

	<p align="center">CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE</p> <p align="center">Wednesday 19th January 2022</p>
Title	Family Services Quarterly Update
Report of	Chairman of the Committee, Councillor David Longstaff
Wards	All
Status	Public, save for Appendix 2 and 3 which are exempt by virtue of Paragraph 1 and 3, Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix 1 - Children Service's Analysis Tool (ChAT) Appendix 2 - LILA Benchmarking Report Q2 (exempt) Appendix 3 – Self Assessment (exempt) Appendix 4 – AEM Notes
Officer Contact Details	Chris Munday, Executive Director for Children's Services
Summary	
<p>This report gives an update on Family Services progress and asks Members to note and scrutinise performance data, that can be found in Appendix 1 and appendix 2.</p> <p>The report updates Members on our Annual Conversation with Ofsted that took place in November 2021. As part of the ILACS framework, we discussed our progress against the recommendations from the Ofsted Focussed Inspection as well as our self-evaluation (appendix 3). The notes from the meeting are included in appendix 4.</p>	

Recommendations
1. That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee is asked to note and provide comments on the CHAT performance report summarised in the report, and provided in Appendix 1.

2. That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee is asked to note and provide comments on the LIIA performance information summarised in the report, and provided in Appendix 2.
3. That the committee notes and scrutinises progress of performance against our Ofsted Self Evaluation provided in Appendix 3.
4. That the committee notes the report from the Annual Engagement meeting held with Ofsted as part of their inspection framework.

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Family Services Performance Update

- 1.1 The services are continuing to work hard with children and families during an unprecedented disruption to their lives to mitigate risk and to meet local needs. We continue to monitor performance through stocktake, audit and reviewing performance management information including the CHaT report (appendix 1). We also work with authorities across London to consider trends.
- 1.2 The London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA) is the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) sector-led improvement partnership and is hosted by London Councils. We submit quarterly datasets to the LIIA to allow comparative data analysis on performance across London. The data is provided on the condition that it is used for internal reporting only and other LAs data should not be shared with external partners or the public. For this reason, Appendix 2 is exempt from publication and its contents should not be shared on a wider basis.
- 1.3 According to ChaT performance data (appendix 1) at the start of December shows that contacts are very similar to last report, going down slightly from 10692 to 10587. However, the volume is 17% higher than pre-pandemic reporting between July 2019 – January 2020 (n=8792). LIIA data (appendix 2), shows in Q2 Barnet had a larger reduction in contacts, at 10% from the previous quarter in compared to 3% in Outer London. Despite this difference, Barnet remains in the middle of the rates of contacts in London.
- 1.4 The data from the CHaT shows open Early Help Assessments have risen by 6.3% from 1677 to 1789 since the last report, the volume is 22.5% higher than pre-pandemic reporting in the CHaT report July 2019 – Jan 2020 (n=1386) demonstrating continuing demand on the Early Help system. Data for the quarter

shown in the LIIA dataset shows a reduction from Q1 to Q2, which is not reflected by the consistent levels across the London average.

- 1.5 Referral numbers in the CHaT have reduced from 1537 to 1497 since the last report but are 16.4% higher than pre-pandemic reporting July 2019– January 2020 (n=1251). There are expected fluctuations in referral volumes before, during and after school holiday periods. The LIIA dataset shows a 20% reduction of referrals between Q1 and Q2 and our rate of referrals is low compared to other London Boroughs. There are a range of reasons for this including our strong early help offer, in place throughout the pandemic when other community support services were not always available for families. Completed assessments has slightly increased since the last reporting period although the volume is 68% lower than pre-pandemic reporting July 2019 – January 2020 (n=3472), this reflects a lower rate of throughput which is reflected in assessment completion timescales. Some assessments have been purposefully delayed to ensure they are comprehensive. Our lower than London average re-referral rate is demonstrative of good quality assessments and interventions being undertaken.
- 1.6 There is a similar number of new Child Protection Plans 115 to 117 following slight reduction in the last period of reporting on the CHaT. This is usual for a period that includes the school reopening. Overall, however, there remains a similar number of children on Child Protection Plans, 194 to 193. This aligns with LIIA data, which shows little overall movement in the number of children on child protection plans across London. The volume of children subject to a Child Protection Plan is similar to pre-pandemic reporting.
- 1.7 The CHaT shows there is an increase in Children Looked After in the reporting period, up from 331 to 344. 98 children started to be looked after during the reporting period which is slightly less than the 101 previously reported however fewer children have journeyed out of care during this period.. LIIA data shows an increase in the rate of new children in care from 21 to 23, which is the same as the Outer London average.
- 1.8 The number of care experienced young people in Barnet continue to rise with 349 young people being supported. The majority of the young people are under 21 years old and 126 are former UASC.
- 1.9 Our focus from the data is to:

- Review our rate and numbers of CIN cases which remains below pre-pandemic levels,
- improve the timeliness of assessments which is lower than performance in other London Boroughs,
- increase the number of dental checks which remains low,
- increase the number of care experienced young people who are NEET aged over 19.

Children's Social Care Self Assessment

- 1.10 Each year all Local Authorities in England are required to develop a self-assessment. This is to aid continuous improvement and is considered as part of the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) arrangements. Members have previously reviewed self-assessments as part of their role in scrutinising performance. The self-assessment is exempt as it contains information in more detail than the CHaT data report.
- 1.11 In their focussed visit report from August 2021, Ofsted made 2 recommendations and the progress made is considered in the self-assessment (appendix 3), along with progress against actions from the 2019 full inspection and priorities identified during the last self assessment.

Annual Engagement Meeting

- 1.12 Ofsted undertook an Annual Engagement meeting on 18th November 2022. The meeting was held between senior officers of the Council and the link senior Ofsted advisor. The meeting considers a range of information including the self-assessment and the CHaT. There are also discussions about the impact of national policy changes such as the changes associated with unregulated provision.
- 1.13 Inspectors report on the findings of the AEM and the notes (Appendix 4) and they noted that the self assessment is clearly presented and shows progress against our priorities

National Issues

- 1.14 Since the last Committee two tragic deaths of children in England have been reported widely. The deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson remind us of the abuse that some adults will inflict on children. It is important to note that the perpetrators of the abuse leading to the death of these two children have been convicted of those offences. The Government has commissioned the National Child

Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to undertake a review of Arthurs case. We will consider the findings when they become available.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

2.1 N/A

3. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Not applicable.

4. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

4.1. Corporate Priorities and Performance

4.1.1 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”.

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

4.2.1 There are no resource implications.

4.3. Social Value

4.3.1. 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.

4.4. Legal and Constitutional References

4.4.1. 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".

4.4.2. 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:

- 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.

4.4.3. 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.'

5. Risk Management

- 5.1.** 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 CMT if necessary.

6. Equalities and Diversity

- 6.1.** 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:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

- 6.2.** 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

- 6.3.** 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.

7. Corporate Parenting Principles

- 7.1.** 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.'

7.2. 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.

8. Consultation and Engagement

N/A

9. Insight

N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A