

**CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE CASE-LOADS QUARTERLY UPDATE**

**To:** **Audit and Accounts Committee**  
**Date:** **25 July 2017**  
**From:** Theresa Leavy  
**Electoral Division(s):** **All**  
**Purpose:** **Arrangements for Safeguarding Vulnerable Children and Adults** – to report on Children's social care case-loads.

Concerns were raised when reviewing the unit case load tool as it highlighted high caseloads.

Therefore this report provides a quarterly update to the Committee on children's social care case-loads to enable the Committee to monitor the potential risk involved.

**Key Issues:**

Following the children's change programme units and teams have now located into the new districts and will have caused some short term movement of cases, meaning for some units they are over the anticipated caseload. Over the last 7 weeks most of the districts have remained at a consistent case load level. However the graph below does highlight some disparity when comparing total caseloads against each of the districts. You will see from the graph below that Fenland and Hunts have around 30-40 less cases compared to Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

**Recommendation:**

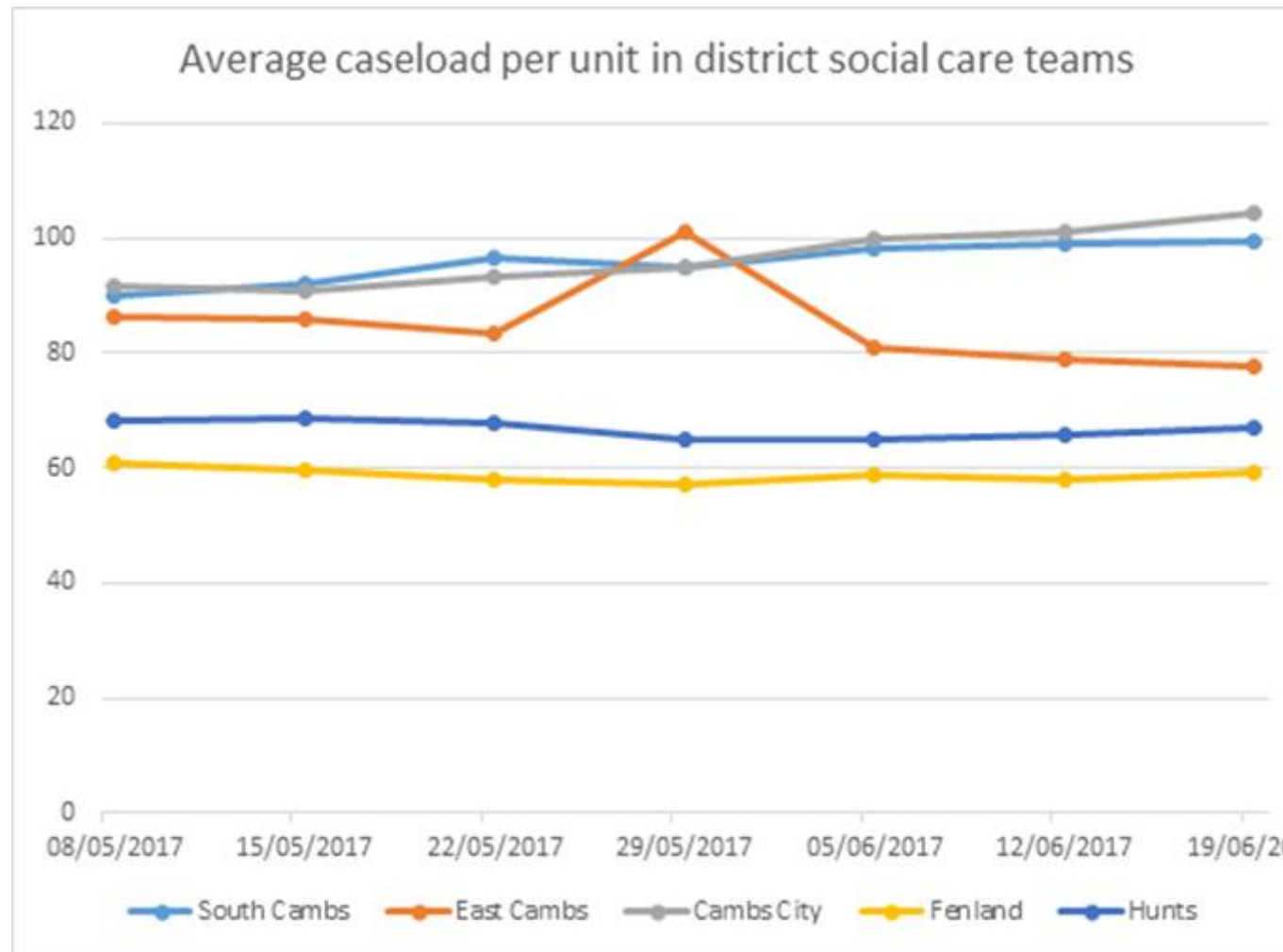
- a) To Note and comment on the report
- b) That continued monitoring of caseloads for the Children's Social Work Units by Children and Families Leadership Team

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## 1. BACKGROUND

The below highlights number of cases over a 7 week period for each of the district areas.

### 1.1



1.2 The Children's Social Work Units comprise a Consultant Social Worker, a Senior Social Worker, two Social Workers, one of whom can be an ASYE, (social worker in their first year of employment post qualification) and Clinician support for three days a week. The Senior Social role is a new role and appointments are being confirmed for this. Each unit is also supported by two Family Workers from within the District. The units are established to support on average 60 children.

1.3 The Children's Social Work Units work with children from pre-birth to the age of 18. They become involved with children after the initial assessment of the risk to the child from Integrated Front Door and will undertake support to families under section 47 Children Act 1989- child

protection, section 17 Children Act 1989- Child In Need and all legal proceedings, private law or public law. The work of the unit is underpinned by the desire to build meaningful relationships with children and for one unit to know and understand their story and travel with them on their journey through social work services.

- 1.4 Children aged 14 and above who are Looked After are supported by the 14-25 Service, which included dedicated teams for care leavers and Unaccompanied Young People.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 The movement of units into the new Districts, as part of the Children's Change Programme, has been underpinned with the principle of causing the least disruption as possible to the lead worker for the child, maintain relationships where possible. On the whole we have been successful in achieving this but it does reflect in the higher caseload numbers for some units. It is agreed that children will be supported to transition to their new social worker at the appropriate time for them. This transitioning is occurring when a child is Looked After and 14 or over and when the time is right, so that children are supported within the District relative to where they live.
- 2.2 Intensive work has been undertaken by the District Safeguarding Managers to identify which children could be supported to step across to Early Help within the District, which children can be closed for social work services as their plan has been successfully completed and which children need to be supported by another District, given where they reside.
- 2.3 As of the first week in July, the Early Help offer in the Districts will be established. This will allow the District Safeguarding and District Early Help Managers to work together to identify where children and their families are best supported, allowing for many of the children who are currently supported by social work units to be supported by Family Workers.
- 2.4 Workloads in the South are presently remaining higher than in the North. We are currently finalising the staff for a fifth unit in Cambridge and a fifth unit in South Cambridgeshire, which will allow for children to be supported by these units, decreasing the caseloads for the other units in the District. At the current time these units have not been fully appointed to.
- 2.5 Some children in March, Chatteris and Whittlesey are also being supported by the units in Ely at the current time, this is a historical position. When the time is right for these children, they will be

supported by units in Huntingdonshire and Wisbech, as detailed in the Children's Change Programme.

- 2.6 Given the success of the Integrated Front Door in identifying the right services, for the right children at the right time, we are now gaining a clearer idea of the need and demand for social work services in particular Districts. It is of note that children identified as being in need of social work services by the Integrated Front Door to Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire has been higher than other Districts.
- 2.7 Caseloads are monitored by the Leadership Team on a weekly basis, with a detailed action plan in place oversee the transitioning of cases. This includes a detailed look at the demand for social work services in each District.

Source Documents	Location
None	