



<b>Meeting:</b>	Safeguarding Private Member Briefing
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	Tuesday 8 September 2020
<b>Report Title:</b>	Children's Social Care Monthly Report – July 2020
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<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Members of the Committee will be aware that the People Directorate has a monthly children’s social care report, which contains an overview of the major performance indicators for children’s safeguarding and social care.</p> <p>The July 2020 edition of the children’s social care 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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>Below is a summary of key performance issues highlighted in the report.</p> <p><u>Early Help Assessments</u> Trends in previous years show seasonal variations in the numbers of Early Help Assessments (EHAs) completed, 132 EHAs had been completed at the end of July which is 4 less than in June (136). The number of interventions closed in July (78) matched that of the previous month but was far lower than the same point in the previous year (191).</p> <p><u>Contacts</u> Contacts during July (391) show an increase from June’s performance (346) as well as July 2019 (240). The percentage of contacts proceeding to referral decreased from 82.5% in June to 75.5% in July.</p> <p><u>Referrals</u> The number of referrals rose in July to an annual high of 310, 49 higher than June and significantly above the average of the last 12 months (231). Expressed as a rate per 10,000 under 18 year olds, the year to date figure at the end of the year was 548.2; below the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (627.0) average but above the national (544.5) average. We continue to see a high proportion of referrals going to assessment, with 99.7% in July.</p> <p>Re-referrals reduced from 19.2% in June to 11.9% in July – also lower than July 2019 (17.8%). Our year to date performance of 14.7% is currently below the 2018/19 Statistical Neighbour average (19%), as well as the national (23%) and regional (25%) averages.</p> <p><u>Assessments</u> The number of assessments undertaken has increased from 271 in June to 339 in July. The number of assessments in July have also increased by 57% compared to July 2019 (216). The rate of assessments for the year to date of 566.7 per 10,000 0-18 population is below the 2018/19 statistical neighbour average (734) but above the national (539.3) average.</p> <p>The percentage of assessments completed within 45 working days of referral remained high at 99.6% in July, falling from 100% in June but well above the 2018/19 national (83.1%) and statistical neighbour (77.2%) averages.</p>



Performance for the percentage of assessments undertaken in under 20 working days has dropped from 60.7% in June to 59.1% in July but is 20% higher than the same point in 2019. Year to date performance of 37% is above target (35%) and above the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (26.4%) and national (32%) averages.

The proportion of assessments ending in no further action has increased from 15% in June to 25.8% in July.

#### Section 47 Investigations

The number of S47 investigations undertaken reduced to 110 in July from 133 in June but is higher than July 2019 (97). When expressed as a rate per 10,000, the year to date figure (239) is above the 2018/19 national benchmark (168.3) as well as our statistical neighbour average (232).

Percentage of S47s converting to child protection conferences increased from 26% in June to 31% in July and remains below the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (39%) and national (38.5%) averages. Comparing quarterly performance, Q1 performance (31%) has reduced for the second consecutive quarter.

The proportion of Section 47 investigations ending in no further action decreased in July to 12.9% following an annual high of 28.6% in June. Performance for Q1 (22.2%) is more than double each of the last three quarters.

#### Child Protection (CP)

The number of children with a CP plan at the end of July (325) represents an annual high and 110 more than the July 2019 figure (215). That figure equates to a rate of 64 per 10,000 under 18 year olds, above the 2018/19 national average (43.7), as well as our statistical neighbour (59) average.

Performance remains strong for timeliness of initial child protection conferences (ICPC). The proportion of conferences within timescale for July is 90.9% above target (85%) as well as the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (79%) and national (79%) figures.

The proportion of children becoming subject of a child protection (CP) plan for a second or subsequent time ever increased to 26.3% in July, having been much lower throughout Q1 (5.8%). Throughout the last 12 months, 70 children have been subject to a CP Plan for a second or subsequent time ever, equating to 16.6%. Comparatively, performance remains below the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (21%), and national (20.8%) averages.

9 CP plans were open for 2 years or more at the end of July, an increase from 7 in June. This equates to 2.8% of all plans, remaining below the 3% target, but above the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (2.2%) and national (2.1%) averages.

No CP plans lasting 2 years or more ceased in July. Year to date performance of 1.4% (5 closures) remains well below the 3% target, as well as the 2018/19 national (3.3%), and statistical neighbour (2.7%) averages.

Performance for the timeliness of child protection reviews has remained at or close to 100% since May 2016, with a 99.6% year to date average. This is above 2018/19 statistical neighbour (91.3%) and national (91.8%) averages. The timeliness of child protection visits has remained close to 100% since December 2016, with 99.9% in July and 99.7% for the year to date.

#### Care Proceedings

The number of new proceedings cases in July (17) was an annual high and significant increase from performance in June. The average duration of open proceedings cases has dropped in the same period,



from 28.6 weeks to 23.7 weeks. The average age of concluding cases over a 12 month period has risen slightly to 35.7 weeks but is higher than the same point last year (32.9).

#### Looked After Children

The number of looked after children increased to 311 in July from 296 in June. Barnsley's current rate of LAC (61.2 per 10,000) is well below statistical neighbour average rates (102.5 per 10,000) and below the national average (65.0 per 10,000). The number of children coming into care during the month was an annual high (27), and significantly above the number leaving (12).

The proportion of looked after children with three or more placements (in the previous 12 months) dropped for the second consecutive month to 5.8% in July. This is below the 9.5% target, and continues to compare well against 2018/19 statistical neighbour (9.5%) and national (10%) averages.

The proportion of children looked after continuously for 2.5 years, and in their current placement for more than 2 years, decreased to 55.9% in July, below the 68% target, as well as 2018/19 statistical neighbour (68.5%) and national (69%) averages.

There has also been a significant reduction in the number of looked after children going missing. Only 5 missing incidents were recorded in Q1 2020/21 well below the average for the preceding three quarters (33).

The proportion of looked after child cases reviewed within timescales was above target (97%) at 100% for July and 99.1% year to date. The proportion of LAC visits in time was 100% in July and year to date performance (99.5%) is just below target (100%).

The proportion of health assessments for looked after children completed on time was 99.5% in July, improving slightly from 99% in June. Performance locally remains above the 2018/19 national (90%) and statistical neighbour (94.2%) averages. The proportion of children looked after for 12 months or more who have had a dental assessment declined for the fifth consecutive month to 76.6% in July, as a consequence of Covid-19.

The proportion of looked after children (aged 4 to 16 years inclusive) recorded as having a completed Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire was 76.9% at the end of July, a decrease from 80.2% in June and below the 80% target.

The proportion of looked after children with a Personal Education Plan (PEP) remained high at 100% in July meeting the 100% target. The proportion with a termly PEP was also high at 100% for June – performance will remain at 100% until the next refresh in September.

#### Quality of Schools Attended by Looked after Children

The proportion of looked after children attending schools rated good or outstanding by Ofsted improved in July compared to the same month the previous year, rising from 69.3% to 79.2%.

#### School Attendance and Absence of Looked after Children

School attendance and exclusion data has not been reported on for Q1, as a result of Covid-19.

#### Adoption

With the exception of 2013/14, Barnsley's performance has remained well above statistical neighbours, regional and national benchmarks.



	<p>In relation to the timeliness of our adoption processes, against the target of 120 days between a placement order and a child being matched, timescales decreased significantly to 178.3 days in July, from 274.4 in June and 224.9 in July 2019.</p> <p><u>Care leavers</u> Care Leaver performance is measured 'accumulatively', using information recorded at the last visit, 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.</p> <p>Performance for July shows that 82.6% of the cohort aged 19-21 were engaged in Education, Employment &amp; Training (EET). Comparatively, the data is well above the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (49.6%) and national (52%) averages.</p> <p>The timeliness of care leaver visits decreased slightly in July (95.9%) compared to June (97%) but remains above the measure at the same point in 2019 (94.3%).</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p><u>Children in Need</u> There was an annual high of 1,989 open Child in Need (CIN) cases at the end of July, an increase from 1,841 in June and 561 greater than July 2019. When comparing against 2018/19 benchmarks, Barnsley's rate of 391.6 remains lower than statistical neighbours (464) but above the national average (334.2).</p> <p><u>Caseloads</u> July 2020 data shows continued increases to the caseloads of the Assessment &amp; Joint Investigation Teams and Safeguarding Teams, which increased for the third consecutive month (26.9 in July). Caseloads in other teams remain consistent.</p>
	<p><b>Recommendations</b></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>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Attachments/background papers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's Social Care Monthly Report – July 2020</li> <li>• Mockingbird Programme:- <a href="https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/fostering-in-barnsley/mockingbird-programme/">https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/fostering-in-barnsley/mockingbird-programme/</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Possible Areas for investigation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the priorities for children's social care over the coming months?</li> <li>• Is the increase in referrals and assessments a backlog from the months during lockdown or a genuine increase in need?</li> <li>• Primary school EHA referrals increased substantially towards the end of the school year - was the nature of those referrals associated with lockdown or the wider impact of Covid-19?</li> </ul>



- Which of the agencies with low EHA referral rates are you concerned about and how will you work with them to improve this process?
- Why is there such a significant increase in the numbers of section 47 investigations resulting in 'no further action' and how confident are you that they have all been offered appropriate support?
- What learning is to be taken from those children that have been placed on a CPP for a second time this year to prevent it happening to other children in the future?
- What more needs to be done to ensure that the target is reached for the number of children with SDQs and what are the challenges?
- How are decisions made as to whether a child progresses to the next step of the process and how do you ensure that this is applied fairly and consistently?
- When sharing Child Protection Reports with parents and families, what support is available so that they fully understand the content and the implications of the report?
- Have you engaged with foster carers to see what particular challenges they faced during lockdown?
- What face-to-face activity was impacted during lockdown, e.g. social work visits, family visits, court sessions, and how has this affected families and the service?
- What benefits will the Mockingbird foster care programme bring to children in care?
- What can members do to support the work of children's social care in Barnsley?