



Meeting:	Safeguarding Private Member Briefing
Date of meeting:	26 th April 2022
Report Title:	Children's Social Care Monthly Report – February 2022
Author:	Ian Standeven, Business Improvement Officer

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 February 2022 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> Early Help data had been impacted by the recent system migration resulting in a backlog of activity, a data cleansing exercise has now taken place and information backdated. 111 EHAs had been completed in February based on the information available, with 64 interventions closed. The total number of active cases at the end of February was 3045.</p> <p><u>Contacts</u> Contacts during February (351) show an increase from January’s performance (236) and above the 12 month average (302). The percentage of contacts proceeding to referral reduced to 64.2% in February, an annual low and below the 12 month average of 79.8%.</p> <p><u>Referrals</u> The number of referrals increased from 170 in January to 232 in February, remaining below the average of the last 12 months (240). Expressed as a rate per 10,000 under 18 year olds, the year to date figure at the end of February was 563.8; below the 2020/21 statistical neighbour (653.0) but above the national (494.3) average. We continue to see a high proportion of referrals going to assessment, with 99.6% in February.</p> <p>Re-referrals reduced from 23.5% in January to 16.4% in February – slightly higher than February 2021 (15.9%). Our year to date performance of 17.2% is currently below the 2020/21 Statistical Neighbour average (24.4%), as well as the national (22.7%) and regional (22.6%) averages.</p> <p><u>Assessments</u> The number of assessments undertaken has increased from 233 in January to 286 in February. The number of assessments in February have also increased compared to February 2021 (263). The rate of assessments for the year to date of 660.7 per 10,000 for the 0-18 population is below the 2020/21 statistical neighbour average (891.4) but above the national (517.6) average.</p>



The percentage of assessments completed within 45 working days was maintained at 99.5% in February, well above our 2020/21 statistical neighbour average (84.6%) and the national average (87.6%).

Performance for the percentage of assessments undertaken in under 20 working days increased from 33.7% in January to 42.8% in February, well above February 2021 (22.5%). Year to date performance of 27.1% is below target (35%) and below the 2020/21 statistical neighbour (34.4%) and national (33.5%) averages.

The proportion of assessments ending in no further action has increased from 24.5% in January to 36.1% in February.

Section 47 Investigations

The number of S47 investigations undertaken reduced from 85 in January to 79 in February and remains below the average for the last 12 months (96). When expressed as a rate per 10,000, the year to date figure (226.1) is above the 2020/21 national benchmark (164.4) but below our statistical neighbour average (259.4).

Percentage of S47s converting to child protection conferences increased from 26% in January to 34% in February and remains below the 2020/21 statistical neighbour (39.2%) and national (36.5%) averages.

The proportion of Section 47 investigations ending in no further action reduced from 16% in January to 13.5% in February.

Child Protection (CP)

The number of children with a CP plan at the end of February (280) increased from 269 in January and is above the February 2021 figure (235). That figure equates to a rate of 54.8 per 10,000 under 18 year olds, above the 2020/21 national average (41.4), but below our statistical neighbour (67.4) average.

For timeliness of initial child protection conferences (ICPC), the proportion of investigations proceeding to conference within timescale in February (90.3%) reduced from January (100%). Year to date performance of 90.4% is above target (85%) and above the 2020/21 statistical neighbour (89.2%) and national averages (83%).

■■■■ became the subject of a child protection (CP) plan for a second or subsequent time ever in February, increasing from ■■■■ in January, and above the average for the last 12 months ■■■■. Year to date performance at the end of February (18.3%) was also outside the internal target of 0-18%. Throughout the last 12 months, 64 children have been subject to a CP Plan for a second or subsequent time ever. Comparatively, performance is below the 2020/21 statistical neighbour (22.3%), and national (22.1%) averages (lower performance is better).

16 CP plans were open for 2 years or more at the end of February, the same as January. This equates to 5.7% of all open plans, above the 0-3% target, and above the 2020/21 statistical neighbour (1.9%) and national (2%) averages.

■■■■■ lasting 2 years or more ceased in February. Year to date performance of 2.3% (7 closures) is below the 3% target, as well as the 2020/21 national (2.9%), and statistical neighbour (3.7%) 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 2020/21 statistical neighbour (93.6%) and national (93.2%) averages. The timeline lss of child protection visits decreased from 99.4% in January to 97.2% in February, with 98.6% for the year to date.



Care Proceedings

The number of new court proceedings in February (6), the same as in January (6). The average duration of open proceedings has increased in the same period, from 32.9 weeks to 33.4 weeks. The average age of concluding cases over a 12 month period has increased from 50.3 weeks in January to 51.1 weeks in February and is significantly higher than the same point last year (40.2).

Looked After Children (LAC)

The number of looked after children increased from 348 at the end of January to 350 at the end of February. Barnsley's current rate of LAC (68.5 per 10,000) is well below statistical neighbours average rates (112.0 per 10,000) but above the national average (67.0 per 10,000). The number of children coming into care in February was 16, which was above the number leaving.

The proportion of looked after children with three or more placements (in the previous 12 months) increased from 10.1% in January to 10.3% in February. Performance is above the 9.5% target, and 2020/21 statistical neighbour (8.3%) and national (9%) averages.

The proportion of children looked after continuously for 2.5 years, and in their current placement for more than 2 years, increased from 62.2% in January to 68.5% in February, slightly above the 68% target and the 2020/21 statistical neighbour (68.3%), but below national (70%) averages.

The number of incidents of looked after children going missing decreased from 18 in January (relating to 11 children) to 17 in February (relating to 11 children). Performance in February was below the 12 month average (18).

The proportion of looked after child cases reviewed within timescales was above target (97%) at 97.5% for February and 98.7% for the year to date. The proportion of LAC visits in time was 95% in February, and year to date performance (97.9%) remains below the aspirational target (100%).

The proportion of looked after children with a completed health assessment in the last 12 months was 95.0% in February, the same as January. Performance locally remains above the 2020/21 national (91%) and statistical neighbour (92.7%) averages. The proportion of children looked after for 12 months or more who have had a dental assessment decreased from 75.6% in January to 71.2% in February.

The proportion of looked after children (aged 4 to 16 years inclusive) recorded as having a completed Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire was 70.9% at the end of February, reducing from 72.2% in January and below the 80% target.

The proportion of looked after children with a Personal Education Plan (PEP) at the end of February was 97.7%, the same as January, remaining below the 100% target. The proportion with a termly PEP increased to 99.5% for February.

Quality of Schools Attended by Looked after Children

The proportion of looked after children attending schools rated good or outstanding by Ofsted reduced in February compared to the previous month, declining from 82.8% to 79.5%.

School Attendance and Absence of Looked after Children

In February, primary school attendance for looked after children increased slightly to 96.6% and persistent absence rates increased slightly to 8.3%. No primary aged LAC received fixed term exclusions up to the end of February.

Secondary attendance for looked after children reduced slightly from 90.4% in January to 90.2% to the end of February. Rates of persistent absence reduced from 24.3% in January to 23.2% in February. Secondary LAC fixed term exclusions increased to 14.3% in the same period.



	<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 February 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 reduced slightly from 113.2 in January to 112.3 in February and remains below target and significantly below performance in February 2021 (133.8).</p> <p><u>Care leavers</u> Care Leaver performance is measured 'accumulatively', 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.</p> <p>Performance for February shows that 66.7% of the cohort aged 19-21 were engaged in EET. Comparatively, the data is above the 2020/21 statistical neighbour (50.1%) and national (52%) averages.</p> <p>The timeliness of care leaver visits was maintained at 100% in February in line with the same point in 2021. At the end of February, 93.3% of care leavers aged 19 to 21 with birthdays between April - February were in suitable accommodation.</p> <p><u>Children in Need</u> There were 1685 open Child in Need (CIN) cases at the end of February, increasing from 1630 in January, but lower than February 2021 (1821). When comparing against 2020/21 benchmarks, Barnsley's rate of 329.9 remains lower than Stat Neighbours (440.5) but above the National average (321.2).</p> <p><u>Caseloads</u> February data shows an increase to the caseloads of the integrated Frontdoor/ Assessment and Safeguarding Teams from 21.6 in January to 24.3 in February. Caseloads in other teams have reduced or remained consistent with January 2022, and at the same point in February 2021.</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"> • Item 8b - Children's Social Care Monthly Report – February 2022
<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 and what impact will that have on looked after children? • What do you consider to be the strengths and areas for development in children's social care at present? • How would you describe the impact you are having upon the lives of those in children's social care? How do you know?



- How is the voice of the child reflected in your work?
- How confident are you that the children, young people and families are getting the right help at the right time? How do you know?
- What is in place to support staff to cope with increased workload in the Front door/Assessment and Safeguarding Teams?
- Does the service have the capacity to deal effectively and safely with the number of children coming into care?
- Has the backlog of EHA migration activity been completed and what impact has this had upon service provision?
- Is the Early Help offer effective? How do you know?
- What actions are you taking to understand the reasons and improve persistent absence performance in secondary schools?
- What are the barriers to improving performance for the SDQ's? How can these be overcome?
- 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 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 can members do to support the work of children's social care in Barnsley?