



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2023**

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 31 March 2023.

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 March 2023; and**
- ii) **notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

3. BACKGROUND

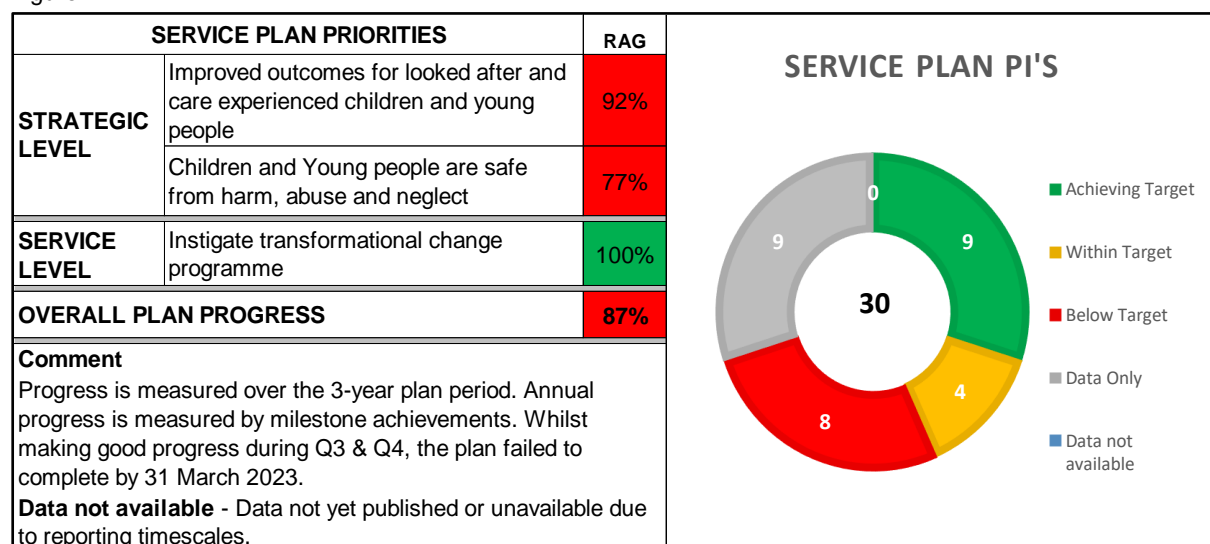
3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Council, approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

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 final 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 31 March 2023 there were 171 Looked after Children (LAC) in Moray, a rate of 9.5 per 1,000, continuing to remain below that of the comparator authority median of 10.5. (PI's CSCF100, LAC003)
- 4.4 At the plan end date of 31 March 2023, six of the eight Strategic actions have completed, five of which did so during quarter 4. The actions in the following five paragraphs all completed during quarter 4.
- 4.5 The final annual milestone to monitor movement in placements before permanence is achieved was met. Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) monthly meetings continue in tandem with tracking and oversight meetings. These provide a level of scrutiny to the process matching young people to the most appropriate placement reducing the need for placement moves. Since 2011/12 Moray has made consistent progress moving from 30/32 (35.2%) to 6/32 (14.9%) in 2020/21, where 1/32 is the lowest, for LAC with more than one placement in the last year. Maintaining and expanding foster carers is crucial to maintain service stability. A recruitment strategy and marketing plan is moving forward at pace to increase the number of varied placement options. (Action STRAT1.2, PI CHN23)
- 4.6 There continues to be positive feedback from children and young people about feeling secure and supported within kinship care placements which has been consistently reflected within social work reporting throughout the course of 2022/23. The Champion's Board is becoming well embedded in practice with young people being involved in recruitment, tendering processes and with better representation on strategic groups. Moving forward the Champions Board will be supported by the newly recruited Engagement officer. (Action STRAT 1.3)
- 4.7 The proportion of care leavers and care experienced young people (CEYP) within the youth and criminal justices' systems at 9.2% remains below the

target of 15% At the end of plan period all annual milestones have been met, this action is now complete. Effective processes are in place to identify CEYP and refer appropriately to prevent duplication of work and overwhelming the individual with multiple contacts. Reviews take place at regular intervals to ensure the young person's voice is heard and exit questionnaires completed to inform future practice. A partner agency Youth Justice sub-group meets regularly to analyse data to inform future action required to further reduce the representation of CEYP within Youth Justice system. (Action STRAT 1.5, PI LAC014)

- 4.8 The continued proportionate reduction of children on the Child Protection Register (CPR) due to neglect concerns allowed the final milestone to complete at the end of quarter 4. The number of Children on the CPR, whilst being static during the first three quarters of 2022/23, dropped significantly in quarter 4 from 40 to 23. The reduction of those registered for neglect concerns witnessed an even steeper decline (11 to 5). The implementation of the 'Graded Care Profile 2' is well underway with 'Train the Trainer' dates scheduled to take place in the later part of 2023 allowing for the full roll-out of staff training to partnership staff. The cost-of-living crisis remains as the largest contributory factor impacting upon neglect. Social work staff are working with families to differentiate between poverty and neglect to establish whether poverty, not neglect, is the underlying factor. (Action STRAT 2.1, PI CMS021c1)
- 4.9 The proportion of children on the CPR due to parental alcohol and/or drug concerns, have reduced significantly during 2022/23, at the end of quarter 4 both achieved target levels. A whole system approach to intensive family support for children and young people impacted by drug and alcohol use is in development and a pilot project has been identified as a key priority within the Children's Services Plan 2023/26. Work will focus with families to support parents to reduce their use and help them to recognise the impact of their use on their children. (Action STRAT 2.2, PIs CMS021g1 & CMS021h1)

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.10 At the plan end date two Strategic actions have failed to complete.
- 4.11 There has been little improvement in the proportion of LAC accommodated within a community setting during 2022/23, from 81.5% at the end of quarter 4 2021/22 to 82% at the end of this quarter. Of the 10 target indicators measuring progress only one is currently meeting target. Annual percentage improvements were set for all indicators to bring them in line with comparator authority median values over the three-year duration of the plan. Improvement targets set for '% of Looked After Children cared for in a community setting' failed to meet any of the annual milestones. Whilst improvements have been noticed within some of these indicators they are insufficient to meet targets. Currently the '% of LAC in Moray Council Fostering Care' is achieving target, there are concerns however due to more foster carers leaving the service than being recruited during 2022/23. A full Business Plan has been completed to review last year's campaign and its lack of success. A targeted approach will be adopted for 23/24 rather than awareness raising. There has been success in increasing our Nominated Carer numbers used for short breaks rather than a fostering placement, with two sets of carers approved at panel in quarter 4. Although improving between quarters 3 & 4 the proportion of brothers and

sisters being cared for within the same fostering placement has fallen during 2022/23, likely to be a result of reduced foster care capacity. The proportion of children in residential accommodation continues to remain stubbornly high, showing no change from the end of quarter 4 2021/22. The service continues to receive high numbers of referrals exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. This presents as a challenge and a reduced ability in accommodating children in placements that meet their needs. (Action STRAT1.1, PI's CSCF101, EdS601.01, Eds606.02, Eds606.03, EdS606.09, LAC009, LAC010, LAC013, CSCF102, CSCF104).

- 4.12 Domestic abuse concerns for children registered on the CPR have increased in the second half of 2022/23 and at 47.8% remain significantly higher than target (16.9%) set pre-pandemic. In comparison with the end of 2021/22 (67.6%) proportions have reduced. High levels of domestic abuse are a legacy of the COVID pandemic which saw numbers rise steeply across the UK, pre-pandemic levels recorded in Moray were significantly lower. The Social Work Department have continued to work on implementing the Safe and Together Model into practice to assess risk when children are living in environments where gender-based violence is a risk. Core sessions of this training were delivered in both November & February. To date 75 staff have been trained across the partnership, with planned training it is anticipated these numbers will increase to around 190. (Action STRAT 2.3, PI CMS021f1).

Service Level Outcomes - successes

- 4.13 The final action within the service element of the service plan completed during quarter 4 as planned. During 2022/23 only one child was placed in an 'Out of area' placement and three returned to Moray. The Placement Oversight group continues to meet monthly to track children who are in interim, emergency, out of area and agency placements. This group provides a focus on returning children and young people to placements within Moray. Contract monitoring templates are in place with service providers allowing effective scrutiny of service delivery along with information gathering documentation to record and monitor comments, complaints, incidents and restraints. (Action SERV1.4, PI's LAC004, LAC005)

Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.14 Nothing to report.

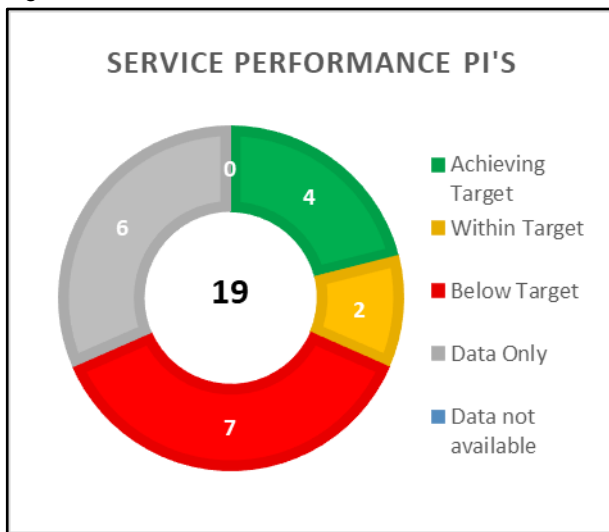
5. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

- 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 publication of 2021/22 Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators are not expected until late May 2023. Where indicators for 2021-22 have been published for this service, they have been incorporated within the relevant sections of this report if results are used to evidence progress against strategic, service plan or service performance

priorities. LGBF indicators for Children and Families & Criminal Justice Social Work 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.

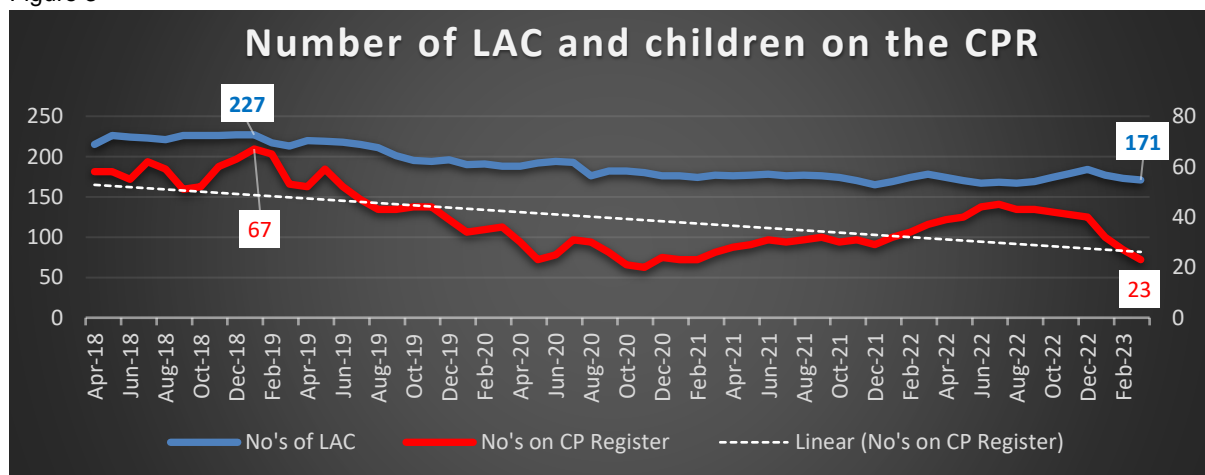
Figure 2



Operational Indicators - successes

- 5.4 Figure 3 below shows, both the numbers of LAC and the number of children on the CPR are on a reducing Trend. For LAC the trend is fairly uniformed, in comparison the CPR can vary significantly from month to month. (PI's CSCF100, CMS013)

Figure 3



- 5.5 The proportion of LAC in foster care placements paid for by Moray Council at 4% has met target, set at the median of comparator authorities. In comparison to the same period of 2021/22 the proportion has halved. (PI LAC007)
- 5.6 One young person was placed in a secure placement during quarter 4, the proportion (0.6%) however remains below target (1%). (PI 606.08)

- 5.7 Children subject to compulsory measures of supervision per 1,000 of 0-17 population has reduced further during 2022/23 and at 6.65 for 2022/23 remains significantly lower than target of 10. (PI CSCF013)
- 5.8 The number of children on the CPR, from being static during the first three quarters of 2022/23, took a significant drop during quarter 4. From the start of 2022/23 until the end the numbers have reduced from 37 to 23. (PI CMS013)
- 5.9 The number of Criminal Justice reports submitted to court by the due date continues to remain at 100%. (PI CJ01)

Operational Indicators - challenges and actions to support

- 5.10 Although lower than 2021/22 year end, the proportion of LAC in paid placements (72.8%) at the end of quarter 4 remains higher than 65% target. 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)
- 5.11 With an 2022/23 average of 89%, the proportion of initial case conferences held within planned timescales, were below the 100% target. The second half of 2022/23 only accounted for a third of case conferences, similar to the 2021/22 trend. (PI CMS001a)
- 5.12 For review case conferences held outwith planned timescales the average time for these conferences to be held in quarter 4 was 45 days (1 case conference). Time taken in the second half of the year was greater than the first half. The three-year trend shows that time taken to hold late conferences is increasing. (PI CMS002e)
- 5.13 The proportion of practitioners from relevant agencies invited to attend case conferences remains low at 82% during quarter 4. Attendance was lower in the second half of the year. Historically representatives from housing have shown the poorest attendance. Social work attendance has been maintained at 100% during 2022/23. (PI CMS004)
- 5.14 As of 31 March 43.5% of children on the CPR had been registered for more than 12 months, significantly higher than the target (15%) and the highest proportion recorded. Length of registration is likely to be indicative of case complexity requiring of more time to ensure children are safe to be removed from the register. (PI CMS017f)
- 5.15 Latest data (August 2022) from the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) shows Moray to have significantly higher Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) rates of fieldwork Social Workers, per 100,000 (0-17 years), than both the national and comparator authority averages. The differences are even more significant when comparisons are made with rates per 1,000 LAC, with Moray having the highest rate in Scotland at almost twice the national average. (PI WRL001 & WRL002)

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 19 complaints were received during the second half of 2022/23 and 15 complaints closed. Of those, 12 were at frontline stage (63%), four were not upheld and the remaining eight were closed via resolution. Six (50%) frontline complaints were closed within the 5-day timescale, with an average time to closure for all frontline complaints of 8 days.
- 6.3 Two investigative complaints were closed in the same period, both of which were not upheld, neither of which were closed within the 20-day timescale.
- 6.4 One escalated complaint was closed in quarters 3 & 4. This complaint was upheld within nine days.
- 6.5 Whilst all complaints were of a differing nature, three of the 15 closed complaints were made about staff, all of which were closed via resolution. Of the four complaints regarding processes, one was upheld.
- 6.6 A total of 6 MSP enquiries were received in the period between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023, four were resolved, the remaining two were outwith jurisdiction.

Other Performance (not included within Service Plan)

- 6.7 No information to report.

Case Studies

- 6.8 Nothing to report.

Consultation and Engagement

- 6.9 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 31 March 2023 is the end date of the three-year plan. 87% of Service Plan Actions have completed. Two Strategic Actions did not complete. Both Actions were monitored by annual milestones, a number of which were not met. All Service Level Actions completed, two of which did so during quarter 4.**

Author of Report: Iain Sneddon, Research & Information Officer

Background Papers: [Service Plan Actions](#)
[Performance Indicators](#)
[Service Performance Indicators](#)
[Service Complaints](#)

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