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**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON 8 JUNE 2022**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2022**

**BY: CHIEF OFFICER, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 31 March 2022.

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 2022; and**
- ii) **notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

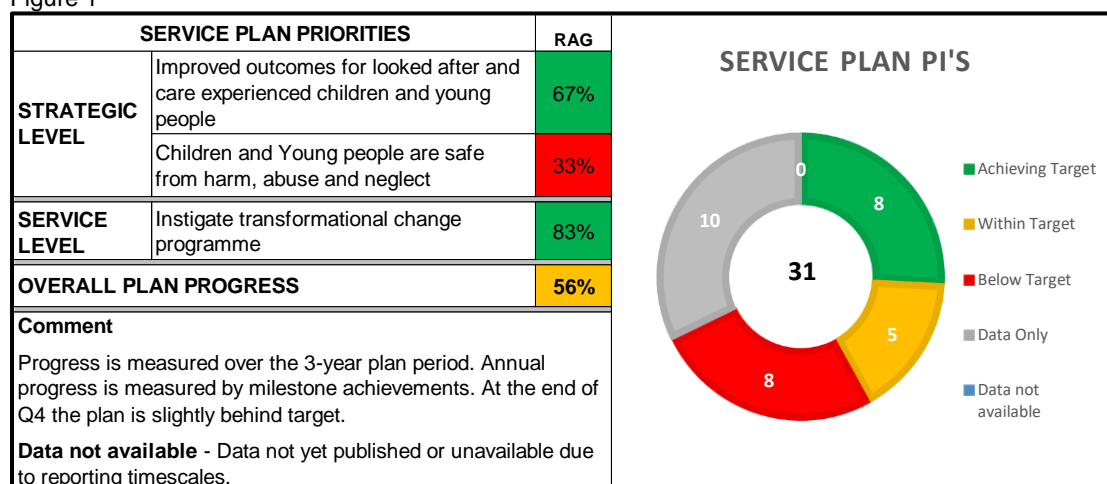
3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Council, approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

**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 an interim 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, links to 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 2022 there were 178 Looked after Children (LAC) in Moray at a rate of 9.8 per 1,000, continuing to remain below that of the comparator authority median of 11. The proportion of LAC accommodated in Moray Council Foster Care placements is achieving target and the proportion of LAC in residential placements outwith Moray has remained below the target throughout the course of 2021/22. In addition, the number of fostering households have increased by two during 2021/22. Work to promote and market fostering services to recruit carers has accelerated during the past year, with a greater web and social media presence being used as key platforms of recruitment. (Action STRAT1.1, PI's CSCF100, LAC003, Eds606.03, CSCF104).

- 4.4 Disrupted by the COVID pandemic the Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) working group was re-established during quarter 4 and is working to addressing the barriers to effective permanence planning. With the courts service remaining as mainly a remote service new ways of working have been adopted to ensure permanence orders can be progressed efficiently. The LGBF performance indicator measuring the proportion of LAC with more than one placement in the last year has reduced significantly. Moray has improved from 29/32 to 6/32 within Scottish local authorities and from 7/8 to 1/8 in the comparator authority group, where 1 has the lowest rate. (Action STRAT1.2, PI CHN23)

### Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.5 Two LGBF indicators measuring the cost of provision for both community and residential placements per week reduced in 2020/21, neither however have achieved target. There has been significant improvement in ranking for residential costs from 29/32 in 2019/20 to 21/32 in 2020/21. In many cases residential placements are specialist for which Moray has no provision, for these placements children are accommodated in other local authority areas incurring higher direct and associated costs. Community placement cost rankings have remained fairly static and Moray remains in the bottom quartile

of Scottish local authorities. Figures 2 & 3 show that gross annual costs have reduced in recent years, this in part is due to improvements in the proportion of children accommodated in community-based placements and an overall reduction in the number of children looked after. (Action STRAT1.1, PI's CHN8a, CHN8b, CHN9, EdS606.1, EdS606.9, CSCF102).

Figure 2

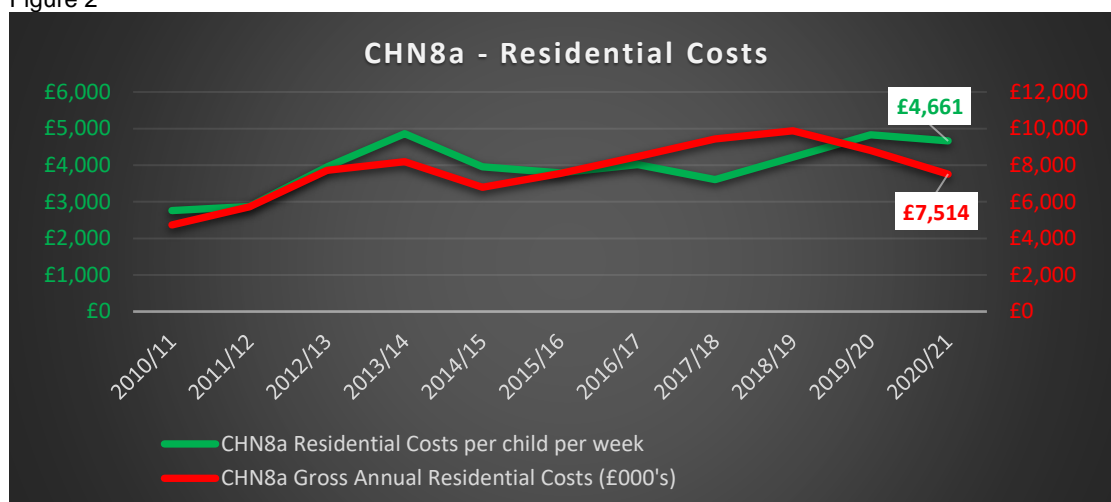
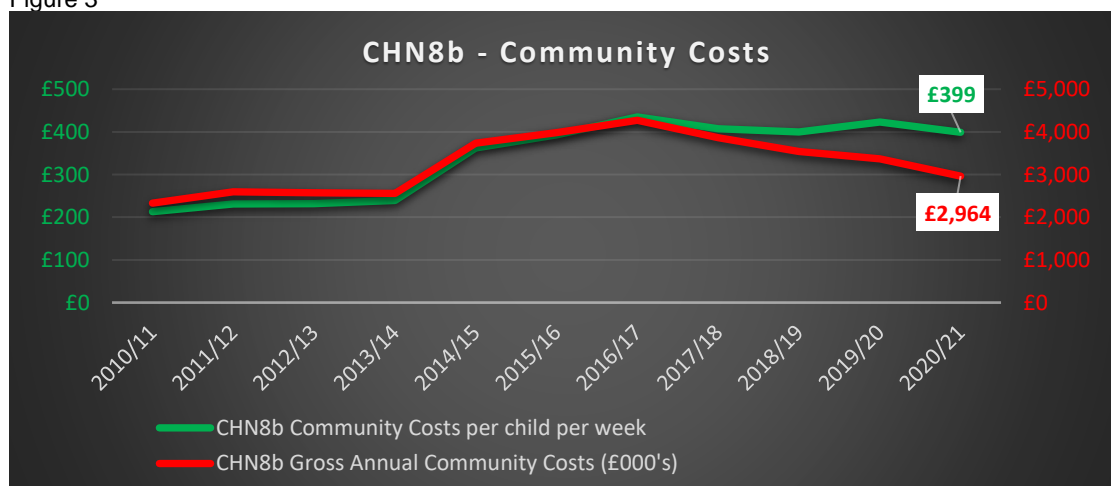


Figure 3



- 4.6 Neglect concerns feature highly for children currently on the Child Protection Register (CPR). Whilst the proportion has reduced during the second half of 2021/22 neglect concerns are recorded in more than a third of all children on the CPR and the target of 24.8% has not been achieved since quarter 1. The implementation plan for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) Graded Care Profile is in progress and will outline 20 staff being trained as trainers for the model, with the training being rolled out during 2022/23. Plans are in place to hold workshops during the coming year which will highlight the issue of the neglect and its link with child protection. Child protection training was delivered during the second half of 2021/22, feedback from the staff was positive, after a period of consolidation for participants' evaluation of learning outcomes will be carried out. (Action STRAT2.1, PI CMS021c1).
- 4.7 Domestic abuse concerns for children registered on the CPR have risen steeply and consistently over the course of 2021/22. At the end of quarter 4

2020/21 27% of children registered had this concern registered, at the end of quarter 4 2021/22 it has risen to almost 68%. The rise in incidences of domestic abuse during COVID-19 lockdown periods is likely to be a contributory driver in the increases witnessed in child protection cases. As part of the process to become accredited “Safe and Together” trainers, social work practitioners are preparing to deliver the first training sessions to the senior social workers in the team. This will be an important shift in culture, skills and knowledge around the impact of domestic violence. (Action STRAT 2.3, PI CMS021f1).

- 4.8 The action to minimise the impact of parental substance use has made mixed progress. The proportion of children on the CPR as a result of parental alcohol misuse has consistently reduced throughout the course of the past year, those registered due to parental drug misuse however has fluctuated but ended the year 13% higher than recorded at the start of the year. Both indicators used to monitor progress regarding alcohol and drug misuse concerns did not achieve target at the end of 2021/22. Partnership working continues around parental drug and alcohol misuse including a bespoke Quality Improvement (QI) project that is being supported by the Scottish Government QI team. This multi-agency project will support families of children on the CPR due to parental substance misuse. (Action STRAT2.2, PI’s CMS021g1 & CMS021h1).

#### **Service Level Outcomes - successes**

- 4.9 The reinvestment of savings to transform the children’s social work model of practice was approved by the Education, Children’s and Leisure Services committee on 26 January 2022 (para 10 of the minute refers). The service model was introduced to staff during development days to gain feedback. The service will now move forward in developing a social work innovation site and introduce the “3 conversation” model as the new practice model. The test of change family feedback process took place in quarter 4, the learning experienced from the process will allow the programme to be rolled out across the service. This Action has completed within the agreed timescale. (Action SERV1.2)

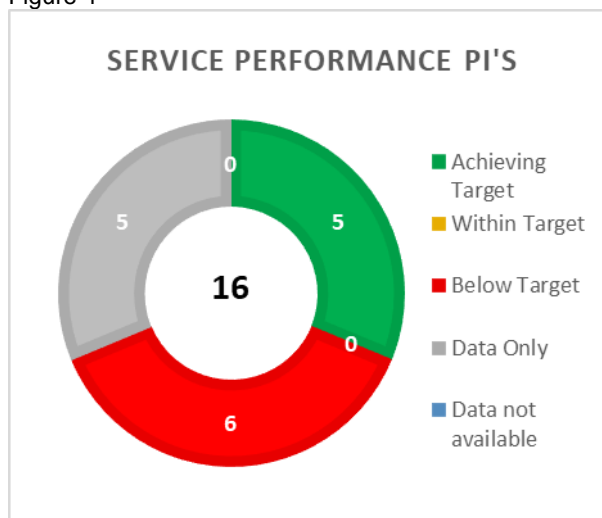
#### **Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support**

- 4.10 Changes to the commissioning model have been made, but the end goal has not yet been reached. The recruitment of a service manager to progress the new commissioning model is in the final stages with an anticipated start date during quarter 1 2022/23. This pivotal role will drive commissioning, quality assurance systems, policy development and the implementation of a robust framework to help develop a better range of services to meet the needs of children, young people and their families. The implementation of new commissioned services are on track to be completed during 2022/23. Approval has been given at committee and these services are currently within the procurement stage, prior to implementation. During quarter 4 the appointment of an Interim Senior Commissioning Officer has allowed a number of contracts and tenders to be reviewed and progressed through the Additional Resource and Allocation Group (ARAG). It is anticipated that the quality assurance and commissioning functions within Children & Families & Criminal Justice will be significantly more robust as a result. (Action SERV 1.3).

## 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 Initial publication of 2020-21 Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Indicators in February 2022 will be refreshed in early June. The full suite can be viewed within the Background Papers section of this report. Published indicators for this service have been incorporated within the relevant section of this report depending on whether results are used to evidence progress against strategic, service plan or service performance priorities. LGBF indicators for Children's 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 4



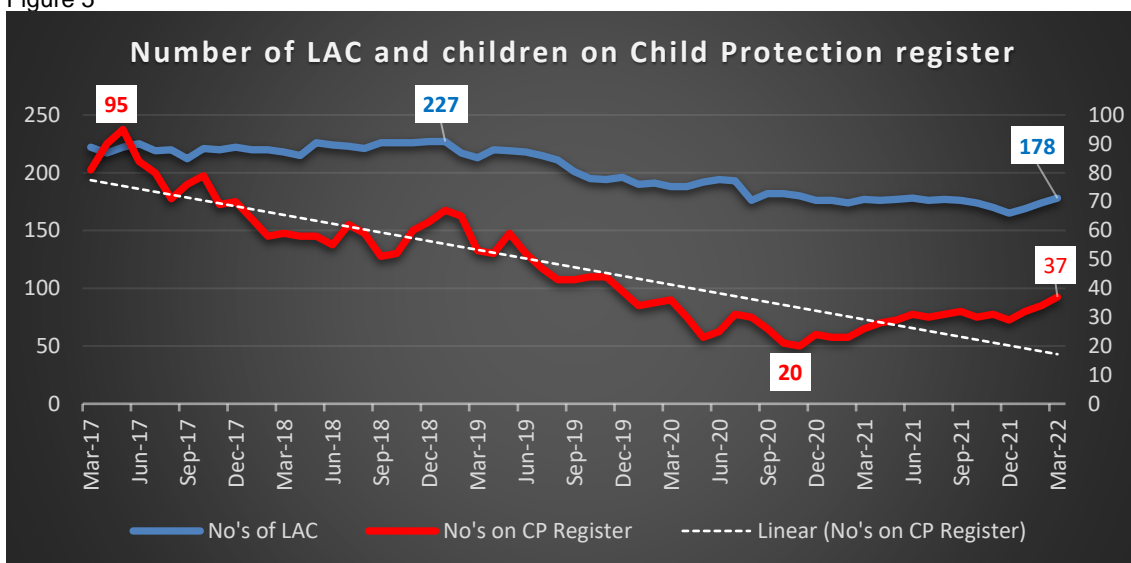
### **Operational Indicators - successes**

- 5.4 The proportion of initial child protection case conferences held within the planned timescales maintained the 100% target throughout 2021/22. This shows an improvement from the 89% meeting the timescales in 2020/21. (PI CMS001a)
- 5.5 96% of agencies practitioners attended case conference meetings during quarter 4, the highest level recorded since recording began in 2010/11. Over the course of the year to March 2022 attendance was recorded at 92.5%, exceeding the values of all previous years. (PI CMS004).
- 5.6 The submission of criminal justice reports to courts continues to maintain the 100% target. (PI CJ01).

## Operational Indicators - challenges and actions to support

- 5.7 As Figure 5 below shows, both the number of Looked After Children (LAC) and the number of children on the Child Protection register (CPR) have risen in the past year, the long-term trends however are reducing. After four years of decline 2021/22 has seen a significant rise in numbers of Children on the CPR. Rates per 1,000 for LAC and children on the CPR are both significantly below the median of comparator authorities. (PI's CSCF100, CMS013)

Figure 5



- 5.8 6% of LAC were in foster care placements purchased by the Council as at 31 March 2022, whilst above target (4%) it does show a slight reduction from 2020/21. The Council continues its drive to recruit and increase the range of foster carers employed by Moray Council which is hoped will reduce the need for agency placements. (PI LAC007).
- 5.9 Throughout 2021/22 the proportion of LAC accommodated in paid placements has remained fairly static and above target. Although the long-term trend is on a reducing path there remains a significant distance to meet the median of comparator authorities' target (65%). Whilst this shows this indicator as underperforming, the increase in proportion of children within community-based placements (para 4.5 refers), at a lower cost, will lead to a reduction of the overall placement costs. (PI LAC006).
- 5.10 In the second half of 2021/22, 8 of the 26 (31%) Child Protection review case conferences were not held within the planned timescales, exceeding the 15% target. The most common reason for these to breach timescales is an essential practitioner being unable to attend, which in many cases is due to illness. (PI CMS002b&d).
- 5.11 Throughout the course of 2021/22 the proportion of children on the CPR for longer than 12 months has continuously risen with the greatest rise witnessed in quarter 4. A rise in the average number of concerns per child within quarter 4 is an indication of a rise in complexity of cases leading to a long period spent on the CPR. (PI CMS017f)
- 5.12 The percentage of offenders with community payback orders seen by their supervising officer within 7 days of the order made has failed to make target in

all quarters of 2021/22, in part due to COVID-19. In comparison to 2020/21 where COVID-19 was a major detrimental factor the proportion has increased significantly. (PI CJ02)

## **6. OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA**

### **Complaints & 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 11 complaints were received during the second half of 2021/22, four less than for the same period of 2020/21. 12 complaints were resolved and closed during the period. Of those, three were at frontline stage (25%), one being partially upheld and the remaining two not upheld. The average time to resolve frontline complaints achieved target of 5 working days.
- 6.3 Nine investigative complaints were closed in the same period. Of those one was upheld (11%) and three were partially upheld (33%). The remaining five investigative complaints were not upheld. Time taken to close Investigative complaints varied. In quarter 3 it took an average of 21 days to close complaints with 3 (50%) complaints closing within the 20-day time period. In quarter 4 investigative complaints took an average of 40 days to be resolved with none of the three complaints closing within 20 days.
- 6.4 All complaints were of a differing nature with the most common category being Process or Policy/Procedure (5 complaints), one was upheld and another partially upheld. One complaint made against staff was not upheld
- 6.5 A total of 4 MSP enquiries were received in the period between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2022, all were resolved.

### **Other Performance (not included within Service Plan)**

- 6.6 The process of gaining family feedback in a systematic manner has been piloted, once collated and analysed it will show a sense of where the service areas of strength are and where improvements are needed.

### **Case Studies**

- 6.7 First offender in 2018 for a sexual offence, sentenced to a short-term custodial sentence and released into the community on a short term sex offender licence. A subsequent Community Payback Order for a period 3 years was imposed with a requirement to complete the Moving Forward: Making Changes Programme. This individual was supported on release from prison to temporary housing and then onto a permanent local authority tenancy which the person continues to manage without support. The individual fully complied with the Order imposed and became a positive member of the group work programme offering support and advice to peers, whilst also showing insight into their own offending and areas of risk. Prior to the Order finishing this individual secured employment and continues to have support from immediate family, all factors which have lowered his overall risk level of reoffending.

6.8 A young person aged 10, open to the department on and off for concerns regarding parenting, poor attendance at medical appointments and low school attendance. The young person was made subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO) due to school attendance. Due to continued declining attendance a decision was made that the young person should reside in alternative care for a period of time to allow for assessment of need and to try and engage the family. At the time of relocation the young person had been out of education for almost 12 months despite the order being in place and the family were also facing eviction. Within the alternative care the placement direct reparative work took place with the young person who was able to transition back to school full-time which was a significant outcome. The parent began to engage with a reunification assessment, had access to independent advocacy and in working relationally with the social worker and family support worker began to reflect and show insight into their own difficulties and the impact on their child. Following a period of time and support in rebuilding the relationship the young person made a very successful transition home to parental care whilst remaining on the compulsory supervision order. After a period of continued support the CSO was terminated. The family continued to work positively with agencies and the parent felt confident in advocating for themselves with education. A very positive outcome with sustained support being in place following the reunification has been achieved. This case is now moving towards being closed to the social work department.

#### **Consultation and Engagement**

6.9 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) Consultations**

The Head of Children and Families & Criminal Justice Social Work, Chief Officer (Health and Social Care), Deputy Chief Executive (Education, Communities & 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 As at 31 March 2022, of the 12 service plan actions, one strategic level and two service level actions have completed. Anticipated progress for four strategic actions is behind schedule for this stage of the plan but there is sufficient time to catch up before the end date of March 2023. The remaining actions are either performing to or above target levels at this stage of the plan, which is 56% complete.**

**8.2 Working within the limits imposed by COVID-19 restrictions has proven challenging in the past year, for what is predominantly a service underpinned by working in a face-to-face manner. Staff have adapted to the changing working environment and have continued to deliver unbroken service provision, albeit using different methods, to the children and young people of Moray. As the working environment continues to transition from the impositions of the COVID-19 pandemic the manner in which services will be delivered will also. It is not anticipated that the service will return to pre-COVID ways of working, but instead by embracing the new delivery methods and skills learned will allow a more effective and blended way of service delivery. Further challenges lie ahead to progress the integration of the service into the Integrated Joint Board (IJB).**

Author of Report: Iain Sneddon, Research & Information Officer

Background Papers: [Service Plan Actions](#)  
[Performance Indicators](#)  
[Performance Indicators](#)  
[My Local Council](#)  
[Service Complaints](#)

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