

Council Report
Corporate Parenting Performance

Title
Corporate Parenting Performance Report – June 2017

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan? No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

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Ward(s) Affected
All

Summary

1.1 This report provides a summary of performance for key performance indicators across Looked After Children services. It should be read in conjunction with the accompanying performance data report at Appendix A which provides trend data, graphical analysis and benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages where possible.

Recommendations

2.1 The Panel is asked to receive the report and accompanying dataset (Appendix A) and consider issues arising.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix A – Corporate Parenting Performance Report (June 2017)

Background Papers

Ofsted Improvement Letter
Children's Social Care Monthly Performance Reports

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
No

Council Approval Required No

Exempt from the Press and Public No

Title: Corporate Parenting Performance Report – June 2017

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to receive the report and accompanying dataset (Appendix A) and consider issues arising.

2. Background

- 2.1 This report provides evidence to the council's commitment to improvement and providing performance information to enable scrutiny of the improvements and the impact on the outcomes for children and young people in care. It should be read in conjunction with the accompanying performance data report which provides trend data, graphical analysis and benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages.
- 2.2 Targets, including associated 'RAG' (red, amber, green rating) tolerances, are included. These have been set in consideration of available national and statistical neighbour benchmarking data, recent performance levels and, importantly, Rotherham's improvement journey.
- 2.3 The narrative supplied within the report has been written by the Deputy Director for Children's Services

3. Key Issues

3.1 Service Overview and Context

- 3.1.1 There continues to be an increasing Looked After Children (LAC) profile. Between March 2016 and March 2017 the number of LAC increased by 13% from 432 to 488. Since this time, until the end of June there were a further 73 admissions to care and only 39 children discharged resulting in an overall cohort figure of 522.
- 3.1.2 Despite the additional capacity pressures, in general, performance since the previous report to panel has seen month-on-month and sustained improvement across a number of areas although the services are still not achieving the targets set at the beginning of 2016/17.
- 3.1.3 This has been assisted by the ongoing recruitment of permanent staff. At mid-June, across the whole LAC Service there was only one team manager vacancy and the Fostering Recruitment Manager has been offered to an external candidate and is in the process of appointment. In addition there are now 2 personal adviser vacancies in the Leaving Care Team with offers of employment having been made, 2 social worker vacancies in the adoption team and 3 social work vacancies in the long-term LAC teams for which interview dates have been set. As a result it is likely that, subject to future turnover, the service will be fully staffed with permanent workers by the end of the summer period.

3.2 Looked After Children Profile

3.2.1 Rotherham continues to have an increasing Looked After Children (LAC) profile. There were 488 LAC at the end of 2016/17 and at the end of June numbers had increased further to 522 children in care which equates to a rate of 92.6 per 10,000 population this is high when compared to the 2015/16 year-end position of 76.6 and statistical neighbour average of 75.8.

3.2.2 The introduction of the Edge of Care provision will ensure there will be an increasingly strong counter balance to the ongoing increase in numbers of looked after children. Interviews for this team are underway but the team is unlikely to be in place before September and may not be having any discernible impact until the end of the year or beyond.

3.2.3 Table 1 provides a breakdown by age of the LAC population at the month end by age group against the latest national comparator data. This shows that overall Rotherham's LAC age profile follows a similar distribution to the National. However we have a higher proportion aged under one (6.5% compared to 5%) and a lower proportion aged over sixteen (17.6% compared to 23%).

Table 1 – Age distribution of Looked After Children at the end of the month

Age Band	Number	% of total	Latest National comparative data (Mar-16)
Under 1	34	6.5%	5%
1 – 4	70	13.4%	13%
5 - 9	110	21.1%	20%
10 - 15	216	41.4%	39%
16+	92	17.6%	23%
Total	522		

3.2.4 The current legal status of Looked After Children at the end of the month shows that almost half of our children are on full care orders (47.7%), 33.7% are on an Interim Care Order and 9.0% are Section 20 (Voluntary care agreements). Unfortunately there is no clear national data to benchmark this distribution against.

3.3 Plans

3.3.1 As at the end of May 73.8% of children had an up-to-date plan which is a decline on previous months and the 2016/17 outturn of 79.1%. The ongoing lack of improvement in this performance measure led to a deeper dive audit in order to identify any underlying issues. As a result it has transpired that the timescale for Care Plans in Liquid Logic has been aligned with a 3 monthly Statutory Review cycle at which point Care Plans should be reviewed. However, most Reviews take place between every 5 and every 6 months meaning that there is little prospect of social workers achieving the target that was inappropriate in the first

place. Once this is recalibrated on the system it is anticipated that there will be a marked shift in performance.

3.4 Reviews

- 3.4.1 91.3% of LAC reviews completed in 2016/17 were within the required timescales. This is an improvement on the previous year's performance of 83.3%.
- 3.4.2 However since the end of the financial year performance has declined and of the 92 reviews completed in June 82 (89.1%) of them were within timescales
- 3.4.3 This dip has been linked to the implementation of the new standard whereby no Review would be completed without a revised Care Plan and a Social Worker Review report being placed on the case file prior to the Review meeting. Although this standard was implemented in order to improve the quality of the Review process it has become a means by which social workers can defer Review dates as a means of managing their workload. As a result, the previous standard has been re-introduced with the clear expectation set down that Reviews will take place in time and that social workers will submit the relevant reports to make this a meaningful process. It is anticipated that there being some marked improvement in the coming months, progress is being monitored by Heads of Service.

3.5 Visits

- 3.5.1 Despite the increasing LAC numbers the overall compliance against National Minimum visiting standards is on an upward trend, achieving incremental month-on-month improvements. At the end of 2016/17 performance stood at 94.7% from 87.7% in January. At the end of June this had fallen slightly to 92.5%.
- 3.5.2 Similarly, against the higher local standard, visits are improving. At the end of 2016/17 performance was 88.3% compared to 81.5% in January, and in June 83% was achieved.
- 3.5.3 Regular dip sampling is undertaken by the Head of Service (HOS) LAC and Care Leavers to assess quality of these visits. The HOS reports that overall this has been positive with only one occasion in the past month requiring challenge to the social worker regarding the inadequacy of the case recording and immediate remedial action. However, these informal audits also identified that there is still a marked shortfall in analysis of the experience of the child in the placement and, on occasions statutory visits for siblings are still recorded for all siblings rather than as individual entries. This is an ongoing focus of feedback for social workers and evidences that in respect of Statutory Visits we are now successfully improving in both compliance and quality.

3.6 Placements

- 3.6.1 Although some placement moves are in the best interests of the child the provision of a good stable home is known to be essential for children to achieve good outcomes. Placement performance statistics demonstrate that we need to improve our preventative work to reduce placement disruption.
- 3.6.2 At the end of the June the proportion of children who have had three or more placements, (two moves in the previous 12 months), had increased to 12.1% against a 2016/17 year end position of 11.9%. This equates to 63 children who have had two changes in placement in 12 months. Our target of reducing to less than 10%, which is also the National average, remains and it is felt achievable over the next financial year.
- 3.6.3 In 2016/17 Rotherham achieved 66.2% for the proportion of our long term children in care who experience a stable placement for over two years. At the end of June this had reduced further to 62.1% which places Rotherham below latest statistical neighbours and the national average.
- 3.6.4 Placements are known to become more fragile as the child enters mid-teens. Therefore although work continues to stabilise current child placements the LAC Service has initiated a preventative pilot programme to protect the stability of younger children deemed vulnerable to multiple future breakdowns.
- 3.6.5 This pilot has identified 9 children aged 10-13 who are deemed most vulnerable to a series of placement disruptions. This vulnerability has been assessed via:-
 - An SDQ score of 18+
 - One previous placement disruption in the past 6 months.
 - Disrupted or less than statutory education provision (ie less than 25 hours per week).
 - Cross referenced analysis with the Rotherham Therapeutic Team (RTT) case load.

- 3.1.2 These children will be having full Team Around the Placement (TAP) meetings convened with an Intensive Intervention Package from the RTT being offered to each child alongside a multi-agency support plan with the specific aim of sustaining the current placement. This pilot will run over a 6 month period and the results will be formally presented to DLT and CPP with a view to expanding it to other children at similar risk of disruption.

3.7 Looked After Children Health and Dental

- 3.7.1 Please note there are known delays in the data input for both Health and Dental information therefore it is likely that performance may change when statistics are rerun in future reports.
- 3.7.2 Current statistics demonstrate that the timeliness of dental checks continue to decline at the end of 2016/17 performance was 57.3% compared to 95% at the end of 2015/16. At the end of June this had declined further to 55.0%. An independent data matching exercise of LAC health team data against social care dental data showed that a root cause of the decline is lack of data input by social workers.
- 3.7.3 Following previous good performance Health Assessment reviews are similarly declining at 89.5% at the end of 2016/17 compared to 92.8% at the end of 2015/16. In June performance had fallen further to 70.7%.
- 3.7.4 Of the 20 Initial Health Assessments completed in May 55% were completed within 20 days of the child entering care. This represents the best ever performance for a single month albeit from the lowest possible starting point. In June performance was stable at 50%, however there was only 4 assessments completed in total, much less than in May. The outturn position for the full 2016/17 year was 18.2% compared to 8.4% in 2015/16.
- 3.7.5 A deep dive audit has evidenced that the LAC Nurse team only receive notifications of a child becoming looked after (BLA) within the target timescale of 0-1 days post admission in 29% of the time. Thus, although access to Liquid Logic has assisted performance there remains an issue regarding the LAC Nurse team not receiving notifications regarding children who are 'Becoming Looked After'. As yet there has been no effective process identified by which the LAC Nurses can be notified of those looked after children on the BLA pathway.
- 3.7.6 A large amount of validation work is to be carried out with Health colleagues which should result in improved performance over the coming months.

3.8 Personal Education Plan (PEP)

- 3.8.1 At the end of 2016/17 96.9% of eligible children have a PEP recorded on their social care record this is a slight reduction on the previous year's performance of 97.8% but is against a much larger number of children.
- 3.8.2 Our Virtual School implemented a local target of termly PEP, which for performance reasons is calculated as a 4 monthly update. This has been a challenge for the service during parts of the year due to delays in quality assurance and authorisation due to long-term sickness absence. These issues are now rectified and by the end of 2016/17 performance had reached 87.9%.

3.8.3 This improved further in April to 89.7% but June's performance is particularly low at 57.4%. Validation work by the Virtual School has identified a number of PEPs which have not been input into the Liquid Logic system this is contributing to performance being lower than expected. Once remedial work is completed it is expected that a future rerun of performance data will see this improve.

3.9 Care Leavers

- 3.9.1 The number of Care Leavers at the end of June was 215 which is a small reduction on end of 2015/16 position of 223.
- 3.9.2 In June 94% of care leavers maintained *meaningful* (i.e. not text or emails) contact with their Personal Advisors over the previous 8 weeks. The Leaving Care Team knows of the whereabouts of all bar one of its care leavers and he remains in touch but refuses to disclose the address of his girlfriend with whom he is living.
- 3.9.3 Pathway Plan performance at 99.3% is good. A revised Pathway Plan template is now in operation and it is anticipated that this will assist in addressing the issues of variable quality of plans as identified in the Ofsted Monitoring Visit.
- 3.9.4 At the end of June 94.4% of care leavers deemed to be in suitable accommodation represents a decrease since the 97.5% achieved at the end of 2016/17, but still places Rotherham in the top quartile nationally. This decline is known to be caused by two care leavers receiving a custodial sentence.
- 3.9.5 In respect of care leavers who are in Education, Employment or training (EET) this currently stands at 65.3%; a slight increase on the end of year figure of 62.9%. This remains well above the statistical neighbour and national averages of 50.4% and 48% respectively.
- 3.9.6 3 care leavers have successfully got through to the final stage of interviews for an apprenticeship with Groundworks although the recruitment process has seemed unduly protracted for young people.

3.10 Adoptions

- 3.10.1 It is a key issue that 55% of children in the adoption pathway process have been assessed as being 'hard to place'. That means they are either:
 - Children older than 5 years of age
 - Sibling groups of 2 or more
 - Children with challenging behaviours, enduring health conditions or learning/physical disabilities.

3.10.2 Rotherham's policy is to persevere in seeking adoptive placements for these and all children for as long as it is reasonable to do so.

Whilst this can impact on performance figures, this practice does give the necessary reassurance that the adoption service is 'doing the right thing' by its children by doing everything it can to secure permanent family placements for its children. As a result one child was recently adopted 1,624 days after becoming looked after which demonstrates the determination and perseverance of the adoption team.

3.10.3 In 2016/17 there were 31 children adopted compared to 43 in 2015/16. There have been only 5 in the first three months of 2017/18 and it is likely that the year total will see another decline but this is reflective of the national decline in adoption figures.

3.10.4 At present (02/08/2017) in total there are 68 children on the adoption pathway:-

- 13 children with SHOBPA (Should Be Placed for Adoption) decisions.
- 25 with Placement Orders.
- 3 children matched with prospective adopters but not yet placed.
- 23 children placed for adoption
- 4 children for whom the SHOBPA decision is in the process of being reversed.

3.10.5 As at the end of June the average time between entering care and moving to the adoptive placement (measure A1) was 323 days as set against the statistical neighbour average of 546 days and the England average of 593 days. Even more significantly the best statistical neighbour average was 336 days which illustrates how well Rotherham is performing in respect of this performance measure.

3.10.6 Also for the 2017/18 year so far the average time between the Placement Order being obtained and an adoptive match being identified (measure A2) has significantly reduced from 378 days to 131 days. Although both these measures only relate to the 4 children which may explain the relatively low figure.

3.10.7 There are ten prospective adopters currently under assessment with panel dates booked between July and September. In addition there have been two further registrations of interest.

3.10.8 In 2016/17 there was only one adoption placement breakdown. There was, as there always is, a formal review of this breakdown and adopter assessment by the Head of Service and has identified that these adopters were highly unlikely to have been approved against the current benchmarks and practice standards employed by the team.

3.10.9 Whilst Rotherham remains committed to the principle of the regionalisation it seems unlikely that there will be any progress towards further regionalisation of the service before April 2018. One of the reasons for this is that Rotherham is the best performing

authority in the sub-region and the South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency have stated that it is unlikely that this performance will be sustained post regionalisation. This seems to undermine any argument for a regional approach and so the SYRAA have been challenged to revise their Business case on this basis.

3.11 Caseloads

3.11.1 The average number of cases per LAC team social worker is relatively stable at 10.7. Similarly the maximum caseload in June was 19.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 The full corporate parenting performance report attached at Appendix A represents a summary of performance across a range of key national and local indicators with detailed commentary provided by the service director. Commissioners are therefore recommended to consider and review this information.

5. Consultation

5.1 Not applicable

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 Not applicable

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report. The relevant Service Director and Budget Holder will identify any implications arising from associated improvement actions and Members and Commissioners will be consulted where appropriate.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no direct legal implications to this report.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 There are no direct human resource implications to this report. The relevant Service Director and Managers will identify any implications

arising from associated improvement actions and Members and Commissioners will be consulted where appropriate.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 The performance report relates to services and outcomes for children in care.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 There are no direct implications within this report.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

- 12.1 Partners and other directorates are engaged in improving the performance and quality of services to children, young people and their families via the Rotherham Local Children's Safeguarding Board (RLSCB). The RLSCB Performance and Quality Assurance Sub Group receive this performance report within the wider social care performance report on a regular basis.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Inability and lack of engagement in performance management arrangements by managers and staff could lead to poor and deteriorating services for children and young people. Strong management oversight by Directorship Leadership Team and the ongoing weekly performance meetings mitigate this risk by holding managers and workers to account for any dips in performance both at a team and at an individual child level.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

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