

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 26 June 2024

Subject: Children’s Social Care National Framework

Report of: Strategic Director (Children and Education Services)

Summary

In response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care published in February 2023, the government published Stable Homes, Built on Love, a strategy for reforming children’s social care. The strategy set out plans to support children’s social care to become a system that continually learns and improves and makes better use of evidence and data. Central to this ambition was the introduction of a new Children’s Social Care National Framework and a new Children’s Social Care Dashboard.

A previous report outlining the National Framework was brought to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 7th Feb 2024:

Recommendations

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny Committee are invited to:

1. Consider and comment on the presented information.
 2. Seek further updates on progress relating to the Dashboard.
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Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city	The issues discussed are not connected to the zero-carbon target. They will not have a negative impact. The move to a more interactive online reporting function could reduce the printing of documents so there may be a slight positive impact.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments	The development of the dashboard discussed allows us to focus on our vulnerable children cohort. It can be used to identify key areas of enquiry and as development of the dashboard progresses we will review, and include where necessary, data to ensure protected and disadvantaged groups are reflected in the analysis.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	<i>Ongoing use of performance information to target improvements in service delivery are like to drive improvements in the outcomes for individuals and in the process unlocking their potential</i>
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Financial Consequences – Capital

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

(Public Pack)Agenda Document for Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, 07/02/2024 10:00 (manchester.gov.uk)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The new National Framework describes the outcomes that local authorities should achieve for children, young people, and families and the dashboard aims to create a stronger learning infrastructure for children's social care, helping to bring transparency to the system and ensure that the impact of children's social care practice can be understood by all in a transparent manner. The government anticipates that taken together, the National Framework and dashboard will raise quality and consistency of practice.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on the dashboard and Manchester City Council's preparation for its publication.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The latest Department for Education (DfE) update on the dashboard was issued in December 2023, including a summary of the proposed indicators and is available to view here: [DfE external document template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- 2.2 The plans include 2 dashboards: A public dashboard which will include annual data already available in the public domain through local authority statutory returns to the Department for education (DfE) . The DfE also want to explore development of a private dashboard which would look at transferring data directly from local authorities to DfE to provide a timely source of data. It will be designed to replicate the public dashboard but with more timely data transferred directly from local authority social care case management systems.
- 2.3 Both of these dashboards are described in more detail below:

3.0 Main issues

- 3.1 The public dashboard will include indicators under each of the Social Care National Framework Outcomes:
 1. Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need
 2. Children and young people are supported by their family network
 3. Children and young people are safe in and outside of their home
 4. Children in care and care leavers have stable loving homes

Plus 3 Enablers:

1. Multi-agency working is prioritised and effective
2. The workforce is equipped and effective
3. Leaders drive the conditions for effective practice

- 3.2 There are a number of gaps which have been identified during DfE consultation for the dashboard including:
- Wellbeing of the child
 - Experience, training and support for the workforce
 - Leadership stability
 - People leadership
 - Mutli agency working
 - Early help and family help
- 3.3 DfE are working with sector experts, academics and children and young people to ensure these areas are captured in future iterations of the dashboard.
- 3.4 The public dashboard will bring key indicators together in one place and show trends, relevant contextual information and allow benchmarking information at regional, national and statistical neighbour level.
- 3.5 DfE have said they will work with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to support the Office for Local Government (Oflog) to select the best available data indicators when considering performance measures for children's social care, drawing on existing indicators and data collections where appropriate, to ensure consistency of measures and avoid duplication of data collection between the two dashboards. The first version of the public dashboard will be published later this year.
- 3.6 DfE state that the dashboard is not intended to be a tool to measure local authority performance on children's social care. They have also stated that the dashboard will not prompt inspection, however, is intended to be the start of a conversation around understanding the outcomes and enablers and generating learning to improve practice.
- 3.7 Manchester City Council are committed to embedding the National Framework in practice and to continually support learning and improvement via data and insight. To assist with this and to pre-empt publication of the public dashboard an internal dashboard has been mocked up based on the proposed indicators alongside comparator areas. This will provide Children's Services with a tool they can use to reflect on their services as part of the embedded new national framework.
- 3.8 The draft dashboard is included in Appendix 1. This is the first iteration, based on data that is currently available in the public domain and from our existing reporting suite. It does not yet include all DfE proposed measures as we are awaiting guidance on how some of the indicators are calculated.
- 3.9 It is our view that while we should keep track of the DfE measures, we should not use these exclusively to review activity within our Children's services. We will

therefore be reviewing the measures we currently report on incorporating these and the DfE measures into one dashboard. This will be updated on a monthly basis with internal data from our case management system and comparator data when they become available in the public domain. It will be shared with senior leaders in Children's and Education Services and made available to the Exec. Member for Children's services and will be available for scrutiny by members via the scrutiny process. It will be created in PowerBI data visualisation software which can be viewed with a given link, allowing previous versions to be access but can also be downloaded as a PDF. We are hoping that the first version will be available once national comparators for 2023/24 reporting year are available, towards the end of the year.

- 3.10 The intention is also for thematic deep dive reviews to be bought to Scrutiny focused on each of the Stable Homes, Built on Love core themes. This will provide more detailed qualitative updates on progress against the core objectives in the new framework in addition to the quantitative metrics in the dashboard.
- 3.11 Manchester's Performance, Research and Intelligence team have been involved in early conversations with the DfE technical delivery team to help advise on the feasibility and quality of live automated data feeds from Social Care case management systems for the private dashboard.
- 3.12 As part of the phased approach, DfE intend to enrol a group of early adopter LAs to explore the viability and quality of transferring pre-agreed data directly from case management systems, providing a timely source of data. Early adopters will also work with DfE to test and evaluate the private dashboard initial indicators, data collection burdens and user experience of the dashboard. Manchester City Council will have the opportunity to apply to enrol as an early adopter.
- 3.13 The private dashboard will not be publicly available and will have restricted access to role-based access within local authorities/ government.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 The Committee is recommended to:
 - 1. Consider and comment on the presented information.
 - 2. Seek further updates on progress relating to the Dashboard.