



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 14 DECEMBER 2022**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK) – PERIOD TO SEPTEMBER
2022**

BY: CHIEF OFFICER, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 30 September 2022.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Committee in terms of section III (D) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration in relation to the functions of the Council as a Social Work Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- i) scrutinises and notes performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of September 2022; and**
- ii) notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

3. BACKGROUND

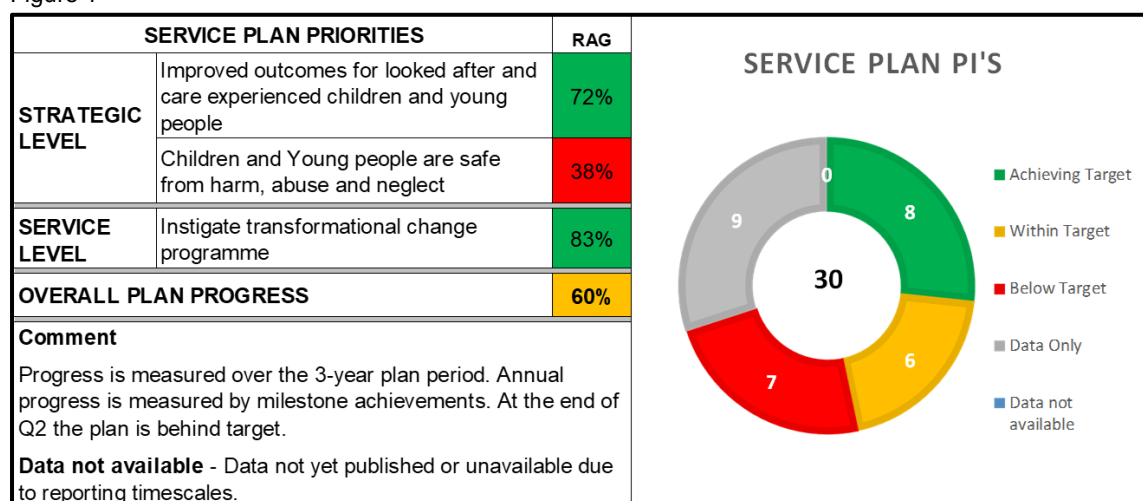
- 3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Council, approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

4. SERVICE PLANNING

- 4.1 Each service plan sets out the planned strategic and service level priorities and outcomes it intends to deliver in the coming year aligning closely with financial planning, corporate and community planning partnership strategic priorities. This report provides an interim update on progress on the service plan, key outcomes and performance indicators. Committee is invited to review progress to secure assurance that is satisfactory and to provide scrutiny and further direction where performance requires attention.

- 4.2 The narrative included is by exception, however links to backing tables for all Service Plan Actions and Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.

Figure 1



Strategic Outcomes – successes

- 4.3 As at 30 September 2022 there were 169 Looked after Children (LAC) in Moray, a rate of 9.3 per 1,000, continuing to remain below that of the comparator authority median of 10.5. (PI's CSCF100, LAC003)
- 4.4 The Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) working group have made significant progress during quarter 2 and has established a baseline process via an updated permanence process map. From this group the four Aims of PACE have been refreshed to reflect current best practice and the development of monitoring and recording systems have allowed the formal reporting and analysis of PACE data to commence during October. In addition, a permanence tracking meeting will monitor the child's progress alongside PACE tracking the process and barriers. (Action STRAT1.2)
- 4.5 The process to reduce the over representation of care leavers and care experience young people within justice systems continues to work well with the provision of a support worker to work with individuals to address any additional needs. At the end of quarter 2, 42 (9.9%) cases open to social work were within the justice systems, below target of 15%. The outcome star tool has been introduced to track success of engagement and impact of intervention. (Action STRAT 1.5, PI LAC014)

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.6 Whilst the proportion of LAC accommodated within a community setting (83.6%) remains below target (86.1%) there has been improvement in the first half of 2022/23, with those under home supervision and in kinship placements having both increased. LAC placed for adoption continues to remain below target with only two children being placed at the end of the quarter. The proportion of brothers and sisters being cared for within the same fostering placement has fallen for the third consecutive quarter. The ability to provide appropriate fostering placements of this type is likely to have been affected by the loss of four fostering households in the first half of the year. The fostering

service is an area where work is being focussed to increase the number of Moray Council carers. The internet landing page is now live and the adoption landing page will be available in November. Recruitment campaigns, making best use of advertising and social media, are in place to identify and recruit carers for children with specific needs. The proportion of children in residential accommodation remains stubbornly high and has risen slightly in the first half of the year. To meet the target, based upon current LAC numbers, there would need to be a reduction of five children.

The service is receiving an increase in referrals exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. This presents as a challenge and the ability to reduce the levels of children who need accommodated. (Action STRAT1.1, PI's CSCF101, Eds606.02, Eds606.03, LAC009, LAC010, LAC013, CSCF102).

- 4.7 Neglect concerns feature highly for children currently on the Child Protection Register (CPR) and have risen during the first half of the year. At the start of the COVID pandemic 20% of children were registered due to neglect concerns, at the end of this quarter neglect concerns had more than doubled to 42%. Whilst the trend is not consistent throughout the period it is on an upward trajectory. It is clear that the COVID period, with the changes it brought to circumstances, has had an impact with regard to children suffering from neglect. The National Society for the Prevention to Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) graded profile assessment tool was licensed for use in Moray during quarter 1 and an implementation plan is being developed during quarter 3. . This neglect specific tool helps practitioners identify neglect and assess the quality of care provided by a parent or carer and consider any further supports that may be offered to families. As neglect has a close association with poverty it is expected that referrals of this nature will continue to rise as the cost-of-living crisis deepens. (Action STRAT2.1, PI CMS021c1).
- 4.8 Domestic abuse concerns for children registered on the CPR have almost halved to 34.9% during the first half of the year, however, remain significantly higher than target (16.9%) set pre-pandemic. Similar to neglect concerns, domestic abuse concerns have risen steeply during the course of the COVID pandemic and only in the past six months have they shown any signs of progress in returning to pre-pandemic levels. The Social Work Department have continued to work on implementing the Safe and Together Model into practice. It is notable through discussions with social work staff that they have a better understanding of domestic violence and impact on caregivers who live with domestic violence. The new model promotes a supportive relationship-based approach to our work, where this is evidencing better relationships with parents which in turn supports better outcomes for children and young people. Multi-agency training in the Safe and Together Model has been scheduled to take place in the second half of 2022/23 and will be delivered maximising the contribution of Children and Families Social Work trainers. Intensive work will continue with cases where domestic violence is a feature to ensure children and young people are protected and supported with its impact. (Action STRAT 2.3, PI CMS021f1).
- 4.9 The action to minimise the impact of parental substance use has made mixed progress. The proportion of children on the CPR as a result of parental alcohol misuse has risen during the first half of the year after consistently reducing in the previous year. At the end of quarter 2 more than a quarter of children were registered due to concerns of this nature, above the target of 13.9%. Children

registered due to parental drug misuse however has reduced from quarter 4 2021/22 and at 27.9% is now below the target set at 33.7%. These two concerns do not follow the same trends as witnessed by Neglect and Domestic Abuse, which would appear to indicate that the COVID pandemic did not have the same increasing impact. Links between Children and Families Social Work and Moray Alcohol & Drug Partnership (MADP) are in early development. Work continues on the Quality Improvement (QI) project which is being overseen by the QI Leaders Network for Children's Services. (Action STRAT2.2, PI's CMS021g1 & CMS021h1).

Service Level Outcomes - successes

- 4.10 In the first half of 2022/23 no children were placed in 'Out of Area' placements and two returned to Moray. Training for the NSPCC 'Reunification model' is in the pilot phase and is being successfully embedded into practice. The assessment of children in out of area placements has been prioritised and where it is appropriate that a child could return, their need for support and resource requirement is assessed to enable their return. This process is being supported by the development of the Placement Oversight Meeting with a monitoring tool developed to aid the measurement of progress. The formal reporting and analysis of data for the Placement Oversight Meeting will commence in quarter 3. (Action SERV1.4, PI's LAC004, LAC005)

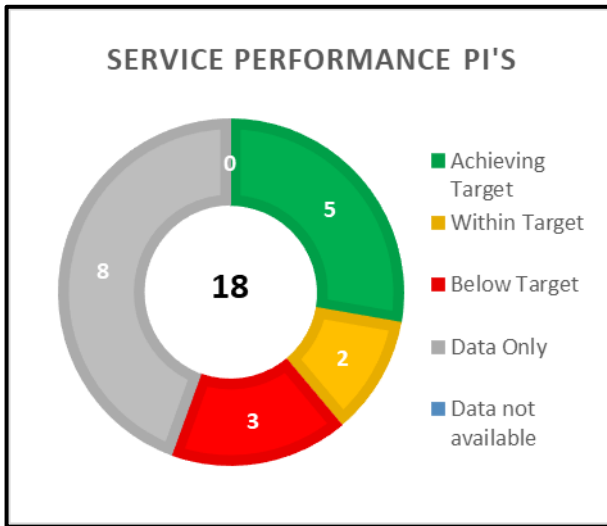
Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.11 The implementation of a newly commissioned service has not completed by agreed timescale. One of the newly commissioned services agreed at committee in Q4 2021/22 remains within the Procurement and Commissioning process, for which the service has no control. The 'Functional Family Service' contract has been agreed and will commence recruitment in the second half of the year with a view to being fully functional by March 2023. A new Service Manager is now in post and will drive forward the commissioning model changes. (Action SERV 1.3)

5. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, operational performance is reviewed quarterly by departmental management. Areas performing well and/or areas subject to a decreasing trend or where benchmarking results show performance significantly below comparators will be reported to this committee for member scrutiny.
- 5.2 The finalised Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Indicators for 2020-21 were published in May. The full suite can be viewed within the Background Papers section of this report. Published indicators for this service have been incorporated within the relevant section of this report depending on whether results are used to evidence progress against strategic, service plan or service performance priorities. LGBF indicators for Education, Resources and Communities are identifiable with the CHN prefix.
- 5.3 The narrative included is by exception, links to Service Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.

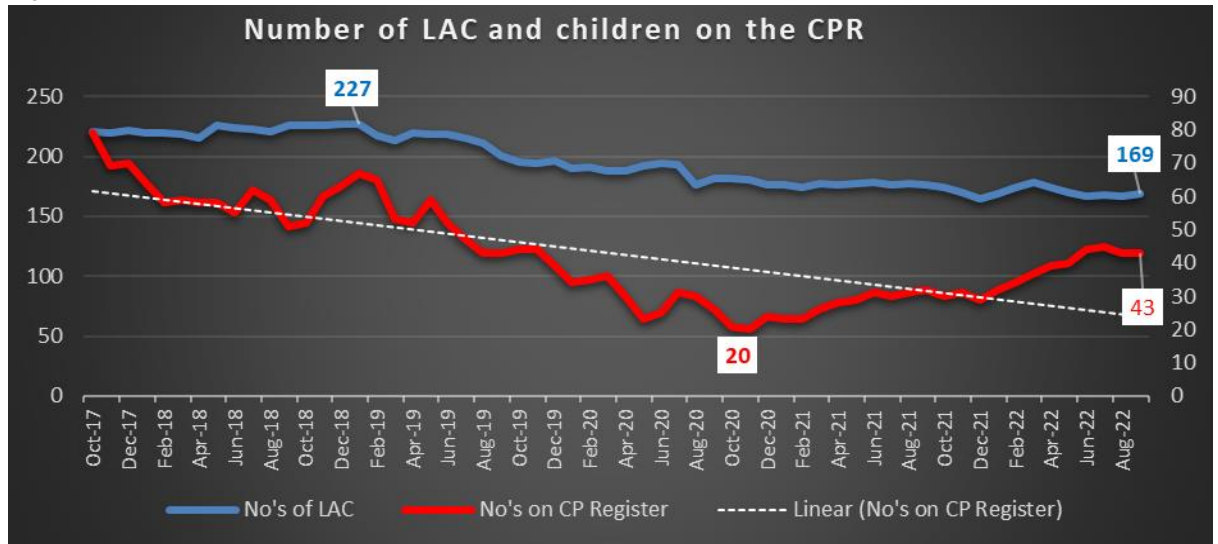
Figure 2



Operational Indicators - successes

5.4 Figure 3 below shows, both the number of LAC and the number of children on the CPR have stabilised over the past 6 months, with a long-term reducing trend. (PI's CSCF100, CMS013)

Figure 3



5.5 The proportion of LAC in foster care placements paid for by Moray Council have reduced in the first half of the year and at 4% has met target for the first time since being recorded. The target has been set at the median of our comparator authorities. (PI LAC007)

5.6 The number of initial child protection case conferences held within agreed timescales after being below target in quarter 1 has met target at the end of quarter 2. (PI CMS001a)

5.7 The proportion of children on the CPR in excess of 12 months has reduced since quarter 4 2021/22 and at 14% now meets target set at 15%. (PI CMS017f)

- 5.8 The submission of criminal justice reports to courts continues to maintain the 100% target. (PI CJ01).

Operational Indicators - challenges and actions to support

- 5.9 At the end of quarter 2, 123 of 169 LAC (74.5%) were accommodated in paid placements, exceeding the target of 65%. This is a recurring trend whereby the set target has never been met since recording commenced in 2019/20. Until the proportion of children accommodated in residential placements reduces it is unlikely that the target, set at the median of comparator authorities will be met. (PI LAC006).
- 5.10 The proportion of child protection review case conferences held within agreed timescales continues to remain below 100% target. In quarter 2, 12 of 16 (75%) review case conferences met the timescales. (PI CMS002b, CMS002d)

6. OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA

Complaints & MP/MSP Enquiries

- 6.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, complaints are reviewed quarterly by departmental management in terms of time taken to respond, outcome and learning points. Detailed tables can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.
- 6.2 A total of 15 complaints were received during the first half of 2022/23 and 10 complaints closed. Of those, six were at frontline stage (60%), four were partially upheld and two were not upheld. Two (33%) frontline complaints were closed within the 5-day timescale, with an average time to closure of 9 days.
- 6.3 Four investigative complaints were closed in the same period, one was upheld and the remaining three were partially upheld. Two investigative reports (50%) were closed within the 20-day timescale, with an average time to closure of 30 days.
- 6.4 Whilst all complaints were of a differing nature, in five of the eight complaints, that were either upheld or partially upheld, there was recognition that policy/procedure or process was not administered as intended.
- 6.5 A total of 3 MSP enquiries were received in the period between 1 April 2022 and 30 September 2022, two were resolved, and the outstanding enquiry was received on 28 September and had insufficient time to be resolved by the end of the quarter. One enquiry from March 2022 was resolved during the period.

Other Performance (not included within Service Plan)

- 6.6 No information to report.

Case Studies

- 6.7 Nothing to report.

Consultation and Engagement

6.8 Nothing to report.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Performance measurement is used to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of services to meet the Council's priorities in both the Corporate Plan and the LOIP.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council has a statutory requirement to publish a range of information that will demonstrate that it is securing best value and assist in comparing performance both over time and between authorities where appropriate.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform the Committee on performance.

(h) Consultations

The Head of Children and Families & Criminal Justice Social Work, Chief Officer (Health and Social Care), Deputy Chief Executive (Education, Communities & Organisational Development), Service Managers, Legal Services, the Equal Opportunities Officer, and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 By 30 September 2022, Service Plan Actions are 60% complete with the majority of actions progressing well. Of the 12 service plan actions, one strategic level and two service level actions have completed. One Service level action failed to complete by agreed date. Anticipated progress for four strategic actions is behind schedule for this stage of the plan but there is sufficient time to catch up before the end date of March 2023.

Author of Report: Iain Sneddon, Research & Information Officer
Background Papers: [Service Plan Actions](#)
[Performance Indicators](#)
[Service Performance Indicators](#)
[LGBF Indicators](#)
[Service Complaints](#)

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