

Summary of Quarter 1 2021/22 Overview and Scrutiny performance discussions

1. Framework

- 1.1 Quarter 1 2021/22 performance was discussed at the following Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) meeting.

Children and Young People O&S: 30 September 2021

Due to the timing of meetings, the summary of performance at Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S committee will follow. The Health & Adult Social Care O&S committee will be held after this committee so no summary can be provided.

2. Items referred to Business Support O&S

To date no items have been referred to Business Support O&S by the chairs of the other O&S Committees.

3. O&S Performance Discussions

- 3.1 This section provides a summary of the discussion at the Children and Young People O&S Committee.

3.1.1 Children and Young People O&S committee discussion summary.

Discussion:

The Director of People introduced the report which set out how the Council had performed on the delivery of two priority areas relevant to the Committee for the first quarter of 2021-22. Officers drew Members' attention to the indicators that were red including:

- excess weight – officers explained that there was a long term whole system approach in place to address this measure, which was a focus for the Council and a number of partner agencies, not least the NHS.
- Number of days between a child entering care and moving in with an adoptive family – officers explained this was slightly improved and was a figure significantly affected by sibling groups and children who were older or who had complex needs. Covid had also impacted this measure due to delays in the Court process.
- S47 and S17 assessment visits – there had been a drop in performance during quarter 1 which related to a small number of families and was attributable to the availability of families as well as partners (particularly over the summer holiday period) and to some vacancies in the assessment team.
- Children Social Care audits – officers explained this was a stretching target and a part of the improvement journey. Small improvements were being made but work was ongoing in this area.

- Persistent absence – officers explained that this was largely attributable to covid and the way a child's absence is marked depending on whether they were absent because of isolating due to being in contact or because they had covid themselves. It was also reiterated that the figures provided were unvalidated figures.
- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) – officers explained that despite the red, performance in this area had been very good, particularly as the number of un-knowns (where a child's destination in terms of EET was un-known) had dramatically reduced. Equally the percentage for Medway, although above national, was below the average for the South East. The pandemic had also been a factor in being a barrier for some NEETs to access employment, education or training.

Members then raised a number of questions and comments which included:

- Smoking at time of delivery – it was suggested that this target be reviewed to be a more stretching target.
- Number of days between a child entering care and moving in with adoptive family – in response to a question about how this was calculated officers confirmed this was the longest period of time measured and was from when the child entered care to when they go to live with an adoptive family. Other measures were taken around time to match etc but these were reported elsewhere and not part of the Council Plan Monitoring data set.
- Underweight children – Members asked to receive information in relation to children who were underweight in Medway, which officers undertook to provide.
- Unknowns – despite the large reduction in the percentage of children whose destination was unknown, Members still raised concern in relation to the children left. Officers recognised that but explained that the majority of the young people were likely to have moved out of area. There was a national system to track the information but there would always be a small number of children who would be difficult to track due to moving locations as an example.
- Be Yourself Project – Reference was made to the project, which provided additional support for young people around employability, education and training, and whether an extension to the project beyond October had been agreed. Officers undertook to report back to members with an update.
- Weight management programme – in response to a request for more detail on this, officers explained that this was a programme delivered through Public Health and children were mainly referred into the service as a result of the outcome of the national child measurement programme. Families could also self refer and Public Health worked with a wide range of partners to raise awareness and support appropriate referrals. The aim for children and families at the end of the programme is for them to be more active and eat more healthy and for at least 75% of the children and young people completing the programme to achieve that.

- Number of children on a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 – in response to a question about whether this target was set at the right value, officers explained that Medway was still on its improvement journey and were yet to determine exactly where the target should be. The service had worked hard to address drift and delay in this area but there was expected to be more movement of the numbers before settling as improvement is continued.

Decision:

The Committee noted the response.