

Corporate Parenting Board – Highlight Report - Final

Date of Board: 29 March 2022

Data is as at 28th February 2022, unless stated otherwise.

*Benchmarking Source: Children's Social Care Benchmarking Tool (BMt) V3.20. Benchmarking data is from March 2021 unless stated otherwise. SN = Statistical Neighbours average, Eng. = England average. Where no equivalent published data is available, "N/A" is shown.

Children Entering Care, Children in Care and Placement Stability

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Mar 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	SN	Eng.
4.02.01 Children in care - numbers in care per 10,000 of age 0-17 population.	Per 10,000 population aged 0-17	66.6 (666)	61.7 (617)	62.8 (628)	61.5 (615)	93.3	67.0
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
4.02.04 Children in care by placement within and outside the LA boundary: Total placed outside Kirklees and more than 20 miles from home address	% (number)	11.1% (74/ 666)	12.6% (78)	12.3% (77)	12.4% (76)	12.6%	16.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
4.05.01 Placement Stability Within Year - LAC with three or more placements	% (number)	5.9% (39)	7.1% (44)	7.3% (46)	8.6% (53)	7.5%	9.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
4.05.04 Social Worker change of LAC in care 12+ Months: Number of Social Worker changes	Number	193	276	302	297	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
Average number of SW changes	Average	0.39	0.55	0.60	0.60	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↔		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- There is currently a decreasing trend in the number and rate of children in care from 67.7 (677 children) in Apr 21 to 61.5 (615 children) in Feb 22. The current 12-month average for Kirklees is 64.1 (641 children), below our 31 March 2021 published rate of 66.0, the England 2021 rate of 67.0 and significantly below our Statistical Neighbours 2021 rate of 93.3.
- Of the 76 children placed outside of Kirklees and more than 20 miles from their home address, the large majority are placed in fostering.
- The Head of Service continues to have oversight of permanency planning through Legal Gateway and Permanence Panel. The panels are held weekly to ensure consistency regarding decision making and care planning for children and young people. The panels also provide a quality assurance framework and opportunity to evidence good practice and areas for development.
- An External Placement Review Panel is now in place, and is held every 2 weeks, chaired by the Service Director. The purpose of the panel is to ensure better oversight of children who are not placed in Local Authority provision and provides a quality assurance function in that it provides high support and challenge as required to avoid drift and delay in care planning for children and young people.
- Whilst the number of social work changes has improved a focus needs to remain on reducing this number further, as we are mindful of the impact this has on our children and young people and will continue to focus on staff retention and consistency in case allocation.
- We have seen an increase in relation to the number of children who have had 3 or more home moves from 46 (7.3%) in January 2022 to 53 (8.6%) in February 2022. We have identified this

number relates to our young people who are aged 13 plus, whereby the foster carer has given notice. Due to the limited availability of foster carers for this age group (a national issue) this has resulted with the service having to utilise the temporary options that have been available, until a suitable home has been found. Also, of note we have successfully reunited a number, of the young people back with their birth family. This inevitably has seen an increase in the placement with parents' data but is a positive outcome for the young people.

What do we want to improve?

- The service will continue to work with the Placement Support team and the Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) team to collaboratively support improving placement stability for our children and young people with a focus on integrating strength-based approaches and tools into practice.
- Further worker needs to be undertaken to 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.
- A review of placement stability will be undertaken as part of practice learning days to further identify areas of future learning and development and to strengthen the good areas of practice that are currently taking place.

Children Looked After Reviews, Visits and Missing

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Mar 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	SN	Eng.
4.06.01: CLA Reviews Within Statutory Timescale	%	99.0%	99.0%	98.6%	98.5%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
4.07.01: CLA visits within statutory time-scale: % of CLA visited in line with Kirklees Practice Standards	%	93.8% (623)	92.5% (571)	95.4% (599)	95.1% (585)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
4.09.02: Missing children: a. No. of CLA having at least one Missing episode per month	% (number)	2.4% (16)	2.9% (18)	3.2% (20)	2.0% (12)	9.3%	11%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
b. No. of LAC that have more than one missing episode in the month (repeat Mispers)	% (number)	37.5% (6)	44.4% (8)	25.0% (5)	25.0% (3)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↔		
4.09.03: Independent Return Interviews for CLA offered within 72 hours of the child being located	% (number)	83.3% (10/ 12)	86.7% (13/ 15)	50.0% (10/ 20)	78.6% (11/ 14)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- 7 requests for Initial Review forms were received by the Child Protection and Review unit in February 2022 relating to 9 children, including a sibling group of 3 children. For all the referrals received, children and young people were allocated an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) within 24 hours and Initial Child Looked After Reviews were arranged within 4 weeks of the children and young people becoming Looked After.
- In February 2022, the Child Protection and Review Unit held 97 Looked After Review Meetings for children, with all but one of these being held within timescales, and a rationale for delay relating to this review was provided. Independent Reviewing Officers closely monitor Child Looked After Review timescales to ensure that this high percentage is maintained and improved upon, 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 statutory timescales.
- IROs robustly review children's care plans. They provide time-bound actions, which are followed up in between review meeting to ensure that plans for children progress swiftly, and where drift is

identified informal and formal resolution processes are used effectively. Children's reviews are well attended by a range of partner agencies, who commit to taking actions to improve children's experiences and outcomes.

- In February 2022, 5 children and young people were supported by an Advocate for their child Looked After Review, 2 of these were living in host local authority area
- There has been slight decrease this month in regard, to the number of Children in Care who have received a statutory visit in line with practice standards from 95.4% in January 2022 to 95.1% in February 2022. We continue to monitor the visits on a weekly basis as part of our service performance meetings to address and increase the timeliness of visits to children and young people.
- *Missing CLA:*
 - The number of Children having at least one missing episode has reduced in November, however the average remains at approx. 3%. This average remains considerably below the national average and statistical neighbours (10.0% and 8.7% respectively).
 - The principles of 'Right Support, Right Person, at the Right Time' are consistently adopted when approaching an Independent Return Interview. Utilising familiarity and identifying the right person for the circumstances and placing the Young Person at the centre of the decision is the consistent approach undertaken. With very specific exceptions all Children and Young people are offered an independent return home interview (97%).
 - 99% of all Independent Return Home interviews offered and accepted were completed.
 - The number of children having multiple missing episodes has fluctuated between 3 and 8 in the three-month period which is lower than the 12-month average. The percentage rate of these children is determined from a very low overall number in the cohort of missing children. The slight fluctuation in the overall number of Children therefore creates a significant shift in the percentage and as such presents a volatile range.
 - As per previous reports, all children's homes are being encouraged to review missing reporting strategies with the placing Local Authorities to ensure they are fit for purpose and have a clear expectation on the home to try all avenues to locate the child before reporting them missing.
 - Daily Risk Exploitation and Missing Meetings (DREMM) occur with partners to discuss, intelligence, missing episodes and individual circumstances to ensure actions, and allocations are in keeping with the core principles placing the child at the centre.
 - The Philomena Protocol is a Police initiative to help locate and safely return a young person as quickly as possible when they are missing. The basis of the scheme is for vital information about the young person to be recorded on a form so that this can be used to help locate them safely and quickly. The Philomena Protocol documents continue to be used by all children's homes and semi-independent providers in Kirklees (introduced in July 2020). A number of meetings have been held with providers recently to consider the protocol, the information within it and expectations that all providers use it. Feedback showed that children's homes and semi-independent providers like the protocol and that the information held means that children are located more quickly and that it aids the Police to do this. It was recognised by the police that more work needs to take place with the police call operators who receive the information as they are not all familiar with the protocol.
 - Provider meetings are run 3 to 4 times per year. These have focussed on the Philomena Protocol and support through Covid-19. Meetings have continued to take place and attendance has been good, but more work is required, to increase understanding and fully implement the protocol across the partnership.
 - There are a number of partners involved when a young person who is looked after goes missing. These include foster carers, children's homes, EDS, CLA Teams, Youth Engagement Service and WY Police. Despite the protocol in late 2021, Police highlighted a number of missing episodes where they questioned how young people had been reported missing. Police expressed a view that more could be done by the responsible carer to determine whether they are missing or whether they are absent from placement. This has resulted in a discussion being planned between all involved partners to review responsibilities and reporting. The meeting has been postponed twice at the request of Police and is rescheduled to take place in February 2022.

What do we want to improve?

- The principles of Right Person, Right Support at the Right Time is embedded in the decision making through the Youth Engagement Service. This principle must continue to be the driver of decisions and become the default position across more services.
- The report identifies the number of independent Return Home Interviews offered and accepted. Securing more IRI's remains a priority and together with securing those IRI's comes the requirement to ensure quality and value is maximised.
- 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 can improve our performance.
- The Youth Engagement Service has developed a recording system to enable a more nuanced understanding of IRI outcomes. This recording is intended to inform discussion about how more productive and informative data might be able to be created regarding both the allocation of and outcomes of IRI's.
- Independent Reviewing Officers to continue to liaise closely with Social Workers and the Children's Rights team to ensure that children are enabled to participate in their Reviews and that their voice is heard. IROs are linked to social work teams and area clusters to share updates about services and highlight any themes and issues that maybe/could contribute to delay.
- Children's Rights Service have liaised closely with IRO Service and have relaunched updated online versions of Children's consultation documents for Looked After Reviews. These include children's consultation and feedback forms for Reviews and an Information about Reviews 'Booklet', for two ranges. These have been distributed to the social work teams to be shared with children and young people when they first come into care. The aim is to help children and young people gain understanding of what a Review meeting is, what they can expect, why it is important that their views are heard, the different ways they can make sure this happens, and to encourage improved participation of children and young people in their reviews.

Children Looked After Education Outcomes

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Autumn Term 21/22	Spring Term 21/22	Summer Term 21/22	Benchmarking	
					SN	Eng.
4.10.02 Personal Education Plans (PEP) up to date (current school age LAC with PEP in the last term)	%	100%	100%			
	Direction of Travel	-				

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	Cumulative	SN	Eng.
Initial PEP completed within 10 school days of Virtual School being notified child came into care	%	100%	100%	73%	96%	N/A	N/A

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Mar 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	SN	Eng.
CLA Persistent Absentees	%	N/A	22.0%	26%	22.4%	11.4% (2018/19)	12.0% (2018/19)
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
LAC with a mid-year school move	%	7	3	6	2	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- 100% of PEPs have been completed within the Autumn Term in-line with the termly processes.
- The Virtual School is currently leading on all PEPs since the Covid-19 lockdowns began in March 2020. These are virtually held meetings unless there is a critical reason why in person attendance is required.
- 96% of initial PEPs have been completed within 10 school days of child coming into care since 01/09/2021.
- We continue to work with social work teams to improve both PEP and initial PEP completion and the quality assurance of PEPs.
- 93.4% of school moves since the start of the academic year have been carefully planned across the service to ensure a smooth transition with no break in provision.

What do we want to improve?

- Issues as a result of Covid will be our priority following the return to school for all pupils. This includes Catch up and Emotional Wellbeing.
- We will continue to have a focus on termly PEP completion as key focus area.
- Attendance / Persistent Absence (PA) remains a high priority and all pupils with attendance less than 90%. We will need to be mindful of some of the emotional issues for our young people following the effects of the pandemic and respond creatively where there are issues or concerns.
- Covid-19 continues to impact on the number of PA pupils, even though many of these young people are not attendance concerns. We monitor individual attendance closely and work to support young people on an individual basis. We will continue to have a strong focus on pupils not in full-time education provision.
- We will continue to work across service to reduce the number of school moves (2018-19 (82), 2019-20 (64) 2020-21 (75)) and to reduce the number of young people with a break in provision whenever possible.

Children Looked After Health

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Mar 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	SN	Eng.
4.11.11 Dental Checks within last 12 months - timeliness	%	24.2%	66.1%	66.6%	63.8%	31.9%	40.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
4.11.12 Initial health Assessments completed on time - within 20 days	%	91.2%	85.3%	88.4%	85.9%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
4.11.13 Annual health assessments: a: Under 5's 6 month Developmental Assessments -percentage up to date	%	93.2%	84.4%	87.7%	91.0%	86.9%	89.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
b: Over 5s Annual Health Assessments – percentage up to date	%	89.0%	89.3%	88.1%	91.6%	92.2%	91.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↑		
4.11.16 No. of LAC in care more than 12 month and identified as having a substance misuse problem during the last year	% (number)	0.20% (1)	1.38% (7)	1.39% (7)	1.42% (7)	2.2%	3.0%
	Direction of Travel		↔	↔	↔		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

Initial health assessments (IHA):

- Kirklees Local Authority (LA) rolling 12-month data shows that **85.9%** were completed in the statutory 20 working day timescale.
- Locala monthly data shows that **100%** were completed in timescales for February 2022.

Review health assessments (RHA):

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **91% & 91.6%** of the 'Developmental' assessments (under 5yrs old) and 'Annual' assessments (over 5 yrs. old) respectively, were completed in statutory timescales.

Locala monthly data shows that **72%** of under 5-year-olds and **60%** of over 5-year-olds RHA's were completed in timescales. There were 13 in-house breaches (1 covid related and 12 capacity), this is a reduction from 31 breaches in January. 2 out of 4 RHA's completed by other authorities on our behalf due to location, were outside timescales due to staff sickness and capacity.

There has been a reduction in the completion of RHA's by the exact date over recent months, with an aim to completed in the month they are due where possible. This contingency plan was introduced to reduce the pressure on the health team and allow visits to be planned more efficiently, with current resources. There has been a significant effort in February to complete by the due date where possible.

Dental Checks within last 12 months:

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **63.8%** of children aged 1 year+, when asked at their health assessment had attended the dentist. This rolling figure is not helpful in showing the recovery of dental services.
- Locala monthly data shows that **73% & 100%** of children age 18m to 4 years, and 5 years+ respectively, had attended the dentist at the point of their RHA in February.

Registered at dentist:

- Locala data shows **89% & 93%** of children age 18m to 4 years and 5 years + respectively at the point of their RHA, were registered with a dentist.
- The use of the 'Flexible Commissioning Project' has ensured all CLA can now be registered.

Substance misuse:

- 7 young people (**1.42%**) have admitted or are known to use substances that have a significant impact on their daily life at their last RHA. All have been discussed with the local Substance Misuse Outreach worker, to ensure support has been offered. The negative percentage increase suggests a downward trend, but it is the same 7 young people as last reported.
- If a young person declines their RHA, a check is made with the social worker to ascertain if substance use is an issue.
- Any young person misusing substances at any level is offered support.

Children Looked After Convictions

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Quarter				*Benchmarking
		Jan-Mar 20/21 Q4	Apr-Jun 21/22 Q1	Jul-Sep 21/22 Q2	Oct-Dec 21/22 Q3	
4.12.01 Number of young people who have been looked after continually for 12 months or more aged between 10 and 17 who have offended and received a substantive outcome (Youth Caution/ Conditional Caution or a Court Order)	%	1.24% (4/321)	1.37% (5/364)	0.55% (2/364)	0.55% (2/364)	Eng.: 3.00% SN: 3.43% Y&H: 3.00%
	Direction of Travel	↔	↑	↓	↔	

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- For the year 2018/2019 65.8% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions but is however a much-improved picture from 2016 when less than 30% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions
- For the year 2019/2020 90.9% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions which in comparison with the last year is an increase of over 25% (65.8%).
- For the year April 20 to March 21, 87.7% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions. Whilst this performance is slightly worse than the same period of the previous year, it remains in line with that of the general population successfully completing their intervention.
- For the April to Dec 21 period 64.7% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions, compared to 81.7% of the general population. This is a reduction in Children Looked After completion from the same period of last year which was 85.7%, whilst the general population remains broadly the same.
- Whilst the numbers of Children Looked After offending remain small in the cohort, we are seeing a decrease in the numbers compared to the same period last year. In the year to date we have seen a decrease in the percentage of CLA offending from 4.36% (20/21) to 2.47% (21/22).

What do we want to improve?

- Continued reduction in the numbers of Children Looked After offending. The overall cohort for the 21/22 year is bigger than the 20/21 year (364 compared to 321), but through continued interventions by the YOT, restorative processes, liaison with Children's Homes and creative out of court disposals it is hoped the offending rate will continue to fall.
- There is a focus around Looked After Children in our subgroups – specifically Sub Group 2 – Reducing offending and reoffending.

Care Leavers

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Mar 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	SN	Eng.
5.01.04 Children in care aged 17 years and 4 months with a Personal Advisor	%	80.0%	79.4%	91.7%	94.4%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
5.01.08 Local Authority In Touch with Care Leavers	%	89.6%	92.7%	91.2%	91.8%	95.6%	91.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
5.01.09 Care Leavers in suitable accommodation	%	83.3%	89.5%	88.0%	89.2%	91.5%	88.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
5.01.10 Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training (EET)	%	51.4%	54.9%	53.5%	55.6%	48.0%	52.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
5.01.11 Number of Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan that is up to date	%	86.8%	84.6%	85.6%	88.2%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- *Contact with care leavers* – There has been an increase in relation to the number of Care Leavers we were in touch with during this month from 91.2% in January 2022 to 91.8% in February 2022. This also has, to be viewed in the context of this group being aged 18 plus and, in some situations, young people do not wish to keep in contact with their Personal Advisor. The team continue to work innovatively to keep in touch with all young people.
- *Number of young people in suitable accommodation* – There has been a significant impact on the increasing demands for tenancies during the pandemic. However, we continue to work with our housing colleagues who have agreed to prioritise the properties for our young people, and this has helped to improve our performance. In February 2022 we have seen an increase to 89.2% from 88.0% in January 2022. We will continue to work with our Housing providers to ensure that suitable accommodation is available, we have also maintained strong links with private housing providers. We have continued to provide virtual and face to face life skills and pre-tenancy training and continue to explore collectively how we can improve independence training for our young people. A further update of this work will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in April 2022.
- *Children in Care aged 17 years and 4 months with an allocated Personal Advisors* – There has been an increase in performance on this indicator this month from 91.4.4% in January 2022 to 94.4% in February 2022. Further work is to be undertaken as a priority with the team to address Personal Advisor (PA) allocation, but it is important to note that all the young people do have either an allocated PA or an allocated Social Worker.
- *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. Due to the COVID19 pandemic some of our young people have unfortunately been in a situation where they have either been furloughed or made redundant from their employment. In order, to offer support to our young people we have recently established a virtual clinic where extra support is available from our Careers Advisor. In February 2022 we have seen an increase in the number of young people who are either in employment, education, or training, this is also a priority area to be addressed by the team from 53.5% in January 2022 to 55.5% in February 2022.

- *Pathway Plans* – We have seen an increase in the numbers of young people who have an up-to-date pathway plan this month. 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. This is monitored at our performance meetings chaired by the service manager.

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. 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 have recently reviewed our financial offer to our care leaver along with our staying put policy and they will be launched following approval. We aim to review our commitment to care leavers, and both will significantly improve and enhance our offer to our young people.
- To improve the allocation timeliness of Personal Advisors and the timeliness and quality of visits to young people.
- This is a key priority area for the service to address and increase the number of our young people who will have access to Education, Employment or Training.

Adoption

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Mar 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	SN	Eng.
5.02.01 Number of children adopted as a percentage of children leaving care (12 month rolling period)	% (number)	6.3% (15)	9.5% (21)	9.5% (20)	9.3% (18)	13.9%	10.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↔	↓		
A10 Average timescale (days) between the child coming into care and being placed with the adopter adjusted for foster carer adoptions (12 month rolling period)	Number	546.1	491.5	493.2	509.9	396.7 (17-20)	367.0 (17-20)
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
A2 Average timescale (days) between receiving court authority to place a child and the council deciding to match the child with an adoptive family (12 month rolling period)	Number	255.0	195.3	193.9	186.6	180.0 (17-20)	175.0 (17-20)
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- 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 and Permanence Panel 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 procedure's 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.
- During the recent COVID19 we have had some difficulties in relation to being able to progress transition plans however as restrictions have been lifted we are now in a much stronger position in being able to progress these plans to be able to move children into their potential adoptive Placement. As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic we have experienced delays in relation to court hearings for application for adoption orders again as restrictions have lifted this is now an improving picture.

What do we want to improve?

- To continue to develop working relationships 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. Regular meetings between the Service Managers in One Adoption and Assessment and Intervention have been established which will improve areas of communication and partnership working to assist timely adoption for our children.
- We have been able to enable children to remain within family, whose alternative plan would have been that of adoption, through the Family Group Conference, and connected persons assessments.
- Kirklees will need to consider whether a panel environment would be of benefit, to consider the below recommendations. This could be similar to, if not, the same as Permanence panel, or be heard at this panel, as additional to the already set TORS. At this panel we would consider,
- Maintaining a realistic outcome of rescindment, within 12 months of Placement Order, if links have not been productive. We also need to have scrutiny of this within the panel environment. This would involve the formulation and frequency of this panel, to ensure all the below issues are considered to have had the appropriate oversight and management.
- Our ongoing working relationships with One Adoption and case audits will be able together to consider individual cases. We will be able to determine/monitor links and match children with potential adopters within the first 3 months of the Placement Order being granted. If this hasn't happened, we need to review this within a panel environment, to ensure we are working closely with One Adoption, and ensuring that everything possible is completed, to try and match children, much earlier (fund days/ National register).
- Through work with One Adoption, we will determine harder to place children, and put plans in place to consider these children for family fun days sooner, as we realistically know at the point of final order in most cases, that children will be more difficult to match. Therefore, we need to be more proactive about this approach.
- Reconsider the timescale for foster carers declaring an interest in adoption. At present this sits at 12 months, which then requires a 3-4 month assessment process. If this was to change to 6 months, then there is potential for a child to be adopted within 14 months of final order, for foster to adopt cases (not EPP). Changes to this present arrangement would need to be agreed and discussed at senior management level before this could progress.
- One of our main issues is in relation to the recording systems and accuracy. We need to be better at recording on the Liquid Logic which would give a better indication of orders being made. We remain to be committed to staff training, to ensure that accurate records are kept, which has also included a number of roll backs, to determine the factual information. We will continue to prioritise this as a learning outcome, as both a refresher for staff, and as part of ongoing training/ induction of new employees.
- Through monthly meetings with One Adoption and case audits, we will work together at a proactive approach to improve the timeliness of the adoption orders being made, post placement.
- One Adoption and Kirklees to work together at focussing on adoption cases in the Practice Learning days. To highlight good practice and developmental areas.

Fostering

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Mar 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	SN	Eng.
6.02.07 Total New Carer Approvals in Month:	Number	7	8	1	4	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
In-house Fostering approvals in the month	Number	6	4	1	2	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↑		
In-house Fostering De-registrations in the month	Number	6	1	1	4	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
6.02.09 Placements split: a. In-house foster placements	Number	243	200	207	192	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
b. Family and friend placements	Number	102	106	104	111	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↑		
c. Independent Fostering Agency Placements	Number	186	173	178	182	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- In February 2022 there were 4 new Foster carer approvals; in January 2022 1 fostering household was de-registered at panel and in February 2022 there were 4 resignations.
- The number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers decreased to 192 at the end of February 2022. This is below the 12-month average of 233.
- The number of Family and Friends Placements increased again in February 2022 to a 12-month high of 111.
- The February figure of 182 Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements is an increase of 1 from the 173 seen in December 2021. The 12-month high of 186 was seen in March 2021. The 12-month average is 177.
- The Fostering Service is working to increase the number of Kirklees foster placements. The Council has achieved a net gain of 11 fostering families over the past 12 months.
- We have recently reviewed 19 recorded de-registrations from 2021 and 5 from 2022, 22 of those were resignations, of which 14 were connected carers whose resignations related to a change of legal order or care plan for the child, and 8 foster carers resigned for various reasons, including personal reasons.

What do we want to improve?

- Recruitment and retention of foster carers continues to be a priority. We are focussed on recruiting foster carers who can help us to meet our sufficiency needs around placements for older children, children with complex needs, offering long-term placements and emergency placements.
- We want to ensure that new foster carers receive the right level of support particularly in their first year of fostering; induction, training and support from a Supervising Social Worker are all essential aspects of supporting and retaining new foster carers. The new website for foster carers is live.
- We will be reviewing the annual leave entitlements and other non-monetary benefits for Foster Carer and benchmarking our benefits against other Local Authorities. The Kirklees offer will then be clearly set out so that existing and new carers are clear about the Council's offer to foster carers.
- We are currently implementing a modernisation plan for the Fostering Service. This includes the line management, performance management and the integration with the Placement Support Service, and we are planning our second Mockingbird constellation.
- Under the wider sufficiency agenda, we are in the process of opening a new children's home in Huddersfield, Magdale House; the required building work is underway and on track for the building to be ready early summer, whilst Healds Road is operational as an ITM (MST) Children's home to support children and young people's reunification to a family setting using an evidence-based model.

Appendix – Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
A&I	Assessment & Intervention (part of Family Support & Child Protection)
ADCS	Association of Directors of Children's Services
ASYE	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (for a newly qualified Social Worker)
BSM	Business Support Manager
BSO	Business Support Officer
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CIC	Child(ren) in Care (see also CLA and LAC)
CIN	Child(ren) in Need
CLA	Child(ren) Looked After (also see CIC and LAC)
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CPRU	Child Protection & Review Unit
CSC	Children's Social Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CWD	Children with a Disability
D&A	Duty & Advice (part of Family Support & Child Protection)
DCS	Disabled Children's Service / Director of Children's Services
EET	Education, Employment or Training
EHC	Education, Health and Care (Plan)
EITS	Early Intervention and Targeted Support
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
Form F	Assessment form for approval of Foster Carers
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HOS	Head of Service
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
IFA	Independent Fostering Agency
IHA	Initial Health Assessment (for a Looked After Child)
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
KNH	Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Child(ren) (also see CIC and CLA)
LAIT	Local Authority Interactive Tool (DfE tool for access to nationally published data)
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NQSW	Newly Qualified Social Worker
PA	Personal Advisor (to Care Leavers)
PEP	Personal Education Plan (for a Looked After Child)
PLO	Public Law Outline
QSW	Qualified Social Worker
RCPC	Review Child Protection Conference
RHA	Review Health Assessment (for a Looked After Child)
S17	Section 17 of the Children Act – Relates to Children in Need
S20	Section 20 of the Children Act – Relates to a child accommodated by the LA
S47	Section 47 of the Children Act – Relates to Child Protection
SDQ	Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability

Term	Description
SM	Service Manager
SN	Statistical Neighbours (closest match Local Authorities for benchmarking)
SW	Social Worker
TM	Team Manager
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child
Y&H	Yorkshire and the Humber
YOT	Youth Offending Team