

# Corporate Parenting Board – Highlight Report

Date of Board: 23 January 2024

Data is as at 30th November 2023, unless stated otherwise.

Benchmarking Source: Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT – Nov 23) & Children's Social Care Benchmarking Tool (BMt) v3.41. Benchmarking data is from March 2023 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	
		Nov-22	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-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	63.3 (621)	62.5 (613)	63.3 (619)	62.8 (614)	93.0	71.3
	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)	10.8% (67/621)	11.4% (70/613)	11.6% (72/619)	12.2% (75/614)	13.0%	17.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
4.05.01 Placement Stability Within Year - CLA with three or more placements	% (number)	8.9% (55)	10.3% (63)	11.0% (68)	12.5% (77)	10.4%	10.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
4.05.04 Social Worker change of CLA in care 12+ Months: Number of Social Worker changes	Number	264	308	346	359	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
Average number of SW changes	Average	0.57	0.72	0.82	0.86	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		

### Service Narrative

#### What difference did we make:

- During the 12-month period from Dec 22 to Nov 23, the children looked after rate peaked at 63.3 (621 children) in Dec 22 and is currently 62.8 (614 children) in Nov 23. The current 12-month average for Kirklees is 61.6 (604 children), slightly above our 31 March 2023 published rate of 60.6, and below the England 2023 rate of 71.3 and significantly below our Statistical Neighbours 2023 rate of 87.6.
- Of the 75 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	56	74.7%
Residential	8	10.7%
Hostel/Sup Res (Unregistered Provider)	3	4.0%
Placed for Adoption	2	2.7%
Placed with Parents	1	1.3%
Residential School	1	1.3%
YOI or Prison	1	1.3%
Secure Unit	1	1.3%
Family centre or mother and baby unit	1	1.3%
Other / unknown	1	1.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	

- Reasons for children and young people living at distance can be due specialist accommodation not available in our area, children and young people living with extended family, identified safeguarding reasons as well as availability of matched and suitable capacity of provision within our area at the point of need. In the data above 16 of those children and young people in fostering arrangements are with members of their family.
- The care planning and decision-making processes for children and young people is monitored and reviewed at Legal Gateway, Permanence and Children Accessing Service Panels that are chaired by a Head of Service. The panels consider the most effective route to securing stable and permanent arrangements for caring for our children and people and oversees the quality and timeliness of care planning and ensures that children and young people receive the right services at the right time, and that these are reviewed.
- The panels provide assurance of management oversight, accountability for decision making and can support practice improvement through identifying areas of best practice and areas for development.
- Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) maintains effective oversight of our children and young people placed in external arrangements through a review panel held fortnightly and chaired by a Service Director. The purpose of the panel is to ensure effective oversight and accountability for our children who are not placed in Local Authority arrangements and provides a quality assurance function with appropriate challenge to ensure that plans for individual children progress.

**What do we want to improve:**

- The service is working together with our Fostering and the Emotional Wellbeing teams to support earlier identification where our children and young people's home arrangements may need additional support to intervene early and prevent a disruptive and potentially damaging breakdown in our children's living and care arrangements. Our Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) team is due to co-locate with our children Looked After teams to support timely identification and earlier planning for children whose plans have the potential for them to return to their family.
- We are setting out a refreshed recruitment campaign to support recruitment to the Children Looked After Social Work teams to support quicker turnaround of vacant posts and enable our social workers to invest the time required to establish and maintain effective relationships with children, young people, families, and carers.
- We are working to improve the alignment of our Children Looked After and Care Leaver teams to better support joint work and preparation for living independently and ensure that this key transitional age of child to adult life we maximise support to protect against disconnection with services and support.

## Children Looked After Reviews, Visits and Missing

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Nov-22	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	SN	Eng.
4.06.01: CLA Reviews Within Statutory Timescale	%	98.1%	98.0%	98.0%	97.5%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
4.07.01: CLA visits within statutory timescale: % of CLA visited in line with Kirklees Practice Standards	%	93.8% (591)	89.6% (552)	91.5% (563)	89.9% (549)	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)	3.7% (23)	2.0% (12)	1.9% (12)	1.6% (10)	11.3%	11.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
b. No. of CLA that have more than one missing episode in the month (repeat Mispers)	% (number)	56.5% (13)	58.3% (7)	16.7% (2)	50.0% (5)	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)	65.8% (25/38)	38.5% (10/26)	64.7% (11/17)	37.5% (3/8)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		

### Service Narrative

#### What difference did we make:

- 12 requests for Initial Review forms were received by the Child Protection and Review Unit (CPRU) for children to become Looked After in November 2023, relating to 19 children in total. 3 of these requests were for sibling groups, with largest sibling group of 6 children.
- 25% of the requests referred were for children who were already subject to Child Protection Plans at point of becoming Looked After, which was reduction from previous month but reflected our average monthly percentage.. 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.
- In November 2023 97.5% of Looked After Review Meetings took place within required timescales. 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, e.g. if it was identified at very short notice that the allocated Social Worker for the child was not going to be available to attend.
- 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.
- 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.
- From June 2023 allocated IRO's for children New into Care have been required to undertake New into Care case audits. Findings are shared with the area social work Service Manager for oversight, and social work Team Managers. Key themes highlighting best practice and areas for practice and service improvement are captured in monthly CPRU reports for senior managers, and the findings are also shared in the monthly Children's Social Care 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 (CICC) and Care Leavers Forum, both which meet on a regular basis.

- Team Managers for children in care meet with the Children in Care Council young people to obtain their wishes and feelings and consult with them in relation to areas of development and proposed changes to key documents. The CiCC and Care Leavers forum also meets with senior leaders. In October, the Service Director for Child Protection and Family Support met with both groups and the Principle Social Worker attended the groups to explore with them their views of social workers including what makes a good social worker, and to gain young people's experiences of services they have received, and where they feel improvements can be made. The new Head of Service for Children in Care has met and plans to continue to meet the groups regularly to consult with them.
- Independent Visitors (IV's) continue to support young people through a range of activities, according to the needs and wishes of the young people they are matched with. Currently there are 23 Independent Visitors matched with children and young people, and 20 young people previously referred are on a waiting list to be matched with an Independent Visitor, however this continues to be reviewed to ensure that this remains an accurate reflection of demand on the service. A significant number of those on the waiting list have additional needs/ are out of area which impacts on matching.
- The children in care service management team meet with the Children in Care Council young people to obtain their wishes and feeling along with consulting with them in relation to areas of development and proposed changes to key documents.
- There continues to be an emphasis on seeking to recruit Independent Visitors and successfully match with young people.
- We are continuing to undertake weekly management oversight and monitoring of statutory visits to our children and young people who are looked after to ensure that we can quickly identify where visits are out of time or risk being so. Through this process we can identify any trends or patterns of gaps in visits quickly and support issues like timely recording of visits, more effectively. Our approach, supported by our routine management auditing enables us to consider both timeliness, quality, and purposefulness of visits to children and 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 a decrease and the 12 month average of 2.4%, 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 number of children looked after who have missing episodes has been low for a considerable period and remains low.
- 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 lower 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.

## *Children in Care – Children Looked After Reviews, Visits and Missing (cont.)*

- The number of children having multiple missing episodes has risen from 2 last month to 5 this month. The percentage rate increase is 50%, however this 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 (DREAMM) 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. Additionally there are 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	Spring Term 22/23	Summer Term 22/23	Autumn Term 23/24	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	
		Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Cumulative	SN	Eng.
Initial PEP completed within 10 school days of Virtual School being notified child came into care	%	95.0% (19/20)	100% (11/11)	94% (16/17)	95.6% (86/90)	N/A	N/A

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Nov-22	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	SN	Eng.
CLA Persistent Absentees	%	26.8%	20.7%	22.8%	24.0%	17.3% (2021/22)	19.1% (2021/22)
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
CLA with a mid-year school move	Number	9	8	12	5	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		

### Service Narrative

#### What difference did we make:

- 100% of PEPs were completed within the Autumn Term.
- Every young person is allocated to a member of our experienced Virtual School Team; therefore we know our young people well and their attendance, progress and attainment are reviewed so that we are able to challenge and support in a timely manner and relevant interventions can be put in place.
- 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 for all young people
- 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%)
- 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	
		Nov-22	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	SN	Eng.
4.11.11 Dental Checks within last 12 months - timeliness	%	61.5%	67.8%	65.2%	63.4%	76.7%	76.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
4.11.12 Initial health Assessments completed on time - within 20 days	%	76.8%	53.2%	40.5%	32.6%	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	%	86.9%	80.2%	82.2%	85.4%	97.0%	88.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
b: Over 5s Annual Health Assessments – percentage up to date	%	91.0%	88.7%	87.4%	85.1%	90.4%	89.0%
	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)	1.08% (5)	0.23% (1)	1.18% (5)	0.96% (4)	2.86%	3.00%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		

### Service Narrative

#### What difference did we make:

#### Initial health assessments (IHA):

- LA rolling 12-month data shows that 36.6% were completed in the statutory timescale, capturing data from earlier in the year. The current percentage of IHA's completed within 20 working days in November is **0%**. The challenges are replicated across regional neighbours and is highlighted on the WY risk register. Prior to the recent situation an average of 95% were in timescales with no waiting list.
- Several contributing factors e.g., continuing numbers coming into care incl. sibling groups, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and some older individuals who we are unable to engage in the process and require alternative options needing extra resource.
- There is a planned, booked waiting list from late December to early March comprising of: 25 Virtual telephone assessments and 34 Face to Face
- There were 22 IHA timescale breaches for the Kirklees CLA related to clinic availability & capacity.
- The Business Case to consider additional nurse/doctor resource/alternative CLA Health model, which would support the whole team remains under commissioner consideration.

#### Review health assessments (RHA):

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **85.4% & 85.1%** of the under and over 5-year-olds respectively, were completed in statutory timescales. Since September there has been an agreement to complete the RHA's in the month they are due instead of the exact date, in line with the DfE guidance SSSDA903, and this is providing improved results.
- Locala monthly data for Nov shows that there were 5 breaches of statutory timescales in total out of the 43 RHA's carried out, related to arrangements with the carers and an admin error. **95%** of the over 5-year-olds were in timescales.

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

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **63.4%** of children aged 1+, had attended the dentist. Several factors are negatively affecting the recording. A working group has been established to look

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

at aligning the data with Locala and using other collection methods avoiding a total reliance on once or twice-yearly recording at the RHA.

- Locala monthly data for Nov shows that **100%** of children age 18months to 5 years & **91%** age 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 & **82%** 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. Children placed out of Kirklees, especially sibling groups may struggle to register, and some older young people may choose not to register.

### Substance misuse:

- 4 (**0.96%**) young people are currently recorded as being significantly affected by substance misuse in their daily lives as recorded at their RHA. An alternative method of collecting this data is under consideration.

### Immunisations: Locala

- 100% & 67%** of under and over 5-year-olds respectively, were up to date with their immunisations at their RHA. 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.
- November data showed: **10** x children had immunisations outstanding at their RHA and **5** of these were UASC who were choosing not to engage in the shortened schedule offer. 4 others had outstanding School leavers boosters and Men ACWY. And 1 had HPV missing. All are followed up with their social workers.

## Children Looked After Convictions

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Quarter				Benchmarking
		Oct-Dec 22/23 Q3	Jan-Mar 22/23 Q4	Apr-Jun 23/24 Q1	Jul-Sep 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)	%	0.00% (0/343)	0.00% (0/343)	0.61% (2/326)	0.61% (2/326)	Kirk: 3.0% Eng.: 2.0% SN's: 3.3% Y&H: 2.0%
	Direction of Travel	↓	↔	↑	↔	

### Service Narrative

#### What difference did we make:

\* The data for Oct to December 2023 will not be available until January 2024.

- The number of Young People who have been looked after continually for 12 months or more aged 10 to 17 who have received a substantive outcome has fallen in comparison to previous year. It should be noted the cohort is very small in real terms.

#### What do we want to improve:

- Continued reduction in the numbers of Children Looked After offending. The overall cohort for the 23/24 year is smaller than the 22/23 year (326 compared to 343), but through continued



## Children in Care – Children Looked After Convictions (cont.)

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	
		Nov-22	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	SN	Eng.
5.01.04 Children in care aged 17 years and 4 months with a Personal Advisor	%	94.0%	98.3%	100.0%	100.0%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↔		
5.01.08 Local Authority In Touch with Care Leavers	%	95.0%	96.1%	96.1%	95.2%	95.0%	92.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
5.01.09 Care Leavers in suitable accommodation	%	90.3%	91.9%	92.0%	91.6%	89.3%	88.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
5.01.10 Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training (EET)	%	58.0%	60.3%	58.2%	57.2%	51.4%	56.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
5.01.11 Number of Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan that is up to date	%	72.7%	93.5%	93.6%	93.9%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		

## Service Narrative

### What difference did we make:

- *Contact with care leavers* –Our Personal Advisors continue to support and build positive relationships with the young people they are working with. Whilst we recognise that accessing support through the care leavers service is a personal choice for our Care Leavers the approach of our Personal Advisor’s is to support and encourage young people to engage.
- *Number of young people in suitable accommodation* – Our new interim Service Manager for the Care Leavers Service has revised the arrangements with our housing services to enable earlier bidding as part of our efforts to support Care Leavers living in suitable accommodation.
- *Children in Care aged 17 years with an allocated Personal Advisors* – we are continuing to work closely with our social work teams to ensure that we identify and support the allocation of young people for Personal Advisor support at 17 and 4 months.
- *Education Employment Training* – Engaging our Care Leavers in employment, training and education is recognised as a core priority for the service. In addition to our seconded C&K Careers Advisor in the Care Leaving Service we have held an initial meeting with the CEO of Kirklees college with the aim of establishing a close working relationship to benefit our Care Leavers. We have support from the Head of Skills and Employment in Skills and Regeneration and have begun work to establish a broad partnership of employers and training providers.
- *Pathway Plans* – We have recently partnered with North Yorkshire as part of the Sector Led Improvement Partnership and have agreed a focus on the quality of our Pathway plans. Existing performance and monitoring of completion remains an important part of our services quality assurance processes and we are continually seeking to identify early and address quickly timeliness and quality of care leavers pathway plans.

### What do we want to improve:

- We recently benefited from a two-day review from the national implementation advisor to government on Care Leavers. This review together with the support we have through partnering with North Yorkshire has enabled us to establish a thorough service improvement plan to improve further our offer and services to Care Leavers
- We recognise that our Care Leaver's offer can be enhanced significantly through developing and extending our partnership arrangements to include businesses, and local charities and organisations within our area. We have engaged Huddersfield Town Foundation Trust and agreed that we will co-develop and deliver our new 'skills for independent living' programme with them to support care leavers succeeding in new tenancies and have the confidence and system to access support where needed.
- We are developing links with the DWP, Kirklees College and the Nation Care Leaver Covenant team to access opportunities for employment and training for our care leavers as well as setting out quicker processes internally to support our Care Leavers access work tasters and internal Council opportunities for apprenticeships and jobs.
- In order to enhance our opportunities to engage care leavers and maximise our contact and support we are reviewing our accessibility and delivery of support provided through our two 'Care Leaver Hubs.' This will involve consultation with our Personal Advisors and Care Leavers.

## Adoption

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Nov-22	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	SN	Eng.
5.02.01 Number of children adopted as a percentage of children leaving care (12 month rolling period)	% (number)	9.5% (19)	9.5% (23)	8.8% (22)	7.7% (19)	12.7%	9.0%
	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	443.1	545.1	553.5	558.1	501.0  (ASGLB Q1-Q4 2022/23)	480.0  (ASGLB Q1-Q4 2022/23)
	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	186.5	210.2	207.7	224.7	193.0  (ASGLB Q1-Q4 2022/23)	197.0  (ASGLB Q1-Q4 2022/23)
	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 made, **which has led to performance being below statistical and national average performance. We do have a small number of children who are either part of sibling group, harder to place due to age, ethnicity or additional needs however ensuring**

**children who have a plan for adoption are given the best opportunity for this to be secured remains our priority. Children who are waiting longer than we would want to be matched are reviewed by the Agency Decision Maker to ensure adoption remains the right plan.**

- Performance relating to % of children leaving care because of adoption is below our statistical and national England average against % percentage of children leaving care. Kirklees prides itself on the emphasis of children where it is not possible to return to birth family are able to remain within the extended family through other legal orders including Child Arrangement Orders and Special Guardianship Orders.
- 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 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.
- 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	
		Nov-22	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	SN	Eng.
6.02.07 Total new Mainstream In-house Fostering approvals in the month	Number	1	0	0	1	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↔	↑		
Total new Connected Person Fostering approvals in the month	Number	3	2	2	5	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↔	↑		
In-house Mainstream Fostering De-registrations in the month	Number	1	5	1	2	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
In-house Connected Person Fostering De-registrations in the month	Number	1	5	2	2	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↔	↑	↓		
6.02.09 Placements split: a. In-house foster placements	Number	179	155	157	168	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
b. Family and friend placements (inc. Reg 24)	Number	134	116	118	102	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
c. Independent Fostering Agency Placements	Number	165	169	171	168	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		

### Service Narrative

#### What difference did we make:

- In November 2023 there were 6 foster carer approvals, 5 were kinship foster carers and 1 was a mainstream (unconnected) approval.
- There were 4 de-registrations in November 2023, 2 Kinship Carers and 2 Mainstream Carers. 1 Kinship Carer progressed to a Special Guardianship Order and another kinship carer resigned as the child in their care moved to another family member.
- The number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers stood at 168 in November 2023, above the 12-month average of 158.
- The number of Family and Friends Placements stood at 102 in November 2023, inclusive of Reg 24 Placements. The 12-month average is 120.
- The November 2023 there were 168 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 updating our fostering recruitment strategy. 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 are exploring quality assurance of all mainstream carers who have left the service.
- 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.

*Sufficiency – Foster Carers (cont.)*

- We continue to develop and implement policies and procedures for the Fostering Service. This service improvement plan is regularly reviewed.

## 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