

Council Report

Corporate Parenting Performance

Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – 15th October 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 – Aug 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 – August 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 Looked After Children Profile

- 3.1.1 In August, we had 22 children admitted to care and 16 children ceased to be looked after. This gave us a total of 642 LAC at the end of the month.
- 3.1.2 The rate of LAC per 10k population remains high at 112.7%. This is exceptionally high in comparison to our statistical neighbours at 87.8%.
- 3.1.3 The percentage of children who have discharged from care this financial year due to permanence is 38.2%. For comparison, our previous 2 years were 31.7% for 2018-19 and 27.3% for 2017/18. Permanence includes SGO, Residence Order and Adoption.
- 3.1.4 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.

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	47	7%	6%
1 – 4	105	16%	13%
5 - 9	125	19%	19%
10 - 15	251	39%	39%
16+	114	18%	23%
Total	642		

3.1.5 The average age of children admitted to care in August was 5 years old. This bodes well for timely permanence plans being achieved in the foreseeable future. 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.

3.1.6 The percentage distribution by legal status remains a consistent picture with 55% of children subject to full care orders, 29% on an Interim Care Order, 10% are on Placement Orders and 5% under Section 20. We have 1% (4 children) who are Accommodated with breaks.

3.2 LAC Plans, Reviews and Visits

3.2.1 Over the summer months we have seen a decline in performance in Care Plans, LAC Reviews and Statutory Visits.

3.2.2 We had a low for the year of 82.7% of Care Plans up to date at the end of August and 88% of Statutory Reviews undertaken in time.

3.2.3 Statutory Visits also declined from 98.4% in July to 92.4% at the end of August.

3.2.4 The significant factor has been the summer holidays with social workers, foster carers and children being unavailable to undertake visits and reviews. We also had a long term absence of an IRO. It is anticipated the shortfall will be addressed over the course of September/October and a plan to address the backlog of reviews in the IRO service has been developed.

3.3 Placements

3.3.1 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.

- 3.3.2 Long-term placement stability has recently increased to 64.8% of children in long term placements for at least 2 years, closing the gap towards the statistical neighbour average of 67.6%.
- 3.3.3 Reassuringly, the number of children experiencing 3 or more placement moves has reduced over the year to 12.1% at the end of August, again closing the gap to the statistical neighbour average of 10.6%.
- 3.3.4 Children placed in family based settings remains stable at 79.3%, which includes internal fostering, independent fostering, pre-adoption placements and those placed with parent/family/friends.
- 3.3.5 The percentage of children placed in a commissioned placement has reduced to 52.3% at the end of August, the lowest this financial year. This is 16 fewer commissioned placements than at the end of July. This can be at least partially attributed to a focussed step-down project that has achieved some success in moving children from Out of Authority residential placements with 10 out of the 31 plans successfully implemented by the end of the month. The remaining 21 plans are on track and 4 more young people are due to move to their house project properties by the end of September.

3.4 Health and Dental

- 3.4.1 During August, 91.7% of initial health assessments were undertaken in time, this was 11 out of 12 children. This makes 84% for the year to date, which is significantly higher than the previous year end figures, the best year being 2017/18 with 55.7%.
- 3.4.2 Overall, 89.1% of all LAC had an up to date health assessment as at the end of August. This has remained consistent across the year to date.
- 3.4.3 Dental assessments are currently reporting at 63.6% up to date at the end of August. There will be a drive over the final two quarters of the year to address this data inputting issue.

3.5 LAC Education

- 3.5.1 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).
- 3.5.2 At the end of the Summer Term, 97.5% of eligible LAC population had a Personal Education Plan and 95% of LAC had a PEP meeting during the term 2018-19.

- 3.5.3 At the end of July, 14.8% of LAC were classed as persistent absentees (more than 10% of sessions missing). This is a reduction compared to the previous months but remains above the statistical neighbour figure of 10%.
- 3.5.4 Of the children who have been in care for 12 months or more, 9.8% had at least one fixed term exclusion as at the end of July. For this measure, we sit below the statistical neighbour average of 13.7%.
- 3.5.5 At the end of July, we had 10.7% of all LAC on reduced timetable arrangements.

3.6 Care Leavers

- 3.6.1 The numbers of Care Leavers eligible for a service stands at 321 at the end of August, which is an all year high. The rise in this number since the start of 2019 is more than that of a full case-load for a Personal Advisor (PA).
- 3.6.2 The percentage of Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan has seen a decline from 86.1% at the start of the year to 84.2% at the end of August. Likewise, as the year has progressed, the number with an up to date pathway plan has reduced to 80.8% from a high of 88.8% in May. This will be an area of focus for the Leaving Care teams in the coming months.
- 3.6.3 We continue to perform higher than the statistical neighbour average of 88.3% of care leavers in suitable accommodation with 95% of our care leavers living in suitable accommodation.
- 3.6.4 The number of care leavers who are in Education, Employment or training has remained fairly consistent at 62% at the end of August and remains above statistical neighbour averages of 56%.

3.7 Fostering

- 3.7.1 At the end of August we had 66.4% of our LAC in fostering placements (both in house and IFA households). This figure excludes relative and friend placements.
- 3.7.2 Since April, we have recruited 9 households and deregistered 7 from our in house fostering service. This is a net increase of 2 households for the year to date, giving us a total of 147 in house fostering households.
- 3.7.3 Recruitment looks increasingly positive with 16 assessments currently being undertaken, a further 9 prospective carers at stage 1

with the potential of progressing to a full assessment and 17 enquiries leading to 2 Initial Visits over the course of August.

- 3.7.4 There will be a further Foster Carer Diversity Community Event held in September to sustain the recent momentum that has built up in respect of this project.

3.8 Adoptions

- 3.8.1 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.
- 3.8.2 There were 3 adoptions finalised over the course of August bringing the yearly 2019/20 total to 16.
- 3.8.3 There are 31 children currently placed with their adoptive parents, 5 of whom have lodged their application and a further 23 whose placement is longer than the required 10 weeks but who are yet to lodge. This looks promising for the number of adoptions projected for this financial year.
- 3.8.4 There are a further 12 children with a matching family identified but not yet placed and a further 25 children for whom family finding is continuing.
- 3.8.5 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 16 adoptions so far is slightly above target at 449 days. However, the latest published statistical neighbour average was 479 days. Performance here is aggravated by the standard 3 month delay between adopters lodging their application and a court date being set for the adoption hearing which continues to be addressed within the Family Court User forum.
- 3.8.6 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 so far is above the target at 167 days. Again, the latest published statistical neighbour average was also higher than the target at 205 days.
- 3.8.7 In adopter recruitment 4 adopters have already been approved this financial year.
- 3.8.8 There are a further 15 adopters in the midst of their assessment; 7 at stage 1 and 8 at stage 2.

3.9 Caseloads

3.9.1 LAC average caseloads have remained relatively stable over the last 3 months with a slight increase in teams 1-3, and a decrease in teams 4-5 during August. In terms of regular time commitments there is a further average equivalent of 3 cases for every social worker arising from contact supervision requirements.

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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