

Council Report

Corporate Parenting Performance

Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – 3rd November 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)

Cathryn Woodward (Performance and Data Officer – Social Care)
Rebecca Wall (Head of Safeguarding Quality and Learning)

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 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 – Aug 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 During August we had 25 children entering care and only 12 children discharging from care, leaving us with an increased number of 616 LAC at month end (13 more than the end of July).
 - 3.2.2 This increase also raised our 10k population rate by 2.3% to 107.1% at the end of August. To compare, our statistical neighbours are at 92%.
 - 3.2.3 Additionally, 2 SGO's were started in August. This is relatively low when compared to pre Covid-19 which reflects the impact on court and progressing final hearings and adoption applications being

granted. Court dates are now planned for final hearings and adoption applications, so this is expected to increase through the next few months.

3.3 LAC Plans, Reviews and Visits

- 3.3.1 There were significantly less LAC reviews undertaken in August, but this is usual through the summer months due to leave and schools/health having reduced capacity to contribute to reviews. The timeliness of these reviews was high at 98.6% (72/73). Through Covid-19 many LAC reviews have been supported virtually, with some positive results around engaging more young people in their reviews.
- 3.3.2 LAC with an up to date plan also reduced slightly in August to 91.2% but remains slightly above the pre Covid months of 90.1% in February.
- 3.3.3 LAC visits up to date and within timescale increased in August to 94.7% from a low of 80.8% in May following the social distancing measures implemented by government. However, the figures do 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 96.9% in August. 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.

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 The number of children and young people experiencing long term placement stability reduced slightly in August to 63% from 65.3% in July. However, this is still relatively stable when compared to the 2020 calendar year calculating an average of 63.1% across the year.
- 3.4.3 There has been a further significant decrease in the percentage of children having 3 or more placements in the last rolling 12 months reducing to 7.6% in August from 9.3% in July. This reflects a small number of children and young people and their carers who have had placement disruptions. For comparison, the latest published statistical neighbour and national averages are both 10%.

3.4.4 The number of children in family-based setting has remained consistent throughout the year with 81.8% at the end of August.

3.5 Health and Dental

3.5.1 Health checks had remained relatively consistent at the start of the 2020 calendar year but since the Covid-19 pandemic beginning in March health checks have seen a gradual, continued noticeable decline with 77.8% of health assessments up to date from a high of 90% in April. This has been noted and work is ongoing to support the improvement of timeliness of consent which has been a recent barrier and challenge.

3.5.2 Dental checks are continuing the downward trend that started in October 2019 (88.1%) to 53.5% in August 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020 enforced the closure of dentists, giving a further impact on this measure. Now that the dentists have reopened, this will be an area of focus for our looked after children and has been picked up and explored via the health and wellbeing partnership workstream.

3.5.3 Performance for Initial Health Assessments undertaken in August was the lowest this year at 42.9% with 3 out of 7 children receiving their assessment in time.

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 The Summer Term PEP completion rates show a slight increase in LAC with a PEP (98.9%) and a significant increase in the number of PEPs in time (96.5%) when compared to the previous Spring term. These figures also show an improvement on last year's performance (97.5% with a PEP and 95.0% with an up to date PEP). This is due in part to the impact of home working supporting increased capacity for the advisers.

3.6.3 Since the start of Covid-19 in March 20, there have been no further exclusions and as such the figure has remained the same.

3.6.4 During Covid-19 schools closed with vulnerable pupils and key worker's children being able to attend if required. Monitoring for LAC (including whether children physically attended or were being educated by their foster carer etc) was undertaken by the Virtual School and this was reported on a weekly basis to CYPS DLT and the strategic GOLD meeting.

3.6.5 Moving forwards, Virtual School attendance will be monitored from the ePEP system from the start of the next academic year. This will improve the overall quality of the attendance data we hold and will now include all our eligible children from 2-18.

3.7 Care Leavers

3.7.1 The number of care leavers has stabilised over the last few months and sits at 331 at the end of August.

3.7.2 The performance of Pathway Plans increased slightly to 94.5% of care leavers having a plan but has reduced to 75.5% having an up to date plan at the end of August. This has been flagged as a key area of work to address with managers.

3.7.3 Care leavers in suitable accommodation has positively increased over the summer months to 95.5% at the end of August.

3.7.4 Education, Employment and Training (EET) has also increased to the highest this year at 60.7%.

3.8 Fostering

3.8.1 At the end of August, we had 67.5% (416) of our LAC in fostering placements compared to 68.2% (411) in July. Fostering placements includes both those placed with our in house foster carers and those placed with Independent Fostering Agencies.

3.8.2 We approved 1 new fostering household in August but deregistered 3, taking our number of in-house fostering families to 150, the same number as in April 2020.

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 There were no adoptions in May and June reflecting the direct impact of Covid-19. However, with court hearings restarting we have had 1 adoption order in July and 1 in August. Further hearings are now being agreed to take place over the coming months.

3.9.3 The national target (A1) for the number of days between a child entering care and having an adoption placement is a maximum of 426 days. The A1 measure for 2020/21 is currently reporting at 109 days for the 3 children adopted so far this year. Note that this will

change as more adoption orders are granted throughout the year and timeliness is affected by the impact of Covid-19.

3.9.4 The national target (A2) 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 A2 measure is currently reporting at 79 days for the 3 children adopted this year. Again, this will fluctuate as more adoption orders are granted over the coming months.

3.1 Caseloads

3.1.1 In August the maximum caseload of workers in the LAC teams remained consistent at 25. The average number of cases in LAC teams 1-3 was 17.8, similar to the beginning of the year and at the beginning of the pandemic. The average number of cases for teams 4-5 had reduced to 14.2 from 17.9 in the summer months.

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)

Rebecca Wall, Head of Service safeguarding
rebecca.wall@rotherham.gov.uk

Ailsa Barr, Assistant Director Safeguarding Children
ailsa.barr@rotherham.gov.uk