

	<p align="center"><b>CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE</b></p> <p align="center">13<sup>th</sup> September 2021</p>
<p align="center"><b>Title</b></p>	<p><b>Family Services Quarterly Update</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>Report of</b></p>	<p>Chairman of the Committee, Councillor David Longstaff</p>
<p align="center"><b>Wards</b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p align="center"><b>Status</b></p>	<p>Public</p>
<p align="center"><b>Urgent</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p align="center"><b>Key</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p align="center"><b>Enclosures</b></p>	<p>Appendix 1 – ChAT Data Report Appendix 2 – Ofsted Focussed Visit Letter</p>
<p align="center"><b>Officer Contact Details</b></p>	<p>Chris Munday Executive Director for Children and Young People <a href="mailto:Chris.Munday@barnet.gov.uk">Chris.Munday@barnet.gov.uk</a></p>
<p align="center"><b>Summary</b></p>	
<p>This report gives an update on Family Services progress against key areas and asks Members to note and scrutinise performance data, that can be found in Appendix 1.</p>	

<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee is asked to note and provide comments on the performance information summarised in the report, and provided in Appendix 1.</li> <li>2. That the Children, Educations and Safeguarding Committee is asked to note the outcome of the Ofsted Focussed visit and provide comments on the findings published in the letter provided in Appendix 2.</li> </ol>

# 1. FAMILY SERVICES UPDATE

## 1.1. Service Performance Data

- 1.1.1. Following a period of increased referral activity, the latest performance data shows that numbers have been stabilising as we headed towards the school summer holidays. We will continue to closely monitor this data as schools reopen in September, comparing the increase to historical annual figures to note any anomalies that might have been caused due to Covid.
- 1.1.2. The ChAT data in appendix 1 shows a similar number of contacts into the MASH during July 2021 as in the previous month, and a slight reduction in the number of open Early Help Assessments, from 1763 to 1759. This illustrates that the previously increased demand for lower level support for young people and their families around anxiety due to the lockdown has stabilised, though the overall number of Early Help Assessments remains higher than usual.
- 1.1.3. We continue to see an increase in the number of Strategy Discussions and child protection enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, up 28% in July from the previous month. This is showing that the system continues to identify child protections concerns which correlates with the continued high number of referrals from education.
- 1.1.4. The number of children in care has decreased since the last CES meeting, currently at 325 young people. We continue to receive referrals of unaccompanied asylum seeking children from the hotels run by the Home Office.
- 1.1.5. During the summer we have welcomed new social workers from Hong Kong and South Africa, following our successful overseas recruitment campaign. We have started to notice more staff movement now that restrictions have been lifted, which is slightly increasing the number of agency social workers. Recruitment of this staff cohort can be a challenge for Barnet, as Local Authorities with inadequate or requires improvement Ofsted gradings are sometimes increasing the rates of pay for agency staff. We continue to build relationships with agencies to try and find solutions, and we are launching a new recruitment campaign in the coming months for permanent staff.

## **1.2. Ofsted Focussed Visit**

1.2.1. Local authorities judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection will usually receive a short inspection about every three years after the previous inspection. In between inspections, the local authority will usually receive one focused visit or a JTAI. Ofsted inspectors conducted a focussed visit on 23 and 24 June. The visit was carried out in line with the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework, and looked at the local authority's arrangements for children in care. Their findings were published on 2<sup>nd</sup> August and are included in this report in appendix 2.

1.2.2. Inspectors found that, despite the challenges of the Covid pandemic, services for children in care have continued to improve since the last inspection in May 2019. Leaders understand what further improvements can be made and have plans in place to deliver this. Ofsted spoke to partners including CAFCASS and the judiciary, who reported positive partnership working and this has contributed to our "well coordinated and effective response to the Covid-19 pandemic".

1.2.3. Inspectors highlighted two areas of social work practice that need to improve:

- Case recording, including the recording of supervision, visits and direct work with children, and the rationale for decision-making on placements
- The completion and quality of 'All about me' plans.

We fully accept these recommendations and will be detailing our plans to make improvements to these areas of practice in our annual self assessment, which we will meet with Ofsted about in November and will be presented to the CES committee thereafter.

## **1.3 Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) & Barnet Active, Creative and Engaging holidays (BACE)**

1.3.1 We have been working in partnership with the Young Barnet to deliver holiday provision to run across Easter, Summer and Christmas following the extension of the Government's Holiday Activities and Food programme. In

Barnet we have delivered this work under the Barnet Active, Creative and Engaging holidays (BACE) programme.

1.3.2 Our BACE Summer Camps have run for 4 weeks over the school holidays and we have had excellent feedback from the children and young people, parents and the providers. BACE Summer Camps have been attended by over 2500 young people with Young Barnet Foundation's providers taking this total in excess of 3000, with over 15,000 hot meals having been served.

1.3.3 Children and Young People have taken part in activities such as multisport, magic, inflatables, healthy baking, nutritional workshops, healthy snack sessions, nerf guns, mini Olympics and Chickenshed performances. The mobile libraries have also been attending the Summer Camps and have handed out over 300 book goodie packs and Give Help Share held nutritional sessions and also handed out over 500 healthy snack packs for the CYP's to take home.

1.3.4 We have also worked with Big Ideas to deliver training for our providers and materials to take part in Foundation Stones and No Barriers:

- Foundation Stones is an activity where providers work with the CYP's to paint stones showing their hopes for the future and remembrance for the holocaust, the stones are then given back to Big Ideas where they are incorporated as part of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre. The activity is about each stone being a commitment to remember and learn from the past.
- No Barriers is an activity to promote inclusion and celebrate differences through football.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1. Members are asked to consider and scrutinise the work of Children and Young People's Services, and to fulfil the council's statutory obligations in this regard.

## **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

Not applicable.

## 4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

Not applicable.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

### 5.1. Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1. Family Friendly is a key part of the Barnet Plan for 2021-2025 with the vision of “Creating a Family Friendly Barnet, enabling opportunities for our children and young people to achieve their best”.

### 5.2. Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1. There are no additional financial implications arising directly from this report.
- 5.2.2. The revenue forecast outturn position for Children and Family Services for 2021/22 is a £3.670m overspend; of this £2.794m is due to Covid-19 therefore the underlying budget position is £0.876m overspend. This is further analysed in the paragraphs below.

Table 1: Children's and Family Services Month 4 Forecast Outturn

Children's Family Services	2021/22 Budget	M4 Forecast	Variance to Budget	of which: COVID Impact	M4 Non-COVID Variance	Month 3 Non-COVID Variance	In-Month change
Service Area	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Children Social Care	48,569	50,998	2,429	1,620	809	834	(26)
Early Intervention and Prevention	12,726	12,656	(70)	532	(602)	(628)	26
Education and Skills	6,322	6,787	465	642	(177)	(177)	0
Family Services Management	(802)	(831)	(29)	0	(29)	(29)	0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>66,815</b>	<b>69,610</b>	<b>2,795</b>	<b>2,794</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
18-25	6,124	7,000	876	0	876	876	0
<b>Total Children's and Families Services</b>	<b>72,939</b>	<b>76,610</b>	<b>3,671</b>	<b>2,794</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>0</b>

- 5.2.2.1. The total COVID financial impact at month 4 is estimated to be £2.794m, shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Children's and Family Service Covid-19 Financial Impact

Service Area	COVID-19 Impact	Commentary
	£'000	
Children's Social Care	500	Increased use of Section 17 payments to support family's needs
	455	Additional Staff COVID cover
	375	Therapies (OT, physio, SLT)
	131	Onwards and Upwards client subsistence
	159	Various misc others
<b>Children's Social Care</b>	<b>1,620</b>	
Early Intervention & Prevention and Education & Skills	460	Mental Health support teams to be rolled out across all schools. Represents estimated 21/22 cost- £1.040m to be spent in future years
	142	Young people support on pathway to employment. Represents estimated 21/22 cost- £858k to be spent in future years
	500	High quality education: Language development, social, emotional, and mental health needs, narrowing the gap
	72	Various misc others
<b>Early Intervention and Prevention and Education and Skills</b>	<b>1,174</b>	
<b>Children's and Family Services Total</b>	<b>2,794</b>	

5.2.2.2. This leaves an overspend of £0.876m which can be attributed to BAU and is made up of various factors. The main areas are:

- 18-25 which is projecting a £0.876m overspend.
- Placements and leaving care are showing a combined overspend of £0.619m. This is largely driven by overspends in family assessment, remand and external semi-independent.
- Education and Skills are underspent by £0.177m due to not requiring the full schools condition survey budget this year. This underspend will be used to offset overspends elsewhere within CFS.
- Underspends of £0.442m make up the difference of which the main ones relate to staffing vacancies in various services.

5.2.3. The forecast position for the DSG for 21/22 is an underspend of £1.527m.  
See table 3 below for the breakdown of this.

Table 3: Children's and Family Service Covid-19 Financial Impact

M4 DSG Forecast	Budget	21/22 Forecast	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Schools</b>			
Individual Schools Budget	150,222	150,222	0
Growth Fund	2,814	73	(2,741)
Central Schools expenditure	2,193	2,193	0
ESG retained funding	700	700	0
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>155,929</b>	<b>153,188</b>	<b>(2,741)</b>
Early Years Block	30,189	30,189	0
High Needs Block	55,270	56,484	1,214
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>85,459</b>	<b>86,673</b>	<b>1,214</b>
DSG Income	(241,387)	(241,387)	0
<b>Total DSG</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,526)</b>	<b>(1,527)</b>
Contribution/(drawdown) to/from DSG Reserve	0	1,526	1,526
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

5.2.3.1. Despite a large allocation increase for the High Needs Block there is still an overspend projected of £1.214m. This is due to the estimated increase in new EHCP's of 28% compared to 20% last year and placements in independent settings. This is an early estimate of the projected overspend and more accurate figures will be known in September once EHCP's are confirmed.

5.2.3.2. Work will be taking place in the year to look at a 3-year forecast for high needs to identify whether the new increased funding from the DfE is sufficient for the anticipated levels of demand. This work will also include a forecast on the growth fund following potentially 2 years of large underspends.

5.2.3.3. This forecast takes the reserve balance to £4.770m as illustrated below:

- DSG Brought Forward 1/4/21- £3.244m
- In Year underspend- 1.526m
- Forecast DSG Carried Forward 31/3/21- £4.770m

5.2.4. CFS have a savings target of £2.775m for the financial year. As at M4, we are reporting 100% achievement of these targets. However it is important to note that these targets are under review for deliverability and this will be updated for the next committee meetings.

Service Area	Savings target 2021/22	Savings Forecast to be made as at 31/07/2021	(Gap)/Over to plan	Service area gap %
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Children and Family Services	(2,775)	(2,775)	0	0%

### 5.3. Social Value

5.3.1. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

### 5.4. Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1. Local authorities have specific duties in respect of children under various legislation including the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004. They have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area and, if this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing services appropriate to the child's needs. They also have a duty to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing services appropriate to the child's needs, provided this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare. They should do this in partnership with parents, in a way that is sensitive to the child's race, religion, culture and language and that, where

practicable, takes account of the child's wishes and feelings. Under the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities must consider how the child or young person can be supported to facilitate their development and to help them achieve the "best possible educational and other outcomes".

- 5.4.2. Local authorities have specific duties to care leavers under the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The corporate parenting duties and powers under the 1989 Act include:
- 5.4.3. to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
- 5.4.4. to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- 5.4.5. to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- 5.4.6. to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
- 5.4.7. to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- 5.4.8. for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and,
- 5.4.9. to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
- 5.4.10. The Council's Constitution, Article 7 notes that the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee has 'Responsibility for all matters relating to children, schools and education.'

## **6. Risk Management**

- 6.1. Specific risk management is being carried out for Children and Young People's Plan. Any Family Services risks are recorded on the Family Services Risk Register and monitored each quarter by the Senior Leadership Team with escalations to CMY if necessary.

## **7. Equalities and Diversity**

- 7.1.** The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public-Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:
- 7.2.** eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- 7.3.** advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- 7.4.** foster good relations between people from different groups
- 7.5.** The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services
- 7.6.** Equalities and diversity considerations are a key element of social work practice. It is imperative that help and protection services for children and young are sensitive and responsive to age, disability, race and ethnicity, faith or belief, sex, gender reassignment, language, maternity / parental status and sexual orientation. We continue to closely monitor this, as report appendixes notes, in our performance data.

## **8. Corporate Parenting Principles**

- 8.1.** In July 2016, the Government published their Care Leavers' strategy Keep on Caring which outlined that the "... [the government] will introduce a set of corporate parenting principles that will require all departments within a local authority to recognise their role as corporate parents, encouraging them to look at the services and support that they provide through the lens of what a reasonable parent would do to support their own children.'
- 8.2.** The corporate parenting principles set out seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:
- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
  - to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;

- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and;
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

## **9. Consultation and Engagement**

**9.1.** Consultation and engagement with young people is central to social work practice and service improvement across Family Services. An overall Engagement and Participation strategy will be developed and co-produced in the next quarter following the collation of different workstreams. The strategy will outline how we embed our service user feedback and child participation into service delivery and development. Three new roles have been created to support consultation and engagement activity (a Service Development Officer and two Child Participation roles based in BICS and Onwards and Upwards) in Family Services. A full update has been provided in the earlier section on this paper.

**9.2.** The Voice of the Child Annual Report is included as a separate paper to this committee and details consultation and engagement activity with the young people who access our services.

## **10. Insight**

**10.1.** Insight data will continue to be regularly collected and used in monitoring the progress and impact of the Children and Young People's Plan and to shape ongoing improvement activity. This report updates the Committee on our performance data.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

