



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2023**

BY: CHIEF OFFICER, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE MORAY

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 31 March 2023.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Committee in terms of section III (D) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration in relation to the functions of the Council as a Social Work Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- i) scrutinises and notes performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of March 2023; and**
- ii) notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

3. BACKGROUND

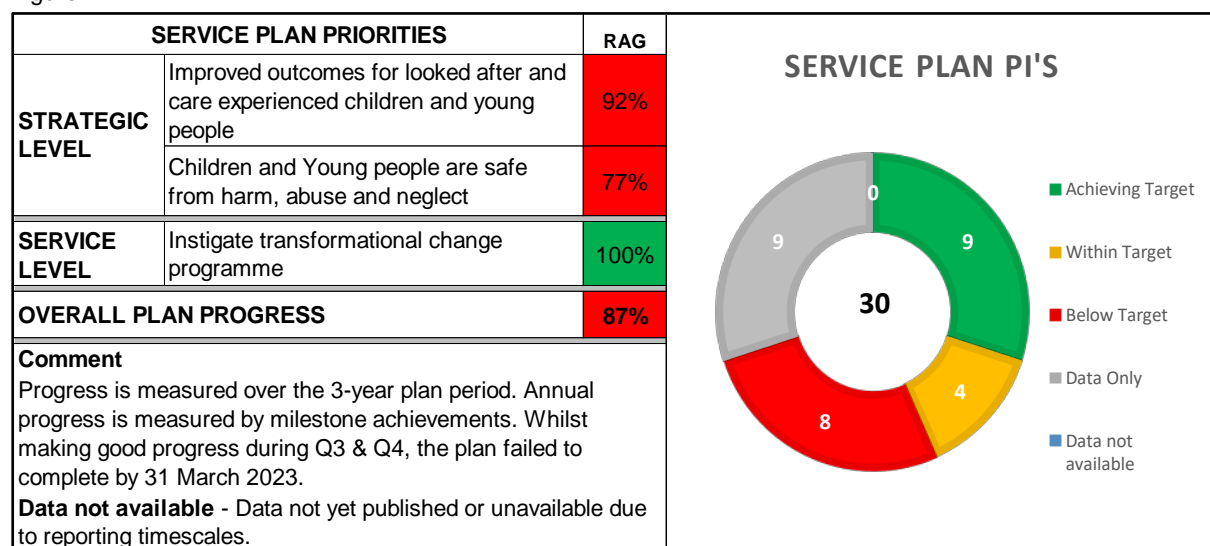
- 3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Council, approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

4. SERVICE PLANNING

- 4.1 Each service plan sets out the planned strategic and service level priorities and outcomes it intends to deliver in the coming year aligning closely with financial planning, corporate and community planning partnership strategic priorities. This report provides a final update on progress on the service plan, key outcomes and performance indicators. Committee is invited to review progress to secure assurance that is satisfactory and to provide scrutiny and further direction where performance requires attention.

- 4.2 The narrative included is by exception, however links to backing tables for all Service Plan Actions and Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.

Figure 1



Strategic Outcomes – successes

- 4.3 As at 31 March 2023 there were 171 Looked after Children (LAC) in Moray, a rate of 9.5 per 1,000 population aged 0-17 years, continuing to remain below that of the comparator authority median of 10.5. (PI's CSCF100, LAC003)
- 4.4 At the plan end date of 31 March 2023, six of the eight Strategic actions have completed, five during quarter 4 as detailed below.
- 4.5 All milestones to monitor movement in placements before permanence is achieved have completed as planned. Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) monthly meetings continue in tandem with tracking and oversight meetings. These provide a level of scrutiny to the process matching young people to the most appropriate placement reducing the need for placement moves. There has been a sustained year on year decrease in the percentage of Looked after Children with more than one placement in the last year to 14.9% in 2020/21, ranking 6 against all other local authorities. Maintaining and expanding foster carers is crucial to maintain service stability. A recruitment strategy and marketing plan is moving forward at pace to increase the number of varied placement options. (Action STRAT1.2, PI CHN23)
- 4.6 There continues to be positive feedback from children and young people about feeling secure and supported within kinship care placements which has been consistently reflected within social work reporting throughout the course of 2022/23. The Champion's Board is becoming well embedded in practice with young people being involved in recruitment, tendering processes and with better representation on strategic groups. Moving forward the Champions Board will be supported by the newly recruited Engagement officer. (Action STRAT 1.3)

- 4.7 In the quarter to March 2023, 9.2% of care experienced young people were in the youth and criminal justice systems, contributing to a year on year decrease well below the accepted target level of 15%. With all planned milestones complete, effective processes are in place to identify CEYP and refer appropriately to prevent duplication of work and overwhelming the individual with multiple contacts. Reviews take place at regular intervals to ensure the young person's voice is heard and exit questionnaires completed to inform future practice and a partner agency Youth Justice Sub-group meets regularly to analyse data to inform future action required to further reduce the representation of CEYP within Youth Justice System. (Action STRAT 1.5, PI LAC014)
- 4.8 The continued proportionate reduction of children on the Child Protection Register (CPR) due to neglect concerns marked completion of the final milestone. The number of Children on the CPR, whilst remaining static during the first three quarters of 2022/23, dropped significantly in quarter 4 from 40 to 23. The reduction of those registered for neglect concerns dropped from 11 to 5. The implementation of the 'Graded Care Profile 2' is well underway with 'Train the Trainer' dates scheduled to take place in the later part of 2023 allowing for the full roll-out of training to partnership staff. The cost-of-living crisis remains as the largest contributory factor impacting upon neglect. Social work staff are working with families to differentiate between poverty and neglect to establish which presents as the main factor. (Action STRAT 2.1, PI CMS021c1)
- 4.9 The proportion of children on the CPR due to parental alcohol and/or drug concerns, has reduced during 2022/23. A whole system approach to intensive family support for children and young people impacted by drug and alcohol use is actively developing and a pilot project underway is a key priority within the Children's Services Plan 2023/26. Work with families continues to focus on supporting parents to reduce their use and help them to recognise the impact of their use on their children. (Action STRAT 2.2, PIs CMS021g1 & CMS021h1)

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.10 Actions to support the increase of children and young people looked after in kinship and foster care and care at home have not completed within the original due date of 31 March 2023. Progress will continue into 2023/24, a Business Plan has been completed as part of the review and a marketing plan is in place setting out a campaign schedule for the coming year. In addition to continued awareness raising, a targeted approach within the caring profession has been added. A panel to consider all children at risk of becoming accommodated away from their parents and assess families for functional family therapy, a new service to support families stay together and connected is being formed. The working group continue to meet regularly to monitor progress. Numbers of children in foster care and kinship care have remained relatively stable, the percentage under home supervision and in kinship care fell short of target. Perhaps due to a reduction in fostering capacity, the proportion of brothers and sisters remaining together within the same placement fell for the third consecutive year to 69%. As of March 2023, 82% of Looked after Children were cared for in a community setting, below the target of 87.5% and the proportion in residential accommodation continues to remain stubbornly high at 18% showing little change over the last four years.

The service faces the ongoing challenge of receiving high numbers of referrals exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. (Action STRAT1.1, PI's CSCF101, EdS601.01, Eds606.02, Eds606.03, EdS606.09, LAC009, LAC010, LAC013, CSCF102, CSCF104).

- 4.11 Domestic abuse concerns for children registered on the CPR have increased in the second half of 2022/23 to 47.8%, significantly higher than the target (16.9%) set pre-pandemic. High levels of domestic abuse are a legacy of the COVID pandemic which saw numbers rise steeply across the UK. The Social Work Department continue to work on implementing the Safe and Together Model into practice to assess risk when children are living in environments where gender-based violence is a risk. Core sessions of training were delivered to 75 staff across the partnership in November and February, it is anticipated these numbers will increase to around 190. (Action STRAT 2.3, PI CMS021f1).

Service Level Outcomes - successes

- 4.12 Actions contributing to the transformational change programme 'Our children return to Moray' have completed as planned. During 2022/23 only one child was placed 'out of area' with three returning to Moray. The Placement Oversight Group continues to meet monthly to track children who are in interim, emergency, out of area and agency placements. Contract monitoring templates are in place with service providers allowing effective scrutiny of service delivery along with information gathering documentation to record and monitor comments, complaints, incidents and restraints. (Action SERV1.4, PI's LAC004, LAC005)

Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

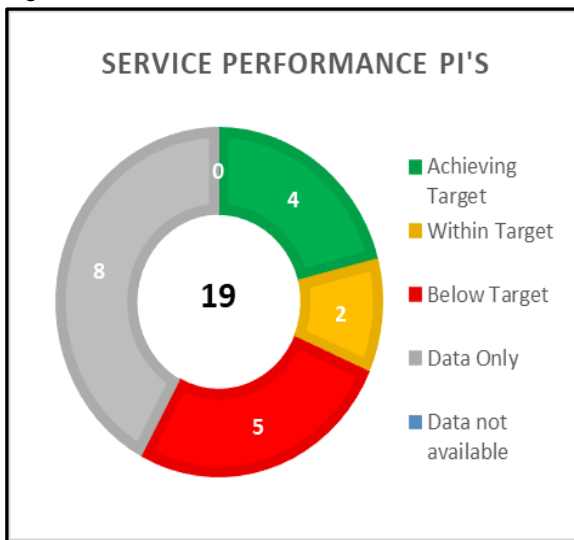
- 4.13 Nothing to report.

5. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, operational performance is reviewed quarterly by departmental management. Areas performing well and/or areas subject to a decreasing trend or where benchmarking results show performance significantly below comparators will be reported to this committee for member scrutiny.
- 5.2 The finalised publication of 2021/22 Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators are not expected until late May 2023. Where indicators for 2021-22 have been published for this service, they have been incorporated within the relevant sections of this report. The results can be used to evidence progress against strategic, service plan or service performance priorities. LGBF indicators for Children and Families & Criminal Justice Social Work are identifiable with the CHN prefix.

5.3 The narrative included is by exception, links to Service Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.

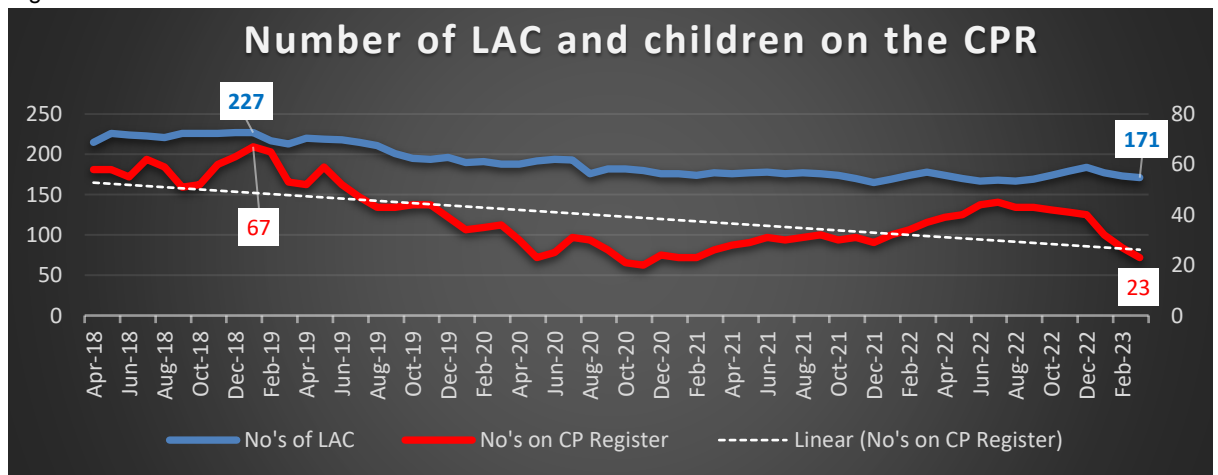
Figure 2



Operational Indicators - successes

5.4 Figure 3 below shows numbers of LAC and children on the CPR are on a reducing trend. (PI's CSCF100, CMS013)

Figure 3



5.5 As at March 2023, 4% of LAC were in foster care placements paid for by Moray Council, an improvement on previous year's performance of 6%. (PI LAC007)

5.6 One young person was placed in a secure placement during quarter 4, the proportion (0.6%) however remains below target (1%). (PI 606.08)

5.7 Children subject to compulsory measures of supervision per 1,000 of 0-17 population has reduced further during 2022/23 and at 6.65 remains significantly lower than target of 10. (PI CSCF013)

- 5.8 The number of children on the CPR, remained relatively static around 40 in the first three quarters of 2022/23, but dropped significantly to 23 in quarter 4, below 37 reported in the same period last year. (PI CMS013)
- 5.9 The number of Criminal Justice reports submitted to court by the due date continues to remain at 100%. (PI CJ01)

Operational Indicators - challenges and actions to support

- 5.10 Although lower than 2021/22 result, the proportion of LAC in paid placements (72.8%) remains above the 65% target which has not been achieved for a number of years. Until the proportion of children accommodated in residential placements reduces it is unlikely that the comparator authority median target will be met. (PI LAC006)
- 5.11 In the 2022/23 reporting period, on average 89% of initial case conferences were held within planned timescales, below the 100% target. As with last year, the second half of 2022/23 accounted for one third of case conferences, with just two held slightly outwith target timescales. (PI CMS001a)
- 5.12 In quarter 4, two of the fifteen review case conferences were held out with target timescales of 28 days with an average result of 45 days. Throughout 2022/23, in the few review case conferences being held late the majority were held within one week of target. The three-year trend does show time taken to hold late conferences is increasing and the service will closely monitor in order to improve performance. (PI CMS002e)
- 5.13 In the quarter to March, 82% of practitioners from relevant agencies invited to attend case conferences did so, just below the 100% target. Similarly to the fall in the number of case conferences held, attendance has dropped in the second half of the year, particularly in relation to housing and support worker representatives, perhaps reflective of the competing pressures within those services. Social work attendance has been maintained at 100% during 2022/23. (PI CMS004)
- 5.14 As of 31 March 43.5% of children on the CPR had been registered for more than 12 months, significantly higher than the target (15%). With a significant drop in the number registered to 23, it is perhaps indicative of case complexity to ensure children are safe to be removed from the register. (PI CMS017f)

6. OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA

Complaints and MP/MSP Enquiries

- 6.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, complaints are reviewed quarterly by departmental management in terms of time taken to respond, outcome and learning points. Detailed tables can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.
- 6.2 A total of 19 complaints were received during the second half of 2022/23 and 15 complaints closed. Of those, 12 were at frontline stage (63%), four were not upheld and the remaining eight were closed via resolution. Six (50%) frontline complaints were closed within the 5-day timescale, with an average closure time for all frontline complaints of 8 days.

- 6.3 Two investigative complaints were closed in the same period, both of which were not upheld and closed just outwith the 20-day timescale.
- 6.4 One escalated complaint was closed in quarters 3 & 4. This complaint was upheld and responded to within nine days.
- 6.5 A total of 6 MSP enquiries were received in the period between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023, four were resolved. The remaining two were out with the jurisdiction of the Councils decision making ability

Other Performance (not included within Service Plan)

- 6.6 Nothing to report.

Case Studies

- 6.7 Nothing to report.

Consultation and Engagement

- 6.8 Nothing to report.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Performance measurement is used to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of services to meet the Council's priorities in both the Corporate Plan and the LOIP.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council has a statutory requirement to publish a range of information that will demonstrate that it is securing best value and assist in comparing performance both over time and between authorities where appropriate.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform the Committee on performance.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None

(i) Consultations

Head Service (Chief Social Work Officer), Chief Officer (Health and Social Care Moray), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Service Managers, Legal Services, the Equal Opportunities Officer and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 The period to 31 March 2023 represents the end of the three-year service plan, with 87% of Service Plan Actions completed. Two Strategic Actions did not complete within target timescales and will be carried forward to 2023/24. All Service Level Actions were completed as planned.

Author of Report: Iain Sneddon, Research & Information Officer
Background Papers: [Service Plan Actions](#)
[Performance Indicators](#)
[Service Performance Indicators](#)
[Service Complaints](#)
Ref: SPMAN-305227695-89