Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Council Report

Corporate Parenting Performance

Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – 2nd July 2019

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 – April 2019

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 – April 2019

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 April appeared to bring the first fruits of Right Child Right Care (phase 2) with 29 discharges from care achieved over the month and only 16 admissions giving a net reduction of 13 children in total and an overall number of 627 by the end of the month, the equal lowest figure for the previous year. These discharges from care meant that all of those planned were achieved within April suggesting some growing confidence within the Family Court regarding RMBC's permanence planning. As a result, 13 children have been discharged via permanence (SGO's) over the course of 2019 thus far which is not far short of half of the total figure achieved in 2018/19.

3.2 Looked After Children Profile

3.2.1 In February, we had 16 children admitted to care and 29 children ceased to be looked after. This gave us a total of 627 LAC at the end of the month.

3.2.2 The rate of LAC per 10k population reduced slightly to 110.1%. However, we remain exceptionally high in comparison to our statistical neighbours at 87.8%.

3.2.3 The percentage of our children who ceased to be looked after due to permanence begins this new financial year at 27.6%. For comparison, our previous 2 years were 31.7% for 2018-19 and 27.3% for 17/18. Permanence includes SGO, Residence Order and Adoption.

3.2.4 Table 1 provides a breakdown 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 (18% 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	46	7%	6%
1 – 4	93	15%	13%
5 - 9	129	21%	19%
10 - 15	248	40%	39%
16+	111	18%	23%
Total	627		

3.2.5 The average age of children admitted to care remains at 6. This is of relevance because CYPS performance data evidences that the younger a child comes into care the shorter the time they spend in care, the greater the chance of them moving to permanence and the less expensive their placement costs.

3.2.6 The percentage distribution by legal status remains a consistent picture with 55% of children subject to full care orders, 28% on an Interim Care Order, 11% are on Placement Orders and 5% under Section 20. We have 1% (4 children) who are Accommodated with breaks.

3.3 LAC Plans

3.3.1 Our target for up to date care plans is 95%. As reported at the last Corporate Parenting, we had a focus on care plans in March to drive up performance from a low of 83.9% in January. At the end of April we had 94.7% of children with an up to date care plan. Despite the improvement in performance for Care Plans there is still work to do in getting social workers to translate this detailed knowledge of their children into similarly detailed Care Plans and this is going to be an area of focus in June's LAC Service Development Day.

3.4 <u>Reviews</u>

3.4.1 There has been a slight increase in performance regarding Statutory Reviews throughout the beginning of 2019 which has arrested a declining performance. At the end of April we had 93.4% of cases reviewed within timescale.

3.5 <u>Visits</u>

3.5.1 Statutory visits has declined slightly to 95.5% at the end of April compared to 97.8% in February. Whilst performance has dipped, it remains in the mid-90s and are therefore not yet an area of significant concern.

3.6 <u>Placements</u>

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 Long-term placement stability has remained very consistent despite the increasing number of LAC discharging from care via an SGO. At the end of April we had 62.3% of children in long term placements for at least 2 years.

3.6.3 Reassuringly, the number of children experiencing 3 or more placement moves has reduced to 12.5%, with the actual number of children affected reducing from 91 to 78.

3.6.4 The percentage of children placed in a commissioned placement has increased slightly by 1.3% but the actual numbers of children involved has remained the same. As a result the % of LAC in family based settings has decreased slightly by 0.7% to 81.5% at the end of April. Family based includes internal fostering, independent fostering, pre-adoption placements and those placed with parent/family/friends.

3.7 <u>Health and Dental</u>

3.7.1 The yearend figure for 2018/19 initial health assessments undertaken within 20 working days of entering care was 51.7%. During April, 72.2% of initial health assessments were undertaken in time.

3.7.2   Overall, 80.8% of LAC had an up to date health assessment as at the end of April (note: this figure was re-run 17/06/2019 for the purpose of this report to take in to account delayed inputting). This is a decline in performance compared to previous months.

3.7.3   Dental assessments also declined in performance in April to 82.6% of LAC with an up to date dental assessment.

3.8   LAC Education

3.8.1   The expanded educational performance report has now been completed with measures in absence rates, exclusions and less than 25 hour entitlements now included. It is planned that the Virtual School Governing Body will discuss and agree performance targets at its next meeting.

3.8.2   Rotherham has a local standard to ensure that each Personal Education Plan (PEP) is of good quality and refreshed every term (rather than the annual minimum standard).

3.8.3   At the end of April, 95.9% of eligible LAC population had a Personal Education Plan and 96.7% of LAC had a PEP meeting during the spring term 2018-19.

3.8.4   At the end of April, 16.6% of LAC were classed as persistent absentees (more than 10% of sessions missing). This is above the statistical neighbour figure of 10%.

3.8.5   Of the children who have been in care for 12 months or more, 10.4% had at least one fixed term exclusion as at the end of April. For this measure, we sit below the statistical neighbour average of 13.7%.

3.8.6   At the end of April, we had 3.5% of children receiving less than their 25 hour statutory entitlement and 3.7% of children on reduced timetable arrangements.

3.9   Care Leavers

3.9.1   There was a realignment of the performance reporting in December of the Care Leavers cohort to reflect the requirements of legislation. Therefore RMBC is now reporting performance on the wider cohort of young people identified as care leavers than we did in the past. This gives us a cohort of 303 Care Leavers at the end of April.

3.9.2   The performance of this larger cohort remains consistent with 85.3% of Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan and 77.6% with an up to date Pathway Plan. The cases without a Pathway Plan tend 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.

3.9.3   We continue to perform higher than the statistical neighbour average of 88.3% of care leavers in suitable accommodation with 96% of our care leavers living in suitable accommodation.

3.9.4   In April we had a reduction of the number of care leavers who are in Education, Employment or training to 60.1%. This is still above statistical neighbour averages of 56%, but will be investigated further.

3.10 Fostering

3.10.1 At the end of April we had 66% of our LAC in fostering placements (both in house and IFA households). This figure excludes relative and friend placements.

3.10.2 During April, we recruited 4 households and deregistered 2. This is a net increase of 2 households for the year to date, giving us a total of 150 in house fostering households.

3.10.3 Overall there are 14 approvals already projected for 2019/20. There are 7 active assessments currently on-going with 2 more on hold, and 3 IFA carers considering a potential move to RMBC.

3.10.4 The Foster Carer Diversity Scheme has thus far led to 4 new foster families being allocated for assessment and a further 3 viability visits looking positive for progression to the full assessment.

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 For the year 2018-19 we achieved permanence through adoption for 32 children. This was an increase on the 27 we achieved in the previous year.

3.11.3 A third of the children adopted complete the process within 12 months of the children receiving their formal decisions that they should be adopted. 72% (23 children) of all children adopted were in the 'hard to place' categories which reflects some of the delays in finding permanence.

3.11.4 The national target for the number of days between a child entering care and having an adoption placement is 426 days. The average for our 32 adoptions was 386.9 days and well within the target.

3.11.5 The national target for the number of days between a child receiving a placement order and being matched to an adoptive family is 121 days. The average for the children adopted in 2018/19 was 212.4. However, note that the national average for last year was 220 days.

3.11.6 Looking forward to 2019-20, we have had 1 adoption in April and a further 36 children already placed with their prospective adoptive families.

3.11.7 For adopter recruitment, we successfully approved 22 families 2018-19, a significant increase on the 14 approved in the previous year.

3.11.8 Looking forward in to 2019-20, we have 14 prospective adopters already at stage 1 of the recruitment process and 3 in stage 2.

3.12 Caseloads

3.12.1 LAC average caseloads have reduced for the first time in many months from 19.4 to 18.8 in the long-term teams and from 15.3 to 14.4 in the Court and Permanence Teams, largely as a direct consequence of the success of the Demand Management Strategy. However, workloads still remain high due to the continuing demands of supervising contact and out of authority visits.

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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