

**A. We need to ensure all carers are offered a review or assessment of their needs**

Increasing the proportion of carers (of adults) who are offered an assessment or review of their needs in their own right was identified by the service as a priority for improvement for 2014/15. Performance for this measure was at 89.4% during 2013/14, and improvement was required. We strongly believe that this was mainly a recording issue, and we have been working hard to address this. Progress has been made during 2014-15, with performance at the end of Quarter 3 standing at 93.7%. This also means that the number of carers who were offered an assessment has also increased from 1152 at Quarter 3 last year to 1205 at Quarter 3 this year, an increase of 53, or 5%. Despite this increase, we still think that there is room for further improvement, and feel that performance should be at or around 100%. This therefore remains an issue that is discussed regularly with Team Managers to ensure that officers record this activity properly on PARIS.

The number of carers (of adults) who have had an assessment or review of their needs has also increased during 2014/15, from 358 at Quarter 3 last year to 385 at Quarter 3 this year, which is an increase of 27, or 8%. The number of carers who were provided with a service has also increased during 2014/15, from 352 at Quarter 3 last year to 370 at Quarter 3 this year, which is an increase of 18, or 5%.

The Young Carers service has arrangements in place to offer all identified young carers an assessment, and they also review all support to young carers.

**B. We need to continue to increase the use of Direct Payments and Individual Service Funds to give people more freedom to choose the services that meet their assessed needs and who provides them**

This is an again an area that was identified as a priority for improvement by Adult & Business Services. Take-up has increased during 2014/15, although not substantially. At the end of Quarter 3 this year, the number of direct payments during the year so far was up to 145, compared to 106 at the same point last year. Clearly there is more room for improvement here, and a Commissioning Officer is currently developing an action plan to improve take-up of Direct Payments, Individual Service Funds etc., which will be brought to the Adult & Business Services Leadership Team on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015 for discussion before being adopted and implemented. There are many issues to resolve, including the fact that staff often feel that it's too difficult for service users to manage a direct payment, especially the complex requirements around employing personal assistants. During 2014/15, training sessions have been held for operational teams and quarterly Steering Groups meetings have been held to promote take-up.

The use of Direct Payments is also being considered by Children & Family Services as part of a broader piece of work to review and re-design the delivery of assessment based services for disabled children. Currently there are 30 Direct Payments in Children & Family Services, through the Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS).

**C. We need to continue improving attendance at work**

Both services have been focussing heavily on this during 2014/15, and have been assisted by the implementation of the new corporate attendance at work procedures.

Sickness absence for Adult & Business Services at the end of Quarter 3 this year stands at 7.79 days per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee. This compares to 9.92 days per FTE employee at the end of Quarter 3 last year. Although 7.79 days per FTE employee is still unacceptable, it represents a 21.5% reduction in sickness absence during the past 12 months.

Sickness absence for Children & Family Services at the end of Quarter 3 this year stands at 7.35 days per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee. This compares to 11.47 days per FTE employee at the end of Quarter 3 last year. Again, although 7.35 days per FTE employee is still unacceptable, it represents a 36% reduction in sickness absence during the past 12 months.

**D. We need to continue to increase the completion of statutory visits to looked after children within timescales**

Our performance was at 89% at the end of 2013/14. Performance at the end of Quarter 3 this year was 87.7%, compared to 88.3% at the end of Quarter 3 last year. This is therefore an area where we have been unable to improve during 2014/15. Although the position has improved in recent years (performance on statutory visits in 2011/12 was 83.7%), we have struggled to push it higher. Most of the children are visited much more frequently than that, but it does not always contain all the required elements to be considered a statutory visit.

We continually monitor this indicator (on a monthly basis) and subsequently challenge practice. There can be various reasons why deadlines are missed, some of these are acceptable and some are not, and there are no indicators of worker related patterns in the missed events. We continue to point out to workers the requirements for compliance and highlight patterns of performance. Whilst this has significantly improved performance, it is still not at a level we are satisfied with and therefore remains as a key area for improvement for the service.

**E. We need to continue to improve educational and health outcomes for looked after children**

There has been an overall improvement in the indicators relating to educational outcomes for looked after children during 2014/15.

The percentage (17.2%) of children looked after who have experienced one or more changes of school which were not due to transitional arrangements, is higher this year (at 17.2%). However, this relates to 17 children, and 16 of the 17 were for positive reasons, such as: moving back with parents; an adoption placement; long-term foster placement, etc.

The percentage of children looked after with a Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school was 22.2% (8 out of 36) at the end of 2013/14. At the end of Quarter 3 this year, we were at 100%, (37 out of 37).

At Quarter 3 this year, 87.5% of looked after children eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 had achieved the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment. This is a very small cohort of Children, and 87.5% represents 7 out of 8 children. The one child who did not achieve the Core Subject Indicator had a Statement of Special Education Need. The comparable figure at Quarter 3 last year was 40% (2 out of 5), so the position has improved.

The percentage of looked after children eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher, has also improved. This year it stands at 50% (4 out of 8), compared to 20% (2 out of 10) last year. Of the 4 children who did not achieve the Core Subject Indicator this year, 2 had a Statement of Special Education Need, and 2 were "Action Plus", meaning that they were all receiving additional support.

The average external qualifications point score for 16 year old looked after children (in any local authority maintained learning setting) was 164 at end of last year. At Quarter 3 this year the figure had improved substantially to 438.5. This shouldn't now change for 2014/15 because it is an annual measure. There are only 4 children in this cohort this year, and all did very well.

The picture in terms of health outcomes for looked after children during 2014/15 is mixed.

The percentage of looked after children who have had their teeth checked by a dentist during the year was 28.6% at Quarter 3, and we expect it to be around 55%-60% (similar to last year) by the end of the year. This is partly a recording issue as it is often difficult to obtain the necessary evidence of the date the visit took place in order to record it on PARIS.

The percentage of health assessments for Looked after Children due in the year that have been undertaken was at 48.7% at the end of Quarter 3, compared to 38.4% at end of last year. There has been an improvement in this area, but clearly there is room for further improvement. We are therefore currently looking into this in more detail to understand the barriers to improving this further.

The percentage of placements started during the year where the child is registered with a provider of general medical services within 10 working days of the start of the placement stands at 93.3% at Quarter 3 this year, which is an improvement compared to 91.8% at Quarter 3 last year.

#### **F. Responding to the challenges raised by the Supreme Court deprivation of liberty (DoLS) ruling from March 2014**

A Supreme Court Judgement in March 2014 revised the test in relation to a deprivation of liberty for the purposes of Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The court ruled that all people who lack the capacity to make decisions about their care and residence, and lack the option to leave their care setting, are deprived of their liberty. The court also ruled that the person's compliance or lack of objection to their placement, the purpose of it or the extent to which it enables them to live a relatively normal life for someone with their level of disability are irrelevant to whether they are deprived of their liberty. This means that

many people are likely to have been deprived of their liberty unlawfully and without safeguards in settings including care homes and supported living placements. This ruling has sparked a considerable increase in DoLS case numbers nationally regarding care home placements, and also applications to the Court of Protection to authorise deprivations of liberty in supported living.

In Denbighshire it is expected that the number of applications will increase to approximately 450 in 2014/15, from an average of 15 annual applications in previous years. 222 requests for a Standard Authorisation have been received to date. It is important to note that this figure changes on a daily basis as requests are received. 33 assessments have been completed and 33 Standard Authorisations granted. Each application has been risk assessed and a priority order for undertaking the assessments has been developed in line with practice nationally.

We have also undertaken an exercise to identify individuals living in community living projects who are likely to be deprived of their liberty in accordance with the revised test. There are at least 50, and these will require applications to the Court of Protection. 2 applications are in the process of being made to the Court as a way of testing the process as it is clear that the impact on the Court of Protection due to this increase means that applications may take some time to be heard. Prior to the Judgement there were 4 trained best interest assessors available within adult services to carry out these assessments. We have since trained a further 7 practitioners, and another 3 are currently undertaking training. Arrangements are also in place for the capacity in the role of the Supervisory Body (a Local Authority responsibility) to be increased.

It should be noted that each assessment carries a cost, in time and money, and we are still awaiting guidance from Welsh Government on their view of how this should be applied in Wales.

### **G. Maintaining stable placements for children and young people, and minimising the number of moves they experience (whilst recognising that this is not always possible).**

The percentage of children looked who have had three or more placements during the year stood at 7.6% at the end of Quarter 3 this year, compared to 6.7% at the end of Quarter 3 last year. 7.6% represents 12 out of 159 children, which is slightly higher than this time last year (which was 11 out of 165 children).

We monitor placement moves closely, and they can often be for positive reasons, for example returning to the family, adoption, etc. Where there is a concern about movements, these are considered at the Placement and Change Panel to make sure we maximise stability. Our performance is about in line with the all Wales benchmark of 10%.