

Council Report

Corporate Parenting Performance

Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – 30th June 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 – April 2020

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 2020

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 2018/19 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 Through this reporting period all services and interventions offered by the council have been impacted upon by Covid -19. The narrative offered below will reflect some of the challenges this has posed for the Looked After Children of Rotherham and how RMBC CYPS have worked to minimise the negative impact to ensuring effective care planning continues to support each young person's stability and progress.
- 3.2 Looked After Children Profile
 - 3.2.1 At the end of April, we had a total of 604 Looked After Children. The number of LAC increased in April 20 following the previous downward trend throughout 2019/20. This reflects the previous 2 months of increased admissions, with some planned and others on an emergency basis.
 - 3.2.2 We continue to support children to safely return home with their wider family network and continue to seek permanency for them where this is not possible. Right Child Right Care (RCRC) continues to track those children in scope to cease being LAC by December 2020. The performance data reflects in April 2020 that the impact of

Covid-19; in line with social distancing and supporting families and children's right to a fair hearing, Court took the position of not hearing contested matters virtually and halted progressing new court applications or hearings. This has particularly impacted for those children placed for adoption or where the plan was to seek a discharge of their care order. In response the service has focused on ensuring applications are logged with legal and that RCRC continue to track the progress on a monthly basis. Court has recommenced some hearings from 01/06/2020.

3.2.3 The percentage of children who discharged from care in 2019/20 due to permanence, including SGO, Residence Order and Adoption, was slightly above the 2018-19 figure of 31.5% with 32.4%.

3.2.4 For our 604 total LAC, the 10k population rate remains high at 106.1% in comparison to our statistical neighbours of 92%.

3.3 LAC Plans, Reviews and Visits

3.3.1 A high number of LAC cases were reviewed in April 2020 (146) but this was a decline from March 2020 (178). Timeliness however increased to 95.2% (+1.4%). Through Covid-19 all LAC reviews have been supported virtually, with some positive results around engaging more young people in their review.

3.3.2 LAC with an up to date plan continued the increasing trend in April to 94.7% (89.6% in Jan 2020).

3.3.3 LAC visits in time (NMS) reduced further in April to 81.2% from 94.5% in March 2020 (-13.3%). However, this figure does not include any Virtual Visits carried out since Covid-19 Lockdown began on 23/03/2020. If we were to include virtual visits this would be 96.5% (584/605). This figure has not been pulled through into the main performance data set in order to show complete transparency about how work is being completed through the Covid-19 pandemic. For each young person, the need to visit is reviewed weekly by the allocated social worker and the subsequent decision making (rag rating) is overseen by the team manager.

3.4 Placements

3.4.1 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.

- 3.4.2 April remained relatively stable across all measures which is particularly positive considering the changes experienced by our children in care and their carers, highlighting the positive work by all involved in the systems to support our young people, carers and placements.
- 3.4.3 Long-term placement stability has remained at 62.6% at the end of April. This measure is the percentage of LAC who have been looked after for at least 2.5 years and remained in stable placements for at least 2 years.
- 3.4.4 The number of children with 3 or more placement moves in the previous 12 months has positively reduced to 9.6%, the best performance so far this year and in line with the statistical neighbour and national averages (both 10%).
- 3.4.5 The number of children in family-based setting has also improved slightly to 81.6%.

3.5 Health and Dental

- 3.5.1 Dental checks are continuing the downward trend since October 2019 (88.1%) to 62.4% in April. The service has progressed some cross referencing with health and there is further data that is due to be input to increase this figure. Given Covid-19 and the closure of dentists there may be some continued decline in the figure.
- 3.5.2 Performance for Initial Health Assessments (IHA) in April was 100% with all 7 children receiving their assessment in time. This has been picked up by the Head of Service as a key area of focus.
- 3.5.3 Up to date health assessments for all LAC has slightly declined from 88.6% in January to 84.4% in April.

3.6 LAC Education

- 3.6.1 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).
- 3.6.2 At the end of the Spring Term, 96.5% of eligible LAC population had a Personal Education Plan and 82.6% of LAC had a PEP meeting during the term. However, these are provisional figures as the Virtual School is currently checking the exceptions lists to rectify any anomalies which means we could see an increase in this figure.
- 3.6.3 During the spring term, 7.1% of sessions were lost due to absence for those children who have been LAC continuously for the previous 12 months.

- 3.6.4 For the same cohort, 19.1% of LAC were classed as persistent absentees in the spring term. This means they missed 10% or more of their sessions.
- 3.6.5 Of those who were LAC for at least 12 months, 14.5% had at least one fixed term exclusion during the spring term.
- 3.6.6 7.2% of all LAC were on reduced timetable arrangements during the spring term.
- 3.6.7 Since the start of Covid-19, there have not been any exclusions and attendance are not being reported in the same way. As a result, figures for exclusions, persistent absence and reduced provision will see a significant reduction for the summer term.

3.7 Care Leavers

- 3.7.1 The number of care leavers in April increased to 325.
- 3.7.2 The performance of Pathway Plans reduced slightly to 92.6% of care leavers having a plan and 91.4% having an up to date plan at the end of April.
- 3.7.3 Care leavers in suitable accommodation has seen a slight improvement (+0.9%).
- 3.7.4 Through May there has been targeted work within the LAC service and IRO's lead by the Service Manager for Leaving care. This is to ensure a focus on timely completion of needs assessments and pathway plans by the LAC service. This is also being supported at senior management level via the residential panel and performance meetings.
- 3.7.5 Education, Employment and Training (EET) is being explored for each young person, but there remain some challenges linked to Covid-19, given this young population are potentially most at risk linked to their age and type of employment. We had a slight reduction in the % of care leavers in EET at the end of April to 60.3%.

3.8 Fostering

- 3.8.1 At the end of April, we had 67.9% of our LAC in fostering placements. Fostering placements includes both those placed with our in house foster carers and those placed with Independent Fostering Agencies.

3.8.2 In the year 2019/20, we recruited 19 new households and had 22 resignations/deregistered, giving us a net reduction of 3 households at year end.

3.8.3 April, the start of the new financial year, remained relatively stable with a steady increase in the number of Foster Care recruited, and a reduction in resignations and deregistration's. This reflects an ongoing move in the right direction with further fostering assessments due to be heard at panel on a regular basis. This highlights positive recruitment and retention.

3.9 Adoptions

3.9.1 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.

3.9.2 In 2019/20 we achieved permanence via adoption for 29 children.

3.9.3 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 29 adoptions was within target at 391.5 days.

3.9.4 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 in 2019/20 was over the target at 146 days. This is partially due to the number of children that we have who meet the criteria for 'harder to place', which often means it takes a little longer to find a suitable prospective family for those children. However, we remain below the latest published statistical neighbour average of 205 days for this measure.

3.10 Caseloads

3.10.1 The average caseload in LAC Teams 1-3 was at 17.4 at the end of April and for Teams 4-5 (permanence teams) to 15.4. This is the lowest level of the past 12 months and is reflective of the reducing size of the LAC total cohort. However, this does not perhaps reflect the level of positive work that practitioners have been completing in order to support colleagues who due to periods of Covid-19 (self isolation, vulnerability or shielding) have not been able to complete visits. The positive level of visits, assessments, reviews and plans completed across the complete pathway needs to be recognised.

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 Subgroup 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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