



Isle of Man
Government
Reiltys Ellan Vannin

Children and Families Division

Annual Report 2017/18

**Committed to
Partnership Working to
Respond Well to Children**

May 2018

Welcome to the Children and Families Division's Annual Report 2017/18

This is the fourth Annual Report from the Children and Families Division. The service has continued to work with Partner Agencies and other Departments to fulfil this vision that: "Every Child will have the best possible opportunities in life,"

This year we have titled the report: **Committed to Partnership Working to Respond Well to Children**. Following the findings and recommendations of the Tynwald ordered Inquiry in 2016/17, Our approach to performance management has been to look at what we are doing through the lens of partnership with families. This has helped us to think about the further developments needed to fulfil this ambition. The report shows that we are making a difference to the experiences and life chances of most children who are supported by the service, but improvements can still be made.

The findings draws upon the 2017/18 complaints and service user feedback reports, which are available separately. From those we know what we are doing well, but we also know that there are areas of development and these are set out clearly in our Divisional Plan for the year ahead.

We are fully committed to provide excellent services. This can only be done through having a consistent, well-trained workforce. We have continued to offer training programmes to staff in the last year to meet this aim. We have also increased the numbers of staff on our Grow our Own Social Workers Scheme and the first of 11 will become qualified later this year.

This report provides you with insights to our work and demonstrates what we have done in the past year to strive for better outcomes and an improved service. It is my belief that everyone in the service is "giving their best, so that children and young people can achieve their best".

Deborah Brayshaw

Director of Children and Families Service

June 2018

Contents

| Section | Title | Page Number |
|---------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Introduction | 4 |
| 2 | Early help and support | 4 |
| 3 | Referrals | 5 |
| 4 | Children with Complex Needs | 5 |
| 5 | Protecting and Safeguarding Children | 6 |
| 6 | Looked After Children | 6 |
| 7 | Children Leaving Care (Aftercare) | 7 |
| 8 | Children with disabilities | 7 |
| 9 | Involving Children and Young People | 8 |
| 10 | Staffing | 9 |
| 11 | Service Developments | 9 |
| 12 | Plans for 2017/18 | 9 |
| 13 | Resources and Finances | 9 |
| 14 | Some final words | 9 |
| 15 | Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) | 10 |

Introduction

This is the fourth Annual Report provided by the Children and Families Division, DHSC. Over the past year, following the Tynwald ordered Inquiry, we have concentrated on striving to respond well to children young people in partnership with families.

This report provides information about how we have tried to do this and tells some stories of children, young people and families who have had contact with us over the past year. A range of statistical data is also included.

Early Help and Support

During the year we have made some changes to help make the service more sustainable.

These changes have been threefold:

1. Agreeing joint funding arrangements for this service between the Departments of Education, Sport and Culture[DESC] and Health and Social Care[DHSC]
2. Finalising the size of the team for the service activity and capacity.
3. Introducing a new electronic recording system; the Early Help Module, which should help the service record its interventions and outcomes in a sustainable way.

Over the year, EHaS received a total of 484 referrals. This is an increase on the previous year, as the service has become established.


The re-referral rate was 21% for the same period and within the target range of up to 25%.

The support and intervention approach is very much working with families to support children and to bring about sustainable change. In most cases, families have said they appreciated the help that they had been given.


100% said that their needs had been listened to; 97% said that the support they had received was in line with expectations and 97% parents confirmed that things

had improved for their child. The results demonstrate both responding **well to children** and **partnership with families**.

Supporting families before things become acute and being able to intervene early means that both children and families are given every opportunity to get things right with skilled help and support. The initiative is supported by a dedicated family support service which is commissioned through a contractual arrangement. Comments received by parents include the following.



I have learnt to cope better in stressful situations



My relationship with my daughter has grown more because of some of the advice I was given.

The impact of early help means that families get help before things become too difficult and reduces the referrals made for statutory social work services. Stepping up to statutory services is right for some families and 11% of children were stepped up to children's social care.

Referrals

The number of referrals coming into the Initial Response Team [duty] during the year was 775. This was a reduction of 214 (21%) on the previous year and the first time in five years, it has been less than the target set. This represents 45.6 per thousand children, down from 58.2 per thousand last year. 25% are re-referrals. This reduction is a strong indicator that EHAS and other targeted early help services are having a positive impact and reducing the need to refer for statutory social work services.

389 (50%) referrals were subject of a NARRATES assessment and 323 (42%) were subject to Strategy meetings to determine if a Child Protection inquiry [section 46] was required. The transition rate of referrals received to assessment or strategy meeting (92%) is a strong indicator that the shared understanding of thresholds is now embedded across all agencies, and referrals on the whole are appropriate. This has improved from 60% last year.

Children with Complex Needs (CwCN)

Sometimes a child's needs are varied and complex, and they need a co-ordinated package of support in order to reduce the risk of harm or abuse, or family break down. Under these circumstances a Child with Complex Needs (CwCN) Plan is drawn up with the consent and agreement of the family.

During the year, we opened 249 new Children with Complex Needs Plans. The number of cases opened with consent, demonstrates that we are working in **partnership with families**.

Children's needs are reviewed regularly to ensure that we are providing the right services at the right time. The data shows that we provided reviews for CwCN in agreed timescales at a rate of 75%. This is a substantial improvement on last year. In January 2018, managers put in place robust plans to achieve this. It is expected that the target of between 85% and 100% in time will be met in 2018/19. The percentage of families either attending reviews or being consulted beforehand was 84%, again showing that we are working in **partnership with families**.

The comparative figure for children was 45%. Several reasons account for this: the age of the child or young person, the willingness of children to attend; time of day of reviews. This figure is, however, a big improvement on last year's results and there is a commitment from Managers to ensure that this result is further improved.

Protecting and Safeguarding Children

It is a statutory function for the Department to protect and safeguard children from potential or actual abuse and neglect. This has been a particularly busy year for the service and the data indicates we are getting better at doing this.

- 519 Section 46 child protection enquiries were conducted (to determine whether action was required to safeguard and protect children) (418 in the previous year)
- 348 Children were subject of a Child Protection (CP) Conference (to ensure the child was safe and to prevent further significant harm) (297 in the previous year)

Our data shows that we held 69% of Initial CP Conferences in timescales and 95% of CP Review Conferences within timescales. This is a small improvement on last year. The timescales for Initial conferences are challenging and investigations are sometimes not concluded in time requiring a legitimate delay.

87% of families attended CP Conferences in the past year and 78% of children/young people participated in them. While this represents a small decrease from last year, it is still good and demonstrates **partnership with families** and **responding well to children**.

In May 2016 we implemented our new approach to Conferences, called Signs of Safety. This approach uses solution focussed methods, and has become embedded during the past year.

79% of parent attendees reported that it was good or better, and 96% of attendees reported that they had received the social

work reports prior to the conference. This is an improvement from last year and shows improved **partnership with families**.

The majority of the parents felt that they could ask questions (96%) of, and provide their views (97%) to, the professionals attending the conference. The service is also now routinely recording child protection conferences in response to the requests from families.



The feedback shows that we can still make improvements to ensure consistent best practice, as a small number of parents did not feel listened to, and felt professionals were against them.

Young people stated they *had time to talk about the conference before it happened; were given the chance to ask questions; were given the chance to put their views across; the people they wanted came; they knew who to talk to if they feel unsafe; and knew how to complain.*

There was an increase of 63% use of engagement with the electronic APP MOMO, improving our **responding well to children**.

Children Looked After (LAC)

Children who are not able to be cared for by their own parents become “looked after” by the department in foster homes and children homes. During the past year 23 children became Looked After (41 last year) and 29 children left the care system (43 last year). At year end there were 84 children in care. This is less than in March 2017.

Forty eight (57%) children are placed in foster care placements, nine (11%) are placed with family and friends carers

(kinship). Twenty children (24%) are placed in children’s homes, and the remainder are placed with their parents (8%).

The profile of children in care at 31st March 2018 was:

| Ages | Number |
|----------------|--------|
| 0 to 4 years | 11 |
| 5 to 9 years | 18 |
| 10 to 15 years | 37 |
| 16+ years | 18 |

The Looked After Child Review meeting develops a partnership between parents/carers and the department. This year 93% parents said that they knew why the child was in care, 95% parents had discussed contact arrangements and 76% being happy with them.

Areas that remain a challenge include improving consistency and timeliness of getting minutes of meetings to families, reducing changes of professionals, and confirming arrangements in writing.

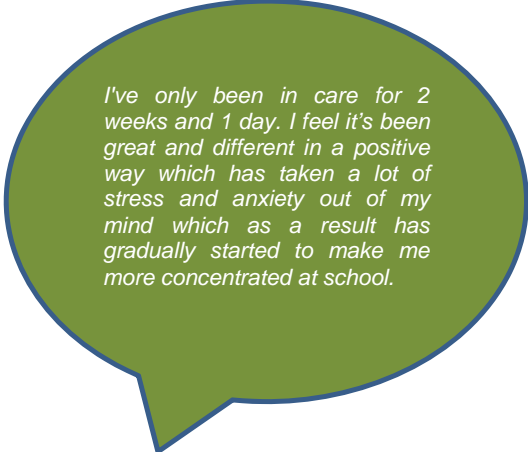
Children and young people are reporting positive changes in their lives. They are more settled in their placement and satisfied with contact visits to their birth family; school/college and routines. They are also making good progress, meeting their developmental milestones and engaging in other activities out of school.

The things that worry some children and young people include the need for improved contact arrangements; help with improving health and well-being; and help with improving behaviour. This shows that we are **responding well to children**.

Keeping a focus on children in care is an aim for all professionals sharing the corporate parent role. Communication between social workers, direct care staff, and children happens in a variety of ways: making social work visits to children and care settings; maintaining good relationships between social workers and children; having discussions about what happens in reviews; having clarity about what the Care Plans are

for children; being clear about day to day arrangements in placements and having clearly agreed, effective contact arrangements.

It is clear that social work visits are happening and the self-reported relationships between children and their social workers is described mainly as fine or better in 96% of the responses. This is an improvement on the findings last year and shows that we are **responding well to children**. Much is written about the trauma of coming into care. One young person provided feedback which shows that providing care is **responding well to children**.



I've only been in care for 2 weeks and 1 day. I feel it's been great and different in a positive way which has taken a lot of stress and anxiety out of my mind which as a result has gradually started to make me more concentrated at school.

Children Leaving Care (Aftercare)

When children reach the age of 18, they officially leave the care of the department, although the service continues to support young people through college, university and into work. 55 care leavers were being supported at the year end. This is a 2% increase from 2017.

Nineteen of the young people are in full or part-time work, and fourteen are in education or training. Nine are actively seeking work. Eighteen are receiving income support and four are supported by other benefits.

The established drop-in centre provides valued support for young people who have left care. Young people accessed help for: education (20%), emotional support (18%), self-care (9%), employment (8%); finance (5%), housing (4%), therapeutic intervention (2%), and used it as a social visit (30%). All of these activities can act as a lifeline to young people in tackling instability of

tenancies and homelessness issues, reducing loneliness, growing a network of friends, building confidence and self-esteem. This shows us as **responding well to young people**.

Personal Advisors (PAs) support young people in the drop-in centre, in the community and in their own home. Records are kept about the impact made from their involvement. Some of the progress made by young people is identified in the box below.

- X currently works part time in two positions
- T has passed driving test
- Y has maintained a bedsit well
- U regularly attends circuit sessions
- P has completed level 1 AQA Maths
- S has maintained the flat really well

Children with disabilities

During the past year, the Braddan multi-agency Hub has offered after-school, weekend and holiday activity provision for children with disabilities and complex health needs. The Ramsey respite home provided overnight respite for children and young people on a regular basis, and offered outreach support. Social work services to families now work from the hub which is beginning to provide a "one Stop" for families, making access to support easier.

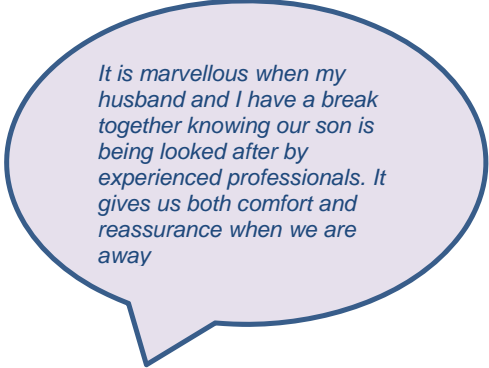
At year end there was a total of 54 children accessing Braddan Hub and 33 accessing Ramsey Respite Centre on a regular basis.

13% of all referrals to Braddan Hub this year have come from the Early Help and Support Service. This shows an extension of the "reach" of the centre and shows that we are getting better at **responding well to children**.

The range of activities provided by and through both centres strives to be inclusive and includes trips to the cinema, lunches out soft play, messy play, beach, Costa, hand painting, swimming, walking in many different venues across the island, arts and crafts, singing and dancing.

We have continued with our support for children with complex medical health needs, so that some children and their families are better able to receive appropriate support within the community and to be better able to carry out their daily tasks. This is an area that requires a more determined multiagency approach.

The two centres and services are demonstrating our **partnership with families** and **responding well to children**.



It is marvellous when my husband and I have a break together knowing our son is being looked after by experienced professionals. It gives us both comfort and reassurance when we are away

Involving children and young people

The Service, through its Participation Officer supports the Voices in Participation (VIP) Council of looked after children and is proud of its achievements.

Over the past year VIP has been working on finalising a procedure for its equal involvement in interviewing professionals for roles across social care and are actively involved in most recruitment processes. They have trained nine new young people to take part in interviewing, and they have now completed their DRIVE project which will now give LAC and care leavers access to learning to drive in a supported and consistent way.

The young people have continued to deliver their “through the keyhole” training supported by the Safeguarding Children Board training arrangements, and which has received excellent feedback from multi agency professionals.

The young people also submitted a report and spoke to the Social Affairs Policy Review Committee on the second part of the Knottfield Inquiry which was a matter of

importance to them. The committee, confirmed this was a “first”.

VIP has a continued presence at corporate parenting group and continues to be part of decision making at an operational and strategic level.

Staffing

We know that staff members are our greatest resource and the key to success for any child is the quality of the relationship their social worker builds with them. We believe that skill development and improved competence does lead to better outcomes.

This year, staff members have received training in the use of Outcomes Stars (Family, Life and My Stars), domestic violence and abuse, emotional literacy, permanency planning, attachment and the impact of developmental trauma.

Staff members have also attended Safeguarding Children Board and government training programmes.

We are now supporting seven staff through the “grow your own social worker” to become qualified in the BA (Hons) Social Work Course at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen and two staff on the Practice Learning Qualification to support social workers in training. We have also continued to invest in post qualification training in partnership with Queens University Belfast. Two social workers have passed during the year and one is currently undertaking the course.

We are also engaged in an innovative Neglect training and research project, funded by the Childrens Safeguarding Board and facilitated by Professor Bifulco at Middlesex University.

Service Developments

Over the past year we have:

- Finalised a full set of revised policies and procedures and published them on-line.
- Made plans to integrate the social work service for Care Leavers with the commissioned aftercare service.

- Implemented a new structure and operating arrangements for the Out of Hours Service.
- Implemented the Division's customer service standards.
- Made progress on our retention and progression arrangements.
- Secured joint funding for the EHaS for children with additional needs for three years.
- Undertaken reviews on Complaints, Service User Feedback, Out of Hours service, Early Help and Support
- Begun arrangements to bring the family placement service back into the Department, after being externally commissioned for a number of years.

Plans for 2017/18

The priorities for 2018/19 will include:

New Legislation

Legislation that has been identified as needing to be added to, or amended, includes:

- Adoption legislation
- Changes to the CYP Act for care leavers, corporate parents, reviewing arrangements of children's cases, and court timescales in care proceedings.

Implement a new approach to improving educational outcomes for LAC

During the past year a multi agency working group has been meeting to look at proposals which will have the effect of better tracking achievement and improving educational outcomes for children.

Establishing new arrangements for Youth Justice Services

The Department and Youth Justice Steering Group have reviewed arrangements and agreed a plan for integration with Probation services in the DHA.

Care planning

Feedback from children and young people told us they remain unknowing or confused

about plans for them, so a full review of the arrangements for planning for children will be conducted.

Change of governance for family placement services

Following notice given by the external commissioner a review concluded it was right to re-establish governance within the service and this will be achieved in this year.

Integrating aspects of services for children with disabilities

The motivation and rationale for this proposal is to create clearer pathways for children with disabilities.

Launching C&F's new suite of information leaflets

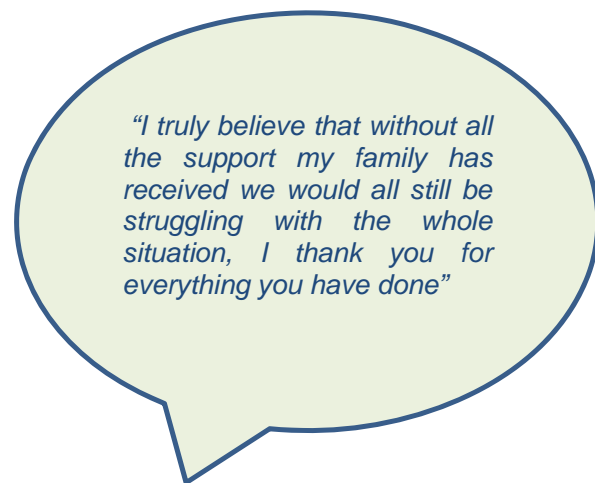
This will help families to better understand what can be offered and the expectations which they can have of their relationship with the division.

Resources and Finances

Through judicious application, analysing need and planning services the service has made best use of its resources, improved quality and increased service offers, whilst continuing to make financial savings for the fourth year running.

Final Words

To conclude this Annual Report we provide a quote from a family that demonstrates that **partnership working achieves a good response for children.**



Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Set out below is the out-turn data for 15 Key Performance Indicators. A comparison is also shown with 2016/17.

| Indicator | End year 2017/18 | Target | End year 2016/17 |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Number of referrals and number per 1000 child population | 775 45.6 | 850 – 930 50.0 | 989 58.2 |
| 2. % of re-referrals in total referrals | 25% | 25 – 30% | 34% |
| 3. % referrals that become NARRATES or strategy discussions | 92% | 70+% | 82% |
| 4. % NARRATES CwCN completed in 45 days | 83% | 85% | 90% |
| 5. Number of CwCN (incl CWD) open cases at 31/3/17 | 172 | Up to 200 | 133 |
| 6. Number of CP open cases at 31/3/17 CP open cases per 1000 population | 93 5.5 | 64 – 89 3.8 – 5.2 | 76 4.4 |
| 7. Number of LAC open cases at 31/3/17 LAC open cases per 1000 population | 84 4.9 | 90 – 102 6.0 | 95 5.6 |
| 8. % CwCN Reviews on time | 75% | 85-100% | 82% |
| 9. % CP Review Conferences in time | 95% | 85-100% | 93% |
| 10. % LAC Reviews on time | 90% | 85-100% | 92% |
| 11. % children participating in or contributing to LAC/CP/CwCN Reviews | LAC: 87% CP: 78% CwCN: 45% | LAC 80% CP 75% CwCN 75% | LAC: 90% CP: 85% CwCN: 19% |
| 12. Social Work Service operating to agreed average caseload | 17 | 16-18 | 17 |