

Year End Head of Service Performance Report Children's Social Services (Community Services Directorate)

REPORT AUTHOR: **HEAD OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES**

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REPORT PERIOD: **APRIL 2013 TO MARCH 2014**

Introduction

The Head of Service report is produced on a half yearly basis and provided to Executive Members for review and assurance and will be available for Overview and Scrutiny Committees as part of their Forward Work Programmes.

The approach is based on exception reporting to summarise key information that the Head of Service feels Members should be aware of, including both good and poor performance. Emerging issues / operational risks should also be highlighted. The report is split into 3 distinct sections: -

1. Improvement Priorities & Service Plan Monitoring – this section is used to discuss the progress being made towards the Improvement Priorities which do not have an in year focus and therefore are not included within the quarterly progress report on the Improvement Plan. It is also used to highlight good news and key issues (including operational risks and the actions necessary to control them) arising from monitoring the progress being made towards delivering the service plan.

2. Internal and External Regulatory Reports – this section summarises regulatory work reported in the half year and its outcomes and intended actions arising from recommendations.

3. Corporate Reporting – this section summarises the performance in relation to corporate issues e.g. sickness absence, appraisals, complaints, data protection training

Appendix 1- NSI & Improvement Target Performance Indicators – summary table of the performance for the NSI and Improvement Targets. Graphs and commentary are included in section 1 for those indicators shown with a red RAG status. An asterisk (*) indicates that the indicator is an *improvement* target.

1. Improvement Priorities & Service Plan Monitoring

Report highlights for the year end 2013-14 are as follows: -

Living Well / Giving Children and young people the best start in life / Out of County Placements

From May 2013 out of county residential placements for Looked After Children with the exception of secure beds have been made via the Regional Commissioning Hub. We work collaboratively with the Hub to ensure that placements continue to meet the needs of the young person, and our documentation has been adopted by the Hub for use on a wider regional basis. A Regional Framework is being developed for the Children's and Young People's Service with the residential element completed and fostering element in progress. Outcome focussed services will be embedded within commissioning and monitoring arrangements of the Framework.

Living Well / Giving Children and young people the best start in life / Looked After Children and Care Leavers

Looked after children

The Systems Thinking report on the Fostering Service has been presented and recommendations made to the Modernising Social Services Board. An Action Plan has been developed and progress will be reviewed in June 2014.

An Action Plan has been written following a Blue Sky Thinking Day to focus on the new court proceedings timeframe arrangements of 26 weeks. A Members workshop took place in October, and was well attended. 20 staff attended training facilitated by Robert Hornby (Barrister) in July.

We are repeating a survey conducted a number of years ago where we asked parents of looked after children to feed back to us on their experiences of having a child in care.

Care Leavers

The Housing support needs of our care leavers are important to us and the impact of Welfare Reforms heightens the need to ensure appropriate accommodation given the increased restrictions placed upon the payment of benefits to this group of young people. Our aim is to see an expansion of the housing options on offer for all our care leavers who will be equipped with skills to live independently. We continue to work in collaboration with Housing to address the issue and this includes completing joint assessments within agreed protocols with the Supporting People Team.

Following receipt of a commissioned report from the British Association for Adoption and Fostering on a review of supported lodging schemes in Flintshire, we have decided at this point, not to develop an "in house" Supported Lodgings scheme. However, as an even better alternative and as part of our Southwark responsibilities (Section 20 of the Children's Act 1989) we have developed Nightstop which provides a safe alternative to bed & breakfast accommodation in a family home for 16 – 18 year olds. Between April 2013 and the end of February 2014 270 nights of accommodation support were provided with £2,160 savings in accommodation costs. Positive move on outcomes for the nine young people supported were one young person returning to the family home, five young people transferred their Nightstop placement into a supported lodgings placement and three young people moved onto supported accommodation.

Living Well / Giving Children and young people the best start in life / 2011/14 Children and Young People's Plan

The Families First Programme

The Families First Programme which reduces the impact of poverty on families in Flintshire is making sound progress. The Parenting Strategy and Action Plan has been finalised and provides the overarching document for the implementation of services to parents in Flintshire. One particular gap was the offer of support to parents of teenagers and this is being taken forward by the Challenging Years programme.

The Taith Y Teulu Team support families in need who do not meet the threshold for Children's Services. They are fully operational and working to support families referred to them by the Team around the Family Project.

In September 2013 we held an event to publicise out QUEST and NOVUS projects. The projects provide complementary support, concentrating on parents, particularly single parents, to help support them to get out of unemployment and back into the work place, by enabling them to develop the skills required by their personal development plan, including communication, numeracy and literacy.

The Sure Start Crèche Service continues to deliver services to enable parents to attend courses. The long term aim is to develop this into a Social Enterprise and discussions are ongoing to take this forward.

In December 2013 as part of the Families First initiative we submitted a bid to the Lottery scheme to expand the delivery of family focussed services from the Gronant Centre.

Flying Start

Construction of a new Flying Start Centre in Deeside began in January 2014 and is due to open in September 2014. The centre doubles the number of local children who are able to receive childcare services and facilities with the full range of services under one roof. Multi agency teams deliver the Flying Start Programme and eligible parents of 2 – 3 year olds receive quality free childcare, parenting support, an enhanced health visitor service and help for early language development. We are encouraged by the Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty's comments "*The expansion of our Flying Start programme is progressing well in Flintshire and over 1,000 children will be supported through the programme this year*".

Safe Communities / Keeping people and communities safe / Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children

We have achieved our aim of bringing together our Children's Safeguarding Managers and Independent Reviewing Officers into an enhanced Children's Safeguarding Unit. The Unit continues to develop its internal consultancy role supporting front line staff. As of January 2014, 74 Children's Social Service staff had completed training on the new assessment and screening Risk Model Tool in order that they can routinely assess and analyse risk of significant harm. The Safeguarding Unit's forward work programme will see further review of process and thresholds supporting safe quality outcomes for children and young people. We are working with our Business Systems to develop and implement processes which will enable improved reporting on information from external agencies.

We have further strengthened our resources through a Service Level Agreement with Action for Children to recruit a part time Therapist with specific remit for Looked After Children to focus on placements at risk at the point of transition. Very positive feedback has been received from foster carers, social workers and young people, and we will be continuing this initiative in 2014/15.

All of our key performance indicators for Children’s Safeguarding remain well above the All Wales average, in a challenging climate where the number of children on the Child Protection Register has continued to increase. All children on the Child Protection Register have an allocated social worker, and 98% of these children have had their child protection plans reviewed within statutory timescales (first review at three months and then six monthly).

The joint Flintshire Wrexham Local Safeguarding Children Board have commissioned some research into the experiences of parents whose children’s names have been on the Child Protection Register and who have been subject to a child protection plan called “Don’t Make Assumptions”. We are awaiting the feedback from this work.

2. Internal and External Regulatory Reports

External inspection:

For 2013/14 these have included:

Annual Review and evaluation of performance 2012/13

Our Annual Performance Report for Social Services (ACRF) received a very positive response from CSSIW when the Inspectors visited in September. The Council has received the draft letter setting out the key areas of progress in the year. The final version was published at the end of October and reported separately to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Internal Audit Reports

The following reports have been finalised in the year. Action plans are in place to address the weaknesses identified.

Levels of Assurance – standard reports.

Project Reference	Project Description	Level of Assurance	Recommendations		
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			High	Med	Low
C.S1050S1	Performance Information –	Green	0	0	1

3. Corporate Reporting

Complaints / Compliments

87 complaints were received in the year, an increase compared to previous years (57 in 2012-13 and 54 in 2011-12). This is against a backdrop of 1,220 referrals received during the year.

The increase in the number of complaints received year on year within Children's Social Services reflects the proactive way in which information about making a complaint is shared with children, young people and their families. The increase may also be partly attributed where families are involved in civil Court proceedings at a time when Legal Aid has been withdrawn for such cases across England and Wales.

10 young people were supported by the National Youth Advocacy Service (N.Y.A.S.) with their complaints. This included one young person being supported by N.Y.A.S. at Stage 2.

7 complaints progressed to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure (compared to 5 in 2012-13). The Service did what it could to resolve the issues at Stage 1 at both a Team Manager and Service Manager level, but the complainants remained dissatisfied and requested their respective issues progress further.

3 Stage 3 Panel Hearings were held re. Children's Social Services during the year. The overall decision for two Panel Hearings was not upheld. One complaint was upheld following a third Panel Hearing and a package of care at an out of county residential school put in place as per recommendation. No (zero) complaints were considered by the Ombudsman.

Services complained about:

Service	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
Childcare Fieldwork	67	36	38
Resources	8	9	4
Children's Integrated Disability Service (CIDS)	9	9	7
Commissioned Provider	0	1	2
Child Care Panel	2	0	2
Safeguarding Unit	1	1	1
Emergency Duty Team	0	1	0
Total number of complaints	87	57	54

Children's Social Services recorded 74 compliments in the year 2013-14 from families and the Courts. They were in the form of cards and letters or praise expressed during Court proceedings. The number of compliments recorded within each area of work is shown in the table below:

Service	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
Childcare Fieldwork	40	22	31
Resources	9	29	30
Children's Integrated Disability Service (CIDS)	5	5	6
Safeguarding Unit	2	1	2
Youth Justice Service	18	10	-
Total number of compliments	74	67	69

Sickness Absence

We continue to make progress to address workforce absence, working closely with Human Resources and Occupational Health, and have seen a reduction in long term absences. We will pilot a new electronic data collection system in 2014 to allow us to improve the management of sickness absence information.

Data from HR for Children's Social Services is as follows:

Cumulative Totals

Average Days Available	FTE Days Lost	Absence Rate	Days Lost Per FTE
41,379	2,438	5.89 %	13.44

This "Days lost per FTE" figure is an annual forecast figure until the final end of year report is produced.

Employee Turnover

Turnover for Children's Social Services has been provided by HR, as follows:

Social Services for Children Annual Total

HC Q1 From	HC Q4 To	Average Head Count For Year	Leavers For Year	Turnover For Year	Stability For Year	Turnover Target For Year
203	213	208	17	8.17%	93.75%	

Employee Appraisals

Guidance is available to all managers on the Appraisal Process who coordinate completion across their service.

We are working with managers to ensure that iTrent is available to them for the recording of appraisals. 64 staff had appraisals recorded on iTrent in the year.

Data Protection Training

The actions arising from the Information Commissioners Inspection have been addressed, with data protection audits being completed as part of the inspection. We continue to promote Data Protection across the workforce and training opportunities are ongoing via electronic learning, training updates and through team meetings and briefings. As of 30th May 2014, 565 staff in Community Services have received data protection training.

Freedom of Information Requests

There have been 97 Freedom of Information requests in the year, relating to Social Services. All were responded to within timescales.

Appendix 1 - NSI & Improvement Target Performance Indicators

Key

R	Target missed
A	Target missed but within an acceptable level
G	Target achieved or exceeded



The RAG status of the indicators for the half year position are summarised as follows:








Graphs and commentary are included in section 1 for those indicators shown with a red RAG status.

Note 1 – NSI = National Statutory Indicator Imp T = Improvement Target

Note 2 – Change (Improved / Downturned) is based on comparison with the previous quarter. Where it is more appropriate to compare performance with the same period in the previous year this should be stated in the commentary.

Indicator	NSI / Imp T (Note 1)	Previous Year Annual Outturn 2012/13	Annual Target 2013/14	Current Year Annual Outturn 2013/14	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
SCC/004 The percentage of children looked after on the last day of the period who have had three or more placements during the year.	NSI Imp T	8.16%	Below 7.5%	14 214 6.5%		Improved	This indicator includes children who have moved placements for positive reasons. We continue to monitor positive and negative placement moves, and take a lessons learned approach to placement disruptions.
SCC/021 The percentage of looked after children reviews to be carried out within statutory timescales.	Imp T	91.34%	93%	365 425 85.9%		Downturned	The increase in the number of looked after children, from 192 in September 2012 to 226 in December 2013 has had an impact on staff capacity. Although all statutory reviews were completed, they were not all

Indicator	NSI / Imp T (Note 1)	Previous Year Annual Outturn 2012/13	Annual Target 2013/14	Current Year Annual Outturn 2013/14	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
							completed within timescales. The independent reviewing officers continue to schedule reviews within timescales whenever possible.
SCC/033d The percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact at the age of 19.	NSI	84.62%	90%	12 16 75%		Downturned	Four care leavers in the cohort returned home aged 16 and requested no further contact from the Authority.
SCC/033e The percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact at the age of 19, and known to be in suitable accommodation.	NSI	100%	95%	11 12 91.7%		Downturned	One young person was in protective custody on the 31 March 2014. This is deemed to be unsuitable accommodation.
SCC/033f The percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact at the age of 19, and known to be engaged in education, training or employment.	NSI Imp	81.82%	75%	7 12 58.3%		Downturned	Five young people refused to engage in any form of education, training or employment.

Indicator	NSI / Imp T (Note 1)	Previous Year Annual Outturn 2012/13	Annual Target 2013/14	Current Year Annual Outturn 2013/14	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
SCC/041a The percentage of 'eligible', relevant and former relevant children that have pathway plans as required.	NSI	100%	98%	69 69 100%		Maintained	All care leavers and looked after children approaching leaving care were provided with pathway plans as required.
PSR/009a The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant.	Imp T	481.56 days	345 days	439 2 220 days		Improved	The average number of days taken to complete adaptations for children with a disability through the DFG process has significantly reduced, in line with the reduction in time taken to completed adaptations for adult service users. Fewer adaptations were completed this year, as only owner/occupier properties are now taken through the DFG route.

WELSH LANGUAGE

Welsh Language Skills Audit: Percentage complete	<p style="text-align: center;">(Requested from Corporate Services)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">%</p>
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Please give narrative updates on the following questions:

<p>What is your capacity to deliver the following bilingual services ?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic Signatures bilingual? • Out of Office Messages bilingual? • Letters bilingual or in preferred language (preferred language recorded) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic Signatures bilingual <p>Social Services employees use bilingual electronic signatures on e-mail. Instructions how to set up bilingual electronic e-mail signatures are available on the intranet. Staff are also regularly reminded to do so via email.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of Office Messages bilingual <p>Social Services employees use bilingual out of office messages on e-mail. Instructions how to set up bilingual electronic e-mail signatures & out of office messages are available on the intranet and instructions have been circulated via email.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters bilingual or in preferred language (preferred language recorded) <p>Correspondence received by the Social Services is responded to in the language required. Translators are used by services if employees do not have the necessary skills to respond through the medium of Welsh. A record of the language preference of customers is maintained to ensure that customers receive correspondence in the language of their choice.</p> <p>If we do not know the preferred language of the recipient, correspondence will be initiated bilingually. The directorate issues bilingual circulars and standard letters to the public in Wales, unless the linguistic preference of the recipient is known.</p> <p>Target times for replying to correspondence in Welsh are the same as for replying to correspondence in English.</p>
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<p>Update on progress with ensuring that guidance e.g. email, bilingual answering of telephone calls, auto-signatures, disclaimers and out of office replies.</p>	<p>The Directorate sends out communications via email to ensure staff are regularly provided with information and advice on this policy.</p> <p>The Welsh Language Scheme is also included on the Community Services infonet page where staff can access guidance in relation to this policy.</p>
<p>What has been done to identify opportunities to encourage and support others to adopt practices which promote equality between the Welsh and English languages and develop action plans?</p>	<p>The Authority is committed to implementing the More Than Just Words Framework and ensuring the needs of our Welsh speakers are met. The Community Services Directorate is currently focused on achieving the key expectations for progress outlined by the Welsh Government (as highlighted below):</p> <p>We have strengthened our leadership; by appointing Welsh Language Champions within the Directorate to lead our action plan and promote the WL agenda. We are currently working with the HR Team to develop a Forum for Welsh Language champions, where best practice can be shared and circulated to the wider workforce. The Social Services Welsh Language Champion now releases a monthly Welsh language article in the Community Services Bulletin, which communicates changes, developments, staff information/events and best practice guidance, as well as training advice. The WL Champion has also assisted in the creation of three Welsh Language Events within the past year. These events have communicated information in relation to the importance of linguistically sensitive care and the Active Offer Ethos to members of the public and members of staff.</p> <p>We are mapping the skills our workforce; HR are currently collating data via staff WL self assessments, this data will enable us to develop our plans to actively offer WL services and up-skill our workforce through targeted training. Further to this Flintshire is linking with Bangor University in relation to our Social Work recruitment process and approaching local Welsh schools to encourage interest in possible social care career options. The Directorate has also created 2 new learning opportunities for staff, establishing a Welsh Language Conversational Group and assisting the Corporate Training Team in devising a new training model for a Welsh Language basics Class (attended in the majority by Community Services Staff). Our Workforce Development Team is currently creating specialised 'Active Offer' training for key staff groups and we are also exploring new methods of training which will be better suited to our staff in the current climate as work demands increase and staff numbers decline.</p> <p>We are Accepting the 'Active Offer' principle and mainstreaming WL Services into key systems; A new Paris specification has been developed, which will ensure staff actively offer welsh language services and are recording more in depth detail in relation to our service users language needs.</p>

<p>How is the Welsh Language Scheme integrated into your service planning?</p>	<p>More than just Words has been highlighted as a priority in the Directors ACRF and the Heads of Service Plans and will be consistently highlighted as an objective for improvement. The Directorate is currently revising its commissioning contracts; ensuring these contracts include reference to the More Than Just Words Framework and the key expectations for providers.</p> <p>The Directorate has assisted Corporate Services in developing a response to the Welsh Language Commissioners Standards, considering the impact such Standards would have on Social Services.</p> <p>The Directorate has also developed a Welsh Language Action Plan, Statement and Community Profile, which can be viewed by staff members on the Community Services Welsh Language Infonet page.</p>
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EQUALITY – please give narrative update – short paragraph only

<p>What has been undertaken to meet the Strategic Equalities plan?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorate Equalities Group – Monitor the progress of the SEP and ensure all actions, objectives and targets are monitored and achieved. • Equality monitoring – The Directorate Equalities Group has agreed that equality monitoring data will be requested ‘as and when needed’ i.e. when an EIA is to be undertaken on a policy / service change or a new strategy. • EIA – The Directorate Equalities Group will oversee and monitor EIA Action Plans on an annual basis. The Directorate Equalities Group also actively encourages that EIA’s to be started at the start of any policy/ service change, so to ensure that issues can be addressed as the new policy/ service change is being developed. • EIA workshops – Further specialist workshops have taken place this Year to up skill key officers in undertaking EIA’s. • Training -The Workforce Development Team now display an ‘equality awareness slide’ and ‘Welsh language awareness Slide’ during all training sessions. The Directorate continue to make good progress in the area of training for example we have delivered DASH (Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment) risk assessment training, which enables the identification of high risk victims of abuse. The Directorate also offers specialist training to staff such as transgender training, Respect Training, EIA Training, Genital Mutilation training, Disability Awareness training etc. • Commissioning – All future Commissioning strategies will include sections on the needs of the service users from specific protected groups, with further elaboration in corresponding EIA.
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<p>Please list E impact assessments' undertaken and dates completed.</p> <p>Were any actions undertaken to reduce impact as a result of the EIA?</p>	<p>Service User Engagement Action Plan – EIA Completed – Review EIA June 2014.</p> <p>The EIA's Undertaken found that the impact on minority groups were likely to be positive or have no effect due to the person centred nature of each project. No further actions were required in these instances as Service protocols dictate the individual needs of each person are to be considered.</p>
<p>Please list the systems in place in your area to monitor the diversity of customers.</p> <p>Please give an example of how monitoring data has been used to improve services or identify and reduce barriers to accessing services within your area of responsibility.</p> <p>Have you put in place any initiatives to capture equal monitoring data so that you are able to better understand the profile of your customers?</p>	<p>There are numerous systems where by Community Services records and monitors equalities data. The core systems for recording & monitoring within the Directorate are the PARIS system, Mental Health Database, TAFF Systems and Careworks. These systems allow for the recording and monitoring of a persons language preference, nationality, age, sex, ethnicity, religion and any mental or physical disability. The Directorate can also access other external systems which record this relevant data, such as Medilinks.</p> <p>Due to the nature of social service assessments the individual needs and feelings of each service user are at the forefront of consideration and in-depth records in relation to a person's equalities background are in the majority of cases collated during the assessment process. Social Services is currently undergoing a number of changes, the introduction of the new Integrated Assessments Framework and the Single Point of Access Programme means we will increase our focus on ensuring the data relevant to a persons individual needs is captured and any barriers to accessing services will be mitigated at the initial stages of involvement.</p> <p>It is the Directorates policy that where possible a person who receives a Local Authority service will be linked with a staff member of a similar ethnical, religious or linguistic background. An example of where this policy is essential is during the matching procedure within the adoption process.</p> <p>The central recording IT business system for Social Services, which enables us to collate robust data on the people who use our services and is vital to the processes of commissioning, is currently undergoing a significant reconfiguration. Any developments undertaken by the PARIS Team will take into consideration our legislative duty and strategic equality plans objectives, actions and targets.</p>
<p>Please give an example of how the Translation and Interpretation facilities for different languages and formats have been promoted to customers within you area of responsibility.</p>	<p>We have promoted the interpretation and translation services to ensure our workforce offer customers and potential customers, whose first language is not English or Welsh, access to a professional interpreter.</p>

Do you have any examples of initiative to promote equality, eliminate discrimination and promote good community relations?

The Directorate has created Community Services Involvement Action Plan. The main aim of the Community Services Involvement Action Plan is to ensure a cohesive and consistent approach to service user and tenant engagement across the Directorate.

A key outcome is to develop and implement a set of standards for service user and tenant involvement, based on national and local good practice and to promote equality and good community relations.

The Involvement action plan relates to the wider aims of the organisation as follows:

Effective communication and engagement with residents and service users is a key priority for Flintshire County Council (see Council Plan and Head of Service Plans).

On the 19th July 2011, Flintshire's Executive endorsed the [National Principles of Public Engagement](#); a set of high level, overarching principles developed by the Welsh Government that define the minimum standards citizens can expect when their views and opinions are sought. The Community Services Involvement Action Plan complements the National Principles.

The Community Services Involvement Action Plan is a service level action plan that sits below the Council's [Core Principles for Public Engagement and Consultation](#) which are a set of overarching core principles for the Council and all its services in the preparation and delivery of engagement and consultation activity.

The outcomes for service users are as follow:

- Positive service user involvement and influence in the planning, development and delivery of services, leading to continuous improvement, improved decision making, greater transparency and accountability. Allowing service users to bring their own individual thoughts and influence to the development of services, encouraging the increased representation of minority groups within the Local Authority.
- Lessons learned / service developments arising from the analysis of service user and tenant questionnaires contributing to higher levels of service user satisfaction.
- Opportunities for service users to meet new people, building on existing skills and have a role in shaping the services which impact upon their lives