

Council Report

Corporate Parenting Performance

Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – October 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)

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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 (LAC) 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 Monthly Performance Report (October 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 – October 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 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 The performance within the LAC teams has remained reasonably consistent despite the significantly increasing caseloads. Where performance has dipped (health needs assessments, dental checks, up to date care plans and statutory visits) the underlying narrative sometimes is one of delays in inputting rather than the work not being completed. These 4 issues will be the main focus of attention in the remaining performance clinics of 2018.
- 3.1.2 The continuing improved performance in respect of placement stability and LAC in family based settings is probably the most reassuring aspect of this report as these are the most reliable indicators of successful outcomes being achieved for our looked after children and of the impact of social work interventions.

3.1.3 The LAC Service underwent its third peer review undertaken by our Improvement Partner, Lincolnshire County Council, on the 5th to the 7th November. On this visit they reported that our social work staff had “blown them away.” They also stated that we knew ourselves very well and they agreed with our judgement on all of the cases we provided for them to track. They stated that the service was unrecognisable from the one they saw when they first came to review LAC in 2016. They were impressed by the significant changes they have seen, the atmosphere in the teams was extremely positive and the co-location had helped relationship building. They did, however, make some useful challenges especially in respect of the Fostering Recruitment processes. These will be incorporated into an action plan that will be developed at the next LAC Service Development day in December.

3.2 Looked After Children Profile

3.2.1 There continues to be an increasing LAC profile. At the end of March 2018, we had 627 children and at the end of October this had increased to 658, a rate of 116 per 10,000 population. This is significantly high when compared to the statistical neighbour average of 81.3.

3.2.2 In October we had 26 admissions to care. 16 of the children were in sibling groups and the average age was 6.4 years.

3.2.3 Discharges were also strong in October with 22 children leaving care, giving us a net increase of 4 LAC. Over the course of 2018, this monthly net increase has started to slow down, although the desired monthly net reduction is yet to be achieved on a consistent basis.

3.2.4 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 difference being the lower proportion aged over sixteen (17% 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	55	8%	5%
1 – 4	98	15%	13%
5 - 9	140	21%	19%
10 - 15	250	38%	39%
16+	112	17%	24%
Total	658		

3.2.5 The percentage distribution by legal status remains a consistent picture with 51% of children subject to full care orders, 32% on an Interim Care Order, 11% are on Placement Orders with Care Order and 5% under Section 20. There is no clear national data to benchmark this distribution against.

3.3 LAC Plans

3.3.1 There has been a decrease in the proportion of LAC who have up to date care plans. Compliance at the end of March was 89% and slowly increased through the year to 91.7% in September. This went back down to 87.6% in October. Team managers have been directed to address the shortfalls and this will be a focus at performance meetings over the coming month.

3.4 Reviews

3.4.1 The timeliness of statutory reviews has improved from 81.3% in August to 89.9% in October (133 out of 148). Increased capacity within the IRO service has supported this improvement.

3.5 Visits

3.5.1 Performance in respect of statutory visits has dipped slightly this month to 95%. This is only 1.6% less than April when we had 32 less children.

3.6 Placements

3.6.1 As is evidenced by research the best indicator of a positive outcome for looked after children is the extent to which they have been supported to remain living in the same placement or with as few placement disruptions as possible. Placement stability is most likely to be achieved by good matching processes; high levels of support provided to foster carers; and strong relationships being developed by social workers with their young people to ensure they are best placed to address any issues as and when they arise.

3.6.2 The proportion of children placed in a family based setting remains stable at 82.7% at the end of October (family based settings include internal fostering, independent fostering, pre-adoption placements and those placed with parent/family/friends).

3.6.3 There has been a positive reduction in the number of LAC experiencing multiple placement moves in the last 12 months from the highest point this year of 14.8% at the end of May to 12.1% at the end of October. In real terms, this is a reduction from 94 to 79 children experiencing multiple placement moves. This represents the best performance of the year so far.

- 3.6.4 October was the highest proportion ever for Rotherham with 69.2% of long term LAC remaining in the same placement for at least 2 years (101 out of 146 children). This is an improvement of 8% compared to the end of March 2018, and is higher than the statistical neighbour average of 68.2%.
- 3.6.5 Projecting forward, the 'Right Child Right Care' project drive to secure greater permanence via SGO/CAO may impact on this performance measure in the coming months as those stable placements come to an end as the young person leaves care for SGO/CAO. However, for those children where the plan is to remain in care, all placements of more than 18 months, where the young person and the carers agree, have been given a set Panel date (within the first 6 months of 2019) to present the case for a formal match. This and the continued impact of the Intensive Intervention Programme and the introduction of the Life-Long Links project, should assist in the drive for even greater placement stability.

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 and that figures reported by the LAC Health Team are higher than those recorded in local systems. Therefore we know that recent performance will change when statistics are rerun in future reports.
- 3.7.2 Initial Health Assessments in October currently shows as 57.9%, with the year to date figure at 43.9%. This is below last year's performance of 55%. In order to address this, a joint agency process review was held on the 10th September where a number of actions were agreed with the objective of improving engagement and timeliness. A follow up review has been scheduled for 10th December to assess the impact of those actions.
- 3.7.3 Health Reviews performance at the end of October decreased from the previous month to 86.6% but still slightly higher than 83.7% at the end of March 2018. Dental performance has dipped to 67.2% from a high of 76% in August. Again, these remain a key focus at performance meetings.

3.8 LAC Education

- 3.8.1 Rotherham has a local standard to ensure that each PEP is of good quality and refreshed every term (rather than the annual minimum standard). 97.4% of eligible LAC had a PEP in the summer term, with most of the shortfall being due to children being admitted too late in the term for a PEP meeting to be arranged. The next termly update will be the autumn term reported at the end of December.
- 3.8.2 At the end of October, 92.2% of eligible LAC population had a Personal Education Plan.

3.9 Care Leavers

- 3.9.1 The number of young people receiving a Care Leavers service at the end of October was 242, which is a reduction on the 2017/18 year end position of 256.
- 3.9.2 Performance has stayed relatively stable in respect of care leavers with a pathway plan and up to date pathway plan. They remain virtually unchanged at 95% and 94.2% respectively. The Peer Review in November also identified one pathway plan that was of 'Outstanding' quality. This will be used as a template of best practice.
- 3.9.3 The proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation remains strong at 95.5% at the end of October.
- 3.9.4 The number of care leavers who are in Education, Employment or Training has again slightly improved at the end of October to 63.6% and places Rotherham in the top quartile.

3.10 Fostering

- 3.10.1 Up to the end of October, we had approved 10 new foster and had 11 assessments ongoing. There are 3 IFA carers who are expressing a strong interest in becoming carers for Rotherham.
- 3.10.2 There have been 20 Expressions of Interest made over the course of October which is higher than usual. Given that 5 of these look to be viable options, this is a positive sign for improved recruitment over the course of the next 4 months.
- 3.10.3 Effective retention is already an increasing concern and this is going to be an ongoing pressure given the increasingly aging demography of our foster carers. Over the course of the financial year there have been 15 foster carers who have resigned or have been de-registered. Although 3 of these foster carers had not provided any placement since the summer of 2017 so the impact of their withdrawal from the fostering role will be less significant than would appear on face value. In summary, 6 of the carers resigned due to practice/safeguarding issues, 2 were deregistered due to safeguarding concerns, 2 resigned following successful application for SGO and the remaining 5 were resignations due to personal issues, changes in circumstances or retirement when placements came to a natural end.

3.11 Adoptions

- 3.11.1 Rotherham's policy is to persevere in seeking adoptive placements for 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. The significant number of children in the adoption process will also, in time, alleviate some of the concerns regarding the overall numbers of looked after children.
- 3.11.2 So far this financial year, 14 children have been adopted. At the end of October, we had 25 children in adoptive placements, of which 11 have court dates for their adoption hearings. The projected number of adoptions for 2018-19 is 31-34. This would be an improvement on the 2017-18 figure.
- 3.11.3 In addition, there are 21 children matched with adoptive parents but yet to be placed and family finding continues for a further 19 children.
- 3.11.4 The A1 measure for 'number of days between becoming LAC and having an adoption placement' for the 14 adopted children is currently an average of 351.4 days. This is lower than the national target of 426 days.
- 3.11.5 The A2 measure for 'number of days between placement order and being matched with an adoptive family' for the 14 adopted children is currently an average of 185.7 days. This is higher than the national target of 121 days.
- 3.11.6 In terms of recruitment of adoptive families, there have been 13 sets of adoptive parents fully approved so far this year with 7 more at stage 1, and six at stage 2. Once again last year's performance looks likely to be surpassed with the forecast of 23/24 over the year compared to 14 approvals last year.

3.12 Caseloads

- 3.12.1 The increase in LAC numbers has impacted on caseloads within the LAC Service. Average caseloads for LAC teams 1-3 are at a high of 14.6 and the average caseload for LAC Teams 4-5 is 13.8. The calculation for average caseloads does not take into account the reduced caseloads of social workers on a phased return to work, 'Assessed and Supported Year in Employment' social workers and 'Advanced Practitioners'. This would increase the average caseloads for LAC teams to 17.25. The Court and Permanence teams have similarly increased caseloads which was an average of 15.75, although each case in proceedings presents a disproportionate level of work. Both of these are part of an on-going rising trend and they are beginning to impact on performance and

quality of interventions with direct work and life-story work being increasingly difficult to accommodate.

3.12.2 The on-going demand for social workers to supervise contact continues to be a significant pressure on the LAC Service, with the time demands being the equivalent of an additional 3 cases per social worker across the service. Recruitment of the additional contact worker resource continues but is likely to be a few months before these workers are in post. As a result the impact on social worker capacity and ability to sustain timeliness in stat visits is likely to be an on-going challenge for a few months yet.

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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