

REPORT FOR: PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:

18 February 2014

Subject:

Children and Families Performance

Responsible Officer:

Catherine Doran, Director, Children, Schools and Families

Scrutiny Lead

Member area:

Councillor Lynda Seymour, Policy Lead Member
Councillor Victoria Silver, Performance Lead Member

Exempt:

No

Enclosures:

Children's Services Scorecards

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

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| <p>1.1. Performance and Finance Sub Committee requested a report on Children and Families performance at the meeting in February 2014.</p> <p>1.2. This report is for information and is presented for the Committee's consideration and comment.</p> |
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Section 2 – Report

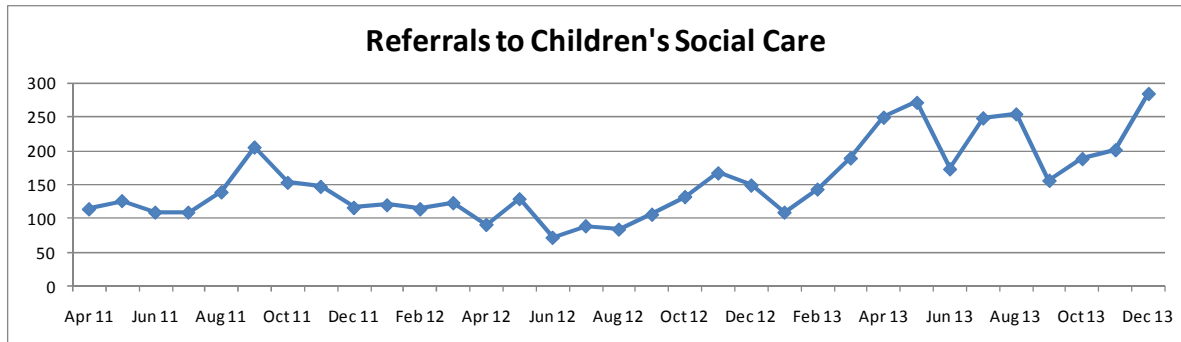
2.1. Introduction

2.2. The Children and Families Directorate is continuing its work to improve service quality and outcomes for children and families. A summary of important issues for the service is provided below.

2.3. In the report to the Committee in July 2013, information was provided on the significant increase in referrals to social care and levels of service provided following the review of thresholds. This level of

activity has been sustained and Children and Families has been given authority to increase its social care workforce to meet the identified additional needs of children and families.

Fig 1: Social care referrals April 2011 to Dec 2013:



- 2.4. There is a national shortage of qualified social workers so considerable effort has gone into recruiting and stabilising the workforce. Details of progress in meeting this major challenge are provided later in this report.
- 2.5. An update is also given on the Council’s response to the challenges facing schools in terms of the ‘raised bar’. While Harrow’s schools continue to perform comparatively well, all schools are being challenged to close the achievement gap for all pupils and to respond to the more stringent Ofsted inspection framework. Details of current support for school improvement from Education Strategy and Harrow Schools’ Improvement Partnership are provided below.
- 2.6. **Achievements of Children & Families Directorate**
- Good result from recent thematic inspection of ‘Early Help’. Ofsted comments include:

Fig 2: Comments from Ofsted inspectors:

“Strong flexibility, responsive to changing need especially in the Strategic group e.g. tracking need, re-drafting thresholds and attendance, health and school issues” and “responsive delivery e.g. LSCB Conference 21.01.14 delivered on Neglect.”

“Evidence of improved outcomes for children and families in the majority of early help work”.

“Dissemination of SCRs learning noteworthy”, including the dramatisation re *Climbie* was cited as memorable by one worker, “with a clear message about impact on practice”

“Professionals speak positively about training, & front line and especially appreciated the systemic training, Genograms” and felt that this “whole family system”, more holistic approach, “had more impact for the child than previously”

- Attendance Intervention Model (AIM) project progressing well and attendance improved in both primary and secondary school in Autumn Term 2013
- Progress on recruiting staff to key posts for example Children Looked After Service Manager, Quality Assurance Manager and Team Managers for Children in Need, MASH and Section 47 Team. There are currently no vacancies for Team Managers in Targeted Services.
- QA work across services including renewed audit programme, evaluation of EIS, self-evaluation in preparation for the Early Help inspection, self assessment of 12 cases picked by Ofsted. Inspectors reported that we 'knew ourselves well'.
- Progress in re-commissioning services around disability, CAMHS, tripartite support for most vulnerable
- Families First – of target 395 families, identified 327, engaged 250, claimed for 96
- The Early Intervention Teams also increased their support, engaging with 173 new families in the quarter
- School inspections – 92% judged good or above. 53% currently outstanding. Hatch End and Vaughan both retained 'good' in inspections during the quarter
- Rate of re-referrals to social care have reduced for Q2 and Q3 indicating that original intervention has been successful.
- We continue to have low rates of children subject to a child protection plan for more than 2 years, again indicating that our interventions are timely and appropriate.
- Increase in reach of Children's Centres, especially for vulnerable groups
- Virtual School now has robust data on all statutory school age children and is monitoring attainment and progress

2.7. **Current Challenges**

- Inspection of safeguarding in health partners by CQC raised issues around A&E and CLA health (report not yet published)
- CLA Health checks performance continues to be well below expectations
- Workforce permanence and stability – national shortage of key professionals.
- Commissioning around single integrated plan for health, education and social care under Children and Families Bill
- Partnership for social care and early intervention – CAF and 'team around the family' approach
- Unannounced Ofsted inspection of safeguarding is due
- Major IT problems following migration, for all teams but particularly YOT, affecting outcomes for young offenders and improvement plan
- Achieving an outcome focus across C&F – building on early work done with 'journey tool' in EIS
- 4 schools require improvement and 1 is judged inadequate
- Improving Key Stage 4 results for some ethnic groups

- First results from new EYFS measurement 2013 establishes a new baseline, improvement needed to bring results into line with other boroughs
- Virtual school has challenge in keeping older CLA engaged in education and other opportunities
- Forecasting £930k overspend

2.8. **Future Challenges**

- Meeting needs of changing population with higher level of need for both social care and early intervention
- Budgetary pressure impacting on early intervention approach
- Increasing pressure on health and other budgets threatens commissioning and partnership work
- Reliable and efficient mobile & flexible working, with remote access to confidential data for staff and appropriate partners

2.9. **Recruitment update**

2.10. The recruitment programme continues to focus on filling vacant social work posts - 132 applications were received in latest round of permanent recruitment and 16 appointments were made.

- Social worker establishment for caseholding social workers is 69
- There were 15 caseholding social worker vacancies (21%) at January 2014 compared with 28 (41%) in October 2013.
- Vacancy rate at January is 18% for the whole of Targeted Services, including Emergency Duty and Placements
- Only limited data available from other authorities to date but shows vacancy range from 11% to 44%, average 26%
- Across C&F, the highest numbers of agency workers in December were in Targeted Services and Special Needs Services
- Targeted Service use of agency is driven by difficulty in filling SW posts
- Special Needs is using temps on Special Needs Transport
- Caseload analysis shows average of 21 children for experienced social workers at end January 2014
- We currently have 17 newly qualified social workers in the CiN service, who all require a protected and reduced caseload
- Number of caseholding agency SWs in Targeted Services at end January was 22 (31%)
- Two other authorities have shared their rates of agency SWs – 35% and 21%
- 43 potential agency SWs were interviewed in November/December
- We are recruiting as at February for experienced social workers and senior practitioners

2.11. We continue to have difficulty attracting and retaining experienced social workers and senior practitioners. An example was that we recruited an excellent candidate externally in our last round, but when

she informed her current authority they immediately offered a promotion and we lost the candidate, despite reviewing our own offer.

2.12. Harrow Schools' Performance

- 2.13. The local authority, through Education Strategy, undertakes a high level analysis of performance of all Harrow schools, using national data including flagging any schools below national standards. This forms the basis of the commissioning of targeted support to specific LA schools from the Harrow Schools' Improvement Partnership. Such schools are referred to as 'schools causing concern'.
- 2.14. In addition to the LA commission, schools themselves, through their service agreements with HSIP, draw in an extensive range of school improvement support to enable them to improve on previous best and to address the challenges posed through an ever changing and more challenging Ofsted inspection framework.
- 2.15. A detailed risk assessment of all schools, especially against the new Ofsted inspection framework for schools, is carried out annually by HSIP, using nationally published and schools' own data and other information e.g. quality of teaching and leadership. This leads to the identification of specific support for schools causing concern. It also identifies areas for improvement for good and outstanding schools.
- 2.16. Rapid Improvement Partnership Plans are in place for all schools causing concern. There are 8 schools with a RIPP. Progress against these plans is reviewed termly by the local authority through Education Strategy. Termly assessment through the Schools Monitoring Group also closely monitors the performance of other schools at risk of receiving a lower judgement in their next inspection than in the previous one.
- 2.17. Recent risk assessment of primary schools, based on the hypothesis that a lead inspector would reach applying the most recent inspection framework, has identified 9 schools (8 of which already have a RIPP) at 'high risk' of not achieving a 'good' in their next inspection and a further 10 schools at 'moderate risk' of not achieving 'good' in their next inspection.
- 2.18. There are also risks for the secondary school sector. Only the one school that is currently 'requiring improvement' is identified as 'high risk' of not being judged as good in its next inspection. However the achievement gaps between free school meal pupils and those with 'Black African', 'Black Other' or 'White other' ethnicities across the secondary sector is a concern and leaves some individual schools vulnerable.
- 2.19. See attached scorecards for full details of Children and Families performance indicators as at Q3 2013-14.

Financial Implications

2.20. The Children & Families budget currently faces significant pressures due to the increase in demand for services with revised thresholds and changes in population.

Performance Issues

2.21. Integral to the report

Environmental Impact

2.22. None

Risk Management Implications

2.23. No new implications. Risks relating to poor performance and inspections are already included in the C&F risk register and are reviewed and updated each quarter.

Equalities Implications

2.24. None

Corporate Priorities

2.25. Supporting and protecting people who are most in need

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

3.1 This report is for information only. Statutory officer clearance not required.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

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Background Papers: Performance Scorecards Q3 2013-14