



Meeting:	Safeguarding Private Member Briefing
Date of meeting:	7 th September 2021
Report Title:	Children's Social Care Monthly Report – June 2021
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1.	<p>Background</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 June 2021 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>
2.	<p>Summary</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. 140 EHAs had been completed at the end of June which is 65 less than in May (205). The number of interventions closed in June (76) was also less than in May (103).</p> <p><u>Contacts</u> Contacts during June (443) show an increase from May’s performance (348) and in increase from June 2020 (346). The percentage of contacts proceeding to referral increased from 85.9% in May to 86.6% in June.</p> <p><u>Referrals</u> The number of referrals rose in June to 383, 98 higher than May and above the average of the last 12 months (252). Expressed as a rate per 10,000 under 18 year olds, the year to date figure at the end of June was 592.6; below the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (755.2) but above the national (534.8) average. We continue to see a high proportion of referrals going to assessment, with 98.7% in June.</p> <p>Re-referrals reduced from 18.6% in May to 18.3% in June – also below June 2020 (19.2%). Our year to date performance of 16.3% is currently below the 2019/20 Statistical Neighbour average (22.4%), as well as the national (21.3%) and regional (22.6%) averages.</p> <p><u>Assessments</u> The number of assessments undertaken has increased from 338 in May to 410 in June. The number of assessments in June have also increased compared to June 2020 (270). The rate of assessments for the year to date of 682.2 per 10,000 for the 0-18 population is below the 2019/20 statistical neighbour average (898.8) but above the national (553.6) average.</p> <p>The percentage of assessments completed within 45 working days of referral remained high at 100% in June, above May and well above the 2019/20 national (83.9%) and statistical neighbour (80.6%) averages.</p>



Performance for the percentage of assessments undertaken in under 20 working days decreased from 42.1% in May to 28.1% in June and is lower than the same point in 2020 (60.7%). Year to date performance of 31.1% is below target (35%) but above the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (29.4%) and national (30.7%) averages.

The proportion of assessments ending in no further action has decreased from 35.5% in May to 30.3% in June.

Section 47 Investigations

The number of S47 investigations undertaken decreased to 103 in June from 130 in May and is lower than June 2020 (133). When expressed as a rate per 10,000, the year to date figure (228.6) is above the 2019/20 national benchmark (167.2) but below our statistical neighbour average (275.9).

Percentage of S47s converting to child protection conferences decreased from 42% in May to 26% in June and remains below the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (39.6%) and national (38.5%) averages.

The proportion of Section 47 investigations ending in no further action increased in June to 17.5% from 7.1% in May.

Child Protection (CP)

The number of children with a CP plan at the end of June (306) increased from May (299) but is below the June 2020 figure (318). That figure equates to a rate of 59.9 per 10,000 under 18 year olds, above the 2019/20 national average (42.8), but below our statistical neighbour (70) average.

Performance remains strong for timeliness of initial child protection conferences (ICPC) with the proportion of conferences within timescale for June at 100%, above target (85%) and above the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (70.9%) and national averages (77.7%).

The proportion of children becoming subject of a child protection (CP) plan for a second or subsequent time ever was 25.4% for year to date at the end of June, outside the internal target of 0-18%. Throughout the last 12 months, 87 children have been subject to a CP Plan for a second or subsequent time ever. Comparatively, performance is also below the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (21.6%), and national (21.9%) averages.

No CP plans lasting 2 years or more ceased in June. Year to date performance of 4.5% (16 closures) is above the 3% target, as well as the 2019/20 national (3.6%), and statistical neighbour (3.8%) averages.

Performance for the timeliness of child protection reviews has remained at or close to 100% since May 2016, with a 100% year to date average. This is above 2019/20 statistical neighbour (88.2%) and national (91.5%) averages. The timeliness of child protection visits has remained close to 100% since December 2016, with 94.6% in June and 99.2% for the year to date.

Care Proceedings

The number of new court proceedings in June (7) was a decrease from performance in May (16). The average duration of open proceedings has dropped in the same period, from 31.1 weeks to 28.1 weeks. The average age of concluding cases over a 12 month period has risen slightly to 46.2 weeks and is higher than the same point last year (35.1).



Looked After Children (LAC)

The number of looked after children reached 336 in June, increasing from 325 in May. Barnsley's current rate of LAC (65.8 per 10,000) is well below statistical neighbours average rates (110.4 per 10,000) but above the national average (67.0 per 10,000). The number of children coming into care in June was 18, which was above the number leaving (6).

The proportion of looked after children with three or more placements (in the previous 12 months) increased for the fourth consecutive month to 7.8% in June. However, this is below the 9.5% target, and continues to compare well against 2019/20 statistical neighbour (9.8%) and national (11%) averages.

The proportion of children looked after continuously for 2.5 years, and in their current placement for more than 2 years, decreased to 63.2% in June, below the 68% target and below the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (66.2%) and national (68%) averages.

The number of looked after children going missing increased significantly, with 24 incidents in June compared to 14 in May. Performance in June was above the 12 month average (13).

The proportion of looked after child cases reviewed within timescales was above target (97%) at 100% for June and 99.3% for the year to date. The proportion of LAC visits in time was 98.7% in June and year to date performance (99.8%) is just below target (100%).

The proportion of health assessments for looked after children completed on time was 98.5% in June, decreasing slightly from 99% in May. Performance locally remains above the 2019/20 national (90%) and statistical neighbour (91.5%) averages. The proportion of children looked after for 12 months or more who have had a dental assessment remained at 43.8% in June, as a consequence of COVID19.

The proportion of looked after children (aged 4 to 16 years inclusive) recorded as having a completed Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire was 90.3% at the end of June, a decrease from 96.8% in May but above the 80% target.

The proportion of looked after children with a Personal Education Plan (PEP) remained consistent at 95.3% in June, below the 100% target. The proportion with a termly PEP was also high at 98% for June.

Quality of Schools Attended by Looked after Children

The proportion of looked after children attending schools rated good or outstanding by Ofsted improved slightly in June compared to the previous month, rising from 78.2% to 79.3%.

School Attendance and Absence of Looked after Children

In June, primary school attendance for looked after children increased slightly from 94.7% to 95.2%. Absence is also lower at 4.8% in June while persistent absence rates improved 15.6%. 0.9% of primary aged LAC received fixed term exclusions up to the end of June.

Secondary attendance for looked after children remained consistent at 86.4% in June. Rates for absence (13.6%) is also unchanged while persistent absence (45.2%) and fixed term exclusions (15.9%) both increased in June.

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 117.8 days in June, from 119.4 in May and 274.4 in June 2020.</p> <p><u>Care leavers</u></p> <p>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 June shows that 50% of the cohort aged 19-21 were engaged in EET. Comparatively, the data is below the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (50.7%) and national (53%) averages.</p> <p>The timeliness of care leaver visits decreased slightly in June (98.9%) compared to May (100%) but remains above the measure at the same point in 2020 (97%).</p> <p><u>Children in Need</u></p> <p>There was 2,068 open Child in Need (CIN) cases at the end of June, an increase from 1,900 in May and increasing from June 2020 (1,841). When comparing against 2019/20 benchmarks, Barnsley's rate of 404.8 remains lower than Stat Neighbours (468) but above the National average (323.7).</p> <p><u>Caseloads</u></p> <p>June 2021 data shows a further increase to the caseloads of the Disabled Children's Team, rising to an annual high of 31.2 cases per worker compared to 22 at the same point last year. There is also an increase to the Integrated Front Door/ Assessment and Safeguarding Teams (26.7 cases per worker - the highest level since August) and an annual high 20.1 cases in the Children in Care/Future Directions Teams.</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>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Attachments/background papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not for publication.
<p>5.</p>	<p>Possible Areas for investigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the priorities for children's social care over the coming months? • Is the increase in referrals and assessments a backlog from the months during lockdown or a genuine increase in need? • What work has been done to determine the cause of the increase in 'missing' incidents? How have you responded to the findings? • 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 to prevent this happening to other children in the future?



- 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?
- What are the barriers to achieving 100% of children completing a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire?
- 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?
- What face-to-face activity was impacted during Covid, eg social work visits, family visits, court sessions, and how has this affected families and the service?
- What can members do to support the work of children's social care in Barnsley?