

Ofsted Focussed Visit March 2019

PERMANENCE PLANNING

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Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council 

What's working well

Improved practice in respect of PLO:-

- **Most recent S20 Audit (Feb 19) evidenced appropriate use or a clear rationale for S20 placements and thus minimal drift.**

- **Of the 33 children subject of s20, 6 were UASCs, 10 by virtue of receiving short-breaks, 6 were 17+, 8 in PLO/legal process and 3 with a plan for rehab**

- **All admissions presented to PLO Panel including emergency admissions so that:**
 - **Opportunities for rehab fully explored.**

 - **All family options exhausted and viability assessments appropriately front loaded.**

 - **Adoption planning including EPP considered at earliest opportunity.**



Improving Placement Stability

- Long-term placement stability tracker
 - Process managed within Performance Clinics
 - 21 long-term matches achieved in 2018/19
 - 13 more with Panel date already booked (7 x IFAs)
- Better use of SGO/CAOs
 - Early use of ISO/ICAO at initial hearings
 - 28 LAC stepped down to SGO/CAO in 2018/19
 - 83 children made subject of SGO/CAO not previously LAC over same period
 - 273 placements financially supported by CYPS
 - Post SGO Support Worker to encourage greater sign up by carers
 - Letterbox co-ordinator

A 'Good' Adoption Service

- 32 adoptions successfully completed – 22 of these children in the 'Hard to Place' categories.
- Time-limited searches by exception only and in accordance with identified needs of the child.
- RMBC acknowledged as regional EPP leads – 6 EPPs in 2018/19 with 7 more in process.
- Only 1 disrupted adoption and this was pro-actively planned by CYPS.
- 35 more children already in adoptive placements 25 of whom are in 'Hard to Place' categories.
- Post-adoption support
 - RTT – plus dedicated sw.
 - ASF – 136 applications/£437k
- A collective commitment to ensure the RAA does not impact on performance and adoption outcomes for our children.

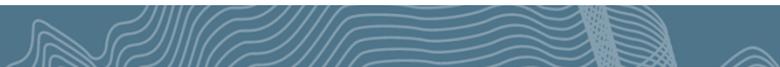


Innovative Practice

- Intensive Intervention Programme using predictive analytics to identify and support the most vulnerable towards increased placement stability.
- Right Child Right Care – providing targeted and performance managed interventions to support more looked after children to permanence arrangements.
- Edge of Care Service - significant investment in a range of edge of care services (PAUSE, MST, FGC, Edge of Care Team) to support children to remain living with birth/extended families and to support Looked After Children to return home.
- Life-Long Links (2nd wave) to re-establish long-term social and family connections using FGC model and social mapping processes to improve placement stability.
- The House Project – contributing to the 'Coming Home' objectives in supporting 16 and 17 year olds to move for Out of Authority placements and towards semi-independent living.

Areas for Further Development

- Although the quality of Life-Story has significantly improved it can be produced too late and is not yet widely available beyond children in the adoption pathway.
- Insufficiency of in-house foster carers can impact on matching practices and placement stability.
- Foster carer retention has been an issue
- A small number of pre-birth assessments have been concluded too close to the end of the pregnancy to allow for a full 12 week consideration within the PLO process.
- Quality of some Care Plans and Support Plans can dissuade the Court from endorsing early permanence



What We Are Doing About It?

- Continued RCRC implementation until we are confident it has become embedded practice
- Improved foster care recruitment
 - Revised Marketing and Placement Sufficiency Strategy
 - Foster Carer Diversity Scheme
 - Mockingbird
 - Challenge 63
 - Fostering Network retention project
- Task & Finish Group has produced a Pre-birth Planning Process and Tracker with milestones measured in Performance Clinics
- Production of Life-story work to become a performance measure
- Improve the quality of Care Plans via the continued drive for 'Outstanding' social work practice.

Informal Feedback – Going Well

- Significant improvement in Permanence Planning for looked after children.
- A real focus on securing the long-term future for LAC with some very creative interventions that are well-adapted to the needs of individual children.
- Progress is very evident and effective strategic management has built on existing strengths and improved management oversight.
- RCRC is a successful enterprise and is progressing to becoming standard practice.
- The Service is reflective and adaptive having embraced the learning identified in previous Peer Reviews.
- There is strong evidence of front-loading assessments and twin track planning.

Areas for Further Action

- SWS are able to well-articulate the plans for their children but they are less well reflected in case files in a consistent way .
- The unique identity of our children is not always captured in assessments especially in regard to ethnic identity and some of our risk assessments are not sufficiently robust to inform placement decisions and permanence plans.
- The IRO footprint is increasingly evident but the impact of this is still limited in respect of wider planning and learning.
- Sufficiency is an issue (N.S.S.) in terms of both demand and the complexity of our young people leading to a small but significant number of unregulated placements.