



**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 3 SEPTEMBER 2024**

QUARTER 1 2024/25 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 April to June 2024 (Quarter 1).

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 and Overview

3. The following report and accompanying data aim to report on the priority areas identified by the Children and Family Services Departmental Plan 2020-2023. The plan identifies ambitions and measures to monitor progress.
4. Quartile positions are added where comparative national data is available. Comparative data is not available for all indicators.
5. From 22 measures reported, 14 have a national benchmark; three are in the top quartile, four are in the second quartile, three are in the third quartile and four are in the bottom quartile.

Education and SEND Performance Spotlight

6. The number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued in Leicestershire continues to increase year on year, with the total number of active plans reaching 6,377 in January 2024. This is 176 (2.8%) higher than the previous year. Overall, the number of EHCPs has increased 90% since 2017, although it should be noted that the rate of increase appears to be stabilising in recent years after a period of abnormally high growth between 2017 and 2020. The average increase for statistical neighbours between 2017-24 is 97% although this varies considerably both in percentage increase and number of active EHCPs across statistical neighbours. Since data was submitted to the DfE

earlier this year, the number of EHCPs for Leicestershire has increased to 6619 in July 2024.

7. Demand for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs) also continues to increase, with a month on month increase in demand of around 20 additional assessment requests per month since September 2023 (to an average of 126 per month in July 2024). The 12-month rolling number of requests now stands at 1,509 in July 2024. This is the highest volume of requests ever received and is placing pressure on the Special Educational Needs Assessment team, impacting timeliness of ECHP assessments and issuing of subsequent EHCP plans where these are identified as needed.
8. The proportion of EHCPs issued within the 20-week target has formally been published by the Department for Education for 2023, and Leicestershire have shown a small improvement on this measure from 3.8% in 2022 to 6% in 2023. This is in comparison to the national average of 50.3% for English authorities and the average for statistical neighbour authorities of 36.8%. This is an area of considerable current focus for improvement, and a recovery plan to bring timeliness closer to the 20-week target, incorporating activity to reduce backlogs of requests for assessment, has been created and progress will be closely monitored. The recovery plan is focused particularly on improving the time taken to receive Educational Psychology advice and to draft and issue EHCPs as these stages of the process are largely responsible for the existing issue with EHCP timeliness.
9. The average time to complete an EHCNA remains well over the statutory target for completion and issue of 20 weeks. This measure has increased to an average of 48 weeks at the end of July 2024. Due to the way this measure is calculated, the ongoing work to clear the backlog of requests for Educational Psychology advice is expected to temporarily increase the average time to issue measure.
10. Response times to contacts around School Admissions continue to improve, with the service consistently answering on average 80% of calls received. School Admissions have also shown considerable improvement in processing of school applications received during the term, with 78% of applications processed within the 15-day target in June 2024 compared to 34% in June 2023.
11. The need for support from the Early Years Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) service continues to rise, with the service now working with 795 children and their families in July 2024. This is an increase of 102 children from the same time last year. Based on data from two-year-old health reviews at the end of April 2024, the number of children needing support is likely to continue to increase as there are a significant number of children who have not met their developmental milestones in four or more key areas. These children are more likely to need specialist support in the future and are an early indication of demand from the Early Years SEND team.
12. Referrals into the Inclusion Service have reduced over time, from a peak of 683 new referrals in 2022 to 289 in 2023, and 158 between January and July 2024. This is around 30 fewer referrals than received at the same time in 2023. Children Missing Education is the highest reason for referral into the Inclusion

service, making up 55% of referrals in 2024. The remainder of the caseload includes Children with Medical Needs (25%) and children and young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (19%). Children who are Electively Home Educated make up less than 1% of current cases, compared to 29% in 2022 and 13% in 2023.

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

13. Local Authority comparisons used are most recent figures published by the government for end of year benchmarking of performance in 2022/23.
14. The percentage of Child Protection cases reviewed within timescales was 92.2% at the end of Quarter 1, with 270 of 293 children having all reviews on time within the last 12 months. This is an improvement on the Quarter 4 figure of 87.4% (291 of 333), and now places Leicestershire in the second quartile of all local authorities by published benchmarks.
15. The percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time in the year to date decreased to 25.2% at the end of Quarter 1 compared to 26.9% at the end of Quarter 4. In this quarter 33 children began a second or subsequent child protection plan, an increase from 28 reported in the preceding quarter. Leicestershire is now placed in the third quartile of local authorities compared to most recent national results published for 2022/23. This continues to be 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.
16. The percentage of re-referrals to Children's Social Care within 12 months was 24.9% at the end of Quarter 1 which is a slight increase from 24.1% at the end of the previous Quarter; 462 children were 're-referred' within Quarter 1. Leicestershire continues to be placed in the fourth quartile of local authorities.
17. The percentage of assessments completed within 45 days to the end of Quarter 1 was 83.1%, a decrease compared to performance at the end Quarter 4 (88.6%). Within Quarter 1, 1,910 assessments were completed, which is approximately 600 more children assessed than during the preceding two quarters, with 1,588 within timescale. Leicestershire is now placed in the third quartile of local authorities using most recent comparisons.
18. The percentage of Care Leavers aged up to 21 in Suitable Accommodation was 93.5% at the end of Quarter 1 (87 out of 93 young people). This is a slight decrease from the end of Quarter 4 (94.9%) although continues to place Leicestershire in the top quartile of local authorities using available comparisons.
19. The percentage of Care Leavers aged up to 21 in Education, Employment or Training was 47.3% at the end of Quarter 1 (44 out of 93 young people). This is a decrease from the end of Quarter 4, 63.3%, and now places Leicestershire in the fourth 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.

20. The percentage of Children in Care at the end of Quarter 1 who had a dental check in the preceding 12 months was 73.0% (541 children), a decrease from 76.6% reported for the previous quarter.
21. The percentage of Children in Care at the end of Quarter 1 who had an annual health assessment within the preceding 12 months was 80.6% (597 children). This is an increase from 76.3% reported for the previous quarter.

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

People are safe in their daily lives

22. Local Youth Justice statistics are regularly reported to the Youth and Justice Management Board. The latest report was presented at the December 2023 board. However, due to ongoing system changes, only national indicators could be reported.

Help every child to get the best possible start in life

Early years

23. In the Summer term 2024, 66% of eligible two-year-olds took up their Funded Early Education Entitlement (FEEE). This is a decrease from the Spring term 2023 (71.2%). For three-year-olds, the figure was 92.9%, an increase over the Spring term 2024 (89.8%). Overall, 98.2% of eligible two- and three-year-olds took up their FEEE in high-quality provision in the summer term 2024, a slight increase from the Spring term (97.3%).
24. Recent national policy changes have broadened out the eligibility for FEEE to include all 2-year-olds. The above data has been updated to reflect these changes.

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

25. The percentage of primary schools rated Good or Outstanding was 90.3% (204 out of 226 inspected schools) at the end of Quarter 1. This represents no change from Quarter 4 2023/24. This figure is within the third quartile of local authorities and is 1.3% below the England average, which is at its highest level ever (91.6%), and 1.6% lower than the average for statistical neighbours (91.9%), which is also at its highest level ever.
26. The percentage of secondary schools rated Good or Outstanding was 77.8% (35 out of 45 inspected schools) at the end of Quarter 1. This represents no change from Quarter 4 2023/24. This performance is within the fourth quartile of local authorities nationally. Leicestershire's performance is 6% lower than the average for England, which at 83.8% is a new highest ever national level of performance,

and 8.3% lower than the average for Statistical Neighbours (86.1%), which is the second highest ever performance figure for this group.

27. The percentage of pupils educated in Good or Outstanding schools was 85.4% at the end of Quarter 1 (approx. 85.8k out of 100.5k pupils). This is a decrease of 0.5% from Quarter 4 2023/24 (85.9%). This figure is within the fourth quartile of local authorities nationally. Leicestershire's performance is 4.3% lower than the average for England (89.7%), and 5% lower than the average for statistical neighbours (90.4%). The figure for England and statistical neighbours continues to be at near record levels of performance.
28. The percentage of applicants obtaining their first preference for first time admission to Primary school in 2024 was 95% (approx. 6.6k out of 6.9k applicants). This is 0.7% higher than in 2023 (94.3%). This figure is within the second quartile of local authorities.
29. The percentage of applicants obtaining their first preference for Secondary school transfer in 2024 was 91.5% (approx. 6.8k out of 7.4k applicants). This is 0.8% higher than in 2023 (90.7%). This figure is within the first quartile of local authorities.
30. The number of children Electively Home Educated (EHE) was 1,279 at the end of Q1 2024/25. This is an increase of 151 students (13.4%) compared to the end of Q1 2023/24 (1,128 students).
31. The trend has been driven by two factors: firstly, having experienced a period of enforced home schooling during the pandemic, 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.
32. The percentage of young people (16-17) in Leicestershire not in education, employment, or training (NEET) at the end of Q1 2024/25 was 0.92% (139 students). This rate was a small increase on the end of Q4 2024/25 (0.8%).
33. The number of permanent exclusions from Leicestershire schools as a percentage of the school population in the 2022/23 academic year was 0.07%. This is 0.05% higher than the last academic year (0.02%). The number of permanent exclusions was 179% higher than the previous year, 67 in 2022/23 compared to 24 in 2021/22. This is the highest number of permanent exclusions from Leicestershire schools since 2008/09. Leicestershire's rate is within the second quartile nationally, and 0.04% below the national permanent exclusion rate of 0.11%, which was an increase of 0.03% on the previous academic year, and the highest national rate since 2006/07. The rate for statistical neighbours was the same as the national rate of 0.11% in 2022/23, and as with the national performance it was also increase of 0.03%, from 0.08%.
34. The number of children receiving at least one fixed term suspension from Leicestershire schools as a percentage of school population in the 2022/23 academic year was 3.16%. This rate is 25% higher than in the last academic

year (2.47%). 3,186 children had at least one fixed term suspension in 2022/23 compared to 2,482 in 2021/22. This represents both the highest number of children and highest rate as a percentage of school population, receiving at least one fixed term suspension since collection of this data was started by the Department of Education (DfE) in 2005/06. Leicestershire's rate is within the second quartile nationally, and 0.45% below the National the rate, which at 3.61%, was an increase from 3.02%. This latest national performance also represents both a record rate and total number of pupils suspended for a fixed term for England. The rate for statistical neighbours was 3.41% in 2022/23, an increase of 0.57% from the rate of 2.84% in 2021/22.

Conclusion

35. The report provides a summary of performance at the end of Quarter 1 2024/25, covering the period April to June 2024.
36. Details of all metrics (reflecting any changes in indicators for 2024/25) will continue to be monitored on a regular basis throughout the year and any subsequent changes will be notified in future reports.

Background Papers

None.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Appendix

Children and Family Services Department Performance Dashboard Quarter 4, 2023/24

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