services, in order to offer early interventions where possible and reduce the risk of re-offending.
- 4.8 The Justice Social Work service continues to submit all reports to Courts by their due date. This includes requests from our local Court and nationally.
- 4.9 At the end of Quarter 3, the number of looked after children was 10.1 per 1,000 of 0-17 population. This is lower than the national average (12.3) based on the most recent comparator statistics which date from 2021-22. It must be borne in mind that the target will have changed for 2022-23 and the service awaits release of this by the Scottish Government In May 2024.
- 4.10 Statistically it is difficult to ascertain how other authorities record their numbers as the level of detail is not readily available. While nationally significant, the numbers of looked after children are comparatively small which can provide significant percentage variance. An example of this is that in Moray, all Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) and Short-term respite breaks are included within our Looked After numbers. The service is aware not all comparator authorities do this and are currently undertaking an exercise to consider what our comparator authorities record.

- 4.11 There is a Carer Recruitment Campaign in place which has a focus on the recruitment of foster carers and supported lodgings carers. This has resulted in an increase in the number of approvals of carers. As a result of this, there has been an improved ability to place children and young people with in-house foster carers. This has reduced the need to purchase agency foster care placements. The Carer Recruitment Campaign is ongoing where it is anticipated that the use of in-house carers will continue to increase.
- 4.12 The target for this indicator is adjusted annually to the median of comparator authorities (25.1% 2021/22). 26% of looked after children in Moray are in approved Kinship care with family members.
- 4.13 There has also been the introduction of Recommended Allowances for Kinship and Foster Carers which will improve the financial position for Kinship Care Placements.
- 4.14 The target for this indicator is adjusted annually to the median of comparator authorities (17.5% 2021/22). 17% of our looked after children are cared for within residential accommodation. One young person was placed in an Out of Area placement during Quarter 3 and none returned to Moray. Over the course of 2023/24, to date three young people have been accommodated in an Out of Area placement (2 in Q1 and 1 in Q3) and three have returned to Moray (2 in Q1 and 1 in Q2).
- 4.15 The Placement Oversight Meeting continues to monitor Out of Area placements with a focus on returning children and young people to Moray. This is supported by the work of the Carer Recruitment Campaign which is increasing the number of in-house fosters carers and supported lodgings carers.
- 4.16 For Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, Moray has not adopted the model used by other local authorities of using residential homes. Its model comprises local authority housing and supported lodgings placements. As such, the uncertainty regarding the future numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children should not have an impact upon residential placements for Moray.
- 4.17 Job descriptions and team structures within local authorities in Scotland differ. This makes it difficult to compare team complements on a like for like basis by description of post. The service is currently working to clarify what our comparator authorities record.
- 4.18 The quality assurance and commissioning functions are now significantly more robust and will continue to strengthen as the team develops with a number of key achievements highlighted in the **Appendix**.

## **5. KEY MATTERS RELEVANT TO RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 Detailed charts and indicator data is attached in **Appendix 1**.

## **6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Moray Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan “Partners in Care 2022 – 2032”**

This report notes that an improvement plan is currently being developed in respect of the inspection findings that will align with key priority areas across the Childrens Services partnership.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

None arising as a direct result of this report.

**(c) Financial implications**

None arising as a direct result of this report.

**(d) Risk Implications and Mitigation**

None arising as a direct result of this report.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no proposed changes to the staffing or reporting relationships.

**(f) Property**

None arising as a direct result of this report.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

None arising as a direct result of this report.

**(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

None arising as a direct result of this report.

**(i) Directions**

None arising as a direct result of this report.

**(j) Consultations**

MIJB Senior Management Team

**7. CONCLUSION**

**7.1 This report provides the Committee with an overview of the performance of specified local and National indicators.**

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Background Papers: Appendix 1