

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Corporate Parenting Panel – 28 March 2023

Report Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – Q3 2022/23

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

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Nathan Heath, Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

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 the Looked After Children (LAC) services. It should be read in conjunction with the accompanying performance data reports, Appendix 1 which provides performance on a page giving an overview of the services performance in comparison to the same period 2021-22 and Appendix 2 which provides trend data, graphical analysis, and latest 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 2) and consider any issues arising.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Performance on a page

Appendix 2 Looked after children quarterly performance – December 22 (Q3)

Background Papers

Children's Social Care Monthly Performance Report – December 22 (Q3)

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 continuous improvement and providing performance information to enable scrutiny of 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 latest 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 local service context.
- 1.3 All benchmarking data is as at the latest data release by the DfE and relates to 2021/22 outturn.
- 1.4 The narrative supplied within the report has been informed by the Assistant Director for Children's Services and the Head of Service – Children in Care.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 **Looked After Children** – At the end of quarter 3 we saw the number of children and young people we look after increase by 7 to 551 when compared to the end of Q2 (544), however, it is 23 below the same period in 2021/22 when there were 574 LAC. As in Q2 a key area of increase has been linked to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) arriving via the National Transfer Scheme but also being placed as adults by the home office in hotels, who after accessing legal advice seek support as children. This continues to be a regional and national trend and pressure. If we removed the number of UASC children the number of LAC would be 509, which demonstrates a reducing number of LAC.

During Q3 57 children became looked after equating to 147 year-to-date, compared to 52 in Q3 2021/22 (132 ytd). 47 children ceased to be looked after (153 ytd), compared to 46 (155 ytd) in the same quarter last year.

The benchmark measure of 10k population rate of children looked after has reduced to 95.9 at the end of Q3 compared to 99.9 last year. This is now below the latest statistical neighbour's average of 102.4 but remains significantly higher than the national average of 70.0.

There are currently 42 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), an increase of 9 when compared to the end of Q2, however, it is 29 more than the same period in 2021/22 when there were only 13 UASC looked after by the local authority (LA). The commissioning team are working to ensure we are able to offer placements and accommodation commensurate to need. We know this is a potential ongoing pressure due to the growing need to support more UASC, and impact on local placement sufficiency is being monitored.

- 2.2 **Plans** – At the end of the quarter, 90.4% of eligible LAC had an up-to-date plan, which is in line with Q2 (90.1%) and a 0.9% decrease in comparison to last year when it was 91.3% at the same point.

2.3 Placements – The percentage of LAC in a family-based setting has remained stable during Q3 reaching 77.0% when compared to 76.7% at the end of Q2 but a decrease when compared to 79.3% at the end of the Q3 last year. 66.1% of long-term LAC had been in a stable placement for at least 2 years at the end of Q3 showing a 3.2% increase when compared to the end of Q2, but a 5.2% decrease to the same period last year (71.3%). Placement stability is an area of focus that the fostering service, responsible Team manager and IRO have been engaged with to review what works and what their roles are in working to prevent placement breakdowns. The fostering service has sought to strengthen placement stability via completing the mapping assessment to identify support needs and ensure these are met via the service. The fostering service is expanding their support offer recruiting additional Family Support workers and an extended on-call support offering after hours and weekend contact, as these have been highlighted as best practice. Team Around the Child meetings are in place to support all placements, with a particular focus at linking in support from the agency or Rotherham Therapeutic Team earlier, to prevent disruption.

The percentage of children having had 3 or more placements in the last rolling 12 months has decreased to 9.2% which is below the latest national average (10.0%) but above the statistical neighbour (8.6%). This is a 2.2% decrease on the end of Q2 and a 0.6% decrease when compared to the same period in 2021/22 (9.8%). The work linked to the team around the child will support strengthening placement stability. Additional support packages to grow foster carers for older children, have also been proposed and piloted, to improve local sufficiency.

2.4 In-house fostering – There were 113 in-house foster carer households registered at the end of the quarter, a decrease of 12 in comparison to 125 at the same period last year. There were 2 foster family approvals in Q3, making 8 approvals year-to-date. However, 9 families also ceased to be foster carers in the quarter bringing the year-to-date total to 20, therefore equating to 12 less foster families at the end of the quarter. At the end of the period there was a total of 7 prospective foster families in the recruitment process, all of which have panels scheduled between January 23 and April 23.

Placement sufficiency remains a key challenge and Brightsparks continue to support us in fostering recruitment work. After a boost last quarter this three-month period has been quieter with 2 approvals creating 2 new placements. Placement sufficiency linked to our residential offer also continues to be positive with a 3rd young person moving into our 4-bed provision.

2.5 Youth Offending – Of the 551 children and young people looked after by Rotherham at the end of the quarter, 8 were also known to the youth offending team. At the same period last year there were 5 out of 574 looked after children.

2.6 Adoptions – 19 children have been adopted since April 2022 which is a decrease (-2) when compared to the same period last year when there had been 21 adoptions.

At the end of Q3, the A10 measure (Average number of days between a child becoming LAC and having an adoption placement) was 552 days (457.1 days Q3 2021/22) and the A2 measure (Average number of days between placement order and being matched with adoptive family) was 210 days (263.9 days Q3 2021/22). The A2 figure from placement order to adoptive match indicates that

we are matching children and placing with adoptive families sooner. The A10 measure performance is directly linked to the court delays caused by the recent Covid-19 pandemic.

- 2.7 Health** – The percentage of LAC having an initial health assessment (IHA) within timescale has also improved in 2022/23 with 71.1% of IHA's being in time year-to-date, compared to 64.3% at the same point in 2021/22.

The number of up-to-date health checks has seen a decrease at the end of Q3 to 74.5% when compared to 85.2% at the same point last year, however, up to date dental checks has seen an increase from 50.5% (21/22) to 59.6% (Q3 22/23). Dental assessments continue to be an area of focus and is being reviewed via the LAC Health and Emotional Well Being Partnership and is a national issue that we want to ensure does not become a trend here in Rotherham.

- 2.8 Reviews and visits** – 92.2% of reviews during 2022/23 were completed within the timescales set, which equates to 1042 reviews in time out of 1130 that were completed April to December 22 (94.7% (1167/1232) in 2021/22).

At the end of the quarter, 96.4% of visits were up-to-date and within timescale of the national minimum standard. At the end of the same period in 2021 98.4% were in time, showing a 2.0% decrease this year.

- 2.9 Education** – The performance reporting for PEP's is moving from being a manual data matching process to being recorded and reported by the ePEP system. Currently the system can only report % of up-to-date PEP's and not the % of children and young people with a PEP in the last 3 terms. Rotherham's local standard which ensures that each PEP is refreshed every term (rather than the annual minimum standard) was 91.9% at the end of the autumn term 2022/23, compared to 94.1% autumn term 2021/22.

Virtual school (VS) advisers are continuing to escalate concerns and provide high levels of support and challenge to schools to ensure timely completion of PEP meeting records. The VS has piloted and launched a new PEP quality assurance framework and trained designated teachers around the new expectations.

- 2.10 Care Leavers** – At the end of Q3 there were 322 young people in the care leavers cohort which shows an increase of 31 when compared to the same point in 2021 (291). The Leaving Care Cohort remains high with the level of UASC growing making up 20 of the current cohort with this set to grow over the coming months. The service is working close with the wider partnership to ensure there is a clear pathway of support recognising the vulnerability of this cohort.

74.8% of care leavers had an up-to-date pathway plan at the end of the quarter which is a 3.6% decrease when compared to the same period last year (78.4%). 97.2% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation compared to 95.5% at the end of Q3 last year. Of the 9 young people in unsuitable accommodation 6 are in custody.

73.0% of care leavers were in employment, education, and training (EET) at the end of this quarter compared to 73.2% at the same point in 2021. There is a steady improvement in the numbers of our young people activity engaged in EET, which occasionally fluctuates as it has this quarter. The service remains ambitious but want to ensure this translates through to Plans. Pathway planning continues to be an area where we are scrutinising quality, as well as compliance.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1** The full corporate parenting performance report attached at Appendix 2 represents a summary of performance across a range of key national and local indicators. 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** 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 Assistant 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 Assistant Director and Heads of Service 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 monthly 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](#).