

## **Council Report**

Corporate Parenting Performance

### **Title**

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – December 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 - Dec 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 2017/18 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 At the end of 2018 we had started to see a reduction in the number of looked after children, with more children leaving care and less children entering care. The reduction in some of our longer term LAC has impacted the long term placement stability figure, however the performance for placement stability indicators remain good overall.
- 3.1.2 The second phase of the Right Child Right Care project begins in January. We are tracking a new cohort of children and young people with the focus of securing long term permanent homes for them, and where appropriate, moving children out of care.
- 3.1.3 The Lifelong Links programme of work begins at the start of 2019. The project aims to improve outcomes for those children who do not have a plan to live with their family or secure permanence through adoption, by helping them to make lifelong links with people who are important to them. In turn, this should improve placement stability for those children.

### 3.2 Looked After Children Profile

- 3.2.1 There has been a reduction in the number of LAC since the last Corporate Parenting meeting. The number was at a high in August at 654 and has steadily reduced to 634 at the end of December. This is the lowest number of LAC since the beginning of the financial year.
- 3.2.2 This net reduction has slightly reduced our rate of LAC per 10k population to 112% from a high of 115.6%. We are, however, still exceptionally high in comparison to our statistical neighbours.
- 3.2.3 The percentage of our children who ceased to be looked after due to permanence is at 29% for the financial year. This is an increase on our previous 2 years of 27.9% for 16/17 and 27.3% for 17/18.
- 3.2.4 Table 1 provides a breakdown by age of the LAC population 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 (16% 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-18) |
|----------|--------|------------|---|
| Under 1  | 53     | 8%         | 6%  |
| 1 – 4    | 96     | 15%        | 13%                                       |
| 5 - 9    | 133    | 21%        | 19%                                       |
| 10 - 15  | 250    | 39%        | 39%                                       |
| 16+      | 102    | 16%        | 23%                                       |
| Total    | 634    |            |   |

- 3.2.5 The percentage distribution by legal status remains a consistent picture with 53% of children subject to full care orders, 31% on an Interim Care Order, 10% are on Placement Orders with Care Order and 5% under Section 20.

### 3.3 LAC Plans

- 3.3.1 The proportion of LAC with an up to date care plan has declined to 86.4% in December, the lowest so far this year (from 87.6% at the last Corporate Parenting report). 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 Statutory Reviews have reached a high for this financial year with 93.8% of cases reviewed within timescale.

### 3.5 Visits

3.5.1 Statutory visits have remained consistent across the year with 96.5% in time at the end of December.

### 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 October was the highest proportion ever for Rotherham with 69.7% of long term LAC remaining in the same placement for at least 2 years (101 out of 145 children). This was higher than the statistical neighbour average of 68.2%. However, as predicted, due to a number of children ceasing to be looked after through the drive of the 'Right Child Right Care' programme, the overall number of children has reduced, slightly reducing this figure to 65.8% at the end of December. Although it appears to be a reduction in performance on this particular measure, the outcomes for the children leaving care and moving to permanence are good.

3.6.3 The number of LAC with 3 or more placement moves in the last 12 months continues to improve. At the end of December, the figure was at its lowest this year at only 11.9% of LAC experiencing multiple placement moves. A reduction from a high of 14.8% in May. This indicates that robust care plans are being achieved for our LAC supporting placement stability.

3.6.4 The proportion of children placed in a family based setting remains stable. At the end of December, it was at the highest this year with 83.9% of LAC placed in family based settings including internal fostering, independent fostering, pre-adoption placements and those placed with parent/family/friends.

### 3.7 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 data will change when statistics are rerun in future reports.
- 3.7.2 We are still below last year's performance of 55% of Initial Health Assessments in time, with only 46.2% recorded so far this year. A further meeting is taking place with health colleagues at the end of January to address the issues experienced from both sides on IHA's.
- 3.7.3 Up to date Health Assessments was also at a low of 82.2% at the end of December from a high of 94.4% in July. However, with the known issue of delayed inputting of health assessments, it is possible that this figure will increase once delays are caught up.
- 3.7.4 Likewise, dental performance has also reduced to 66% at the end of December from a high of 76% in August. Similarly dental checks are likely to have some delays in recording. Team managers have been briefed to focus on these areas of performance to achieve some marked improvement by the end of January.

### 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).
- 3.8.2 97% of LAC had a PEP meeting during the autumn term 2018-19, with 86% of these being complete and signed off by the Virtual School. Schools are actively being chased for incomplete PEPs therefore the figure will continue to rise.
- 3.8.3 At the end of December, 94.4% of eligible LAC population had a Personal Education Plan.

### 3.9 Care Leavers

- 3.9.1 Note that there has been a realignment of the performance reporting for the Care Leavers cohort to reflect the requirements of legislation. Therefore RMBC will now be reporting performance on the wider cohort of young people identified as care leavers as opposed to previous classifications arising as a consequence of allocation of a Personal Advisor.

- 3.9.2 The number of young people receiving a Care Leavers service at the end of December was 294.
- 3.9.3 The above change has created fluctuations in performance. There has been a decline in the percentage of young people with an up to date pathway plan (81.4%). This tends to be young people aged 16. The majority of these young people will have an in date care plan and it will be addressed by transitioning young people to a pathway plan on Liquid Logic. This will now become the focus of activity over the coming months across the LAC and Leaving Care services.
- 3.9.4 The proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation remains strong and has slightly improved to 96.3% at the end of December, the highest this financial year.
- 3.9.5 The number of care leavers who are in Education, Employment or Training has again slightly improved at the end of December to 63.6% and places Rotherham in the top quartile.

### 3.10 Fostering

- 3.10.1 At the end of December we had 70.5% of our LAC in fostering placements.
- 3.10.2 With regards to in-house fostering capacity, in December, we had 1 new foster carer household approved, taking the total to 150 in house fostering households.
- 3.10.3 Over this financial year, there have been a total of 12 new foster families approved so far. We have a further 7 assessments on-going and are therefore forecasting a total of 19 approvals over the full 2018-19 year.
- 3.10.4 These approvals have been offset by the 17 de-registrations we have had since April, and a further 3 deregistration's that we have booked in at fostering panel in January. This imbalance in fostering household approvals against de-registrations, remains the most significant performance pressure for the LAC Service.
- 3.10.5 The team have been set the target of a net increase of 15 new foster families every year over the course of the next 3 years. Whilst it is to be hoped that there will be far fewer de-registrations due to poor caring practices in 2019 it is likely that there will be a number of resignations/retirements. This is projected because 6 of the 150 foster carers are over the age of 70 and that 20% of the current foster carer cohort are over the age of 60, thus hitting retirement age.
- 3.10.6 We have 7 new assessments that will be allocated in January. Should these be successful, they will provide a start to the 2019-20 recruitment target.

3.10.7 The Recruitment Team will be visiting Lincolnshire in the New Year to assess if there is any learning to be had from their recruitment practices.

3.10.8 A DLT report is to be written in respect of the Muslim Foster Carer recruitment which aims to provide an additional 12 placements for a fee paid at point of approval.

### 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.

3.11.2 So far this financial year, 25 children have been adopted. 28% of which were adopted within 12 months of receiving the formal decision that they should be adopted.

3.11.3 The number of days between becoming looked after and being placed in an adoption placement has a national target of 426 days. For these 25 children so far, we have performed better than the given target with the average number of 380 days.

3.11.4 However, for the number of days between receiving a placement order and being matched with an adoptive family, we have a national target of 121 days. For these 25 children so far, we have had an average of 214 days.

3.11.5 We have a further 7 children with court dates set for adoption order and 1 has an application lodged. Taking these cases in to consideration, we would project a total of 33 adoptions for 2018-19. This would be an improvement on the 2017-18 figure of 27.

3.11.6 We also have 27 children already in their adoptive placements, 12 of which are able to lodge because the children have been in place for more than 10 weeks. These cases will give us a good start to the upcoming 2019/20 year for adoption performance, achieving permanence for our children and subsequently, reducing the number of overall LAC in Rotherham.

3.11.7 In terms of recruitment of adoptive families, there have been 17 sets of adoptive parents fully approved so far this year, surpassing last year's figure of 14. We have a further 7 at stage 1, and six at stage 2 of the recruitment process. This gives us a forecast of 23/24 approvals over the 2018-19 year.

### 3.12 Caseloads

3.12.1 Average caseloads for LAC teams 1-3 are at a high of 15.5 and the average caseload for LAC Teams 4-5 is 14.4. As previously reported, 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'.

3.12.2 Further to this, the on-going demand for social workers to supervise contact provides a further drain on capacity to the equivalent of up to 3 additional cases per social worker.

3.12.3 Within the Court and Permanence Teams recruitment is becoming increasingly challenging. The two teams are currently operating on 75% capacity overall (a shortfall of 3 social workers and one AP overall) with even Agency social workers of the requisite skills and experience being difficult to secure. If the recruitment position is not resolved it is likely that the teams will have to stop taking any more case transfers which will have a consequential impact on other parts of the service. Opportunities for secondments from other parts of the service are being promoted.

## **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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