



Restorative Devon

Children's Social Care *Performance Report* September 2023

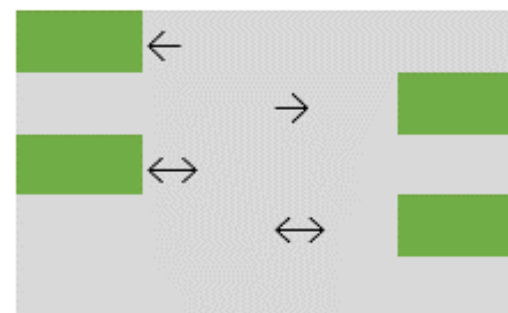


Introduction

- The Children Social Care performance dashboard has been reviewed following feedback from scrutiny members.
- The revised dashboard is now consistent with the same methodology Ofsted uses to visualise the data and direction of travel in the Children's services Analysis Tool (ChAT).
- The monthly performance has also been coloured coded to assist Scrutiny members to identify areas for further consideration.
- The statistical comparison data has now also been updated with the recently published 2021/2022 update.

The Performance Dashboards shows the Local Authority's latest data for each indicator, and the direction of travel in the most recent month using the following method:

Decreasing, low is good
Increasing, high is good
No change, low is good
No change, high is good
Not RAG rated



The performance has been RAG rated against the national and statistical neighbours using the following parameters:

More than 10 percentage point difference
within 10 percentage points
On or above target



Measures of change

Area	Indicator	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Rolling 12 months	Monthly Average over 12 months	England Average 21/22	Statistical Neighbours 21/22	DOT	
Activity Data: Number of children/young people supported per 10,000	Referrals to children's social care (per 10,000)	329	467	495	464		538	465		
	Section 47 enquiries (per 10,000)	133	175	198	199		180	173		
	ICPCs (per 10,000)	45	53	60	65		61	62		
	Children who are the subject of a child protection plan at period end (per 10,000)	41	39	38		40	42	41		
	Initial Assessments completed in the period (per 10,000)	373	319	358	385		518	451		
	Children looked after at period end (per 10,000)	61	62	61		57	70	69		
	Rate of children in need at point in time (per 10,000)	263	255	263	271		334	319		
	CiC starts (per 10,000)	22	20	23	26.14		26	25		
	CiC ends (per 10,000)	11	23	31	20.36		26	20		
Quality and Timeliness of Practice	% of referrals which are repeat referrals	23%	22%	24%		27%	22%	18%	↔	
	% S47s that progress to ICPC	23%	30%	5%		28%	34%	35%	↔	
	% initial assessments with outcome Case to Close	42%	48%	53%		41%			→	
	% of initial assessments completed in 45 days	71%	86%	82%		85%	85%	84%	↔	
Child Protection	% ICPCs completed within 15 days of S47	66%	66%	85%		72%	79%	82%	→	
	% of children subject to CPP for 2 years +	1%	2%	2%		2%	3%	2%	↔	
	% children starting a CP plan who have been subject to a previous CP plan	30%	28%	33%		33%	23%	24%	↔	
Children in Care	% of CiC with an up to date health assessment	87%	85%	84%		84%	89%	90%	←	
	% of CiC with a permanence plan	94%	98%	98%		92%			→	
	% of CiC with an up to date visit	84%	84%	88%		86%			→	
	% Children who had three or more placements in the year	14%	14%	15%		14%	10%	10%	↔	
	Number of under 16's in unregistered accommodation									
Care Experienced	% Care Leavers in Touch	17-18	86%	85%	89%		86%	94%	95%	→
		19-21	94%	95%	95%		94%	92%	94%	↔
	% Care Leavers in suitable Accommodation	17-18	78%	77%	82%		77%	90%	91%	↔
		19-21	82%	82%	84%		83%	88%	90%	→
	% Care Leavers in EET	17-18	56%	56%	57%		51%	66%	69%	→
		19-21	42%	41%	41%		46%	55%	55%	←
% of Pathway plans up to date		82%	84%	85%		84%			→	
Workforce	% FTE Agency worker rate						15.4%			
	Average caseloads	16.2	15.94	16.47			16.3	16.2	↔	



What is the data telling us?

Referrals

Referrals have decreased from 483 to 464 per 10,000. This is lower than the England average, and in line with our statistical neighbours.

The number of repeat referrals has decreased from 28% average to 27% average and stayed consistent at 22%-24% across April to June.

Assessments

There has been a drop in initial assessments from 386 per 10,000 to 385 per 10,000. The timeliness of the assessments is averaging 85% completed in 45 days which is comparable with the England average and statistical neighbours.

Child Protection

Children subject to a Child Protection Plan decreased to 40 per 10,000 and Children Looked After increased to 57 per 10,000.

The timeliness of initial Child Protection Conferences is up again to 72% monthly average.

Children starting on a Child Protection Plan who had a previous Plan is currently at 33%.

Children in Care

The average number of children in care is at 57 per 10,000, which is lower than England and statistical neighbours.

The number of children coming into care in June 2023 was 23 per 10,000. This is a decrease from March 2023, and is lower than the England average and statistical neighbours.

Percentage of children with a Permanence Plan is up to 92% average, from 90% at the last report, and the figure for May and June was 98%. Percentage of up-to-date health assessments is 84% up from 81% at the last report.

Care Experienced Young People

Care leavers in suitable accommodation age 17-18 is at 77% overall, and this was 83% in June. For care leavers aged 19-21 the average is 83%.

Care leavers in EET at 17-18 years old is up to 51% average and this was 57% in June. Care leavers in EET at 19-21 years has decreased to 46%.

Workforce

Our agency worker rate has decreased to 35% from 39% average for all children's social care posts. The agency worker rate for social workers is 50.37%.

The average caseload has decreased and was at 16.47 in June 2023.



Headlines

- New permanent leadership in Children's Services
- Progressing Phase 2 of the children's workforce Reshape
- Refreshed strategic Corporate Parenting agenda within the whole Council, and with our partners
- Revised Safeguarding Partnership structure and strategic priorities
- Refreshed and refocused Improvement Partnership Board approach
- Peer reviews of services taken place and visit from Mark Riddell, DfE National Adviser for Care Leavers
- Ongoing preparation for next Ofsted Monitoring Visit in Autumn – becoming always Ofsted ready.



Peer reviews and learning

We have invited in colleagues to help us improve

- Cornwall conducted a peer review of our Disabled Children's Service
- Leeds Relational Practice Centre peer-reviewed the Front Door and Early Help
- Wiltshire reviewed the Corporate Parenting service

The findings and recommendations have been shared with each respective service area who have each come together to co-develop service development plans in response.



Wiltshire Council



Mark Riddell visit 27/28 June 2023

Mark Riddell MBE is the National Adviser for Care Leavers within the DfE. His role is to drive improvement in leaving care services which are deemed as needing an intervention through a targeted visit to offer his experience and expertise of the sector, to share best practice, and to offer advice and recommendations to help improve the leaving care services. Mark visited Devon on 27 and 28 June 2023 to focus on:

- leadership
- culture
- attitude
- the corporate governance approach
- the development of relationships with internal and external partners and the partnership offer
- the local offer
- the new statutory duties around the extended Personal Advisor offer of support for all care leavers up to 25yrs old.

Mark told us that he sensed the passion and commitment towards our care-experienced young people, with clear signs of ambition and aspiration for them. However, accessing services is still a struggle for many of our young people and some partners are not yet fully engaging with the Corporate Parenting Principles.

Mark's challenges to us

- Reaffirm the strategic and political leadership on corporate parenting to ensure comprehensive partnership engagement and improved outcomes for young people
- Ensure that housing services and other support services are being delivered with a focus on Corporate Parenting principles and treating care-experienced young people as our own children
- Use our resources as the 'family business' to promote and target employment opportunities for care-experienced young people

What we're doing in response

- Resetting the Corporate Parenting governance, with greater partnership engagement and political leadership
- New Housing plan with Districts, looking at housing stock and Council Tax relief
- Exploring new ETE opportunities internally, as well as through our partners and local businesses



Children's Services Improvement Plan 2023-24

Revised Improvement Plan

More detailed Plan, approved by our DfE-appointed Commissioner with three distinct, but related areas:

- Children's Services actions with impact statements for young people – developed and monitored through QPRM and CSLT
- Devon County Council whole council actions – developed and monitored through Strategic QPRM
- Partnership Plan actions – developed and monitored through Improvement Partnership Board

Reset of the Improvement Partnership Board

- Structure and approach to the meetings refreshed to create the conditions for a pro-active partnership which owns and directs the partnership actions
- Board meetings now structured to give more focus to priority action areas
- Shared targets with SEND Improvement Plan and engagement with Health to set shared targets



Front Door Redesign

Improving the process of the Children's Social Care front door is one of three key priority areas identified by the Improvement Partnership Board in the Improvement Plan 2023/24.

Priority Area 2 – Improving partnership working in compliance with Working Together, focusing on areas of shared responsibility and multi-agency responses to families

How we effectively and consistently understand and respond to need. Including who provides support, where and how. How agencies work together to understand levels of need and provide the most effective response at the right time.

Outcomes

- I get the right support at the right time in the right way.
- Services work effectively together to support me and my family.

The Front Door Redesign Project is led by DCC with support from Leeds Relational Practice Centre. It aims to:

- support and develop our staff to build capability and confidence
- improve the referral process resulting in less failure demand and more high-quality and appropriate referrals into the Front Door for children and families
- redesign the Front Door – including our Targeted Early Help/Family Intervention Team offer - to improve the response to referrals and moving from a procedure-heavy approach which creates duplication and slows down responses, to a model which puts expertise at the beginning of the process to understand the need and respond effectively and quickly
- align closely to the refocus of the Safeguarding Partnership.



Strategic QPRM

Purpose

To create a culture of continuous learning and improvement within DCC to ensure every family and child receives a service which is sustainably good.

Two have taken place so far and the next one is 2 October 2023.

Chaired by Commissioner Matt Dunkley to provide external support and challenge

Intended outcomes

- For Children's Services to improve because of Strategic Leadership Team support
- Evidence of each Directorate having Children's Services central to its own function
- Evidence of shared decision making which avoids unintended consequences
- Wider Devon County Council corporate services working together to improve Children's Services. Actions are created and governed through the regular Strategic Quality Performance and Review Meeting (QPRM).



QPRM – six month review and evaluation

In July, we gathered feedback from QPRM attendees to evaluate its impact.

- **Achieving impact for children:** Heads of Service said that the QPRM approach helped them to stay focused on outcomes for children, and to be clear on what still needed to improve for them
- **Greater connection and relationships:** Heads of Service strongly agreed that they have a better understanding of the whole service, how it connects and how each service area contributes to the common vision
- **Sharing challenges:** Heads of Service agreed that they could share issues honestly, and both offer and ask for help through QPRM
- **Providing structure and accountability:** the monthly schedule gives discipline and routine to tracking progress and impact regularly and over time, as well as ensuring joint accountability

QPRM is evolving based on what works best for driving improved outcomes for children and families.



Recruitment and retention

Includes C&F, P&T, IRT, DCS, MASH	Perm	Agency	Total	Budgeted Est	Vacant
Social Workers (Adv, Exp, NQ)	110.71 (47.51%)	117.36 (50.37%)	228.07	233	4.93 (2.11%)
All Posts (Below Service Manager Level)	262.57 (62.96%)	145.36 (34.86%)	407.93	417	9.07 (2.16%)



Creating a stable and supported workforce

- Workforce reshaped to better meet changing demand across the county
- Hearing the views of staff in the North locality and local challenges, leading to co-ordinated Senior Management response and positive impact for staff
- Improved management oversight and supervision
- New progression and development opportunities for staff
- More permanent staff and reduced reliance on agencies
- Maintaining manageable work loads
- Supporting new social workers into Devon (ASYE, NQSW and overseas recruitment)



Permanency

In our April Ofsted Monitoring Visit it was noted that most children in care experience delays in securing permanent homes.

Since April we have:

- Established the Achieving Permanence project group which is led by the Deputy Director
- Launched a revised panel process to improve senior management oversight and understanding of the issues
- Commissioned best practice training led by Research in Practice
- Ensured all children now have a primary permanence plan by their second Review

Although there have been delays in getting agreement, the approval of the revised SGO policy at cabinet would enable around 30 children to exit care- the offer to foster carers is improved with the revised policy.

All children now have a permanence plan on file; we are working to ensure these are each reviewed routinely within appropriate timescales and evidence impact.

Bridges Team and social workers are working together to plan for 4 children to benefit from bespoke 3 month pre-reunification support approach, then 9 months post-reunification while family support. We are currently identifying another 2 children.

We are tracking children who could return home better and we have identified a cohort of children who are we are targeting to either step-across back to fostering or home from residential care.



Practice Quality Assurance (Audit Framework)

We said we would:

- Further develop our Audit Framework to align with Best Practice themes and focus.
- Further develop the Framework to include scaling/scoring questions and for the tool to be web-based – potentially attached to the Eclipse IT system, so data can be more easily collected, improvement can be tracked and to enable improved reporting.

What we have done:

- We have further developed the audit framework and tool, with oversight from Ofsted.
- Regular dip-sampled audits, alongside the monthly audit cycle, focus on Best Practice themes and specific cohorts of children
- We are developing the Web-based audit tool, with the requirements being scoped and the right provider being sought
- A monthly audit summary report is now produced, capturing key themes, areas for improvement and strengths – the report is routinely circulated to all Heads of Service and Service Managers
- Key themes are shared at QPRM every month
- An infographic, to summarise monthly audits, is shared with Team Managers and frontline practitioners
- Audit reports are reviewed monthly by the Social Work Academy to inform and tailor our training offer based on current needs and gaps
- Good practice examples are identified and celebrated during Practice Week with staff
- Our Audit Framework is aligned with multi-agency Quality Assurance activity through the DCFP



Our focus for the next 6 months

- Implementing the children's social care improvement plan (to be completed by April '24)
- Embedding Phase 2 of our Social Care workforce reshape and ensuring it is working for all parts of the service
- Alignment and strengthening of Targeted Early Help offered by DCC
- Developing our new children's homes and launching our second Mockingbird Constellation
- Continuing to develop corporate parenting in Devon, creating new partnerships across public and private sector to support our care-experienced young people
- Continuing to embed Restorative Practice through the service, among our partners and with elected members of the Council
- Refocusing the statutory partnership – DCFP will become DSCP – with one strategic priority (the multi-agency Front Door)

