



**Name of meeting:** Corporate Parenting Board  
**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019  
**Title of report:** Children in Care Services Performance Highlights

### Purpose of report

This report outlines key performance highlights for children in care and care leavers up to September 30<sup>th</sup> 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 <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)</a>	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) – 14.10.19
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 <a href="#">portfolio</a>	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 September 30th 2019 are as follows:-

Over 12 months we have a slight decrease in the number of children in care from a 12 month high in Aug 18 of 647 children to 641 children in September 2019

However there has been an increase from 626 children in July 2019 to the current number 641 on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

The current 12-month average for Kirklees rate per 10.000 child population is 64.2, 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.

Kirklees (Sept 2019) = 64.2 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

### What difference did we make?

The current total number of children in care of 641 in September 2019 has increased from 635 in August 2019. The Legal Gateway Permanence Panel continues to support consistency in regards to decision making and planning around placement moves for children and young people.

A weekly External Placement Review Panel is now in place, to provide better oversight of children who are not placed in council provision. An External Placement Review 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 this number placed more than twenty miles away from Kirklees from 127 in 2017 to 78 on 30th September 2019.

For Placement Stability the placement support team are very active and we have implemented innovative solutions to support several placements. From 7<sup>th</sup> October the support team have moved alongside children in care social work teams. An example of plans to limit unplanned moves is as follows: is 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.

Whilst the data shows improvement in certain areas we are focussing on the negative data particularly as it relates to three and four placement changes in the previous 12 month period.

The social work change data has improved compared to the previous month, we are mindful of the negative trend related to social work changes, when compared to the same point last year, and the impact this has on our children and young people and we will continue to focus on the retention of staff and consistency in case allocation.

## **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 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.

## **Health of Children in Care**

### **What difference did we make?**

#### **Initial health assessments:**

Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows 86.7% were completed in timescales. Locala monthly data reports that 100% were completed in timescales. The difference in comparison with Locala data is that in August, 4 siblings' assessments placed with a parent, were asked to be re-arranged on the final date of statutory timescales. This will affect the data for the coming 12 months.

#### **Review health assessments:**

Kirklees rolling 12-month data for developmental assessments completed in timescales, i.e. children under 5 years old, were 92.3% and for annual assessments, i.e. children over 5 years old, were 96.8% on time. Locala monthly data records that 95% of the developmental and 94% of the annual assessments were completed in timescales. There were 3 late RHA's (Reasons = 2x Carer holiday arrangements and 1x placement move). 3 were completed on our behalf by other Local Authorities, 1 was late due to their staff capacity. 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 shows that 78.7% of LAC have been recorded as having received a dental check. This figure in real time will be higher, as it relies on 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 annually.

### **Registered at dentist:**

Locala monthly data shows 94% of children up to age 5 (omitting babies under 18 months) and 95% of children over age 5 were registered at the dentist at the time of their RHA. The Designated Nurse is informed 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 met with a Public Health colleague in July 19 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. Update September from Public Health, is that there has not been a subsequent meeting held yet to finalise.

### **Substance misuse:**

1.45% (n7) of looked after young people were identified at their last review health assessment, as having a dependant problem with substances. The number has reduced by 1 in the 12 month rolling data collection. 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. 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 number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers increased to 222 in Aug and has remained at this level in Sep. This is the same the 12-month average of 222.

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 launched a new package of carer benefits including access to the employee health scheme. Our bid to the Department for Education to fund the “Mockingbird” model of fostering, was not successful however we now have some internal funding available. We will be consulting with Kirklees Fostering Network to discuss how we can develop our Kirklees model.

A review of the Fostering Service operating model has begun 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”. Our relationship with Huddersfield Town raising awareness of the need for new carers in the stadium and at events is developing.

We have Foster Carer celebration event at John Smiths Stadium planned for Friday 22 November 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.

We have launched a new package of carer benefits including access to the employee health scheme, the launch was well attended and received positive feedback from carers.

### **What do we want to improve?**

Recruitment and retention of foster carers, reduce use of IFA – 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 remand. 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 been realigned to improve timelines for applications to foster Form F assessments.

### **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 have moved 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?**

91% initial PEP's have been completed within 10 school days of notification to the Virtual School since 01/09/2019. 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 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 has improved on this time last year, as has the number of persistent absentee pupils. 88.2% of school moves have been carefully planned across service to ensure a smooth transition with no break in provision.

#### **What do we want to improve?**

We will have a focus on termly PEP completion as all pupils should now have a termly PEP from 1st Sept 2019. Attendance persistent absence is an ongoing concern as we remain slightly below regional data. All pupils with attendance less than 90% have a PA 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 education 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 increased, we had 5 young people not on a school roll for exceptional reasons and they have a personalised package of education in place. In addition to this we have 3 young people from specialist provision whilst an appropriate provision to meet need is sought.

### **Looked after Children Reviews and Missing**

#### **What difference did we make?**

Child Looked After Reviews held within timescales remained at over 90% in September 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 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 reported as missing from care, which as a result has improved awareness and information sharing. In addition there is recognition that there have been some inconsistencies in the data produced and that this has resulted in it not being entirely reflective of the work relating to Missing Children Looked After. 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 Vulnerabilities Team for all young people reported to the police as missing in Kirklees. We have strengthened our partnership working and a Police Missing Person co-ordinator is now co-located with the team, encouraging timely and relevant sharing of information. Daily missing and risk briefings have been introduced to further improve information sharing, and the timely allocation of return interviews.

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?**

The Service Manager is increasing focus on statutory visit compliance to improve the performance. Regular performance meetings are held within the service to ensure that we are able to improve our performance. We will ensure that the issues of risk and vulnerability are clearly considered at each Child Looked After review, where relevant.

Children New into Care referrals to the CPRU to be made in a consistent and timely manner. Child participation in the Looked After Reviews delays in recording on Liquid Logic affect reporting of the monthly performance.

Further development of a combined response to Missing, Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation delivered through the 'Risk and Vulnerabilities' team to offer a cohesive approach for children, young people and parents /carers.

### **Looked after Children involved in the criminal justice system**

#### **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**

### **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 85.9% 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 "No 12" and where possible link young people with tenancy support when housed in KNH tenancies.

#### **Kirklees Commitment to Care Leavers**

We now have an established service at our new drop in no 12 in the North of the district which has improved our 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 97% 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. We are currently undertaking work to analyse the 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**

Steve Comb, 01484 221000

[steve.comb@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:steve.comb@kirklees.gov.uk)

Janet Tolley, 01484 221000

[janet.tolley@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:janet.tolley@kirklees.gov.uk)

## 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)