

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Corporate Parenting Panel – 12 December 2023

**Report Title**

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – Q2 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)**

Jane Wood, Head of Children in Care,

[jane-e.wood@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:jane-e.wood@rotherham.gov.uk)

Rebecca Harrison, Performance Officer

[rebecca.harrison@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto: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 – September 23 (Q2 2023/24)

## **Background Papers**

Children's Social Care Monthly Performance Report – September 23 (Q2 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 Q2 (2023/24) we saw the number of children and young people we look after decrease by 27 to 517 when compared to the end of Q2 2022/23 when there were 544 LAC. 78 children have become looked after since April 2023, this is a reduction of 13 when compared to the same period in 2022/23 (91). Since April 2023 101 children have ceased to be looked after, compared to 106 in the same period last financial year.

The benchmark measure of 10k population rate of children looked after has reduced further to 91.8 at the end of Q2 compared to 96.5 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 40 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), an increase of 5 when compared to the end of Q2 in the last financial year when there were 35 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 Q2, 79.2% of eligible LAC had an up-to-date plan, which is a 10.9% decrease in comparison to last year when it was 90.1%. This is likely to be as a result of some instability in staffing in the children in care team. This has included a change in management of the service, some unexpected sickness and some vacancies. It is expected that this will improve in the next quarter.
- 2.3 **Placements** – At the end of Q2 76.1% of LAC were in a family-based setting compared to 76.7% at the end of Q2 2022/23.

64.4% of long-term LAC had been in a stable placement for at least 2 years showing a 1.5% increase when compared to the end of Q2 2022/23 (62.9%). The Q2 percentage (64.4%) 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 7.7% when compared to 11.4% at the end of Q2 2022/23. The latest percentage (7.7%) remains below both the latest national average (10.0%) and 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 have been 8 foster family approvals (14 new placements) since April 2023, however, 11 families have ceased to be foster carers (loss of 16 placements), which equates to a loss of 3 foster families (loss of 2 placement) at the end of the quarter. It should be noted that the majority of foster carers who have resigned or been de-registered, did not have children in placement at the time. There have also been occasions where foster carers have resigned due to seeking permanent arrangements for the children in their care, such as Special Guardianship Order's or Adoption.

Placement sufficiency remains a key challenge and Brightsparks continue to support us in fostering recruitment work. We have a target set to increase the number of fostering families by 20 this financial year.

Current projections are positive, and we are hopeful that the current net loss will become a gain in Q3. If each panel that is booked over the next 4 months goes as expected we are projecting to have approved at least 20 foster families (34 new placements) by the end of January 2023, against 12 deregistration's (19 placements) which will give us a gain of 8 families (15 placements).

- 2.5 Youth Offending** – Of the 517 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 time last year there were 6.

- 2.6 Adoptions** – 11 children have been adopted since April 2023 which is a decrease of two when compared to the same period last year when there had been 13 adoptions.

At the end of Q2, the A10 measure (Average number of days between a child becoming LAC and having an adoption placement) was 352.0 days, a significant reduction on 475.7 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 a sign the delays are improving.

The A2 measure (Average number of days between placement order and being matched with adoptive family) was 216.7 days at the end of Q2 compared to 197.8 days last year which is still an 18.9 day increase but the gap is becoming much smaller (78.5 days end of Q1).

**2.7 Health** – The percentage of LAC having an initial health assessment (IHA) within timescale has reduced to 57.4% at the end of Q2 when compared to 77.2% at the same point last financial year. Similarly, the number of up-to-date health checks also decreased to 85.2% when compared to 92.3% 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 September 23 (Q2):

- Under 5's placed in Rotherham 96%.
- Over 5's placed in Rotherham 96% when those that decline are deducted from figures.
- Under 5's placed out of Rotherham 95%.
- Over 5's placed out of Rotherham 97% when those that decline are deducted from figures.

Up to date dental checks has also reduced from 78.2% at the end of Q2 last year to 71.1% (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** – 91.9% of reviews since April 23 were complete within the timescales set, which equates to 626 reviews in time out of 681. In the same period 2022/23, 92.8% were complete in time (706/761).

At the end of Q2, 93.4% of visits were up-to-date and within timescale of the national minimum standard. At the end of the same period in 2022/23 98.0% were in time, showing a 4.6% decrease this year.

**2.9 Education** – At the end of Q2 we can report that 98.9% of LAC had an up-to-date PEP at the end of the summer term (Term 3 2022/23). This shows a 3.9% increase when compared to the end of the same term 2021/22 (95.0%).

**2.10 Care Leavers** – There were 322 young people in the care leavers cohort at the end of Q2 which shows an increase of 9 when compared to 2022/23 (313). The Leaving Care Cohort remains high with the level of UASC growing making up 36 of the current cohort.

77.6% of care leavers had an up-to-date pathway plan at the end of Q2 which is a 3.5% decrease when compared to the same period last year (81.1%). 96.3% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation compared to 97.4% last year. This remains above the latest stat neighbour (90.2%) and national (88.0%)

averages. Of the 12 young people in unsuitable accommodation 6 (50%) are in custody.

70.2% of care leavers were in employment, education, and training (EET) at the end of Q2 compared to 69.3% at the end of Q2 in 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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)**

Jane Wood, Head of Children in Care,  
[jane-e.wood@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:jane-e.wood@rotherham.gov.uk)

Monica Green, Assistant Director Safeguarding Children  
[monica.green@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:monica.green@rotherham.gov.uk)

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