



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ON 3 FEBRUARY 2021**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK) – 9 MONTHS FROM 1
APRIL TO 30 DECEMBER 2020**

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 from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee following a decision of Moray Council on 17 June 2020 to agree a simplified committee structure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the case of this committee the combining of the delegated responsibilities of Children and Young Peoples Services and Governance, Strategy and Performance (para 9 of the minute refers).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:-

- (i) scrutinises performance of the Service Plan, Operational Performance Indicators and Complaints to the end of December 2020**
- (ii) welcomes good performance; and**
- (iii) notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Moray Council, approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers). The framework introduced new arrangements for Managing, Delivering and Reporting of Performance. This is intended to increase the focus on priority areas and reduce the level of reporting on lower priority indicators in order to ensure discussion, scrutiny and challenge is directed towards areas of strategic importance as opposed to operational performance. Whilst the latter

is clearly deserving of scrutiny if trends develop, consideration at committee should focus on the ability to deliver Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP), Corporate Plan and Service Plan priorities. This performance report from 1 April to 31 December 2020 allows the Service Plan priorities, any relevant Operational Performance Indicators and Complaints Data for Integrated Children’s services, to be monitored by committee as outlined in this section of the framework.

4. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

4.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impact on service delivery for the period in which this report covers. As a result, the preparation of a three-year service plan for Children and Families & Criminal Justice Services has taken longer than would normally be anticipated. The proposed Service Plan, a separate item on the agenda for approval and, although not yet approved at the time of writing this report, performance has been measured against the key strategic and service level outcomes.

- Strategic Outcomes - Identified LOIP and Corporate Plan outcomes pertinent to the service.
- Service Level Outcomes – reflecting service priorities not covered in higher level plans.

4.2 A total of eight Strategic actions and two Service level actions have been used to measure progress over the course of the nine-month period. One Strategic and one Service level actions are due for completion by April 2021. Some of the other actions have yearly milestone indicators to monitor the progress of these actions throughout the duration of the plan, updates will be detailed where appropriate.

Level of Action	Number of Actions	Expected completion by end March 2021	Forecast to complete by end March 2021
Strategic Outcome	8	1	0
Service Level Outcomes	2	1	1

Strategic Outcomes - successes

4.3 Within Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) priority ‘Building a better future for our children & young people in Moray: Children and care leavers have safe, secure, stable and nurturing homes, there are two strategic actions (STRAT1.1 & 1.2) both of which are ongoing actions. Annual improvement milestones have been set for some elements to enable the monitoring of progress over the three-year plan period. Evidence suggests that looked after children (LAC) and young people achieve better outcomes if placed within a community-based placement. Within the action to increase the proportion of children and young people looked after in Kinship and Foster Care placements (STRAT1.1) significant progress has been made and, if the current trend continues, is forecast to achieve the annual milestone target by April 2021. Since the end of quarter 4 2019/20 the proportion of LAC placed

within kinship care has increased and remains above target, this however has been partially negated by the decrease in proportion being looked after within foster care placement. Since the end of March 2020 three new fostering households have been recruited, however overall capacity has fallen from 45 to 43 households. The Fostering service improvement plan identifies actions required to develop strategy to increase availability of kinship and foster placements. The overall balance of care between community and residential based placements has a significant bearing on the service's budget. With the proportion of 'Paid' placements reducing from 79.3% at the end of March 2020 to 72% at the end of December and the balance of care increasing in community placements it is expected that this will reduce budget pressures.

- 4.4 Within the LOIP 'Children live in safe and supportive families' and Corporate Plan 'Improved outcomes for our most vulnerable young people and families' proposed outcomes there are three actions to intervene at the earliest opportunity to minimise the impact of neglect, substance misuse and domestic abuse for young people and their families (STRAT2.1,2.2 & 2.3). One of the most vulnerable groups of children and young people, where early intervention is critical, are those for which there is a need to place on the Child Protection Register (CPR) due to concerns raised for their wellbeing. The numbers of children and young people registered on the CPR have fallen significantly and consistently since the highpoint of 84 at the end of June 2017 to 24 at the end of December 2020 and for the period covered by this report have fallen by a third. This is testament to the work carried out by practitioners in the field putting protective measures in place to safeguard these children. Concerns relating to neglect, substance use and domestic abuse have been identified as areas of particular concern. It is particularly difficult to identify and evidence progress in intervening at the earliest opportunity and the measures currently in place to do so will need to be revisited. High levels of child protection concerns at registration stage can be seen as intervening at the earliest opportunity. Concerns identified during the registration process are currently measured. The proportion of children registered with neglect concerns have risen from 8.3% at the end of March 2020 to 21% as of 31 December 2020, drug concerns have risen from 22% to 33% and those of domestic abuse from 11% to 17% over the same period. Those with alcohol concerns have fallen from 19% to 8%. In an effort to evidence early intervention, work has been ongoing within the service and a tool to assess neglect will be embedded across the service from March 2021. In addition a Safe and Together Framework to support working with families affected by violence in the home will be implemented during 2021.

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.5 Work has not yet commenced on the LOIP planned outcome 'The number of looked after children and care leavers who enter the youth and criminal justice systems is reduced'. It is highly unlikely that the action to 'improve the identification and monitoring of care leavers and care experienced young people in the youth and criminal justice systems' (STRAT1.4) will be completed by the target date of March 2021. Capacity and resource shortages have prevented this action moving forward, if these issues can be resolved work could commence on the requirements needed to improve the identification of care leavers and care experienced young people entering both justice systems.

Service Level Outcomes- Successes

- 4.6 The instigation of the Transformational Change programme is the main focus of service development. The Action 'Complete immediate business case and get authorisation to progress with the programme' (SERV1.1) has a single Planned Outcome 'The whole system has a clear road map to understand the change required to support children and families the way they want to be supported', is due for completion by April 2021. Initial feedback from CMT advised that additional work is required before authorisation to commence the programme is approved. An agreed project officer post to support the implementation of the programme is currently in the process of recruitment. This action is on course to be completed by the end of this reporting year.
- 4.7 The Action 'Initiate the three work streams within the transformational change programme', has three planned outcomes (SERV1.2, 1.3 & 1.4) that are not due for completion in this reporting year. It should be noted however that all three have made good progress to date.

Operational Indicators - successes

- 4.8 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 below comparators will be reported to this committee for member scrutiny.
- 4.9 In this reporting period, of particular note is the significant increase in the proportion of Looked After children and young people under home supervision (EdS606.01). At the end of March 2020 19.1% were looked after at home, at the end of quarter 3 the proportion had increased to 23.4%, the highest figure recorded since this indicator was introduced in March 2016. Although significantly lower than the comparator median it has shown a marked improvement. To bring the proportion in line with the comparator median milestone annual targets have been set for the duration of the service plan. To meet these targets a 3% increase is required annually, if the current proportion remains the same or improves during quarter 4 the target will be met for 2020/21.
- 4.10 As a consequence of home supervision placements increasing, the proportion of Looked After children placed in residential placements (CSCF 102) have decreased. As at 31 March 2020 21.3% of Looked After children were in residential placements, by the end of December 2020 18.2% were in these type of placements. This is the lowest value recorded since quarter 1 2017/18. Similar to item 4.9 milestone targets have been introduced to bring Moray in line with the median of our comparator authorities by the end of the three-year plan. To achieve each annual milestone a 3% reduction is required each year. At the end of quarter 3 the proportion is on target, if this remains the same or improves the milestone target for 2020/21 will be met.

- 4.11 Items 4.9 & 4.10 demonstrate that the balance of care has changed between the least and most expensive types of placements for Looked After children. Based on latest available Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) data the cost of placing a residential placement for a Looked After child is approximately ten times the cost of a community-based placement. Home supervision placements tend to be the least costly of all community-based placements. For each child moving from a residential to a community placement the estimated saving (per week) based on LGBF data, would show a reduction in budget expenditure in the region of £3.5K. It is important however to recognise each child requires a placement that meets their needs and not all Looked After children can easily be placed in a community placement without significant support being in place.
- 4.12 Since the end of quarter 4 2019/20 only one Looked After child has been placed in an 'Out of Area' placement (LAC004) and a total of three have returned to Moray (LAC005). During the same period of 2019/20 five children were placed out of area and three returned. Out of area placements are the most expensive of placements as more often than not specialised care is required for each child.
- 4.13 With the number of Looked After children (LAC) and those on the Child Protection register (CPR) decreasing the rates per 1,000 of the relevant populations have also decreased. The rate for LAC (LAC003) at 31 December 2020 stood at 9.6, a decrease of 0.7 from 31 March 2020. Over the same period the rate for children on the CPR (CMS013a) also decreased by 0.7 to stand at 1.5 at 31 December. Both of these rates are significantly below the median of our comparator authorities. Child protection referrals have also significantly fallen when quarters 1-3 are compared from 2019/20 and 2020/21. In 2019/20 193 child protection referrals were made, during the same period of 2020/21 106 were made. It may be the case that with children being less visible due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions referrals have fallen as a result. At present this is an unknown factor, however if referrals increase as restrictions are lifted it would strengthen this argument.

Operational Indicators - challenges and actions to support

- 4.14 Within strategic action STRAT1.1 'Children and young people looked after in kinship or foster care increases', one of the measures to gauge progress is the number of fostering households and the number and type of placements that they are able to offer. It has been recognised that the number of households, number of placements and type of placements needs to be expanded. As detailed in item 4.3 the number of Moray Council fostering households have decreased by two between 31 March and 31 December which has impacted on the number of placements available. The number of active placements decreased from 29 to 24 between 31 March and 31 December. If this trend were to continue and there is a need for foster care placements, it may be necessary to place children with other foster care agencies paid for by Moray Council at an increased cost. The target (median of comparator authorities) set for '% of foster LAC in Foster Care purchased by Moray Council' is 4%, whilst the proportion has reduced over the past nine months to 6.2% it remains significantly above target.

Complaints & MP/MSP Enquiries

- 4.15 Between April and December 2020, Children and Families and Criminal Justice Social Work Services received 23 complaints. 30 complaints were closed during the period. Of the closed complaints 12 (40%) were resolved at frontline stage, five (42%) of these complaints were partially upheld and seven (58%) were not upheld, no frontline complaints were upheld during the period. One of the 18 investigative complaints was upheld during the period, 10 (56%) were partially upheld and seven (39%) were not upheld. Three extensions were granted for investigative complaints with one being partially upheld and the other two not upheld. 17% of Frontline complaints were closed within five days and 28% of investigative complaints were closed within 20 days. It is likely that the impact of COVID restrictions and working arrangements have affected the timescales for resolving complaints. Two MSP enquiries were received during the period, one was resolved with the other being outwith jurisdiction.

5 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, Deputy Chief Executive (Education, Communities & Organisational Development), Service Managers, Legal Services and the Equal

Opportunities Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 One of the two service plan actions is expected to complete by 31 March 2021. No completion date can be provided for the other action which is not expected to complete until the shortfall in capacity to take the identification of care leavers and care experienced in the justice systems is addressed. Being a three-year plan and with most actions ongoing, milestones have been integrated within many of the indicators to measure progress annually. At the end of quarter 3 2020/21 progress within many of the milestone indicators is encouraging with most either achieving or within reaching distance of set targets. Children and Families and Criminal Justice social work services have undergone many changes in structure and service delivery in preceding years, further changes are in progress with the instigation of the transformational change programme which will see changes to practice and commissioning in pursuit of providing the best care for the young people of Moray.**

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