

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

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Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Summary

- 1.1. Overall, progress against targets for 2010/11 is mixed, with only 26% of safeguarding and children in care measures on track to achieve. 26% of indicators have improved since 2009/10 year end, however a total of 53% have deteriorated in performance.
- 1.2. Areas for improvement specifically include:

Indicator description	Performance
NI 59: Initial assessments completed within seven working days	Fall in performance from 56.6% in 2009/10 to 45.4% in December 2010
NI 60: Core assessments completed within 35 working days	Fall in performance from 80.2% in 2009/10 to 74.3% in December 2010
NI 62: Placement stability	Improvement in performance from 13.9% in 2009/10 to 13.6% in December 2010
NI 63: Length of placement	Fall in performance from 67.0% in 2009/10 to 64.9% in December 2010
NI 64: Child protection plans lasting two years or more	Fall in performance from 7.1% in 2009/10 to 9.0% in December 2010
NI 100: Children in care reaching level four in Maths at Key Stage 2	Fall in performance from 50.0% in 2008/09 to 46.0% (provisional data) in 2009/10
NI 147: Care leavers in suitable accommodation	Fall in performance from 83.5% in 2009/10 to 69.4% in December 2010
NI 148: Care leavers in employment, education or training	Improvement in performance from 47.7% in 2009/10 to 48.2% in December 2010

- 1.3. The Ofsted unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment in November 2010 was positive and highlighted the good working practices that have been established since the previous inspection in August 2009. Four areas for development were highlighted; no priority actions were identified.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. This report provides an overview of performance against key Children's Services Department safeguarding and children in care indicators at December 2010. The Department has a well-established and robust Planning and Performance Framework, with regular reporting against service plans used to inform monitoring of progress against the Department Plan and Children and Young People's Plan.

3. Increase in social care activity

- 3.1. There has been a significant increase in children's social care activity nationally and locally, prior to and since the Baby P case was brought to public attention in October 2008. Increases in activity bring particular practice and resource pressures to the Children and Families branch. It is also important to note that increases in the number of children in care (which is linked to the number of children in need of protection) brings with it significant additional financial pressures.
- 3.2. While this is being described nationally as the 'Baby P effect', most informed commentators identify three dimensions to the cause of the increase, not least since it began before the Baby P case reached public attention:
 - undoubtedly the case has raised awareness and made some referrers/agencies more risk-averse (although the consensus is that the cases do meet the criteria for referral);
 - there is a view that the recession has put more financial pressure on poorer families, which has an impact on child neglect and abuse;
 - there is also a strong argument that improvements in communication, systems and services (particularly access to Sure Start Children's Centres) following the Children Act 2004, has revealed cases that have always been at risk but never notified.
- 3.3. All of which imply that the increase is a good thing for the children concerned, as they are being protected from harm and their welfare promoted.
- 3.4. The performance data in this report reflects these national pressures, which are particularly evident in some of the measures for timeliness of assessments.

4. Ofsted annual assessment of Children's Services

- 4.1. Children's Services Department was judged as *performing excellently* in the 2010 annual rating from Ofsted. The assessment gave the County Council the highest performance rating for its Children's Services and

concluded that the Authority has *an unrelenting focus on improving outcomes for children and young people and the quality of services provided for them*. Ofsted identified a number of strengths, including:

- the overall effectiveness of a large majority of inspected services and settings judged as *good* or better;
- the increased number of early years; childcare and general further education colleges judged as *good* or better;
- in a large majority of services, arrangements to help children and young people stay safe and achieve well in their education are *good* or better;
- national performance measures show that a large majority of outcomes for children and young people are in line with the average or better;
- test and examination results for children and young people are in line with and improving at a same rate as similar areas;
- the local authority has an unrelenting focus on improving outcomes for children and young people and the quality of services provided for them;
- most children and young people have a good start in life and receive good support to do well in adult life.

4.2. Key areas for improvement include increasing the proportion of pupil referral units and school sixth forms that are judged *good* or better in inspections; and improving outcomes for young people aged 19, particularly those from low income families or those leaving care.

5. Ofsted annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment

5.1. Ofsted completed their annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment in November 2010. Overall, the inspection was positive, with three of the four areas for development and one priority action from the 2009 inspection found to have been addressed.

5.2. Strengths identified included the decisive action taken following the 2009 inspection; the robust and assured service provided by the emergency duty team; particularly effective and efficient arrangements for screening initial contacts through Hantsdirect; and the high quality of training available for staff.

5.3. Identified areas for development were as follows:

- caseloads for some social workers are too high and as a result, timely assessment and service provision is not provided for all children;
- some aspects of record keeping remain inconsistent across the county (this was an area for development at the previous inspection);

- equality and diversity issues were not explored effectively and the relevance of these issues was not applied appropriately to the assessments made; and
- the quality core assessments remain too variable with some lacking sufficient rigour and analysis across the county.

6. Changes to the national performance framework and potential implications

- 6.1. A number of changes to the national performance framework for local government have been announced since 2009/10 year end reporting. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) has ceased with immediate effect; and the National Indicator dataset is under review. It is currently unclear how this will directly impact Children’s Services, as a number of indicators are yet to be identified/confirmed through other ongoing reviews, such as the Munro review.

7. Performance progress

- 7.1. 17 of the 19 safeguarding and children in care measures have recent data available. Internal monitoring data provides a mixed picture of performance as at December 2010 for safeguarding and children in care indicators. 26% have improved; 53% have deteriorated; 5% remain unchanged; and 16% had not had a data update since 2009/10 year end. A full list of the safeguarding and children in care indicators including direction of travel since 2009/10 is provided in Appendix C.
- 7.2. Nine of the 19 indicators are updated internally on a monthly basis. A comparison between the 2009/10 end of year return and data for the 12 months to December 2010 shows that three of the nine measures have improved and five have deteriorated. An overview is provided in table one.

Table one: safeguarding and children care indicators with monthly monitoring data available

Indicator	Performance*	Direction of travel
Safeguarding		
NI 59: Initial assessments completed within seven working days	Fall in performance from 56.6% in 2009/10 to 45.4% in December 2010	↓
Initial assessments completed within 10 working days	Not available	
NI 60: Core assessments completed within 35 working days	Fall in performance from 80.2% in 2009/10 to 74.3% in December 2010	↓
NI 64: Child protection plans lasting two years or more	Fall in performance from 7.1% in 2009/10 to 9.0% in December 2010	↓
NI 65: Repeat child protection	Fall in performance from 11.2% in 2009/10 to 12.9%	↓

Indicator	Performance*	Direction of travel
plans	in December 2010	
NI 67: Child protection reviews held within required timescales	Improvement in performance from 95.6% in 2009/10 to 97.8% in December 2010	↑
Children in care		
NI 62: Placement stability	Improvement in performance from 13.9% in 2009/10 to 13.6% in December 2010	↑
NI 66: Children in care cases reviewed within required timescales	Fall in performance from 90.8% in 2009/10 to 88.0% in December 2010	↓
NI 148: Care leavers in education, employment or training	Improvement in performance from 47.7% in 2009/10 to 48.2% in December 2010	↑

*All figures are 12 month rolling data to the end of quoted month

- 6.3 Only five of the 19 safeguarding and children in care measures are on track to achieve their 2010/11 target. A further two measures do not have targets.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. Overall, progress against targets for 2010/11 is mixed, with only 26% of safeguarding and children in care measures on track to achieve. Although performance against more than half of the indicators has deteriorated since 2009/10 year end, a quarter have shown improvement, despite the economic climate and additional demand pressures on services.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate): 1.1 – improved educational attainment of children in care; and 1.5 – improved placement stability for children in care	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. Successful delivery of the improvement strategies outlined in this report will result in a positive impact on outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the county

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. No impact.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint/energy consumption?
No impact.
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?
No impact.

National Indicators for safeguarding and children in care

National Indicator	Hampshire 2009/10	England average 2009/10	Hampshire performance for the 12 months to the end of December 2010	2010/11 target
Safeguarding				
NI 59: Initial assessments for children's social care that were carried out within seven working days of their commencement	56.6%	67.3%	45.4%	76.0%
Initial assessments for children's social care that were carried out within ten working days of their commencement	n/a	n/a	65.1%	to be confirmed
NI 60: Core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement	80.2%	78.1%	74.3%	85.0%
NI 64: Children protection plans lasting two years or more	7.1%	5.9%	9.0%	3.0%
NI 65: Children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time	11.2%	13.4%	12.9%	12.0%
NI 67: Children protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales	95.6%	96.8%	97.8%	99.0%
NI 68: Referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment	58.6%	65.5%	74.4%	50.0%
NI 70: Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children and young people	117.3 per 10k	117.4 per 10k	n/a	to be confirmed
NI 71: Children who have run away from home/care overnight (self-assessed score out of 15)	9 out of 15 (2009/10 Q4)	11 out of 15	9 out of 15 (2010/11 Q1)	to be confirmed
Children in care				
NI 58: Emotional and behavioural health of children in care	14.7	14.2	n/a	14.0
NI 61: Timeliness of placements of children in care for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption	81.7%	72.4%	82.1%	88.0%

Appendix C

National Indicator	Hampshire 2009/10	England average 2009/10	Hampshire performance for the 12 months to the end of December 2010	2010/11 target
NI 62: Stability of placements of children in care: number of moves	13.9%	10.9%	13.6%	11.0%
NI 63: Stability of placements of children in care: length of placement	67.0%	68.0%	64.9%	70.0%
NI 66: Children in care cases which were reviewed within the timescales	90.8%	90.5%	88.0%	94.0%
NI 99: Children in care reaching level four in English at Key Stage 2	48.0% (2008/09)	46.0% (2008/09)	41.0%* (2009/10 provisional)	48.1%
NI 100: Children in care reaching level four in Maths at Key Stage 2	50.0% (2008/09)	46.0% (2008/09)	46.0%* (2009/10 provisional)	66.7%
NI 101: Children in care achieving 5 A*-C GCSE (or equivalent), including English and Maths	7.6% (2008/09)	9.8% (2008/09)	15.3%* (2009/10 provisional)	19.8%
NI 147: Care leavers in suitable accommodation	83.5%	90.3%	69.4%	89.0%
NI 148: Care leavers in employment, education or training	47.7%	62.1%	48.2%	65.0%

*The Department for Education have revised the method for calculating this indicator. It is now based on results data being matched to information in the National Pupil Database