



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES & ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ON WEDNESDAY 04 NOVEMBER
2020**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S
SERVICES) – HALF YEAR TO MARCH 2020**

BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period from 1 October 2019 to 31 March 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 March 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 half yearly performance report 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 During 2019/20 Integrated Children's Services underwent significant reorganisation which included structural changes within areas of service delivery, as such no Service Plan was agreed for Integrated Children's services for 2019/20. In the absence of a Service Plan performance has been measured against

- 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 three Strategic actions and one Service level action have been used to measure progress over the course of the six months, all actions are ongoing with none due for completion by 31 March 2020.

Level of Action	Number of Actions	Expected completion by end March 2020	Actual completion by end March 2020
Strategic Outcome	3	0	0
Service Level Outcomes	1	0	0

Strategic Outcomes - successes

4.3 Contributing to the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) priority 'Building a better future for our children & young people in Moray: Safer children: to protect children from the risk of harm, abuse and neglect and promote and support safer environments and communities, significant work has taken place that evidences progress has been made. The 2019/20 annual report for the Children's Services plan 2017/20 (Multi-agency plan) identified improvements in a number of areas, most noticeable were the impacts on the number of children registered on the Child Protection register (CPR) and the number of Looked After Children (LAC). The number of children on the CPR have decreased by more than a third within the space of a year and the number of children who have remained on the CPR for more than 12 months has fallen from 10% at the end of 2018/19 to 6% (CMS017f).

4.4 Looked After Children have followed a similar trend to that witnessed within Child Protection Registrations, all be it to a lesser extent, decreasing by 12% in the same period. Through the delivery of focussed training and the improvement and streamlining of processes practitioners are now better

equipped to the challenges faced dealing with Child Protection. Along with partners work was undertaken to strengthen Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) processes and improvements in joint working have been witnessed through shared reflective practice with the delivery of Practice Reflection and Improvement Short Model (PRISM) across social work teams. Evidence from North Ayrshire Council, the pioneers of PRISM, has shown that in its four years of use practitioners are: *“More than able to look at the evidence put before them, identify learning and challenge their own and others practice to improve in light of this”*. Monthly performance data is analysed and presented at regular meetings to gain an understanding of trends and to adapt timeously to changes in need. (ICS1.1)

- 4.5 Contributing to the Corporate Plan: ‘Our People: Provide opportunities where young people can achieve their potential’, and in particular to working with families as partners to give their children the kind of lives they want them to lead so that children grow up to be strong and resilient, Locality Management groups hosted consultations for the new Children’s Services Plan. The nine workshops held were well attended by children, young people and frontline practitioners and were focussed on identifying priorities and actions to deliver improvements for children and young people. Several networking events were held throughout Moray during the course of the reporting year to build upon effective partnership working and develop an understanding of services and supports available for families. A series of interviews were carried out with families to capture their experiences of accessing mental wellbeing supports and identify the gaps in local service provision so as to enable them to work with strategic leads to shape and design an early intervention wellbeing service. (ICS1.2)
- 4.6 Within the same Corporate Plan priority and in particular to the ‘Improvement in children and young people’s health and well-being’, children and young people benefitted from a two-year initiative (2017-19) to fund Mental Health Development Workers. Through the delivery of a number of key training courses, (Scottish Health First Aid, Healthy Minds, Helping young people cope with anxiety and using Art Therapeutically) young people were able to better manage their mental wellbeing. The next steps are to build on the good work started by these workers and focus on the development of Tier 2 mental health and wellbeing supports for children and young people. This is a key priority within the 2020-2023 Children’s Services Plan. (ICS1.2)

Service Level Outcomes

- 4.7 In the absence of a Service Plan for 2019/20 all actions and outcomes, with the exception of one, have been included within the Strategic Outcomes for 2019/20. At a service level work has been underway to develop the Service Plan for Children and Families, Criminal and Youth Justice Social work, to date it has not yet been finalised and submitted for approval.

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.8 Within the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) priority ‘Building a better future for our children & young people in Moray: and in particular to Safer children: to protect children from the risk of harm, abuse and neglect and promote and support safer environments and communities, whilst there have

been many improvements in service delivery over the past year it is recognised that there are still areas where improvements can be made. It is key to nurturing better outcomes for young people by directing resources effectively, with a focus on an early intervention and preventative approach, at the same time ensuring that the voices of children and parents inform improvements. More emphasis will be placed towards working with families in developing a “Strengths based” approach to the assessment and management of risks and recognising the experience of families in managing the risks, seeing them as “Experts”. Links between adult and children’s services will be improved upon to foster more effective working partnerships. (ICS1.1)

Operational Indicators - successes

- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 In this reporting period, of particular note is the significant fall in Child Protection registrations per 1,000 of the 0-15 population (CMS013a). At the end of quarter 4 the rate stood at 2.2 in comparison to the rate of 3.5 in the same period of 2018/19. Similarly, the rate of Looked After Children per 1,000 of the 0-17 population (LAC003) saw a significant drop over the past year from 11.6 to 10.3 and remains well below the target level of 11.6. Both rates for Child protection and Looked After Children are lower than the national rates and one of the lowest in the council’s comparator authorities’ group.
- 4.11 At the end of quarter 4 25% of Looked After Children were cared for within Kinship placements (Eds606.2), well above the target level of 23.4% (Comparator authority Median). The proportion of children placed for adoption (Eds606.09) has also remained consistently above target (2.2%) during the course of 2019/20 and by the end of the reporting year stood at 3.2%.
- 4.12 Whilst the number of offences committed by young people aged 8-17 (CJ09) and the number of young people responsible for committing these offences (CJ10) remained fairly static, in comparison to the previous reporting year, the number of young people committing repeat offences (CJ11) fell from 24% to 21.5%. There has been a consistent downward trend in repeat offences from a high of 28% in 2015/16, with the fall from 2018/19 to the current year the most significant.

Operational Indicators - challenges and actions to support

- 4.13 The overall balance of care split between community and residential placements shows that in Moray a higher proportion of Looked After Children are placed in residential placements in comparison to the majority of all other authorities. At the end of quarter 4 21.3% (40/188) were cared for in a residential placement (CSCF102) against a comparator median target of 12.7%. The provision of residential care is significantly more expensive than that of community-based placements. In 2018/19 (Latest data) the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) gross cost of “Children

Looked After” in Residential based services per child per week (CHN8a) was £4,215, an increase of £609 from the previous year. The costliest element of residential care is for children who are placed “Out of Moray”, these placements tend to more specialist placements for children with complex needs. Work has been ongoing throughout the year to put measures in place to reduce the proportion of children in “Out of Area” placements. This work appears to have had a positive impact as there has been improvement in the proportion of children cared for in these types of placement with a reduction from a high of 11.5% at the end of quarter 1 to 8.5% by the end of quarter 4.

- 4.14 At the end on quarter 4 2019/20 the proportion of Looked After Children under home supervision (Eds606.1) stood at 19.1%. This indicator is measured against a median of the Council’s comparator authorities and has consistently remained significantly less than the 2019/20 median of 29.3%. Community based placements are significantly less expensive than residential placements. In 2018/19 (Latest data) the LGBF gross cost of “Children Looked After” in a community setting per child per week (CHN8b) was £400, £7 less than the previous year. The most costly type of community placement (LAC in Foster Care purchased by Moray Council (LAC007)) however at 6.9% it remained significantly higher than the comparator median of 4.0% and did not meet target in any period during 2019/20.

Complaints & MP/MSP Enquiries

- 4.15 Between October 2019 and March 2020, Integrated Children’s Services received 21 complaints. 17 complaints were closed during the period. Of the closed complaints 14 (82%) was resolved at frontline stage, seven of these complaints were upheld, one was partially upheld and the remaining six frontline complaints were not upheld. Of the three investigative complaints two were partially upheld and one was not upheld. Two extensions were granted for investigative complaints and one of these was also escalated. The remaining closed complaint resolved at Investigation stage and was not upheld. 64% of Frontline complaints were closed within five days and 67% of investigative complaints were closed within 20 days. Four MSP enquiries were received during the period and two were closed, 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 & Families 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 As all service plan actions for 2019/20 are ongoing it was not expected that any would be completed by March 2020. The service has had to contend with many challenges through the course of the reporting year with the structural and organisational changes, and recommendations made within the Children's Services inspection report. Good progress has been made within the service to implement many of the changes, which at this relatively early stage, appear to be making a difference for both service delivery and the care of children. It is recognised that changes take time to bed in and improvements to meet targets will take time, however there has been improvement across more than 50% indicators measured against "Children and young people are safe from harm, abuse and neglect" (ICS1.1).**

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Background Papers: Held by Author
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