

**Council Report**

Corporate Parenting Performance

**Title**

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – May 2018

**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)**

Deborah Johnson (Performance Assurance Manager – Social Care)  
Ian Walker (Head of Service Children in Care)

**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 (May 2018)

**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 – May 2018

## **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 The panel have previously received the the provisional outturn for 2017/18 within the March 2018 report. This year-end data has now been refreshed and some updates made as data entry and validation continued to be made.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 Please note that all benchmarking data is as at the latest data release by the DfE and relates to 2016/17 outturn
- 2.5 The narrative supplied within the report has been informed by the Deputy Director for Children's Services and the 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 2017 and March 2018 the number of LAC increased by 29% from 488 to 628. As at the end of May this had increased further to 642.
- 3.1.2 This increase in LAC numbers and the consequential shortage in available placements has 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 sustained 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. The 642 children at the end of May equates to a rate of 113.4 per 10,000 population this is significantly 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 1-4 years (16.0% compared to 13%) and a lower proportion aged over sixteen (16.8% 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	49	7.6%	5%
1 – 4	103	16.0%	13%
5 - 9	137	21.3%	19%
10 - 15	242	37.7%	39%
16+	108	16.8%	24%
Total	642		

3.2.3 The percentage distribution by legal status remains a consistent picture with 52% of children subject to full care orders, 31% on an Interim Care Order, 10% 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 LAC Plans

3.3.1 After a period of consistency at circa 90%, compliance on plans at the end of May dropped to 87.4%. This area still remains under close management scrutiny in the performance meetings and at the time of this report (22/06/18) had increased back to 89.5%.

## 3.4 Reviews

3.4.1 In the two months since the end of 2017/18 there has been a decline in the timeliness of LAC Statutory Reviews from 96.1% to 78.8%. The timeliness of Statutory Reviews has declined once again this month to 78.8%. This has been attributed to on-going sickness and capacity issues within the IRO service although there is also an issue in respect of a smaller number of Reviews not being held due to social workers not having completed their pre-Review reports.

### 3.5 Visits

- 3.5.1 As the service continue to experience significantly high demand workers have been directed to prioritise visits to meet the national minimum standard over the local standard, (although this is a generalisation and visiting patterns are still influenced by any current risk factors for each child or young person).
- 3.5.2 There is a correlation between the number of cases held by the team and performance (higher cases lower performance). Performance against National Minimum visiting standards has dipped from 97.5% to 93.2%.
- 3.5.3 A review at operational performance meetings has shown that for the majority children on the system as 'visit overdue' they have been seen but workers had not yet updated their electronic record. This should be reflected in future reports when May's data will have been refreshed.

### 3.6 Placements

- 3.6.1 Despite the overall increase in numbers the proportion of children placed in a family based setting remains relatively stable at 81%, (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 The increase at the end of 2017/18 in the number and proportion of children experiencing multiple placement moves has continued. 13.8% (88 children) have had three or more placements. This has in part been linked to the shortage or placement choice created by the national increase in LAC making appropriate matching decisions an increasing challenge but we continue to work with providers to improve this for Rotherham children.
- 3.6.4 Following incremental improvements during 2017/18 the proportion of long term LAC who have lived in the same placement for over two years seems to have plateaued at 61.3% (92 out of 150 children). This measure has been impacted by the increasing number of long term LAC and our desire to bring children closer to home and into family placements. Due to the timeframes within the definition this is an area of performance which cannot be improved quickly. 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.

- 3.6.5 The first impact analysis of the Intensive Intervention Programme (IIP) has been completed. This evidences that whilst 14 of the LAC had 2 or more placement moves prior to them accessing the IIP this has reduced to 4 young people since their IIP intervention. Similarly the numbers in the group who were going missing from care has reduced from 7 to 3. A full Review of the programme will be presented to DLT in July and then disseminated for wider consideration.

### 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 we know that performance will change when statistics are rerun in future reports as figures reported by the LAC Health Team are higher than those recorded in local systems.
- 3.7.2 The number of Initial Health Assessments (IHA) complete each month increased was high in April at 25 but dipped to 12 in May. Timeliness performance according to internal recording in May was 41.7% taking the current 2018/19 year to date position to 43.7% (16 out of 37 IHAs).
- 3.7.3 With regards to Health reviews performance has dipped to 79.6% compared to 83.7% at the end of March. Similarly Dental performance has declined from 72.5% to 63.2%.

### 3.8 LAC Education

- 3.8.1 At the end of May 92.7% of eligible LAC population had a Personal Education Plan (36 LAC with no PEP).
- 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). Data shows that at the end of the Spring Term 95% had a PEP from within the term. Although this performance is high and an improvement on the Autumn term it is slightly lower than usual due to a combination of the adverse weather which meant that several PEPs had to be rescheduled, and the fact that it was a very short term. Also, the figure includes LAC who either did not come into care until late in the term, or who we were notified had come into care, and who there wasn't time to arrange PEP meeting

### 3.9 Care Leavers

- 3.9.1 The number of young people receiving a Care Leavers service at month end was 249 which is a decline on the 2017/18 year end position of 256.
- 3.9.2 Performance in all of the indicators has improved over the course of the month possibly as a result of some Personal Advisors returning from sick leave which ensures that the reported data is more up to date. There is, however, a potential risk to future performance in that as from April the Leaving Care Services now have the statutory duty, as set down in the Children and Social Work act 2017, to offer support to care leavers up to the age of 25. This is likely to have an impact on capacity within the team although plans are being formulated in order to mitigate this impact.
- 3.9.3 The proportion of care leavers who have a pathway plan is above target at 96.3%, with 86.4% of young people having plan less than 6 months old. Both represent a significant improvement on the year-end positions of 93.9% and 70.3% respectively. The service continues to focus on improving the quality of the plans so that they are meaningful for young people. The introduction of a new plan template will significantly improve the quality of the plans and will assist in addressing the variability issues identified in the Ofsted Monitoring Visit.
- 3.9.4 The proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation remains strong at 96%, and represents top quartile performance nationally.
- 3.9.5 Performance in respect of care leavers who are in Education, Employment or Training remains at circa 64% (63.9%). The Leaving Care Team are working closely with other Directorates to firm up the pre-apprenticeship offer (work experience and work placements) in order to achieve more sustained apprenticeships given that from 2017 only one young person is still attending his apprenticeship placement. However, performance remains strong and once again places Rotherham back in the top quartile.

### 3.10 Fostering

- 3.10.1 The recruitment of foster carers is demonstrating improved performance. In 2017/18, 17 new foster families were approved providing 27 new foster placements. Conversion rate from expression of interest to approval has increased from 11% to 16%.
- 3.10.2 As at the 1st June 3 new foster families had been approved by Panel (5 placements) with 15 more foster families booked onto Foster panel for approval (20 placements) with 4 more assessments needing allocation. As a result the Fostering Service will also surpass last year's performance. Significantly 6 of the 15 assessments will be able to offer placements for adolescents.

- 3.10.3 There were a further 33 enquiries over the course of May which was supported by a very positive Foster Carer Fortnight during May. The current conversion rate should provide a minimum of a further 3 new foster families. The recruitment of foster carers is therefore demonstrating improved performance.
- 3.10.4 The launch of Challenge 63 proved to be a disappointing. Only 2 elected members engaged to any degree and one of those being one of the organisers. Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to support officers in recommending methods to encourage greater member commitment when the scheme is re-launched.
- 3.10.5 In total there were 25 resignations and de-registrations of foster carers in 2017/18 with a further 4 in 2018/19 to date. Of these, in the course of the past 12 months, 4 foster carers have resigned after having been approved for less than 2 years. Whilst some of these resignations can be attributed to unforeseeable circumstances including illness and bereavement the Fostering Service will review all of these cases to ascertain if there are any lessons to be learned

### 3.11 Adoptions

- 3.11.1 In total five children have been adopted in the first two months of 2018/19. Performance remains vulnerable to significant swings given the cohort is so small and the 5 adoptions achieved thus far have had such an impact with the A1 performance declining from an average of 370 days to 469 days and the A2 from 146 to 260.
- 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.
- 3.11.3 It is also clear that court timescales are having an impact on this performance as adopters are reporting that where it used to take 6 weeks between them lodging their adoption order application and being heard in court this has now extended to an average of 12 weeks. Despite this, the team are well placed to surpass last year's performance of 27 adoptions given that in addition to the 5 adoptions achieved there are currently;
- 24 children already living in their adoptive placement (6 of whom have a date set for the Adoption Hearing, 6 with their application lodged with Court but no date yet set. A further 9

eligible for lodging to court having been in placement for more than the required 10 weeks and 3 placed for less than 10 weeks),

- 10 children with a match identified,
- 10 with a potential match,
- 8 further visits organised for the initial meeting with adopters who have expressed an interest.

3.11.4 There have been 3 sets of adoptive parents fully approved so far this year with 12 more at Stage 1 and seven at stage 2. The services are confident that last year's performance will be surpassed.

### 3.12 Caseloads

3.12.1 Taking into account the reduced caseloads of 'Assessed and Supported Year in Employment' (ASYE) social workers and 'Advanced Practitioner' (APs) (but not the 3 social workers currently on long-term sick leave) average caseloads for LAC teams 1-3 remain at 15. Which is high than the shown in system data reports.

3.12.2 In addition, the audit undertaken in April 18 evidenced that on average across the 5 teams 20% of social worker capacity is 'lost' by virtue of them having to supervise contact or due to the time spent driving to and from out of authority placements. This means that in real terms the average caseload for LAC 1-3 is the equivalent of 18. More concerning the average caseload for teams 4-5 is 13 (with a similar 20% uplift for contact and travelling) and this is being impacted by the increasing delays in adoptions being progressed due to the court more readily agreeing to final appeals by birth parents meaning that the throughput of cases is delayed.

3.12.3 The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Handbook recommends that IRO's should have between 50 and 70 children whom they review. Rotherham's nine IRO's currently have an average of 69.9 children. In real terms due to high level of IRO sickness, three IRO's have 70 or more, and our agency IRO is providing some support to cover individual meetings over and above her allocated caseloads. The real pressure in the team is coming from the on-going allocations linked to high admissions to care. In order to support the IRO's with caseloads, and covering staff sickness we have agreed a 12 month secondment to the team to support a workers development and reflect that we aim to reduce the number of Looked after children in the coming months.



#### **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)**

Ian Walker, Head of Service Looked After Children and Care Leavers  
ian.walker@rotherham.gov.uk

Ailsa Barr Interim Assistant Director Safeguarding Children  
ailsa.barr@rotherham.gov.uk