

# Children and Education Select Committee

16 November 2018



## Children's Services Performance Improvement

**Purpose of report:** Scrutiny of Children's Services Performance Improvement

### Introduction:

1. This report supports the review the Children's Improvement Plan designed by the Children, Families and Learning Directorate to determine its effectiveness of resolving the issues highlighted in the Ofsted report (2018), specifically in relation to performance improvement.
2. This report also informs the assessment of the capability of the Improvement Plan to resolve the issues in Children's Services, within the context of the Ofsted report (2018) and report of the appointed Children's Commissioner, and have made suggestions as required.

### Background information

3. Following the implementation of the new Practice Leadership Team (PLT), the Performance Improvement Team (PI) have been working with PLT to develop new ways of working to drive performance improvements.
4. The monthly performance report has continued to be produced and developed over the last three months, with a focus on data integrity and making information accessible to managers through the council's reporting software, a product called Tableau.
5. In July the department submitted the annual statutory data and performance reports to central government.
6. Through the process of submission a number of data quality issues were identified specifically in relation to the accuracy of recording Looked After Children placements.

7. Information required by central government for Adoption and Fostering continues to be held in spreadsheets rather than an integrated record in the case management system. This means there is a heavy reliance on manual recording and reporting via Excel, rather than structured recording in LCS and reporting through Tableau.

#### How we manage performance

8. The performance framework puts more focus on each service to own their data and performance information using Tableau as management tool to monitor and track key indicators in near real time and to inform assurance reporting to the Directors.
9. The performance cycle is outlined below:
  - a) First Monday, the performance manager circulates an initial performance report for the previous month with headline analysis.
  - b) Second Monday, the performance manager circulates the validated performance report with performance challenge questions for Assistant Directors and Service Managers to prepare answers at the performance challenge meeting the following week.
  - c) Third Monday, Practice Leadership Performance Challenge Meeting takes place to discuss highlight reports and agree a performance narrative based on the outcomes of the investigations to the performance challenge questions from the previous week.
  - d) Fourth Monday, the final draft performance narrative is prepared for discussion at the Children's Leadership Team and wider distribution to Lead Members and staff. It is expected that the learning from the performance challenge is used to inform a programme of audit to assess quality and drive service improvements and better outcomes for children.
10. In addition the performance managers attend regular meetings in each of the practice quadrants to support Assistant Directors and Service Managers to address the issues coming out of the data and develop new reporting tools to aid their professional curiosity.
11. To help focus the performance improvement agenda, the following criteria is used to enable priority setting:
  - a) Is it a strategic priority linked to a transformation programme?
  - b) Does it relate to an Ofsted/ SEND recommendation

- c) Is there a statutory requirement
- d) Is there an external deadline to meet?

- 12. The performance challenge is seen as a healthy opportunity to inwardly look at how well outcomes for children are being achieved as well as outward reflection to review current practice and agree how things can be done differently to improve children and families experiences.

#### **Addressing Data Quality issues**

- 13. We are aware that there are some data quality issues in relation to the recording of where looked after children are living. Although we are aware of all current placements, the information is not easily accessible as some of it is held outside of the case management system on spreadsheets or not recorded in the format that is required for reporting.
- 14. At present, the performance team are working with colleagues in all service areas to review this data and ensure that it is then reportable.
- 15. Following this activity, recommendations will be presented to the Practice Leadership Team with clear expectations and accountability for recording standards for all children's records.

#### **Review of IT systems used in Children's Services**

- 16. The data quality issues have highlighted that there are a number of changes required to the core IT systems used across the department. This includes streamlining some business processes, reducing bureaucracy and the reliance on manual data and the use of spreadsheets and to make the job easier for practitioners.
- 17. This will enable the development of a set of data quality standards, linked to a scheme of delegation that clearly sets out expectations for the recording of information (by whom and by when) to drive performance reporting based upon child level information that is accurate and reliable.
- 18. To support this work, it has been agreed to review the use of all IT systems used across the department and make recommendations to the Children's Leadership Team, aiming towards a single view of children's information reported through Tableau with minimal use of data held outside of this platform.

#### **Conclusions:**

19. There is a clear vision across the department to work towards having a single view of all children's information, to improve data quality and access to information that is accurate, reliable and a single version of the truth.
20. The work described in this report is directly influencing the content of the Ofsted improvement plan and associated measures for success.

<b>Recommendations:</b>
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21. That the key indicators referred to in the 'Compendium At A Glance' continue to be regularly reviewed each month and assessed against national performance (published by the Department for Education on 15 November 2018) and quarterly regional benchmarking to assess Surrey in the national and regional context.

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**Sources/background papers:**

Annex A – 2018-19 Compendium at a Glance

Annex B – IHA Performance Report October 2018

Annex C – Surrey's Children's Improvement Plan (Strategic) Aug 2018