

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Director of Social Work Services

Children's Services Committee: 18 April 2007

Subject: Performance Indicators for Children's Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report provides Committee with a progress report on Social Work Performance within Children's Services for the period ending 28 February 2007.
- 1.2** This report also informs Committee of recent performance of Social Work in the submission of Social Background Reports (SBRs) and Initial Assessment Reports (IARs) to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and on the proportion of children and young people made the subject of a supervision order who are seen within fifteen working days.
- 1.3** The remainder of the performance targets for Children's Services are best suited to annual reporting, for example, educational attainment and progress on the level of qualified staff in residential units.
- 1.4** In line with Scottish Executive Best Value Guidance and Audit Scotland recommendations, the report presents information for elected members and stakeholders as part of wider Public Performance Reporting.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Progress Report to the Children's Services Committee on 14th February 2007 highlighted Performance Indicators where the Social Work Department is aiming to improve performance.
- 2.2** Due to some low levels of performance which were highlighted in previous reports a series of actions aiming to improve performance were initiated.
- 2.3** This report provides an update in performance detailing the performance for Quarters 1, 2 and 3 and for the first two months of Quarter 4. Due to the timeframe of the indicators, analyses of the 3 months of Quarter 4 will not become available until late May.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Children's Reporter Liaison: Social Background Reports Submitted on Time
The percentage of Children's Hearing reports requested by the Reporter which were submitted within target time.

- 3.1.1** In 2005/06 we were ranked 24th out of 32 Councils, at the bottom of the 3rd quartile of Local Authorities and lying 4th in our comparator group of five authorities.
- 3.1.2** The issues and trends identified as affecting our performance in the Children's Hearing indicators were the volume of report requests and supervision orders made and recruitment and retention issues within Social Work Services for Children and Families. West Dunbartonshire had the second highest percentage of children in Scotland referred to the Reporter. In 2005/06 620 more children from West Dunbartonshire were referred than in Inverclyde, one of our comparator councils.
- 3.1.3** A series of actions to improve performance were initiated resulting in a revised method of recording and a streamlined process of passing completed reports to the Reporter by secure email link.
- 3.1.4** Discrepancies have been identified between our understanding of the level of outstanding reports and the Reporter's Time Interval reporting system.
- 3.1.5** The Performance Improvement Officer for the National Scottish Children's Reporter Administration has been invited to meet with us to learn of our concerns over these discrepancies and agree a way forward.
- 3.1.6** Social Work has recorded the provision of reports submitted on time as follows:

April-June 2006	July-Sept 2006	Oct-Dec 2006	Jan-Feb 2007
29%	38%	34%	29%

- 3.2** Supervision: Percentage of Children seen within 15 working days
The percentage of Children and Young People seen within 15 working days of issue of a supervision requirement by the children's hearing.

- 3.2.1** In 2005/06 we were ranked 28th nationally and were in the bottom quartile of Local Authorities. We were below our comparator group average of 75% and lying bottom of the comparator group.
- 3.2.2** The percentage of young people seen within 15 working days has improved during the year, as follows:

April - June 2006	July-Sept 2006	Oct – Dec 2006	Jan-Feb 2007
45%	69%	78%	91%

- 3.2.3** Actions put in place and reported to Committee in December have assisted in achieving an increase in performance.
- 3.3** Looked After and Accommodated Children
Although this is no longer a performance indicator for Audit Scotland, it was agreed that elected members should continue to be informed of the number of children being looked after by the Council.

- 3.3.1** Overall, there was an increase of 8% in the number of children looked after in 2005/06 (323: 2004/05, 350: 2005/06). In the three quarters of 2006/07 ending 31st December numbers have risen in each of the quarters.

April – June 2006
355

July-Sept 2006
368

Oct – Dec 2006
382

- 3.3.2** The increase in looked after and accommodated children is in line with national trends, where numbers have risen each year over the last 5 years, and with the level of deprivation experienced in West Dunbartonshire. Looked After Children numbers are monitored by our Children's Services and the Departmental Management Teams. Work is currently underway to analyse factors leading to a child or young person having to be accommodated. This will be reported to a future Children's Services Committee.

4. Departmental Objective: Evidence of Continuous Improvement and Performance Improvement Actions

4.1 Best Value Review

- 4.1.1** During this year four Best Value Reviews are being undertaken two of which relate to Children's Services, Standby Out of Hours Service and Youth Justice Services.

- 4.1.2** Work is ongoing and it is expected the Youth Justice review will be completed by the end of April with the Standby Out of Hours review completed by the end of May.

- 4.1.3** Further reviews on adoption and fostering services and the use of temporary agency staff are planned to commence during 2007/08. Two joint reviews are also planned to commence during 2007/08: one on the provision of adaptations (along with Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services); and another on the provision of transport (along with Education and Cultural Services) commenced in the last week in February 2007.

4.2 Quality Management Systems

- 4.2.1** Through a process of workforce planning and development meetings held with Section Heads, an appropriate scheme has been identified and agreed for each section in Social Work, along with a timescale for submission, which takes account of the amount of work required for realistic progress to be made.

- 4.2.2** Three groups of staff are currently involved in preparatory work:

- The Strategy, Resources and Quality Assurance Section are preparing a submission for IIP, and are about to go through a pre-submission test-run with an expected submission for accreditation to take place around May/June 2007.

- Residential and Day Care services for children and adults are preparing a joint submission for Charter Mark
- Groupwork teams in childcare are preparing a joint submission for Charter Mark.

4.3 Complaints

- 4.3.1** Between 1 October and 31 January 2007, the Department received 3 formal complaints. One of the complaints was in relation to children's services and was justified as there had been a delay in implementation of contact due to staff sickness and annual leave. The service has now been put in place.

4.4 Performance Development Planning (PDP)

- 4.4.1** The Service Plan improvement target for PDP is that every Social Work employee will have had at least one PDP review by 31 March 2007.

- 4.4.2** Progress on this is fairly substantial, however, it is now clear that this target will not be achieved. Of a total workforce of 1,378 employees it is expected that 834 will have been completed by 31 March. Most of the remaining employees to be reviewed are in Home Care and these have been delayed due to the large numbers of employees involved. Plans are in place to ensure these employees have had their first PDP review by the end of June.

5. Personnel Implications

- 5.1** There are no personnel implications relating to the above other than those noted regarding PDP.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial implications arising from the performance noted above.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** The risk created by poor achievement on Statutory Performance Indicators is that external bodies will make judgements about the performance of the Department and Council and service users and carers will have less confidence in our services.
- 7.2** In order to lessen this risk we have initiated action plans for each SPI that have been agreed by management. Ongoing monitoring and reporting to Committee via the Quarterly Performance Reporting cycle will assist in monitoring progress.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1** Members are asked to:

- i) note the content of the report,
and
- ii) request that the Director of Social Work Services continues to report on performance through the Quarterly Performance Reporting cycles to this Committee.

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Appendices:	No appendices
Background Papers:	Children’s Services Committee 14 th February 2007 Report: Performance Indicators For Children’s Services
Wards Affected:	All wards