



Children and Families Division

Annual Report 2014/15

A Day in the Life of ... Children and Families

Welcome

To the Children and Families Division's First Annual Report 2014/15

I am delighted to introduce this first Annual Report and to thank you for taking the time to read it.

The approach we have taken in this report is to take a day in the life of the Division to provide a snapshot of many of the activities happening day in and day out for children and families.

The responsibilities which we hold in children's social care (sometimes called the fourth emergency service) are immense. Alongside those responsibilities goes a true sense of accountability: accountability to the children and families who we serve; accountability to achieve outcomes for children and young people; accountability to staff and managers, to ensure that they have the skills, knowledge and experience to undertake their work efficiently and effectively; accountability to use the resources to obtain best value; and accountability to the Minister and MHKs who put their trust in the Division to meet their strategic and operational objectives.

We take these responsibilities and accountabilities seriously. This report takes you on a journey from first contact with the Division through the assessment processes to a time when there is greater involvement with us through Child in Need, Child Protection, Looked After Children and After Care arrangements. The report shows that we are constantly thinking about how we are doing our job and putting in place developments which will make a greater difference.

I welcome comments on our work including the format and approach of this First Annual Report which I commend to you

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Chief Social Worker

Director of Children's Social Care Services

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Introduction

This is the first Annual Report provided by the Children and Families Division, DHSC. It is aptly called “A Day in the Life of ...Children and Families” The objective of this report is to give a real flavour of the work carried out on a daily basis by dedicated social work/social care staff, either working for government, or in our commissioned provider services.

First contact

When professionals (such as colleagues in health, education or police services) or individuals (such as parents, relatives or neighbours) wish to notify the Children and Families Division (C&F) of any issues about which they have concerns about, they make contact with the front door team – The Initial Response Team.

Every day, we have at least 66 calls including official contacts or referrals from concerned individuals or agencies

The top four referrers in 2014/15 were:

- Police: 31%
- Health (including A&E): 19%
- Parents/relatives: 19%
- Schools: 7%

The responses to contacts vary. Some referrers are provided with information, some are signposted on to other, more relevant services, some move into the more detailed work of C&F (becoming a confirmed referral) and others (which were provided to C&F for information only) are deemed to need no further action and closed.

Assessing need

Before we can support children and families we need to undertake an assessment of need. The assessments being carried out are either Initial Assessments or Core Assessments

Initial Assessments (IAs) are done to establish a quick understanding of the

facts and issues in order to establish whether the child/family meets the threshold of intervention by C&F. Core Assessments (CAs) comprise of an in-depth assessment, which addresses the central or most important aspects of the needs of a child and the capacity of his or her parents or caregivers to respond appropriately to these needs within the wider family and community context.

Every day, we are carrying out between 5 and 6 formal assessments on children and young people and having dozens of discussions about them

Timescales are expected to be met for carrying out these assessments. In 2014/15:

- 87% of Initial Assessments were completed in timescales (against a target of 95%)
- 71% of Core Assessments were completed in timescales (against a target of 85%)

These targets are expected to be met in 2015/16.

Protecting Children

A key task for all children’s social care services is to protect and safeguard children from potential or actual harm

Every day, we are protecting and safeguarding 52 children

There are a range of activities associated with the protection and safeguarding of children. These are: undertaking **strategy meetings**, when there is reasonable cause to suspect that children are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm; undertaking **Section 46 Enquiries**, to determine whether action is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child or children who are the subject/s of the enquiries; initial and on-going **Child Protection Conferences**, to ensure the child is safe and to prevent him or her from suffering further significant harm and to promote the child’s health and

development; holding **Core Group Meetings**, to develop and monitor the effectiveness of the plans and ensure that actions agreed are followed.

Every day there we hold around 7 Strategy Meetings, Section 46 Enquiries, CP Conferences or Core Group Meetings (1624 per year)

Children in Need

Sometimes an Initial or Core Assessment concludes that a package of support is needed for a child and/or the family. Under these circumstances a Child in Need Plan is drawn up and implemented.

Every day, we are supporting 183 children via a Child in Need Plan

The plan identifies the developments needed, the support to be provided, the objectives of the support and the expected outcomes. The support the children receive includes:

- Direct 1-1 support for children and parent(s)
- Counselling support
- Advocacy
- Small group work (e.g. supporting improvements in parenting)
- Therapeutic support
- Specialised courses or individual programmes (e.g. behaviour management)
- Activity programmes
- Life skills training
- Communication training
- Preparation for independence

Children Looked After

Children who, for some reason, are not able to be cared for by their own parents come into care system managed by C&F. These children are classed as Looked After Children (LAC). The age ranges and numbers of children in care are:

Ages	Number
0 to 4 years	11
5 to 9 years	17
10 to 15 years	38
16 years plus	26

Fifty four of the children looked after (59%) are placed in foster care placements provided by Fostering First, a service commissioned by C&F. Twenty two children (24%) are placed in residential care settings provided by St Christopher's, a service also commissioned by C&F. The remainder are either placed with their parents (5) or with family and friends (2). This is often called kinship care. Two children are currently placed in specialist provision off-island.

Every day, we are caring for 92 Looked After Children

Activity associated with Looked After Children includes:

- Preparing Court reports
- Care Planning
- Placement meetings
- Statutory visits
- LAC Reviews
- Providing advocacy for the child
- Liaising with other professionals (e.g. health and education, youth justice)
- supporting placements (in foster care or residential settings)

Children Leaving Care

When children reach the age of 18, they officially leave the care of the department. Some choose to leave earlier than that age. C&F have a duty and responsibility to continue to support young people through college, university and hopefully into work. 42 care leavers are currently being supported. This number will rise over the next 2 years.

Every day, we are supporting 42 Care Leavers

Through commissioned services C&F provide:

- 2 homes for (semi) independent living
- A team of workers working with young people where they live to give support when and where they need it

Team around the School/Family Project

The Team around the School/Family (TSF) is the name given to the service delivery approach to assessing, making plans for, and reviewing outcomes of services provided to Children with Additional Needs. Schools in one part of Douglas (Ballakermeen) and Health Visitors in Ramsey can make referrals to the TSF Coordinator and following assessment, services are provided in response to need.

Every day, we are supporting 28 children through our TSF project

This service will be rolled out island-wide from September 2015 with a capacity to be supporting up to 250 children and young people at any one time.

Staffing

Every day, 230 staff members (approx.) in C&F and in our provider services are supporting and/or caring for children, young people and families

The C&F arrangements for managing and delivering services were changed in early April and May 2014. The intention of the Division was that through this change, we could create a reality of:

“Making every day count for children”

As a result of the changes made, we are of the view that:

1. The management task can be achieved without being over burdensome
2. Line management arrangements allow for high quality reflective, best practice supervision
3. Team structures encourage and enable collaborative working
4. Individuals within teams have caseloads which can be managed in a professional way using the

theories, models, knowledge and skills of social work to truly make a difference to those children and families we serve and support

5. Due attention can be given to strategic responsibilities

Service Developments

Over the past year we have:

- ✓ Published our new commissioning intentions and by so doing have improved the balance of service delivery (more early intervention; less high cost residential provision; more services for children leaving care; and more intensive support for LAC in respect of their emotional health and well-being)
- ✓ Revamped and re-launched the Supporting Families Team
- ✓ Developed the concept of the Team Around the School (TAS) and developed a pilot project for DHSC and DECS
- ✓ Developed a project to revamp the 2 Children’s Resource Centres for children with disabilities
- ✓ Created a partnership with Queens University Belfast to provide the Diploma/Masters in Applied Social Studies (Child Care Pathway) for C&F social workers/managers
- ✓ Provided all C&F managers with a ten part management development programme and created the C&F Leadership Framework
- ✓ Developed and delivered on the Divisional Plan
- ✓ Embedded the Quality Assurance and Performance Management (QAPM) Framework
- ✓ Undertaken reviews on:
 - Supervision

- Requests for commissioned services
- Contact: No Further Actions
- Managers and Team meetings

Resources and Finances

We are proud of our judicious use of the resources granted to us. The implementation of our commissioning intentions has enabled us to procure new and different services and, in 2014/15, contribute some of our savings into the overall DHSC pot.

Every day, we spend £43,753 supporting and/or caring for children, young people and families

Every day, we spend £5,330 on supporting children in foster care placements and £17,109 on children/young people in residential care (on island, off-island and in secure home accommodation)

Involving children, young people and parents

Feedback about the felt experiences of contact with C&F is regularly sought from parents, children and young people. This helps to improve our services over time.

The Division, through its Participation Officer supports the Voices in Participation (VIP) Council. This had small beginnings in 2008 but now has 30 young people regularly contributing to its work and activities. Council members:

- Have accredited qualifications for interviewing professionals for posts in the Division.
- Work with the Registration and Inspection Unit, helping inspectors to communicate with children in care
- Offer a VIP club group
- Organise and participate in the VIP Awards evening. (This year 87 professionals/MHKs attended)
- Have made links with other similar groups in the UK

We have recently developed a new service user feedback strategy and process. An annual report will be produced from 2015/16 identifying the learning from this feedback and the changes made to service delivery.

The following quotes are from written feedback received after Child Protection Conferences and before LAC Reviews.

On Child Protection Conferences:

During Conference, I was patiently listened to and given a chance to speak

Parent, December 2014

I was nervous, but glad there are people who will look at our situation closely

Parent, October 2014

I would feel more comfortable if I got more accurate facts about situations for conference

Parent, June 2014

On LAC Reviews: what's gone well for you?

Getting into college; getting a job; getting great feedback from my tutor about my record of achievement; getting my iPad back (being trusted); making a new friend

Young Person July 2014

On LAC Reviews: what's gone badly for you?

Some grades weren't good. Dad and Carers help me with revision

Young Person, June 2014

Argument with the family; stopped talking to them

Young Person, June 2014

On working with a Family Support Worker

After using the Outcomes Star, I realised for the first time that I did lots of stuff right, I wasn't rubbish and I could develop myself more. Thank you

Mother, October 2014

Next days

C&F are continuously looking to develop and improve services. This next year has an ambitious plan to put new things in place. These include the following:

- 1. Single Assessment Framework:** this will replace the current process of undertaking initial and core assessments. it will be used by all departments and services involved with children and families from later on in 2015.

1. Children with Disabilities:

From the Braddan Community Hub, we are expecting to provide a much wider range of services for disabled children and their families. This will include the provision of skills for living, improved communication, managing challenging behaviour and support for young people in transition and for independence.

2. Introduce/embed Signs of Safety:

the evidence base of using the signs of safety approach to providing assessment of risk to children is strong. From its routes in USA is now used extensively in Australia and in parts of the UK. We wish to introduce this way of working as the preferred option for safeguarding children

3. Greater focus on educational attainment for LAC:

at any one time there are up to 20% of LAC who are either on reduced timetables or not in mainstream schools at all. We wish to provide better coordination among the various providers, improve tracking and targeting, and to improve outcomes over time

4. Early Help and Support

In September 2015 we are expecting to roll out our approach to providing early help and intervention. This is based on the Team around the School/Family Project (referred to elsewhere in this report). Five coordinators will be appointed to run this service

5. Recruitment and Retention of Staff

We have put together an ambitious plan to attract social workers to our service and to keep them when they are here. This will be implemented in 2015/16

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

During 2014/15 we have been tracking what we call our set of Key Performance Indicators. Some of the targets are new and were set during the year so will be subject to change in 2015/16. Wherever possible we benchmark ourselves against English Local Authority measures (and adjust if and when necessary). Provided below is a table showing the 2014/15 out-turn figures against the targets set. There are also notes to some of the indicators.

Ref	Indicator	Target	2014/15 out-turn
1	Number of referrals per 1000 population	53.7	53.5
	Actual number	913	910
2	% of re-referrals in total referrals*	25%	39%
3	% referrals that become Initial Assessments	70%	74%
4	% Initial Assessments completed in 10 days	95%	88%
5	Initial Assessment to No Further Action	20%	31%
6	Section 46 Enquiries per 1000 population**	13.7	17
	Actual number **	233	292
7	Core Assessments per 1000 population***	–	28.1
	Actual number ***	–	478
9	% Core assessments completed in 35 days****	85%	69%
10	Number of CiN (incl Children with Disabilities) open cases	Up to 200	183
11	CP open cases per 1000 population	2.7 – 3.8	3.1
	Actual Number	45 – 64	53
12	LAC open cases per 1000 population	6.0	5.4
	Actual Number	90 – 102	92
13	% CiN Reviews on time	95%	62%

14	% CP Reviews on time*****		100%	90%
15	% LAC Reviews on time		100%	89%
16	% Supervisions due that were completed		100%	83%
17	% Pathway Plans in place		100%	74%
18	% children to permanence panel by second review		100%	60%
19	% children participating in or contributing to:	LAC Reviews	75%	89%
		CP Conferences	75%	31%
		CiN Reviews*****	75%	9%
20	Parents attending CP conferences	-		85%
22	Social Workers to have a caseload that accurately reflects their optimal capacity (as determined by experience, number of cases and complexity of work)		80%	100%

Notes to the KPIs:

- 1) The results are colour coded: **Green** = on target; **Amber** = we are satisfied that sufficient progress has been made during the year, or where robust plans are in place (even though the target may have not been met); **Red** = a target not being met or where further investigation is needed
- 2) These notes refer to specific indicators and are by way of explanation

*

Re-referral rates have traditionally been high in Isle of Man. We are of the view that this is due, in part, to the previous lack of a comprehensive early help and prevention service. This, in turn, leads to referrals which were deemed not to meet the social care threshold to then being re-submitted. It is undoubtedly true also, that there are some referrals that could have been dealt with at the first time of asking. A piece of work is underway to understand this better. The 2014/15 out-turn shows a reduction in re-referrals of 10% on 2013/14.

The target quoted is the average for NW England in 2014. Within that average, there is variation from 7.2 per 1000 population and 40.4 per 1000 population. 35% of the local authorities in the NW England are within 2 points of Isle of Man out-turn figures. We will be keeping a close eye on the rates over the next year

Many local authorities have switched from their previous approach of providing Core Assessments to the Single Assessment Framework (SAF). This means that it is not appropriate to quote a target for 2014/15 as the comparative data is unreliable. C&F intend to introduce the SAF later in 2015.

The target of 85% of Core Assessments (CAs) being completed in timescales is internally generated. We have improved slightly on last year's out-turn, but there is some way to go. The England national average in 2014 was 73% of CAs in timescale, so not dissimilar to the Isle of Man out-turn.

It would normally be expected that 100% of CP Review Conferences would be completed within timescales. On investigation, it was found that of the 15 Conferences held out of timescale, the main reasons were either unavailability of a chairperson or inability of the family to attend. On all occasions the delay was sanctioned by a senior manager.

During the past year, we have been resolving some issues in respect of recording CiN Reviews and, in particular, the recording of the participation, representation and/or attendance of children at CiN reviews. We believe that this is now working more effectively and we will be able to show significant improvement in this indicator over the next year.

A Collage of Pictures

Water sliding at Resource Centre



Paddle boats on a serene afternoon



Getting Creative

Look out – here come the swans



Forest Adventure



Preparing artwork for Thie Yn Lleihys



VIP Cub event



On the tractor at the Community Farm



Go Karting



Lazer Mayhem: ready to beat the Juggernaut



Voices in Participation Awards



The End