

Birmingham City Council

Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 6th September 2023



Subject: Children and Families Performance Report
Report of: Sue Harrison, Director of Children and Families
Report author: David Fallows, Head of Service
Digital, Evidence and Performance (Children and Families)

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide a summary of the Directorate's performance approach and progress. This will be the first Directorate led Performance update to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following the appointment of the new permanent Head of Performance.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee note this report and provide feedback on content and presentation of information to inform future Performance reporting and a proposed workshop on performance data.

3 Background

- 3.1 **Performance Approach:** The directorate has introduced a new Performance Framework (in October 2022). The directorate collects, analyses, and reports on a range of performance indicators at service, directorate, and corporate level.
- 3.2 The Council has Key Performance Indicators in place to hold the Children and Families Directorate to account. Note that these indicators do not cover all the service areas within the Directorate. Appendix One provides Key Performance Indicators progress reporting for 2023/24 Quarter one. Headlines from Children and Families Directorate Workforce measures are also provided.
- 3.3 As part of our wider improvement plan, we are expanding an evidence and performance approach across the directorate through activities such as:

- 3.3.1 Data cleansing and mapping to improve the availability and accuracy of performance data.
- 3.3.2 Mapping and assessing all directorate digital tools and capabilities to ensure we have the right systems and skills in place.
- 3.3.3 Monthly performance reviews and a Quarterly Performance Board with Heads of Services and Senior Leadership to monitor performance, respond to collective issues and share good practice.
- 3.3.4 Developing a range of dynamic dashboards to present data and analysis for different users
- 3.3.5 Working with partners and the BCC Observatory to identify, collect and monitor outcome indicators on the health, safety and prosperity of Birmingham's Children and Young People

3.4 **Performance Update:** Figures 1 and 2 below provide an overview of the Children and Families Corporate performance indicators over time (Figure 1) and compared to targets, national and statistical benchmarks (Figure 2). Detailed figures are presented in the Performance annex and appendix.

3.5 Figure 1 below highlights some key trends overtime including:

- 3.5.1 We are broadly maintaining performance levels for SEND EHCP Assessments, Transport Services and NEET service areas.
- 3.5.2 While we are maintaining SEND Assessment performance, we have seen an increase in the number of 5- to 16-year-olds waiting more than 12 weeks for specialist placements (from 244 in April 2022 to 322 to June 2023). This is in part due to do rising need (with the number of 0 to 25 year olds with EHCPs increasing from 10,399 in April 2022 to 10, 766 in July 2023). We have identified additional capacity with schools for an additional 196 places for September and continue to work with special schools and schools with resource bases increase capacity to address this gap.
- 3.5.3 There are persistent challenges related to families take up of Early Years education. This is due to lower up take in harder to reach communities and families in temporary accommodation. Some families believe their children are too young to attend a childcare setting or perceive Early Education to be childcare which they do not require, as parents or extended family members look after young children. The majority of parents/carers of those eligible children in temporary accommodation do not access Early Education Entitlement places. We believe this is due to competing priorities in their lives with including prioritising their school age children to attend school.

3.5.4 In response to these issues, we have identified some new strategies to increase early years up take including using data and analysis in partnership with NESTA to identify and address low engagement. In addition we will be working with city-wide community engagement colleagues to develop strategies to raise awareness including the benefits of accessing an early education place and to demystify perceptions of parents and carers in communities who are not accessing early education places. We are also part of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy Group and will be starting to develop strategies to support parents of eligible children to access an early education place or at least be in a position to once out of Temporary Accommodation.

3.5.5 Attendance and absences remain areas of concern. The primary responsibility for attendance and absences remains with schools. The city councils' role is to offer support to co-produce and challenge to the sector. Co-produced attendance and exclusion strategies are being developed. These include workshops with parents/carers, schools and partner agencies next half term to help us identify the priorities. The Alternative Provision working group is working on more inclusive pathways for CYP to work towards equitable access to support for this cohort of children.

Figure 1: Overview of Children Families Corporate Indicators (Apr 2022 to Jun 2023)

		2022-23 Q1	2022-23 Q2	2022-23 Q3	2022-23 Q4	2023-24 Q1
Theme	Indicator	Apr - Jun (Q1)	Jul - Sep (Q2)	Oct - Dec (Q3)	Jan - Mar (Q4)	Apr - Jun (Q1)
		2022			2023	
Early Years	% of 2-year-olds accessing Early Education Entitlement (EEE)	67%	67%	69%	67%	67%
	% of 3 and 4-year-olds accessing 15 hours EEE	86%	86%	91%	90%	89%
Holiday Activities	No of children attending the HAF Programme	12,523		19,576	13,104	16,090
	Number of meals taken up by children through the HAF Programme	50,092		162,566	58,787	
NEET	% of 16- and 17- year olds Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)	3.50%	3.80%	2.20%	2.70%	5.90%
	No of NEET's (16 and 18) engaged in career/education support	1112	1127	725	871	
SEND	% of new EHCPs issued within 20 weeks	69%	63%	65%	67%	68%
	No of 5 to 16 yr olds with an EHCP waiting >12 weeks for a specialist placement		244	278	327	322
Travel Service	Proportion of eligible pupils transported to school	100%	99.90%	100%	99.5%	
	Number of students we provide with Transport					5,377
Absence and Exclusions	Absence Rate: Primary				6.9%	
	Absence Rate: Secondary				8.6%	
	Primary school exclusion rate				0.02%	
	Secondary school exclusions rate				0.12%	
	Special School Exclusion rate				0.07%	

*Note there are different targets across Financial Years

** % of 16 to 17% NEETS Indicator, expanded target to include unknown status in 22/23 so can only compare RAG rating and not figures over financial years for this indicator

3.6 Figure 2 confirms those trends with comparisons to national values and statistical neighbours (where data is available).

- 3.6.1 We are comparable to national and statistical neighbours for NEETS and SEND assessments.
- 3.6.2 The challenges we are seeing around Early Years Entitlement uptake are mirrored nationally performance levels are comparable to national comparators.
- 3.6.3 Making national and statistical neighbour comparisons for Absence and exclusion rates is difficult as there is a significant time lag for published data. Where available they are included below.

Figure 2: Overview of Children Families Corporate Indicators (Targets and Comparisons)

Theme	Indicator	Prefered Direction	2022-23 Q1	2022-23 Q4	2023-24 Q1	Target (Most Recent)	Latest National Value	Latest Stats Neighbours
			Baseline	Previous	Most Recent			
			Apr - Jun (2022 Q1)	Jan- Mar (2023 Q4)	Apr - Jun (2023 Q1)			
Early Years	% of 2-year-olds accessing Early Education Entitlement (EEE)	▲	67%	67%	67%	76%	72% (Jan 2022)	66% (Jan 2022)
	% of 3 and 4-year-olds accessing 15 hours EEE	▲	86%	90%	89%	96%	92% (Jan 2022)	87% (Jan 2022)
Holiday Activities	No of children attending the HAF Programme	▲	12,523	13,104	16,090	15,524		
	Number of meals taken up by children through the HAF Programme	▲	50,092	58,787		60,000		
NEET	% of 16- and 17- year olds Not in or Not Known to be in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)	▼	3.50%		5.90%	7%	5.50%	4.46%
	No of NEET's (16 and 18) engaged in career/education support	▲		871		1049		
SEND	% of new EHCPs issued within 20 weeks	▲	69%	67%	68%	65%	49%	
	No of 5 to 16 yr olds with an EHCP waiting >12 weeks for a specialist placement	▼		327	322			
Travel Service	Proportion of eligible pupils transported to school	▲	100%	99.5%		99.50%		
	Number of students we provide with Transport	▲			5,377			
Absence and Exclusions	Absence Rate: Primary	▼		6.9%		4%	6.3% (21/22)	6.5% (21/22)
	Absence Rate: Secondary	▼		8.6%		6%	9% (21/22)	8.9%(21/22)
	Primary school exclusion rate	▼		0.02%		0.01%		
	Secondary school exclusions rate	▼		0.12%		0.10%		
	Special School Exclusion rate	▼		0.07%		0.05%		

3.7 As the first directorate led O & S performance update, we have provided a broad overview of Corporate Performance Indicators. For future updates we recommend additional deep dives into specific service areas' performance as guided by the Committee. We would suggest the following areas for further review (including topical areas such Transport September Mobilisation and Results and Attainment when official data is available):

- 3.7.1 Hidden Children is already scheduled as a topic for the October O&S Committee meeting.
- 3.7.2 Children and Young People's Travel Service (CYPTS) to provide an overview of transport applications and arrangements for the 23/24 Academic Year and give an overview of the September mobilisation. CYPTS ended the 22/23 Academic Year with 5150 students supported on transport contracts and have an estimated 4386 students that will be on contracts for the 23/24 Academic Year. They have currently received 1231 new SEN Transport applications for the 23/24 academic year. CYPTS are currently managing the September mobilisation with transport arrangement

letter sent to parents, meet and greets underway and communications and logistics plans in place.

- 3.7.3 Present an analysis of education results and attainment once official data is published in October 2023. Provisional high-level GCSE and A-level results information suggests West Midlands remains below the outcomes for England with the 2023 gap in attainment levels falling roughly to what they were in 2019.
- 3.7.4 Present an update on SEND Sufficiency Strategy to highlight plans, challenges, and choices to meet current and future demand for specialist placements.
- 3.7.5 Early Years to present their strategy and approach to addressing barriers to entitlement uptake.

3.8 **Workforce Update:** The headlines from Children and Families Directorate Workforce measures (as detailed in the Performance Appendix) are:

3.8.1 **Attrition and Retention:** Total headcount for Children and Families is 1476 employees, as of the 1st of August 2023. In July 2023, more employees left the council from Children and Families than joined the directorate. Six employees joined, with 36 leaving.

3.8.2 **Absence:** 2.6% of Children and Families employees were absent as of 1st August 2023, compared to the Council rate of 3.1%. Apart from a small spike of 4.3% in June, the percentage of employees' absence has steadily decreased from 5.5% in February to 2.6% in July

3.9 Agency staff have played an important role in our improvement journey since January 2022 in two main areas:

3.9.1 Operational staff: Particularly in the SENAR and Travel service areas fulfilling operational roles such as SENAR Case officer to maintain service delivery and allow the council to meet its statutory commitments.

3.9.2 Transformation and support roles: in areas such as project management, business analysis and digital and data roles. These roles have enabled the directorate to make progress against its improvement plan, achieving key strategic milestones such as re-establishing the Birmingham Childrens Partnership and launching Children, Young People's Plan and SEND and Inclusion strategies. These roles have also supported other areas of improvement such as setting up our performance framework and strengthening directorate governance and communications.

3.10 The directorate is committed to continue to reduce the number of agency staff we use having secured the necessary budget to recruit the right number of

permanent staff with the necessary skills to ensure our overall performance can continue to progress from poor to good. The directorate is making good progress in our redesign as summarised below. The new job evaluation process is taking significantly longer than when they were carried out by the internal job evaluation team and lengthy consultation and recruitment processes are prolonging our need for agency staff.

3.10.1 Travel Service: implementation stage with a high number of applications for advertised roles with an average of over 17 applications per advertised role (including 4 interim staff applying and 2 being appointed).

3.10.2 SENAR: in consultation phase with Trade Unions and aiming to start advertising roles by late September.

3.10.3 Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation: design complete and aiming to start consultation before the end of September

3.10.4 Thriving; work on the future model is progressing, aiming to finalise in September and then remaining pre-consultation activities will be progressed.

3.11 Strategic Risks and Challenges

Risk/challenge	Mitigation
Access to data and information	<p>As systems develop, we will be able to report in more detail</p> <p>Focused work is being undertaken to develop reporting meanwhile existing reporting mechanisms are being maintained</p>

4 Any Finance Implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications with this report.

5 Any Legal Implications

5.1 The report summarises the Council's performance in fulfilling some of its statutory duties.

6 Any Equalities Implications

6.1 There are no direct equalities implications with this report.

7 Appendices and Annex

7.1 Appendix 1: Children and Families Directorate Key Performance and Workforce Indicators

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DIRECTORATE

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2023/24 – PROGRESS UPDATE



Making a positive difference every day to people's lives



1. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Measure	22/23					23/24		Q1 Commentary
	Target	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Target	Qtr1	
Early Years								
Percentage of 2-year- olds accessing Early Education Entitlement (EEE) <i>These are snapshot figures as at quarter end. Our statistical neighbour average for 2022 was 65.7%.</i>	72%	67%	67%	69%	67%	76%	67%	Despite previous improvements in take up rates, this has now plateaued during Q1 which is now showing as below target. New strategies are being identified to increase take up within hard-to-reach communities (due to cultural barriers) eg: families in temporary accommodation.
Percentage of 3 and 4-year-olds accessing 15 hours Early Education Entitlement (EEE) <i>These are snapshot figures as at quarter end. Our statistical neighbour average for 2022 was 88.7%</i>	92%	86%	86%	91%	90%	96%	89%	Performance for 3 and 4 year olds is mirroring that of 2 year olds, this has also plateaued during Q1 which is now showing as below target. New strategies are being identified to increase take up within hard-to-reach communities (due to cultural barriers) e.g.: families in temporary accommodation.

Measure	22/23					23/24		Q1 commentary
	Target	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Target	Qtr1	
SEND								
Number of children and young people (aged 5-16) with an EHCP awaiting specialist placements for more than 12 weeks <i>These are snapshot figures as at quarter end.</i>	N/A		244	278	327	N/A	322	While numbers have remained relatively constant, this is a slight increase on the May result. However, we have continued to work with schools to increase capacity and 136 of these Children/Young People have places secured for September 2023.
Percentage of new Education Health Care (EHC) plans issued within 20 weeks, excluding exceptions <i>The MBC benchmark is 60%.</i>	65%	69%	63%	65%	67%	65%	68%	The latest data is for June 2022 to May 2023 it shows the newly embedded processes continue to work well and we continue to be above our target and the National Average of 49%.
Absence								
Absence Rate: Primary <i>Absence for academic year 21/22. The Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) average for this period was 6.3%</i>	4%				6.9%	N/A		Not yet due
Absence Rate: Secondary <i>Absence for academic year 21/22. The MBC average for this period was 9.5%.</i>	6%				8.6%	N/A		Not yet due

Measure	22/23					23/24		
	Target	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Target	Qtr1	Q1 Commentary
Exclusions								
Primary school exclusion rate <i>This is data for 20/21 academic year. The MBC average for this period was 0.01%</i>	0.01%				0.02%	N/A		Not yet due
Secondary school exclusions rate <i>This is data for 20/21 academic year. The MBC average for this period was 0.15%</i>	0.1%				0.12%	N/A		Not yet due
Special School Exclusion rate <i>This is data for 20/21 academic year. The MBC average for this period was 0.02%</i>	0.05%				0.07%	N/A		Not yet due

	22/23					23/24		
Measure	Target	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Target	Qtr1	Q1 Commentary
Travel Service								
Proportion of eligible pupils transported to school. <i>These are snapshot figures as at quarter end.</i>	99.5%	100%	99.9%	100%	99.5%			
Wording of KPI changed for 23/24 Number of students we provide transport for						N/A	5,377	The number of students we support with transport in Q1 is 5377 of which 200 are personal transport budgets. A data dashboard is currently being developed to assist the service further. The data dashboard will be available for Q2 and will capture the overall number of applications against agreed and declined.

	22/23					23/24		
Measure	Target	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Target	Qtr1	Q1 Commentary
Holiday Activities and Food Programme								
Number of individual children attending the HAF programme <i>Q1 result is the spring programme, Q3 is summer and Q4 winter.</i>	15,000 (Q4)	12,523		19,576	13,104	15,524 (Q1)	16,090	We overachieved the target for Spring 2023 by +566 children and our uptake of 86% Free School Meal (FSM) children. The holiday activity clubs have been successfully targeting schools and parents who may be eligible.
Number of meals taken up by children through the HAF <i>Q1 result is the spring programme, Q3 is summer and Q4 winter.</i>	60,000 (Q4)	50,092		162,566	58,787	No longer reported		
Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training,								
Percentage of 16 and 17 year olds that are Not in Education, Employment or Training' <i>These are snapshot figures as at quarter end. The All England average for March 2022 was 2.6%.</i>	5%	3.5%	3.8%	2.2%	2.7%			
Percentage of 16- and 17- year olds that are Not in or Not Known status, in terms of Education, Employment or Training						7%	5.9%	Data is correct as of May 2023. Given the time in the academic calendar you will begin to see an increase in the NEET & Not Known figures whilst we are capturing data at key transition points. Currently with the DfE on 31 May 2023 we have confirmed the cohort to report against for this annual tracking cycle activity. Stage two of the process is to confirm the September Guarantee figures - offers of young people's participation.

<p>Number of NEET's aged between 16 and 18 engaged in support to help them into education, training, apprenticeships, and jobs</p> <p><i>These are snapshot figures as at quarter end.</i></p>	1,049	1,112	1,127	725	871	No longer reported		
<p>Percentage of 16- and 17- year olds that are participating in Education, Employment or Training</p>						93%	93.1%	Data correct as of May 2023. You will start to see changes in the participation figures given the academic cycle on reporting activity. Year 11 & 12 figures will need to be reconfirmed with providers. This is a critical period for the annual tracking activities.

2. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DIRECTORATE WORKFORCE MEASURES

Measure	Narrative
Attrition/retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total headcount for Children and Families is 1476 employees, as of the 1st of August 2023. • In July 2023, more employees left the council from Children and Families than joined the directorate. Six employees joined, with 36 leaving.
Staff sickness absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of absentees: 2.6% of Children and Families employees were absent as of 1st August 2023, compared to the Council rate of 3.1%. • Apart from a small spike of 4.3% in June, the percentage of employees' absence has steadily decreased from 5.5% in February to 2.6% in July. • Average number of days absent: 3.7 days per C&F employee as of the 1st of August 2023, compared to the Council rate of 2.5. Again, apart from a spike of 5.8 in June, this has progressively declined since March 2023 (5.4 average days). • Types of absence: most common reason for absence, as of the 1st of August 2023, was tumour benign/malignant (27.78%), followed by Musculo-skeletal (20.23%), unknown (19.82%), and mental health (12.76%). Instances of tumour-related absences has increased by approximately ten percentage points from June to July. Musculo-skeletal cases are starting to rise again, despite the improvement seen in June. Mental health absences have remained well below the peak of 31.89% seen in April.