



Meeting:	Safeguarding Private Member Briefing (Redacted)
Date of meeting:	11 th January 2022
Report Title:	Children's Social Care Monthly Report – October 2021
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1. Background	<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 October 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. Summary	<p>Below is a summary of key performance issues highlighted in the report.</p> <p><u>Early Help Assessments</u> Early Help data has been impacted by the recent system migration resulting in a backlog of activity to upload to the new system. 45 EHAs had been completed at the end of October based on the information available, with 66 interventions closed. The total number of active cases rose to an annual high of 3,959 in October.</p> <p><u>Contacts</u> Contacts during October (260) show a reduction from September’s performance (300) and remains below the 12 month average (316). The percentage of contacts proceeding to referral increased to 86.9% in October, the highest proportion since December 2020.</p> <p><u>Referrals</u> The number of referrals decreased from 244 in September to 229 in October, remaining below the average of the last 12 months (257). Expressed as a rate per 10,000 under 18 year olds, the year to date figure at the end of October was 602.2; 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 October.</p> <p>Re-referrals increased from 14.8% in September to 19.7% in October – in line with October 2020 (19.3%). Our year to date performance of 17.3% 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 267 in September to 276 in October. The number of assessments in October have also increased compared to October 2020 (214). The rate of assessments for the year to date of 706.5 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>



The percentage of assessments completed within 45 working days of referral remained high at 99.3% in October, above September and well above the 2019/20 national (83.9%) and statistical neighbour (80.6%) averages.

Performance for the percentage of assessments undertaken in under 20 working days increased from 11.8% in September to 20.2% in October but is slightly lower than the same point in 2020 (22.5%). Year to date performance of 27.5% is below target (35%) and below the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (29.4%) and national (30.7%) averages.

The proportion of assessments ending in no further action has decreased from 41.8% in September to 36.4% in October.

Section 47 Investigations

The number of S47 investigations undertaken increased from 72 in September to 80 in October but remains below the average for the last 12 months (102). When expressed as a rate per 10,000, the year to date figure (241.6) 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 17% in September to 12% in October 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 from 15.9% in September to an annual high of 40.7% in October.

Child Protection (CP)

The number of children with a CP plan at the end of October (346) decreased from September (350) but is above the October 2020 figure (276). That figure equates to a rate of 67.7 per 10,000 under 18 year olds, above the 2019/20 national average (42.8), but below our statistical neighbour (70) average.

For timeliness of initial child protection conferences (ICPC), the proportion of investigations proceeding to conference within timescale in October (85.7%) increased slightly from September (83.3%). Year to date performance of 88.1% is above target (85%) and above the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (70.9%) and national averages (77.7%).

██████████ became the subject of a child protection (CP) plan for a second or subsequent time ever in October, in line with September performance and significantly below the average for the year (7). However, year to date performance at the end of October (23.6%) was outside the internal target of 0-18%. Throughout the last 12 months, 85 children have been subject to a CP Plan for a second or subsequent time ever. Comparatively, performance is above the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (21.6%), and national (21.9%) averages (lower performance is better).

6 CP plans were open for 2 years or more at the end of October, increasing by ████ from September. This equates to 1.7% of all plans, inside the 0-3% target, and below the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (2.7%) and national (2.1%) averages.

No CP plans lasting 2 years or more ceased in October. Year to date performance of 2.4% (7 closures) is below 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 September 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 decreased from 96.4% in September to 93.3% in October, with 98.1% for the year to date.



Care Proceedings

The number of new court proceedings in October (11) was an increase from performance in September (9). The average duration of open proceedings has dropped in the same period, from 30.8 weeks to 29.5 weeks. The average age of concluding cases over a 12 month period has decreased from 48.3 weeks in September to 47.8 weeks in October but is significantly higher than the same point last year (35.8).

Looked After Children (LAC)

The number of looked after children increased for the fifth consecutive month to an annual high of 354 in October. Barnsley's current rate of LAC (69.3 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 October was 16, which was above the number leaving (11).

The proportion of looked after children with three or more placements (in the previous 12 months) increased from 8.6% in September to 9.6% in October. Performance is above the 9.5% target, but below 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 from 62.5% in September to 62.2% in October, below the 68% target and below the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (66.2%) and national (68%) averages.

The number of incidents of looked after children going missing decreased from 21 in September (relating to 11 children) to 14 in October (relating to 9 children). Performance in October was below the 12 month average (17).

The proportion of looked after child cases reviewed within timescales was above target (97%) at 100% for October and 99.4% for the year to date. The proportion of LAC visits in time was 98.7% in October but year to date performance (99.2%) remains below the aspirational target (100%).

The proportion of health assessments for looked after children completed on time was 96.3% in October, decreasing slightly from 96.7% in September. 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 decreased from 71.4% in September to 70% in October.

The proportion of looked after children (aged 4 to 16 years inclusive) recorded as having a completed Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire was 78% at the end of October, an increase from 74.7% in September but below the 80% target.

The proportion of looked after children with a Personal Education Plan (PEP) remained increased slightly from 91.9% in September to 92.2% in October, remaining below the 100% target. The proportion with a termly PEP increased to 99% for October.

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 October compared to the previous month, rising from 79.9% to 82.4%.

School Attendance and Absence of Looked after Children

In October, primary school attendance for looked after children remained constant at 95.6%. Persistent absence rates increased slightly to 12.7%. No primary aged LAC received fixed term exclusions up to the end of October.



	<p>Secondary attendance for looked after children reduced slightly from 92.3% in September to 90.8% up to the end of October. Rates of persistent absence increased from 19% in September to 26.9% in October. Secondary LAC fixed term exclusions also increased from 1.9% to 5.6% in the same period.</p> <p><u>Adoption</u> With the exception of 2013/14, Barnsley's adoption performance has remained well above statistical neighbours, regional and national benchmarks. Year to date performance for adoptions at the end of October is 21.7%</p> <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 increased slightly from 107.5 in September to 107.8 in October but remains below target and significantly below performance in October 2020 (182.7).</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 October shows that 66.7% of the cohort aged 19-21 were engaged in EET. Comparatively, the data is above the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (50.7%) and national (53%) averages.</p> <p>The timeliness of care leaver visits increased to 100% in October in line with the same point in 2020. At the end of October, 92.3% of care leavers aged 19 to 21 with birthdays between April - October were in suitable accommodation.</p> <p><u>Children in Need</u> There was 1,919 open Child in Need (CIN) cases at the end of October, decreasing from 1,997 in September but increasing from October 2020 (1,727). When comparing against 2019/20 benchmarks, Barnsley's rate of 375.7 remains lower than Stat Neighbours (468) but above the National average (323.7).</p> <p><u>Caseloads</u> October 2021 data shows a further increase to the caseloads of the Disabled Children's Team, rising from 19.7 cases per worker in September to 23.6 in October. Caseloads in other teams have remained consistent with between September and October however caseloads in all teams are above the same point in 2020.</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>
<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? • When will the backlog of migrating EHAs be cleared and does the service have the capacity to deal with the increased demand for services?



- How do you plan to strengthen your Early Help & Targeted EH offer?
- 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?
- Why is there an increased number of children coming into care; how do you know; and what pressures does this put on the service?
- 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?
- Other than the SDQs, how is the voice of the child reflected in your work?
- What work is done to quality assure TPEPs and PEPs?
- What is the key to improving school attendance and reducing exclusions for looked after children?
- 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, consistently and in a timely manner?
- 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 remedial action has been taken as a result of the annual Ofsted conversation?
- How are social workers coping with consistently high caseloads?
- How do you plan to attract, recruit & retain more social workers and ensure that Barnsley is an employer of choice?
- What can members do to support the work of children's social care in Barnsley?