

## Children and Families Scrutiny Panel – Monitoring report

Date	Title	Recommendation	Action Taken	Progress Status
25/06/15	Children and Families Performance (Cllr Jeffery)	1) That officers provide the Panel with information outlining the sources of referrals to the MASH.	<p><b>2014/15 (financial year):</b> The most recent shows that most of the referrals in Southampton come from the Police (43%), followed by Schools (11%) and Other – this includes children’s centres, independent agency providers and voluntary organisations (8%). Comparative data for this period is not yet available.</p> <p><b>2013/14 (financial year):</b> When comparing Southampton’s data to that of Portsmouth, Bristol, and the whole of England it can be seen that sources of referrals are fairly consistent locally and nationally. The top four sources of referrals for all are (in descending order): The Police, Health Services, Schools and LA Services. Notably, however, in Southampton 30.1% of referrals come from the Police, compared to 23.9% in England, 24.4% in Portsmouth and 24.7% in Bristol.</p> <p>The high proportion reported with an unknown source is, according to the Children in Need Census, due to the fact that 2013/14 was the first year of collecting sources of referral, and not all local authorities have been able to report it fully. For this reason, data on the source of referral should be interpreted with some caution. (see: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/367877/SFR43_2014_Main_Text.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/367877/SFR43_2014_Main_Text.pdf</a>)</p>	

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		2) That the Cabinet Member works with the Head of Service to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address the performance issues created by changes within the Business Support function.		
		3) That officers contact Portsmouth City Council to develop an understanding of why their levels of Looked After Children are much lower than those in Southampton.	<p>We have included data for both Southampton and the City of Bristol so that comparisons can be made with more than one statistical neighbour.</p> <p>The Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) provides a search index for finding statistical neighbours for different statistics, one of which is LAC (see attached list for more information), or visit:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait</a></p> <p>The Office of National Statistics has also produced area classifications after every census since 1971, where by using socio-economic and demographic data from each census, they aim to identify areas of the country with similar characteristics. This allows us to identify similar areas for comparative studies.</p> <p>Generally, the following LAs are considered similar to Southampton (most similar first): City of Bristol, Leeds, Norwich, Newcastle upon Tyne, Nottingham  (see <a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/products/area-classifications/ns-area-classifications/index.html">http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/products/area-classifications/ns-area-classifications/index.html</a>)</p> <p>However – what is considered the</p>	

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			statistical neighbour group does in some cases vary depending on the outcome measure (e.g. LAC and CiN).	
		4) That the Panel are provided with a breakdown of the headline reasons why children in Southampton have become looked after.	<p>When looking at the 2014/15 figures for Southampton, the main category of need of children who have become looked after is abuse or neglect (over 300 children), other reasons being family in acute stress or family dysfunction. However, an analysis of the reasons used reveals that initial legal statuses of children are often not recorded correctly on Paris.</p> <p>Comparative data is currently not available for 2014/15, but comparing</p>	
			<p>Southampton's data to that of Bristol, and the whole of England for the 2013/14 financial year, we see that for all areas, the most common reason why children became looked after was abuse or neglect – in 79.5% of cases in Southampton, compared to 61.0% in Bristol and 55.5% in England.</p> <p>It should be noted that children who become looked after may come from families with multiple problems, which may include family dysfunction, absent parenting, low income or similar, but where the core reasons for the child becoming looked after is that he or she is either already suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, and it follows, therefore, that abuse or neglect is the appropriate reason to be recorded.</p>	
		5) That the Chair of the Panel and the Cabinet Member		

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		give consideration to how the Scrutiny Panel and the Corporate Parenting Committee can work together to improve outcomes for Looked After Children.		
		6) That, to enable the Panel to have an overview of Children and Family Services in Southampton, officers incorporate into the suite of performance indicators monitored by the Panel, relevant indicators relating to education, youth offending, NEETS, children's health, fostering and adoption at appropriate intervals.	A draft set of measures for the Children and Families Dataset was presented to the Children's Senior Leadership Team (CSLT) and will form the basis for development.	
		7) That, to aid analysis, commentary is incorporated into the Performance Indicator dataset.	We will continue to provide analysis of significant changes in performance levels, as a separate report, which is distributed alongside the monthly dataset.	
		8) That action is taken to improve performance with regards to Looked After Children having Personal Education Plans in place.	There is an action place to increase the number of PEPS that are completed. Training for schools staff and social workers is being provided, and the Virtual School Head and the Independent Reviewing Officers are working proactively to ensure that PEPs are completed.	