

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

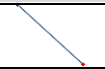
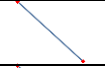


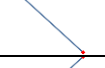


Tuesday 6th December 2022

REPORT TITLE:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Children, Young People & Education Committee - indicator sets

Demand	Keeping children safe	Looking after children well	Schools
Education	SEND	Workforce	Budget (under development)

Demand

	Year-End			2022/23		National (20/21)	North West (20/21)	Stat Neighbours (20/21)	Trend
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1	Q2				
Social care contacts	15086	10149	10732	3230	3051	-	-	-	
Early Help contacts	9973	12199	11128	2290	2104	-	-	-	
Referrals to social care	3997	3030	3254	881	714	-	-	-	
% of domestic abuse referrals to children's social care	23.2%	23.5%	27.3%	26.1%	26.2%	-	-	-	
Child In Need rate per 10,000 population	369.0	379.9	382.9	389.3	378.5	321.2	367.0	403.5	
Child Protection rate per 10,000 population	41.9	47.0	57.4	55.6	56.7	41.4	47.0	51.8	
Children Looked After rate per 10,000 population	120.0	123.0	116.6	114.2	116.3	67.0	97.0	101.8	

Supporting narrative

Contacts into children's social care this quarter have followed a similar pattern to that seen in Q1 as anticipated, we saw a pronounced deviation in the number of contacts in September 22 following children returning to school after the summer break. It is of interest that the highest portion of contacts (more than a third) received, originated from Vulnerable Person Referral Form (VPRF) notifications generated from the police, the majority of which were related to concerns pertaining to domestic abuse.

The service is currently reviewing pathways and processes within the Integrated Front Door (IFD) to ensure that pathways for children in specific circumstances are robust and effective. All Domestic abuse rereferrals will be discussed at the daily morning meeting to ensure full information sharing and multi-agency decision making on threshold application. The daily morning meeting will include representatives from the domestic abuse hub and family matters to streamline engagement and intervention to victims of domestic abuse.

A further piece of work will be completed, alongside the safeguarding partnership to review and oversee the application of threshold with a view to achieving consistency and collective understanding across the partnership.

Along with the increase in contacts we have seen referral rates increase by 56% from 195 in August to 305 in September 22. Despite this the conversion rate from contact to referral reduced to 23.4% resulting in our rate of referrals per 10, 000 being below our target range of 515 – 588 per 10, 000. Further analysis through dip sample audits will support our understanding of the conversion rate for this period.

The rate of CIN at the end of Q2 per 10,000 was 378.5 which places us in line with our target range.

Keeping children safe

	Year-End			2022/23		National (20/21)	North West (20/21)	Stat Neighbours (20/21)	Trend
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1	Q2				
% of Early Help cases closed with outcomes met	80.3%	91.6%	83.5%	85.3%	76.4%	-	-	-	
% Repeat referrals within 12 months period	27.6%	23.5%	21.6%	25.0%	25.4%	22.7%	22.2%	22.6%	
% Assessments completed within timescale	82.6%	78.8%	81.0%	83.0%	76.0%	88.0%	86.0%	87.0%	
Children who were subject to a section 47 enquiry Rate per 10,000 YTD	182.2	179.7	202.4	51.6	101.0	164.4	172.1	199.3	
% of children who were subject to a section 47 enquiry that led to an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)	33.3%	33.1%	37.4%	31.9%	41.1%	-	-	-	
% Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) taking place in the month and within timescales	76.4%	57.6%	75.8%	76.5%	52.2%	83.0%	82.0%	84.0%	
Child Protection Plans ceased Rate per 10,000 YTD	75.8	51.3	61.7	15.7	30.5	53.9	62.1	72.1	
% of children on second or subsequent Child Protection Plan	19.4%	28.7%	23.0%	32.7%	27.9%	22.1%	22.6%	22.6%	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Child in Need (CIN)	-	-	82.8%	77.0%	76.0%	-	-	-	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Child Protection (CP)	-	-	81.4%	84.0%	82.2%	-	-	-	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Children Looked After (CLA)	-	-	90.5%	90.6%	93.5%	-	-	-	
Reduce first time entrants into the criminal justice system	254	219	114	82	Available in Q3	-	-	-	-
Reduce young people re-offending (%)	50	40	41.9	Not published	Available in Q3	-	-	-	-
Reduce the use of Custody (rate per 100,000)	0.30	0.07	0.16	0.10	Available in Q3	-	-	-	-
Children currently open to MACE (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation)				49	53				
Children removed from MACE due to lowered risk				17	13				

Repeat referrals – Q2 stands at 25.4%. This is above our target range of 19.4 – 21.9%. During July and August we have seen a slight increase in repeat referrals, however September has shown this is starting to decline with September ending at 23.3%. Data analysis from performance in relation to repeat referrals identifies a high proportion have domestic abuse concerns as the referral reason. Domestic abuse also accounts for over a quarter of all repeat referrals for the same reason during this quarter. The developments at the Integrated Front Door (IFD) that include the engagement of the domestic abuse hub will enable a more robust and proportionate response to victims of domestic abuse and reduce repeat incidents.

Assessments - the percentage of assessments completed within timescales during Q2 was 76% which highlights a decline in performance in this area. This may be attributable to a number of staff vacancies in the Assessment service but also coincides with a sharp increase in referrals during September. This area of performance will continue to be monitored during regular service performance meetings.

S47 enquiries – there has been a sharp increase in the percentage of S47 enquiries completed this quarter. Of these approximately 44% progressed to Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC). A substantial proportion of S47 enquiries have an outcome of continue with assessment. This is due to be a feature at a mandatory all service wide learning event to ensure that alternative risk management processes are used effectively at the appropriate level.

Initial Child Protection Conferences taking place in timescales for this quarter has declined significantly from 76.5% in Q1 to 52.2% in Q2. Poor performance in July and August accounts mainly for the decline which was attributable to an increase in demand outweighing capacity in the operational teams with additional challenges within the Safeguarding unit business support team. Performance in September improved significantly to 77.8% but July and August performance has negatively impacted Q2 outcome. We currently remain below our target range. Performance will be reviewed at monthly Performance Management & Quality Assurance meetings.

During Q2 we have had 8 children on a Child Protection Plan (CPP) for less than 3 months. In reviewing these cases all of the children who came off a CPP became looked after – CLA. The service will be undertaking a deeper analysis of children subject to CPP to ensure our current practice is robust and effective.

The percentage of children subject to repeat CP plans has reduced during Q2 from 32.7% in Q1 to 27.9% in Q2. We know that more than half of our children subject to CPP feature Domestic Abuse therefore further analysis to determine whether this also features in repeat child protection plans is required to ensure step down plans are robust and effective in supporting and protecting children in the longer term.

Statutory Visits - we have seen a slight dip in our performance regarding our children being seen, with Q2 performance for CP being 69%. There are currently 534 children in need of which 79% have had their plan reviewed within timescales.

Looking after children well

	Year-End			2022/23		National (20/21)	North West (20/21)	Stat Neighbours (20/21)	Trend
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1	Q2				
% CLA visits completed within timescale	-	-	90.5%	90.6%	93.5%	-	-	-	
% Completed health assessment reviews YTD	87.0%	87.0%	96.1%	50.6%	67.2%	91.0%	94.0%	92.6%	
% Completed dental checks YTD	88.0%	31.0%	78.9%	17.8%	37.2%	40.0%	40.0%	38.2%	
% Completed Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) YTD	97.0%	98.0%	98.1%	67.1%	82.5%	80.0%	85.0%	83.0%	
% of CLA adopted in year	17.0%	15.0%	8.5%	17.7%	10.4%	10.0%	11.0%	10.8%	
% of CLA placed with Foster carers	70.5%	70.8%	70.6%	70.3%	70.3%	71.0%	67.0%	68.0%	
Timeliness of Adoption process A10 (426 days national target) Average days	486	363	809	496	519	375 (2020)	426 (2020)	not published	
% Care leavers in suitable accomodation (Age 19-21)	95.0%	92.0%	97.0%	98.0%	98.0%	88.0%	91.0%	93.0%	
% Care leavers in Education , Employment or Training (EET) (Age 19-21)	48.0%	56.0%	57.5%	61.9%	60.7%	52.0%	50.0%	50.7%	
Missing Episodes	1477	918	1385	282	258	-	-	-	
CAMHS referrals seen within 6 weeks	43.7%	67.6%	67.6%	15.7%	Not available	-	-	-	
CAMHS referrals seen within 18 weeks	64.9%	96.4%	96.4%	50.3%	Not available	-	-	-	

Supporting narrative

In terms of children looked after visits completed within timescale, these continue to be completed at a high level, which is positive as it demonstrates we are seeing children and young people and having direct face-to-face contact and engagement with them as part of our core working practices.

There is some work to do around improving our review health assessment compliance, and a regular meeting with health colleagues takes place called 'improving health outcomes for children looked after' and we have key personnel across services linked in to resolve some of the issues which are often administrative in nature (late completion of documents, documents without key information which causes delay, some delay in assessments being completed by health). Dental checks also requires a push to get a higher compliance rate around this. Some of this is related to a post-Covid hang over around dental practices, but this does not explain the significant dental check delay for some children. However compliance within the permanence service is currently 75% for dental checks completed within timescales.

The numbers of children adopted within this quarter is down, and further work is needed to establish whether this is a short-term issue, potentially linked to court timeframes which have been considerably elongated in recent months, or whether there is a separate issue to be addressed. SDQ measures need to provide some overall data around the progress of children in terms of are the services that are supporting children's mental health having an impact longer term on reducing the scores, and this is a piece of work is ongoing currently.

Headline education, employment and training outcomes for Wirral care leavers has been consistently above the national averages. The Leaving Care and 14-19 Services are effectively support young people to access a variety of post 16 provisions (education) and local employment opportunities. Care Leavers - not reported but of interest - employment, education and training outcomes for care leavers aged 17 and 18 is exceptional high - reported as 71% which equates to 98 young people in the cohort of which 70 young people are positively participating. The number of care leavers accessing Higher Education in 2022/23 academic year is the highest every reported at 28 young people accessing degree courses across a range of subjects and institutions. This statistic recognises the high aspirations and support of both Leaving Care PAs and 14-19 colleagues.

- Comparing a 3-month period Jun-Aug 21 to June-Aug 22: Currently average 2.2 missings per child missing. 2.6 in 2021.
- 2.4% reduction in Episodes. 3 more individual children.
- 5.8% episodes are CLA, compared to 59.5% in 2021.
- No children missing for 7 days plus. 4 in 2021.
- 9.2% Return Interviews Offered. 96.7% 2021.

Education

	Year-End				2022/23		Current	Trend
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1	Q2		
% of under 5's who are engaged with the Early Years Service	68	76	45	51.11	40.25	42.53	-	
% of under 5's who have sustained engagement the Early Years Service (3 of more)	60	62	58	60.5	50.6	47.66	-	
% of 2 year olds benefitting from funded early education	78	78	76	83	87.05	87.05	62	
% of 3 year olds benefitting from funded early education	86	86	90	91	89.42	89.42	88	

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Current National	Trend
% of schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted	84%	85%	83%	83%	Available Q3	86%	
% of children in good or better schools as rated by Ofsted	84%	86%	84%	84%	Available Q3	86%	
% of early years settings good or better	94%	96%	98%	98%	Available Q3	97%	
% of young people aged 16 and 17 who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) or Not Known	4.90%	5.30%	5.00%	5.10%	Available Q2	5.50%	

	2017/18	2018/19	2021/22	Current National	Trend
Foundation Stage - % achieving a good level of development	70.5%	69.3%	62.9%	65.2%	
Foundation Stage - % of children who are looked after achieving a good level of development	52.2%	59.5%	48.10%	41%	
The gap in progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers achieving good level of development in early years foundation stage profile	17.7	23.5	20.2	18.7	
% Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving a Good Level of Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile	18%	23%	21.5%	20%	
% achieving expected standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2	60%	60%	52%	59%	
% Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the 'expected standard' in English, reading, English writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2	23%	22%	24.1%	23%	
The gap in progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at Key Stage 4	0.73	0.84	TBC	0.7	
Progress 8 Score for Wirral	0.03	0.01	TBC	-0.21	

Supporting narrative

Over Q2 a range of activities took place across the summer period, including large scale events in all parks across Wirral including older siblings who were on summer holidays, as well as targeted transition sessions for children moving into school in September. Q2 also saw the return of 'drop in' 0-19 Healthy Child clinics which have enabled families to access health support, weighing babies etc on an drop in basis.

Two-year funding figures remain the same as headcount figures as autumn term are still being finalised. Parents appear to be more interested in two-year funding combined with school readiness workers visiting all eligible families to encourage take up of the offer and discuss the benefits of accessing nursery provision for them and their child. There continues to be an increase in the number of children being identified at two with additional needs and requests for financial support through the Inclusive Practice Fund continue to put additional pressure on a budget that is primarily to support three-and-four-year-olds.










Promotion work continues to ensure parents are aware of all early years funding entitlements and encouraged to take up the full offer as soon as their children are eligible.







Attainment across all age ranges has fallen at both a national and Wirral level compared to 2019 outcomes - for this reason outcomes between 2022 and 2019 should not be compared.




In relation to GLD, the gap to national has narrowed to 2.3% compared to the 2019 gap to national. Further work is being supported across schools where GLD outcomes have been identified as needing support.

In relation to KS2 outcomes, the gap to national in 2022 has widened to 7% compared to the 2019 gap. Focused work is taking place in relation to writing across schools where outcomes for this area is significantly below the national figure. In relation to Maths at both KS1 and KS2, outcomes are below the national figure. Working with the Maths Hub, in depth analysis at the question level is being undertaken to understand the key strands that need further support in relation to numeracy.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

	Year-End			2022/23		Current National	Current North West	Current Stat neighbours	Trend
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1	Q2				
% Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) issued within 20 week timescale (Excluding Exceptions)	37	58	24	40	39	58	62.5	80.44	
% of requests that went to tribunal	7.63	9.47	8.23	1.35	1.84	-	-	-	
% of Children Looked After with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	6.93	8.68	9.26	17.7	18.3	-	-	-	
% of Children In Need with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	14.12	17.59	16.45	21.7	22.1	-	-	-	
% of Child Protection with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	5.93	5.93	6.45	7.8	8.9	-	-	-	
% of Early Help Episodes with (SEND) Special Educational needs and disabilities	25.77	25.82	26.44	28.98	29.8	-	-	-	
% of Children Looked After with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	18.29	18.22	19.29	18.2	17.6	-	-	-	
% of Children In Need with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	11.66	15.83	16.2	14.3	13.7	-	-	-	
% of Child Protection with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	23.32	19.88	21.51	21.6	18.3	-	-	-	

	Year-End			Term		Current National	Current North West	Current Stat neighbours	Trend
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2021/22 Summer	2022/23 Autumn				
(EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan- Overall School Attendance %	88.9	90.6	88.9	88	89.1	-	-	-	
(EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan Overall Persistent absence %	31.2	25.6	37.1	38.2	35.6	-	-	-	
Number of pupils with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan who are electively home educated	10	18	12	12	9	-	-	-	
(SEN) Special Educational Need support - Overall School Attendance %	92.3	93.4	91	89.3	91.5	-	-	-	
(SEN) Special Educational Need support - Overall Persistent absence %	23.8	19.3	28.6	33.8	30.4	-	-	-	
Number of pupils with (SEN) Special Educational Need support who are electively home educated	2	39	54	54	54	-	-	-	





	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2021/22	Current National	Current North West	Current Stat neighbours	Trend
	Key Stage 2 (RWM) Reading, Writing, Maths EHCP - % at Expected Level	2.9	6	2.2	2.5	7.2	6.4	
Key Stage 4 Overall Progress 8 Score - (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	-1.08	-0.85	-1.12	Available Q3	-1.17	-1.31	-1.29	
Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing, Maths (SEN) Special Educational Need support - % at Expected Level	18	21	23	20.7	21.1	20.3	Available Q3	
Key Stage 4 Overall Progress 8 Score - (SEN) Special Educational Need support	-0.36	-0.29	-0.42	Available Q3	-0.43	-0.59	-0.5	


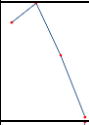

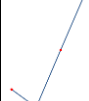
Supporting narrative

The cumulative 20 week completion rate remains consistent and is in line with Q1 data. Various factors should be considered including:

- More in depth focus on trouble shooting and finalising the 'backlog' cases (those already over 20 weeks). A team has been created to address cases over timescales and their time is solely focused on working these cases with settings and parents/carers to ensure any barriers to finalising are removed. Having this dedicated team has helped to decrease the historic backlog from 247 cases to 154 within two months. In adopting this approach, and thus finalising more out of timescale plans, it has kept the overall compliance rate where it stood last quarter.
- The overall number of plans both in and out of timescale being finalised has increased significantly and for some months is over double what it was in Q1. Overall output from the team is therefore demonstrated to be greater than before. This is due to case management meetings being held weekly to hold EHCP coordinators to account with their caseloads as well as individual performance management meetings.
- The tracking system that has been introduced has been further expanded to measure more in depth and accurate data with detailed notes on each case and identified barriers that prevent those plans being finalised. These are then collated and shared during EHCP Process meetings with SLT to ensure that there is strategic oversight and plans put in place to reduce those barriers. This has been a positive step and has resulted in a clearer allocations system for educational psychologist assessments as well as changes to staffing structures. These changes, particularly in staffing structure, have had a positive impact on work output. The move from a model based on age range to a locality model has meant that EHCP coordinators now have responsibility for EHC plans across all age ranges which has helped broaden and increase their knowledge and skills. This coupled with the introduction of a team dedicated to overseeing Annual Reviews has helped increase capacity and reduce workload.
- Another significant shift has been in the way our EHCP process is managed. All documentation, letters and handbook have been updated and coproduced with all stakeholders including parents/carers and young people. The notable change has been to move away from a process driven model to a relationship based model built on establishing and securing trust and respect with our parents/carers and young people. This is delivered through more contact (face to face/telephone and email) being built into the process and more opportunities to work collaboratively during the 20 weeks to avoid stress for families. We have already had positive feedback informally during conversations with parents as well as our new feedback surveys showing that parents/carers and young people have welcomed the changes and are seeing the effect of them on their experiences.
- Built into this process is an opportunity for EHCP Coordinators to complete a compliance checklist when finalising each plan. This allows SEND Management to gain oversight of where the successes and points for improvement are in the 20 week process. It is already evident from those collated so far that more contact is being made with families.
- The working relationships between the SEND team and Legal continues to grow. A new mediation and tribunal tracker has been developed to give complete oversight of all cases in an appeals process. This allows us to see trends in why cases end up in appeal and address those through strategic change. It also allows us to track individual performance.
- An audit tool has been introduced to help us identify strengths and areas for improvement in the quality of our EHC Plans. This means that at draft stage EHCP Coordinators will be able to complete the audit to show whether each section of the plan is of good quality. Once we have a bank of evidence collated, we will be able to use this to inform our training development plans.
- Provision continues to be a barrier to finalising plans on time. We are addressing this through regular SEND Sufficiency planning meetings to look at where the gaps in provision lie and how we can address this. An increase in the number of special school places has helped bridge this gap somewhat and the establishment of some more base provision within our mainstream settings will help have impact on this.
- We continue to work with our mainstream settings on developing a common graduated approach and ensure inclusive practice is demonstrated for SEND learners. We are now strategically planning for pupil places on a long term model to ensure pupils are placed in the right provision and that this is available to them at the end of the 20 week process.

Schools

	Year-End				2022/23		Current National	Trend
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1	Q2		
% School capacity - places available vs pupil numbers (school)	89.4	89.8	89.6	90.1	-	-	-	
% Exclusions - suspensions	4.6	3.31	4.06	Available Q3	Available Q3	Available Q4	3.76	
% Exclusions - permanent	0.09	0.04	0.04	Available Q3	Available Q3	Available Q4	0.06	
Number of children known to be electively home educated	145	171	275	254	258	266	-	
Number of Pupils who are not in receipt of full-time education and subject of an agreed part time timetable (Indicator once named - Pupils who are missing more than 25hrs of education a week (CME25))	-	-	171	254	253	62	-	-

	Year-End				Term		Current National	Trend
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2021/22 Summer Term	2022/23 Autumn Term		
% of school age pupils eligible for (FSM) Free school meal	19.5	21.5	24	27.59	27.59	Available Q3	20.8	
Overall School Attendance %	94.9	94.3	94.9	93.3	91.4	92.3	94.7	
Overall Unauthorised Absence %	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.9	2.8	2.1	1.7	
Overall Persistent Absence %	12.6	15.9	14.0	20.1	26.2	26	-	
Overall School Attendance Open to Social Care %	-	-	-	-	-	83.8	-	-

Supporting narrative

After a successful bid, funding has been agreed for the two additional teachers and the one day admin post to continue until 31st July 2023. There is close liaison between the Lead Officer for Elective Home Education (EHE) and individual EHCP Co-ordinators/Reviewing Officers in respect of EHE children with EHCPs (Total 9 out of the live total of 266 as at the end of September 2022: 5 are primary and 4 secondary.)

September 2022 saw 20 new cases for the start of the new academic year. As the LA continues to be responsible to monitor the educational arrangements as part of the Annual Review. The main reason cited by parents for removing their child from school to Electively Home Educate during Q1 was mental health and in particular, anxiety and EHE was seen as a way of getting their child in a more stable position before possibly returning back to a school. Out of the 266 we currently have 52 Year 11 students. This is an increase on the previous academic year, where we had 37.

Wirral Attendance Service is working hard to create a culture where all professionals and schools work together to advise parents to choose EHE when it benefits the needs of the child and not to be the solution for poor school attendance. EHE advisory teachers have worked to strengthen relationships with difficult to reach parents, changing the mindset has led to positive communication. The work of one of our EHE teachers has been recognised nationally by Education Otherwise following a referral from a parent.

There is a growing need for Part Time Timetables to be constantly reviewed and monitored to ensure CYP can access their right to a full time education (See White Paper). The risk may be mitigated by 2 existing vulnerable children's panels that meet to discuss school attendance. We are also considering our staffing structure, to take account of the numbers of young people on Part Time Timetables. The current figure of 62 for Part Time Timetables includes 53 which represents the start of the new academic year as all prior Part Time Timetables for 2021/22 will have ended at the close of Summer Term 2022.

Overall Attendance. The information provided is based on the new DfE Daily Collections. Whilst nationally there is a 69% sign up to this, locally we have 80% of schools signed up and we continue to encourage others to do so. In line with the new DfE guidance relating to school attendance, we are beginning the process of establishing working relationships with our independent schools. This will also include encouraging them to sign up to the new DfE Daily Data Collections.

Illness was identified as the main reason for absence when the Attendance Service was formed in Autumn 2019. The three year trend shows, the schools are tackling this area through a combination of whole school approach, including support and challenge to parents and where appropriate, enforcement measures. The evidence for this can be seen in our 360 degree reviews. We will continue to work with and coach our schools to challenge absence. This approach ties in with the DfE guidance for school attendance.

Workforce

	Year-End			2022/23		National	North West	Statistical Neighbours	Trend
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1	Q2				
Vacancy rate – number of posts currently vacant / total no of posts Social Workers	31%	31%	30%	20%	21%	-	-	-	
Agency rate – positions filled by agency staff Social Workers	15%	11%	22%	15%	13%	-	-	-	
New starters - Social Workers	19	29	20	5	13	-	-	-	
Retention of staff – number of leavers - Social Workers	8	16	33	6	15	-	-	-	
Average FTE days lost to sickness absence - Social Workers	16.75	10.88	16.46	3.56	3.47	-	-	-	
Average caseload for social worker	14.6	14.2	15.5	16	16.2	16.3	17.9	17	
Vacancy rate – number of posts currently vacant / total no of posts Children's Services Directorate	25%	17%	20%	16%	15%	-	-	-	
Agency rate – positions filled by agency staff Children's Services Directorate	6.80%	5.30%	6.29%	6.00%	6.80%	-	-	-	
New starters - Children's Services Directorate	112	88	98	20	27	-	-	-	
Retention of staff – number of leavers - Children's Services Directorate	95	57.5	102	22	26	-	-	-	
Average FTE days lost to sickness absence Children's Services Directorate	14.54	10.92	12.55	2.86	2.75	-	-	-	

Supporting narrative

In terms of retention of staff, we have had a lot of social worker leavers in Q2, 15 in total, however we have managed to balance that somewhat with the new starter figure also being high with 13. The agency rate has gone down, which is not a good thing as this leaves us with more empty posts within the teams. The qualitative data around that figure is that staff are either leaving to go to LA's who pay a higher agency rate or are moving to agency in another LA, or have been attracted by other LA's offering golden hellos etc. Sickness seems to have stabilised a little (whilst still being high) the next two Quarters will need to drop again for us to see better figures than we saw at the end of the last financial year.

Budget
Supporting narrative

Under development - further work required to align performance and financial reporting.