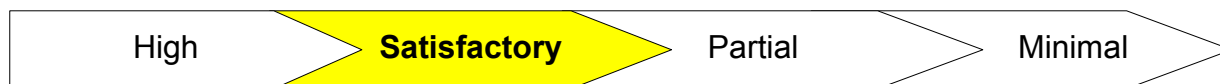


Appendix 2A: Assurance and Themes

Assurance



Contract Management of Children's Centres (2018/19)

Objective

To assess whether the contract is being effectively managed to ensure the planned outcomes for children and families are being delivered in compliance with the specified performance and / or quality standards, at the correct price

Themes

The contract for management of the Children's Centres commenced on 1 October 2016. From the outset, the Council recognised that the service provider's ability to achieve the Key Performance Indicators within the contract was affected by a requirement to TUPE existing staff and restructure the service, while containing the costs within the Council's maximum budget envelope. It was also affected by a number of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which required partnership working with other organisations.

To address this, the Council proposed changes to the contract that led to a formal Contract Variation during April 2018. The variation changed the KPIs reducing their number and classifying them across three themes Access to Services, Quality of Services and Partnership Working.

This classification recognised that the service provider is largely an enabler of opportunity in capturing families and children into a wider partnership system of working with people/other agencies to improve outcomes.

Since April 2018, the council has put in place two Action Plans to respond to concerns over delivery of the KPIs. The first concentrates on the number of children living in deprivation areas who are attending a children's centre, and the second on maximising the use of the buildings. The second action plan recognises that many of the KPIs cannot be delivered to their maximum potential without the Children's Centres being opened and occupied in pursuit of meaningful activity related to delivering them. It is reported that there is currently a particular focus on three children centres through 'test and learn' initiatives with partners, to start the change to improve service delivery and outcomes.

Since April 2018, progress on meeting the actions has been robustly managed and monitored at a senior level by the Director of Learning in accordance with recommended practices, to maximise what can be achieved. The contract is also monitored by the Success For All Group and the Department for People's Major Projects Group.

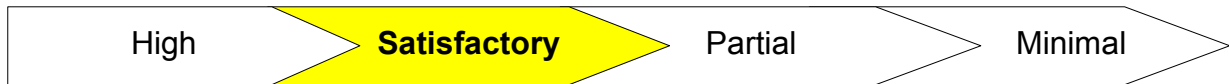
The Deputy Chief Executive (People) has authorised additional expenditure up to the Council's original budget envelope to mitigate the early effect of a reduced service, as resources were consumed in restructuring costs.

Contractual payments to date have been held within the budget envelope.

Going forward there is recognition that as the delivery of this service approaches the end of the current contractual arrangement, there will be significant opportunities to re-examine how outcomes can best be achieved by applying the principles laid out in

Appendix 2A: Assurance and Themes

Assurance



the council's Commissioning Framework. There is a particular acknowledgement that effective commissioning requires collaboration with partners and other key Stakeholders.

Better defining realistic outcomes and associated performance measures for children and families will ensure the contractual behaviour drives performance for contracted services, if that is the service delivery model selected, necessary to achieve the council's 2050 ambition and five-year road map.

Number of actions agreed: 3