

Report of: Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

Meeting of	Date	Ward(s)
Children Services Scrutiny Committee	18 October 2016	All

Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non-exempt

**SUBJECT: Quarterly Review of Children's Services Performance:
 Quarter 1**

- 1.1 This Quarter One (Q1) performance report provides an update on the council's progress and challenges in working towards our goal of making Islington a fairer place for all Islington residents.
- 1.2 The report looks at key performance indicators across Children's Services and provides a table of progress against these, with brief commentary. All figures quoted are cumulative for this year to the end of Q1 (i.e. 1 April to 30 June 2016) unless otherwise stated.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note progress in the first quarter of this financial year (April to June 2016) in delivering the council's corporate priorities and targets.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council routinely monitors a wide range of performance measures to ensure that the services it delivers are effective, respond to the needs of residents, and offer good quality and value for money. As part of this process, we report regularly on a suite of key performance indicators which collectively provide an indication of progress against the priorities which contribute towards making Islington a fairer place. Individual Scrutiny Committees now have responsibility for monitoring performance against Council priorities.

4. Children's Services

Performance measure	Actual Q1 Apr-June	Target Q1 Apr-June	Year End Target 2016-17 (other specified)	Progress against Q1 Target	Same period last year Q1 2015/16	Perf. better than Q1 2015/16
Percentage of 2 year old places taken up by low income families, children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) or who are looked after	72%	66%	72%	Achieving	53%	Better
Percentage of families with under-5s registered at a Children's Centre	95% (15/16)	n/a (termly indicator)	92%	n/a	88%	Stable
Number of active childminders	192 (At end Q1)	189	195	Achieving	192	Stable
Number of families in Stronger Families programme with successful outcomes as measured by payment by results	30 (claim in Jan 2016)	n/a (next claim in Sept 2016)	100	n/a	n/a – no Phase 2 claims at this point	n/a
Number of new mainstream foster carers recruited in Islington	1 (At end Q1)	3	12	Not achieving	1	Stable
Number of children missing from care	16 (June 2016)	10 or fewer	10	Not achieving	14 (June 2015)	Stable
Percentage of primary school children who are persistently absent (below 90% attendance)	9.5% (Autumn term 15/16)	11%	11% or below	Achieving	11.4% (Autumn term 14/15)	n/a
Number of children in Alternative Provision	130 (At end Q1) 97 for 16/17 cohort	n/a	100 or fewer	TBC	160 (At end Q1) 106 for 16/17 cohort	Better
Percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grade GCSEs (including Maths and English)	57.9% (2014/15 revised results)	n/a (Prov. data available in autumn)	At or above the Inner London average	n/a	59.9% (13/14)	Below, although changes in methodology affected results across the country
Percentage of Islington school leavers in Year 11 who move into sustained education or training	96.7% (April 2016)	n/a (Annual indicator)	98%	n/a	94.4% (April 2015)	Better

Early Years – quality of and access to provision

4.1 Islington's take-up of **funded early education for 2 year olds** for summer term 2016 is 72% of the eligible cohort, up from 53% in the summer term in 2015 and 63% in the previous term. There are currently 773 2 year olds in funded early education places, an increase of 69 on the previous term. Take-up figures for the spring term have been published by DfE following voluntary returns from all LAs in Feb/March 2016. These figures show that the London average was 60% and the national average was 70%. Within statistical neighbours the average take-up was 57%, placing Islington 3 out of 11. 93.4% of the 2 year olds currently accessing a place in Islington are attending settings rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

4.2 The DWP provides the borough with a termly list of potentially eligible children, the total number of which fluctuates from term to term. Termly take-up is measured as a % of the previous term's list.

While there is a shortage of around 280 places against the current term's DfE target of 1,094, several extensive capital projects are currently proposed which would create 115 new places. Additional places are also likely to be created through the early childhood transformation programme.

Although take-up of available places has increased and is generally good there are still some vacancies in group settings (including schools) and with childminders.

The impact on the 2 year old offer of the extended entitlement to 30 hours per week for eligible 3 & 4 year olds from September 2017 is not yet clear. There are concerns at national level that there could be a pressure on places for eligible 2 year olds as a result of the new policy. Any impact on place availability in Islington will be monitored carefully over the coming months.

4.3 **Children's Centre reach** is a key indicator in the children's centre Ofsted inspection with 65-79% to achieve a "good" judgement and 97%+ to achieve 'outstanding'. The Islington target is challenging to ensure that nearly all families in the borough are aware of and receive information about the integrated services at children's centres. Reach for 2015/16 was the highest annual figure we have ever achieved at 95%, 7 percentage points above the previous year. Over the longer term, reach of our children's centres has increased by 30 percentage points over the last five years. Reach to target groups is as follows: families in statutory overcrowding – 93%; lone parent families – 92% and families living in social housing – 91%.

Ofsted have currently suspended children's centre inspections, pending a DfE consultation on children's centres, which is now overdue.

4.4 The **number of childminders** is currently 192. There were some issues with several childminders registrations being temporarily cancelled by Ofsted around the end of 2015/16, in relation to outstanding payments of fees. These have now been resolved and the registrations have reactivated. 82 people completed the CACHE Level 3 Award in Preparing to Work in Home Based Childcare between April 2015 and March 2016. The Islington CACHE centre closed in March 2016 due to reductions in funding. It is being replaced by a non-accredited termly Pre-registration Course – 22 childminders attended the first course in May/June 2016. There can still be a lengthy period between training and registration owing to a number of factors, in particular the length of time to obtain a DBS check and other costs associated with becoming fully registered. The national childcare business grant scheme which helped childminders with some of these costs closed in March 2016. This is now being reviewed and a revised scheme is expected to be launched shortly. Delays to receiving completed DBS checks is an ongoing issue affecting recruitment timelines across the early years sector.

Support families facing multiple challenges and disadvantage

4.5 Having achieved our target of 'turning around' 100% of 815 families known to the **Stronger Families** programme in phase one 2012-2015, we are now in phase two of the programme.

- 4.6 The government has expanded the criteria for inclusion and tripled the number of families we must engage with and 'turn around' on all identified problem areas including crime/ASB, education, employment, child welfare, domestic violence and health.
- 4.7 As well as adding three further PbR criteria, the government had tightened the eligibility requirements for a claim to require that any families claimed must have demonstrable evidence of whole family assessments and plans.

100 cases have been manually checked and 30 claims were made - in comparison 80-100 claims were made each quarter during Phase 1. This lower figure relates to:

- a need to automate systems to meet Phase 2 requirements
- a time lag on indicators, e.g. attendance at school could not be claimed as it required three terms to have passed
- claims now require a whole family plan and a lead professional, a tighter requirement than under Phase 1

The next claim is in the autumn. Claims will be twice a year in Phase 2, rather than quarterly as they were in Phase 1.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- 4.8 In the first quarter of the year, we have approved one **mainstream foster care** household, in line with the number recruited in the first quarter of 2015/16. An autumn campaign to attract carers for unaccompanied asylum seeking teenagers has taken place, followed by a Consortium campaign to attract specialist carers for challenging teenagers. Eleven adverts have gone out recently, and there have been two editorials about fostering in Islington Life. A meeting at Muslim Welfare house attracted 40 people to hear about Islington fostering service. More outdoor banners have been placed in the community, and advertising initiatives have taken place in Haringey, Hertfordshire and Essex. We are also successfully retaining existing foster carers and helping to develop their confidence to foster older children.

We have also improved our social networking including a new Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/islington.fostering> to attract a wider audience. We encourage all staff and councillors to 'Like' this and send us positive stories. We are currently considering further council-wide initiatives such as widening the Find a Foster Carer reward scheme and more Housing initiatives.

There are ongoing difficulties in attracting people to foster because of the shortage of spare bedrooms in London, fears about teenage behaviour and a shortage of applicants with fluent English.

Following this extra advertising there has been an increase in interest in foster care in Q1, which should generate more foster carers this year. The foster care recruitment strategy will be considered by corporate parents in September.

- 4.9 The figures for **children missing from care** in each month have been 22, 21 and 15 for April, May and June 2016. This increase compared to earlier in the financial year is largely due to improved reporting of children missing from care as a result of the increased awareness of the risks faced by children that go missing. We are aware of the need for rigorous recording of missing episodes in order that we can make sure that we are responding to each child that goes missing from care and are working with them to reduce the risk of them going missing again. Accurate recording of missing episodes also allows us to identify and analyse any significant patterns of missing episodes.

Missing episodes are very often linked to risks of child sexual exploitation and gang/criminal activity and we have a number of initiatives in place to reduce risks of CSE and gang activity for our young people. We have recently reviewed our quality assurance system to

ensure that every missing episode is entered promptly onto our database with social workers being quickly challenged about any non-compliance.

We have also recently appointed a project officer for CSE and Missing and have developed a new process for missing episodes and return home interviews. These measures should ensure that we have completely accurate missing children data and will be able to quickly tackle any problems with compliance in this area. We will then be able to have a sharper focus our work to reduce the frequency of missing episodes as we will be able to ensure a consistent response to every missing episode. We will have an accurate picture of our highest risk missing children and will be able to ensure that all necessary measures are completed for these children including strategy meetings, safety plans and return home interviews.

Supporting vulnerable pupils

- 4.10 The DfE has set out a new challenge for school attendance by further raising the level at which a child is deemed persistently absent. From September 2015 **persistent absence (PA)** data includes all pupils whose attendance is 90% or less. The DfE have also changed the definition of this measure during the year. Previously, the persistent absence calculation was based on a minimum number of days of absence. This was to prevent a pupil who is only enrolled at a particular school for a short period of time before transferring being classified as a persistent absentee if they are absent for a few days. For 2015/16 onwards, the DfE have changed the PA definition to be any pupil who misses 10% or more of their own individual total number of possible days of school. Because different terms have different lengths, there will also be a varying impact in each term. Pupils taking unauthorised leave of absence early in the year could be categorised as persistently absent well into half term five but have perfect attendance from their return date onwards.
- 4.11 The DfE have now published data for the autumn term 2015/16 using the new 10% definition, as well as comparable data for the autumn term for the last 10 years. This has shown that the PA level in Islington was the lowest it has ever been at only 9.5%. The gap between Islington and the national average narrowed from 1.3% in autumn 2014/15 to 0.5% in autumn 2015/16.
- 4.12 We are supporting schools to prepare by making sure that consistent messages are sent to parents on the detrimental effect that absence has on their child's educational progress and attainment. Over a five year period, a child whose attendance is at 90% will miss a half of a school year. We are also sharing the message that to improve and maintain good attendance successfully, a whole school approach is vital. Where attendance data is scrutinised, patterns identified and a clear structure is in place to plan ahead and support families, schools will be well prepared to address the challenge ahead.
- 4.13 We are aware that the best place for the majority of students is to remain in mainstream school, and aim to do everything possible to minimise the number of referrals for **Alternative Provision**. A detailed plan is also in place to improve outcomes for all young people who do attend Alternative Provision. Actions include:
- A Service Specification between Islington schools and Islington Council - to identify clearly the roles and responsibilities of each.
 - Revised arrangements for referral by school to alternative provision
 - Non-attendance at Alternative Provision challenged more rigorously through legal action
 - Regular half termly meetings with providers that focus on ensuring individual students are challenged and stretched.
 - New students who are referred to AP will be assessed to make sure that both they and their families have the right level of support from Early Help / Targeted services. Key Stage 3 students at risk of AP are being identified in school, needs are being assessed and students and families are being referred appropriate outside agencies to support them to remain in mainstream education.

One of the intended outcomes of the improvement plan is to reduce the number of students referred to alternative provision from mainstream schools by 30% by January 2017

Attainment at Key Stage 4

- 4.14 Revised figures show 58.1% of pupils achieved the benchmark of **5 or more A*-C grades including English and Maths** in 2014/15. The DfE have now published comparator data based on the revised results, which shows that Islington is below the Inner London median average of 59.4%. However, Islington is ranked 6th in the country in terms of the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the GCSE benchmark, and 32nd in the country for non-disadvantaged pupils, with Islington being at or above the Inner London median for both groups.
- 4.15 There have been further changes to the types of qualifications that count in this measure between 2013/14 and 2014/15, which will affect comparisons made between the results in each year.
- 4.16 There was another strong performance in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate qualification, which increased to 27.3 per cent. No Islington schools are below the national floor standard, compared to 4 per cent of schools in London and 11 per cent across England.
- 4.17 It is not yet known if the DfE will publish local authority figures on the proportion of pupils achieving **5 or more A*-C grades including English and Maths**, due to the changes being made to the secondary school accountability measures.

Ensure suitable provision and take up of opportunities for at-risk groups post-16

- 4.18 At risk groups, in particular those learners who completed year 11 in alternative provision, are disproportionately represented in the group of young people who subsequently became **NEET** within the first two terms of post 16 learning. Additional resource is being identified to enhance capacity to support these learners more effectively in order to retain them in learning. Further analysis will also be completed to better understand where these young people progressed to post 16 in order to identify and address any patterns.

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Summary of corporate performance

Background papers: None

Final Report Clearance

Signed by:

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Corporate Director of Children's Services

13.10.16

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Date

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Successes

Priority	Achievements
Adult social care	
Children's services	Highest ever children's centre reach figures. Lowest ever level of persistent absence for the autumn term. Increase in proportion of 2 year olds in funded places.
Community safety	
Employment	
Environment and regeneration	
Finance, customer services and HR	
Housing	
Public Health	

Risks and challenges

Priority	Risks and challenges
Adult social care	
Children's services	We are continuing working to attract foster carers through a variety of initiatives, and are working with young people who go missing from care to reduce the risk of them going missing again.
Community safety	
Employment	
Environment and regeneration	
Finance, customer services and HR	
Housing	
Public Health	