

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Social Work and Health

Education and Life Long Learning Committee: 9 September 2009

Subject: Annual Performance Report 2008/09 Statutory Service Plan Actions and Performance Indicators: Social Work Services for Children and Families

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report provides members with information on the performance of Social Work in relation to the Service Plan Actions 2008/2012, Statutory Performance Indicators and Key Performance Areas for Children and Young People for the period of 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009.
- 1.2** It should be noted that the annual information is subject to audit. For this reason the figures presented in this report may vary slightly from those presented nationally following completion of the audit process.
- 1.3** The report also provides information on complaints about services for children and young people over the year.
- 1.4** In line with Scottish Government Guidance and Audit Scotland recommendations, this report presents information for elected members and stakeholders as part of the Corporate Public Performance Reporting Framework.

2. Background

- 2.1** As part of a programme of continuous improvement and performance monitoring all Social Work Services have agreed Service Level priorities to support the delivery of National, Corporate and Department Objectives and Priorities.
- 2.2** The report provides information on progress in meeting the above and both statutory and key performance indicator targets for Children and Young People's Services.
- 2.3** This is the final year for the submission of these SPIs to Audit Scotland. All of the areas of work covered by these indicators will continue to be reported on albeit that some of the actual indicators may be altered and refined.

3. Corporate Themes and Priorities

- 3.1** Within Social Work and Health a set of departmental objectives and service level actions has been agreed to support the attainment of Corporate Priorities.

3.2 For 2008/09 within Services for Children and Families the themes and priorities were agreed as those of:

- Health and Wellbeing
Improve service to Vulnerable Children and Families
- Safe and Sustainable Communities
Improve Child Protection Services

3.3 Improve Services to Vulnerable children and families

Under this objective there are three main actions: Implementing “Getting It Right for Every Child”, Developing the Council’s response to “We can and Must Do Better” and Improving Child Protection in response to the Inspection of Services to Protect Children.

3.3.1 Implement the Getting It Right for Every Child Agenda

- Progress has been made in implementing the Scottish Executive Integration Assessment Framework to improve information sharing and care planning. Phased Implementation of the Integrated Assessment Framework is on target. Two pilots have been carried out and positively evaluated. Social Background Reports for Scottish Children's Reporter Administration are now within the Framework. Further implement will indicate include reporting the Looked After and Accommodated paperwork within the IAF.
- Protocols for interagency working with children and families affected by parental substance misuse have been reviewed and the Getting Our Priorities Right Guidance is about to be re-issued.
- Review of family support services is nearing completion and Business Process mapping is underway.
- A review has been conducted into the current transition and pathway planning arrangements to ensure they meet the needs of children, young people and families and an implementation plan is being developed.
- In order to develop and implement a strategy and action plan to address the needs of young carers the following progress has been made:

A West Dunbartonshire Inter Agency Policy, Strategy and Guidance for staff on Supporting Young Carers has been developed
Awareness of young carers was promoted at a multi agency event in February 2009

Questions on young carers have been included in the annual Additional Support Needs audit in schools to improve information and identify need

In partnership with Y-Sort-It Youth Information Service, and the Youth Strategy Action Groups, young people, including young

carers, have been involved in focus groups and workshops to consult with them on needs, services and development of information leaflets

Social Work groupwork teams have piloted the Princess Royal Trust for Carers Assessment tool for young carers

- A West Dunbartonshire Parenting Strategy is nearing completion with a short timescale agreed for it to be written and published. Meantime work has been underway to develop and implement strands of the agreed model.
- A research project has been completed to identify the level of need in relation to young survivors of childhood abuse. A report has been produced and a bid for funding has been made to Fairer Scotland Fund.
- Domestic Abuse Pathfinder is currently being evaluated and a final report is due by March 2010. This will shape the way in which inter-agency support children affected by domestic abuse.

3.3.2 Develop and implement local actions in response to "We Can and Must Do Better"

This guidance refers to the responsibilities of the Council and partner agencies in respect of looked after children. The following actions have been progressed.

In order to progress the corporate parenting agenda we have appointed a Corporate Parenting Strategy Officer and an action plan is being developed.

Systems have been put in place to strengthen multi agency working in schools and improve co-ordinated assessment and care planning. Learning from successful developments in secondary schools, we have established Multi-Agency Support Groups (MSG) in 3 primary schools to date, the intention will be to roll out across clusters

We have put in place a crisis intervention service which will respond to situations where to respond a young person is at imminent risk of admission to residential care

There are two teachers with specific responsibility for supporting the educational needs of looked after children. The teachers work directly with children and young people as well as supporting parents and carers with educational issues

3.3.3 Improve Child Protection Services

The follow through initial inspection of services to protect children and young people by HMle was published in May 2009. The report noted that there had been significant progress on recommendations made in the initial inspection in 2007, which included the key areas of risk assessment and service user involvement, and stated that no further visits would be made to the area under phase 1 of the HMle inspection programme.

4. Statutory Performance Indicators

4.1 The annual performance of the SPIs is summarised in Appendix 1 and in sections 4.3 to 4.8 below. National rankings will not be available until published by Audit Scotland in November.

4.2 There are 5 SPIs for Children Services. These are further broken down into different sections and this report therefore details performance for 11 areas, 5 show an improving trend and 6 a decline in performance.

4.3 Children's Reporter Liaison: Social Background Reports (SBRS) Submitted on Time

In 2007/08 our performance showed that 51% of Children's Hearings reports were submitted on time.

During 2008/09 performance has fluctuated with the annual figure being 45%.

The issues and trends identified as affecting our performance in the Children's Hearing indicators are the volume of work associated with report requests from the Scottish Children's Reporter Administrator, recruitment and retention issues within Social Work Services for Children and Families and continuing difficulties in agreeing accurate performance information between the Department and SCRA. An exercise is constantly undertaken to identify the level of reports which are submitted just outwith timescales to identify clear reasons as to why any are late and to scrutinise the differences in performance information.

4.4 Supervision: Percentage of Children seen within 15 working days

In 2007/08 78% of children were recorded as seen within 15 working days. In 2008/09 performance has varied over the year with the annual figure being 63%.

We have identified that all of the Children and Young People who were not seen on time are currently open cases where there is a level of ongoing support from one of the services within children and families

4.5 Looked After Children – Academic Attainment

4.5.1 This indicator relates to young people aged 16/17 years ceasing to be looked after at home as well as those who have been accommodated away from home and is the third year the indicator has included care leavers supervised at home.

4.5.2 Performance for 2007/08 is as follows:

- At Home: 1 SCQF level 3 or above
The number of children ceasing to be looked after at home decreased significantly from 42 last year to 35 this year. Of the children 66% attained 1 SCQF level 3 compared to 55% last year.

- At Home: English and Maths at SCQF level 3 or above

There was a marked increase this year in the number of children gaining both English and Maths. IN 2007/08 31% gained both qualifications, this year 37% attained both qualifications.

- Away from Home: 1 SCQF level 3 or above

At 21 the number of children ceasing to be looked after away from home has dropped slightly from 23 last year. Of these 81% achieved 1 SCQF level 3 or above, whereas last year 61% did.

- Away from Home: English and Maths at SCQF level 3 or above

The proportion of children gaining both subjects increased from 39% last year to 67% in 2008/09.

4.5.3 There is always a high level of support provided to this vulnerable group of young people. While it is good to note improved figures, it is important to remember that the indicator is based on young people leaving care or supervision within the year and is therefore affected by issues specific to the particular young people leaving care during the period.

4.6 Residential Accommodation – Staff Qualification

4.6.1 This indicator reports on the level of qualified staff within children's residential units and is used as a proxy measure for quality of service. West Dunbartonshire has a strong commitment to training and supporting staff to complete qualifications within target times.

4.6.2 The level of qualified staff has decreased from 75% in 2007/08 to 52% in 2008/09. Our target was to achieve 95% in 2008/09. The drop in performance is due to a change in the qualification criteria for managers and to the closure of one unit.

4.7 Respite Care

4.7.1 This indicator measures the level of respite care provided by Councils to children with disabilities aged 0 – 17 years and counts the provision of overnight and daytime respite.

Respite Care is one of the areas showing a drop in some types of provision but it is important to remember that the need and therefore demand is based on the specific needs of the children and young people assessed.

Performance in 2008/09 was as follows:

- Overnight respite provided – 1,303 nights. This is a significant increase on last year's figure of 957 and reflects the impact a small number of new

sizeable packages of respite can have on the overnights total and also the impact of a smaller number of young people moving on to adult services

- Percentage of respite nights not in a care home at 1.8% is a small decrease on last year's proportion of 1.99%.
- Total hours daytime respite – 27,462. This is a decrease on last year's total of 28,702.
- Percentage of daytime respite not in a day care centre – 66%. This is a decrease from last year figure of 70%.

5. Key Performance Areas

5.1 Looked After and Accommodated Children

The number of children looked after by the local authority is 387. This reflects a 5% reduction the 2007/08 figure of 408 returning the authority to the figures last seen in 2006/07. This is broken down as follows:

Cared for at Home	199
Community Placement	167
Residential Placement	21

5.2 Child Protection Referrals and Registrations

Between 1st April 2008 and 31 March 2009 there were 165 child protection referrals, an increase of 4% from the previous year.

- 46 children were placed on the Child Protection Register
- During the year 41 were de-registered
- 56% of children on the register were registered for 6 months or less

As at 1st April 2009 there were 32 children on the Child Protection Register

The main category abuse noted for these children was:

50% for physical injury;
38% for physical neglect;
6% for emotional abuse; and
6% for sexual abuse;

6. Complaints

6.1 Between April 2008 and March 2009 there were 11 formal complaints in relation to Services for Children and Families. All were acknowledged within the required timescale of 5 working days. Eight received a full reply within 20 working days and one an interim reply within this timeframe.

Of the 11 complaints, 2 were found to be justified; 2 were found to be part justified; 5 were found to be unjustified; and 2 complaints were found to be unsubstantiated.

7. Personnel Issues

7.1 There are no direct Personnel issues arising from the above.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from the above.

9. Risk Analysis

9.1 There are a number of areas of performance noted above where performance may not meet identified targets. These targets will be used by external agencies as a means of judging the performance of the Social Work service. If performance on these areas is poor then there is a risk to the reputation of the Council and department.

9.2 In order to mitigate against these risks improvement plans have been agreed by management to attempt to maximise the department's performance.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

10.1 The above report shows the performance of Social Work and Health 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 may be reduced from previous years.

10.2 The department has instigated a number of actions to attempt to improve performance in the future.

10.3 A revised set of indicators will be submitted to a future committee for debate and approval.

10.4 Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and to request ongoing reports on progress.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Social Work Statutory Performance Indicators =
Covalent Report
Appendix 2 about Social Work Services for Children and
Families Complaints Annual Report 2008-09

Background papers:

Wards Affected: All