

To: Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board

On: 18 May 2021

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Children's Services Service Improvement Plan 2020/21 Outturn Report

1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the performance of Children's Services for the 12-month period to 31 March 2021 in relation to the Service Improvement Plan which was approved in March 2020. That plan was drafted for committee before the extent to which Covid-19 would impact services became apparent.
- 1.2. This report provides a summary of performance in Children's Services for the 2019/20 period, with detailed explanation on all relevant actions and performance indicators. This includes details of those actions delayed or cancelled as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and/or the need to refocus service priorities in order to manage the pandemic response.
- 1.3. The Service Improvement Plan sits beneath the Council Plan, Community Plan, and along with the service's risk register and workforce plan forms a suite of documents which provide the strategic direction for the service. Service Improvement Plans are aligned to the priorities set out in the Council Plan 2017-2022 and include those areas of the Council Plan for which Children's Services is the lead.
- 1.4. In March 2020, the service identified key actions it aims to achieve over the next three years, in order to deliver improved outcomes for local people and communities and contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan 2017-22. Given the unprecedented nature of events in 2020/21, these three-year plans have been curtailed and replaced by Service Delivery Plans which cover a single year (2021/22) and outline what each service plans to do to mitigate

the effects of the pandemic and associated restrictions, as well as actions to support recovery and renewal. The Children's Services Service Delivery Plan was presented to this Board on 16 March 2021 and will be presented to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board on 18 March 2021.

- 1.5 The action plan is the core of the Service Improvement Plan. It sets out the priorities being addressed, the key tasks to be implemented, the implementation timetable and the measures of success. The service scorecard sets out a range of key indicators against which aspects of performance of the service are measured. Despite the challenges of maintaining services throughout different stages of restrictions, Children's Services continued to deliver on its priorities and select achievements are highlighted in Section 4 of this report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board note:
- a) the contents of this report;
 - b) the achievements of Children's Services during 2020/21 which fall within the remit of this Board;
 - c) that an outturn report will be presented to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board on 20 May 2021 in respect of service areas falling within the remit of that board.

3. Background

- 3.1 Children's Services is responsible for the delivery of social work services to children and families, criminal justice social work, and early years, primary and secondary education. Much of what the service does is statutory; that is, there is a legal requirement for the Council to provide that service. Service delivery is a mix of universal provision (such as education), targeted provision (such as children's houses for accommodated children and young people) and specialist support (for example, criminal justice social work court services).
- 3.2 The service accounts for over half of the Council's overall budget and delivers a range of provisions, such as:
- 49 Primary Schools;
 - 11 Secondary Schools;
 - 12 Early Years Centres and 23 nursery classes;
 - 2 Schools for children and young people with Additional Support Needs;
 - Social Work Fieldwork Teams;
 - 4 children's houses;
 - Supported accommodation for young people leaving care;

- Criminal Justice Social Work (Fieldwork, Unpaid Work service; Throughcare; Women's Community Justice; Court Services; Drug Treatment and Testing Orders);
- Fostering and Adoption services; and
- Kinship Care.

3.3 Children's Services has an approach which is strongly focused on prevention, early intervention and providing additional support for the most vulnerable. Whilst children's health services sit within the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), a key priority of both organisations will be the continuation of effective integrated working.

3.4 The Service Improvement Plan is one of the ways in which elected members can scrutinise the work of Children's Services, and to consider and decide upon policy options as necessary. Importantly, the Service Improvement Plan also links the Council Plan and Community Plan priorities to strategic and operational activity within the service, which supports employees to understand how their role contributes to the Council delivering on its objectives.

3.5 The action plan details the progress of specific areas of work which, during 2020/21, enabled the service to support the Council's priorities and help deliver improved outcomes for Renfrewshire residents. It also reflects those areas which were paused or cancelled in order to focus more on frontline service delivery and crisis response. Section 4, which covers the achievements of the service, includes activity which could not have been envisioned when the 2020/21 Service Improvement Plan was written.

3.6 The service also measures progress by reporting on performance indicators. The scorecard included in Appendix 1 provides details of the progress of these indicators throughout 2020/21 against set targets. Some indicators are dependent on other services being operational and could not be collected during 2020/21 whilst others require considerable input from frontline staff and would have taken resources away from core services at a time when there was an acute need to bolster these.

4. Key Achievements 2020/21

4.1 Although operating within a very challenging context for much of the year and requiring to provide a range of additional support as a direct result of the pandemic, Children's Services continued to meet and exceed its statutory obligations in 2020-21.

- 4.2 Justice Social Work services continued to support court and tribunal services and manage and support people with convictions, on community orders and on release from custody, with particular emphasis on those with high levels of need and those who present a risk to the community. Social work services maintained face to face services throughout the lockdown and other periods of public health restriction.
- 4.3 Employability is a community justice priority in Renfrewshire and this work was able to continue during 2020/21. Justice Social Work, in partnership with West College Scotland, has provided the YES course which offers training to people with convictions so that they have the necessary skills to enter employment.
- 4.4 Renfrewshire Justice Social Work took part in a pilot training programme run by Community Justice Scotland and targeted at unpaid work staff, who found it valuable. Lockdown restrictions have delayed the full roll-out of this training.

5. Progress against performance measures

- 5.1 Children's Services paused several performance measures during 2020/21 due to the direct impact of the pandemic. Public health restrictions mean that the Criminal Justice Social Work service has not been allowed to operate unpaid work services in the usual way. Further, many court processes are significantly delayed; at the start of 2021, capacity was only 25% of normal levels although this is now being increased. Consequently, measures which relate to the delivery of unpaid work cannot be reported on at present. The indicators remain in the Service Delivery Plan for 2021/22 and will be reported on once the service is permitted to return to full operations.
- 5.2 The only justice indicator which can be reported on for 2020/21 is the number of unpaid work orders successfully completed within the target time. Performance is very strong against this measure, with 91% of orders completed on time despite the challenges of delivering the service over the course of the past year. COVID legislation created extensions in 2020 for all existing orders, allowing an additional 12 months for these to be completed, and imposing a 12 month time period for new orders, given restrictions and periods when the service required to be closed.

Implications of the Report

- 1. Financial** – This report highlights resourcing pressures arising from increasing demand for services and the current financial environment.

2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – the report details a range of activities which reflect local council and community planning themes.
4. **Legal** – none
5. **Property/Assets** – none
6. **Information Technology** – Digital resources are now key to the delivery of services and strategies are in place to manage this.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – Children's Services continues to follow current public health guidance in relation to the safe operation of care establishments, learning establishments and other working environments.
9. **Procurement** – none.
10. **Risk** – Risks related to the delivery and management of services are regularly monitored and included in Renfrewshire Council's Corporate and Strategic Risk Registers.
11. **Privacy Impact** - none
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none.
13. **Climate Change** - none

List of Background Papers: None

Author Lisa Fingland, Service Planning & Policy Development Manager;
Email: lisa.fingland@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Children's Services SIP 2020-21



Action Status	
	Cancelled
	Overdue;
	Not Started; In Progress; Assigned
	Completed

Strategic Priority 5: Working together to improve outcomes

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
	CS.SIP.20.05a	Through Community Justice Renfrewshire further develop the Just Learning employability programme for people with convictions.	By addressing some of the factors which lead to offending behaviour, the rate of re-offending can be reduced. People with convictions can be supported to make positive changes.	31-Mar-2021		The programme has continued to operate and develop during lockdown, moving from face to face to virtual where required with service users moving into employment, paid traineeships and full-time education, with many more gaining certificates in various courses and training. The YES course, a partnership with West College Scotland which supports service users to reach a place where training and employment is within	Criminal Justice Service Manager

Status	Code	Title	Description	Due Date	Status Progress Bar	Latest status update	Managed By
						reach, has continued. The course won the Essential Skills Award at the College Development Network Awards in December. Liaison within HMP Low Moss, to promote service involvement with prisoners pre-release and utilisation of the prison peer mentors has been impacted upon by COVID given restrictions on attending prisons during this period.	
	CS.SIP.20.05g	Contribute to a pilot and learning exercise on national training for Unpaid Work paraprofessionals.	Staff at all levels have the opportunity for personal and professional development which supports the delivery of good quality services.	31-Mar-2021		Renfrewshire Council contributed to the Community Justice Scotland pilot of a training model for Unpaid Work Staff. This involved staff at all levels within the service, who found it relevant and helpful to their work. The pilot was completed prior to initial lockdown, however Covid-19 has resulted in the wider training roll out being delayed.	Criminal Justice Service Manager
	CS.SIP.20.05i	Work with partners on delivering the recommendations of Renfrewshire's Alcohol and Drugs Commission.	Agencies work together to reduce the impact of addictions on the lives of Renfrewshire residents.	31-Mar-2022		Delivery of the recommendations of the Alcohol and Drug Commission which relate to children and young people are being delivered via the Mental Health and Wellbeing workstream in Children's Services. Discussions on how the funding will be deployed have taken place involving officers from the Council, Renfrewshire HSCP and the third sector; a plan for how the funds will be deployed will be finalised by May 2021.	Head of Childcare and Criminal Justice

CS 2020-2021 Financial Year Scorecard

PI Status		Long Term Trends		Short Term Trends	
	Alert		Improving		Improving
	Warning		No Change		No Change
	OK		Getting Worse		Getting Worse
	Unknown				
	Data Only				

Priority Strategic Priority 2: Building strong, safe and resilient communities

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q3 2020/21		Q4 2020/21		2020/21		Latest Note
					Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target	
CHS/CJ/CPO/02	% of new unpaid work orders/requirement complete by the required date				97%	72%	100%	72%	91%	72%	Performance has exceeded the target throughout the year, despite the additional challenges arising from lockdown restrictions. Due to these restrictions, many service users were given an additional 12 months to complete their unpaid work. Justice Social Work has continued to support service users to undertake work and complete their orders. The figure of 91% for 2020/21 equates to 102 orders completed within the target time from a total of 112 which ended during this year.
CHS/CJ/CPO/01	The percentage of new clients subject to a new supervision	Not available for 2020/21								All Scottish courts closed in March 2020 for all but urgent business as a result of the UK-wide lockdown.	

	order seen by a supervising officer within 1 week		Because of this closure, there were no new community orders with unpaid work or supervision requirements for several months. As such, there was no activity to measure for these indicators. Although courts have now resumed, there is a considerable backlog to be worked through and the number of new orders has not returned to pre-lockdown levels. Further, the public health restrictions which remain in place mean that the capacity of the unpaid work service is significantly reduced and this is likely to impact on performance for the remainder of 2020/21 and beyond. Although officers continue to be in contact with service users, the nature of contact is different from what is usually measured.
CHS/CJ/CPO/04	Percentage of new unpaid work clients seen within 1 working day of the order	Not available for 2020/21	
CHS/CJ/CPO/05	Percentage of new unpaid work clients receiving an induction within 5 working days of the order	Not available for 2020/21	
CHS/CJ/CPO/06	Percentage of new unpaid work clients beginning work placement within 7 working days of the order	Not available for 2020/21	

Priority Strategic Priority 5: Working together to improve outcomes

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q3 2020/21		Q4 2020/21		2020/21		Latest Note
					Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target	
CHS/CORP/01a	% of Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescales agreed with customers				100%	95%	0%	95%	95%	95%	The number of complaints has been extremely low, with only one Stage 1 complaint received in Q4; as such percentages are not a good representation of performance for quarters. During 2020/21, Children's Services received a total of 56 Stage 1 complaints, of which 53 were responded to within the five day timescale.
CHS/CORP/01b	% of Stage 2 complaints responded to within timescales agreed with customers				90%	95%	80%	95%	92%	95%	Only five Stage 2 complaints were received during Q4 and all but one was responded to on time, as with Stage 1, very low numbers result in percentages which do not provide a good representation of performance. Stage 2 complaints are often complex and investigations can exceed the timescale of 20 days. During 2020/21, Children's Services received a total of 39 Stage 2 complaints, of which 36 were responded to within the agreed timescale.

Code	Short Name	Status	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Q3 2020/21		Q4 2020/21		2020/21		Latest Note
					Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target	
CHS/CORP/03	% of FOI requests completed within timescale by Children's Services				86.4%	100%	97.1%	100%	94.8%	100%	Children's Services received 135 FOI requests in 2020/21, of which 128 were responded to within the required timescale. There was a considerable drop-off in requests in the first quarter of the year but these have increased and are back at levels consistent with previous years. An IT issue resulted in a small number of requests not being received in good time and consequently there were some late responses. This affected all services and was quickly resolved once it was identified.