



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 24 NOVEMBER 2021**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK) – PERIOD TO SEPTEMBER
2021**

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 30 September 2021.
- 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 performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of September 2021; and**
- ii) **notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

3. BACKGROUND

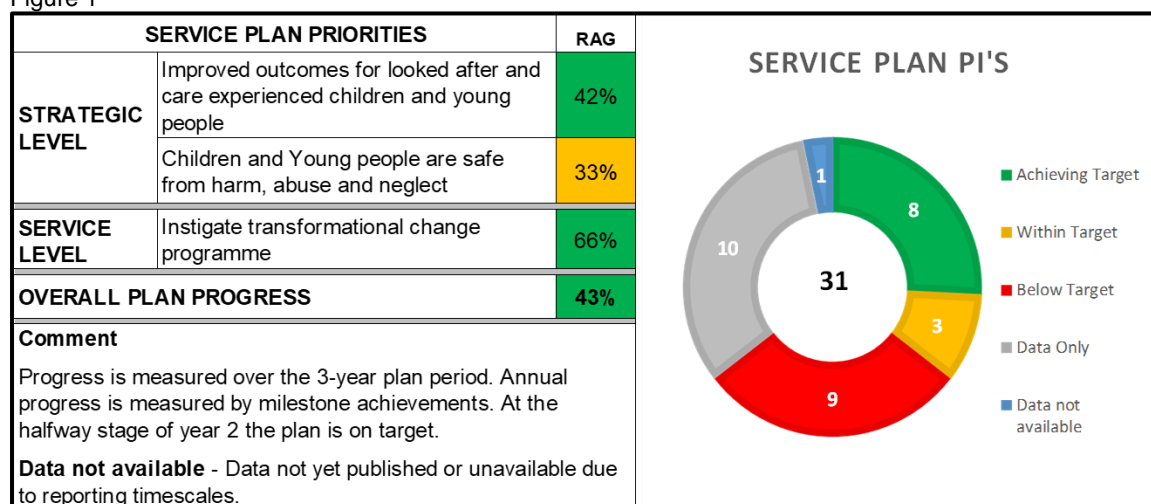
- 3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Council, approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

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, however links to backing tables for all [Service Plan Actions](#) and [Performance Indicators](#) are provided.

Figure 1



- 4.3 Many of the actions within the Strategic section of the Service Plan are measured by annual milestones which are linked to performance indicators. As a result the percentage advancement of actions at the half-yearly stage will be limited. Progress towards milestones is reported throughout the report narrative.

Strategic Outcomes – successes

- 4.4 As at 30 September 2021 there were 176 Looked after Children (LAC) in Moray at a rate of 9.7 per 1,000, continuing to remain below that of the comparator authority median of 11. Both the proportion of LAC accommodated in Kinship and Moray Council Foster Care placements are achieving target. In addition, the proportion of LAC in residential placements has consistently improved over the past year and is within tolerance level. (Action STRAT1.1, PI's EdS606.02, EdS606.03, LAC003, CSCF102).
- 4.5 In May 2021 the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) published the remaining indicators for Children's Services for 2019/20. The data shows that the balance of residential/community care, whilst remaining below target, has shown improvement in comparison with the previous year and is now within the tolerance level. Whilst not benchmarked against other local authorities more current local data adds weight to the improving trend with 83% of LAC in community-based placements as of 30 September 2021. Annual improving milestones have been set for the duration of the plan to bring the level in Moray to that of our comparator median by March 2023. The proportion of LAC with more than one placement in the last year (25%) reduced significantly in comparison with the previous year (31%) and is now achieving target of 28%. (Action STRAT1.1, PI's CHN9, CHN23, CSCF101).

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.6 Two LGBF indicators measuring the cost of provision for both community and residential placements per week have risen in recent years. These rises, in part, are attributed to the types of placement. Moray has 77% of LAC in paid placements with a low proportion under home supervision, therefore incurring higher weekly costs. In addition, for most LAC requiring specialist residential care, placements are sourced out with Moray, again attracting higher costs. Figures 2 & 3 show how costs have changed through time. Gross annual costs have reduced in recent years 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).

Figure 2

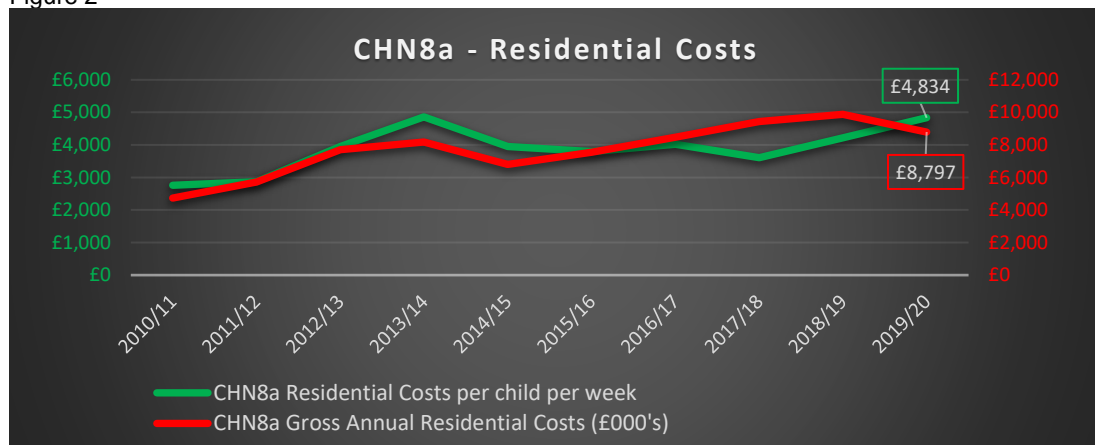
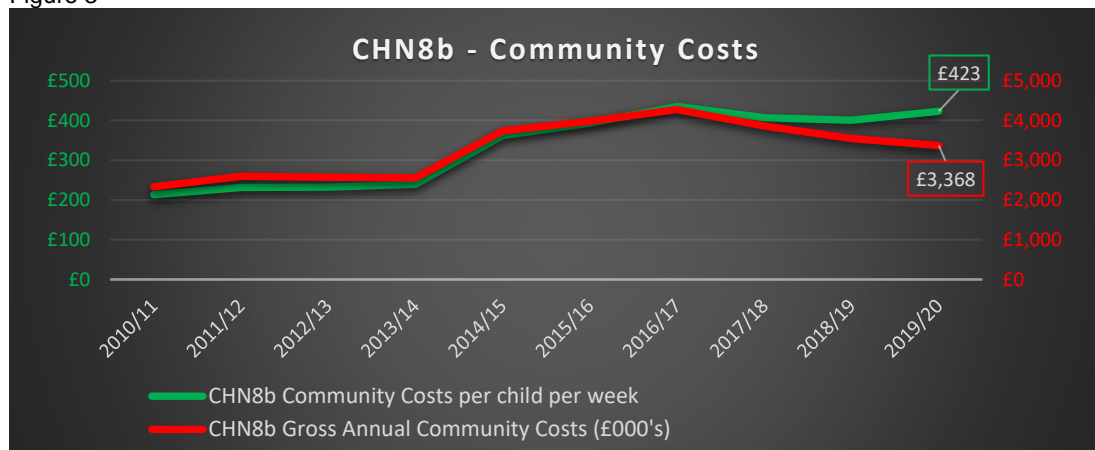


Figure 3



- 4.7 Foster care recruitment has witnessed delays and the planned Skills to Foster Care course was cancelled; the next course is due to take place during quarter 3. Over the past year the number of fostering households haven't changed, however there are indications of an improving situation, with an increase of two in the six months to 30 September. As a priority, siblings, where possible, should be placed together, during the first two quarters of 2021/22 this hasn't been achieved. Work to improve the profile of foster care services is ongoing with inroads being made in redesigning the website in collaboration with ICT and the campaign to increase the range of foster carers is using innovative methods to attract carers by hosting 'Live' events and including information within council staff payslips. (Action STRAT1.1, PI's LAC009, LAC010, LAC013).

- 4.8 Neglect concerns feature highly for children currently on the Child Protection Register (CPR). Over the past two quarters concerns of this nature have increased from 31% to 47% (15 of 32 children). In quarter 2 alone seven children were added to the CPR as a result of neglect, four of which were a sibling group. A neglect 'Toolkit' has been purchased and will be implemented with guidance from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) during quarter 4. It is anticipated that the implementation of the 'Toolkit' will better equip social work practitioners to work with families to address and reduce these concerns improving outcomes for children more timeously. (Action STRAT2.1, PI CMS021c1).
- 4.9 Actions to minimise the impact of parental substance use and domestic abuse have not progressed as anticipated. Both areas have witnessed increases in the number of children on the CPR with these concerns since March 2021. Although planned, attendance at the Moray Alcohol and Drug Partnership (MADP) has not yet taken place due to a delay in replacing a retiring Service Manager, progress is expected in the next quarter. A bid to the 'Delivering Equally Safe' fund was successful which will enable the recruitment of a Violence Against Women development worker. (Action STRAT2.2 & 2.3, PI's CMS021f1, CMS021g1 & CMS021h1).

Service Level Outcomes – successes

- 4.10 The business case for the 'Transformational change programme' was approved during quarter 1 and work on implementation has commenced. (Action SERV1.1)
- 4.11 Incorporating the views of staff, the new 'Robust model' of social work has been designed and the service continues to collaborate with staff and families of children to ensure their involvement in the process. 'Outcomes Star', an evidence-based suite of tools, is being procured and will improve both the support and measurement of change in a child's journey through the service. (Action SERV1.2)

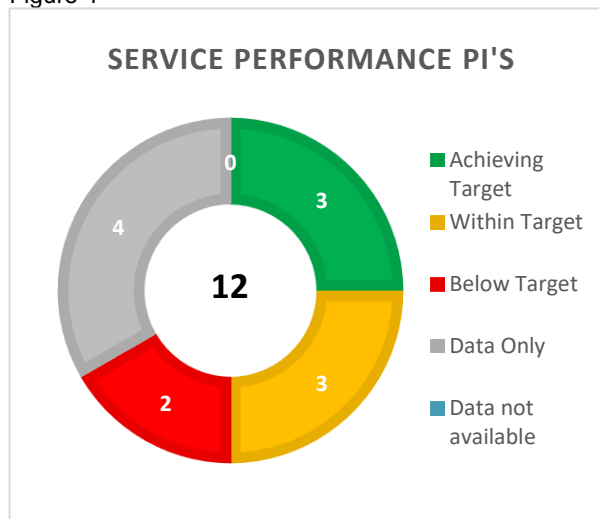
Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.12 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 In February 2021 the initial publication of Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators were made available, Children's social work indicators were not available at this time. The refresh of the publication took place in May 2021. The full suite can now be viewed using the [My Local Council](#) tool.
- 5.3 Report is by exception, however links to backing tables for all Service [Performance Indicators](#) is provided.

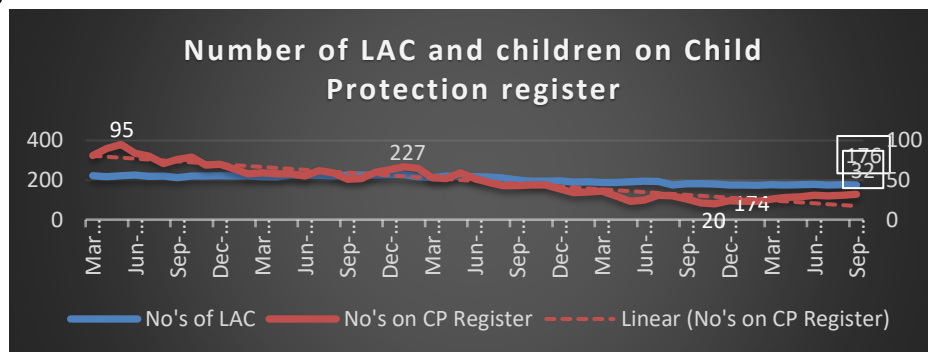
Figure 4



Operational Indicators – successes

- 5.4 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 declined significantly over the past four years. Since April 2021 the numbers of LAC have remained fairly static, Child Protection numbers however have shown a slight rise from 26 at the end of March to 32 at the end of September. 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



- 5.5 No children have been accommodated in a secure placement for the past five quarters. (PI EdS606.08).
- 5.6 Although slightly below target, 94% of child protection review case conferences were held within the agreed timescales in the quarter to September, the highest result in the last four years. One conference was late missing target timescale by one day. (PI's CMS002b, CMS002e).
- 5.7 For the twentieth consecutive quarter, all Criminal Justice Social Work reports were submitted to courts by the due date. (PI CJ01).

Operational Indicators - challenges and actions to support

- 5.8 5.7% of LAC were in foster care placements purchased by the Council as at 30 September 2021, above target (4%). The Council continues its drive to recruit and increase the range of foster carers employed by Moray Council. (PI LAC007).

- 5.9 During the first half of 2021/22 there has been a 1% increase in the proportion of LAC accommodated within paid placements to 76.7%. 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).

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. Links to backing tables for all [Service Complaints](#) is provided.
- 6.2 A total of 13 complaints were received during the first half of 2021/22, five less than for the same period of 2020/21. Nine complaints were resolved and closed during the period, one at frontline stage (11%) and eight at investigative stage. The closed frontline complaint was partially upheld and one investigative complaint was upheld (12.5%) during the period. The remaining seven complaints were not upheld. All complaints were of a differing nature with the most common category being Process or Policy/Procedure (3 complaints), one was upheld and another partially upheld. Two complaints were made against staff, both of which were not upheld.
- 6.3 Time taken to close Investigative complaints in the six months to 30 September 2021 varied. In the first quarter it took an average of 18 days to close complaints with 2 (40%) complaints closing within the 20-day time period. In the second quarter investigative complaints took an average of 27 days to be resolved with one (33%) closing within 20 days. The one frontline complaint was closed within the 5-day time period.
- 6.4 A total of 3 MSP enquiries were received in the period between 1 April and 30 September. Of these three, one was outwith jurisdiction, one case was resolved and the remaining enquiry was ongoing at the end of September.

Other Performance (not included within Service Plan)

- 6.5 Nothing to report.

Case Studies

- 6.6 Nothing to report.

Consultation and Engagement

- 6.7 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 30 September 2021, of the 12 service plan actions, one strategic level and one service level action have completed. Anticipated progress for three 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 43% complete.

8.2 Working within the limits imposed by COVID-19 restrictions has proven challenging in the past 18 months 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 restrictions continue to ease it is anticipated that there will be some return to pre-COVID ways of working but with practitioners having an additional set of skills. Further challenges lie ahead to progress the integration of the service into the Integrated Joint Board (IJB).

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Background Papers:	Held by Author
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