

Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board
Date: 10 September 2019
Title of report: Children in Care Service Performance Highlights (July 2019)

Purpose of report

This report outlines key performance highlights for children in care and care leavers up to July 31st 2019, for the board to consider and comment upon.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable – for information
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Elaine McShane (for Mel Meggs) – 2.9.19
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	Not applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	Not applicable
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr V Kendrick (Children)

Electoral wards affected: None

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

Have you considered GDPR? Yes GDPR considered no service users identified

1. Summary

The key performance highlights for children in care and care leavers up to July 2019 are as follows:-

We have seen a decrease in the number of children in care from a 12 month high in Aug 18 of 65.2 per 10,000 children (647 children) to 61.7 (616 children) in June 2019, increasing slightly to 62.7 (626 children) in July 2019. The current 12-month average for Kirklees rate per 10.000 child population is 63.6, below our 31 March 2018 published rate of 68.0 and our Statistical Neighbours 2018 rate of 86.1 and the England 2018 rate of 64.0.

The number of children in care has decreased by 21 between August 2018 and July 2019. The number of children in Kirklees aged 0-17 has been revised for the calculation from 99,192 to 99,815 as per the data published by DfE in October 2018)

Kirklees (July 2019) = 62.7 per 10.000 child population

Statistical Neighbours (2018) = 86.1 per 10.000 child population

England (2018) = 64.0 per 10.000 child population

Placement Stability and support

The Legal Gateway and Permanence Panel continues to support consistency in regard to decision making and planning around placement moves for children and young people. A weekly External Placement Review Panel is in place, to provide better oversight of children who are not placed in council provision. An External Placement Review is ongoing of all children who are placed out of Local Authority to consider their care planning and explore options of returning to the local area if this is in line with meeting the children and young person's needs. We have already made progress reducing the number of children placed more than twenty miles away from Kirklees from reducing from 127 in 2017 to 81 on 31st July 2019.

We have reviewed all children who are placed at home on interim or full care orders as a legal status (Placed with Parents). This includes children residing at home under a court direction.

For Placement Stability the placement support team are very active, and we have implemented innovative solutions to support several placements. An example of plans to limit unplanned moves is as follows: where a foster carer or placement is given 28-day notice, the Team Manager will coordinate a meeting within 5 working days to look at what can be provided to avoid placement breakdown and to maintain the current placement.

Health of Children in Care

What difference did we make?

Initial health assessments

Kirklees rolling 12-month data for July 2019 shows 88.2% were completed in timescales. Locala monthly data for July reports that 100% were completed in timescales.

Review health assessments:

Kirklees rolling 12-month data for July 2019 for developmental assessments, i.e. children under 5 years old, stands at 96.8% and for annual assessments, i.e. children over 5 years old, were 98.6% on time. Locala monthly data for July records that 100% of the developmental and 97% of the annual assessments were completed in timescales. There were 2 late RHA's (1 was a Kirklees child who declined the assessment. 1 was another local authority child where the carer said she did not receive the appointment letter, so it was re-arranged). All Kirklees children who decline an assessment, are informed that a 'Virtual' assessment will be completed if they agree. The 'Virtual' assessment gathers available health information from current records and discussions with carers and the social worker. The assessment information helps to inform the LAC reviews and those caring for the children of any outstanding health needs. These are not counted in the data.

Dental Checks

Within last 12 months: Kirklees rolling 12 month data for July 2019 shows that 83.6% of LAC have been recorded as having received a dental check (we know this figure is higher, as it relies on the team being notified after each dental attendance, in between health assessments). Additional actions are undertaken to find this information other than at their health assessment i.e. when an SDQ is sent out, monthly lists of missing information etc. The missing information is less likely for children up to age 5 as this is asked at their '6 monthly' RHA. For children over age 5, this information is reported at the 'annual' RHA

Registered at dentist:

Locala monthly July 2019 data shows 100% of looked after children from age 5 to 18 (omitting babies under 18 months) were registered at the dentist at the time of their RHA. The Designated Nurse is informed immediately following the child's health assessment by electronic task from Locala, of any children not registered to allow action to be taken. The Designated Nurse has arranged a meeting with a Public Health colleague to look at including Looked after Children and Care Leavers, as a cohort to automatically access dental registration, in the 'Oral Health Strategy and Action Plan 2019-24', which is in draft format currently

Substance misuse:

1.66% of looked after young people were identified at their last review health assessment, as having a dependant problem with substances. Consideration must be given to the difficulty in obtaining an accurate figure, as it is dependent on the young person admitting the extent of the issue, given that it is illegal and they may not wish to share the information. (National figure 4%). Those young people who refuse any support are discussed with the local support service, to try to have a targeted response. Any young person misusing substances at any level is offered support.

Fostering

What difference did we make?

We have had a number of de-registrations of foster carers. Several of these are families in the “connected person” pathway, carers who have decided to take permanence orders such as Special Guardianship Orders, and therefore resign as foster carers, and this is a positive outcome for the child. We have also had some carers resign in recent months for reasons beyond our control for example a foster carer who adopted and decided that fostering was not compatible with the adoptive placement. We have also had some retirements in recent months and inactive fostering households who have made the decision that fostering is not something they wish to continue doing.

The Service Manager is working closely with the Kirklees Fostering Network to continue to develop our fostering service and ensure that carers are supported appropriately. A foster carer is now attending the Corporate Parenting Board. A regular meeting is now in place to review calls to the foster carer helpline and we meet with the foster carers who operate the helpline. We have submitted a bid to the Department for Education expressing interest in obtaining funding for two hubs operating the “Mockingbird” model of fostering, we await the outcome of the bid.

A review of how the Fostering Service operates is to take place in the autumn to ensure we are focussing our resources in the correct way, and that our existing carers are receiving good support. It was highlighted during the Ofsted inspection that recording latency was causing an issue in the Fostering Service, and that the service needs to make better use of data. It was also highlighted more positively that at the time of the 2016 inspection 66% of children were cared for in family settings at this inspection this had risen to 75%, due to increases in connected persons and other fostering, and a reduction in residential use.

We have been very active with prospective carer recruitment, taking part in the Jo Cox fun run, the Pride event, using Facebook, Twitter, Kirklees Intranet, marketing materials in a range of arenas (including coverage in regional news) and positive coverage re educational attainment of a young person who is now an adult talking about her time in Kirklees Foster Care. Adverts in flower beds across the District to raise awareness of children in need of placements, with the strap line “Help a Kirklees Child Bloom”, we have developed stronger links with Huddersfield Town FC in terms of marketing fostering opportunities.

We have Foster Carer Awards at John Smiths Stadium planned we were extremely pleased with the success of the previous event, receiving positive feedback from those foster carers who attended, and press coverage. We have developed a much better working relationship with the local Fostering Network.

What do we want to improve?

Recruitment and retention of foster carers

The Service Manager is focussing on these challenges as two separate matters, improving our offer for existing carers and a focus on recruitment. We continue to develop the Recruitment Team to increase numbers of Kirklees carers and have targeted carers for respite and teenagers. A recruitment and retention focus for our foster carers is a key strand of our improvement work and the Service Manager is working closely with the Recruitment Team to ensure that the numbers of assessments increase and that they are completed in a timely fashion.

Capacity has now been increased for Form F assessments. The “Refer a Friend” scheme is in place encouraging existing carers to assist with recruitment for a small financial reward. Our target this year is to add 25 new mainstream households per year, after mainstream resignations have been deducted.

Further work is to be undertaken to look at encouraging culturally diverse applicants our marketing campaign approach continues and there is plan for further digital marketing. Fostering fortnight during May created 23 initial enquires and these expressions of interest will be tracked. We have met with Huddersfield University Business School who have agreed for some post graduate projects to look at our foster carer recruitment methods these have now started.

One Adoption West Yorkshire Children with a plan for adoption

To the end of July 2019, 16.7% (32 children) had been adopted as a percentage of children leaving care in a 12-month rolling period. This represents a 12-month high. The 12-month average is 12.4% (23). At the level of performance to July 2019, Kirklees is now above the England rate of 13.0% (2018) and Statistical Neighbours rate of 15.5% (2018).

The average timescale for adoption has been increasing and reached 427.7 days in July 2019. Overall this remains better than the Statistical Neighbours and National averages, 512.4 and 486.0 days respectively, from the most recent Adoption Scorecard (3-year average outcome to March 2018). Kirklees performance on the Scorecard was 487 days, so performance has improved since this time. The average timescale has been increasing and reached 214.1 days in July 2019. Overall this is better than the Statistical Neighbours average of 243.6 and above the national average of 220.0, from the most recent Adoption Scorecard (3-year average outcome to March 2018). Kirklees performance on the Scorecard was 198 days, so there has been a small increase in the average timescale since this time

We have established weekly clinics to support children's social workers who are undertaking child permanence reports, sibling assessments and considering whether a plan for adoption is appropriate. This is a joint initiative between the Assessment & Intervention Service and One Adoption and will be supported by regular training and workshops. One Adoption continue to attend legal gateway on a weekly basis in order to track children with a plan for adoption and to ensure a family finder is allocated.

If an adoption placement ceases then One Adoption have a 'disruption review' and their new procedure is on our procedures website. There will be work with Kirklees staff as to the implementation of this process. We have a structured Agency Decision Making process in relation to adoption planning. This includes legal and medical advice as well as advice from One Adoption West Yorkshire.

Adoption Support Fund – there has been an increase in successful applications for Kirklees children that resulted in an increase of support, training and therapeutic input.

What do we want to improve?

Develop an even closer working relationship between One Adoption West Yorkshire and Kirklees social workers and managers, to ensure we maximise the potential benefits of the regional adoption agency in Kirklees. The family finding team at One Adoption with responsibility for Kirklees are currently moving into Civic Centre 1, which will improve areas of communication and partnership working to assist timely adoption for our children.

Education

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

98% of all initial PEP's have been completed within 10 working days of notification to the Virtual School since 01/09/2018. The 53.2% reflects the fact that we are unable to hold PEP meetings with educational providers if it is the school holidays and the historic lag in notification processes earlier in the academic year.

We continue to work with social work teams to improve both PEP and initial PEP completion and the quality assurance of PEP's. This includes weekly updates to Social Work managers and regular chase up emails and phone calls to Social Workers where there is missing information. We also focussed relentlessly to ensure PEP completion in July prior to the summer holidays. We are currently moving to termly PEP's to meet statutory requirements and this will need to be clearly communicated and implemented across the service as a priority.

Attendance is steady, as is the number of persistent absentee pupils. However this is an ongoing area of focus as we remain slightly below regional and national data. All pupils with attendance less than 90% have a persistent absentee plan in place agreed by all professionals working with the young person.

We continue to maintain a strong focus on pupils not in full-time educational provision. Wherever possible we look to ensure a return to full time education as soon as possible but these situations are often very complex.

The number of young people not in full-time education has slightly decreased, we have 2 young people not on a school roll for exceptional reasons and they have a personalised package of education in place. The performance in May 2019 was slightly better than the England 2017 of 3.9% and the statistical neighbour rate of 3.6%.

What do we want to improve?

Working together to ensure PEP completion within the new termly timescales – reducing the amount of chasing up required prior to sign off.

Working together to improve attendance overall by reducing the number of persistent absentee pupils.

Looked after Children Reviews and Missing

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

Child Looked After Reviews held within timescales remained at over 90% in July 2019.

Discussions held between Independent Reviewing Officers and Social Worker in Reviews and Planning Meetings, are challenging perceptions of permanence. Independent Reviewing Officers are now being proactive in asking about considering move to Special Guardianship Orders where appropriate for the child.

Service Specific Performance data is now provided to Independent Reviewing Officers on a weekly basis, which enables them to more efficiently identify any errors, and to raise any concerns relating to drift and delay.

Work continues to develop and improve our response to children and young people who are missing. There are improved links with the residential units, police and external services, which as a result has improved awareness and information sharing. In addition there is recognition that there have been some inconsistencies in the data that has resulted in this not being entirely reflective of the work undertaken around Missing Looked after Children. Work has taken place in liaison with the Performance Intelligence Unit to improve the recording of episodes thereby ensuring that the data produced is reflective of the work being undertaken.

The Return Interview (RI) offer is delivered by the Risk and Vulnerability Team for all young people reported to the police as missing in Kirklees. We have strengthened our links with partnership working with the Police and a Police Misper co-ordinator is now co-located within the team, encouraging timely and relevant sharing of information.

A daily missing and risk briefing has been introduced with participation from Police Misper Coordinator. It is envisaged this should improve information sharing, enhance timely allocation of return interview.

We continue to monitor that Children in Care have a statutory visit in line with practice standards as part of our service performance meetings. The recent introduction of Advanced Practitioners within the service will further enhance the improvement with regards to our performance.

What do we want to improve?

Placement stability we will also use lessons learned to inform practice always have placement stability meetings in place. Improve allocated social worker stability reduce further the number of children placed more than 20 miles from their home address. We aim to recruit more local foster carers to provide more local placement options.

Looked after Children involved in the criminal justice system

Service Narrative

What difference did we make? What difference did we make?

For the year 2018/2019 65.8% of CLA young people have successfully completed their interventions which in comparison with the previous year is a decrease of 10% but is however a much improved picture from 3 years ago when less than 30% of LAC young people successfully completed their interventions. For the 1st quarter of this year (April to June 2019) the percentage of CLA offending is 0.86% which is an improvement from 2.13% for the same period last year.

What do we want to improve?

There has been a significant reduction in offending by CLA between 2017/18, 7.26% and 2018/19 5.48%. The latest quarterly figure for offending 0.86% is also better than the first quarter of last year 2.13%. Through interventions by the YOT LAC team, restorative processes, liaison with Children's Homes and creative out of court disposals it is hoped the offending rate will continue to fall.

LEAVING CARE

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

Contact with care leavers

There has been a slight decline however we continue to maintain a high percentage of care leavers we are in touch with, currently in touch with 89% of care leavers, this has to be viewed in the context of this group all being aged 18 plus. In some situations, young people are not wanting to keep contact with their Personal Advisor,

the team work innovatively to keep in touch, we have a best practice protocol in place.

Number of young people in suitable accommodation

There has been a decrease in the number of young people in suitable accommodation. This is linked to young people who are taken into custody, rather than a lack of suitable accommodation in the borough. We continue to maintain strong links with KNH and Housing and the Housing Panel is enabling us to ensure that suitable accommodation is available in a timelier manner when young people are moving to their own accommodation. We have recently made some strong links with private housing providers and are considering how collectively we can improve our skills for independence training.

We now have life skills and pre-tenancy training in place held weekly at “No.11” and where possible link young people with tenancy support when housed in KNH tenancies.

Kirklees Commitment to Care Leavers

We are working on opening a similar service to number 11 in the North of the district to improve reach with our young people.

Personal Advisors – The service report shows that 100% of our Young People aged 17 and 4 months have an allocated PA, as well as an allocated Social Worker. We have been able to strengthen our pathway planning in relation to developing timely transitions with young people.

Education Employment Training

Our performance in relation to Employment, Education and Training (EET) indicator is a focus for improvement we are now 3% above statistical neighbours with 54.4% of care leavers in education employment or training we have a C&K Careers Advisor in the Leaving Care Service. We have a pro-active multi agency group to improve opportunities in partnership working and there is a real desire to ensure our young people are afforded the best of opportunities in relation to EET.

Pathway Plans – We continue to work with the Personal Advisors to ensure pathway plans are completed in a timely manner to meet targets with a focus going forward on the improvement of the quality of plans, the involvement of young people and ensuring we capture their wishes and feelings.

What do we want to improve?

Number of young people with a pathway plan – The number of young people with a pathway plan has increased to 98% which is in part due to the better recording of plans on Liquid Logic. Work is currently ongoing within the service and it is expected that the measure will improve further. We continue to work with the Personal Advisors to ensure pathway plans are completed in a timely manner to meet targets with a focus going forward on the improvement of the quality of plans, the involvement of young people and ensuring we capture their wishes and feelings. A piece of work will take place to analyse the reported decline in young people placed in suitable accommodation.

Childrens Homes

The Councils five Ofsted Registered Childrens Homes have all been inspected unannounced by Ofsted in the 18/19 financial year, for their main annual inspection four are graded as Good and one Outstanding. The homes will be re inspected unannounced in this financial year

2. **Information required to take a decision**

Not applicable

3. **Implications for the Council**

3.1 **Working with People**

Not applicable

3.2 **Working with Partners**

Not applicable

3.3 **Place Based Working**

Not applicable

3.4 **Improving Outcomes for Children**

Oversight and monitoring of children in care performance to continue at future Corporate Parenting Board to monitor progress, as requested by the Chair.

3.5 **Reducing demand of services**

Not applicable

3.6 **Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**

Not applicable

4. **Consultees and their opinions**

Not applicable

5. **Next steps**

Managers to lead the focus on areas of performance with staff, in areas where outcome data is not what we expect it to be.

6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

That the report and key highlights on performance within Children in Care Services be noted.

7. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**

Not applicable

8. **Contact officer**

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9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Monthly performance information is used to inform the narrative for this report

10. **Service Director responsible**

Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director (Learning and Early Support)

Elaine McShane, Service Director (Family Support and Child Protection)