

Children's Social Care Performance Report – October 2023

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Data and intelligence around practice outcomes are key in driving continuous practice improvement.
- 1.2 This report, along with Item 4b (attached), provides members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an overview of performance in Children's Social Care. At this time, reporting continues to develop following the move to a new case management system, Mosaic. The data in this report is consistent with the information provided to the Children's Development Board and the Director's Performance Clinics. Data shown is for October 2023.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Following the migration of the Children's Social Care case management system to Mosaic in November 2022, work continues with Business Intelligence to redevelop reporting across the service. Although further development is required to the Performance Framework, the data it produces is now routinely used to produce monthly updates to the Children's Development Board and is used as the basis of the monthly Director's Performance Clinics.
- 2.2 In September 2023 Ofsted carried out an inspection of Barnsley local authority children's services (ILACS), which judged the overall effectiveness of Children's Services to be 'Good'. As part of the inspection, Ofsted identified that the ability to gather and analyse data through the electronic recording system was an area for development, while also recognising the progress and improvements that have been made.

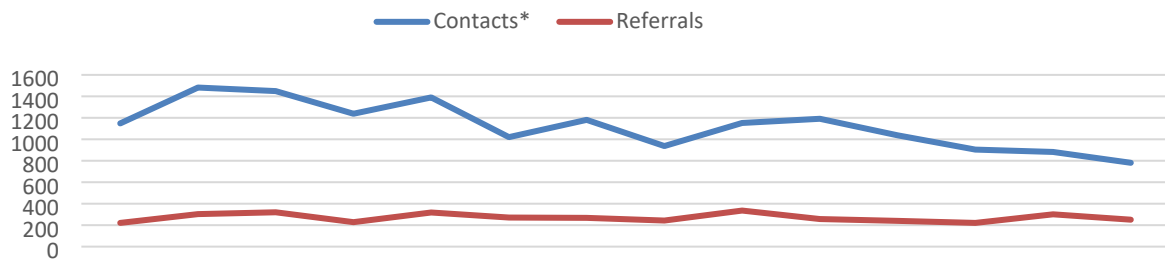
3.0 Current Position

- 3.1 A number of operational reports and dashboards are starting to be made available across the service, including a basic, live, case management tool which allows Service Managers, Team Managers and individual workers to monitor caseloads, visits, plans and supervisions.
- 3.2 Whilst development continues, Heads of Service and Service Managers maintain management oversight and assurance using a combination of highlight reports provided by Team Managers, and operational reports which report on information from Mosaic, which are reviewed and discussed in conjunction with the case management report at fortnightly Head of Service performance clinics.
- 3.3 We continue to work on data quality, alerting managers of any issues, using various methods to target those individuals who need support and challenge.

Demand

- 3.4 At the Front Door, the number of contacts at the end of October was 781, reducing by 102 between September and October. There were also an additional 715 'Information Only Contacts' in October which deal with requests for information from partners.
- 3.5 The number of referrals is generally proportional to the number of contacts received. At the end of October, the number of referrals was 251, lower than the number in September (301).

Demand - Front Door



	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23
Contacts*	1148	1482	1449	1238	1390	1020	1181	937	1152	1191	1037	904	882	781
Referrals	221	303	320	228	318	271	268	243	336	257	240	221	301	251

* Excludes information only contacts

- 3.6 The number of Children open to the Service remains broadly static with the numbers decreasing slightly from 1740 in September to 1730 in October. When compared with data from October 2022 (1473), there is a significant increase in demand over that time period as there are now an additional 257 cases now open and impacting on service activity and capacity.
- 3.7 The number of Children in Care at the end of October was 421, increasing from 417 in September. When compared to October 2022 (385) the numbers have increased by 32.
- 3.8 The number of Care Leavers open to service is 118 at the end of October which is higher than the previous month (114).
- 3.9 There were 17 children admitted into care during October. Since April 2023 this figure has fluctuated between 15 and 26.

Performance and Compliance

- 3.10 The percentage of decisions made on all contacts and referrals in one working day at the end of October was 55% against the target of 80%. This is an improvement on the previous month (September 53%). The % outcome in 2 working days increases to 76% and in 3 working days to 91%. Performance has been affected by sickness and annual leave that has reduced capacity within the team. Plans are now in place to mitigate the impact of any future staffing capacity issues.
- 3.11 The percentage of re-referrals within 12 months of a referral was 28.4% at the end of October, against a target of 20%, this is above the national average of 21.5%. The year-to-date figure is 23.7%
- 3.12 There were 312 assessments undertaken across Children’s Social Care in October. 81.7% of assessments were carried out in 45 working days which continues to exceed the target of 80%. In terms of benchmarking, the October figure exceeds the statistical neighbour benchmark (78.6%) but is slightly lower than the regional (82%) and National (84.5%) figures.
- 3.13 Assessments completed in 20 working days continues to rise. In October 23.2% of assessments were carried out in 20 working days compared with 22.7% in September.
- 3.14 The percentage of assessments ending in no further action has reduced to 20.1% in October from 21.0% in September. This remains below the target of 26%.
- 3.15 In October, 80.3% of children who had an initial assessment were visited within 5 working days which now exceeds the target of 80%. This has increased by 2.3% from 78.0% in September.

- 3.16 The percentage of S47 investigations leading to an Initial CP conference decreased to 26.9% in October from 32.9% in September. The percentage of children whose ICPC was held within 15 working days was 67%, increasing from 63% in September but remains below target.
- 3.17 Of the 35 Children starting a Child Protection Plan in October 2023, 28.6% of them had a plan within the last 2 years, which equates to 10 children. Any children subject to a second or subsequent plan within 2 years are reviewed to understand the circumstances leading to the repeat plan.
- 3.18 Compliance for up-to-date plans in October shows a varied picture. Performance for care leavers with an up-to-date plan has improved over the year and now exceeds our target of 80%. Performance is still below our 80% target for children in need, children on a child protection plan and children in care. Investigations into the number of plans not up to date show these figures are not reflective of the number completed, it has been identified that workers are not saving plans accurately and work with front line workers is ongoing to address this.

Up to Date Plan	September 2023	October 2023
Children in Need	66%	68%
Children on a CPP	68%	58%
Children Looked After	68%	58%
Care Leavers	90%	90%

- 3.19 The percentage of children visited in timescale show some fluctuations over the past 3 months. In October, visits for Children in Need dropped slightly below the 80% target. For children on a Child Protection Plan, the percentage of visits in 10 days working days has improved (from 79% in September to 84% in October) however, performance remains below the 95% target.

Visits to Children in Care have dropped from 90% in September to 86% in October but remains above the 80% target, with visits to Care Leavers increasing from 92% to 94% and exceeding the target of 80%.

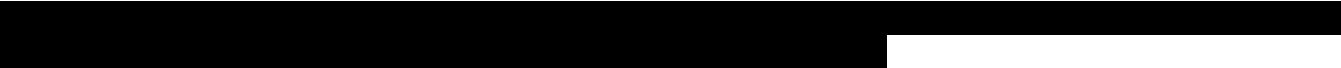
We plan to make changes to Mosaic which will allow us to reflect the longer visiting periods within our practice standards, this cannot yet be reflected on Mosaic. Team managers track visits to children and discuss this in supervision to ensure children are being seen and managers are assured that the majority of children are visited in line with statutory requirements. There continues to be some recording issues around visits, but improvements are being made.

Visits	September 2023	October 2023
Children in Need within last 4 weeks	84%	79%
Children on a CPP visited within 10 days	79%	84%
Children Looked After	90%	86%
Care Leavers within the last 8 weeks	92%	94%

- 3.20 Case Supervisions have improved across the service in October, but despite these improvements all are below the agreed target of 80%. Supervision data still needs to be refined to reflect longer supervision timescales for some children in care. This is the same Mosaic change mentioned in the paragraph above.

Case Supervisions	September 2023	October 2023
Children in Need	59%	72%
Children on a CPP	60%	72%
Children Looked After	59%	76%
Care Leavers	69%	71%

- 3.21 For children in care, there were 18 missing episodes in October involving 9 children. Since April 2023, the number of missing episodes each month ranges from 11 and 23, and the number of individual children involved each month is between 8 and 10.

- 3.22 The percentage of children in care with an up to date and Quality Assured Personal Education Plan (PEP) was 100% at the end of October.
- 3.23 School attendance for children in care is measured cumulatively from the start of the academic year. The data provided for this report by the Virtual School was to the week ending 24/11/2023. At this point, whole school attendance for this academic year was 92.1%, which is +0.2% when compared to Barnsley as a full cohort.
- 3.24 Primary attendance was 96.1% which was +2.2% when compared to Barnsley total Primary aged children. Secondary attendance was 88.7% which was -0.3% when compared to the Barnsley total.
- 3.25 To date, there have been 19 young people that have received a suspension from school, 10 girls and 9 boys. 6 of these students have an EHCP and 9 have additional SEND.
- 3.26 The latest EET data available for care leavers was at the end of quarter 2, at which point 59.4% of care leavers aged 19-21 were engaged in education, employment or training. This was a reduction from Q1 where the figure was 61.5% This remains below the target of 68%, but above the national benchmark of 55%.
- 3.27 

4.0 Future Plans & Challenges

- 4.1 We are seeing improvements in performance. However, many areas remain below target. There are several systems and structures in place to manage weaker performance, which include:
- Monthly Directors' performance clinics.
 - Fortnightly Head of Service (HOS) performance clinics with Service Managers, Team Managers, colleagues from the Quality Assurance Team and Business Intelligence.
 - Performance data trends and analysis now form part of the conversation at the Weekly HOS meeting.
 - Service improvement plans that focus on practice improvement.
 - A continued focus on data quality and timeliness of recording in Mosaic.
 - A new Quality Assurance (QA) dashboard has been developed and is being used with service areas.
 - Key link officer roles have been developed in QA which has given service increased support around key themes and areas improvement. This includes training for auditors.
- 4.2 Further plans to manage weaker performance include:
- Targeted performance plans to be put in place by HOS to ensure a more focused approach is taken to support weaker performance.
 - Raising expectations around timely recording now that we are confident that the operating environment will allow us to set ambitious standards and targets.
 - The introduction of weekly exception reports to be completed by team managers in CYPT as this area of the service needs to accelerate.
 - Performance management to be more embedded within teams taking the learning and systems from those high performing teams to support consistency.
 - Compliance checks by CP / IRO's that will result in escalation to the appropriate Team Manager and Service Manager.
- 4.3 Children's Social Care and Business Intelligence will continue to work together on our agreed data and reporting priorities. Priorities are now shifting from the performance framework to operational reporting, which are starting to be made available to the service. and work has started on a new performance portal and dashboard which will provide a central data, performance, and intelligence resource for Children's Services. It will include:

- A front page with 'Data Tiles' providing key headlines.
- Layered drilldown analysis under each data tile through from headline, team, worker, and child level.
- A daily automated exception report to highlight cases for review and action.
- A case management report of child level data with inbuilt traffic light systems for exceptions.

5.0 Invited Witnesses

The following people have been invited to answer questions from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding their role in this area of work:-

- Matthew Boud, Service Director Children's Social Care & Safeguarding, Children's Services, Barnsley Council
- Carly Speechley, Executive Director Children's Services, Barnsley Council
- Trevor Cave, Cabinet Spokesperson, Children's Services, Barnsley Council

6.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

6.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:

- What would you expect performance to look like for a service judged as 'good'? How does this differ from the current picture?
- What are the current risks for children's social care? What is causing the greatest concern?
- How are you building resilience within the teams so that performance is not affected in the future?
- How does the service ensure that it is flexible so that it can adapt and respond to changing need and numbers of looked after children?
- Following examination of the re-referrals, is there anything that the service needs to change as a result?
- What are the implications of not carrying out assessments within 20 days? How can this be improved?
- When do you expect to see the data accurately reflecting the number of plans that are up to date?
- What are the implications of not visiting children within the set timescales? What are the barriers and how can these be removed?
- How do you know that plans are of sufficient quality?
- What do children and young people say about the quality of visits? Do they meet their needs?
- How often do you review placements to ensure they are meeting the needs of the child? Is this often enough?
- What are the reasons/causes for children going missing and how do you know that risks are being effectively assessed and that steps are taken to prevent future incidents? Are any of the recent incidents cause for concern?
- To what extent are exclusions a result of schools not being able to meet the needs of the child? What more needs to be done to ensure that young people with SEND are fully supported and in appropriate settings?
- How do you work with young people and care leavers to build on their strengths and raise aspirations so that more enter employment, education, and training? What more could be done?

- What can elected members do to support the work of Children’s Social Care?

7.0 Background Papers and Useful Links

7.1 Item 4b (attached) - Monthly data performance sheet which is provided to the monthly Children’s Development Board and the Directors Performance Clinics.

8.0 Glossary

8.1 Annex A – this consists of 11 lists of child-level data that Ofsted request from the local authority at the start of the inspection.

CIN	Child in Need
CIC	Child in Care
CL	Care Leaver
CP	Child Protection Conference Chair
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CYPT	Children & Young People Team
EET	Employment, Education, or Training
EHCP	Education, Health & Care Plan
HOS	Head of Service
ILACS	Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
OSC	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
PEP	Personal Education Plan
QA	Quality Assurance
S47	Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, allowing enquiries to be initiated where a child is suffering from or at risk of harm.
SEND	Special Education Need and/or Disability

9.0 Officer Contact

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20th December 2023