



Meeting:	Safeguarding Private Member Briefing
Date of meeting:	13 th September 2022
Report Title:	Children's Social Care Monthly Report – July 2022
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1.	<p>Background</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The July 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.</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 July 2022 report:</p> <p><u>Early Help Assessments</u> 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 109 EHAs had been completed in July and 67 interventions closed, with 3,478 active cases at the end of July. These figures are much lower than the May and June figures, and significantly lower than July 2021, however there is a natural lag in the system so July's figure will be higher once all records are updated.</p> <p><u>Contacts</u> The number of contacts reduced from an annual high of 579 in June to 379 in July, but still above the 12 month average of 322 per month. Similarly, the number of consultations reduced from 658 in June to 542 in July - although the proportion of contacts progressing to referral has increased: 64.7% in July, up from 56.1% in June, the remains slightly below the 12 month average of 68.1%.</p> <p><u>Referrals</u> The number of referrals reduced from 322 in June to 247 in July, but remains above the rolling 12 month average of 220 referrals per month. The percentage of referrals going on to assessment increased to 100%. The percentage of re-referrals (in 12 months) has shown a marginal increase from 16.8% in June to 17.0% in July. Indeed, the year to date performance of 19.3% remains slightly above target (18.5%), but below the 2020/21 statistical neighbour and national averages of 24.4% and 22.7% respectively.</p> <p><u>Assessments</u> The number of assessments commencing reduced from an annual high of 358 in June to 310 in July. This remains above the 12 month average of 264, but below the figure of 330 reported in July 2021. The current year to date rate of assessments, at 602.3 per 10,000 u18s, remains well below the 2020/21 statistical neighbour benchmark (891.4) but above the national benchmark (517.6).</p> <p>Performance for the percentage of assessments completed within 45 working days showed a marginal reduction from 98.7% in June to 98.3% in July. YTD performance of 98.8% remains well above our 2020/21 statistical neighbour average (84.6%) and the national average (87.6%), including our own target of 95%.</p>



Performance for the percentage of assessments undertaken within 20 working days reduced from 31.8% in June to 29.6% in July. YTD performance of 25.8% remains below the target of 35%.

The proportion of assessments ending in 'No Further Action' increased from 31.4% in June to 33.1% in July. The YTD percentage of 34.3% remains higher than the target of 30%, but is still slightly lower than the 21/22 outturn of 34.6%.

Section 47 Investigations

The number of S47 investigations commencing reduced from 132 in June to 126 in July, broadly in line with 122 in July 2021. Performance is well above the monthly average for the year which is 92. When expressed as a rate per 10,000 population, the year to date figure of 217.9 is slightly below our outturn for 2021/22 of 219.6. This is higher than the 2020/21 national benchmark (164.4) but below our Stat Neighbours' average (259.4).

Percentage of S47s converting to child protection conferences has shown a slight increase, from 25.5% in June to 27.7% in July. The year-to-date performance of 23.2% is notably below the target of 36.5%, and below the 2020/21 national (36.5%) and statistical neighbour (39.2%) averages.

The percentage of S47s ending with no further action (NFA) increased from 10.8% in June to 27.7% in July, which is the highest rate since last October.

Child Protection (CP)

The number of children with a CP plan increased from 261 at the end June to 269 at the end of July. This is a cessation of the previously observed month-on-month reducing trend since February.

Barnsley rate of CPP is 52.1 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 July was maintained at 100% for a second month. Year to date performance of 93.8% is above target (85%) and above the 2020/21 statistical neighbour (89.2%) and national averages (83%).

7 CYP became the subject of a child protection (CP) plan for a second or subsequent time ever in July, increasing from ■ in June, and this is above the average for the last 12 months (■). Year to date performance at the end of July (16.1%) is now within our internal target range of 0-18%. Throughout the last 12 months, 45 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).

The number of children on a CP plan for more than two years reduced from 10 to ■ at the end of July. The current rate of 1.1% is now below national (2.0%) and Stat Neighbour (1.9%) benchmarks for 2020/21.

There were 7 CP plans lasting two years or more that ceased in July. Year to date performance for this measure is at 7.6% and is above the 3.0% target and national (2.9%) statistical neighbour (3.7%) benchmarks.

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 timeliness of child protection visits was 94.7% in July, a small reduction from 95.0% in June and the fourth reduction in a row. CP visit performance for the year to date is 97.4%.



Care Proceedings

The number of open proceedings cases increased from 95 in June to 97 at the end of July. There were 8 new cases in July, whilst 6 cases concluded. The average length of open proceedings cases increased from 34.5 weeks in June to 36.2 weeks in July. The 12 month rolling average duration for concluding cases decreased slightly from 49.6 weeks in June to 48.4 weeks in July.

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 from 361 in June to 367 at the end of July (the highest in any month for some time). That said, Barnsley's latest rate of LAC of 71.1 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.

The proportion of looked after children with three or more placements (in the previous 12 months) reduced from 11.1% in June to 9.9% in July. Performance remains above the 9.5% target, and 2020/21 statistical neighbour (8.3%) and national (9.0%) averages.

The proportion of looked after children in the same placements for 2.5yrs+ increased slightly from 68.4% in June to 69.1% in July, and remains above 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 17 in June to 20 in July, and this figure is slightly above the rolling 12 month average of 19. The number of CYP missing from care also increased from 8 in June to 10 in July.

The percentage of LAC cases reviewed within timescale reduced from 100% in June to 98.9% in July. The year to date average at the end of July was 97.7%, slightly below the 98.3% reported for Barnsley in 2021/22, but above the target of 97%. Performance for LAC visits within timescale fell from 96.1% in June to 93.2% in July, giving a year-to-date performance of 96.7%. This is below the target of 100%.

The proportion of looked after children with a completed health assessment in the last 12 months has increased, from 91.6% in June to 93.4% in July. Performance locally therefore remains above the 2020/21 national (91%) and statistical neighbour (92.7%) averages. The performance of dental checks has reduced again from 79.5% in June to 77.6% in July, and well below the target of 94%

The proportion of looked after children (aged 4 to 16 years inclusive) recorded as having a completed Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire was 68.6% at the end of July, reducing from 70.5% in June and below the 80% target.

Information on Personal Education Plans is gathered from a Looked After Child's record, within the authorised care plan. July's data shows an improvement to 100%, for both children/young people with a valid PEP, and TPEP.

Quality of Schools Attended by Looked after Children

This measure focuses on Ofsted inspection ratings for schools in which looked after children are placed. July performance showed 80.4% of LAC in Good or Outstanding schools, which is a marginal increase on the previous month. 17.0% of Looked After Children at the end of July were in 'less than good' schools, and 2.6% were in schools with no current inspection.

School Attendance and Absence of Looked after Children

Performance up to the end of July shows 96.6% attendance, which is comparable with performance throughout the year. Persistent absenteeism showed a slight reduction from 9.8% in June to 9.5% in July,



this is also comparable with performance throughout the year. No primary aged LAC received fixed term exclusions up to the end of July.

In terms of secondary school attendance performance, July figures showed 89.9% attendance, which is consistent with attendance rates since the turn of 2022. Persistent absenteeism increased from 27.6% in June to 28.6% in July. More than a fifth (21.8%) of secondary aged LAC received fixed term exclusions up to the end of July.

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 July is 14.3% 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 slightly from 100.3 days in June to 101.7 days in July and remains below target and significantly below performance in July 2021 (115.7).

Performance for average time taken between Placement Order and child being placed with adopter(s) was maintained at 3.7 months in July, the same as June.

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 July shows that 58.3% of the cohort aged 19-21 were engaged in EET, below our internal 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 eight weeks (40 working days). Performance was maintained at 100% for the fourth month in a row. Year to date performance is 99.9%, above performance for 2021/22 (99.5%). In addition to this, at the end of July, 88.2% of care leavers aged 19 to 21 with birthdays between April - July were in suitable accommodation.

Children in Need

The number of open CIN cases has reduced by 69: from 1,797 in June to 1,728 in July. The July figure is notably lower than the same period last year by a count of 317. In terms of rates of Children in Need per 10,000 when comparing against 2020/21 benchmarks, Barnsley's rate for July (334.7) remains lower than Stat Neighbours (440.5), but above the national average (321.2).

Caseloads

Caseloads in the Disabled Children's Teams increased by 0.5 cases per worker from 27.1 in June to 27.6 at the end of July. Caseloads in the Integrated Front Door's Assessment and Safeguarding teams reduced by approximately 2.5 cases per worker on average from 28.3 to 25.8 cases. Caseloads within Children in Care/Future Directions, Adoption/Fostering teams also showed a slight reduction.

Recommendations

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.



4.	Attachments/background papers <ul style="list-style-type: none">•
5.	Possible Areas for investigation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What new ways of working can be adopted to ensure that workloads are reduced and data is reported in a timely manner?• What are the key aims of the draft Children in Care & Care Leavers Strategy and how will you monitor progress?• What are the challenges associated with the new step-up/down protocols and how are these being managed?• How do you measure the quality of your performance and what areas need to improve?• What do you consider to be the greatest risks for Children's Social Care at present?• What analysis has been done into re-referrals and those who are subject to a CPP for a second time to ensure that the right children are receiving the right support, at the right time?• What are the key areas of focus over the next 12 months and the intended outcomes?• What more can be done to address persistent absence and the number of children subject to a fixed term exclusion in secondary schools?• When do you expect to see an increase in performance in the number of completed SDQs?• What are the implications of not achieving the 20 day assessment target and do you know the reasons for under-performing?• What are the reasons for the decrease in adoption performance and what impact has the Regional Adoption Agency had on performance?• How prevalent are private fostering arrangements in Barnsley and are you confident that the reporting mechanism is robust and effective?• What can elected members do to support the work of Children's Social Care?