

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Corporate Parenting Panel – 12 September 2023

Report Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – Q1 2023/24

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

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Nicola Curley, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

Craig Liversage, Interim Head of Children in Care,
craig.liversage@rotherham.gov.uk

Rebecca Harrison, Performance Officer
rebecca.harrison@rotherham.gov.uk

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 2022-23 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 performance – June 23 (Q1 2023/24)

Background Papers

Children's Social Care Monthly Performance Report – June 23 (Q1 2023/24)

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 Q1 (2023/24) we saw the number of children and young people we look after decrease by 16 to 520 when compared to the Q1 2022/23 when there were 536 LAC.

During Q1 32 children became looked after, compared to 36 in Q1 last financial year (2022/23). 54 children ceased to be looked after, compared to 57 in 2022/23.

The benchmark measure of 10k population rate of children looked after has reduced to 92.3 at the end of Q1 compared to 93.3 last year. This remains below the latest statistical neighbour's average of 102.4 but remains significantly higher than the national average of 70.0.

There are currently 36 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), an increase of 19 when compared to the end of Q1 2022/23 when there were only 17 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 Q1, 92.1% of eligible LAC had an up-to-date plan, which is a 4.0% decrease in comparison to last year when it was 96.1%.
- 2.3 **Placements** – At the end of Q1 77.1% of LAC were in a family-based setting compared to 80.0% at the end of Q1 2022/23. 67.8% of long-term LAC had been in a stable placement for at least 2 years at the end of Q1 showing a 3.2% increase when compared to the end of Q1 2022/23 (64.6%). The 67.8% Q1 figure continues to be below the latest stat neighbour (71.1%) and national (71.0%) averages. 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 8.5% when compared to 11.2% at the end of Q1 2022/23. The Q1 2023/24 figure (8.5%) is not only below the latest national average (10.0%) but it is also now below the latest statistical neighbour average (8.6%). 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 3 foster family approvals (5 new placements) in Q1, and 2 families ceased to be foster carers (loss of 4 placements), which equates to 1 extra foster family (1 extra placement) at the end of the quarter.

Placement sufficiency remains a key challenge and Brightsparks continue to support us in fostering recruitment work. We have a target set to increase fostering placements by 20 this financial year. We are projected to reach 14 new placements by the end of December 2023 which leaves 6 to gain between January – March 2024.

- 2.5 Youth Offending** – Of the 520 children and young people looked after by Rotherham at the end of the quarter, 10 were also known to the Youth Justice Service. At the same period last year there were 5 out of 536 looked after children.

- 2.6 Adoptions** – 7 children have been adopted since April 2023 which is a decrease of 1 when compared to the same period last year when there had been 8 adoptions.

At the end of Q1, the A10 measure (Average number of days between a child becoming LAC and having an adoption placement) was 242.1 days a significant reduction on 457.6 days at the same point in 2022/23. The A10 measure performance has been previously directly linked to the court delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The reduction in days is hopefully a sign the delays are improving.

The A2 measure (Average number of days between placement order and being matched with adoptive family) was 264.3 days at the end of Q1 compared to 185.8 days last year which is an increase of 78.5 days. The A2 figure from placement order to adoptive match indicates that we are matching children and placing them with adoptive families as soon as reported last year.

- 2.7 Health** – The percentage of LAC having an initial health assessment (IHA) within timescale has decreased in Q1 to 46.2% when compared to 63.0% in Q1

2022/23. Similarly, the number of up-to-date health checks also decreased to 82.7% when compared to 83.8% at the same point last year. We often see a delay in accurate performance figures being reported via Liquid Logic due to delays in assessments being signed off and delayed inputting. In order to address this the service manager is meeting health on a quarterly basis to ensure accurate data. The named nurse for LAC & Care Leavers can confirm that the below figures are correct for the end of June 23:

- Children placed in Rotherham aged under 5 - 99%
- Children placed in Rotherham aged over 5 - 94%
(98% if those that decline are removed from figures)
- Children placed out of Rotherham aged under 5 - 92%
- Children placed out of Rotherham aged over 5 - 92%
(95% if those that declined are removed from figures)

Up to date dental checks however have increased from 72.1% in Q1 (2022/23) to 80.2% (2023/24). 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 – 91.8% of reviews during Q1 were completed within the timescales set, which equates to 315 reviews in time out of 343 that were completed between April 23 and June 23. In the same period 2022/23, 93.3% were complete in time (335/359).

At the end of Q1, 94.4% of visits were up-to-date and within timescale of the national minimum standard. At the end of the same period in 2022/23 98.9% were in time, showing a 4.5% decrease this year.

2.9 Education – The performance reporting for PEP's remains the same as last quarter 82.1% of PEPs being up to date at the end of the spring term 2022/23, compared to 92.1% spring term 2021/22. The end of summer term performance will be available and reported in the Q2 report.

2.10 Care Leavers – At the end of Q1 there were 331 young people in the care leavers cohort which shows an increase of 29 when compared to 2022/23 (302). The Leaving Care Cohort remains high with the level of UASC growing making up 31 of the current cohort. The service is working close with the wider partnership to ensure there is a clear pathway of support recognising the vulnerability of this cohort.

78.9% of care leavers had an up-to-date pathway plan at the end of the year which is an 6.1% decrease when compared to the same period last year (85.0%). 96.1% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation compared to 96.4% last year. This remains above the latest stat neighbour (90.2%) and national (88.0%) averages. Of the 13 young people in unsuitable accommodation 7 are in custody.

71.9% of care leavers were in employment, education, and training (EET) at the end of Q1 compared to 72.2% at the end of Q1, 2022/23. However, this remains above the latest stat neighbour (53.7%) and national (55.0%) averages. 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)

Craig Liversage, Interim Head of Children in Care,
craig.liversage@rotherham.gov.uk

Monica Green, Assistant Director Safeguarding Children
monica.green@rotherham.gov.uk

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).