

Public Document Pack

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Legal & Democratic Services

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27 November 2018

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - TUESDAY, 27TH NOVEMBER, 2018

Agenda No	Item
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3.	<u>Questions from Members of the Public</u>
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Fiona Abbott
Principal Democratic Services Officer

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People Scrutiny Committee – 27th November 2018

Public Questions

Question from Mr Webb to the Cabinet Member for Children & Learning – Cllr Helen Boyd

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Question 1

*In the monthly Southend Council report CP 3.10 Percentage of initial child protection conferences that took place within 15 working days of the initial strategy discussion was only 62.3% in July a shortfall of 27.7 of the 90% target. In September it was 68.6% which is short by 21.4% of the 90% target. **What is the clear reason for every conference that does not match the timescale and how are you going to meet the targets next month?***

Answer

This is a cumulative measurement involving small numbers of children. This means that if, for example, an initial child protection conference for a family of 3 children is held 16 days after the strategy discussion the overall performance is significantly affected. The reasons for a conference being held outside timescales include; availability of the family to attend the conference, the investigation of abuse being complex resulting in more time being needed by social care and the Police, and injuries requiring an expert opinion as to whether an injury is non-accidental.

During the period between the strategy meeting and the conference a multi-agency plan to safeguard children is in place and safeguarding activity is undertaken. This includes seeing children alone, assessing risk and harm and visiting the family home.

The relevant Head of Service reviews the circumstances for each child when the conference is not held within 15 working days. This has led to changes in process within the service leading to improved performance as can be seen between July and September. We will not meet the cumulative target next month but will continue to see improvements in performance.

Question from Mr Webb to the Cabinet Member for Children & Learning – Cllr Helen Boyd

Question 2

In the monthly Southend council report CP 1.4 Percentage of children who have been in LAC for at least 5 working days, who have had a visit

in the 6 week (30 working days) prior to the last day of the month was only 79.6% in July which was shortfall of 15.4% of the 95% target. In September it was only 92.1% a shortfall of 2.9% of the 95% target.
What are the reasons for the shortfall and how are you going to meet the targets in the next month?

Answer

Due to the importance of statutory visiting we have set a very high target of 95%. Performance of 92.1% is strong and is evidence of our continued improvement in this area. The reason why a visit to a looked after child is late are varied and include issues such as; the child being unwell, an older child declining to see the social worker when they visit and the child being away on a school trip or holiday with carers. There is also sometimes a small delay in the visit taking place and being recorded on the child's record which impacts on the reported performance.