



**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

7 JUNE 2022

QUARTER 4 2021/22 PERFORMANCE REPORT

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Committee with an update on the Children and Family Services Department's performance for the period to March 2022 (Quarter 4).

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Children and Family Services Department's performance is reported to the Committee in accordance with the Council's corporate performance management arrangements.

Background

3. A Strategic Plan 2018-2022 was agreed by the Council setting out priority outcomes for delivery and supporting performance metrics, and this was refreshed in 2020. A new Strategic Plan has been signed off and is due to be agreed by Cabinet on 18 May 2022. Performance reporting arrangements for 2022/23 will be revised accordingly to reflect these changes.
4. The Children and Family Services Department has also produced a Departmental Plan 2020-2023 which identifies ambitions and measures to monitor progress. The following report and accompanying dashboard aim to report on the priority areas identified by both plans and monitor performance of key indicators on a quarterly basis. The current performance dashboard is appended and has been refreshed to concentrate on indicators where updated data is available for Quarter 4.
5. Quartile positions are added where comparative national data is available. Comparative data is not available for all indicators.

Overview

6. From 23 measures that have been reported, six have improved and 12 have declined. Five indicators are provided for information only, with no polarity.
7. From 10 measures that have a national benchmark, one is in the top quartile, six are in the second quartile, one is in the third quartile and two are in the fourth quartile.

Helping children in Leicestershire live in safe, stable environments and have secure attachments

8. Local authority comparisons used are most recent figures published by the government for end of year benchmarking.
9. The percentage of Child Protection cases reviewed within timescales was 86.3% at the end of Quarter 4, a decline on the Quarter 3 figure (94.2%). This places Leicestershire in the fourth quartile of all local authorities by published benchmarks. This may reflect the implementation of additional standards to underpin the Child Protection process and more specifically some of the staffing pressures experienced in Quarter 4 across both Intensive Referral Order (IRO) teams and Locality teams.
10. The percentage of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time decreased to 28.0% at the end of Quarter 4. In this period 60 children began a second or subsequent plan, an increase from 47 reported in the preceding quarter. Leicestershire remains in the fourth quartile of local authorities compared to most recent national results published for 2020/21. This is an area of focus for the service and regular audits are completed, to understand any themes around the circumstances leading to repeat periods of child protection planning and to inform actions in response. Most recent findings suggest that Domestic Abuse remains a factor in some repeat plans and the implementation of the Domestic Abuse toolkit aims to strengthen exit planning. Consideration has been given to the timescales for a repeat plan starting and this has shown that for the majority, there has been a gap in excess of two years
11. The percentage of re-referrals to Social Care within 12 months was 20.1% at the end of Quarter 4 compared to 19.6% at the end of the previous quarter, with 262 children 're-referred' within Quarter 4. Leicestershire remains in the second quartile of local authorities.
12. The percentage of single assessments completed within 45 days was 90.7% at the end of Quarter 4, a slight decrease from Quarter 3 (91.0%). This represents 958 assessments completed within timescale in Quarter 4 compared to 925 in the preceding quarter. Leicestershire remains in the second quartile of local authorities.
13. Eight Child Protection plans lasting two years or more were open at the end of Quarter 4, representing 1.4% of cases. This is a similar number and proportion as the end of Quarter 3 (9 children, 1.7%). Leicestershire remains in the second quartile of local authorities.

14. The percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation was 92.5% at the end of Quarter 4 (283 young people). This is a decrease from Quarter 3 (95.8%) and places Leicestershire in the second quartile of local authorities using available comparisons.
15. The percentage of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training was 58.5% at the end of Quarter 4 (179 young people). This is a small decrease from 62.1% at the end of Quarter 3. However, it continues to place Leicestershire in the top quartile by comparison with other local authorities. The Service continues to provide careful oversight to the care leaver indicators and is driven by a corporate commitment for creating mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities for care leavers.
16. The percentage of Children in Care who have had a dental check was 44.3% (308 children), a slight decrease from 44.7% (301 children) at the end of the previous quarter. Routine dental treatment has been limited during the period of the Covid-19 lockdown and figures are now beginning to rise.
17. The percentage of Children in Care who have had an annual health assessment within the last 12 months was 83.6% (581). This is an increase compared to the end of the previous quarter (80.9%).
18. Completion of health assessments continue to be overseen by the Children in Care Head of Service and Service Manager, with specific actions identified to address delays and barriers including systems support, processes, and staffing pressures. Both managers attend quarterly operational and strategic meetings with health partners to discuss and address the health needs of children in care and how best to meet these needs.

Helping children and their families build strength, resilience, confidence, and capacity

19. During Quarter 4, the Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) worked with 3,055 individuals and 1,149 families across Leicestershire. This is slightly lower than Quarter 3 in both cases when the figures were 3,797 and 1,417, respectively. Over the whole of 2021/22 CFWS worked with 6,631 individuals and 2,406 families.
20. The Children and Families Services Departmental Plan states the intention to ensure that the needs of young people are identified as early as possible so that timely and appropriate support is provided in the right setting, therefore reducing the risk of needs escalating at the same time as ensuring children and young people's best outcomes are achieved.
21. The number of children in mainstream schools in Leicestershire with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) was 2,291 in the Spring 2022 school census. This is 122 higher than the Autumn 2021 census (2,169). The Spring term 2022 school census EHCP numbers and proportion of pupils on roll are the highest recorded on a school census since 2017, when the phasing in of the 2014 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice changes were completed.

22. The number of children in mainstream schools in Leicestershire without an EHCP but in receipt of SEN Support was 11,578 in the Spring 2022 school census. This is 254 higher than the Autumn 2021 census (11,324). The Spring 2022 school census SEN support numbers are the highest recorded and highest proportion of pupils on roll since the completion of the phasing in of the 2014 SEN Code of Practice changes in 2016.

People are safe in their daily lives

23. Youth Offending statistics are usually reported one or two quarters in arrears because data must be produced and validated by legal bodies such as the Police and courts before being released to local authorities.
24. The Leicestershire Quarter 3 2021/22 figure (latest available) for 'first time entrants to the criminal justice system aged 10-17' was 16. This is compared to 17 for Quarter 2 2021/22. In Quarter 3, five children were previously known to the Children and Families Service (Youth Justice Team). The figures for the first-time entrants remain low compared to regional and national data.
25. The rate of re-offending for Quarter 4 2019/20 (latest available) was 4.19%. This is an increase when compared to the previous year, Quarter 4 2018/19 (2.68%). Leicestershire's performance remains ahead, when compared to that of regional and national performance, 3.69% and 3.61% respectively.
26. Instances of the use of custody for young people for the year January-December 2021 were 0.1 per 1,000 10-17 population. This is compared with 0.09 for the same period in the preceding year. The use of custody performance continues to remain ahead of the regional (0.14) and national (0.11) performance, and the same when compared against average Youth Offending Teams (0.10).

Help every child to get the best possible start in life

Early years

27. The percentage of eligible two-year and three-year olds taking up the Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) is reported termly, and latest figures include the 2022 Spring term.
28. During the Spring term, the percentage of eligible three-year-olds taking up their FEEE place was 93.9% (7,018), a decrease on the previous term (95.8%). The percentage of eligible two-year-olds was 76.5% (1,239), a decline on the Autumn term (77.6%). Eligibility for two-year-olds is more targeted towards disadvantaged families, hence the smaller number of children.
29. In the Spring term, the percentage of all two and three-year-olds accessing their FEEE in Good or Outstanding settings was 95.1%, a decline compared with 97% in the Autumn term.

30. The figures for the past year have been heavily affected by the Covid-19 disruption which has meant that newly eligible children were unable to begin their placement and some parents preferred to keep their children at home. However, recent figures are now approaching pre-pandemic levels.

Help every child to have access to good quality education to ensure they achieve their maximum potential

31. The percentage of primary schools rated Good or Outstanding was 91.5% at the end of Quarter 4. This is 0.4% higher than the Quarter 3 figure (90.6%). This figure is within the second quartile of local authorities.
32. The percentage of secondary schools rated Good or Outstanding was 75.6% at the end of Quarter 4. This is unchanged since Quarter 2, 2022. This figure is within the third quartile of local authorities.
33. The number of children Electively Home Educated (EHE) was 883 at the end of Quarter 4, an increase of 54 since Quarter 3. This was also an increase of 59 students (7.15%) in comparison to the end of quarter 4 2020/21.
34. This follows the national trend of an increasing EHE population. The Association of Directors of Children's Services complete an annual survey which includes 124 of the 152 local authorities nationally responding with data on their EHE cohort. In November 2021, they published their latest findings which suggested that the EHE population in the UK had increased by 7% in comparison to October 2020 and an increase of 34% since October 2019.
35. Leicestershire figures closely follow the national trend since 2019 with its cohort at the end of Quarter 4 2021/22 increasing by 29.3% since Quarter 4 2019/20.¹
36. The trend has been driven by two factors during this period: firstly, having experienced a period of enforced home schooling, some parents have opted for EHE as a lifestyle choice and have chosen to continue this even when schools reopened. The second factor has been ongoing health concerns which could be for the child, vulnerable parents, or general safety concerns. The numbers will continue to be monitored closely.
37. Latest Leicestershire NEET data (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training) for the end of Quarter 4 (March 2022) shows a rate of 1.2%. This is a decrease on the end of Quarter 3 rate (December 2021) of 1.4%.

Conclusion

38. The report provides a summary of performance at the end of Quarter 4 of 2021/22, covering the period January-March 2022.

¹ Report available online at:
https://adcs.org.uk/assets/documentation/ADCS_EHE_Survey_2021_Report_FINAL.pdf

39. Details of all metrics (reflecting any changes in indicators for 2022/23) will continue to be monitored on a regular basis throughout the year and any subsequent changes will be notified in future reports.

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

40. Addressing equalities issues is supported by this report, with a focus on vulnerable groups within Leicestershire, including children in care. Education data relating to performance for different context groups including children with Special Educational Needs and Free School Meals is reported when data becomes available.

Background Papers

None

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

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Appendix

Children and Family Services Department Performance Dashboard for Quarter 4, 2021/22