

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Interim Executive Director of Social Work and Health

Education and Life Long Learning Committee: 12 May 2010.

Subject: Half Year Performance Report October to March 2010 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 2009/2013 and Key Performance Areas for Children and Young People for the period of 1 October 2009 to 31st March 2010.
- 1.2** The report also provides information on complaints about services for children and young people over the period.
- 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 Departmental Objectives and Priorities.
- 2.2** The report provides information on progress in meeting the above and also key performance targets for Children and Young People's Services.

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 Objectives and Priorities.
- 3.2** For 2009/13 within Services for Children and Families the priorities were agreed as those of:
 - Improve services to Vulnerable Children and Families
 - 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

Integrated Assessment and Care Planning:

- Work in implementing the Integrated Assessment Framework is on track and we are currently carrying out a pilot to test the electronic sharing of information which, it is hoped, will provide an interim solution until the National eCare Programme can be implemented. A paper has been written to go to the Joint Strategy Group for Children's Services proposing a full implementation date of September 2010.

Domestic Abuse:

- Posts to support work in schools in the areas of Domestic Abuse prevention; awareness raising; and counselling and advocacy services have now been cleared for advertising with interviews planned later this month.

Young Carers:

- A report with recommendations and an action plan is currently being prepared for reporting to a future committee. Progress has been limited due to capacity issues following the retirement of key personnel. The vacant posts have now been filled and progressing this work will be a priority.

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

Work continues across all local agencies to implement the actions identified to ensure child friendly, inclusive and targeted services which improve outcomes for Looked After and Accommodated Children and Young People in terms of health, education and social relationships.

- We are working with the Scottish Government to further develop measure of attainment for Looked After and Looked After and Accommodated Young People. Once this work is complete performance will be reported to the committee.

Corporate Parenting Strategy: This guidance refers to the responsibilities of the Council and partner agencies in respect of looked after children

- The Strategy has been developed and was the subject of a report to both the Education and Life Long Learning and Social Work and Health Improvement Committees in January 2010. Over the rest of this committee cycle the strategy has been on the agenda at the remaining service committees returning to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee on 12 May and then being presented to Council on 28 May. The strategy will be launched at a Senior Managers Network in the near future. All departments and agencies will require to develop an action plan to support the implementation of the strategy.

3.3.3 Improve Child Protection Services

Improve Child Protection Services:

- The Annual Report for 2009 and Business Plan 2010 are being drafted now.
- A Consultation Plan to support progress is being developed as part of the departmental Consultation Strategy.
- Progress on this work has been limited due to capacity issues.
- Monitoring System is in place to ensure consistency of practice.
- Timescales in relation to the review of inter agency procedures being produced in partnership with 12 other local authorities across the West of Scotland have slipped but are nearing completion.

4. Key Performance Areas

4.1 There are currently three key performance areas for Children's Services

- Work with Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA)
- Looked After and Accommodated Children
- Child Protection

4.2 Social Background Reports submitted on time:

In 2008/09 44.8% reports were submitted within the agreed timescales. Our performance in Quarter 4 is 61.7% which shows an improvement on both the annual (2008/09) and quarterly figures in 2009/10.

4.3 Percentage of Children placed on a Supervision Requirement who were seen within 15 working days:

In 2008/09 63% of children made subject to a supervision order were seen within 15 days. Since Q1 there has been steady improvement on this indicator. Quarter 4 performance, at 86.4%, is marginally down due to the circumstances of two families where hospitalisation and family bereavement meant the children were unable to be seen within the timescales.

4.4 Looked After and Looked After and Accommodated Children:

The number of children looked after by the local authority as at March 2010 is 379. Levels have remained relatively steady across the year. Placements are broken down as follows:

Cared for at Home	159
Community Placement	175
Residential Unit	25
Residential Schools	18
Secure Unit	0
Other Residential Unit	2

4.5 Child Protection Register

As at 31st March 2010 there were 29 Children on the Child Protection Register as compared with 14 at the end of December 2009. The main category of abuse noted for these children was as follows:

Category	Children	Percentage
Physical Neglect	13	45%
Physical Injury	5	17%
Emotional Abuse	9	31%
Sexual Abuse	2	7%
Failure to Thrive	0	0%
	29	100%

The main reason for the increase in children on the Child Protection Register is a recent rise in family groups being registered in the Alexandria area. Over February and March 2010, 6 families were registered. One large family constitutes 17% of the total children currently registered.

There were 14 children de-registered between 31st December 2009 and 31st March 2010. The main reasons for de-registration were:

- ◆ Reduced risk due to good support mechanisms; and
- ◆ Reduction in risk due to alleged perpetrator being absent.

(It is important to note that when percentages are applied to relatively small numbers even minor changes can appear significant.)

5. Complaints

- 5.1** Between October 2009 and March 2010 there were 10 formal complaints in relation to children's services. All were acknowledged within the required timescale of 5 days. 6 of the 10 were replied to within 28 days and 4 are still being investigated. Of the 6 completed investigations, 1 was found to be justified, 2 partly justified, 2 unjustified and 1 unsubstantiated.

The complaint which was upheld related to a perceived lack of sensitivity on the part of the worker and the complainant has since been allocated a new worker.

Of the 2 partly justified complaints:

- 1 related to an incident during supervised contact and a meeting has been arranged with all involved to agree the format of future supervised contact.
- 1 related to the cross authority transfer of a case and processes were examined and updated.

6. People Implications

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

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from the above.

8. Risk Analysis

8.1 Although overall performance has greatly improved there are some areas of performance noted above where we have not met targets set. 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.

8.2 In order to mitigate these risks, improvement plans are in place to attempt to maximise the department's performance.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 The report shows the performance of Social Work and Health against identified improvement targets. Work is progressing against the action points noted and performance against the indicators in relation to the Children's Hearings system are showing overall improvement.

9.2 The department continues to work on the actions put in place to attempt to improve performance in the future.

9.3 Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.



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Appendices Appendix 1: Social Work Statutory Performance Indicators,
Covalent Report
Appendix 2 Complaints about Social Work Services for
Children and Families Complaints October 2009 to March
2010.

Background papers:

Wards Affected: All