

Children and Young People's Scrutiny and Performance Panel

Agenda
Item No.

20 August 2013

Performance Overview

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr R Andrew – Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of performance and progress towards delivering the priorities set out in the Strategic Improvement Plan for Safeguarding in Walsall.

Recommendations

1. To discuss and confirm the progress to date and priorities going forward.

Background papers

Improvement Board Performance Scorecard – August 2013. (**Appendix 1**)

Walsall Strategic Improvement Plan for Safeguarding – Updated August 2013

Ofsted final report of Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children, August 2013

Resource and legal considerations

This overview report relates to the strategic and operational improvement plans which are underpinned by resources, with the expectation that the Council and partner agencies will continue to contribute to ensure that resources across the partnership are prioritised to improvement needs.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families has exercised his power to issue an Improvement Notice that contains a concise range of outcome driven targets to address the issues raised in the previous Ofsted inspection. If the Council and partners fail to comply with the Improvement Notice by the assessment dates, then the Secretary of State for Education can use statutory powers of intervention (s497A Education Act 1996) to direct the Council to enter into appropriate arrangements to secure the necessary and rapid improvements required in children's services.

Citizen impact

Improving Children's Services will ensure the partnership works '*better together*' for children in Walsall so that they are safe, happy, healthy and with a bright future.

Performance and risk management issues

Failure to adequately deliver sustained improvements to services and therefore meet the requirements of the Improvement Notice risks the safety and protection of children and young people. Delivery of the objectives in the Improvement Plan will be risk assessed and mitigated as appropriate.

The Improvement Board monitor progress and impact on a monthly basis. This is in addition to developing service and partnership wide performance management and quality assurance arrangements. The Department for Education (DfE) will also assess and evaluate progress and impact on a 6 monthly basis. This will include written reports from the independent chair of the Improvement Board as well as other supporting evidence, including external review and inspection.

Equality Implications

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out? No

Consultation

There is on-going engagement with partners at a strategic level at the Improvement Board. One aspect of improvement is to ensure that other key partnership boards e.g. the Walsall Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB), the Children and Young People's Partnership Board (C&YPPB) and the Health and Wellbeing Board are productive, mutually challenging and impact positively on better outcomes for children. At an operational level, a multi-agency group, chaired by the Assistant Director Specialist Services, representing all key partners, is championing the implementation of the delivery plans which underpin improvements.

Staff and partner briefings are now in place on a 6 weekly basis to ensure key messages are communicated and to provide regular opportunities to capture feedback and learning from those delivering the services. Regular visits to teams and services provide additional opportunities for feedback and feed-forward as do email updates.

Contact Officer:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rose Collinson". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a simple horizontal line.

Rose Collinson – interim Director, Children’s Services

☎ . 01922 652081

✉ collinsonr@walsall.gov.uk

1. Summary of progress since last report

Improving the quality of partnerships and governance

1.1 Walsall Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB)

The Board met on 17 July to finalise its Business Plan, endorse committee terms of reference and scope of its learning and development strategy and agree process for appointing a vice-chair. It also received and challenged the reports from each of its committee chairs. The Board is currently surveying partner agencies about the scope, depth and currency of their safeguarding training requirements. Feedback from this will inform reporting back to the next WSCB Board meeting in September.

The Chair of the WSCB has provided a report evaluating progress and improvement since his appointment as an agenda item to this Board meeting.

1.2 The Walsall Children and Young People's Partnership (CYP) Board

The focus of CYP Board members since the last Board meeting on 3 July is on:

- Agreeing the alignment of the CYP Plan with the Walsall Plan
- Progressing the implementation of each of the Board Priorities
- A meeting with the CCG and Public Health has been arranged on 14 August to agree how to manage s75 payments and commissioning services for children
- The draft Terms of Reference and strategy management approach will be agreed on 6 September for agreement by the Board at its next meeting on 18 September

1.3 The Health and Well Being Board

The Health and Well-Being Board met on 22 July and as part of a rolling programme of review looked at the action plans relating to key recommendations within specific sections of the joint Health and Well-Being Strategy. In July these included the section: 'Employment and Improving Employability' with three of the five action plans having a specific impact for children:

- Reduce youth unemployment by working with partners to provide co-ordinated support to vulnerable young adults and young parents to encourage them into work and to reduce poverty and become capable parents
- Reduce child poverty by targeting workless reduction on parents of young children and enhancing access to childcare; mitigate impact by supporting income maximisation and foodbanks; high quality housing and fuel poverty reduction

- Ensure that all organisations involved in giving welfare advice and support to people in Walsall, work together to meet the identified needs in a holistic, collaborative way that makes best use of all the resources available and provides the best possible support for people and families in crisis or at risk of being so

The Board agreed the 2013/14 expenditure on commissioned Public Health Services, including additional allocations against JSNA and Health and Well-Being Strategy priorities. These included additional recurrent investment in School Nursing services to deliver the Healthy Child Programme and a time limited investment in services to promote breast feeding as part of an approach to reduce infant mortality rates in Walsall.

The Board also agreed how it will fulfil its duty to ensure commissioners take proper account of the Health and Well-Being Strategy in their commissioning plans. Additionally it received the Walsall Winterbourne View review.

1.4 Corporate Parenting Board (CPB)

The Corporate Parenting Board met on 31 July. It received feedback from the Council 4 Kids including an evaluation of the recent Excellent Superheroes party for primary aged children which included a training challenge to gain superpowers, presentation of certificates of achievement and showcasing the Council 4 Kids DVD. 93% of guests said it was brilliant and 7% finding it ok (the new caterer hadn't allowed enough 'seconds'.) The Board agreed how it will reshape the Virtual School's Governance arrangements, identified what it wished to be included in a CPB performance digest and decided on it's work-plan for the year.

2. **Capacity, capability and culture**

2.1 Better together for Children - vision and ambition for Children's Services:

The principles, values and ambitions for children and young people across Walsall continues to be communicated and endorsed in practice across the council and across the partnership through face-to-face conversations, briefings, meetings, presentations and engagement sessions. The August focus is on 'Our Ofsted, our next steps' to ensure follow up on sustaining successes and addressing improvement actions as well as using the learning from both the Ofsted process and findings to ensure readiness for inspection and evaluation across other parts of Children's Services, including Fostering, Adoption, Children in Care, Children's Homes, Children's Centres, Support for School Improvement and the Youth Justice Service.

2.2 Reshaping the Strategic Improvement Plan

The reshaped Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) was produced in June 2013 following a rigorous process of both internal and independent challenge and review and now incorporates feedback from the 2013 inspection report. Since the last Board meeting the focus has been on ensuring secure implementation

of the quality assurance arrangements, drilling down into worker level performance data to improve outcomes for children and sharpening and smartening the underpinning SIP delivery plans.

The DfE six month review has been rescheduled to 21 August and an updated presentation detailing our self assessment of improvement, impact and next steps with an accompanying scorecard and report on progress with performance management and quality assurance is being prepared for the review meeting.

2.3 Early Help

Partner representatives have been invited to join an Early Health strategy development working group to build on the findings of the Early Health workshop to ensure resources are prioritised to support the right intervention at the right time for children and their families in need of help. The terms of reference for the working group ensure that there is commitment to engage widely both within individual organisations as well as across agencies with staff groups, leaders and children and young people ensuring their views contribute to the development of the Early Help Strategy in Walsall. The first working group session will take place on 20 August with a further 2 sessions scheduled for September. The final version will be presented to the October Improvement Board.

Walsall's Early Help Top Tips for professionals devised by young people and parent are being promoted through a poster and postcard campaign to be launched in September.

Work continues as part of the Early Help Delivery Plan including the production of a communication plan to ensure updates on Early Help, the work of the MAST and contact arrangements are regularly provided to Early Help providers.

As part of Walsall's Early Help offer options have been explored to ensure that we have a dedicated tracking system for the Strengthening Families programme. The proposed solution allows us to meet the programme objectives more appropriately and meet all deadlines for reporting, etc. It will enable us to contribute to not only our own evidence based approach in Walsall but those required by the national Troubled Families Unit, provide management information and collate information required for the payment by results criteria.

The tracking system will provide the ability to:

- Log and record interventions/summary case notes for the individual and family
- Visualise the (inter)relationships and activity within families
- Promote effectively coordinated case management of individuals and the families
- Enable the monitoring and tracking of the troubled families criteria

- Enable the collation of the national troubled families programme evaluation requirements

A workshop involving representative staff (internal and external) from each part of a child's journey (partner organisations) across our Early Help offer in Walsall will be jointly developed and delivered by ourselves and Illy Computer Systems so that our specific requirements can be incorporated. In addition we will receive training on the use of the system, reporting and analysis and there will be administrator training.

2.4 Children and Young People's Scrutiny

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel has convened a special meeting on 20 August to review progress against the recommendations in their Safeguarding in Walsall working group report, published in May 2013 and to discuss the recent Ofsted inspection of the Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children.

Following Panel Member training by a peer member from Derby City, Scrutiny Members are now actively exercising their role in challenging and scrutinising outcomes for children and young people and making use of the tools and mechanisms available to them as highlighted to them during the training sessions.

2.5 Member Development

A series of all Member Training workshops has now taken place, supported by Cllr Simmonds from the LGA. These have focused on the challenge and contribution all members can and should make to Children's Services and, in particular, safeguarding and have enabled Councillors both during training and subsequently to discuss and explore the national and local safeguarding context and within that 'how to become and stay a self aware Council'. The sessions included practical examples of the important issues and questions around:

- Key roles in safeguarding
- Corporate and individual responsibilities
- Knowing and staying a self-aware Council Member
- Safeguarding Boards: what they do and their inter-relationship with each other and with other key Boards.
- Media

2.6 People Capacity

Following the campaign to recruit permanent social workers, we received 104 applications for 15 social work posts. 45 people were shortlisted and undertook an assessment exercise, with 27 candidates subsequently interviewed. 14 social workers have been appointed.

Following the publication of our Ofsted report, adverts will be placed in September for experienced staff only at that point.

Another breakfast meeting is planned for November and assessment centre and interview dates will be timed for a few days after the breakfast meeting.

Interviews for the Principal Social Worker post took place on 18 June and following a rigorous selection process, no appointment was made. The post is will be re-advertised imminently.

We will be using a dual approach to recruiting to the PSW post, by using a wider based attraction strategy and exploring agency referral. This dual campaign will run throughout August and early September with a view to applying the following draft timescales:-

- Advertisement/Agency campaigns: August/September with closing date of Monday 16 September.
- Short listing: 18, 19, 20 September.
- Assessment: Monday 30 September

Following the unsuccessful recruitment process in May to appoint to the WSCB Board Manager post, an interim appointment has now been made. The substantive post has already been out to advert and is at the short listing stage. Three candidates were interviewed for the post on 22 July. The post has been offered to an exceptional candidate who has verbally accepted the post. Starting date yet to be fixed but it is anticipated for September 2013.

The person appointed as LADO after the last round of recruitment has let us down. Her current manager mentioned that she was not joining us and despite a considerable number of attempts to get in contact with her she did not respond. The post is therefore being re-advertised with a market supplement as it has been advertised three times without success. The current interim worker is leaving at the end of July as she has another post to go to and another is being recruited to fill the gap.

A Member Appointments Board was held on 22 July to initiate the process for appointments to the reshaped Children's Services directorate following the transition into the Council of the previously outsourced education functions.

3 Quality and effectiveness of front line practice

- 3.1 Work continues with parents and carers of children with disabilities on 1 July to check progress against the co-produced work-plan which actions the findings of the children with disabilities peer challenge and a further meeting is planned for September.

A draft charter has been developed and is currently out for wider parent consultation. The Charter will be published in September. Further progress includes a mapping of SEND meetings, social media used to communicate with

parents who have children with SEND and alternative communication resources available to help us to include as many parents and children in future consultation and decision making. The next meeting is scheduled for September.

- 3.2 Following the Research in Practice (RiP) workshop on 20 June, work is ongoing writing and implementing an Evidence Informed Practice strategy. Practitioners were very positive about the focus of the day and we are following up on evaluations and also growing a community of practice.
- 3.3 As evidenced in the performance score card referrals to the MAST are rising as practitioners and partners have increased confidence in our social care front door.
- 3.4 Lichfield Road Children's Home was inspected with an overall judgement of adequate, with a good rating for outcomes for children.
- 3.5 Redruth Road Children's Home was also recently inspected and received an overall judgement of good, with a outstanding rating for outcomes for children.

4. Notable improvements this period

4.1 Key improvements in this period include:

- Practitioner and partner contribution to the post Ofsted action planning
- Improved robustness and reliability of strategic performance data
- Access, referral and reporting arrangements are increasingly effective at our Social Care Front Door

5. Priorities in the next reporting period

5.1 Improving the quality of partnership and governance

5.1.1 The key priority areas in the next month are to:

- Work with the Chair of the WSCB to embed changes and improvements to the Board's function, operation and impact of holding agencies to account on their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Focus the work of the Corporate Parenting Board so it can effectively fulfil its role and responsibilities.
- Align the planning and activity of WCSB and CYP

5.2 Capacity, capability and culture

5.2.1 The key priority areas in the next month are to:

- Work with CYPP priority sponsors on driving forward progress and improvements.
- Drive forward the implementation and impact of the Phase 2 SIP and take into account feedback from the inspection.

- Workforce planning, including reshaping the directorate and reducing reliance on agency workers
- Focus on inspection readiness across Children's Services

5.3 Quality and effectiveness of frontline practice

5.3.1 The key priority areas in the next month are to:

- Continue to increase the consistency and impact of front line social care practice with specific focus on ensuring children are seen alone and their voice and views heard and taken into account and that reflective supervision is both a right and a responsibility.
- Drive forward the implementation of early help provision to better match and meet needs.
- Action Ofsted practice recommendations.
- Ensure agreed mutual accountabilities with Police

6. Risks to delivery

6.1 The risk register is reviewed on a monthly basis by the operations group and new issues or risks requiring Improvement Board attention are highlighted here. The full risk register is available to all Improvement Board Members on request.

6.2 Current risks to bring to the notice of the Improvement board are:

- Alignment of PARIS, the ICS system, with practice change priorities, including the child's voice and his/her journey and in the context of the developing regulatory framework.
- Ensuring fair and equitable workloads across children's social care
- Fitness of purpose of Quest accommodation, where MAST is hosted
- Ensuring a shared understanding and practice of accountabilities with the Police

Author

Rose Collinson

Interim Executive Director, Children's Services

☎ 652081

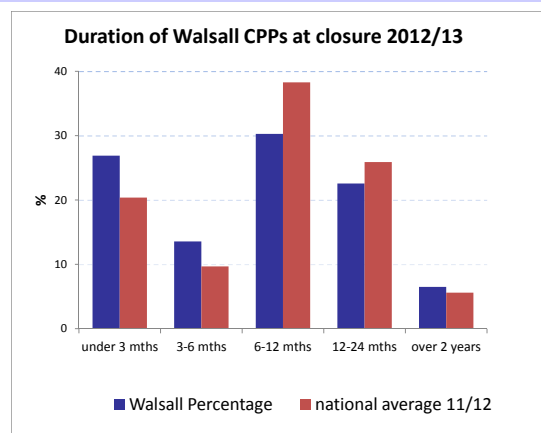
✉ collinsonr@walsall.gov.uk

NB: Mar 2013 figures are draft and subject to change, statutory return submitted 30 June 2013 for Looked after children and finalisation by end July for Children in Need.
 Early help and qualitative measures are to be developed for reporting later in the year.

1.0 OUTCOMES - Service Users

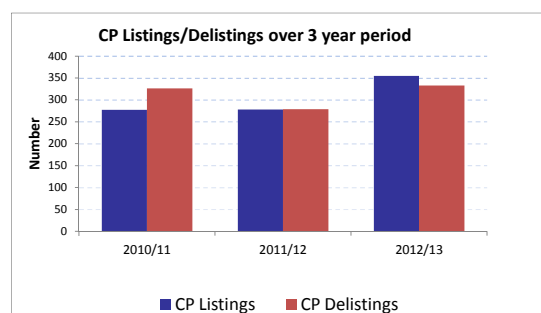
Charts for selected areas

(Intervention duration as proxy for quality for now)	Eng Mar 12	Mar-12	Mar-13
Duration of CPP 2+ years at closure (%) [SB]	5.6	6.1	6.5
Duration of CiN Episode 2+ years at closure (%) [SB]	9.2	16.3	5.54
Rate of offences against under 18 CYP in Walsall as a % of WM total [SB]	n/a	n/a	8.4
Fewer reported offences against children than expected for population size (9.8% of WM total). Work is underway to close CPPs and CiN where safe and relevant to do so. This causes a short term increase in 2+ year closure figures, but ensures caseloads become more manageable and prioritised.			
Accidental and deliberate injuries - admission to hospital [SB]	124.3	96	published June 2014
This measure combines safeguarding and safety from accidents. Rate equates to 609 admissions; working with health colleagues to receive in year data and earlier published data			

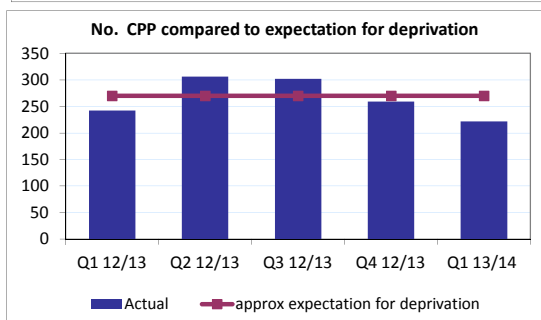


2.0 OUTPUTS

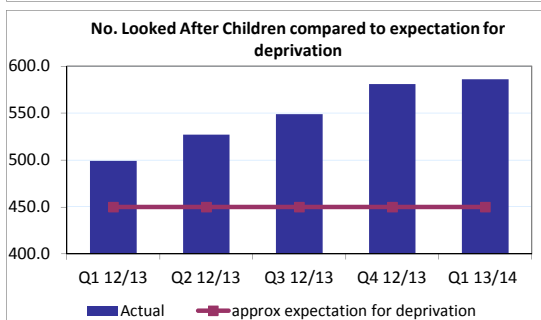
Child Protection Plans	Mar-12	Mar-13	Yr to date
No. Child Protection Plans (CPP) at the end of year	230	251	222
No. de-listed during the year	248	334	104
No listed during the year	255	355	75
The number of CPPs lies just below the level expected for income related child poverty levels. Exploration of this compared to earlier and later stages of the system are being examined.			



Repeat CPPs	Eng Mar 12	Mar-12	Mar-13
Second or subsequent CPP in 2 yrs since a CPP (%)	13.8	10.5	10.4
10-15% is considered as ideal. Walsall's rate has remained good, indicating appropriate caution levels.			



S47s and ICPCs	Mar-12	Mar-13	YTD Jun 13
Section 47 number of assessments carried out	491	722	202
Number of ICPCs	484	402	81
% of ICPC resulting in a Child Protection Plan (CPP)	n/a	87	91.4
The number of S47 assessments and ICPCs has decreased and the % ICPCs resulting in CPPs has increased. Work is underway to ensure that this is as a result of effective identification and early help.			



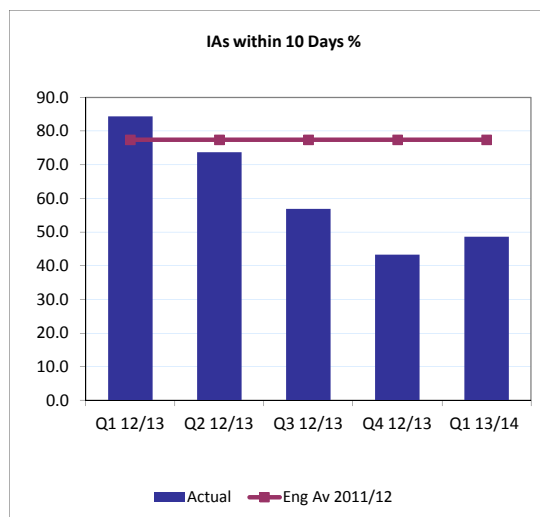
3.0 PROCESSES

CPP reviews	Eng Mar 2012	Mar-13	YTD June 13
★ CPP reviews within timescales	96.7	97	100

The May outturn equates to 156 out of 158 reviews in timescale.

Assessment Timeliness	Mar-12	Mar-13	Jun-13
▲ % Initial Assessments (IA) completed < 10 days	81.1	64.9	48.7
★ % Core Assessments (Cas) completed < 35 days	87.1	64.7	81.7

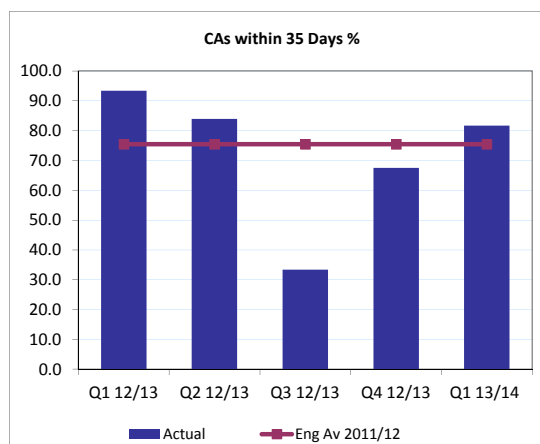
Work has been undertaken to improve the data quality around timeliness and worker level reports are ready to support supervision. This a priority area for action by teams.



Improvement Board - SCORECARD

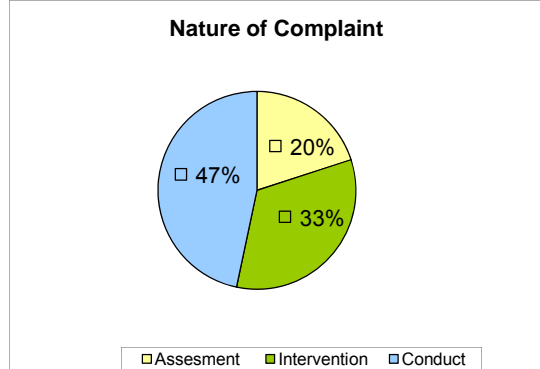
Agency understanding of thresholds and participation		
	12/13 % of refs	% of these NFAd
Police	26.6	16.0
Health (Midwives, hospitals and other NHS)	11.6	16.5
Schools	17.6	12.0
Housing	n/a	n/a
Relative, self and anon	11.1	13.8
Others	33.1	24.6

Communications with and to partners about the new referral system through the MAST Team and re-enforcement of thresholds is underway at present. Audits suggest the current threshold understanding is generally good - this will be built on further.



Complaints	Mar-13	YTD June 13
Complaints Stage 1	116	54
Complaints Stage 2	8	3
Complaints Stage 3	0	0

There were 25 Stage 1 complaints in Apr 13 22 in May and 7 in June. Of these the majority concerned conduct. There were no Stage 2 complaints. Breakdown by subject area and examination of potential learning from these is underway. Ref learning matrix in performance report.



4.0 INPUT

Early Help	April '13	May '13	June 13
CAFs (and from Apr 13, early help assessments) received	77	45	48
Cases stepped up to Level 3	7	12	4
Cases stepped down from Level 3	0	2	0

Early Help end measures being developed:
 1) Satisfactory outcomes achieved
 2) Case escalated
 3) Family disengaged
 4) Family moved away
 5) Referred on to a different service
 6) Child died / other exceptional reason

The above will compliment the findings of the "distance travelled" tools being used in direct work with families

Staffing measures	2011/12	2012/13	Jun-13
% Social worker vacancies	n/a	14.4	19.82
Sickness - average days lost per social worker / senior practitioner rolling 12 months	n/a	16.3	17.73
Nos. agency staff - SW, SP, TM's	n/a	54	60
% SW turnover - rolling 12 months	n/a	10.5	14.04
Av no. open CiN cases per worker, inc CiN, CPP and LAC	n/a	37	25.2*
% supervisions completed in timescale	n/a	80.5	87

The reported high caseload figure is being examined further to ensure accuracy and to establish what proportion are active cases, what type, and to safely close any longer term "monitoring and review" type cases. * May figure calculated based on all SP's and SW's (107)

Legend

Performance versus target band:
★ achieved or exceeded minimum standard
▲ Did not meet minimum standard

	Direction of travel from previous period
↗	improved in performance
↔	Maintained level
↘	deteriorated in performance
BB	bigger is better
SB	smaller is better