

Public Report  
Improving Lives Select Commission

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Improving Lives Select Commission – 22 July 2025

**Report Title**

CYPS Performance Report 2024/2025 Outturn

**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, Children & Young Peoples Service

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The report includes the performance outturn for the reporting year April 2024 to March 2025 for Children and Young People's Services. It includes areas of performance that are working well alongside other areas where a continued focus is required.

**Recommendations**

That the Improving Lives Select Commission:

1. Considers the CYPS Annual Performance Report and accompanying scorecard for the outturn 2024/2025.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 CYPS Performance – Members Scorecard – Q4 (March 2025)

**Background Papers**

None

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **CYPS Performance Report 2024/2025 Outturn**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 This report evidences the council's commitment to improvement by providing performance information which enables the scrutiny of service achievement levels and the associated impact on the outcomes for children and young people. It should be read in conjunction with the appended performance data report, which provide trend data, graphical analysis, and benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages.
- 1.2 The report provides a summary of performance under key themes across Children & Young Peoples Services (CYPS) including Early Help and Family Engagement, Social Care, Education and Inclusion at the end of the 2024/2025 reporting year (and Academic year 24/25) and represents the monthly report for March 2025.
- 1.3 Performance has been considered against local targets, including associated 'RAG' (red, amber, green) rating tolerances. These are reviewed annually and are set in consideration of available national and statistical neighbour benchmarking data and recent performance levels. It ensures focus on the effectiveness of services and achieving good outcomes for children and young people.
- 1.4 In addition to this annual report members are advised that strong operational performance management arrangements are in place across the service with a programme of service and team-based performance meetings which are well embedded across the directorate. On a monthly basis governance is provided by the CYPS Performance Board, chaired by the Director of Children's Services, and attended by the Directorate Leadership Team, Heads of Service from across the directorate along with the Head of Service, Performance and Quality and the CYPS Performance Manager. In addition to this an Assurance Board is held each quarter which also provides a quality focus as well as performance management including work undertaken by the Young Inspectors, the Practice Learning Days (PLDs) and the monthly audit programme. Scrutiny is also provided by the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board (CPPB) and Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (RSCP).

### **2. Key Issues**

#### **2.1 Family Help**

- 2.1.1 **Summary of what was working well against some key measures during 2023/2024**
- 2.1.2 In 2024/25 we saw an increase in the number of families engaged with Family Help, from 637 in the previous year to 817 this year. We maintained our timeliness of engagement with 91.4% meeting the target of 3 days.
- 2.1.3 We improved our assessment timeliness from 90.2% the previous year up to 92.6% completed within 45 working days in 2024/25. We also saw an increase

in the numbers complete by partners, such as schools and health colleagues, going from 27.5% up to 32.8%, ensuring support is provided at the earliest opportunity and appropriate level preventing escalation.

- 2.1.4 Our Outreach and Engagement team had an ambitious target of registering 95% of children aged 0-5, living in the 30% most deprived Super Output Areas with Rotherham Children's Centres by 31st March 2025 (Super Output Areas are small geographical areas developed from Census 2001 information). This year we continued our positive trajectory, reaching 98% of children registered. This is a significant improvement on previous years of 87% (2022), 92% (2023) and 94.5% (2024). This early engagement is important in ensuring children and their families are connected with appropriate support and resources or know where to find them should the need arise.
- 2.1.5 Following registration, 82.9% of these children accessed Childrens Centre activities, exceeding the target of 65% engaged within the year. Again, this was an improvement on the previous 3 years. We have been working hard this year on ways to improve data production to help us identify families early, using data from partners in Health.
- 2.1.6 Our Outreach and Engagement team also support our older children preparing for adulthood. The team work directly with young people to break down barriers and find suitable Education, Employment, and Training (EET) provision. The annual outturn figures, which is based on a 3-month combined average for statutory reporting, met set targets for Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET), and Not Known young people. For these figures, lower is better. Our NEET figure was 4.4%, within the target of 4.5% and similar to 4.31% last year. Our Not Known figure was 0.4% well below our target of 1.5% and a slight improvement on 0.64% last year. Our overall combined figure was 4.7% clearing our target of 6% and a slight improvement on 4.95% last year.
- 2.1.7 The Rotherham Youth Justice Service has a relentless focus on preventing young people entering the youth justice system, and ensuring that when they do, we work to 'child first' principles to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people and victims of crime. The rate of re-offending was 13.2, an improvement on 16.1 in the previous reporting year. This is a national measure to help compare data. Our performance is significantly below Statistical Neighbours at 34.8 and the national average of 32.6. This is positive and demonstrates the impact of good multi agency support being provided to first time entrants.
- 2.1.8 The use of custody in Rotherham reduced from 0.08 to 0.04 at the end of 2024/25 latest data. The national average is 0.07 with statistical neighbours at 0.13.
- 2.1.9 **Summary of areas of continued focus against some key measures during 2024/2025**
- 2.1.10 In the Youth Justice Service, we also measure reoffences by reoffenders. There were 53 young people in Rotherham's most recent cohort, of which 10

reoffended committing 20 further offences between them (a frequency rate of 2.86). This was compared to 62 young people in the previous year of which 10 reoffended at a frequency rate of 2.00. This suggests a small cohort of young people have re-offended more than once.

## **2.2 Children's Social Care**

### **2.2.1 Summary of what was working well against some key measures during 2024/2025**

2.2.2 To monitor and compare ourselves both nationally and to other local authorities like ours (known as statistical neighbours), we monitor rates of children against our 10,000 (k) population figure. Our rates of children open to social care are all within our set targets this year.

2.2.3 Our rate of Children in Need (CiN) at the end of 2024/24 was 310.7, a reduction from 316.8 in the previous year. This is below statistical neighbour average of 398.8 and the national average of 332.9

2.2.4 Our rate of children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP) at the end of 2024/25 was 54.2. Overall, our child protection population has safely and steadily reduced since 2022. In the last twelve months this has increased slightly but within tolerance levels. The latest available data indicates that although we are in line with stat neighbours (also 54.2), the rate continues to be above the National average (41.6) and so remains an area of focus.

2.2.5 Our rate of Children in Care (CiC) at the end of 2024/25 was 83.0 compared to 88.4 last year and is the lowest rate in Rotherham since 2016. This is below the statistical neighbour average of 100.9, but above the national average of 70.0. Children in care numbers continue to reduce through focussed work on rehabilitation and support to transition to Special Guardianship Order (SGO), with a number of older children reaching 18 and moving over to the Leaving Care service. Rotherham continues to support the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), set up by the government to ensure a more equitable distribution across local authorities, meeting the overall best interests of these vulnerable children. Our CiC data includes unaccompanied children (25/482), making the cohort larger than it would otherwise be based on local children.

2.2.6 Our Leaving Care cohort continued to increase to 357 at the end of 2024/25, an increase from 348 last year, with 71 who were formally unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

2.2.7 In 2024/25, 62% of contacts coming through the front door were identified as Social Care and 36.1% were identified as needing Early Help. This shows a slight increase into Early Help and reduction in those going to Social Care compared to 2023/24 (65.1% and 33.8% respectively). Accessing Early Help services means families can access the support earlier without the need to step up to Children's Social Care (CSC). Family Network Meetings (FNM) and the use of Family Group Conferences (FGC) support families to develop plans to support themselves without the need for CSC intervention.

- 2.2.8 From the beginning of a child's journey within CSC, we track and measure the timeliness of the contact response. For those contacts going through to Social Care, 86.8% had a contact decision within 1 working day, an improvement on the 69.3% the previous year, bringing us closer to our 88% target. This follows the work we talked about in last year's annual report to improve timeliness through service improvement and working with partners, developing new monitoring processes to monitor MASH information sharing contacts separately to give us deeper understanding of where delays are in returning the information.
- 2.2.9 Sometimes children will be re-referred into the service after a previous intervention. The learning following the direct work we reported last year continued into 2024/25, including strengthening the use of Family Network Meetings, reinforcing the plan prior to closure with everyone in the network, and implementation of some simple processes to ensure consistent management oversight at closure. We received 17.3% of re-referrals for the year, within the target of less than 22% (lower is better).
- 2.2.10 Once a child has a referral to Social Care and an assessment is deemed necessary, the timeline set in the Working Together Guidance is 45 working days for completion. We have a target which aims for 90% of assessments to be completed within that timeframe. In 2023/24 we did not reach our target with 88.2% and assessment timeliness was a topic of conversation at performance board. The improvements from that focus have been reflected with an increase of 4.3% in 2024/25, meeting our target with 92.5% of assessments in time. In comparison to other Local Authorities, this is good performance with our statistical neighbours performing at 84.7% and national average at 84.5%.
- 2.2.11 At the end of 2023/24 we had 4.6% of open child protection plans (CPP) lasting more than 2 years. This is above our target of 2.5% (lower is better). This triggered further work in February and March 2024 to do some focused auditing for all children on a plan for 18 months or more. Measures were put in place to track these plans including the continued use of midway reviews, check and challenge, and managerial scrutiny and oversight. This was presented back to Performance Board to provide assurance. For 2024/25, performance was good with a reduction back down to 0.6%.
- 2.2.12 Every looked after child must have a care plan. This is a detailed plan which covers how all a child's current needs will be met and the arrangements for the child's care now and into the future. We review these plans regularly and have targets set to monitor compliance. At the end of 2024/25, 95.8% of children in care had their care plan reviewed in time. This is above target and an improvement on the 89.2% in the previous year.
- 2.2.13 For our children with a permanence plan of adoption, we measure the timeliness of their adoption process. The average number of days between a child coming in to care and being placed with their prospective adopters was 345.1 days, an improvement on 387.2 in the previous year and surpassing our target of less than 487. The average number of days between a placement

order being granted and the child being matched to an adoptive family was 107.4 days, improving on 182.6 days in the previous year, and within the national target of 121 days.

**2.2.14 Summary of areas of continued focus against some key measures during 2024/2025**

2.2.15 When a child is subject to Section 47 (S47) investigation and they progress to an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC), we have a target to hold the ICPC within 15 days of the S47. In 2024/25, 80% of ICPCs were complete in time; below the target of 86%. We analysed the data and it agreed the cases going to ICPC were all appropriate. The reasons for those out of the 15-day timescale vary, but we are aware of the reason for every case. Whilst we are below our local target, we are in line with the national average of 79.7% but below statistical neighbours at 85%.

2.2.16 Throughout the year, we had an increasing trajectory of children on a CPP for a second or subsequent time within 2 years of their last plan. Whilst it started to decrease in the last few months, we ended 2024/25 at 17.3%, remaining above our 8% target (lower is better). In response to the rising numbers, an audit was undertaken sampling all 47 children (23 families) in the January cohort. The audit found that whilst most previous CP planning was appropriately managed, there were instances where interventions, particularly in cases of domestic abuse, were not fully implemented, and that recurring issues such as substance misuse, mental health problems, and domestic violence, continue to be significant factors leading to repeated CP plans. This highlights the importance of ensuring that all planned interventions are carried out, sustained, and monitored effectively.

The audit also identified areas where multi-agency collaboration could be strengthened. Effective safeguarding requires coordinated efforts from all involved agencies to ensure comprehensive support for children and their families.

The findings from this audit resulted in several recommendations, which will inform training and development programs for professionals involved in child protection. Ensuring that our staff are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills is essential for effective safeguarding.

2.2.17 In 2024/25, 95.8% of children on a Child Protection Plan (CPP) had their plan reviewed with timescale. This is below our ambitious target of 97% this year, but we are above our statistical neighbour average of 79.1% and national average of 88.1% evidencing that our performance is strong when comparing with other local authorities, but our high target keeps us focused on this area to aim to achieve more for Rotherham children.

2.2.18 At the end of March, 90.8% of children on a CPP had received a visit within the previous 2 weeks. This remains amber as our target is high at 95%. We have recently reviewed our targets and Performance Board agreed that this should remain high for our most vulnerable children. A focused response to

this continues to be followed up with team managers at service performance meetings.

2.2.19 At the end of March, 96.5% of children in care had up to date visits completed within timescale. This is an increase on the previous quarter but below our target of 98%. As part of our annual measure review, the Performance Board agreed that this target should remain high at 98%, stressing the importance of visiting our children within timescales. We will continue to closely monitor this within teams.

2.2.20 Placement stability for our children in care was rated as amber against our targets at the end of 2024/25. 62.1% of children in care for at least 2 years had remained in a stable placement, missing the target of 70%+ (higher is better). 12.7% of children in care had 3 or more placement moves missing the target of below 8% (lower is better). This was challenged at Performance Board, resulting in a dip sample of all children in care on 1st March 2025, who had experienced 2 or more placement moves. This involved 57 out of 480 children. 40% were over the age of 15 and 75% over the age of 10. We discovered 5 young people had not had a placement move, but there was a recording error.

The most prevalent themes were difficulties associated with the child or young person's complex needs or challenging behaviours. In recent years the resilience of foster carers has been problematic, and we have seen an increase in carers giving immediate notice on children's placements. This often leads to emergency placements being needed before an alternative placement can be found, increasing placement moves.

Another factor was the new processes in place for children who have not yet reached the best destination for them. This involves tracking children in Step Down Panel and 16+ Panel until they reach a destination which would be considered permanent. This has driven practice around children returning home and moving young people into independence. As this has not been a previous focus, there were several children who could have returned home, or moved on to independence previously. This created a momentum of planned moves for children, which impacted the placement stability measure. All these planned moves have been happening in the last 12 months. This will most likely have influenced the higher numbers of children with 2 or more placements. This is demonstrated in the 7 children who have now moved home or into family placements.

Stability and disruption meetings always happen for children where there are known concerns about the stability of the placement. What is not clear is how robust and effective these meetings are at identifying appropriate support for placement fragility. There are times when these happen at a stage when difficulties are not possible to reverse.

This dip sampling work has resulted in several actions including: review of the stability and disruption process; review of training and support to foster carers; work with health colleagues to understand the trauma pathway and how therapeutic intervention can be accessed; mitigation against multiple



moves during the step-down process for 16+; and training on recording placements accurately on the system. Alongside this, we will continue to dip sample children who have experienced 2 or more placement moves to determine themes and patterns and understand the issues better.

2.2.21 We have a target of placing 85% of children in care in family based settings. This had dipped at the end of 2023/24 due to children entering care over 16 years of age (children who are unaccompanied minors who have travelled from abroad) requiring supported accommodation. Through 2024/25, this has slowly increased to 77.6% but remains below the target of 85%.

2.2.22 Health and dental assessments continue to be an area of focus and this is being addressed via the refreshed children in care health and wellbeing meetings. At the end of March 2025, we had 84.5% of children in care with an up-to-date health assessment recorded on our case management system and 66.7% of children with an up-to-date dental assessment recorded. The last 12 months data for health and dental assessments shows that performance usually increases to around 90% for health assessments and 85% for dental once the time lag has elapsed. Data suggests the lag is around 3-4 months. Both measures have a target of 95%. We have some children (often teenagers) who decline health and dental checks, which remains a challenge and an area of focus.

Nationally, for the last 3 years, data has shown an average of 89% for Health Assessments and statistical neighbours latest data shows an average of 91%. For Dental Checks, the latest national data shows an average of 79% and statistical neighbours at 83%

As part of our annual measure review, it was proposed to reduce the targets to bring them closer to national averages. After deep discussion, it was agreed that we wanted to maintain our targets higher than both national and our own performance to keep our focus in this area, working collaboratively with partners to achieve better outcomes for our children's health. The agreed targets were set to 92% for both measures, starting in April 2025. We will continue to work with health colleagues to strive to achieve this target.

2.2.23 Within our Leaving Care Service, 94.1% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation, dipping below target by 1.9%. The highest reason recorded was emergency accommodation, and we had 6 young people in custody, where accommodation is categorised as unsuitable. Whilst this is below target, it remains above national average of 88% and statistical neighbour average of 91.1%. The national top quartile is 93.1%.

2.2.24 63.3% of our care leavers were in employment, education, or training (EET) at the end of 2024/25, below the target of 66%. A third of these young people not in EET was due to illness or disability, or pregnancy or parenting. We have an area of focus across all cohorts, to support our young people in securing appropriate EET in line with their aspirations. Whilst this is below our target, it remains above national average of 54% and statistical neighbour average of 52.7%. The national top quartile is 60.1%.

## 2.3 Education and Inclusion

- 2.3.1 The year-to-date figures referenced in the March 2025 Members Scorecard include Term 1 and Term 2, as we are still in Term 3. We will report on the full academic year end data and attainment results in the Members Scorecard, during the Autumn Term.
- 2.3.2 Whilst education data is reported termly, we continue to check and challenge our education performance at the monthly CYPS performance board, working collaboratively with colleagues across the service to take a whole service approach on impact and outcomes.
- 2.3.3 **Summary of what was working well against some key measures during 2023/2024**
- 2.3.4 International research shows that children who spend longer in early years provision have better educational outcomes later. It also shows that high-quality early years provision particularly benefits children from low-income backgrounds. At the end of Term 2, 85.7% of eligible 2-year-olds were taking up an early education place in Rotherham, just above the 85% target.
- 2.3.5 A preferred education setting is important for both children and their families in their everyday lives. This year, 99.2% of primary children were allocated a place at one of their 3 preferences on National Offer Day, above the national average of 98.3%. For secondary pupils, 97.1% were allocated one of their 3 preferences, performing above the national average of 95.6%.
- 2.3.6 The attendance data we have recorded shows slight improvement in term 2 at 94.6% for primary schools compared to 94.3% in the previous Term 2, and above the target of 94%. Secondary school attendance was the same as last year in Term 2 at 90.5%, sitting just below the target of 91%.
- 2.3.7 On the 1st of January 2025, attendance monitoring moved to our Access to Education team to enable a sharper focus on persistent and severe absence. The attendance action plan, strengthened from the recent Practice Learning Day, provides several measures to support attendance in Rotherham. The impact of the pilot for enhanced transition support from year 6-7 will be evaluated with learning shared across all settings in the Autumn. Persistent Absence remains within target at 15.4% in Term 2 for primary (17.7% target) and 23.7% for secondary (27.7% target). Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of their sessions.
- 2.3.8 Our Virtual School provides Personal Education Plans (PEP) for our children in Care. This is a statutory document that outlines a child's educational progress, needs, and aspirations, as well as the support they receive in their educational setting. It's a key part of a child's care plan and is used to ensure looked-after children receive appropriate educational support. The PEP is a living document that is reviewed termly, to ensure it remains relevant and effective. At the end of term 2, 95.6% of children in care had received an up-to-date Personal Education Plan in the term.

- 2.3.9 The number of children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) continues to increase, along with national trends. In Rotherham, we continued to improve compliance with 85.8% of EHCP's issued within 20 weeks, an improvement on 59.8% in the previous year. Newly published data shows that national performance decreased in 2024 to 46.4%.
- 2.3.10 EHCP Primary transition reviews completed by the statutory deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> February 2025 reached 99.5%, an improvement on 95.8% in 2024. Secondary transition reviews completed by the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 reached 93.6%, a significant improvement on 79.1% in 2024.
- 2.3.11 **Summary of areas of continued focus against some key measures during 2023/2024**
- 2.3.12 The latest attainment data is our 2023/24 outturn.
- 2.3.13 64.4% of early years foundation stage pupils achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD). This is 3.3% lower than the National average of 67.7%. is a decrease of 2.9% from the previous year. Schools report speech and language as being a primary barrier to children not achieving the expected standard.
- 2.3.14 78.5% passed the phonics screening check in Year 1, 1.5% lower than the National average of 80%. This was a reduction of 0.5% in 2022/23.
- 2.3.15 58.6% achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing & Maths (RWM) in KS2, 2.4% lower than the National average of 61%. However, this was an increase of 3.3% on the previous year in Rotherham.
- 2.3.16 4.9% of KS2 pupils achieved higher standard in reading, writing and maths combined. This is 0.1% lower than last year and lower than the 8% national average. Our maintained schools had a higher percentage of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading and maths. This suggests that the work that we are doing around reading is starting to bear fruit.
- 2.3.17 Our schools are now focusing on the writing curriculum in the same forensic way that they did the reading. RoSIS are providing CPD around early writing, which we believe will begin to have an impact on writing throughout school in a similar way to phonics supporting improved reading results.
- 2.3.18 This year, to support improvements in writing, we are offering the following CPD opportunities:
- Strategic leadership of writing.
  - GPS subject knowledge
  - Writing networks for all primary year groups
  - Writing for pleasure conference
  - Early writing/writing bespoke reviews and CPD

- 2.3.19 38.5% of KS4 pupils achieved grade 5 or above in English and Maths. This is similar to last year and remains below our statistical neighbour average of 41%. Our target has been reset for this academic year to 41% following newly published data.
- 2.3.20 The average attainment 8 score was below target at 42.10, and a reduction on the previous year's performance. The national average has been published at 46.1.
- 2.3.21 Numbers of Elective Home Educated (EHE) children continue to rise with 747 at the end of term 2 compared to 523 at the end of term 2 last year. A permanent increase to the staffing establishment has now been agreed to support this area of work and to strengthen the preventative offer. Numbers of children returning to school and involvements not resulting in EHE have also increased on last year's performance and this has supported ongoing school based education for children when this is in their best interests. The Rotherham Elective Home Education Policy is currently under review and although this won't change the statutory framework, the aim is for Policy to be easier to navigate and understand for families to support their decision making.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 Members to consider and accept the CYPS Performance Scorecard for March 2025 (Out-turn 2024/2025) as attached – Appendix 1

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 N/A

### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 N/A

### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications with this report.

### **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications with this report.

### **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no human resource implications with this report.

### **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 Performance and Quality assurance is a key element of the work of Children and Young Peoples services to ensure that outcomes are improved for Rotherham children and their families and that they are resilient, successful, and safe.

**10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 There are no Equalities and Human Rights implications with this report

**11. Implications for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions and Climate Change**

11.1 There are no CO<sub>2</sub>, Emissions or Climate Change implications with this report.

**12. Implications for Partners**

12.1 Partners and other directorates are engaged in improving the performance and quality of services for children, young people, and their families, including via the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (RSCP), the CYPS Performance Board, the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board, the Early Help Steering Group and the SEND Strategic Partnership Board. All boards receive performance reports 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 the Directorship Leadership Team and the continued development of the Performance Management Framework mitigates this risk by holding managers and workers to account for any decline in performance both at a team and at an individual child level.

**Accountable Officer(s)**

Kelly White, Assistant Director Family Help

Monica Green, Assistant Director, Children's Social Care

Niall Devlin, Assistant Director, Education & Inclusion

Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Quality

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