



**Name of meeting:** Corporate Parenting Board  
**Date:** 4th March 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> January 2020, 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 <a href="#">Strategic Director</a> &amp; name</b>	<b>Tom Brailsford for Mel Meggs (19.2.20)</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

#### Service Narrative

#### What difference did we make?

- The total number of children in care was 659 in December 2019 but there has been an increase to the numbers of children in care to 672 in January 2020. We are currently seeing an increasing trend in the number and rate of children in care from 61.5 (616 children) in Jun 19 to 67.1 (672 children) in Jan 20. The current 12-month average for Kirklees is 63.7 (638 children), above our 31 March 2019 published rate of 62.0, but below our Statistical Neighbours 2019 rate of 91.6 and the England 2019 rate of 65.0.
- The Legal Gateway and Permanence Panels continues to support consistency in regard to decision making and planning around placement moves for children and young people. There continues to be scrutiny by senior management to ensure that it is appropriate for the children and young people entering the care of the Local Authority. An 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 the number placed outside of Kirklees and more than twenty miles away from Kirklees from 127 in 2017 to 85 at the end of January 2020.
- For Placement Stability, the placement support team is 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 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 **86.9%** were completed in timescales (In August 2019, 4 sibling assessments were re-arranged on the final date of statutory timescales, affecting data until August 2020). Locala 'monthly' data is showing that **92%** were completed in timescales. Breach reason: two children initially refused their assessment, later they agreed to complete it with the LAC nurse in school mid-January. They were part of a sibling group of 7.
- *Review health assessments:* Kirklees rolling 12-month data for 'developmental' assessments completed in timescales, i.e. children under 5 years old, were **88.7%** and for 'annual' assessments, i.e. children over 5 years old, were **93%** on time. Locala monthly data records that **82%** of the 'developmental' and **92%** of the 'annual' assessments were completed in timescales. There were 7 late RHAs. (Breach reasons – 4x cancelled by carer, 1x placement move, 1x carer not contacted timely, 1 x staff capacity). 7 RHAs were completed on the behalf of Kirklees for children accommodated in other local authorities, 4 of these were late (57%). Reasons for breach: 3x capacity, 1x placement move.
- *Dental Checks within last 12 months:* Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **81.9%** 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. We are waiting for feedback from a meeting from 24.1.20 by Public Health, 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:* **1.02%** (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 admission of the issue, the illegality of it and they may not wish to share the information. Any young person misusing substances at any level is offered support. Young people who refuse support, are discussed with the local Substance Misuse Service, to try to offer an alternative response e.g. group work or access through other agencies. The Health Team are looking at using a verified tool, to provide a more uniform method of assessing the level of need.

## **Fostering Service Service Narrative**

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

- January 2020 saw two new carer approvals, the same as December 2019. The rolling 12-month total of approved carers to January was 26 approvals. There were two in-house fostering de-registrations in January (including connected carers). The number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers was 232 in January, a slight decrease from the level in December. This is above the 12-month average of 226. The number of connected persons placements increased to 102, from 89 in December 2019 (Note that this figure includes Regulation 24 placements). The January 2020 number of 185 represented a 12-month high in the number of Independent Agency placements. This compares to a 12-month low of 157 in January 2019. This increase reflects the use of independent agency foster care to place the increased number of children in our care, because we did not have internal carers available. There are: 9 prospective carers at Stage 1 with Fostering Advisors; 17 at Stage 2 (Concurrent Assessments – this includes 6 x Supported Lodgings, one of which is Connected Persons).

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

- Recruitment and retention of foster carers is a priority as is reducing the use of fostering agency care. 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 will have focussed campaigns for respite care that can be a softer introduction to fostering, and teenagers exhibiting troubled and troublesome behaviours. 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. All foster carer resignations are scrutinised by the Service Manager and panel, and expression of interest in fostering that does not progress is peer challenged within the Fostering Team.
- We have recently signed an agreement with the National Fostering Network to work together this year to implement two Foster Carer Mockingbird hubs in Kirklees, with an initial timeline to work towards of November 2020. This model facilitates additional support to specific carers. We will be consulting with Kirklees Fostering Network, and other stakeholders, to discuss how we can develop our Kirklees model and work with the National Fostering Implementation team, who hold responsibility for monitoring the application and “fidelity” of the licensed model. The Challenges re carer recruitment are a both a local and national issue. Latest figures from the National Fostering Network show that 8,500 more fostering households are needed across the UK. The carer supply and demand activity has led to supply constraints, with less choice of carer availability across the UK – we experience this at a local level. We continue to pursue a range of recruitment activity: To improve our

internet search presence to prospective carers we have entered into an agreement with “Google Ads”; an advertising campaign highlighting the need for Forever Families for our children in foster care is currently taking place.

- Our current internal foster carer household registration profile is: Short term 97; long term 60 (permanence); short break carers for children with a disability 4; connected persons carers 47; parent & child foster carers 1. We need to improve numbers across all of these categories to place more of our children with internal foster carers. We currently also have 20 carers registered to provide placements for connected children under regulation 24 (emergency placement regulations).
- The Service Manager is working closely with the Kirklees Fostering Network to continue to develop our fostering service offer and ensure that carers are supported appropriately. Foster carers now have membership of the Corporate Parenting Board. We have launched a new package of carer benefits including access to the employee health scheme, and access to the staff discounted shopping scheme.

## **Adoption Service Narrative**

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

- To the end of January 2020, 13.0% (24 children) had been adopted as a percentage of children leaving care in a 12-month rolling period. At the level of performance to January 20, Kirklees is above the England rate of 12.0% (2019) but below the Statistical Neighbours rate of 17.7% (2019).
- The average timescale has been increasing, with the exception of November 2019, further increasing to 491.3 days in January 2020. Overall this remains better than the Statistical Neighbours average of 512.4 days but just above the National average of 486.0 days, from the most recent Adoption Scorecard (3-year average outcome to March 2018). Kirklees performance on the Scorecard was 487 days, so performance is currently similar to this outcome.
- The average timescale improved slightly to 228.0 days in January 2020. Overall this is better than the Statistical Neighbours average of 243.6 and just 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 an 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. 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: Service Narrative**

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

- 96.8% of PEPs have been completed within the Autumn Term in-line with the new termly processes.
- 91.6% of initial PEPs 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 PEPs. We have moved to termly PEPs to meet statutory requirements.
- Attendance has slightly improved on this time last year, as has the number of pupils who are persistent absentees.
- 75% of school moves have been carefully planned across the service to ensure a smooth transition with no break in provision, with 82.5% 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.
- Working together across service to reduce the number of young people who have 20+ days between a school move.

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

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

- In January 2020, the Child Protection and Review Unit (CPRU) held 151 Looked After Review Meetings. Over 95% 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 timescales. 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 a slight decrease with regards to the number of Children in Care who have received a statutory visit in line with practice standards. Performance in Jan 20 was 84.2%, slightly below the 12-month average of 85.9%. 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.
- Children and young people continue to be supported by an Advocate from the Children's Right's Team at their Looked After Review, when requested. 7 young people living outside of Kirklees boundary received this service in January 2020. In January, Advocates also supported Children Looked After in various other meetings/settings such as medical and legal appointments, and at Court Hearings
- In January 2020 2 further matches of Independent Visitors with young people have been made, bringing a total to 44 Children Looked After who are now supported by an Independent Visitor. All volunteers are now matched with a child/ young person.
- Independent Reviewing Officers continue to liaise closely with Social Workers to ensure that they inform children of their right to an Independent Advocate at the earliest opportunity and children are enabled to participate in their Reviews ensuring that their voice is heard.
- 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?**

- The Service Managers are 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.

- Children New into Care referrals to the CPRU to be made in a consistent and timely manner. To progress this, the Child Protection and Review Unit Service Manager with oversight for Children Looked After attends the Legal Gateway Panel and reports on children with status of 'Becoming Looked After' referred to CPRU and any identified process delays.
- Processes, information sharing and data collation relating to Child Looked After Reviews. To help achieve this the CPRU have recently reviewed and updated the CLA Review process to ensure that invites are sent in a timely manner and minutes of meetings are received promptly.
- Strengthen the Early Resolution process when seeking to resolve issues for young people. A Children's Rights Early Resolution procedure has been produced and is in draft awaiting comment and ratification in February 2020.
- Increase the number of Independent Visitors (IV) to ensure that all children who ask to be matched with an IV are able to access the service in a timely manner. Development of the Independent Visitor's scheme is currently under review.
- 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

### **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 decrease in this measure, however we continue to maintain a high percentage of care leavers we are in touch with, this currently stands as 85.9%. 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.

## **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 all be re inspected unannounced in this financial year.

### **1. Information required to take a decision**

Not applicable

### **2. 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**  
Steve Comb, 01484 221000  
[steve.comb@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:steve.comb@kirklees.gov.uk)  
  
Julie Bragg 01484 221000  
[julie.bragg@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:julie.bragg@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**  
  
Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources Improvement Partnerships)  
  
Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director (Learning and Early Support)  
  
Elaine McShane, Service Director (Family Support and Child Protection)