



**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE - 21 JANUARY 2025**

**QUARTER 2 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 July to September 2024 (Quarter 2).

**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. The current performance data is appended and has been refreshed to concentrate on indicators where updated data is available for Quarter 2.
4. Quartile positions are added where comparative national data is available. Comparative data is not available for all indicators.
5. From 21 measures reported that have a national benchmark, one is in the top quartile, seven are in the second quartile, eight are in the third quartile and five are in the bottom quartile.

**National and Local Performance updates in respect of Targeted Family Help and Children's Social care**

**Key national issues**

6. In November 2025, the Government published its paper Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive. The document sets out the new government approach and vision for the safeguarding system. It has significant relevant for local

authorities as references intended legislative change to support new ways of working. A summary of key headlines from the report have been set out below.

- **Wherever possible children should remain with their families and be safely prevented from entering care in the first place**, there is lots of learning to draw from here e.g. youth justice teams, SureStart, Supporting Families, Families First for Children,
- **Support children to live with kinship or foster carers rather than residential care** via the use of family-based decision making, rolling out kinship reforms and recruiting more foster carers,
- **Fix the broken care market** via a range of measures to improve competition, regulation and commissioning, as well as shining a light on the levels of profit being made,
- **A focus on key enablers** including better data and information sharing, spreading evidence-based programmes and the workforce.

#### Legislating to keep families together and children safe, and to remove barriers to opportunity

- Mandating the use of family-based decision making before care proceedings can be initiated,
- Legislating for a single unique child identifier (to be introduced in the future),
- Extension of corporate parenting duties to more departments and agencies,
- Making “Staying Close” a national entitlement, with government to work with local authorities on barriers to delivery over the next three years,
- Placing the expansion of Virtual School Head (VSH) role to kinship arrangements on a statutory footing and a new LA duty to promote the achievement of all cohorts represented by VSH,
- Consideration will be given to the role of the VSH for children leaving custody,
- Schools as the fourth partner in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) and education to be well represented here both operationally and strategically,
- Creation of new legal duty for local authorities to establish multi-agency child protection teams and requirement on other named agencies to be part of this provisions,
- New register for CME and government will allow Local Authorities to take into account the home and other learning environments in assessments of suitability,
- If a child is subject to a Section 47 enquiry or on a child protection plan, local authority consent will be required to home educate.

#### Legislating to make the care system child centred and to tackle profiteering

- Reforms to the planning and registration process for new children’s homes, including work with Ofsted on a fast-track route for selected new homes and location to play a larger role in applications,

- Work with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to reform planning regulations to make it easier to open homes when and where they are needed,
  - Government to support Local Authorities to address capacity concerns with new capital investment and other measures,
  - The Department is currently evaluating the paper locally to consider impact and how it will respond. It is unclear what if any specific funding might be linked to this work.
7. New government rules as part its aim to support workforce development in social care came into force on 31 October:  
<https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2024/10/31/agency-social-work-rules-come-into-force/#:~:text=Councils%20should%20not%20engage%20social,all%20contracts%20for%20agency%20assignments>
8. The new rules, some of which came into force fully from October 2024 (for agency staff in existing contracts) are already starting to have impact on the agency market, with specific reference to the new requirement from 31 October 2024 for all new agency candidates to have three years direct employment in a CSC department in England. It is essential that all local authorities apply this rule consistently as early evidence shows that some agency staff do not have this experience, even if employed as agency staff for some years. To date, regional agreements have been implemented to agree price caps for wages, but also to prevent permanent staff becoming agency in the regional within six months of ending employment. The Service is actively reviewing the CVs of all agency staff and are finding that many fail to meet the three years direct employment rule, even when they may have worked as agency workers for some months or years. The Department is taking the opportunity to approach agency staff to encourage applications for posts having shared forms and is setting up interviews promptly in order to prevent delay.
9. A full report on the Policy Statement and its implementation in Leicestershire will be brought to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee later in 2025.

### **Departmental performance activities**

10. Progress has been made against the residential redesign element of the Children's Innovation Partnership. In partnership with Barnardo's, four homes have opened and are registered by Ofsted. The remaining four homes will open by July 2025. The homes will include Short Breaks Overnight provision, Complex Need (step down from hospital) home, a home specialising in contextual safeguarding (harm outside the home) and an emotional and behavioural home.
11. An annual Pride in Practice event took place at the King Power Stadium on 12 November 2024. The focus of learning was on fathers and how they can be better represented in case work. Around 400 staff across the Service attended. A

number of awards were given out to celebrate practice excellence in a number of categories with young people making the final decisions. It was an opportunity to celebrate the Outstanding Ofsted judgement, bringing the whole service together.

12. In November 2024, senior managers took part in practice observations as part of the bi-annual practice focus week. This provided a chance to meet practitioners and children and their families receiving Targeted Family Help and Child in Need social work support. It was positive for all involved to see so many of the groups being delivered, and the support they provide to children in need and those subject of a child protection plans, showcased and to hear the positive feedback from families.
13. Targeted Family Help has successfully been awarded funding from Public Health to support the commitment to reduce poor mental health outcomes within children and young people across Leicester and Leicestershire. Over the next three years, the Service will be inviting practitioners from Health, Education, Early Years, Social Care, and the Voluntary sector who work with families to attend a training session to learn about the model and see how they can embed Five to Thrive into their day-to-day practice.
14. Family Help has organised its yearly 'Expression of Freedom' Exhibition in conjunction with Living without Abuse which has received positive media and public interest and was on display in Highcross Shopping Centre from 25<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> December. The Exhibition featured several powerful artwork pieces created by survivors of Domestic Abuse and children impacted by this to raise awareness of the impact Domestic Abuse has on families and society.
15. His Majesty's Inspection of Probation (HMIP) have set out the new Youth Justice Framework for all future inspections and the Service is now focusing on Quality and Assurance work to ensure preparedness ahead of the next HMIP Inspection. This includes a new victims domain which the service will be inspected against and a greater focus on Child First work, and the trauma informed approach which the Service has been embedding for some time.

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

16. Local Authority comparisons used in this section are most recent figures published by the government for end of year benchmarking of performance in 2023/24.
17. The percentage of Child Protection cases reviewed within timescales was 92.7% at the end of Quarter 2, with 291 of 314 children having all reviews on time within the last 12 months. This is an improvement on the Quarter 1 figure of 92.2% (270 of 293), and now places Leicestershire in the third quartile of all local authorities by published benchmarks.
18. The percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time in the year to date decreased to 23.0% at the end of Quarter 2 compared to 25.2% at the end of Quarter 1. In this quarter 28 children began a second or subsequent child protection plan, a decrease from 33

reported in the preceding quarter. Leicestershire is now placed in the second quartile of local authorities compared to most recent national results published for 2023/24. 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.

19. The percentage of re-referrals to Children's Social Care within 12 months was 26.3% at the end of Quarter 2 which is an increase from 24.9% at the end of the previous quarter; 443 children were 're-referred' within Quarter 2. Leicestershire continues to be placed in the fourth quartile of local authorities.
20. The percentage of assessments completed within 45 days to the end of Quarter 2 was 86.0%, an increase compared to performance at the end Quarter 1 (83.1%). Within Quarter 2, 1,706 assessments were completed, with 1,467 within timescale. Leicestershire is now placed in the second quartile of local authorities using most recent comparisons.
21. The percentage of Care Leavers aged up to 21 in Suitable Accommodation was 92.4% at the end of Quarter 2 (218 out of 236 young people). This is a slight decrease from the end of Quarter 1 (93.5%) and now places Leicestershire in the second quartile of local authorities using available comparisons.
22. The percentage of Care Leavers aged up to 21 in Education, Employment or Training improved to 49.3% at the end of Quarter 2 (99 out of 201 young people). This is an increase from the end of Quarter 1, 47.3%, and while Leicestershire remain within the lowest quartile at the end of Quarter 2, performance for this indicator has since further improved to 54.4%. 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.
23. The percentage of Children in Care at the end of Quarter 2 who had a dental check in the preceding 12 months was 78.9% (562 children), an increase from 73.0% reported for the previous quarter.
24. The percentage of Children in Care at the end of Quarter 2 who had an annual health assessment within the preceding 12 months was 84.4% (601 children). This is an increase from 80.6% reported for the previous quarter.

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

25. Due to ongoing work following system changes, specifically relating to Capita/Synergy, it is not possible to report the total numbers worked with by Targeted Family Help.
26. 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.

### **People are safe in their daily lives**

27. Local Youth Justice statistics are regularly reported to the Youth and Justice Management Board. The latest report was presented at the December 2024 board. Local data is currently unavailable for Use of Custody and Re-offending, although Ministry of Justice figures are available in the report.
28. In the year to end Quarter 2 2024/25, there were a total of 34 First Time Entrants in the Criminal Justice System (aged 10-17). This is an increase of 14 from the year to end Quarter 1 figure (20).

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

29. The percentage of primary schools rated Good or Outstanding for leadership and management was 91.6% (208 out of 227 inspected schools) at the end of Quarter 2. This represents a 0.4% increase from Quarter 1 2024/25. This figure is within the fourth quartile of local authorities and is 1.3% below the England average, which is at its highest ever level (92.9%), and 1.7% lower than the average for Statistical Neighbours (93.3%), which is close to their highest ever level.
30. The percentage of secondary schools rated Good or Outstanding for leadership and management was 84.1% (37 out of 44 inspected schools) at the end of Quarter 2. This represents an increase of 1.9% from Quarter 1 2024/25. This performance is within the third quartile of local authorities nationally. Leicestershire's performance is 3.8% lower than the average for England, which at 87.9% is a new highest ever level of national performance, and 4.9% lower than the average for Statistical Neighbours (89%), which is the highest ever performance figure for this group.
31. The percentage of pupils educated in Good or Outstanding schools for leadership and management was 88.5% at the end of Quarter 2 (approx. 88.9k out of 100.5k pupils). This is an increase of 0.4% from Quarter 1 2024/25 (88.1%). This figure is within the fourth quartile of local authorities nationally. Leicestershire's performance is 3.6% lower than the average for England (92.1%), and 4.2% lower than the average for Statistical Neighbours (92.7%).
32. The England and Statistical neighbour performance continues to be at either record levels of performance, or near the record level.
33. The DfE has released the final assessment outcomes for the Primary school phase of education and provisional assessment outcomes for the Secondary school phase of education in 2024.
34. The percentage of children in 2024 with a good level of development at the end of the early year's foundation stage (EYFS – 5-year-olds) was 69.6% (of 7,501 children), an increase from 69.1% in 2023, which was the second year of formal assessments under the current assessment framework. This performance is

within the second quartile of local authorities nationally, and is 1.9% above the England average, and 0.1% below the average for Statistical Neighbours.

35. The percentage of children eligible for Free School Meals with a good level of development was 44.3% (of 837 children) in 2024, a decrease of 1.4% (45.7%) from 2023. This performance was within the fourth quartile of local authorities nationally, and 7.2% lower than the England average, and it is 2.7% below the average for Statistical Neighbours.
36. The percentage of children with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and assessed with a good level of development was 3.7% (of 191 children) in 2024, an increase of 1.2% (2.5%) from 2023. This performance was within the second quartile of local authorities nationally, and 0.1% lower than the England average, and it is 0.4% below the average for Statistical Neighbours.
37. At Key Stage 2 (11-year-olds) the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard or higher in Reading, Writing and Mathematics was 61.4% (of 8,037 pupils). This is 0.7% lower than in 2023 and places Leicestershire in the second quartile nationally. Leicestershire's performance is 0.7% higher than the national performance, and 1.8% higher than the average for Statistical Neighbours.
38. The 2024 performance for Leicestershire is the lowest performance since 2016, and almost 6% lower than the performance achieved in 2019. Nationally the 2024 performance is also the lowest since 2016, and 4.2% below that achieved in 2019.
39. The percentage of Free School Meal (FSM) eligible pupils achieving the expected standard or higher in Reading, Writing and Mathematics was 42.1% (of 1,515 pupils). This is 1.1% lower than in 2023 and places Leicestershire in the third quartile nationally. Leicestershire's 2024 performance is the local authorities second highest ever performance for FSM pupils under the current assessment framework, 2023 was the highest, and still 0.8% higher than in 2022. At 45.4% the National performance remains lower than in 2018 and 2019, but 5.2% higher than in 2022.
40. The percentage of SEN support pupils achieving the expected standard or higher in Reading, Writing and Mathematics was 23.1% (of 1,345 pupils), third quartile nationally, and for Education and Health Care Plan pupils (EHCP) it was 7.6% (of 383 pupils), third quartile nationally, a drop from the second quartile in 2022 and 2023. The SEN support cohort's performance was 0.1% higher than in 2023, whilst the EHCP cohort's performance was 3% lower than the previous year. Leicestershire's SEN support pupils' performance was 2.6% below the National average, but it does represent the joint highest performance level in history under the current assessment framework. The latest national performance in comparison represents a new highest level. Leicestershire's EHCP pupil performance was below the national average by 1.2% but still represents performance higher than any year prior to 2022, whereas the National performance remains below 2019 levels.
41. At Key Stage 4 (16-year-olds) the provisional average Progress 8 score for all pupils (7,678 pupils) was -0.10. This performance is within the third quartile of

Local Authorities nationally, this continues to represent the lowest National percentile ranking since 2017. For Free School Meal eligible pupils (1,256 pupils) the average Progress 8 score was  $-0.76$ , this performance is within the third quartile nationally. Leicestershire's 2024 National percentile performance for Free School Meal eligible pupils remains above all years previously, except 2019 and 2022.

42. The Progress 8 score for SEN support was  $-0.51$  (992 pupils), and Education and Health Care Plan pupils (EHCP),  $-0.94$  (336 pupils). In comparison to the performance of other local authorities nationally the SEN support performance is within the third quartile, a drop from the second quartile last year. The EHCP performance has improved to the second quartile from the third quartile in 2023.
43. The number of children Electively Home Educated (EHE) was 1,119 at the end of Q2 2024/25. This is an increase of 120 students (10.7%) compared to the end of Q2 2023/24 (999 students).
44. 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.
45. The percentage of young people (16-17) in Leicestershire not in education, employment, or training (NEET) at the end of Q2 2024/25 was 0.8% (127 students). This rate was a slight increase on the end of Q1 2024/25 (0.9%), but well below the target of less than 2.1%.

### **Conclusion**

46. The report provides a summary of performance at the end of Quarter 2 2024/25, covering the period July to September 2024.
47. Details of all metrics will continue to be monitored on a regular basis throughout the year and any subsequent changes will be notified in future reports.

### **Background Papers**

Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67375fe5ed0fc07b53499a42/Keeping\\_Children\\_Safe\\_Helping\\_Families\\_Thrive\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67375fe5ed0fc07b53499a42/Keeping_Children_Safe_Helping_Families_Thrive_.pdf)

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

None.

### **Appendix**

Children and Family Services Department Performance Dashboard Quarter 2, 2024/25



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