

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE

2 NOVEMBER

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - CHILDREN

PERFORMANCE DATA UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report.

The Welsh Assembly Government has recently released data on adoptions, outcomes and placements for Children Looked After by Local Authorities for the year ending 31st March 2010. This report will provide information to Members regarding the national and local performance indicators.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

Looked After Children are a key responsibility for the Council as corporate parents and, as such, are included within the following community strategy themes:

- Young Voices,
- Healthy Living,
- New Opportunities.

3. Background.

The Safeguarding and Family Support Service is required to provide data to the Welsh Assembly Government to evidence its performance against a number of key indicators. Within the service a number of these performance indicators are monitored on a monthly basis to ensure compliance and track progress as well as identification of any areas for further attention. They are reported on routinely within the Quarterly Business Review and to our Continuous Improvement Board as well as to members.

4. Current situation / proposal.

The key points from the latest release are that, across Wales:

- there was a 10 per cent increase in the number of children looked after at 31 March 2010 over the previous year (excluding short-term or respite care);
- approximately 10 per cent of children looked after at 31 March 2010 had three or more placements during the year;
- Key Stage assessments and GCSE results improved over the previous year;
- local authorities were in touch with 95 per cent of 19 year old care leavers; 47 per cent of these young people were in education, training or employment.

There are 27 core and strategic performance indicators which relate to looked after children. Of these, performance in Bridgend improved across 14 on the previous year,

was worse in 8 and had no change for 2. The remainder were not reported on in previous years so there is no comparative data available. (see table 1).

For a large number of these performance indicators, Bridgend performed above the Welsh average. It is also important to consider that for some PIs where there are small numbers of children or young people being considered, changes can cause a significant impact on the percentage increases or decreases e.g. young adults (care leavers) over the age of 19 that we are still in contact with. Large percentage changes may only relate to 4 or 5 people a year. The table includes commentary alongside details of Bridgend's performance.

TABLE 1 – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS												
Indicator description	2006 / 07	2007 / 08	2008 / 09	8/09 rank (where 1st is best and 22nd is worst)	2009 / 10	2009 / 10 rank (where 1st is best and 22nd is worst)	how many authorities reported	Wales average	Quartile UQ - upper best quartile, IQR inter quartile range and LQ lower quartile	PI value compared to previous year	Rank compared to previous year	Commentary
The percentage of first placements (for looked after children) beginning with a care plan in place	77.10%	50.00%	78.48%	21st	86.70%	18th	22	92.30%	LQ	Improving	Improving	Performance has improved significantly to the highest in 4 years.
For those children looked after whose second review (due at 4 months) was due in the year, the percentage with a plan for permanence at the due date	64.20%	81.50%	82.46%	20th	88.50%	18th	22	91.90%	LQ	Improving	Improving	Performance has improved significantly to the highest in 4 years.
The percentage of children looked after at 31 March who have experienced one or more change of school, during a period or periods of being looked after, which were not due to transitional arrangements, in the 12 months to 31 March	14.50%	14.50%	13.50%	11th	8.60%	6th	22	13.10%	UQ	Improving	Improving	Performance is above Welsh average and has progress to move from 11th to 6th quartile.
The percentage of children looked after on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year	9.9%	11.2%	8.2%	5th	8.0%	6th ¹	22	10.2%	UQ	Improving	Worse	Performance is above the Welsh average. And though there was a slight drop of 0.2%, we remain in the upper quartile.

Indicator description	2006 / 07	2007 / 08	2008 / 09	08/09 rank (where 1st is best and 22nd is worst)	2009 / 10	2009 / 10 rank (where 1st is best and 22nd is worst)	how many authorities reported	Wales average	Quartile UQ - upper best quartile, IQR inner quartile range and LQ lower quartile	PI value compared to previous year	Rank compared to previous year	Commentary
The percentage of open cases of children with an allocated social worker where the child is receiving a service in each of the following groups: Children looked after.	70.80%	75.4%	77.1%	21st	78.7%	22nd	22	92.3%	LQ	Improving	Worse	Insufficient capacity within current qualified workforce has necessitated some LAC cases to be held by unqualified workers.
The percentage of open cases of children allocated to someone other than a social worker where the child receiving a service in each of the following groups: Children looked after.	100.0%	24.3%	22.4%	21st	20.9%	22nd	22	7.3%	LQ	Improving	Worse	See above commentary.

Indicator description	2006 / 07	2007 / 08	2008 / 09	08/09 rank (where 1st is best and 22nd is worst)	2009 / 10	2009 / 10 rank (where 1st is best and 22nd is worst)	how many authorities reported	Wales average	Quartile UQ - upper best quartile, IQR inner quartile range and LQ lower quartile	PI value compared to previous year	Rank compared to previous year	commentary
The percentage of looked after children who have had their teeth checked by a dentist during the year	Not Reported	88.5%	88.3%	7th	86.8%	11th	20	84.0%	IQR	Worse	Worse	Performance was above Welsh average. There were reporting issues to ensure this information was being captured. Processes are being tightened to ensure Health collate this information on DRAIG appropriately.
The percentage of looked after children reviews carried out within statutory timescales	98.30%	94.6%	94.9%	9th	94.4%	10th	22	90.9%	IQR	Worse	Worse	Performance was above Welsh average. Performance has been maintained despite some capacity and vacancy issues within the IRO service.
The percentage attendance of looked after pupils whilst in care in primary schools	Not Reported	95.2%	Not Reported	Not Reported	94.90%	9th	22	93.3%	IQR	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Performance is above Welsh average.
The percentage attendance of looked after pupils whilst in care in secondary schools	Not Reported	88.9%	Not Reported	Not Reported	90.90%	7th	22	88.7%	IQR	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Performance is above Welsh average.

Indicator description	2006 / 07	2007 / 08	2008 / 09	08/09 rank (where 1st is best and 22nd is worst)	2009 / 10	2009 / 10 rank (where 1st is best and 22nd is worst)	how many authorities reported	Wales average	Quartile UQ - upper best quartile, IQR inner quartile range and LQ lower quartile	PI value compared to previous year	Rank compared to previous year	Commentary
The percentage of children looked after who were permanently excluded from school during the school year	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	5th	0.0%	1st	22	0.1%	UQ	No change	Improving	Best performance in Wales.
The average number of days spent out of school on fixed-term exclusions for children looked after	6.7	9.2	8.8	19th	5.4	9th	22	7.7	IQR	Improving	Improving	Performance is above Welsh average. Excellent progress - Periods of fixed term exclusions have nearly halved within the last 2 years.
The percentage of children looked after during the year with a Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school in the year	Not Reported	Not Reported	Not Reported	Not Reported	28.60%	20th	22	61.4%	LQ	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Significant improvement in completion of PEPs. 90% of LAC have one. Additional attention now being given to improve completion within timescales.

Indicator description	2006 / 07	2007 / 08	2008 / 09	08/09 rank (where 1st is best and 22nd is worst)	2009 / 10	2009 / 10 rank (where 1st is best and 22nd is worst)	how many authorities reported	Wales average	Quartile UQ - upper best quartile, IQR inner quartile range and LQ lower quartile	PI value compared to previous year	Rank compared to previous year	Commentary
The percentage of statutory visits to looked after children due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations	77.1%	77.3%	76.2%	20th	55.2%	22nd	22	82.2%	LQ	Worse	Worse	Disappointing performance but monitoring arrangements in place to improve data capture.
The percentage of children looked after who had a fully completed and updated Assessment and Action Record at their third review	Not Reported	Not Reported	Not Reported	Not Reported	Not Reported	Not Reported	16	16.9%	Not Reported	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	LA's are in the process of creating ICS versions of Assessment and Progress records as part of a phased approach to implementing ICS. Data capture arrangements are being established, but were not sufficiently robust to be able to report upon.
The percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact at the age of 19	100.0%	100.0%	85.7%	16th	100.0%	1st	22	95.1%	UQ	Improving	Improving	Highest performance in Wales.

The percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact, who are known to be in suitable, non-emergency accommodation at the age of 19	76.9%	100.0%	66.7%	20th	94.1%	10th	22	92.7%	IQR	Improving	Improving	Performance is above Welsh average and shows significant improvement.
Indicator description	2006 / 07	2007 / 08	2008 / 09	08/09 rank (where 1st is best and 22nd is worst)	2009 / 10	2009 / 10 rank (where 1st is best and 22nd is worst)	how many authorities reported	Wales average	Quartile UQ - upper best quartile, IQR inner quartile range and LQ lower quartile	PI value compared to previous year	Rank compared to previous year	Commentary
The percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact, who are known to be engaged in education, training or employment at the age of 19	30.8%	50.0%	44.4%	15th	41.2%	13th	22	49.2%	IQR	Worse	Improving	It is acknowledged that the recession has affected employment opportunities. This PI can fluctuate due to small changes which cause large percentage variations.
The percentage of looked after children eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment		35.70%	58.82%	3rd	23.08%	20th	22	44.19%	LQ	Worse	Worse	This PI is prone to fluctuate depending on whether the children may have special educational needs.

The percentage of looked after children eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment		11.10%	8.33%	18th	25.00%	12th	22	25.00%	IQR	Improving	Improving	Performance has improved and additional efforts have been identified to support this cohort. As above this PI can be subject to fluctuations depending on whether the children have special educational needs.
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The average external qualifications point score for 16 year old looked after children, in any local authority maintained learning setting		188	145	13th	123	19th	22	152	LQ	Worse	Worse	This PI is prone to fluctuate depending on whether the specific children in the cohort have special educational needs.
The percentage of health assessments for looked after children due in the year that have been undertaken			54.9%	20th	55.1%	20th	21	82.0%	LQ	Improving	No change	There were difficulties in the recruitment of a LAC Health Visitor and this adversely affected the visiting schedule and data capture arrangements.
The percentage of placements started during the year where the child is registered with a provider of general medical services within 10 working days of the start of the placement			68.9%	17th	68.9%	18th	21	80.8%	LQ	No change	Worse	Training has increased to foster carers to improve this PI.

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The percentage of eligible, relevant and former relevant children that have pathway plans as required			92.8%	13th	94.6%		22	89.1%	IQR	Improving	Improving	Performance is above Welsh average.
The percentage of eligible, relevant and former relevant children that have been allocated a personal advisor			99.0%	10th	93.9%	12th	22	92.8%	IQR	Worse	Worse	Performance is above Welsh average. Numbers are relatively small therefore percentages can be skewed by small changes that cause big impact on the percentage.

Table 2 - Number of Children looked after by local authorities and their legal status.

Local Authority	Total looked after children 08/09	Total looked after children 09/10 % change	Care Orders	Remand, detained or other compulsory	Other legal status	Single period of accommodation under s20
Wales	4705	5160 (+10)	3420	20	335	1390
Bridgend	255	290 (+14)	200	*	20	70
Torfaen	205	235 (+15)	185	*	15	40
Newport	290	295 (+17)	220	0	20	60
Swansea	395	560 (+42)	295	*	35	230
NPT	290	390 (+34)	205	*	30	155
Caerphilly	315	330 (+5)	220	*	25	85
Vale of Glamorgan	175	185 (+6)	135	0	10	40

* = figure too small to be significant.

As previously reported and shown in table 2, Bridgend's LAC population has increased by nearly 14% and our neighbours also saw rises, some, such as NPT and Swansea, were significantly larger than others. CSSIW inspections have been critical in some authorities of the overuse of informal arrangements for care. This is not the case now in Bridgend.

Table 3 - Children looked after by local authorities by age and gender (boys and girls)

Local Authority	All ages	Under 1 year	1-4 years	5-9 years	10-15 years	16-17 years 18 and over	18 and over
Wales	5160	280	1010	1065	2070	725	10
Bridgend	290	15	65	70	105	35	0
Torfaen	2335	15	55	60	75	30	0
Newport	295	20	60	55	120	35	0
Swansea	560	40	135	120	200	60	*
NPT	390	25	75	100	150	40	0

Caerphilly	330	15	70	55	140	50	0
Vale of Glamorgan	185	10	40	30	85	20	*

As table 3 shows, of the 22 authorities, all but 4 have more boys in care than girls. Bridgend follows this norm. Two significant groups with a high number of children aged 0 to 4 were becoming looked after but, in the selection of authorities above, it is the 10 to 15 age group that dominates. This is sometimes as a result of abuse or neglect but can also be about rejection by parents and family breakdown. This, combined with increasing alcohol and drug misuse by younger teenagers, is making some of them more vulnerable to emotional difficulties.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

This report is concerned with performance information rather than policy or decision making. Each looked after child's needs are identified on an individual basis; hence an equality impact assessment is not applicable.

7. Financial Implications.

The increase in the number of looked after children and the use of independent foster placements continue to create volatility within the budget of the Safeguarding and Family Support Service. This is alongside an increase in the number of care proceedings and the costs incurred for the Authority's Legal Service when making such applications.

8. Recommendation.

It is recommended that the Committee notes this report on the performance of the Safeguarding and Family Support Service in meeting the needs of children and young people within its care against the other 21 authorities in Wales.

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Background documents

LAC Data report 27.5.10

The data can be found by following the link:

http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx?IF_ActivePath=P,24604,24605