



Report for: INFORMATION
Item Number:

Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO
Title	Management Information Summary – Children Looked After
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Portfolio(s)	Schools and children' services
For Consideration By	Corporate Parent Committee
Date to be considered	Thursday 18th March 2021
Implementation Date if Not Called In	Not Applicable
Affected Wards	All
Area Committees	All
Keywords/Index	Performance Assessment Framework, performance indicators.
Purpose of Report: To provide a brief analysis on the 9 months to December 2020 performance for children looked after (CLA), child protection (CP) and care leavers.	

1 Review of Performance Indicators for Children Services

Children & Families Performance Assessment Framework 2020/21

1.1 The use of Performance Indicators (PIs) in assessing performance enables the council to evaluate its current performance, monitor improvements and inform service development. Performance is reviewed monthly by operational service management and by the departmental senior management team.

1.2 The external inspection and assessment of services led by Ofsted uses the indicators as part of the evidence to inform their assessments of the council's performance. These indicators, however, must be considered as part of a broader set of performance evidence including inspection and review, regular liaison and monitoring of services and the commissioning and delivery of services with partners, particularly with the schools' service and health.

1.3 The service has identified all key measures through developing the business planning processes, service and team plans and it is through monitoring these alongside the indicator set that we will make ensure that we achieve what we have set out to do.

1.4 To set the performance data for CLA and leaving care in the context of the whole remit for safeguarding, the report contains information on assessment and child protection activity as follows:

1.4.1 Children Looked After

As at end of December 2020, there were 311 looked after children in Ealing, down by 8% from 339 at the same time in 2019.

The number of CLA in Ealing is now the lowest for at least a decade. The equivalent rate in December 2020 is 37.8 children per 10,000, a reduction of 3.6 per 10,000 from last year. The rate is below the London (49) and National average (67).

Of the CLA cohort, the biggest age group is 16 to 17 years with 114 young people (37%), followed by the 13–15-year group with 85 or 27% of the children in care at end of December 2020.

The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) at end of December 2020 stands at 34, down from 50 (-32%) in December 2019. The reduction is against the backdrop of rising number of UASC in Ealing in recent years from 5 in March 2013 to 55 in March 2019.

In the 9 months to December 2020, a total of 109 children and young people have become looked after; this is down from 143 (-24%) on last year. Over a third (39%) of the total number of new children and young people coming into care in this period is 16-17-year-old with 43 young people and 21 young children aged between 1-4 years equating to 19% of all children becoming CLA.

A total of 12 young people was taken into care as UASC this year, this is down by 10 from same period last year reflecting the overall reduction of UASC population.

A total of 131 children and young people have ceased care between April and December 2020, down from 155 (-15%) from last year. Many of the CLA ceasing care have returned to a more permanent and stable environment. 34% (44) have returned home to their families, while 41% (54) turned 18 years old and 11% (15) were granted special guardianship order.

1.4.2 Child Protection

Children subject of a child protection plan have been increasing since start of the year. At the end of December 2020, 232 children were subject of a CP plan, which has risen by 21% since April 2020 with 192 children on CP plan. The rate per 10,000 for the current CP population is 28.2; this is significantly lower than our neighbours at 34.2 London at 35.0 and England at 42.8.

The largest age groups of children and young people (CYP) subject of CP plan are age between 1-4 years old and 10-15 years old; with 64 and 85 children and young people in each group respectively and represents a combined 65% of the 232 CP population.

Emotional abuse (50%) and Neglect (42%) are the prevailing reasons for those CYP subject of a CP plan.

A total of 227 children and young people were made subject of a CP plan between April and December 2020, whilst 189 have been deregistered reflecting an overall increase in children on CP plan this year so far.

This is reflected across London boroughs where there are increasing number of children on CP plans, whilst falling in number of looked after children.

1.4.3 Re registrations of children & young people to child protection plans

A total of 227 children started on CP Plan during April to December 2020. Of those, 46 children (20% of all new CP plans) were re-registrations. The re-registration rate is comparatively higher than 2019/20's outturn at 12.5%.

The statutory definition for CP re-registrations is the proportion of children becoming subject of CP plan regardless when they were previously on plan in Ealing. Of the 46 children, 8 had been on plan between 0-12 months previously, whilst the remaining 38 (few large sibling groups) were last on plan between 1-7 years, which means majority of children have had a period of stability before returning on plan.

In some circumstances, re-registration of children to CP plan is essential to keep the child safe and from harm.

1.4.4 Timing of Children and Family Assessments (CFAs)

CFA year to date performance has increased from 74.4% at end of September 20 to 74.8% and already exceeds the 2019/20 outturn of 69%. Current performance is below national (83.8%) and London average (84.7%). The anticipated rate improvement is impacted by Covid on staffing levels, rising contacts and referrals in the last 3 months to December 2020 and reduction in workers in MAST teams.

Senior managers have implemented a series of actions to improve performance via regular monitoring, reducing the internal timescales target and a clear commitment to reduce the time children and families should wait for completion of assessments.

1.5 There are several key measures for children looked after and child protection, they are as follows:

1.5.1 Percentage of looked after children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption

There were 8 adoptions recorded in the between April – December 2020, where four children (50%) was placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision.

Compared to previous year, a total of 11 children have been adopted in 2019/20, of which nine (82%) were placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision.

This measures the effectiveness of an important part of the adoption process and timescales. When placing children for adoption, the timeliness in which they are adopted will be affected by how easy or difficult it is to find an adoptive placement. Good performance is represented by a high percentage.

1.5.2 Stability of placements of children looked after

A stable placement for our looked after children is important for their health and well-being and we have been doing well in minimizing children with frequent placement moves.

Figures to end of December 2020 shows 6.11% (19 children out of 311) of the total number of looked after children have had 3 or more placement moves, which means nearly 94% of the children are living in stable environments.

Ealing has seen sustained performance improvements in this area for the last couple of years reducing the rate from 9.14% in 2018/19 to 6.41% in 2019/20, which means more children in care have fewer placement moves. Good performance is indicated by a low percentage

Placement moves are regularly monitored by senior managers however, some placements moves are essential to keep children and families safe and from harm.

1.5.3 Child protection plans ceased lasting 2 years or more

This measure provides an indication on the effectiveness of social care work towards specified outcomes which should lead to the child being removed from the CP register within two years. Good performance is typified by a lower percentage.

Performance at the end of December 2020 shows only 7 children coming off CP plan that have lasted 2 years or more. This equates to 3.7% of the 189 CP de-registrations, a reduction from 12% reported at the same time last year.

Managers are informed of children who are approaching the two-year mark to ensure their cases are reviewed and, if appropriate, to de-register the children in a safe and timely manner.

1.5.4 Timeliness of looked after children reviews

Provisional performance at end of December 2020 shows 99.7% of the 303 eligible children in care have had their reviews completed on time during the year.

The Department for Education have ceased producing and publishing comparison data for looked after children reviews for several years.

1.5.5 Reviews of child protection cases

Latest performance in the period between April to December 2020 shows 96% of all reviews have been completed to timescales for 159 out of the 166 eligible children. This compares well with our statistical neighbour (92.84%) and national (91.5%) averages.

All eligible children are required to be reviewed within 3 months from the start of the plan and then 6 months thereafter. Good performance is represented by a high percentage.

1.5.6 Employment, education and training (EET) for care leavers

Ealing continue to exceed expectations by supporting many of our care leavers into education, employment and training.

Data for 2019/20 shows 60.2%, up from 56% in previous year, for 19- 21-year-old care leavers and 76.9%, up from 67% previous year for 17- 18-year-old care leavers were in EET. Performance exceeds national average of 52% and 64% respectively.

Provisional performance¹ for 9 months to December 2020 shows 69% of 17-18-year olds and 66% for 19-21-year olds are in EET.

Research shows that care leavers experience high levels of unemployment and are at risk of homelessness and social exclusion. The monitoring of whether care leavers are in Education, Employment or Training (EET) is used to show the performance of local authorities in improving outcomes for young people leaving care, so that they are enabled to achieve, to make a positive contribution and to be offered the opportunity to secure

¹ Data source: Ofsted Annex A report based on a snapshot at end of December 2020

their future economic well-being. A higher percentage would represent good outcomes for young people.

2. Other Implications

2.1 Risk Management

The service has in place a risk register linked to the current business plan and priorities. The register is reviewed regularly by the senior management team and where appropriate remedial and action in mitigation are considered and agreed.

2.2 Links to Strategic Objectives

Children Services is key to delivering the strategic objectives of supporting young people to be safe, healthy and prosper. The vision will be achieved by working on shared priorities with key partners and stakeholders via the Children and Young People Board.

2.3 Equalities and Community Cohesion

An Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken for each area of development within the services

2.4 Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications:

None.

2.5 Property and Assets

None.

2.6 Any other implications:

None.

2.7 Consultation

Consultation arrangements across internal partners, external partner agencies and strategic partnerships will be to be determined and managed through the Children and Young Peoples Board.

Background papers – None

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Department	Date sent to Consultee	Date response received from Consultee	Comments appear in report para
Internal Director	Director C&F	February 2021	February 2021	
Cllr Johnson	Portfolio	February 2021	February 2021	

Report History

Decision type:	Urgency Item?		
For Information	No		
Authorised by Cabinet Member	Date report drafted	Report deadline	Date report sent
Report No:	Report author and contact for queries		
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