

Corporate Parenting Board – Highlight Report

Date of Board: 05 March 2024

Data is as at 31st January 2024, 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	
		Jan-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	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	62.6 (612)	63.2 (618)	63.4 (620)	62.6 (612)	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)	12.3% (75/612)	12.1% (75/618)	12.6% (78/620)	13.1% (80/612)	13.0%	17.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
4.05.01 Placement Stability Within Year - CLA with three or more placements	% (number)	8.3% (51)	12.5% (77)	13.9% (86)	14.4% (88)	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	229	359	345	355	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
Average number of SW changes	Average	0.50	0.86	0.83	0.86	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- During the 12-month period from Feb 23 to Jan 24, the children looked after rate peaked at 63.4 (620 children) in Dec 23 and is currently 62.6 (612 children) in Jan 24. The current 12-month average for Kirklees is 61.7 (603 children), 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 93.0.
- Of the 80 children placed outside of Kirklees and more than 20 miles from their home address, the large majority are placed in fostering and residential care. The full breakdown is as follows:

Placement Type	Number	%
Fostering	58	72.5%
Residential	10	12.5%
H5 - Hostel/Sup Res (Unregistered Provider)	3	3.8%
S1 - Residential School	3	3.8%
Placed for Adoption	2	2.5%
Placed with Parents	2	2.5%
YOI or Prison	1	1.3%
Secure Unit	1	1.3%
Total	80	

- The reasons for children and young people living at distance can be varied, such as 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/or suitable capacity of provision within our area at the point of need.
- 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:

- 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, Fostering Service and Emotional Wellbeing teams work closely to support timely identification and earlier planning for children whose plans have the potential for them to return to their family.
- We have begun work to re-launch and promote our work related to reunification with a focus on the additional support that the MST team will provide as it becomes more embedded in the service.
- We are working to establish protected time for Team Managers to complete supervisions giving the increase in staff they are supervising and to remain focussed on the quality of the conversations with staff.
- We have met with the CiCC and are now supporting our social workers to write their personal profiles as agreed. This will support the relationships our social workers have and develop with their children and young people.
- Children and young people are to be provided with books and stickers to record direct work, wishes and feelings and any questions they wish to note for the social worker – this will be an individual offer to all though for those to take up as they wish.
- Improved alignment of our Children Looked After and Care Leaver teams to better support joint work and preparation for living independently and ensure that at 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	
		Jan-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	SN	Eng.
4.06.01: CLA Reviews Within Statutory Timescale	%	98.3%	97.5%	97.5%	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	%	92.3% (567)	89.9% (549)	90.4% (545)	89.7% (547)	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)	2.5% (15)	1.6% (10)	1.0% (6)	1.1% (7)	11.3%	11.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↑		
b. No. of CLA that have more than one missing episode in the month (repeat Mispers)	% (number)	73.3% (11)	50.0% (5)	66.7% (4)	57.1% (4)	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)	77.8% (7/9)	23.1% (3/13)	50.0% (3/6)	50.0% (3/6)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↔		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- 11 requests for Initial Review forms were received by the Child Protection and Review Unit (CPRU) for children to become Looked After in January 2024, relating to 18 children in total. 3 of these requests were for sibling groups, with largest sibling group of 5 children.
- 27% 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 reflects 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 January 2024, 132 Review Meetings were held for Children looked After. 97.5% of these 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.
- 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 July 2023 allocated Independent Reviewing Officers 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 Child Protection and Review reports for senior managers in Children's Services.
- 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. The new Head of Service for Children in Care meets with the groups regularly to consult with them.
- Currently there are 22 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. This continues to be reviewed to ensure that this remains an accurate reflection of demand on the service. A significant number of children on the waiting list have additional needs/ are out of area which impacts on matching. Of the 22 volunteers 2 are ready to be matched to young people with their previous IV relationships are due to end.
- 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 have recently received 2 applications to become an Independent Visitor following a recruitment drive.
- Management oversight and monitoring of statutory visits to our children and young people who are looked after ensures that we can quickly identify where visits are out of time or risk being so. Through this process we identify any trends or patterns of gaps in visits quickly and focus on areas for improvement such as the timely recording of visits. Our approach, together with management quality assurance activities enables us to consider 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 improvement.

Missing CLA:

- The number of Children having at least one missing episode has seen a decrease an overall decrease in last 12 month (albeit at 0.1% increase was noted from previous month) average of 2.2%, 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. (This is currently more than 50% lower than Jan 2023).
- 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 has remained static over last two 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 50%, 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 remained static in actual numbers, although the percentage rate has slightly decreased. 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	
		Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Cumulative	SN	Eng.
Initial PEP completed within 10 school days of Virtual School being notified child came into care	%	100% (11/11)	94.0% (16/17)	100% (15/15)	96% (101/105)	N/A	N/A

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Jan-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	SN	Eng.
CLA Persistent Absentees	%	22.6%	22.8%	24.0%	23.4%	17.3% (2021/22)	19.1% (2021/22)
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
CLA with a mid-year school move	Number	14	12	5	4	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	
		Jan-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	SN	Eng.
4.11.11 Dental Checks within last 12 months - timeliness	%	60.9%	63.4%	63.9%	66.7%	76.7%	76.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
4.11.12 Initial health Assessments completed on time - within 20 days	%	78.5%	32.6%	29.1%	22.3%	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	%	88.5%	85.4%	82.5%	85.2%	97.0%	88.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
b: Over 5s Annual Health Assessments – percentage up to date	%	91.1%	85.1%	84.8%	83.5%	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)	0.87% (4)	0.96% (4)	0.96% (4)	0.97% (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 **22.3%** were completed in the statutory timescale. This is in line with Locala monthly data (**21%**) for January.
- All younger children have a virtual assessment quickly with all concerned in attendance on the call. Health needs are identified, and a plan written for social care and the carer to action. Older children prefer a face to face only assessment. These are planned and form part of the waiting list alongside the younger ones waiting for their hybrid face to face with the paediatrician. The current waiting list is filled until the end April. The challenges are replicated across regional neighbours and is highlighted on the WY risk register. Prior to May 23 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 were 16 IHA timescale breaches for the Kirklees CLA related to; clinic availability, movement out of area to arrange, communication arrangements with SW & team capacity.
- The Business Case to consider additional nurse/doctor resource has been considered with agreements related to the nurse provision now being actioned. The doctor resource remains under commissioner consideration.

Review health assessments (RHA):

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **85.2% & 83.5%** of the under and over 5-year-olds respectively, were completed in statutory timescales.
- Locala monthly data for January shows **100% & 97%** for under and over 5-year-olds respectively were completed in statutory timescales in the month they were due.

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

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **66.7%** 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 other collection methods avoiding a total reliance on once or twice-yearly recording at the RHA.

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

- Other factors affecting collection are an inability to record on LL when a child is 'in date' if they attended prior to becoming 'looked after', adoption rollback issue, at age 1 year +1-day children flagged as out of date automatically on LL.
- Locala monthly data for Jan shows that **100%** of children aged 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 & **80%** 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 (**0.97%**) 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% & 89% 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 impact.

Children Looked After Convictions

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Quarter				Benchmarking
		Jan-Mar 22/23 Q4	Apr-Jun 23/24 Q1	Jul-Sep 23/24 Q2	Oct-Dec 23/24 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)	%	0.00% (0/343)	0.61% (2/326)	0.61% (2/326)	0.0% (0/326)	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 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.
- The Out of Court Disposal Panel is well attended with good representation. This enables greater insight into the Young Person's life journey and creates a confidence to use outcomes such as community resolution or outcome 22 (no further action).
- A substantive offence is a Youth Caution / Conditional Caution or Above.

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 interventions by the YJS, restorative processes, liaison with Children's Homes and creative out of court disposals it is hoped the offending rate will remain low.

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

- 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	
		Jan-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	SN	Eng.
5.01.04 Children in care aged 17 years and 4 months with a Personal Advisor	%	91.4%	100.0%	100.0%	98.4%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↔	↔	↓		
5.01.08 Local Authority In Touch with Care Leavers	%	94.2%	95.2%	92.8%	92.2%	95.0%	92.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
5.01.09 Care Leavers in suitable accommodation	%	90.9%	91.6%	89.3%	87.9%	89.3%	88.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
5.01.10 Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training (EET)	%	56.8%	57.2%	55.3%	54.7%	51.4%	56.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
5.01.11 Number of Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan that is up to date	%	83.1%	93.9%	93.1%	94.1%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- We are continuing to work with North Yorkshire as our partners in practice to support our Continuous improvement plan.
- Care Leaver experience has been accepted by Kirklees council as a protected characteristic which is significant move by the council and will support our efforts to protect care leavers from stigma and discrimination and support better outcomes for all care leavers.
- The Service is planning for an 'ambassadors/champions' event on the 7th of March to bring together prospective partners to support our care leavers across the authority.
- We are working with C&K Careers and wider partners to develop the range of opportunities to support care leavers access education, training, and employment opportunities across the spectrum of need.

What do we want to improve:

- Following our work with North Yorkshire we are now working with our Data and Insight team to establish better quality reporting of key areas of services delivery along with developing a refreshed approach to pathway planning based on best practice. This will also support our timeliness and quality of all key performance indicators including narrative behind low data sets as well as understanding what the barrier to recording in a timely manner is.
- We are Increasing young people's engagement in the designed and activities based in the HUBS – this is beginning with increasing sessions being held as well as developing multi-agency attendance at drop ins and widening the support available. We have agreement of REAL employment to attend fortnightly sessions.

Care Leavers (cont.)

- 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.

Adoption

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Jan-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	SN	Eng.
5.02.01 Number of children adopted as a percentage of children leaving care (12 month rolling period)	% (number)	10.0% (21)	9.2% (23)	9.0% (23)	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	448.4	575.2	575.2	593.9	501.0	480.0
	Direction of Travel		↑	↔	↑	(ASGLB Q1-Q4 2022/23)	(ASGLB Q1-Q4 2022/23)
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	204.7	248.9	248.9	253.3	193.0	197.0
	Direction of Travel		↑	↔	↑	(ASGLB Q1-Q4 2022/23)	(ASGLB Q1-Q4 2022/23)

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.

Adoption (cont.)

- 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.
- Data integrity assurance has identified some practitioners are not triggering the correct pathway following ADM approval which potentially has impacted on the actual data performance reported negatively. Service Manager following becoming aware of the issue is meeting with other SMs to ensure appropriate pathways are rectified within Assessment and Intervention service areas.
- 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:

- Appropriate adoption recording pathways triggered at point of ADM decision to ensure correct data collection on adoption pathways
- 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	
		Jan-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	SN	Eng.
6.02.07 Total new Mainstream In-house Fostering approvals in the month	Number	1	1	1	1	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↔	↔		
Total new Connected Person Fostering approvals in the month	Number	0	4	2	0	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↔	↓	↓		
In-house Mainstream Fostering De-registrations in the month	Number	2	2	4	1	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
In-house Connected Person Fostering De-registrations in the month	Number	2	2	2	0	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↔	↓		
6.02.09 Placements split: a. In-house foster placements	Number	170	168	156	158	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
b. Family and friend placements (inc. Reg 24)	Number	138	102	108	112	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
c. Independent Fostering Agency Placements	Number	165	168	171	169	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- In January 2024 there was 1 foster carer approval.
- There was 1 de-registration in January 2024, this was a foster carer who had retired after 23 years of fostering.
- The number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers stood at 158 in January 2024, above the 12-month average of 156.
- The number of Family and Friends Placements stood at 112 in January 2024, inclusive of Reg 24 Placements. The 12-month average is 116.
- The January 2024 there were 169 Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements. The 12-month average is 169.

What do we want to improve:

- Recruitment and retention of foster carers continues to be a priority. In February 2024 we are due to participate in a Foster Link diagnostic in conjunction with Department for Education. It is envisaged that the findings from this diagnostic visit will assist us in meeting our sufficiency needs around placements for children over the age of 10 years, children with complex needs, short notice / emergency placements and placements for sibling groups.
- In addition, work is being undertaken in respect of utilising current foster carers expertise to offer support, respite, and holiday placements. In we are completing quality assurance of all mainstream carers who have left the service in March 2024 to best understand how to support and retain foster carers.

Sufficiency – Foster Carers (cont.)

- 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 introducing a first year in fostering to support new foster carers.
- We continue to develop and implement policies and procedures for the Fostering Service on a monthly basis. 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