

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Corporate Parenting Panel – 19 October 2021

Report Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – Qtr 1 2021/22

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

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Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

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 (Appendix 1) which provides trend data, graphical analysis, and benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages where possible.

Recommendations

1. The panel is asked to receive this report with the accompanying dataset (Appendix 1) and consider any issues arising.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Looked after children quarterly performance report – June 21 (Qtr1)

Appendix 2 Performance on a page

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

1. Background

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 Please note that all benchmarking data is as at the latest data release by the DfE and relates to 2018/19 outturn.
- 1.4 The narrative supplied within the report has been informed by the Assistant Director for Children's Services and the Head of Children in Care.

2. Key Issues

Through this reporting period, services and interventions offered by the council have continued to be impacted upon by Covid -19. RMBC children and young people's service 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.

- 2.1 **Looked After Children** - During quarter 1 2021/22, 27 children became looked after compared to 42 in the same period of 2020/21 (-15). There were also 61 children who ceased to be looked after in the quarter, almost double (+27) the amount in the same period last year (34).

Both the positive reduction in children entering and the positive increase in children leaving care has resulted in an overall decline in the number of looked after children in Rotherham to 563 children (603 – Qtr 1 2020/21). This decrease has reduced the 10k population rate to 97.9 at the end of quarter 1 in comparison to 105.9 at the end of the quarter last year. In comparison to the latest available benchmarking data (2020) 97.9 is in line with our statistical neighbour's average of 98.2 but is still significantly higher than the national average of 67.0.

- 2.2 **Plans** - At the end of the quarter 95% of all looked after children plans were up to date which in comparison to last year is a small increase of 0.8% from 94.2%.
- 2.3 **Placements** - The percentage of looked after children in a family-based setting continues to be fairly consistent reaching 80.3% at the end of the quarter but shows a small decrease when compared to the same period last year 81.7%. Similarly, the percentage of children placed with parents remains stable at 3.6%

at the end of the period, although showing a decline of 1.2% in comparison to 2020/21.

68.6% of long-term LAC had been in a stable placement for at least 2 years at the end of the quarter showing a positive increase of 3.1% when compared to the same period last year (65.5%). Performance continues to be positive despite the pressure of the Covid-19 pandemic on placements and remains in line with the latest stat neighbour (68.5%) and national averages (69.0%).

Children having had 3 or more placements in the last rolling 12 months remains below the latest statistical neighbour (10.0%) and national averages (10.0%) at 9.6%. This is also a small decrease on 2020/21 when there was 10.1% of children at the end of the quarter.

- 2.4 **In-house fostering** – There were 143 in-house foster carer households registered at the end of the quarter in comparison to 152 (-9) last year. This continues the downward trend in numbers. In the quarter there were 4 approvals (6 in qtr1 20/21) and 8 deregistrations (1 in qtr1 20/21). The themes around resignations are linked to families revisiting their commitments in light of their own families.

Similarly, the number of LAC in a fostering placement has declined to 377 at the end of the quarter, compared to 409 quarter 1 2020/21. A key element to factor into fostering placement capacity is the pandemic and a reduction in experienced carers as they revisit their fostering options and other areas experience an increase in their LAC populations. In addition, experienced 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.

- 2.5 **Adoptions** – There were 9 children adopted in the quarter and a number of children remain in the adoption pathway, which compared to the same period last year (1 adoption in qtr1 20/21) is a significant improvement (+8). However, the start of 2020/21 was heavily affected by delays as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the end of quarter 1, the A10 measure (Average number of days between a child becoming LAC & having an adoption placement) was 475.4 days (0 days 20/21) and the A2 measure (Average number of days between placement order & being matched with adoptive family) is 282.3 days (unreportable 20/21 – see note below). These both continue to be higher than recent years however this was anticipated due to the court delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. 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.

N.B. At the end of the same period in 2020/21 the A1 measure was reported at 0 days due to the 1 adoption taking place being a child placed with their adoptive family on the same day as entering care. The A2 measure was unreportable due to the 1 adoption case in April not requiring a placement order.

- 2.6 **Health** – The number of up-to-date health and dental checks have both fluctuated and declined since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic with dental checks being affected significantly due to the enforced closure of most dentists or emergency care only being available. However, quarter 1 has seen the number of up-to-date dental checks increase to 30.7% at the end of the quarter but in comparison to quarter 1 last year (64.8% qtr1 20/21) this is very low. Whereas the percentage of up-to-date health assessments has declined in the quarter from to 78.1% which again in comparison to the same period last year shows a decline (83.5% qtr1 20/21).

23 initial health assessments were completed in quarter 1 with 15 of them being in time (65.2%). This is a positive start to the year considering the current demands and pressures related to the Covid-19 pandemic however, 34 assessments were completed in the same period last year with 79.4% (27 assessments) being in time.

- 2.7 **Reviews & visits** – 96% of reviews compete in quarter 1 were within timescales which equates to 364 out of 379 reviews. This is in comparison to 95.6% (388/409) in quarter 1 last year, a 0.4% increase.

At the end of the quarter, 96.8% of visits were up to date and within timescale of the national minimum standard. At the same point in 2020 only 87.1% were in time, showing a 9.7% improvement this year.

- 2.8 **Education** – Personal Education Plans (PEPs) have continued to be completed throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and performance has improved when compared to the same term last year. At the end of the Spring term 2021 99.0% of LAC had a PEP compared to 97.7% Spring 2020.

Rotherham has a local standard to ensure that each PEP is of good quality and refreshed every term (rather than the annual minimum standard). At the end of the Spring 2021 term 94.6% of those LAC with a PEP had a PEP completed within the term, an 8.3% improvement on Spring 2020 (86.3% Spring 2020).

- 2.9 **Care Leavers** – At the end of the period the care leavers cohort had continued the downward pattern and had reached 312 which is a reduction of 20 when compared to the same point in 2020 (332).

90.0% of care leavers had a pathway plan at the end of the quarter which is a reduction when compared to the same period last year (92.4%). Similarly, the number of those plans that were up to date has also fallen (-9.2%) from 90.8% quarter 1 2020/21 to 81.6% at the end of the current quarter 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.

Both the care leavers in suitable accommodation and the care leavers in employment, education, and training (EET) measures have remained fairly stable. The number of care leavers in suitable accommodation has continued to be positive with 96.5% of children meeting the measure at the end of the quarter. This also shows a 1.6% improvement on the same point in 2020 when it was 94.9%. However, the EET measure has been stable during the quarter but shows a 3.9% reduction year on year with 61.2% at the end of this quarter compared to 65.1% at the same point in 2020.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 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.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 Not applicable

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 A Not applicable

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

6.1 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.

7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)

7.1 There are no legal implications to this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 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.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 The performance report relates to services and outcomes for children in care.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 There are no direct implications from this report.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 There are no direct implications within this report.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 The Partners and other directorates are engaged in improving the performance and quality of services to children, young people, and their families via the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (RSCP). The RSCP 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 mitigates 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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This report is published on the Council's [website](#).