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To: Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny
Committee – 10 January 2012

Subject: **SEPTEMBER 2011 (QUARTER 2) UPDATE FOR
PERFORMANCE FOR SPECIALIST CHILDREN'S SERVICES
AND
A SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL RELEASE
FOR 2010-11.**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides Members with the Core Monitoring performance report for the second quarter and a summary of the National Statistical First Release Indicators for Children's Services.

Introduction

1. (1) The Specialist Children's Services Division has a statutory duty to provide performance information to the Department of Families and Education annual basis, via a number of statutory returns, collecting data for the previous financial year. This years (2010-11) returns for all Local Authorities have recently been published by the Department of Families and Education. A summary of the key indicators is contained in Appendix 1. The summary provides an overview of Kent's performance in relation to its statistical neighbours, in relation to high and low performing authorities and most importantly Kent's current position post the submission of the data.

(2) Following the Munro Review, the Government, Ofsted, the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and a range of other partners have developed a new set of Local child safeguarding performance information. This will lead to a formal consultation in the New Year on the finalized set of National Performance Information sets. In addition Ofsted has consulted on a new child-centred inspection regime; an update on the new model is expected by May 2012.

(3) Within Kent a new Core Monitoring report is produced on a quarterly basis. This is the second quarter's report, which updates Members on progress against our key performance areas, as identified within Bold Steps. The Specialist Children's Services outturn for Quarter 2 is contained in Appendix 2.

Key points

2. (1) The results for the ongoing performance indicators for Specialist Children's Services can be found at **Appendix 1 and 2.**

(2) The Division has seen some good improvements, however further work is required ensure the service continues to improve; this focus is clearly mapped out in the second phase of the Children's Services Improvement Plan. In summary, the Division has:

- Continued to effectively manage the allocation of cases in the system. This is demonstrated in the consistent achievement of the Children's Services Improvement Plan target to have no more than 100 children's social cases not allocated to a social worker for over 28 days.
- The number of initial and core assessment outside of timescales and in progress continues to be sustained within target.
- The number of children subject to a child protection plan reduced during the summer period and stood at 1,616 by the end of September. This improvement brings the count to lower than the position seen in March, but we still have a lot to do to achieve our challenging target.
- The percentage of the social worker establishment posts held by permanent staff has shown a good increase Quarter 2.
- Numbers of looked after children (LAC) in Kent continue to increase. Much of the focus to date of the Children's Services Improvement Plan has been around tackling the backlog of cases and improving throughput, which as anticipated has resulted in more children becoming looked after. Work is now underway to develop a projected downwards trajectory for numbers of LAC.
- The Adoption target as established in the Improvement Notice remains a challenge for Kent. This indicator is affected by both a rise in the number of children leaving care and the higher volume of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (in comparison to other LA's).
- For a number of indicators Kent is currently showing improvement since the submission of the statistical returns in March 2011. The statistical return targets are closely monitored on a monthly basis as part of the activity contained in the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

Recommendations

5. (1) Members are asked to NOTE the Quarter 2 performance update and the National Government Statistical Release performance information for Kent.

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Background documents: Improvement Plan Phase 2