

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Director of Social Work Services

Children's Services Committee: 20 June 2007

Subject: Annual Performance Report 2006/07 and Quarterly Progress Report - January to March 2007 – Performance Indicators: Social Work Services for Children and Continuous Improvement Information for all Social Work

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report provides Committee with a progress report on Social Work Performance within Children's Services for the period ending 31st March 2007.
- 1.2** The report also provides information on the annual performance where this information is available at present. It should be noted that the annual information is subject to further refinement and audit therefore the figures may change between now and the final published figures.
- 1.3** The report also provides information on work being undertaken by the department on continuous improvement, including Best Value Reviews, Performance Development Planning, etc.
- 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** This report provides an update on the performance of Social Work Childcare Services. Information is presented for Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) which are monitored quarterly and for one SPI which is reported annually as follows:

- EC4b: Children's Reporter Liaison: Social Background Reports Submitted on Time;
- EC5b: Supervision: Percentage of Children seen within 15 working days; and
- EC7: Percentage of Staff Qualified within Children's Residential Services (Annual).

The remainder of the Social Work Children's Services SPIs which are reported on an annual basis are not presently available and will be reported at the next Children's Services Committee.

3. Main Issues

3.1 EC4b: 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 A meeting was held with the Planning Performance Manager of National Scottish Children's Reporter Administration to discuss concerns. It was agreed that in 2006/07:

- An increase in compulsory supervision requirements had contributed to an increase in the number of social work reports required by SCRA;
- During this year the number of social background reports and initial assessments reports required by SCRA rose by around 30% from last year;
- The timescale for submitting SBRs on time was reduced from 25 working days to 20 working days;
- That the time interval figures published by SCRA were unlikely to be the same as those obtained from social work; and
- The way forward was to develop a protocol between social work and SCRA which clarified the processes and pressure points.

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-Mar 2007
29%	38%	34%	26%

While the target for 2006/07 of 60% has not been achieved performance has improved since 2005/06. Further improvement in performance is expected due to improvement actions taken recently, as noted above.

3.2 EC5b: Supervision: Percentage of Children seen within 15 working days

This measures 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-Mar 2007
45%	69%	78%	72%

3.2.3 Actions put in place and reported to Committee in December have assisted in achieving an increase in performance.

3.2.4 The annual average performance has improved significantly from 54.8% in 2005/06 to 69.9% in 2006/07. Further improvement is expected following the improvements implemented as described in Appendix 2.

3.3 EC7: Percentage of Qualified Staff within Childcare Residential Services

This measures the levels of qualified staff within children's residential services.

3.3.1 In 2005/06 we were ranked 10th nationally, but were above the levels in our comparator group.

3.3.2 The draft figure for 2006/07 shows the level of qualified staff has increased from 63% in 2005/06 to 75% in 2006/07.

3.3.3 Management action has been taken to attempt to continue to increase the level of qualifications as noted in Appendix 2. In addition the recently approved Workforce Development Plan seeks to have all such employees appropriately qualified by the end of 2008/09.

3.4 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.

3.4.1 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 four quarters of 2006/07 ending 31st March numbers have continued to rise.

April – June 2006	July-Sept 2006	Oct – Dec 2006	Jan – March 2007
355	368	382	382

3.4.2 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 September with the Standby Out of Hours review completed by the end of August.

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 have been through a pre-submission test-run with an expected submission for accreditation to take place at the end of June 2007;
- Residential and Day Care services for children and adults are preparing a joint submission for Charter Mark; and
- Group work teams in childcare are preparing a joint submission for Charter Mark.

4.3 Complaints

4.3.1 Between 1 January and 31 March 2007, the Department received 7 formal complaints. Four of the complaints were in relation to children's services.

One child care complaint has received an interim response. This is a complex case requiring inter agency investigation to identify supports for several children and is ongoing.

Two complaints related to child care social workers. One expressing lack of support from a social worker is under investigation. The other alleged a breach of confidentiality and was found to be unjustified, as the social worker named had no knowledge of the client or their circumstances.

The fourth complaint claimed the complainer had not received a response to an earlier complaint. The response had been sent in November and was re-sent once the address of the complainer had been verified.

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 has slipped but is substantial, however it is clear that this target has not been achieved. Of a total workforce of 1,378 employees 830 were completed by 31 March 2007. Most of the remaining employees are in Home Care, which has been delayed due to the numbers of employees involved. Plans are in place to ensure these employees have had their first PDP review by the end of June. A large number of these employees have received their first PDP in April and May 2007.

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. Conclusions

8.1 The above report shows the performance of Social Work Services for children and young people against identified improvement targets. As can be seen from the above, the majority of the targets have been met,

however there are a number where targets have not been met or where performance as measured for SPIs will be reduced from previous years.

- 8.2** The department has instigated a number of actions as noted above and in Appendix 2 to attempt to improve performance in the future.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1** Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the action initiated by the department to attempt to improve performance.

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Appendices:	Appendix 1: Summary of performance on Social Work Childcare Statutory Performance Indicators Appendix 2: Traffic Lights Reports for Social Work Childcare Statutory Performance Indicators
Background Papers:	Children's Services Committee 14 th February 2007 and 18 th April 2007 Report: Performance Indicators For Children's Services
Wards Affected:	All wards