

Council Report

Corporate Parenting Performance

Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – October 2017

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

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Report Author(s)

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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 (October 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 – October 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 Please note that new benchmarking data has recently been released by the DfE (relating to 2016/17 outturn) and where applicable this report reflects the new data position.
- 2.3 The narrative supplied within the report has been written by the Deputy Director for Children's Services and Head of Looked After Children 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 October there were a further 162 admissions to care and 119 children discharged resulting in an overall cohort figure of 531 (a further 9% increase on March 2017).
- 3.1.2 This increase in LAC numbers and the consequential shortage in available placements has in an increase in young people being placed outside of the local area, this in turn has negative impact on social work capacity. However despite the additional capacity pressures, in general, performance remains improved and sustained since the 2016/17 across a number of areas.

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, this has risen further to 531 at the end of September which equates to a rate of 93.8 per 10,000 population this is high when compared to the statistical neighbour average of 81.3.

3.2.2 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. The most notable differences being the higher rate of children aged 5-9 years and (21.1% compared to 19%) and a lower proportion aged over sixteen (17.7% compared to 24%).

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

Age Band	Number	% of total	Latest National comparative data (Mar-17)
Under 1	29	5.5%	5%
1 – 4	76	14.3%	13%
5 - 9	112	21.1%	19%
10 - 15	220	41.4%	39%
16+	94	17.7%	24%
Total	531		

3.2.3 There has been no change in the distribution rates of current legal status of Looked After Children. At the end of October; 54% of children were subject to full care orders, 29% are on an Interim Care Orders, 11% are on Placement Orders with Care Order and 6% are under Section 20. Unfortunately there is no clear national data to benchmark this distribution against.

3.3 Plans

3.3.1 Compliance on plans has declined slightly on the previous month to 91% compared to 92.3% of children having an up-to-date plan at the end of September. However since this time performance has improved to 96% (as at 8th November '17).

3.3.2 As outlined in the previous performance following management investigation of poor performance discrepancies were identified between the 'plan cycle' within systems reports and the LAC review timescales to which it should be linked. This was recalibrated and 2016/17 monthly data re-profiled.

3.4 Reviews

- 3.4.1 After the excellent performance achieved in September of 98% there was a decline in the proportion of reviews completed in time to 91% which is still high compared to previous months.
- 3.4.2 At the time of this report (8th December '17) there were 21 children with overdue reviews which equates to 96% being up-to-date.
- 3.4.3 Performance for the 2016/17 year to date is 88.8% however, assuming the above improvements are sustained, the year end figure can still equate or better the 91.3% achieved in 2016/17.

3.5 Visits

- 3.5.1 Compliance against National Minimum visiting standards has improved to 93.2% and is currently 94.8% which is excellent given the current service context.
- 3.5.2 Performance against the harder local target however is on a declining trend. At the end of October performance was 86.3% compared to figures of over 90% earlier in the year.
- 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 little requirement to challenge the social worker regarding the inadequacy of the case recording and immediate remedial action. There is also increasing evidence of direct work and life-story work being undertaken during visits. However, these informal audits also identified that there is still some 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 There has been a small increase in the number of LAC placed in a family based setting from 430 in September to 433 in October. However due to the larger increase in the overall population this as percentage of total LAC has reduce from 83% to 81.7%. (Family based settings include internal fostering, independent fostering, pre-adoption placements and those placed with parent/family/friends).
- 3.6.2 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.

- 3.6.3 At the end of the September the number of children who have had three or more placements, (two moves in the previous 12 months), remains static at 71 which equates to 13.4%. 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.
- 3.6.4 Since August the proportion of our Long Term LAC in a stable placement has shown month on month improvements. At the end of October this had was 63.3% compared to 60% in the summer. However this still places Rotherham below latest statistical neighbours and the national averages of 68%.
- 3.6.5 However after each child has 'moved' it takes at least 2 years to improve this outcome measure therefore our improvement plan will take time to see full fruition. An analysis of the child level placement/duration data behind the performance figures is projecting a more significant improvement by next July/August.
- 3.6.6 A Permanence Oversight Group has been established to ensure every child has a clear plan to establish a secure home. This can be via adoption, SGO, return home or if none of these are suitable for the child a long-term/permanent family based placement. The group has prioritised children by their length in care with Long Term LAC being addressed first.

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 Performance in relation to health and dental assessments has been poor, but in recent months has showed improvement. October data shows that health and dental assessments have reduced on the previous improved performance to 81.7% health and 71.8% dental.
- 3.7.3 Overall Initial health assessments compliance is improving. Following further data input September's performance has improved further than previously reported to 90.9%. Figures for the year to date has improved from the 50% reported at last corporate parenting panel to 53.1%.
- 3.7.4 Although much improved it is clear that the data validation and process development, in partnership with health colleagues, will need to continue to ensure improved and ensure more consistent performance.

3.8 LAC Education

- 3.8.1 At the end of September 90.5% of our LAC population had a Personal Education Plan.
- 3.8.2 Rotherham has a local standard to ensure that each PEP is of good quality and refreshed every term (rather than the annual minimum

standard). As systems are not calibrated to educational 'terms' which can move each academic year, within performance reports we have used a proxy measure of 'no older than 4 months' to represent the three terms of the year. This has led to the unnecessary confusion and concern when misleading low performance is reported. It has therefore been agreed that this measure will be deleted from the monthly performance data report. However regular narrative provided will be provided by the virtual school at the end of each term.

- 3.8.3 At the end of the last term (i.e. end of July) 98.8% of LAC had a Personal Education Plan (PEP), and 97.9% of LAC had PEPs that were up to date. This is an improvement on 2016/17 outturn position. Furthermore external quality assurance rated 87% of PEPs as "good or better" standard and 83% of children are educated in a school rated either "Good or Outstanding" by Ofsted.

3.9 Care Leavers

- 3.9.1 The number of young people receiving a Care Leavers service at month end was 237 which an increase of seven since the last corporate parenting report and a 6% increase on 2016/17 position of 223.
- 3.9.2 The service is in touch with almost all the young people (93%). Currently, (as at 8th December), 78% of Care Leavers have had meaningful contact with their personal adviser in the last eight weeks.
- 3.9.3 Pathway Plan performance at is very good with 99% of eligible young people have a plan with 94% being less than 6 months old. 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 97% of young people are in suitable accommodation which represents top quartile performance nationally (Rotherham is currently ranked 6th nationally). Most of the shortfall is due to care leavers being in custody (five young people), although there was one young person who had chosen to leave his tenancy and is now street homeless and another in emergency accommodation. The team continue to try to make contact with these two young people and support them back into rented accommodation. In respect of care leavers who are in Education, Employment or training (EET) was 62.2%. This is inline with previous months and year end performance, placing Rotherham within the national top quartile however but we aim to improve further.

3.10 Fostering

- 3.10.1 At the end of September there were 389 children within a fostering placement 73% of the total LAC population. Of these there were 182 children placed in-house foster families with a further 14 in friends or family placements.
- 3.10.2 Between 1st April and 31st October there have now been 9 new foster families approved by Panel resulting in 14 new placements. Ten foster families have de-registered resulting in a net increase of four.
- 3.10.3 Currently there are three privately fostered children (as at 8th December) with a further child recorded as 'becoming Privately Fostered'. This is a decrease on last reported figure of six.
- 3.10.4 The Fostering Supervisory Team are now performance managing their visits to foster carers and are currently achieving an improved performance from 81% last month to 88% for supervisory visits within the last 6 weeks. But have seen a small drop in performance for unannounced visits in timescale from 80% to 77% in the last 6 months.

3.11 Adoptions

- 3.11.1 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.
- 3.11.2 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 adoption completed this year 1,624 days after the child became looked after this demonstrates the determination and perseverance of the adoption team.
- 3.11.3 Although there have been only 16 adoptions so far in 2017/18 a number are on stream to complete before the end of April and the service hope to surpass the 31 achieved in 2016/17.
- 3.11.4 At the 3rd of November there were
- Six children with a SHOBPA decision but no placement order
 - 36 children subject of Placement Orders but not yet placed, 15 of whom have a match identified.

- 21 children are placed with their prospective adopters. Of these 16 have been placed for over 10 weeks and will be supported to move towards their final adoption order hearing. Four already have their hearing booked.

3.11.5 'In year' performance against the two key national is good and improving when compared to 2016/17. For the period April-October the average time between entering care and moving to the adoptive placement (measure A1) was 307.6 days as set against the statistical neighbour average of 511.6 days and the England average of 558.0 days. The average time between the Placement Order being obtained and an adoptive match being identified (measure A2) also remains good at 138.5 days compared to 214.7 for statistical neighbours and 226.0 nationally.

3.12 Caseloads

3.12.1 The data report now provides the average caseload split to show the difference in caseloads between Teams 1-3 and LAC team 4 (Court) & 5 (Permanence). This in turn has shown that LAC 1-3 have a higher average caseload, however this is still an eminently manageable caseload. The span of control for managers is 6 social workers and 1 advanced practitioner which is also highly appropriate and should facilitate good management oversight.

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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