

Council Report

Corporate Parenting Performance

Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – 13th July 2021

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 2021

Background Papers

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

Corporate Parenting Performance Report - Yearend 2020/21 & April 2021

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 Children in Care.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 Through this reporting period, services and interventions offered by the council have continued to be impacted upon by Covid -19. RMBC CYPS have worked to minimise the negative impact to ensuring effective care planning continues to support each young person's stability and progress. The narrative offered below reflects some of the challenges Covid-19 has posed for the Looked After Children of Rotherham.
- 3.2 Looked After Children Profile
 - 3.2.1 In 2020/21, 186 children became looked after and 183 children ceased to be looked after throughout the year, with 32.8% of these children leaving care to permanence which was in line with 2019/20 (32.4%). At the end of the financial year there were 596 LAC.
In April 21 we had 10 admissions to care and 25 discharges, resulting in a decrease to 581 LAC at the end of April 2021.
 - 3.2.2 This decrease in LAC has reduced our 10k population rate to 101.0 at the end of April 2021. This remains significantly higher than the latest available national average of 67.0 but is now only slightly above our statistical neighbour's average of 98.2.

- 3.2.3 Of those who left care in 2020/21, 21 (11.5%) children secured an SGO.
- In April 21, 2 children ceased to be LAC due to an SGO and 6 SGO's were started.
- 3.2.4 In 2020/21 34 adoptions took place which is 5 more adoptions than in 2019/20.
- 3 children were adopted in April 21.

3.3 LAC Plans, Reviews and Visits

- 3.3.1 96.2% of all LAC reviews completed in 2020/21 were within timescales which is the highest this measure has been at yearend. Overall, the use of virtual reviews supported a higher percentage being completed on time, highlighting how different approaches support timeliness and for some older young people, their willingness to be engaged purposefully.
- In April 21 98.4% of LAC reviews took place within timescales, with only 2 reviews falling out of time.
- 3.3.2 There were 95.7% of LAC with an up-to-date plan at the end of March 21, which is also an increase on the yearend outturn for 2019/20 (92.6%).
- LAC with an up-to-date plan remained fairly stable at 94.4% at the end of April 21.
- 3.3.3 95.3% of physical visits were completed in time (NMS) during March 21 and if we were to include the 21 virtual visits that also took place in March 21 this would bring the percentage up to 98.8%. This again highlights how adapting different ways of working supports timeliness, which is key in safeguarding and supporting LAC.
- 95.6% of visits were undertaken within timescale in April 21 and 11 virtual visits were recorded which would take the percentage up to 97.6%.

3.4 Placements

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.

- 3.4.1 At the end of March 21, the percentage of children and young people experiencing long term placement stability remained high with 69.2% of long-term LAC having a stable placement for at least 2 years. This is an increase on 2019/20 (62.1%) and is the highest, it has been since yearend 2015/16 (72.7%). Performance is also above the latest stat neighbour (68.5%) and national averages (69.0%). This is a really

positive outcome in relation to the pressure of the Covid-19 pandemic on placements and is a testament to the work done by social workers, the SSW's therapeutic team and virtual school to maintain placement stability.

In April 21 this increased further to 70.1% of children and young people remaining in placement for at least 2 years.

- 3.4.2 2020/21 saw a positive decline in the percentage of children having 3 or more placements to 9.0% (54/598) which is below the 2019/20 yearend performance (11.1%) and the latest stat neighbour (10.0%) and national averages (10.0%). The fluctuation in performance reflects some of the placement instability brought by the Covid-19 pandemic and is further complicated by a challenge around the placement availability for some of the older and more complex LAC.

This increased slightly in April 21 to 9.2% (54/588).

- 3.4.3 The percentage of children in a family-based placement was fairly consistent throughout 2020/21. At the end of March 21 79.9% of LAC were in a family-based placement which is a slight decline on 2019/20 (81.5%). There continues to be positive foster recruitment inhouse but balanced against a number of foster carers resigning. Recruitment, retention, and the development of inhouse foster carers remains a key area of focus.

At the end of April 21 80.3% of LAC were in a family-based placement.

3.5 Fostering

A key element to factor into fostering placement capacity is that carers who resign are often more established and are often approved for 2 or more young people. New carers usually start with an approval of only 1 or, less frequently, 2 children. The combination of newer carers coming in, resignations of experience carers concluding, and some placements being on hold due to Covid-19 means, while the number of fostering households look the similar to the year start, the number of young people in fostering is lower than at the start of the year.

Our newly approved foster carers will grow with time and experience and have potential for more placements in future.

The themes around resignations are linked to families revisiting their commitments in light of their own families.

- 3.5.1 The number of LAC in a fostering placement has continued to decline over the last 3 years and had reached 391 children (65.6%) in foster care at the end of March 21. This figure does not include those children and young people placed with family and friends.

At the end of April this had reduced further to 388 (66.8%).

- 3.5.2 The number of fostering households fell to 146 at the end of March 21, in comparison to 147 at the end of 2019/20. The challenge in 2020/21 has been the number of new FC approvals has been matched with the number of resignations and de-registrations.

In April this reduced further to 145 fostering households.

3.6 Adoptions

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.

- 3.6.1 In 2020/21 34 adoptions took place with 31 of these taking place since September 20 due to delays as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic at the start of 2020. This however is 5 more adoptions than in 2019/20 and the most since 2015/16 (43). The increase in adoptions completed has been reassuring to see and highlights that despite the Covid-19 pandemic the service has continued to ensure transitions to support adoption, adoption support and applications have continued to be progressed, ready for court coming back online.

3 children were adopted in April 21 and there remains a number of children in the adoption pathway as we continue to catch up with adoption order appeals and hearings.

- 3.6.2 At the end of March 21, the A1 (number of days between a child entering care and having an adoption placement) measure was 446.6 days. The national target for A1 is a maximum of 426 days.

At the end of April 21 this currently stands at 523.3 days however this will change throughout the year as more adoptions take place.

- 3.6.3 The A2 (number of days between a child receiving a placement order and being matched to an adoptive family) measure was 210.6 days at the end of March 21. The national target for A2 is a maximum of 121 days.

At the end of April 21 this currently stands at 259.7 days however this will change throughout the year as more adoptions take place..

- 3.6.4 Both the A1 and A2 measures were much higher at the end of the last financial year (2020/21) than recent years however this was anticipated due to the court delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic

3.7 Health and Dental

- 3.7.1 Health checks have fluctuated slightly throughout the year starting at 90.2% in April 20 to 88.3% in March 21. This is slightly above the 2019/20 yearend (88.2%), given the Covid-19 pandemic, this shows there is ongoing positive commitment to ensuring children's health needs are met.

Health checks at the end of April 21 were at 86.3%.

- 3.7.2 Dental checks have continued a month-on-month downward trend from 78.4% in April 20 to 20.2% in March 21. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, since March 20 dental surgeries have either closed or only been providing emergency care at times which has significantly affected LAC being able to attend assessments. There is focused work in place via the Health and Wellbeing partnership and as dentists seek to reopen there is a clear plan to support a focused increase in dental checks.

At the end of April 21 this has improved slightly to 20.9%.

- 3.7.3 Throughout 2020/21 151 initial health assessments have been completed with 78.8% (119) of them being completed within timescale. This has not met the yearend performance of 2019/20 (86.4%) but is above other previous years and is considered to be positive under the current demands and pressures related to Covid-19.

3.8 LAC Education

All measures are reported termly and with the exception of the PEP data Autumn term 2020/21 performance remains unvalidated due to the new reporting system being developed and checks taking place to ensure data is as accurate as possible.

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).

- 3.8.1 The Autumn Term PEP completion rates show a slight decline in the number of LAC with a PEP from 98.9% in the summer term to 97.9%.
- 3.8.2 Similarly, the number of PEPs in time decreased from 96.5% in the summer term to 94.5%. The Spring term performance is currently being validated and will be available in July 21.
- 3.8.3 During the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns schools closed with only 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.

3.9 Care Leavers

- 3.9.1 At the end of March 21, the care leavers cohort was 319 which is the highest yearend cohort however this has been higher during 2020/21 (335 in Sept and Dec 20).

April 21 has seen this reduce to 315.

3.9.2 Care Leavers with a Pathway plan at the end of March was 91.8% which is a decrease on 2019/20 (94.2%) however the timeliness of pathway plans was 82.7% at the end of March 21 which is a significant improvement on 2019/20 (73.1%). Timeliness has been an ongoing area of focus in recent months for the LAC and leaving care service and this has been reflected in March's performance.

At the end of April 92.4% had a pathway plan with 81.2% of them being up to date.

3.9.3 The number of care leavers in suitable accommodation has been positive throughout the year reaching 98.4% at the end of March 21 which is the highest it has been at yearend and is also above the latest stat neighbour (86.6%) and national averages (85.0%).

98.1% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation at the end of Aprils 21.

3.9.4 At the end of March 21 performance for care leavers in employment, education, or training (EET) reached 65.5% which is an improvement on 2019/20 (59.7%) and is the highest yearend performance since 2015/16 (68.0%) and is also above the latest stat neighbour (56.0%) and national averages (51.0%).

At the end of April 21 65.1% of care leavers were EET.

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. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no direct implications within this report.

12. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 12.1 There are no direct implications from this report.

13. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

- 13.1 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.

14. Risks and Mitigation

- 14.1 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.

15. Accountable Officer(s)

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