

<b>Meeting:</b>	Safeguarding Private Member Briefing
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 January 2021
<b>Report Title:</b>	Children's Social Care Monthly Report – November 2020
<b>Author:</b>	Matt Biggs, Business Improvement Advisor

<b>1. Background</b>	<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 November 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. Summary</b>	<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 although the peaks and troughs differ slightly as a result of the pandemic this year. 197 EHAs had been completed at the end of November which is 5 less than in October (192). The number of interventions closed in November (87) was also less than in October (110).</p> <p><u>Contacts</u> Contacts during November (275) show an increase from October's performance (247) but a reduction from November 2019 (377). The percentage of contacts proceeding to referral increased from 74% in October to 85.5% in November.</p> <p><u>Referrals</u> The number of referrals rose in November to 229, 47 higher than October and above the average of the last 12 months (218). Expressed as a rate per 10,000 under 18 year olds, the year to date figure at the end of November was 514.3; below the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (627.0) and the national (544.5) average. We continue to see a high proportion of referrals going to assessment, with 99.6% in November.</p> <p>Re-referrals reduced from 19.2% in October to 13.1% in November – though higher than November 2019 (9.4%). Our year to date performance of 13.6% 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 217 in October to 271 in November. The number of assessments in November have decreased slightly compared to November 2019 (283). The rate of assessments for the year to date of 546.2 per 10,000 for the 0-18 population is below the 2018/19 statistical neighbour average (734) but above the national (539.3) average.</p>

The percentage of assessments completed within 45 working days of referral remained high at 100% in November, in line with October and well above the 2018/19 national (83.1%) and statistical neighbour (77.2%) averages.

Performance for the percentage of assessments undertaken in under 20 working days increased from 22.5% in October to 34.1% in November and is higher than the same point in 2019 (28.4%). Year to date performance of 35% is on 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 10.3% in October to 18.1% in November.

#### Section 47 Investigations

The number of S47 investigations undertaken increased to 101 in November from 58 in October but is lower than November 2019 (125). When expressed as a rate per 10,000, the year to date figure (212.8) is above the 2018/19 national benchmark (168.3) but below our statistical neighbour average (232).

Percentage of S47s converting to child protection conferences decreased from 28% in October to 22% in November and remains below the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (39%) and national (38.5%) averages.

The proportion of Section 47 investigations ending in no further action decreased in November to 13% from 16.2% in October.

#### Child Protection (CP)

The number of children with a CP plan at the end of November (256) represents an annual low and 13 less than the November 2019 figure (269). That figure equates to a rate of 50.4 per 10,000 under 18 year olds, above the 2018/19 national average (43.7), but below our statistical neighbour (59) average.

Performance remains strong for timeliness of initial child protection conferences (ICPC) with the exception of October 2020. The proportion of conferences within timescale for November is 100%, above target (85%) and above the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (79%) and national averages (79%).

The proportion of children becoming subject of a child protection (CP) plan for a second or subsequent time ever was 16.1% for year to date at the end of November, below the internal target of 18%. Throughout the last 12 months, 54 children have been subject to a CP Plan for a second or subsequent time ever. Comparatively, performance remains below the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (21%), and national (20.8%) averages.

6 CP plans were open for 2 years or more at the end of November, a decrease from 7 in October. This equates to 2.3% of all plans, below the 3% target, but above the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (2.2%) and national (2.1%) 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 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 99.6% in November and 99.8% for the year to date.

## Care Proceedings

The average age of concluding cases over a 12 month period has risen slightly to 36.2 weeks and is higher than the same point last year (35.1).

### Looked After Children (LAC)

The number of looked after children reached an annual high of 345 in November, increasing from 336 in October. Barnsley's current rate of LAC (67.9 per 10,000) is well below statistical neighbours average rates (102.5 per 10,000) but above the national average (65.0 per 10,000). The number of children coming into care in November was 20, which was above the number leaving (13).

The proportion of looked after children with three or more placements (in the previous 12 months) decreased for the third consecutive month to 4.1% in November. 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, increased to 63.4% in November, below the 68% target and below the 2018/19 statistical neighbour (68.5%) and national (69%) averages.

The number of looked after children going missing remained consistent, with 12 incidents in November compared to 13 in October. Performance in November was above the 12 month average (7).

The proportion of looked after child cases reviewed within timescales was above target (97%) at 100% for November and 99% for the year to date. The proportion of LAC visits in time was 99.1% in November 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 98.6% in November, improving slightly from 97.2% in October. 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 ninth consecutive month to 50.7% in November, 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 95.7% at the end of November, a decrease from 98.8% in October but well above the 80% target.

The proportion of looked after children with a Personal Education Plan (PEP) remained high at 99% in November just below the 100% target. The proportion with a termly PEP was also high at 99% for November.

### 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 November compared to the previous month, rising from 78.4% to 78.8%.

### School Attendance and Absence of Looked after Children

In November, primary school attendance for looked after children increased slightly from 98.5% to 98.9% which represented a new annual high. No unauthorised absence or exclusions were recorded. Both absence and persistent absence recorded annual lows at 1.1% and 1.0% respectively.

Secondary attendance for looked after children increased slightly from 94.6% to 94.7% in November. Exclusions were recorded by 10.1% of secondary CIC in November. Both absence and persistent absence were comparatively high in November at 5.3% and 13.8% respectively.

	<p><u>Adoption</u></p> <p>With the exception of 2013/14, Barnsley's performance has remained well above statistical neighbours, regional and national benchmarks.</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 decreased significantly to 157.4 days in November, from 182.7 in October and 300.2 in November 2019.</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 November shows that 79.5% of the cohort aged 19-21 were engaged in 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 November (99%) compared to October (100%) but remains above the measure at the same point in 2019 (93.2%).</p> <p><u>Children in Need</u></p> <p>There was 1,730 open Child in Need (CIN) cases at the end of November, a slight increase from 1,727 in October but 25 less than November 2019. When comparing against 2018/19 benchmarks, Barnsley's rate of 340.6 remains lower than Stat Neighbours (464) but above the National average (334.2).</p> <p><u>Caseloads</u></p> <p>November 2020 data shows continued decreases to the caseloads of the Assessment/JIT and Safeguarding Teams, which decreased from 22.2 in October to 20.5 cases per worker. 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>
4.	<p><b>Attachments/background papers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's Social Care Monthly Report – November 2020</li> </ul>
5.	<p><b>Possible Areas for investigation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does the data tell you about the overall picture of children's social care in Barnsley? What are our families experiencing?</li> <li>What are the priorities for children's social care over the coming months?</li> <li>What have been the key factors in improving the performance for assessments carried out within 20 working days and what more needs to be done?</li> <li>How do you know that the right children are being progressed to the next stage of the process?</li> </ul>



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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some service areas have not made any EHA referrals for the 12 months shown. Does this concern you and how do you work with them to improve this process?</li><li>• 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?</li><li>• What are the SDQ's telling you and can you give an example of how you have responded to the findings?</li><li>• How has Covid impacted upon the school attendance of looked after children?</li><li>• Why has the time taken between a placement order and a child being matched with prospective adopters decreased dramatically and how can this be improved further?</li><li>• What can members do to support the work of children's social care in Barnsley?</li></ul> |
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