

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNC

Report by the Acting Director of Social Work Services

Children's Services Committee: 13 December 2006

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 1 July to 30 September 2006.
- 1.2** This report also informs Committee of actions taken to address the performance of Social Work in the submission of Social Background Reports (SBRs) 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.

2. Background

- 2.1** 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.
- 2.2** The attached Appendix compares our performance against the national average and that of our comparator group of Local Authorities (2004/05 data).

3. Performance

Children's Reporter Liaison: Social Background Reports submitted on time

- 3.1** The issues identified as affecting 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.
- 3.2** A series of actions were initiated:
 - revised recording and administrative procedures;
 - two dedicated posts to progress the provision of reports;
 - secure email links to the Reporter's Office.
- 3.3** The above actions have led to an improved performance in the provision of Social Background reports submitted on time.

2005-06	April-June 2006	July-Sept 2006
31.6%	29.0%	38.0%

3.4 The 2005/2006 Audit Scotland Annual Performance review was taken from the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration information system and it was apparent that there were discrepancies between this data and that held on the Social Work Information system. Our monitoring systems indicate 40% of reports were submitted in time in 2005/06. Work is underway to identify where discrepancies are occurring.

3.5 Supervision : Percentage of Children seen within 15 working days
The proportion of Children and Young People seen within 15 working days has fluctuated over the year and currently shows some improvement.

2005/2006	April - June 2006	July-Sept 2006
54.8%	45.0%	68.7%

3.6 An initial audit of case files carried out in line with National Standards for Social Work within the Children's Hearing System has indicated that the recording of this area of work is inconsistent across the department. Part of the audit involved sampling case records of Children and Young People made subject to a supervision order during the reporting year. The audit showed that all children and young people had an allocated worker and care plan as required by National Standards and that 75% had been seen well within the 15 working day period.

3.7 Standards have been developed to establish clear procedures and improve recording practice.

3.8 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.

Overall, there was an increase in the number of children looked after in 2005/06 (323: 2004/05, 350: 2005/06). Those looked after in the community rose by 11% to 294 while those in residential accommodation fell by 5% to 56.

2005/06	April – June 2006	July-Sept 2006
350	355	368

Although the increase in looked after and accommodated children is in line with national trends and the level of deprivation experienced in West Dunbartonshire, the numbers are monitored by our Children's Services and the Departmental Management Teams. In addition we believe that one of the reasons for the increase is the high level of drug misuse in West Dunbartonshire. This can impact on the number of children who require to be cared for either through parental drug use resulting in children requiring care or through the child's own use of drugs which may result in a supervision order being made.

An analysis of the reasons for children and young people becoming looked after and accommodated will be completed for 2006/2007 and will be reported to Children's Services Committee.

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

4.1 Best Value Review

During this year four Best Value Reviews are being undertaken two of which relate to Children's Services and these are for the Standby Out of Hours Service and Youth Justice.

The Standby Out of Hours review is now at the final report stage and will be reported to Committee around April 2007.

The review of Youth Justice Services is still in progress and it is expected that it will be reported to Committee around April 2007 also.

4.2 Quality Management Systems

Through a process of workforce planning and development meetings held with Section Heads, we have identified and agreed an appropriate scheme 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.

Three groups of staff are currently involved in preparatory work. The Strategy, Resources and Quality Assurance Section is preparing a submission for IIP, residential and day care services for children and adults are preparing a joint submission for Charter Mark, as are the groupwork teams in childcare.

Achievement of these targets is being supported by the departmental Quality Assurance and Training Section with support from the Employee Development Team in the Corporate Personnel Section.

The implementation plan for Quality Management Systems is reported as a separate report to this committee.

4.3 Complaints

Between 1 July and 30 September 2006, the department received four formal complaints, none of which were in relation to Children's Services.

4.4 Performance Development Planning (PDP)

Our commitment with regard to PDP is that every Social Work employee will have had at least one PDP review by 31 March 2007, which is ahead of our corporate target date.

Progress on this is now fairly substantial and on target to achieve our commitment.

5. Personnel

5.1 There are no personnel issues at present.

6. Finance

6.1 There are no financial issues at present.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Committee is asked to note the content of the report and to request that the Acting Director of Social Work Services reports on progress to the Children's Services Committee on 14 February, 2007.

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Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All