

Council Report

Corporate Parenting Performance

Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – 4th February 2020

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 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 – December 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 Assistant 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 Over the last few months, we have sustained fewer children entering care than we have had leaving care, slowly bringing the total number of looked after children to a low of 607 at the end of December, the lowest number since February 2018.
- 3.1.2 Although the post-Christmas period usually brings additional pressures on the system and a likely increase in numbers of LAC in January/February there are currently 53 discharges planned between the start of January and the end of March, indicating that a figure of 600 by the end of the financial year could be a realistic one.
- 3.1.3 The initial scoping for the Right Child Right Care project for 2020 has commenced with around 156 children identified for possible discharge from care over the course of the year.
- 3.1.4 The percentage of children who have discharged from care this financial year due to permanence, including SGO, Residence Order

and Adoption, remains positive at 37%. This is higher than our previous 2 years of 31.5% in 2018-19 and 27.3% in 2017/18.

- 3.1.5 For our 609 total LAC, the 10k population rate has continued to reduce this reporting month, but remains high at 106.6% in comparison to our statistical neighbours at 87.8%.

3.2 LAC Plans, Reviews and Visits

- 3.2.1 95.1% of our LAC had up to date Statutory Visits at the end of December. Performance here has remained above 95% for all but 1 month in the year of 2019.
- 3.2.2 Up to date care plans have fallen to 88.9% at the end of December, below the desired standard of 95%. It is reported that the Christmas period has been a major factor during the month of December, as it did in the summer holidays.
- 3.2.3 92% of LAC cases were reviewed within timescales during December reaching the IRO team's aim to exceed 90% as reported at the last Corporate Parenting Panel following a previous dip in performance.

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 reduced very slightly to 61.1% although in real terms there have been 5 more children in the same placement for over 2 years, bringing the total to 116 children (improving from 90 to 116 children over the course of the year). However, this performance will continue to be impacted by a small number of foster carers accepting a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) / Child Arrangements Order (CAO) or a plan for adoption to achieve permanence for the children in their care.
- 3.3.3 The number of children with 3 or more placement moves in the previous 12 months has increased slightly from 10.9% to 11.1%. This is only one child in real terms and the general trend is still an improving one over the course of the year and only 0.5% higher than the statistical neighbour average of 10.6%.

- 3.3.4 The number of children in family based setting has improved over the course of the past 3 months to 79.3% which has reversed the previous worsening trend.
- 3.3.5 The number of children living in a commissioned placement increased slightly by 3 children (0.7%) but the ongoing work within the House Project and Out of Authority step-down plans should positively impact on this performance in the coming months.

3.4 Health and Dental

- 3.4.1 Performance for Initial Health Assessments (IHA) in December was 94.7% (with only one child not having their IHA in timescale) and was at 100% in November. The year to date performance equates to 84.9% and this is no longer deemed to be an area of critical need for attention for the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).
- 3.4.2 Health Needs Assessments (HNA's) performance has dropped by 3.1% in December to 81.9%. However, the data held by the LAC nurse team is significantly better indicating some delayed inputting that should see performance figures increase slightly. In addition much of the shortfall is due to older teenagers refusing to access their HNA.
- 3.4.3 Dental checks have also started to decline in performance to 80.1% up to date at the end of December. A quarter of the shortfall is due to older teenagers refusing to access a dental check which would otherwise push performance into the mid 80%'s. However, there needs to be some focussed efforts to address the remaining shortfalls.

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. PEP completion rate for the Autumn term will be similar however, due to staff turnover, not all PEPs had a Virtual School adviser present at them. This may mean that some PEPs were not completed and as such the completion rate may be slightly lower than previous terms. Where possible, in these circumstances, social workers lead on the completion.
- 3.5.3 Of the children who have been in care for 12 months or more, 14.4% were classed as persistent absentees at the end of December. This means they had more than 10% of sessions

missing. This measure has been consistent over the last few months and remains above the statistical neighbour average of 10%. This is due to a number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's) not in provision. To mitigate this, it is being challenged on a weekly basis by the Education Health and Care Assessment Team (EHCAT). The cohort is tracked on a weekly basis by both the VS and EHCAT in a shared tracking and monitoring document. Most of the learners in this specific cohort have a tuition offer in place.

3.5.4 Of the children who have been in care for 12 months or more, 9.3% had at least one fixed term exclusion as at the end of December. For this measure, we sit below the statistical neighbour average of 13.7%. The Virtual School continues to challenge fixed term exclusions and seeks to support schools directly when they exclude LAC and with training and advice to prevent exclusions. Action plans are being drawn up to further develop and formalise the offer of support and challenge to both primary and secondary schools. The split between in and out of authority remains similar to last year at 54:46 respectively. There are differences in exclusion rates between Primary and Secondary; 5% of Primary children have been excluded this term, 13% of Secondary aged children have been excluded this term.

3.5.5 At the end of December, we had 5.9% of all LAC on reduced timetable arrangements. Reduced provision timetables are only ever agreed in exceptional circumstances and are monitored closely and reviewed regularly.

3.6 Care Leavers

3.6.1 The numbers of Care Leavers eligible for a service remains high at 320 at the end of December.

3.6.2 Pathway Plans remain stable for our care leavers with 89.9% having a plan and 86.2% having an up to date plan at the end of December.

3.6.3 We continue to perform higher than the statistical neighbour averages with an increase to 98.8% of care leavers in suitable accommodation and an increase to 65.6% of our care leavers in employment, education or training.

3.7 Fostering

3.7.1 At the end of December we had 68.1% of our LAC in fostering placements (both in house and IFA households), the highest of the year. This figure excludes relative and friend placements.

- 3.7.2 Since April, we have recruited 14 new households, had 12 resignations and deregistered 3, giving us a net reduction of 1 household so far this financial year.
- 3.7.3 There are a further 15 potential new fostering households in application and 5 in assessment.
- 3.7.4 The refreshed foster care recruitment website and process as designed with Bright Sparks was launched on the 23rd September 2019. From the interest they have drawn so far, there have been 56 initial visits and 26 follow up visits. Those with follow up visits are the ones that are more likely to progress.
- 3.7.5 To supplement this, a more refined performance management process is in the midst of being developed in order to support the team to minimise any delays in the assessment and approval process with the aim of reducing the overall timescale from Initial Visit to Approval to an average of less than 4 months.

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 December bringing the yearly 2019/20 total to 25. Over half of these children are categorised as 'harder to place'.
- 3.8.3 A further 31 children are already living in their adoptive placements, and 13 children have an adoptive family identified. We are also family finding for an additional 13 children.
- 3.8.4 Taking this in to account, the current forecast is approximately 34 adoptions by the end of 2019/20.
- 3.8.5 The LAC Service is currently undertaking 4 revocations of Placement Orders. This means we are no longer planning for adoption for these children. The service is undertaking an internal review to clarify if there are any lessons to be learned from these changes in plans for children. An additional report will be presented to Corporate Parenting Panel once this is complete.
- 3.8.6 The national target for the number of days between a child entering care and having an adoption placement is a maximum of 426 days. The average for our 25 adoptions so far is on target at 408 days

and is lower than the latest published statistical neighbour average of 479 days.

3.8.7 The national target for the number of days between a child receiving a placement order and being matched to an adoptive family is a maximum of 121 days. The average for the children adopted so far this year is over the target at 146 days. However, this is lower than the latest published statistical neighbour average of 205 days.

3.8.8 In adopter recruitment 12 adoptive families have already been approved this financial year. There are currently a further 13 potential adopters in assessment; 7 at stage 1 and 6 at stage 2.

3.9 Caseloads

3.9.1 The average caseload in the LAC Service has increased slightly. This is largely due to a number of social workers leaving the employment of RMBC and some long-term sickness issues meaning that the remaining social workers have had to be allocated more cases. At an average of 19.7 for the long-term LAC Teams, this equals the highest average figure for the year, although recent recruitment should ensure the figure will start to reduce once again in the foreseeable future.

3.9.2 The average caseload in the Court and Permanence teams has reduced slightly primarily due to a number of care proceedings coming to an end with permanence arrangements being positively secured for a number of children.

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. Corporate Parenting Panel members 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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