

## Performance Commentary (February 2015 data)

The LGA safeguarding practice diagnostic commented that 'Performance Management arrangements lack sufficient rigour to drive the current progress to a sustainable platform'. When we explored this in more detail, they had expressed this view because much of the data/performance information provided is not disaggregated to a team or individual worker level (although there are exceptions to this and Heads of Service do analyse data, disaggregate to a service and team level and use with first line managers). This makes it more difficult for first line managers to use data to improve team and individual performance.

There are also a number of changes to the monthly performance data that would make it easier to 'see at a glance' where urgent attention needs to be focused and to make it easier to see the improvement trajectory travelled.

There have been capacity issues within the Performance Team that have led to problems in undertaking the required changes. However, discussions have taken place and changes required have been identified and scoped, including a 'scorecard' showing improvement against a number of key performance indicators in a visual way has been requested.

DfE have updated our statistical neighbour group of 'most similar' councils. They are now:

Hillingdon, Hounslow, Redbridge, Luton, Birmingham, Ealing, Leicester, Reading, Coventry, Sandwell

### 1. Referral and Assessment

- i. The number of **contacts** rose in February to 884, (an average of 44.2 received every working day – up on the 35.5 seen in January).
- ii. There was an improvement in performance in respect of **decision making for contacts and referrals** in February. In January, the standard for decision making was met in 85.4% of contacts. This improved to 97.2% in February. Similarly, the standard for decision making on referrals was met in 63.2% of cases in January, improving to 75.3% in February.
- iii. 77% of **single assessments have been completed within timescales** over the past year (79.5% in February 2015) which is a marked improvement over the position a year ago. The focus going forward will be to increase the percentage of assessments that are completed within 10 days.

- iv. The proportion of repeat referrals (20.5% for the year to date) is between the statistical neighbour and national averages for 2013/14 but is the highest proportion seen in the past year.
- v. The referral rate per 10,000 local children is now broadly in line with the national average for 2013/14. A very high proportion of referrals (c. 97% in the year to date) went on to be the subject of single assessments (above comparator averages). However, *within* the month (February 2015), this stood at only 82% - a significant reduction, achieved through far greater disposal of referrals through providing Information and Advice rather than progressing to assessment. This has already narrowed the gap between Slough and direct statistical neighbours.

## 2. Child Protection

- i. We generally initiate a high volume of **section 47 enquiries** although the number begun in February did fall. When viewed as a rate per 10,000 child population our rate for the year to date (237.9) is almost 90% higher than the national average (124 in 2013/14). The proportion of these enquiries which culminate in an Initial Child Protection Conference is generally *slightly* below the average seen elsewhere.
- ii. Slough does well on holding a higher than average proportion of initial child protection conferences ('ICPCs') within 15 working days of the associated s47 enquiry starting (73.6% in the year to date compared to England value of 69.4%).
- iii. The number of children **subject to a Child Protection Plan ('CP Plan')** appears to have risen slightly once more following a 'steady' position in the final quarter of 2014, and stood at 262 by end of February – about 1 for every 150 children who live in Slough. Our rate of CP Plans per 10,000 local children (67.2) is about 60% higher than the national position. At end of February, about 57% of CP Plans had been in place less than 6 months and 13% in place for a year or longer – these patterns are very close to the last known national position (page 16).
- iv. In Slough, almost twice the **rate of child protection plans** have begun and ended in the year as the England average.
- v. December and January showed relatively high numbers of new CP Plans made on children who had previously been subject to a CP Plan. In February, however, only 3 out of 25 plans were made on children previously the subject of a child protection plan.

### 3. Looked After Children;

- i. The number of **Looked After Children** fell slightly compared to the previous month and stood at 197 – about 1 child for every 191 who live in Slough. As a rate per 10,000 (50.5) this remains lower than comparators.
- ii. 10 of these children are Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers.
- iii. All looked after children continue to be **allocated** to a single named, **qualified social worker**.
- iv. At month end the **majority of looked after children were placed in “family type” settings**: 78 were placed with independent foster carers; 54 with in-house foster carers; 16 with relative / friend or own parent, and 15 in supported living settings. 11 were in Children’s homes and 2 were placed in mother and baby units. 9 were placed with prospective adoptive parents.
- v. **Placement stability** has generally improved, with good performance on “3 or more placements” and “long term stability” indicators. February saw a further improvement in the percentage of long-term looked after children in placements of at least two years duration (to 73%); this measure has seen steady and sustained improvement throughout the past year.
- vi. **Annual Health and Dental checks** continue to be held and recorded at high frequency, but some ‘lag’ still remains in data entry which means the reported February position (88%) may in fact become higher.
- vii. We continue to perform well on securing a high percentage / volume of adoptions and Special Guardianship Orders – 28 children left care in these ways in the year to end of February.
- viii. Since April 2014, we appear to have generally fared better at securing and using **placements within or close to Slough** than has been the case in the past. In February 2015, 18.2% (of 77 looked after children) were placed more than 20 miles from Slough compared to 25.7% in April 2014. This position needs further improvement. .