

Name of meeting: Children's Scrutiny Panel

Date: 8th November 2019

Title of report: Re-referrals into Children's Social Care

Purpose of report

To provide information to the Childrens Scrutiny Panel on the current re-referral rates into children social care service and offer assurances that children are receiving the right service at the right time with safeguarding at the centre of all decision making and care planning.

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?	Yes/ no or " not applicable" No If yes give the reason why .
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Yes/ no or "not applicable" N/A If yes also give date it was registered
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes/ no or " not applicable" N/A If no give the reason why not
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Elaine McShane
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	N/A
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Viv Kendrick, Children's Portfolio

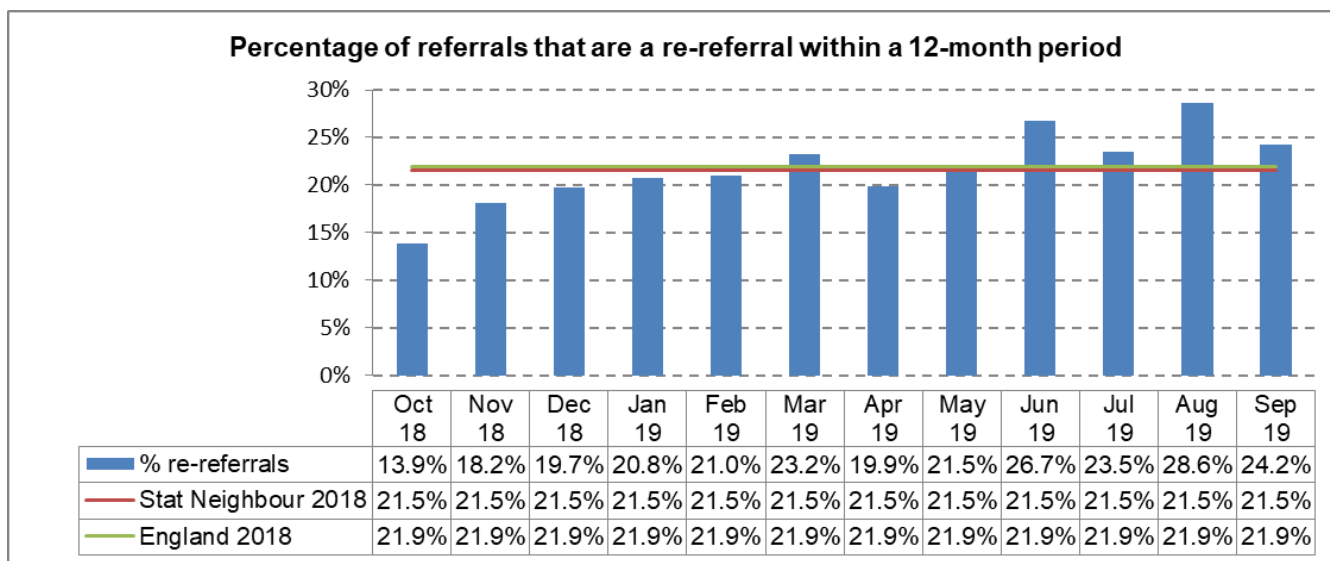
Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or private: Public

1. Summary

- 1.1 The table below illustrates repeat referrals to Kirklees Childrens Social Care over the last 12 months. The data shows an increasing trend over the period. In comparison to national and statistical neighbours, Kirklees has a slightly higher rate of re-referrals.



- 1.2 Children's Services has reviewed the data and cases in order to understand the reasons for re-referrals.
- 1.3 Domestic abuse and child behaviour are the main reasons recorded for re-referral, with domestic abuse accounting for the highest proportion of child re-referrals.
- 1.4 Domestic abuse referrals are broken down into a number of sub categories so that we better understand the type and impact of abuse and ensure the response is appropriate and proportionate.
- 1.5 In regards to child behaviour, the re-referral data indicates the main reason for re-referral is family breakdown where there are children aged 16- 18 year olds in the household and where interventions such as family support, family group conferences or arrangements where teenagers residing with extended family as part of preventing the need to become looked after have subsequently broken down.
- 1.6 The reasons for family breakdown are often complex with a number of differing factors, however school/college holidays often coincide with increase requests for social care intervention. This is reflected in the increase of children becoming looked after between July – September of this year. There was a similar trend in re referrals in the same months in the 2018 data, as identified below.

Presenting Issue	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Domestic Violence/Abuse	27	36	27	37	34	42	26	35	46	22	41	14	387
Sexual Abuse	7	11	7	18	14	5	3	7	24	1	7	1	105
Child Behaviour	4	5	5	12	6	7	13	4	8	7	24	5	100

How are Children Service's Responding:

- 1.7 Within the front door, multi-agency weekly review meetings take place; decision making and outcomes are reviewed as a partnership, with lessons learned used to further improve practice across the partnership ensuring re

- referrals to service are appropriate for example safeguarding and risk is correctly identified and considered and consent properly obtained.
- 1.8 Domestic violence consultants are part of the duty and advice team within the front door to offer advice and support to families where Domestic incidents occur, but immediate risk of harm to the child is not evident and no social care action is needed.
 - 1.9 Reviewing cases is one of the quality assurance methods we undertake to ensure cases have been closed appropriately and at the right time; we are focusing on the wider factors in relation to whether previous assessments covered the contextual and historical concerns and risks, which also determines whether the re referral is appropriate or whether further work should have been completed prior to case closure. Where necessary, the case is re-opened and further work with families is undertaken.
 - 1.10 Embedding and strengthening the early help offer to further support families, without the need for social care involvement is part of the improvement plan with a key focus on prevention at an earlier level and greater collaboration with the VCSE and communities.

2. Information Required to Take a Decision

N/A

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)

See below

3.2 Economic Resilience (ER)

N/A

3.3 Improving Outcomes for Children

Work completed will ensure children and their families receive appropriate and timely services that prevent need for social care intervention

3.4 Reducing Demand of Services

The embedding of early support within local communities will ensure resources are targeted to meet the bespoke needs of families in the area with earlier identification of potential for family going into crisis or children at risk of coming into the care of the local authority

3.5 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

N/A

4. Consultees and Their Opinions

N/A

5. Next Steps

Professor David Thorpe commences a piece of work in November which will assess how the front door has developed and is performing including responses to child protection enquiries and referrals

Continuous development of our staff is a key strand of our overall workforce development plan, professional curiosity and roles of professionals involved in a child's life are planned areas of focus. Further development of the plan will take into account the recommendations and analysis of Professor Thorpe

Progress of the next steps outlined above will be provided to the Improvement Board as part of ongoing monitoring of performance.

6. **Officer Recommendations and Reasons**

N/A

7. **Cabinet Portfolio Holder's Recommendations**

N/A

8. **Contact Officer** - – Christine Bennett, Head of Service Assessment and Intervention

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

N/A

10. **Service Director responsible** - Elaine McShane, Service Director Family Support and Child Protection.