

Children's Services Performance Report Quarter Two 2019/20

Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

'Our vision is to improve families' lives by giving them the support they need, when they need it'

Children's Services have shown improvement throughout 2018/19 and it is our intention to improve on this. Inspection reports and performance data evidence improvement in many areas of work which in turn is improving the outcomes for most of our children and young people within Midlothian.

Permanence and Care Excellence Programme (PACE)

Scottish Government and the Centre of Excellence for Looked After Children view the level of change and improvement for Midlothian's most vulnerable children as a great achievement and have requested that we continue to be part of the PACE programme; and continue to share our learning with other Councils. We have already identified 4 further aims which are:

Aim 1 – Children who are looked after at home for more than 2 years will have a looked after review looking at their whole period of time being looked after at home.

Aim 2 – Children who become looked after and accommodated will have a recommendation for Permanence (including a permanent return home) within 30 weeks of becoming looked after and accommodated.

Aim 3 – Children who have had recommendation for permanence away from home will have the decision ratified by the ADM within 14 weeks of the LAAC review recommended permanence.

Aim 4 – Court submissions will be lodged within 16 weeks of the ADM sign off.

Mental Health

The Midlothian Early Action Partnership (MEAP) project started in January 2019, to effect system change so that children, young people and young adults get timely and appropriate mental health support. To kick-start the project, three cross-system teams spent 100 days experimenting and testing their ideas. The teams continue to progress ideas since the 100 Day review in June, with six-month follow-up surveys planned for December, involving both Leadership group and the teams involved.

The next stage of the MEAP project was to commission a scoping study to inform a planned mapping of the social and public mental health services for children and young people. This latter piece of work will both inform the focus for project activity and form a baseline for future evaluation. The scoping study involved desk-based research, focus sessions with the Steering Group and young people, the output of which will be a tender document for the main mapping research. This tender document is expected to be completed by end October, ready to publicise in November 2019.

Participation

The Champions board continue to be a big success and were successful in winning a national award. Despite Midlothian having commissioned the application later than many other Councils across the UK, our usage was highest.

Kinship Care

Midlothian's Kinship Care were recently presented with the prestigious "Queens Award" for all their hard work and effort – a well-deserved success.

Child Protection

At the end of Q2 reporting we had 52 children (27 families) on our child protection register which equates to 3.0 per 1000 of the population compared with the national rate of 2.9. This figure has increased from the last quarter and is slightly above the national average. Nationally there has been a 3% increase in the number of child protection registrations from 2017 (latest figure), however within Midlothian there has been 7% decrease compared to September 2018.

The implementation of the Safe and Together model continues with training of all staff being rolled out.

Looked after away from Home

There are 159 children and young people looked after away from home both in and out-with Midlothian. This number is higher than the previous quarter (150 children & young people). The current rate per 1,000 of young people looked after in Midlothian is 8.2 which remains well below the national of 10.6. Nationally there has been a 1% decrease from 2017 to 2018 (latest figure) in the number of children and young people looked after away from home, within Midlothian there has been a 8% increase from September 2018.

Looked after at home

There are 61 children and young people looked after at home. This is the same number as Q1. They have all been reviewed by the Interim Independent reviewing officer. The current rate per 1,000 of young people looked after at home in Midlothian is 3.1 which is lower than the national rate of 3.7. Nationally there has been a significant reduction of children looked after at home (26% reduction from 2008 – 2018 – latest figure) Within Midlothian this number has also decreased by 27% from September 2018.

Our LAC reviewing Officer's post has now been extended for a further year which will help to continue to embed the LAC reviewing process into practice and ensure a consistent approach for all our LAC children in Midlothian.

The CEYP funding received from Scottish Government is continuing to support our LAC population's attainment and the recruitment of an Educational Psychologist to work specifically with this group alongside increasing outreach support capacity will help to support this priority.

Whole Systems Funding

We have secured funding from Scottish Government to strengthen our existing early intervention approach to youth offending with a focus on training. The funding will also be used to continue to develop supports and interventions.

Challenges and Risks

Young People with complex Needs

Children's Services budget continues to remain a significant and ongoing challenge. This is as a result of several factors, such as secure care, young people who require a high level of specialised care and who have severe and complex needs and those young people who are 16+ and require somewhere to live. These 3 work streams are complex and difficult to plan for and all of them require significant amounts of funding.

Young people with severe and complex needs often come into care around 14/15 years of age when their parents despite their best intentions can no longer offer them adequate care due to their increased needs. To date we have opened two additional houses to accommodate 5 young people who cannot live independently and shall require ongoing support. We have commissioned two different agencies to provide their package of care and support. As a result of continuing care legislation this means that the 5 young people will have the right to reside in these houses until the age of 21.

Young People in Secure Care

We continue to have one young person in secure care.

Continuing Care

We have now developed and launched new guidance to support children's services staff meet the Continuing Care requirements as contained in the Children and Young People's (Scotland) 2014 Act. It is important to note that the additional duties do impact on our current services and will require Midlothian to dual register a number of foster cares foster (both adult and children). The implementation also requires that the Family Placement Team also be registered as Adult Service too.

As stated previously the challenge of having to additionally accommodate 16-21 year old young people in both residential care and foster care is ongoing. The impact on resources in terms of meeting the needs of younger children who require to be accommodated whilst making sure our young people are 'staying put' continues to pose a professional dilemma. However, we wholly support the 'spirit of the act' and are currently looking at more creative and innovative ways of delivering services to this group of young people.

After Care

Similarly to Continuing Care, the challenges of delivering services to those leaving the care system continue to be significant. We continue to liaise with our own housing department, other local authorities and Scottish Government to identify a model that supports young people who are 16+ however, as a result of their chaotic lifestyles are unable to continue residing with their foster carer, in their residential house or in homeless accommodation. Whilst legislation through the 2014 Act promotes continuing care the reality of 'after care' is very different. We are looking at various different models

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

The most recent Section 21 is a significant piece of work that requires both skilled and knowledgeable staff to undertake this task. The request to identify all foster carers back to the 1930's and analyse the data to identify any allegations made and report on this by the end of January 2020 is challenging.

Integrated Children's Services Plan

A new 3 year plan must be ready by March 2020. Work is progressing with our partners on this project however it is a significant piece of work that requires a commitment to engage with service users and communities to deliver a plan that improves outcomes for our children and young people across Midlothian.

Children Services



Successes and Challenges

Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

● 2 ● 11 ? 0 ? 6

Service Plan Actions (latest)

▲ 0 ● 7 ? 0

Service Plan PIs (latest)

● 1 ● 4 ? 0 ? 6

Service Risks (latest)

▲ 3

Corporate PIs Off Target as at 31st October 2019

PIs ● 2

Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 working days

Average time in working days for a full response for escalated complaints

Service Plan Actions Off Target as at 31st October 2019

Actions ▲ 0

No Off Target Actions

Service Plan PIs Off Target as at 31st October 2019

PIs ● 1

Measure the increase in number of care experienced young people going to college/university/employment

High Risks as at 31st October 2019

Risks ▲ 0

3 Risks at Medium and 0 Risks are high

- Key PIs
- Off Target
 - On Target
 - Data Only Indicator
 - ? Data is not yet available

- Key Actions
- ▲ Off Target
 - On Target/Complete
 - ? Data is not yet available

- Key PIs
- Off Target
 - On Target
 - Data Only Indicator
 - ? Data is not yet available

- Key Risks
- ▲ High Risk / Medium Risk
 - ? Data is not yet available