

PERFORMANCE REPORT UPDATE

REPORT OF HEAD OF SERVICE: SAFEGUARDING

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an updated position on performance data for Looked After Children in Sunderland.
- 1.2 The performance report informs members of the current position of the Council as 'Corporate Parent' and demonstrates that elected members are aware of their role as corporate parents. It updates members on the current performance of the Council in meeting this responsibility, and on action taking place to further improve outcomes for those children and young people for whom the Council has a parenting responsibility.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 When a child becomes looked after, he or she enters a system in which their care and upbringing is managed by professionals and paid carers. This has two major consequences for the child. Firstly, in addition to the problems of needing to re-form attachments, he/she moves into a world of paid, and sometimes changing, carers, where life is managed through formal and legal processes. Secondly, in addition to learning to cope with this world, they have lost the continuity of parental management of their access to services and opportunities.
- 2.2 The Corporate Parenting responsibility is shared by the Council as a whole. All members, not just those with an interest in Children's Services, are 'Corporate Parents'.
- 2.3 For 'Corporate Parenting' to replicate the quality of care afforded by a 'good parent', each agency and professional involved needs to consider how they can be proactive, within their own remit, on behalf of looked after children, and for all agencies to strive for ever stronger collaborative working so that the whole of the 'corporate parent' can be greater than the sum of its parts.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The Quarter 3 scorecard is attached at annex 1.
- 3.2 The number of Looked After Children has increased from 539 at 30 September 2014 to 561 at the end of December 2014 (4.1% increase).
- 3.3 One of the five former National Indicators for Looked After Children are within the locally set 'Very Good' banding; two as 'Ask Questions'; and two as 'Investigate' as detailed within Annex 1.

3.4 The bandings are:

- **Stability of placements of looked after children: number of moves.** The LAC Short term stability indicator (of those children looked after at the end of the period, the number of children with 3 or moves in the year) has remained stable end of June 2014 (11.7%) to end of September 2014 (11.9%). This indicator has remained in the 'Very Good' band.

- **Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement.** The Long term stability indicator (children looked after for more than 2 and a half years at the end of the period, who have been in the same placement for 2 years or more) has improved in performance from 59% at end September 2014 to 67% at end of December 2014 although does not achieve the target of 73% for 2014/2015. Current performance is in line with the 2013/14 national average of 67% and higher than the regional average of 64.9%. This indicator has moved from the 'Investigate' band to 'Ask Questions'.

- **Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescale.** The number of Looked After Reviews within timescales has decreased from 88.5% as at end of September 2014 to 75.7% at the end of December 2014. The indicator has moved from the 'Acceptable' band and is now rated within the 'Investigate' band.

- **Timeliness of Looked after children adopted following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption.** The percentage of adopted children who were placed for adoption within a year of agency decision has declined from 76.0% for April to September 2014 to 71.1% for April to December 2014; the latter is based on a cohort of 27 adopted children. This indicator remains in the 'Ask Questions' band.

The percentage of children who ceased to be Looked After who were Adopted remained steady at 23% end of June 2014 to end of September 2014. This is an increase on the 17% for 2013/14. Current performance is higher than the 2013/14 national average (17%) and regional average (20%).

The average number of days in adoption process (length of time from child becoming Looked After to being placed for Adoption) has declined during quarter 3 2014/15 to 515 days although this is an improvement compared to the 2013/14 outturn (599 days). This is within the 2014/15 target of 600 days. Current performance is better than the 2013/14 national average of 628 days (3 year average) and the regional average of 581 days (3 year average).

- **Care leavers in suitable accommodation.** 43.2% (38 care leavers) of 19, 20 & 21 year old care leavers were in suitable accommodation during 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014, this has improved from 34.9% in quarter 1 2014/15. Of the 88 care leavers who should have been contacted between April and December 2014, 47 have been recorded as contacted. This indicator remains in the 'Investigate' band.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to consider and comment on the performance data for quarter 3.