



**Name of meeting:** Corporate Parenting Board  
**Date:** 10 February 2020  
**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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019, for the board to consider and comment upon.

<b>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?</b>	No
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)</a></b>	No
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b>	Not applicable – for information
<b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b>	<b>Elaine McShane for Mel Meggs 31.1.20</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a></b>	<b>Cllr V Kendrick (Children)</b>

**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**

### **Placement Stability and Support**

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

The total number of children in care was 657 on 30th November 2019 with a slight increase to 659 in December 2019. In terms of comparators Kirklees (Dec 19) data shows 65.8 CIC per 10,000 child population. Statistical Neighbours last validated data (2019) = 91.6, England (2019) = 65.0 per 10,000 child population

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 outside of Kirklees and more than twenty miles away from Kirklees from 127 in 2017 to 78 in August 2019, standing at 81 at the end of December 2019.

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.

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.

Whilst 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 Service Narrative

### What difference did we make?

*Initial health assessments:* Kirklees Local Authority (LA) rolling 12-month data shows 88.5%% were completed in timescales. (In August 2019, 4 sibling assessments were asked to be re-arranged on the final date of statutory timescales. This will negatively affect the LA data until August 2020, due to small numbers producing a high percentage loss).

*Review health assessments:* Kirklees rolling 12-month data for developmental assessments completed in timescales, i.e. children under 5 years old, were **90%** and for annual assessments, i.e. children over 5 years old, were **95.4%** on time. Locala monthly data records that **100%** of the developmental and **97%** of the annual assessments were completed in timescales. There was 1 late RHA. (Reason – Difficulty arranging with carer). All Kirklees LAC 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 **80.2%** of LAC have been recorded as having received a dental check. This figure will be higher, as it relies on being notified by carers or Social Workers after each dental attendance, in between health assessments. Additional actions are taken to find this information other than at their health assessment e.g. attachment slips on other correspondence and contact with carers from monthly exception reports.

*Registered at dentist:* Locala monthly data shows **100%** of all age LAC were registered with a 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 and a Public Health colleague, have agreed that consideration will be made at the next meeting on 24.1.20 of the ‘Oral Health Strategy and Action Plan 2019-24’, to raise the profile of Looked after Children and Care Leavers, as a cohort who should automatically access dental registration.

*Substance misuse:* **1.05%** (5 children) 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.

## **Adoption Service Narrative**

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

To the end of December 2019, 13.5% (25 children) had been adopted as a percentage of children leaving care in a 12-month rolling period. At the level of performance to December 19, Kirklees is slightly above the England rate of 12.0% (2019) and the Statistical Neighbours rate of 17.7% (2019).

The average timescale between coming into care and being placed for adoption has been increasing and reached 487.9 days in November 2019, this reduced slightly to 486.5 in December 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 that Scorecard was 487 days, so performance is currently similar.

The average timescale between the Council receiving court authority to place a child and the Council matching a child with an adoptive family improved slightly to 229.1 days at the end of December 2019. Overall this is better than the Statistical Neighbours average of 243.6 and better than the national average from the most recent Adoption Scorecard (3-year average outcome to March 2018). Kirklees performance on the 2018 Scorecard was 198 days, so it is now taking longer on average for this part of the adoption process.

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. They will be working with Kirklees staff on 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 offers funding for ongoing support to adoptive families and children. 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 now moved into Civic Centre 1 which will improve areas of communication and partnership working to assist timely adoption for our children.

## **Head of Service Narrative: Janet Tolley- Virtual School Head Teacher:**

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

96.8 % of PEPs have been completed within the Autumn Term in-line with the new termly processes.

91% of 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. We have moved to termly PEP's to meet statutory requirements and this will need to continue to be clearly communicated and implemented across the service as a priority.

Attendance has slightly improved on this time last year, as has the number of pupils who are persistent absentees.

75.8% of school moves have been carefully planned across the service to ensure a smooth transition with no break in provision, with 79% within the statutory timescale of 20 working days.

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

We will continue to have a focus on termly PEP completion as all pupils should now have a termly PEP from 1st Sept 2019.

Attendance / Persistent Absence (PA) remains a high priority and 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.

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

### **Service Narrative**

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

49 requests for Initial Review forms were received by the Child Protection and Review unit between 1st October and 31st December 2019 – relating to 71 children who have become Looked After, this is a significant rise compared to the previous 3 months. All of these children were allocated an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) within 24 hours, and Initial Child Looked After Reviews were arranged for all these children to within 4 weeks of their becoming Looked After.

Between October and December, the Child Protection and Review Unit held 560 Looked After Review Meetings. Over 94% of these were within timescales. Independent Reviewing Officers closely monitor Review timescales to ensure that this high percentage is increased, whilst a clear rationale is recorded on a child's file if there are circumstances which result in a Child's Review meeting not being held within time scales. Mid-way reviews are embedded in practice and this continues to improve evidence of Independent Reviewing Officer's oversight on children's files.

There has been an increase with regards to the number of Children in Care who have received a statutory visit in line with practice standards we continue to monitor the visits as part of our service performance meetings. The introduction of Advanced Practitioners within the service will further enhance the improvement with regards to our performance.

In November and December 2019, 35 children and young people were supported by an Advocate from the Children's Right's Team in their Looked After Review. 13 of these were for children living out of Kirklees.

At the end of December 2019, 43 Children Looked After were supported by an Independent Visitor.

For young people who are reported as missing (from home or care) for a period of more than 24 hours or 3 times over a 30 day period a multi-agency strategy meeting to discuss safety planning is considered, to enable a risk management plan to be developed which seeks to support a young person and reduce further missing episodes.

In October 2019 a Children's Social Care thematic audit on children missing from home or care was undertaken, the findings of which have been analysed to help develop service delivery and performance. This work is being undertaken alongside the development of an electronic missing dashboard, to enable improved analysis of and response to reported missing episodes.

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

Children New into Care referrals to the CPRU to be made in a consistent and timely manner. To progress this, Child Protection and Review Unit Service Manager with oversight for Children Looked After reports to every Legal Gateway Panel on children with status of 'Becoming Looked After' referred to CPRU to help address any drift and delay.

Independent Reviewing Officers to continue to liaise closely with Social Workers to ensure that children are enabled to participate in their Reviews to ensure their voice is heard, which includes being made aware of their right to an Independent Advocate at the earliest opportunity.

Development of the return interview offer for Children Looked after who are reported as missing and reside in a host authority.

## **Children in Care involved in the criminal justice system**

### **Service Narrative**

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

For the year 2018/2019 65.8% of CIC 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 CIC young people successfully completed their interventions. For the 3rd quarter of this year (Oct to Dec 2019) the percentage of CIC offending is 0.86%. Although this is not an improvement for the same period last year which was 0.61%, the year to date is currently 2.88% which is a significant improvement on the same period last year of 4.88%.

Although there has been a slight decrease in the number of CIC offending these continue to be relatively small numbers of young people in comparison to the larger CIC cohort. This figure continues to be encouraging when in 2010 almost 13% of Kirklees CIC were convicted of an offence, this compared with a national average of about 5% and a local average of 7%.

West Yorkshire data continues to indicate that rates of reoffending overall by young people is lower in Kirklees than neighbouring Councils [HERE](#)

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

We continue to see year on year reductions in offending by CIC. The latest quarterly figure for offending 0.86%, although a slight increase on the same qtr. for last year still presents us with a significant reduction in the yearly figure at 2.88% in comparison to 4.88% for the same period last year.

Through continued interventions by the YOT CIC team, restorative processes, liaison with Children's Homes and creative out of court disposals it is likely 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 increase however we continue to maintain a high percentage of care leavers we are in touch with, currently in touch with 88.1% 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 either an allocated PA or 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 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 slightly decreased. 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.

### **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 Climate Change and Air Quality**

Not applicable

#### **3.5 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.

#### **3.6 Reducing demand of services**

Not applicable

#### **3.7 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)