

Corporate Parenting Board – Highlight Report

Date of Board: 24 October 2023

Data is as at 31st August 2023, unless stated otherwise.

Benchmarking Source: Children's Social Care Benchmarking Tool (BMt) V3.29. Benchmarking data is from March 2022 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	
		Aug-22	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	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	62.1 (609)	61.4 (602)	60.4 (592)	60.8 (596)	92.0	70.0
	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)	14.1% (86/609)	12.0% (72/602)	11.0% (65/592)	11.2% (67/596)	12.0%	16.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
4.05.01 Placement Stability Within Year - CLA with three or more placements	% (number)	9.0% (55)	8.0% (48)	9.0% (53)	9.9% (59)	9.0%	10.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
4.05.04 Social Worker change of CLA in care 12+ Months: Number of Social Worker changes	Number	279	225	273	274	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
Average number of SW changes	Average	0.58	0.52	0.65	0.65	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- During the 12-month period from Sep 22 to Aug 23, the number of children looked after peaked at 64.1 (628 children) in Oct 22 and has since decreased to 60.8 (596 children) in Aug 23. The current 12-month average for Kirklees is 61.8 (606 children), marginally below our 31 March 2022 published rate of 62.0, but below the England 2022 rate of 70.0 and significantly below our Statistical Neighbours 2022 rate of 92.0.
- Of the 67 children placed outside of Kirklees and more than 20 miles from their home address, the large majority are placed in fostering. The full breakdown is as follows:

Placement Type	Number	%
Fostering	51	76.1%
Residential	6	9.0%
Placed for Adoption	3	4.5%
YOI or Prison	2	3.0%
Hostel/Supported Accommodation (not subject Children's Home regs)	2	3.0%
S1 - Residential School	1	1.5%
Secure Unit	1	1.5%
Other / unknown	1	1.5%
Total	67	

- The care planning and decision-making processes for children and young people has Senior Manager oversight through Legal Gateway, Permanence and Children Accessing Service Panel. The panels consider the most effective route to securing permanency for a child or young person, oversees the quality and timeliness of care planning and ensures that children and young people receive the right services at the right time.
- The panels provide assurance that management oversight, the performance of practitioners is understood, and clear actions and timescales are in place to address practice of concern and highlight evidence of good practice.
- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) maintains oversight of children and young people placed in external placement through review panel held monthly and 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.
- Permanence and timely accessing of early support services has been achieved through Family Group Conference (FGC) service that is a family-led meeting in which the family and friends network come together to make a plan for a child and the promotion of Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) that provide an alternative legal status for children that offers greater security than long term fostering but without the severance from the birth family that stems from an Adoption Order. Since January 2023 we have successfully supported 48 children to remain within their family network subject of Special Guardianship Order.

What do we want to improve:

- The service will continue to work with the Emotional Wellbeing 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.
- 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.
- Ongoing work regarding placement stability is being undertaken jointly with practitioners and partners to address the challenges and ensure good homes are available for our children and young people.
- There has been an increase in relation to the number of children who have had 3 or more home moves. This remains a focus to ensure we provide stability to our children and young people to engage the emotional wellbeing team sooner to support the children and carers the issues to mitigate against children having to move.
- We have seen an increase in the number Social Worker changes in Jul 23, due to staff leaving. 4 new social workers have now commenced working in the service and continue to recruit new staff. We will maintain weekly manager oversight; we should see an improvement in this data from October 2023

Children Looked After Reviews, Visits and Missing

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Aug-22	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	SN	Eng.
4.06.01: CLA Reviews Within Statutory Timescale	%	97.6%	98.0%	98.3%	98.1%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
4.07.01: CLA visits within statutory timescale: % of CLA visited in line with Kirklees Practice Standards	%	95.0% (575)	89.9% (543)	94.5% (566)	93.4% (552)	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)	2.0% (12)	2.2% (13)	2.9% (17)	1.5% (9)	8.7%	10%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
b. No. of CLA that have more than one missing episode in the month (repeat Mispers)	% (number)	25.0% (3)	38.5% (5)	41.2% (7)	33.3% (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)	33.3% (2/6)	44.4% (4/9)	34.5% (10/29)	10.0% (1/10)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- 17 requests for Initial Review forms were received by the Child Protection and Review unit for Children to become Looked After in August 2023, relating to 19 children in total – this is a higher than usual number for August. Just 2 of these requests were for sibling groups of 2 or more, which was a lower number than usual. 24% of children referred were subject to Child Protection Plan at point of becoming Looked After. The same percentage of young people – 24% - were Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers who Kirklees will now be Looking After. 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 August 2023 the Child Protection and Review Unit held 83 Looked After Review Meetings for children, of which all but two were held within timescales. August is usually one of the quietest months for referrals as schools are usually not available due to the holidays. Independent Reviewing Officers closely monitor Child Looked After Review timescales to ensure that this high percentage is maintained 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.
- Independent Reviewing Officers robustly review children's care plans. They provide time-bound actions, which are followed up in between Review meetings to ensure that plans for children progress, and where drift and delay is identified this is raised via informal and formal resolution processes.
- Children's Looked After Review meetings are well attended by a range of partner agencies, who commit to taking actions to improve children's experiences and outcomes.
- From June 2023 onwards the allocated IRO's for children New into Care are required to undertake a New into Care case audit. Findings are shared with the area social work Service Manager for their oversight and then sent to social work Team Managers. Key themes highlighting best practice and areas for practice and service improvement are then set out in monthly CPRU reports to senior Managers, and findings shared in the monthly Quality Assurance Board Meeting with Service Managers.

- The Children's Rights team continue to provide advocacy for children and young people, along with supporting young people at their Looked After Review meetings and working with the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum, both which meet on a regular basis with managers at all levels attending.
- The children in care service management team meet with the Children in Care Council young people to obtain their wishes and feeling along with consult with them in relation to areas of development and proposed changes to key documents. One of these meeting is scheduled to take place on 2nd October where discussion regarding the draft care plan will take place.
- Our children and young people along with care leavers views are also obtained during Time to Talk sessions with senior managers which are scheduled until the end of year. These sessions have recently ascertained the views of young people in respect of celebration events, and 17 young people recently attended a trip to Chester Zoo on 01 August 23.
- There continues to be an emphasis on seeking to recruit Independent Visitors and successfully matched with young people.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of Children in Care who have a recorded statutory visit in line with practice standards. We continue to have weekly oversight and monitoring of the visits as part of our service performance meetings. The meetings focus on timeliness and quality of visits to young people as well as providing evidence of practice in relation key strengths and areas for further development.

Missing CLA:

- The number of Children having at least one missing episode has seen an increase, however the 12 month average of 2.6%, remains considerably below the national average and statistical neighbours. The numbers used to calculate percentages are relatively low making shifts in percentage scales potentially volatile.
- 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 (100%).
- The percentage of Children receiving an IRI within 72 hours was higher than recent previous months and in line with the wider cohort of missing children. The principal of right person meant that although not always within 72 hours the best possible person undertook the task and ensured 100% of all accepted interviews were completed.
- Those completed within 72 hours of their return was low in August, however under those principles of utilising the right person 100% of all Independent Return Home interviews offered and accepted were completed.
- The number of children having multiple missing episodes has fallen along with those children with more than one missing episode. 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.
- West Yorkshire Police are undertaking a revised approach in accordance with an agreed national pilot. Though recently changed the lower numbers of missing episodes could be a reflection of the three steps undertaken when reporting a missing person. Levels of Intervention, No Immediate Intervention Required. Parental or Carer Intervention and Police Intervention. This approach may more accurately identify missing episodes and not unnecessarily create missing episodes that do not reflect the circumstances.

What do we want to improve:

- The Service Managers to continue to provide oversight of statutory visit compliance through the weekly performance meetings that are held within the service. Along with fortnightly practitioner focused performance meeting chaired by the team manager to ensure all relevant support and development is in place for all staff.
- 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 Youth Engagement has seen an increase in conversation from offer of IRI to Acceptance. This remains an ambition to constantly improve and harvest information that supports the young person and develops knowledge to reduce future missing episodes.

Children Looked After Education Outcomes

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Autumn Term 22/23	Spring Term 22/23	Summer Term 22/23	Benchmarking	
					SN	Eng.
4.10.02 Personal Education Plans (PEP) up to date (current school age CLA with PEP in the last term)	%	100%	100%	100%	N/A	N/A

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Cumulative	SN	Eng.
Initial PEP completed within 10 school days of Virtual School being notified child came into care	%	100% (24/24)	100% (20/20)	100% (7/7)	99% (154/156)	N/A	N/A

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Aug-22	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	SN	Eng.
CLA Persistent Absentees	%	n/a	23.2%	25.4%	25.5%	28.4% (2020/21)	30.4% (2020/21)
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
CLA with a mid-year school move	Number	n/a	3	4	1	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- Good performance at Key Stage 4 and low Exclusion rate in comparison to national data.
- 100% of PEPs were completed within the Summer Term. Autumn Term completion rate will be reported at the end of the term. 95% of initial PEPs have been completed within 10 school days.
- The Virtual School is currently leading on all PEPs which are virtually held meetings.
- We continue to work closely with social care to improve young people's educational experiences.

What do we want to improve:

- Improving attainment and progress at Key Stage 2
- Reducing the number of unauthorised absences in both frequency and duration
- Reduction in the number of young people who are classed as PA (Persistent Absenteeism 90%)
- Increase in overall attendance percentage
- Reducing the time young people are not in full time provision.
- Stabilising school placements for young people

Children Looked After Health

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Aug-22	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	SN	Eng.
4.11.11 Dental Checks within last 12 months - timeliness	%	60.3%	62.5%	64.3%	65.2%	73.0%	70.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
4.11.12 Initial health Assessments completed on time - within 20 days	%	77.4%	72.5%	67.9%	60.4%	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	%	87.0%	82.1%	89.7%	82.5%	82.6%	89.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
b: Over 5s Annual Health Assessments – percentage up to date	%	93.7%	88.9%	90.1%	90.5%	92.2%	91.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
4.11.16 No. of CLA in care more than 12 month and identified as having a substance misuse problem during the last year	% (number)	1.05% (5)	0.70% (3)	0.48% (2)	0.24% (1)	3.0%	3.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

Initial health assessments (IHA):

- LA rolling 12-month data shows that **60.4%** were completed in the statutory timescale. This rolling data gives a false representation of the current situation. As predicted, the actual percentage has

dropped to **0%** in real terms in August. This is being replicated across regional neighbours and is highlighted on the WY risk register.

Several responsible factors e.g., continuing increase of numbers coming into care incl. large sibling groups, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, recent rise in children placed with connected carers not being brought requiring re-scheduling, increasing complexities, more requests from other local authorities to complete on their behalf as child(ren) placed in Kirklees & capacity of doctor & nurses time & clinic availability. Extra clinics that have been scheduled have a knock-on effect for completion of medical reports. Update that December is the new timeframe for IHA completion. Prior to the recent situation an average of 95% were in timescales with no waiting list.

- There were 10 IHA timescale breaches for the Kirklees CLA related to clinic availability & capacity' & 1 social care late request.
- The Business Case to consider additional nurse/doctor resource/alternative CLA Health model, which would support the whole team remains under commissioner consideration, with a resubmission presented in Sept. to the Integrated Care Board.

Review health assessments (RHA):

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **82.5% & 90.5%** of the 'Developmental' assessments (under 5yrs old) and 'Annual' assessments (over 5 yrs. old) respectively, were completed in statutory timescales. These positive results include months when the previous model of delivery by Thriving Kirklees (TK) was in place. Since April, TK have put a temporary process in place to complete most allocated RHA's on additional hours, or incorporate with their own statutory assessments, until the commissioning arrangements are completed.
- Locala monthly data for August shows that **63% & 68%** for under and over 5 years olds respectively, were completed in timescales under the temporary regime. However, almost all assessments are completed in the month they are due, or soon after to fit around carer arrangements.
- 13 breaches of exact timescale in the month, (7 x capacity, 3 staff sickness, 1 carer holiday, 2 difficulties arranging with carer).
- In line with the DfE guidance SSDA903, Locala from September will record RHA's as 'in date' if completed in the month they are due. Discussions are underway to look at aligning the LA data processing with this. This will remove unwarranted pressure on health practitioners to complete by an exact date in the month, which is affected by weekends, bank holidays, carer arrangements, sickness, holidays etc.

Dental Checks (attended) within last 12 months: at the point of their RHA.

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **65.2%** of children aged 1+, had attended the dentist. Several factors are negatively affecting the recording. A working group has been established to look at aligning the data with Locala and using SW practitioners to update when a child has attended as part of their stat visits, avoiding a total reliance on once or twice-yearly recording at the RHA.
- Locala monthly data for Aug shows that **100%** of children age 18months to under 5 yrs., and **94%** 5 years+, had attended the dentist at the point of their RHA.

Registered at dentist:

- Locala data shows **100%** of children aged 18m to 5 years & **86%** 5 years+ at the point of their RHA, were registered with a dentist.
- The use of the 'Flexible Commissioning Project' has supported CLA and care leavers to register.

Substance misuse:

- **1** young person (**0.24%**) has admitted or are known to use substances that have a significant impact on their daily life when asked at their last RHA. Those reaching 18 years old are removed from the data.

Children in Care – Children Looked After Health (cont.)

- 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.
- The working group will also look at alternative methods of collection of this data as the RHA is not a reliable source.

Immunisations: Locala

- **93% & 83%** of under and over 5-year-olds respectively, were up to date with their immunisations. Reasons for a lower uptake in older children can be related to the shortened schedule offered to UASC who generally have an unknown history, some young people may decline, and placement moves or moves to semi-independent living can negatively impact take up.
- Outstanding Immunisations Aug RHA's: Pre-school booster x1, MMR x1, HPV x3, School leavers booster & MenACWY x3. All are followed up with SW.
- The working group are to look at accessing this data from Locala to include in the reporting.

Children Looked After Convictions

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Quarter				Benchmarking
		Jul-Sep 22/23 Q2	Oct-Dec 22/23 Q3	Jan-Mar 22/23 Q4	Apr-Jun 23/24 Q1	
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)	%	1.75% (6/343)	0.00% (0/343)	0.00% (0/343)	0.31% (1/326)	(2021/22) Eng.: 2.0% SN's: 4.0% Y&H: 2.0%
	Direction of Travel	↔	↓	↔	↑	

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- For the year April 18 to March 19, 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 April 19 to March 20, 90.9% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions which in comparison with last year, 65.8%, is an increase of over 25%.
- 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 year April 21 to March 22, 64.3% of interventions completed by Children Looked After were completed successfully compared to 72.8% of the general population. This is a reduction in Children Looked After completion from the same period of last year which was 87.7%, whilst the general population remains broadly the same.
- For the year April 22 to March 23, 60.6% of interventions completed by Children Looked After were completed successfully compared to 76.7% of the general population. This is a small reduction in Children Looked After completion from the same period of last year which was 64.3%, whilst the general population remains broadly the same.
- Whilst the numbers of Children Looked After offending remain small in the cohort, we are seeing an increase in the numbers compared to the same period last year. In the year to date we have seen an increase in the percentage of CLA offending from 2.47% (21/22) to 3.50% (22/23). However in the Oct to March 2023 period no Children Looked After have received convictions.

What do we want to improve:

- Continued reduction in the numbers of Children Looked After offending. The overall cohort for the 22/23 year is smaller than the 21/22 year (343 compared to 364), 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 remain low.
- There is a focus around Looked After Children in our subgroups – specifically Subgroup 2 – Reducing offending and reoffending.

Care Leavers

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Aug-22	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	SN	Eng.
5.01.04 Children in care aged 17 years and 4 months with a Personal Advisor	%	96.0%	93.0%	90.0%	85.5%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
5.01.08 Local Authority In Touch with Care Leavers	%	92.5%	94.8%	95.0%	95.2%	95.0%	92.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
5.01.09 Care Leavers in suitable accommodation	%	88.8%	92.1%	92.2%	92.3%	91.0%	88.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
5.01.10 Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training (EET)	%	59.2%	58.2%	58.7%	59.2%	50.0%	55.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
5.01.11 Number of Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan that is up to date	%	71.4%	78.8%	82.0%	85.9%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- Contact with care leavers* – There is an increase this month in relation to the number of Care Leavers we were in touch. 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 and we are confident that our post 18 young people all are aware of the support of offer if required.
- Number of young people in suitable accommodation* – There has been a significant impact on the increasing demands for tenancies. 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. 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.
- Children in Care aged 17 years with an allocated Personal Advisors* – Although the performance on this indicator has shown a decrease this month, it includes Qualifying young people who would not have an allocated Personal Advisor, but it is important to note that all the young people under 18 have an allocated Social Worker. Currently all Relevant and Former Relevant young people aged 17 and over have an allocated Personal Advisor.

- *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 have seen a slight increase in the numbers of young people who have an up-to-date pathway plan this month. We continue to work with the Social Workers and 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. Work is being undertaken to identify and address the issues that are impacting the timeliness of pathway plan reviews being undertaken.
- In order to provide further support and guidance for social workers throughout Children Services and personal advisors training is currently being delivered face to face and on a virtual basis and workers are expected to attend this training. All new starters will be offered this training and will continue to be delivered on a rolling programme.
- We have weekly drop in sessions that are held at the hubs at No11 and No12.

What do we want to improve:

- *Number of young people with a pathway plan* – The number of young people with a pathway plan to increase. Work is currently ongoing within the service, and it is expected that the measure will improve further. We continue to work with the Social Worker and 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. Training is in place for staff across Children Services for Pathway plans.
- To improve the allocation timeliness of Personal Advisors and the timeliness and quality of visits to young people. With a focus for our Personal Advisors to begin to build relationships with our 17 year old young people and begin working towards their independence in line with their needs, wishes and feelings.
- A key priority area for the service continues to be to address and increase the number of our young people who will have access to Education, Employment or Training.
- The embedding of the corporate parenting principles and our role as corporate parents.

Adoption

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Aug-22	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	SN	Eng.
5.02.01 Number of children adopted as a percentage of children leaving care (12 month rolling period)	% (number)	8.3% (17)	9.8% (23)	9.2% (23)	9.7% (23)	13.0%	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	419.4	561.9	557.4	557.4	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	208	209.4	208.7	208.7	180.0 (17-20)	175.0 (17-20)
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↔		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- We continue to prioritise brothers and sisters growing up together and **where possible Early Permanence Placements are sought**
- We have good working relationships between Kirklees and One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), to address challenges at the earliest point.
- Monitoring of the adoption cases and outcomes continues to take place through monthly tracking of adoption cases by Kirklees and OAWY Service Delivery Managers. **This is embedded into our day-to-day arrangements with OAWY.**
- Training from OAWY has been and will continue to be provided to Kirklees staff, to ensure understanding of the complexities of the adoption process and awareness raising from research/practice.
- Continued support from OAWY to practitioners to Kirklees staff in relation to adoption practice.
- Timely identification of harder to place children and provision of appropriate resources to progress linking and matching outside of One Adoption where needed.
- OAWY attend Legal Gateway with a view to being able to provide support and assistance for any adoption cases including consideration of Early Permanence.
- The Early Permanence Meetings, which are held fortnightly to discuss all children and their plans for adoption, is having a positive impact on ensuring at the earliest point decisions are made to secure permanency should reunification to birth parents ruled out.
- Agreed escalation processes where drift is identified from tracking and monitoring processes.

- OAWY have secured national funding to support family finding for children who wait the longest for adoption and local provision of Early Permanence for older children/sibling groups. Kirklees children will be eligible for and benefit from these resources as the projects progress.

What do we want to improve:

- To increase the numbers of children placed through Early Permanence through early identification of children and increasing the number of EP adopters. **This remains a key area for improvement.**
- To improve timeliness in agreeing transitional payments for foster carers adopting the child in their care to reduce delay and a process has been implemented to achieve this.
- To ensure all children considered 'harder to place' are identified early for OAWY to commence family finding. For OAWY to continue taking an innovative approach to family finding for these children, ensuring that all avenues are proactively explored.
- To increase staff understanding of adoption, including Early Permanence, through training.
- Continue to jointly review cases where adoptions disrupt or breakdown to understand contributing factors to inform future practice.
- Introduce some contract (agreement) management to review all outcomes to the objectives of the agreement.
- Finance staff and Service managers should review all available data at the time of formula reset to ensure all parties are clear what the apportionments are based on. This should commence swiftly to ensure it concludes in time for the 2024/25 refresh.

Fostering

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Aug-22	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	SN	Eng.
6.02.07 Total New Carer Approvals in Month:	Number	2	1	8	5	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
In-house Fostering approvals in the month	Number	1	0	7	5	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
In-house Fostering De-registrations in the month	Number	5	0	5	8	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
6.02.09 Placements split: a. In-house foster placements	Number	177	150	148	148	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↔		
b. Family and friend placements	Number	121	121	117	113	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
c. Independent Fostering Agency Placements	Number	172	175	176	166	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- In August 2023 there were 5 foster carer approvals, 4 were kinship foster carers and 1 foster carer.
- There were 8 de-registrations in August 2023, 7 Kinship Carers and 1 Mainstream Carer. Of the Kinship carers, 5 were in relation to kinship carers who became SGO's, 1 was in relation to a child who was reunified with a parent and 1 carer was unable to continue to offer care. A piece of work is planned to explore with the mainstream carer to explore the reasons why they resigned from fostering and identify any future learning opportunities.
- The number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers stood at 148 in August 2023, just below the 12-month average of 163
- The number of Family and Friends Placements stood at 113 in August 2023, inclusive of Reg 24 Placements. The 12-month average is 124
- The August 2023 there were 166 Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements. The 12-month average is 168

What do we want to improve:

- Recruitment and retention of foster carers continues to be a priority. We are focussed on recruiting internal foster carers who can help us to meet our sufficiency needs around placements for older children, children with complex needs, offering short and long-term placements, and short notice / emergency placements. In addition, work is being undertaken in respect of utilising current foster carers expertise to offer support, respite, and holiday 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.

We are implementing our modernisation plan for the Fostering Service. This has included a number of policies and procedures to ensure consistency and transparency across the service and with our carers. This service improvement plan is regularly reviewed and is overseen by the Homes For Children Board.

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
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