

IMPROVEMENT NOTICE PROGRESS REPORT

Introduction

This report provides an update on progress against each of the Improvement Notice (IN) requirements up until 4 September 2009.

Performance Indicators

NI 51 CAMHS Provision

No target was set for this measure pending the publication of the definition, which is now known. The PI is based on a self-assessment score which has been made by the CAMHS commissioners and service and for 2008/09 they have self-assessed themselves as 14/16.

NI 54 Improve experience of families with disabled children through Aiming High core offer

SCC and NHS Surrey have achieved the Aiming High core offer with DCSF sign-off. NI 54 is a new indicator that will be measured through an independent customer survey managed by DCSF. The Surrey questionnaires will be sent out in September/October and the results are due for publication later this year.

NI 59 and NI 60, Increase Assessment to 77% by 31st March 2010 and increase Core Assessments to 90% by 31st March 2010

Good performance in quarter 4 2008/09 on the timeliness of Initial Assessments has been maintained into 2009/10 so far, with the year-to-date figure as of 4th September standing at 78.3%. If Initial Assessment performance is sustained then SCC will hit the target.

The good performance on Core Assessment timeliness seen between January – May 2009 was not maintained during June – mid-August. This is mainly due to the clearing-up of a backlog of cases in one Assessment team. Since then performance has increased to 80%+ each week, however, whilst the backlog of cases is reducing further work is needed to ensure it is completely cleared. Once the backlog is cleared, if the performance in this team reaches the same level as all other teams undertaking core assessments than the Improvement Notice target could be reached in time for March 2010.

NI 66 LAC reviews on time 95% of time

On the 4th September 2009 95.6% LAC have had all their reviews undertaken in the last 12 months on time against a target of 95%.

NI 101 Improve LAC attainment at KS4

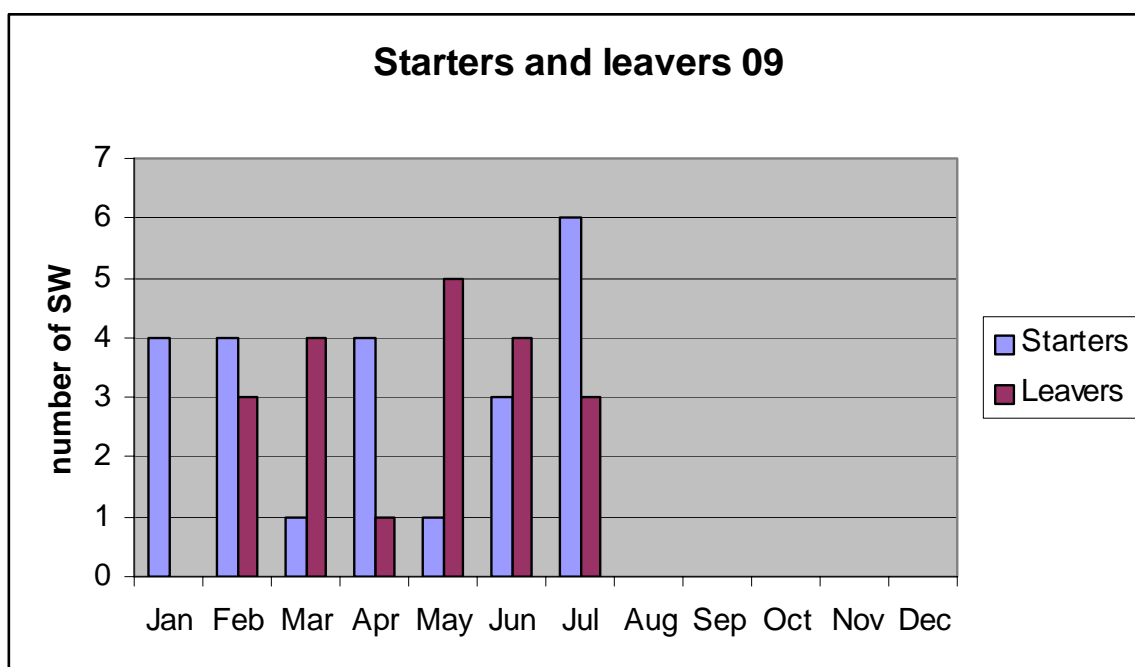
Results will be available in October.

Reduce social worker vacancies to 11% by 31st March 2010

The table below gives an idea of our net position since January with 23 new starts but 20 leavers, we are closing the vacancy gap but slowly.

There are as at the 31st July 28 social workers awaiting pre- employment checks due to start with us. Recruitment activity is continuing with recruitment days every two weeks and an average of three candidates being appointed per session.

However the emphasis now needs to shift from just recruitment to retention to help us close the vacancy gap faster. A strategy to this effect has been drafted which will engage the service and corporate services in closing this gap further.



Sustaining unallocated cases open to duty at 0%

Although we are reporting very low numbers of unallocated cases “open to duty” there were nevertheless cases open elsewhere. At 21 May 2009 there were 682 unallocated cases. Targeted management action has since brought this down to 133 on 4th September 2009. This is subject to weekly monitoring.

All LAC with an allocated social worker

We were able to achieve 100% on 31/3/09. Current performance was c.97% in August. In 2007/08 England average was 97% and statistical neighbour average was 93.2%. Those Surrey LAC without a social worker are supported by a consistent Family Support Worker who undertakes visits and general tasks, supervised/overseen by a qualified social worker.

PAF C24, reducing LAC schools absence to 7% in the academic year 08-09 and to 5% in 09-10

Results from the last academic year will be available in the autumn.

SEN statements completed to timescale

In the 2009/10 year-to-date all SEN final statements (excluding exceptions) were prepared within the 26-week timeframe.

Reducing permanent SEN exclusions to 23 per 1000 in the 08-09 academic year and to 16 per 1000 in 09-10

Provisional results for the academic year 2008/09 indicate that there were 22 permanent exclusions (4.7 per 1000) from Surrey maintained schools of pupils with an SEN statement against the Improvement Notice target of no more than 107 exclusions (23 per 1000). This is a significant improvement from 2007/08 where there were 31 exclusions.

Building Capacity and Capability to Sustain Improvements

Review structure and appoint to permanent management team

The new Senior Management Team is in place. The review of the structure is still underway. It is anticipated that the new Children's Services service structure will be in place in early 2010.

Embed Performance Framework with QA Audit Programme

The CSF Directorate Leadership Team received their first report card in July; the format is evolving throughout August with the addition of up-to-date HR and finance information. A workshop for all Managers in September will ensure all teams and services are able to use the report cards and narratives effectively as part of their service m. The Interim Head of Safeguarding has developed and is implementing a programme of QA audits for safeguarding with trials completed in July full implementation since August. The Ofsted unannounced inspection confirmed that these arrangements were in place and beginning to inform performance management and practice development.

Ensuring all managers and staff are subject to an assessment of competence by 31st March 2009 and action taken as a result to ensure that appropriately skilled people are in post at 1st May 2009

Within Children's Services, all senior managers and team managers have gone through an assessment centre process. Action for Assistant Team Managers has focused on addressing their development needs at this stage as it was clear that to date they had received very little management development to support them in their role. 8 Assistant Team Managers have enrolled on the Institute of Leadership and Management programme.

By April 2009 assessment of social workers and family support worker had resulted in 7 formal and 77 informal HR cases. These figures have now reduced to five formal cases and 15 informal cases principally brought about by targeted interventions by HR, coaching and equipping line managers to address apparent issues early on. Next steps include briefing managers on

how to use HR processes to support performance management and “nip issues in the bud” before escalating into formal procedures.

As we move forward the restructure process should ensure we have competent managers in place, provide potential opportunities for internal staff to step up and to recruit some new managers externally. There will also be a review of the career structure to create a progressive route from entry level, to newly qualified social workers, competent social workers, senior social workers/practitioners and team managers. A tool for mapping social worker career paths has been developed.

Implementing the JAR Action Plan –

Most plans achieved and or to be rolled in to new Improvement Programme.

Building capacity for early intervention, preventative services including services through schools –

A pilot for cross agency preventative/early intervention work is taking place in Westborough, Guildford. It is planned that a new approach to early intervention is to be built in to the new services structure for Surrey CC’s Children, Schools and Families Service, with integrated arrangements for prevention to be implemented through the local Children’s Alliance arrangements.

Reviewing the process for referrals to children’s care so that all partners know when to refer a child –

A level of need document has been agreed by the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board. This has since been supplemented by a refreshed Eligibility Criteria for Children’s Social Care. A recent “Deep Dive” on Access and Assessment undertaken in July found that the new criteria was understood and being applied by staff. The unannounced Ofsted inspection in August considered that most referrals were managed appropriately but did note that some partners were making inappropriate referrals.

Reviewing placements of LAC inc residential care to ensure they are appropriate and implementing a strategy to place children closer to home with clear targets approved and monitored by the Improvement Board by 31st March 2009 –

Lead Managers have now been identified to carry out reviews of in-house residential and fostering provision. All reviews will evaluate whether resources match and are appropriate for the needs of our LAC, that sufficient and / or the right type of provision and choice is available and that in all cases we provide or demand best value.

New guidelines for Placement Planning for Looked after Children have been introduced in August 2009 to ensure greater clarity and accountability for decision-making and to ensure best use of in-house resources.

Since March 2009 there has been a reduction in the number of children placed in external placements from 222 to 200 as of 12th August 2009.

ICS Compliance

The ICS tender evaluation is nearing completion. Several site visits have taken place to other local authorities as well as demonstrations by each supplier. Children's service staff has been closely involved in the evaluation of each supplier. Sign off by the Cabinet member is planned for the 16th September. The "go live" of the system is planned to take place using a phased approach to be agreed with the successful supplier.

Strategy to reduce fixed term exclusions of SEN pupils with targets agreed by the Improvement Board for implementation from September 2009 -

A three-part strategy is in place:

- a) Targeting schools with high representation of pupils with SEN statements amongst fixed term excludees. Targeted interventions using 4S consultancy to analyse and improve practice in targeted schools. This will include individual improvement targets for each school. Schools have been identified and contacted by 4S Intervention starts in September 2009. Proposed targets will be reported in October.
- b) Establishment of area based practitioners groups of school, Council and partner staff working with pupils with challenging behaviour. Groups used to disseminate materials from the DCSF National Strategies for use in schools to improve behaviour management. A priority is the dissemination of the toolkit to identify cohorts of pupils receiving exclusions and link to school planning.
- c) Work with Special Educational Needs services to ensure that SEN relating to behaviour form part of the SEN Strategic plan, both for mainstream schools, special schools and central services. Gaps in service and provision will be identified through the SEN Provision Mapping project and recommendation identified for implementation.

The target for reducing fixed term exclusions will be 10% for the academic year 2009/10.

Meeting Aiming Higher Readiness criteria by 31st March 2009 and the full service offer by 31 March 2010 – The readiness criteria was met and confirmed by the DCSF in March 2009. A number of new short break services are in place for Summer 2009. Good progress is being made towards the Full Service Offer with all stages met to date. The process is about to enter phase two commissioning and various workstreams of improvement in services are underway (e.g. direct payments process, early support, etc). Together for Disabled Children Advisers have reduced their input to a low level of support reflecting confidence in Surrey's progress towards delivering Aiming High.

Working with Others

Children's Trust arrangements – The new Surrey Children's Alliance arrangements were formally launched on 29th June 2009. A first cycle of meetings has been held with a second cycle to beginning in September. The focus for the first cycle of meetings has been establishing the arrangements. The focus for the second cycle of meetings will be to agree local priorities for joint action at the local level and targeted at the five priority neighbourhood and to begin the process of identifying and agreeing to priorities for joint action and for a new Children and Young People's Strategy 2010-2014.

Joint Commissioning – Work has begun on the putting into place a Joint Commissioning plan for children with complex needs. Joint Commissioning arrangements, specifically with NHS Surrey are to be developed further in Autumn.

Effective Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) with Independent Chair and action plans to address Serious case Reviews – This has been achieved. The Board is now chaired by an Independent Chair. Serious Case Review processes have been reviewed. The current arrangements are compliant with the requirements of "Working Together". These are however subject to DCSF review and changes will in due course be needed. The LSCB have undertaken a rewrite of two Serious Case Reviews following a judgement of inadequate. One of the reviews has been judged as good with the remaining judgement of the other review awaited. No new Serious Case Reviews have been undertaken since the JAR inspection in 2008.