

Report to the Schools, Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee

7 December 2016

Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families Six Month Update

Purpose of the Report

To brief the Committee on progress (see full report) and to provide a short budget summary.

Recommendation

That Members note the information contained in this report.

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Early Help and Children's Social Care – 2016/17 budget summary £153.5m

At month 6 the EH&CSC is forecast to underspend by £2.8m.

Pressures identified include:

- £0.4m Secure Remand beds costs due to a decrease in the Youth Justice Board Secure Grant allocation of £0.142m and £0.283m due to an increase in bed nights at Secure Training Centres and Secure Children's homes.
- £0.5m due to cost pressures for legal disbursement fees where the budget is not adequate for activity levels.
- £0.6m due to the increasing costs of accommodation and support to No Recourse to Public Fund families.
- £0.1m pressure as a result of additional costs incurred for translators and interpreters required to undertake family assessments.

However, these pressures are more than offset by: -

- £1.7m underspend with internal foster care where the service has undertaken a review of current internal foster care capacity in readiness for implementation of the next phase of the improvement plan to grow the in house service and have fewer higher cost external fostering and residential placements.
- a projected underspend of £1.3m due to a longer mobilisation period on the phased go live of the residential block contract due to securing planning permission and OFSTED registration for individual properties.
- £0.4m underspend due to a reduction in the number of externally commissioned residential and community based assessments. The reduction is due to more direct social work with families which mitigates court requests for separate independent assessments.
- £0.5m underspend on staffing budgets within the family support services due to held vacancies whilst the service implemented a revised structure. The structure is now being implemented.
- £0.16m underspend on employees budgets for the five children's homes that have now transferred to an external provider.
- A number of other minor variations across several services totalling £0.4m.

Education Services - 2016/17 Non-DSG (primarily General Fund) budget of net £38.3m plus Dedicated School Grant of £704m gross which is allocated between Schools and Central Services

The General Fund as at Period 6 is as follows:

- A overall forecast deficit of £1.9m reflecting non delivery of £1.4m of the savings target (£2.463m) ascribed to Travel Assist for 2016/17 and a base budget pressure on Guides of £0.500m. The position is expected to worsen for Period 7 on the basis that it will not be possible to deliver any of the savings and further base pressures are emerging. In parallel to this events over the summer term regarding the appeals to proposed changes have prompted a more thorough top down review of Travel Assist's operational capacity and cost drivers. This will need to be addressed through fundamental changes in support and practice.
- Reductions of £2.400m were required this year to offset the impact of changes in Education Services Grant (ESG). Various mitigations have been identified and applied but there is still a residual unallocated sum of £0.711m
- Other net pressures of £0.413m including delays in delivering the savings on unattached playing fields (0.316m)