



Meeting:	Safeguarding Private Member Briefing
Date of meeting:	10 th January 2023
Report Title:	Children's Social Care Monthly Report – October 2022
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1. Background

Members of the Committee will be aware that the Children's Services directorate produces a monthly children's social care performance report, which contains an overview of the major performance indicators across all service areas within children's safeguarding and social care.

The October 2022 edition of the report is attached. It includes a summary section with an overview of performance, using RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings and direction of travel for most indicators. Barnsley's historical performance and comparisons with other local authorities are also included.

More detailed information against most indicators can be found in the main body of the report, where members will find graphs, tables, and a management performance analysis at the top of each page, which highlights areas of performance considered good and areas where improvement is required.

2. Summary

Below is a summary of key performance issues highlighted in the October 2022 report:

Early Help Assessments

Data relating to the volumes of EHA's completed is reliant on partner organisations notifying the Local Authority that they have completed an EHA, therefore performance is dependent upon all agencies following the process within the timescales. Latest available data shows that 108 EHAs had been completed in October and 72 interventions closed, with 3,721 active cases at the end of October. The number of active cases has increased each month since January 2022, and the October 2022 figure is 15.8% higher than the same time last year.

Contacts

The number of contacts increased in October to 1480 from 1148 in September. The number of case events/consultations decreased from 106 in September to 2 in October. The spike in the number of contacts, and dip in the number of case events/consultations reflects a change in procedure; from 12/09/2022 the decision was made to streamline the response to enquiries to the Integrated Front Door. Enquiries are no longer recorded as consultations, they are now recorded as contact records. The proportion of contacts progressing to referral reduced from 22.8% in September to 19.1% in October, significantly below the 12 month average of 63.9%.

Referrals

The number of referrals increased from 221 in September to 303 in October, above the rolling 12 month average of 223 referrals per month. The percentage of referrals progressed decreased from 97.3% in September to 96.4% in October. The percentage of re-referrals in the last 12 months has decreased from 22.2% in September to 20.1% in October. The year to date performance of 20.7% remains above target (18.5%), but below the 2020/21 statistical neighbour and national averages of 24.4% and 22.7% respectively.

Assessments

The number of assessments commencing increased from 282 in September to 320 in October. This is above the 12 month average of 262 per month and higher than the October 2021 figure of 264. The current



year to date rate of assessments, at 601.7 per 10,000 u18s, remains well below the 2020/21 statistical neighbour benchmark (891.4) but above the national benchmark (517.6).

The percentage of assessments completed within 45 working days showed a further reduction from 96.6% in September to 95.8% in October. YTD performance of 98.4% remains well above our 2020/21 statistical neighbour average (84.6%) and the national average (87.6%), including our own target of 95%. Performance for the percentage of assessments undertaken within 20 working days increased from 32.1% in September to 44.9% in October. YTD performance of 29.2% remains below the target of 35%.

The proportion of assessments ending in 'No Further Action' decreased from 52.4% in September to 47.3% in October but remains higher than the YTD figure of 38.9%. The YTD percentage remains higher than the target of 30%, and above the 21/22 outturn of 34.6%.

Section 47 Investigations

The number of S47 investigations commencing increased from 117 in September to 131 in October. This was higher than the October 2021 figure of 83, and above the monthly average for the year which is 98. When expressed as a rate per 10,000 population, the year to date figure of 227.6 is now above our outturn for 2021/22 (219.6). Performance is higher than the 2020/21 national benchmark (164.4) but below our Statistical Neighbours' average (259.4).

The proportion of S47s proceeding to conference increased from 17.9% in September to 31.7% for those authorised in October. The year-to-date performance of 23.5% is notably below the target of 36.5%, below the 2020/21 national (36.5%) and statistical neighbour (39.2%) averages.

The percentage of S47s ending with no further action (NFA) decreased from 51.6% in September to 41.3% in October.

Child Protection (CP)

The number of children with a CP plan decreased from 258 at the end of September to 254 at the end of October. Barnsley's rate of CPP is 49.2 per 10,000 compared to national rate of 41.4 per 10,000 and the statistical neighbour rate of 67.4 per 10,000

For timeliness of initial child protection conferences (ICPC), the proportion of investigations proceeding to conference within timescale in October was maintained at 100% Year to date performance of 96.7% is above target (88%), above the 2020/21 statistical neighbour (82.9%) and national averages (83%).

■ CYP became the subject of a child protection (CP) plan for a second or subsequent time in October, decreasing from ■ in September. Year to date performance (15.9%) is below the 18% target, the 2020/21 statistical neighbour average (22.3%) and national average (22.1%).

The number of children on a CP plan for more than two years increased from ■ at the end of September, to ■ at the end of October. The current rate of 1.2% is below national (2.0%) and Statistical Neighbour (1.9%) benchmarks for 2020/21.

There was ■ plan lasting two years or more that ceased in October. Year to date performance for this measure is at 7.9% and is above the 3.0% target, the national (2.9%) and Statistical Neighbour (3.7%) benchmarks.

Performance for the timeliness of child protection reviews remained at 100% in October with performance remaining at 100% for more than two years. The percentage of child protection visits occurring within



timescale (four weeks) decreased from 94.4% in September to 92.1% in October. CP visit performance for the year to date is 96.7%.

Care Proceedings

The number of open proceedings decreased from 110 in September to 107 at the end of October. There were 1 new cases in October, and 8 cases which concluded. The average length of open proceedings cases increased from 33.6 weeks in September to 34.9 weeks in October. The 12 month rolling average duration for concluding cases increased from 49.6 weeks in September to 52.2 weeks in October.

Looked After Children (LAC)

The number of children in care is closely monitored. There is no definitive best practice performance; it is important to be confident that the right children are looked after at the right time. The number of looked after children has shown an increase for the fifth successive month from 354 in May to 385 at the end of October. That said, Barnsley's latest rate of LAC of 74.6 per 10,000 remains well below our statistical neighbours' average rate of 112 per 10,000, but above the national average of 67.0 per 10,000 for 2020/21.

Performance relating to children with three or more placements (in the previous 12 months) increased from 9.6% in September to 10.5% in October. Performance remains above the target of 9.5%, statistical neighbour figure of 8.3% and national benchmark of 9%.

The proportion of looked after children in the same placements for 2.5yrs+ reduced from 69.5% in September to 65.0% in October, and is now below the 20/21 statistical neighbour average of 68.3%, and below the national average of 70%.

The number of reported missing from care incidents showed an increase from 31 in September to 32 in October, this figure is above the rolling 12 month average of 22. The number of CYP missing from care remains at 11.

The percentage of LAC cases reviewed within timescale reduced from 95.5% in September to 92.9% in October. The year to date average at the end of October was 96.4%, below the 98.3% reported for Barnsley in 2021/22 and the target of 97%. Performance for LAC visits within timescale decreased from 91.4% in September to 87.4% in October, with a year to date performance of 95.2%. This is below the target of 100%. It should be noted that this is measured using a locally set definition (i.e. six-weekly) to support relationship-based practice and robust corporate parenting.

The proportion of looked after children with a completed Health Needs Assessment in the last year increased from 91.9% in September to 92.0% in October, but remains below the target of 96%. The performance of dental checks has reduced further from 72.0% in September to 68.9% in October, and remains well below the target of 94%.

The percentage of looked after children (aged 4-16yrs inclusive) recorded as having a completed Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire decreased from 71.9% in September to 67.4% in October, which is now below the Barnsley 2021/22 outturn of 71.6%, our Statistical Neighbour and the national average of 82.2% and 80% respectively, as well as below the target of 80%.

The information on PEPs is gathered from a Looked After Child's record, within the authorised care plan. October data shows that 90.9% of children/young people hold a valid PEP, reducing from 94.9% in September. TPEP performance is 97.2% in October, which is below the October 2021 figure of 99.0%.



Quality of Schools Attended by Looked after Children

This measure focuses on Ofsted inspection ratings for schools where Children in Care are placed. October performance showed 81.8% of CIC are attending Good or Outstanding Schools, which is higher than the September figure of 79.4%. At the end of October 15.7% of Children in Care were in schools judged to be less than Good, 2.5% were in schools with no current inspection outcome

School Attendance and Absence of Looked after Children

For Primary aged Children in Care, attendance at the end of October was 96.5%, which is comparable with figures throughout the previous academic year. Persistent absenteeism at the end of October remains at 10.3%, which is lower than the October 2021 figure of 12.7%. 0.9% of primary aged Children in Care received fixed term exclusions up to the end of October.

For Secondary aged Children in Care, attendance at the end of October was 91.2%, which is consistent with attendance throughout the previous academic year. Persistent absenteeism at the end of October was 24.0%, an increase on the September figure of 23.0%, but lower than the October 2021 figure of 26.9%. 8.8% of Secondary aged Children in Care received fixed term exclusions up to the end of October.

Adoption

With the exception of 2013/14, Barnsley's adoption performance over the last decade has remained well above statistical neighbours, regional and national benchmarks. However, current year to date performance for adoptions at the end of October is 13.2% of children and young people leaving care, which is slightly below our internal target of 16.5%.

In relation to the timeliness of our adoption processes, against the target of 121 days between a placement order and a child being matched, timescales increased from 75.2 days in September to 109.9 days in October. Performance for average time taken between Placement Order and child being placed with adopter(s) was 4.0 months in October, remaining unchanged from the previous month.

Care leavers

Care Leaver performance is measured 'cumulatively', using information recorded around birthdays, relevant to those care-experienced young people who have a birthday within the current month. This is then added to the previous performance, recorded since April, and builds up over the year. Reporting for care leavers can fluctuate significantly due to the small numbers of young people in the cohort.

Performance for October showed that 64.7% of the cohort aged 19-21 were engaged in education, employment or training (EET), below the target of 68%. Comparatively, the data is above the 2020/21 statistical neighbour (50.1%) and national (52%) averages.

It is a requirement that Care Leavers are 'seen' via an official visit every 8 weeks (40 working days). Performance declined slightly from 98.6% in September to 91.7% in October. Year to date performance is 99.0%, above performance for 2021/22 (99.5%). In addition to this, at the end of October, 91.9% of care leavers aged 19 to 21, with birthdays between April – October, were in suitable accommodation.

Children in Need

The number of open CIN cases increased by 89; from 1484 in September to 1573 in October. The October figure is significantly lower than the same period last year by a count of 336. In terms of rates of Children in Need per 10,000 when comparing against 2020/21 benchmarks, Barnsley's rate for October (304.7) remains lower than Statistical Neighbours (440.5), and below the national average (321.2).



	<p><u>Caseloads</u></p> <p>In October, caseloads in the Integrated Front Door's assessment and Safeguarding teams reduced by approximately 0.1 cases per worker on average to 20.1 cases. Caseloads in Children in Care/Future Directions teams decreased to 19.8 cases on average, caseloads in the Disabled Children's Team's decreased to 23.8 cases on average, caseloads in Adoption / Fostering teams reduced to 18.0 cases on average at the end of October.</p>
	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>The Committee is asked to review the attached report in a private session and challenge performance. Any areas for investigation or improvement can be agreed for formal detailed discussion at a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p>
4.	Attachments/background papers
5.	<p>Possible Areas for investigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the ambitions for children in care and what are the priorities for the next 12 months? How will they be achieved?• Is there an escalation of need in the community? If so, what needs to be done to support families and young people whilst at the same time ensuring that the service continues to be resilient?• What is being done to ensure quality of provision?• What assurances can you provide that work is being done in response to the recent Ofsted judgement on a council run care home? When do you expect to see improvements?• What are the outcomes of children in residential care compared to the rest of your looked after children?• How confident are you that you are keeping children safe from harm?• What information sharing agreements are in place with other agencies to ensure that information is used holistically to prevent a child in need from falling through the gaps?• Do you have a system for seeking feedback from LAC and care leavers about the services they receive? How is this information used?• What do LAC say about their placements? What would you do if a child complained about their placement?• How do Independent Reviewing Officer's add value to the service? What do you do with the information they provide? Can you give examples?• How many children are placed out of area? Is this cost effective? Where are the gaps in provision that prevent these children being placed locally?• What access do LAC get to services to help with mental health, substance misuse, sexual health and teenage pregnancy to ensure a healthy lifestyle and improved outcomes?• If children have to move placement, what arrangements are made to keep them at the same school?• Are you satisfied that children are supported to maintain relationships with people that are significant to them?• What is the profile of children waiting for a permanent placement and what are the barriers to finding them a home?• What do foster carers say about the support they receive, including out of hours support, and about their relationships with social workers and professionals?• When sharing Child Protection Reports with parents and families, how do you ensure that they fully understand the content and the implications of the report?• What can elected members do to support the work of children's social care?