

# CHILDRENS SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 - 2019/20



**SOMERSET**  
County Council



## Purpose of the Report

This report draws out the key performance measures included in the Corporate Performance Report that relate to Children's Services. It sets out the key activities and measures used to check our performance for the year against the priorities we are working towards.

This report does not contain details of the numerous other activities ongoing that also contribute to delivering what is important and will make a difference to children in Somerset.




Further information about how the Council monitors and reports on performance can be found on the Council website ([www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk))

For any other information please contact the Planning and Performance Team at [Performance@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Performance@somerset.gov.uk)

## Key to KPI ratings used

This report includes Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), where progress is assessed against targets and project updates.

Performance is shown using Performance Ratings, progress is shown in terms of Direction of Performance (DOP) through the use of arrows.

Performance Ratings	
<b>G</b>	Performance is on or exceeding target. Project is on target
<b>A</b>	Performance is off target but within tolerance. Project requires attention
<b>R</b>	Performance is off target and outside tolerance. Project is off target
<b>B</b>	Metric discontinued. Project is closed.
Direction of Performance	
	Performance is improving. Project achieved a milestone.
	Performance is steady. Project is progressing
	Performance is declining. Project missed or at risk of missing milestones.

## High level Summary

	RAG Rating	Direction of Performance*
Embed an Effective Multiagency Early Help Offer in Somerset	<b>G</b>	➔
Improved Multi Agency Children's Safeguarding	<b>A</b>	➔
Improve the Outcomes for Looked After Children	<b>A</b>	➔
Improve Outcomes for Vulnerable Learners	<b>A</b>	N/A
Ensure Effective Workforce Capacity is in Place Across Children's Services	<b>A</b>	➔
Embedding a Learning Culture in Children's Social Care	<b>A</b>	➔

\*Not all measures carry a direction of performance



### **Areas of Success/ What is working well**

- An event was held for Early Help leaders across Somerset, where partners shared challenges and opportunities, creating new connections across different agencies.
- The Early Help Assessment has been shortened, adjusted to clearly identify SEND, and re-launched as part of a month-long campaign on Early Help. This has received positive feedback from our partners.
- Funding for Young Carers clubs has been awarded, ensuring all five areas of Somerset have accessible and regular provision. Young Carers were involved in the evaluation and influenced the final decision with their views.
- Working Together training continues to be well-attended and to receive positive evaluation. This training supports staff across partner agencies to have a common understanding of identification of need, and actions to take.

### **Areas of Concern/ What are you worried about**

- The Early Help Strategy for 2020 onwards will be co-produced with children, young people and families. Co-production with a broad range of people will be challenging, and we will need partners to be active in supporting this work.

### **Focus on for next quarter/ What needs to happen**

- Early Help Board to be strengthened with a voluntary sector representative, and a focus on co-producing the next Early Help Strategy
- The Early Help Fund to be launched with funding allocated in the third sector.



### **Areas of Success/What is Working Well:**

The new Executive, comprised of the three key safeguarding partners (SCC, CCG and police) is working well, and has agreed to the recruitment of an Independent Scrutineer post to provide high-level assurance of the safeguarding children arrangements in Somerset, which has now been advertised.

Regional multi-agency scrutiny arrangements are also under development, led by Avon & Somerset Constabulary, and are beginning to identify a pool of peer scrutineers to work across the region. Areas emerging for regional scrutiny across Somerset include: intrafamilial sexual abuse; chronic neglect; child exploitation; children's emotional and mental health.

The first Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (September 2019) was well-attended by agencies with responsibilities for promoting wellbeing and safeguarding under Section 11 of The Children Act, with some positive actions emerging as to how to improve practice around identifying chronic neglect and working with young, vulnerable parents in the pre-birth period.

### **Areas of Concern/ What are you worried about:**

Neglect continues to feature as an area that is not identified early enough for children, and very young children continue to suffer harm. In addition, intrafamilial sexual abuse is emerging as an area for focus across the partnership, and there is more to do to embed the pre-birth protocol to safeguard very young children of vulnerable parents.

### **Focus for next Quarter/ What needs to happen:**

The multi-agency Business Plan needs to be signed off with its four continued areas of focus:

- Early help
- Multi-agency safeguarding
- Child Exploitation
- Neglect (especially in children aged under 5)

Focus for the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership will be on the continued embedding of learning around identification and action on pre-birth vulnerabilities, neglect, high-quality staff supervision and multi-agency information sharing.

The appointment of an Independent Scrutineer for quality assurance of the functioning of the partnership (winter 2019) will also be a key priority for the partners.



### **Areas of Success/ What is working well:**

We continue to work closely with our young people's council (SICC and SLCC) to ensure that the voice of our children and young people is heard and drives our service improvement and delivery. In particular we have responded to concerns raised in respect of language we use around children spending time with their families. We have revised all paperwork and processes to ensure we promote family time rather than the use of the word contact.

The Emotional Health and Well-being team provide consultation and advice to social workers and leaving care workers which has impacted positively on placement planning and stability.

We continue to focus on ensuring children and young people can live in a family environment wherever possible and whilst we have a small number in residential provision, we continue to work towards finding foster families to link and care for these children or for birth family connections these children can return to.

Social care meets regularly with the Virtual School to ensure that we agree priorities and work together to achieve them. We have recently focussed on children and young people who are not in full time education with a view to working towards all children and young people having access to a full-time offer.

The new named nurse for Looked After Children is working closely with social care around the consistency of health assessment. The Fostering Service is well underway in its transformation, looking at the recruitment and retention of foster carers and the foster care offer in order to meet the needs of our children.

### **Areas of Concern/ What are you worried about:**

Placement sufficiency remains an issue in Somerset, as in does in the South West region. Our focus on careful placement planning and review is crucial to ensure the placements identified can meet need and prevent placement breakdown. This requires a partnership approach.

### **Focus for next quarter/ What needs to happen:**

The revised paperwork and processes for Children Looked After is being launched imminently which will focus on one plan, capturing the child's voice in their journey and the removal of unnecessary repetition.

In line with the social care Service Plan, we will continue to work on supporting and improving connection with families, promoting creative family time and reunification of children wherever possible to their families in a planned and sustainable way.

The work of the CLA health team has identified the need for more resource to ensure that the health needs of CLA are met appropriately in line with statutory requirements.

Launch of the new Fostering Service communications strategy.

**Areas of Success:**

- New structure now in place which integrates Virtual School and Learning Support Service. This offers additional capacity to focus upon CLA and those with SEND, to target resources for Education Attainment and Progress outcomes. This comprises a team of fifteen Lead Advisory or Advisory Teachers and ten learning support staff.
- All CLA now have a named Advisory Teacher who will oversee their educational provision and attainment in partnership with other agencies. Caseloads have been reduced to enable a greater focus supporting children and young people.
- A targeted training offer is available to schools to support them in meeting the needs of their vulnerable learners (CLA and SEND). This is delivered by the Virtual School and Learning Support Team. The Virtual School also commissions Education Psychologists to deliver targeted programmes. The offer for FE and early years providers is currently being developed.
- Attainment data of Children Looked After (CLA) shows slightly improved results at end of key stage assessments. These are small cohorts, however Key Stage 2 pupils achieving the expected standards has increased from 25% to 31%, and Key Stage 4 from 8% to 16%.

**Areas of Concern:**

- There remains continued high levels of fixed term and permanent exclusions. The fixed term exclusions are a concern across CLA and SEND. Some schools are permanently excluding children and young people with identified SEND needs.

**Focus for next Quarter/ What needs to happen:**

- Ongoing development of a 'Governing Body' of the Virtual School to be formed, this will act as the Education Sub-Group of the Corporate Parenting Board.

**Areas of Success:**

- Locum full time equivalent has dropped by approximately 2 FTE each month over the last 3 months. Currently standing at 20 FTE.
- Annual Health Check report 2019 for Children's Social Care showed improvements in induction for staff joining the service in the last two years. Other key strengths emerging from the survey were; relationships with and support from peers and colleagues, team working, good relationships with managers, flexible working policies. NQSWs in their ASYE continued to rate their learning and development very highly.
- Social Work Degree programme - University of Gloucester/Yeovil College, which commenced in September – 16 starters

**Areas of Concern:**

- Issues arising related to retention issues. Recruitment is steady, but retention the more significant issue. Proposals are being made in relation to this.
- The turnover of Social Workers is too high. 23% on average for frontline social workers. However, if you look at the Social Worker cohort as a whole, this drops to 17.54%.

**Focus for next Quarter/ What needs to happen:**

- Development of a more cohesive plan in conjunction with Children's Services to ensure clarity of the journey towards the Family Safeguarding Model. Use this to drive collaboration and behavioural and cultural change.





There is considerable activity underway aimed at developing and embedding a learning culture within Children's Social Care:

1. Review and refresh of the current Quality Assurance Framework, reflecting developments in processes and thinking (Timescale: December 2019)
2. Updated Case File Audit Tool and process (now Practice Evaluation) to reflect a shift from measuring compliance to quality, and a focus on strength based approaches. (Completed and now in use.)
3. Updated Team Diagnostic Process to reflect a strengths based approach and learn from feedback received via Diagnostic Leads (Completed July 2019)
4. Development and implementation of a service wide systematic approach to recording feedback from children and families, to better inform service provision and development with their views (Launched August 2019)
5. Development of a Practice Framework for CSC, outlining the theoretical and practice tools which inform high quality social work practice in Somerset (Completed: to be launched in October 2019)
6. Simplification of complaints codes recording to enable more effective analysis of feedback trends (Completed – August 2019)
7. Participation in the ADCS Peer Challenge, with Bristol City Council, to seek independent peer oversight of quality of practice (Completed June 2019)
8. Development of a Multi-Agency Practice Evaluation (MAPE) based on appreciative enquiry techniques (Launched July 2019)



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## Contact us



If you have any specific questions or comments on this publication please contact the Planning and Performance Team by emailing [performance@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:performance@somerset.gov.uk)