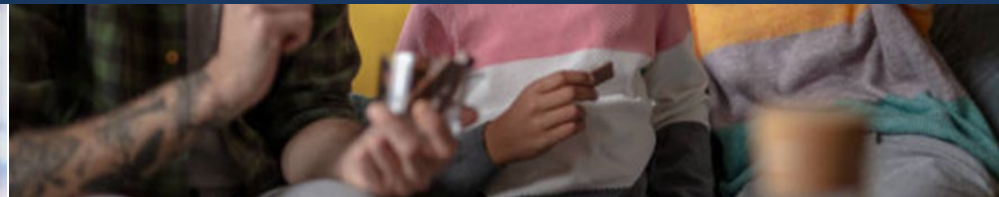




Scrutiny Report

Southampton Children and Learning Service Improvement Board
January 2022

Stuart Webb, Head of Quality Assurance
Jo Feeney, Performance Manager



A city of opportunity where everyone thrives

Practice and Performance Summary

This month's performance report highlights a dip in performance in some key areas, in particular visits to children in care and frequency of case supervision. The Improvement Board will rightly have concerns about the quality of support for children and how well social workers are being supported. Some parts of the service have been negatively affected by staff leaving (mostly linked to Destination 22) and by pressures associated with the pandemic. For some teams there is still a problem with recording and general compliance.

I am frustrated about slow progress, and even decline, in some parts of the service. But I also have a sense of optimism that the foundations for a sustainable service are in place and we are now starting to build. Our senior leadership and management team, from Deputy Director to Service Leads, is now complete, with all twenty posts recruited to, with permanent staff. Almost all are in post, with the 20th starting mid-March. The 12 Service Leads who have joined our leadership team will need support to excel in their roles and to establish themselves as a team, but we are seeing some early signs of management grip. We have strengthened our quality assurance function (in response to unexpected absence) and we continue to improve accountability, oversight and openness about performance through monthly service assurance clinics. We are taking steps to develop and procure training to support the implementation of our practice framework.

In the context of the pandemic we have maintained firm expectations about face-to-face visiting and encouraging staff to collaborate and support each other, safely, in the office. We know that our social workers are finding their profession tough right now. Rob and I, together with our Principal Social Worker, ran a very well-attended webinar for all staff to acknowledge the huge impact of the tragic death of little Arthur. The message of care, compassion and 'if not us then who?' was well received.


My huge focus at the moment is staff stability. We launch a major recruitment campaign on 17 January and we hope to complete our management team by recruiting to our remaining practice manager posts. This will, I believe, be a tipping point. We also desperately need good social workers to join us. We envisage that all 29 of our South African social workers will be with us by mid-April and we are busy preparing a warm welcome and solid induction for them.

The areas of collective focus I would like to share with the board are similar to those for November:

- I remain worried about the number of contacts that are coming into the service, particularly from the police, and the impact of this on the service
- We need ongoing partnership support to manage what is now very high demand by making sure that only families who really need our support are referred to us
- Continued partnership support for recruitment activity (staff and foster carers).
- We need an ongoing collective commitment to promoting positive working relationships on the ground between practitioners within our teams and services, particularly in relation to professional respect and trust.

I would like to the board to support our staff and fostering recruitment campaigns in any way that they can. I also I have a request that partners commit to including a short corporate parenting video in their induction of all their new recruits. We think this would be a concrete way to demonstrate our shared commitment to the City's looked after children. We need to work together to make sure that families are supported in the right way at the right time, and that we reduce demand on our specialist services. If we work together we will be able to give children a better service and embed our practice framework across the new service.

Steph Murray
Deputy Director
Children's Social Care



Scrutiny CSC Performance Indicators 17/01/22

What's Going Well

- Assessments completed in 45 days
- Children on a CPP
- CLA reviews in timescale
- Care Leavers with an up to date Pathway Plan

Ones to Watch

- Rate of Re-referrals
- Visits to Children in Need in timescales
- Visits to CLA in timescale
- Reduce the number open on a Child in Need plan

What We Need to Do Better

- Reduce number of contacts submitted from across the partnership
- Reduce the number of Children on a Child Protection Plan
- Visits to children on a CP plan
- Visits to Children Looked After
- Reduce CLA numbers
- Supervisions within timescale

What the Data tells us

Area	Indicator	Outturn type	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Target 21/22	Southampton 19/20	Southampton 20/21	Statistical	South East	England
Early Help	Number of cases (children) open to Early Help at the end of the month	NUMBER	1069	1194	1236	1248	1296	1305	1208	1159	1047	1000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Front Door	Number of contacts	NUMBER	1828	2016	2294	2093	1781	2038	1895	1843	1653	1400 per month	15657	17661	N/A	N/A	N/A
Front Door	Year-to-date number of contacts	NUMBER	1828	3844	6137	8229	10009	12046	13938	15779	17431	15880	15657	17661	N/A	N/A	N/A
Front Door	Rate of Contacts per 10,000	RATE	366	401	458	425	365	413	381	360	322	805	974	902	805	610	602
Front Door	Percentage of contacts that lead to No Further Action where the reason for contact was request to children's social care	PERCENTAGE	87%	86%	89%	89%	90%	88%	90%	88%	88%	70%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Front Door	Number of referrals in the month	NUMBER	336	444	342	349	283	414	372	374	347	300 per month	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Front Door	Rates of referrals per 10,000 of Under 18 Population	RATE	64	150	216	283	338	418	490	562	629	647	944	790	647	561	484
Front Door	Percentage of re-referrals within 12 months	PERCENTAGE	21%	27%	26%	33%	26%	31%	24%	24%	27%	23%	23	28	22	28	23
Assessments	Percentage of C&F assessments completed within 45 working days	PERCENTAGE	90%	86%	88%	94%	86%	89%	85%	92%	88%	87%	N/A	86	87	89	88
Child In Need	Number of all Children in Need (CiN) (including Child Protection (CP) / Children Looked After (CLA) / Care Leavers / Children in Need (CiN) in Early Help (EH) teams) at end of period	NUMBER	548	549	530	537	512	536	532	523	515	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
Child In Need	CiN on a plan visited within 4 weeks	PERCENTAGE	73%	66%	79%	76%	70%	69%	87%	73%	66%	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Child Protection	Number of children who are subject of a Child Protection Plan as at the end of month	NUMBER	339	355	385	387	420	387	388	413	453	340	396	310	430	N/A	N/A
Child Protection	Rates of children who were the subject of a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 of Under 18 Population	RATE	65	68	74	74	81	74	74	79	87	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Child Protection	Number of CP with a visit within 10 days	NUMBER	277	177	258	228	171	279	219	246	290	100	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Child Protection	Percentage of CP with a visit within 10 days	Percentage	82%	50%	67%	59%	41%	72%	56%	60%	64%	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Child Protection	Percentage of Child Protection plans reviewed within required timescales who had been subject of a plan for 3 or more months	PERCENTAGE	97%	97%	97%	99%	97%	99%	94%	95%	97%	100%	65	63	91	93	93
CLA	Number of CLA at the end of the month	NUMBER	494	498	501	508	508	517	530	540	544	456	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CLA	Rate of CLA per 10,000 under 18 population	RATE	95	96	96	98	98	99	102	104	105	89	95	TBC	97	53	67
CLA	Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within statutory timescales (6 weeks or less visits)	PERCENTAGE	65%	79%	80%	77%	74%	75%	75%	90%	73%	100%	95	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CLA	Percentage of CLA children with an up to date review	PERCENTAGE	98%	96%	95%	96%	97%	96%	97%	96%	96%	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Care Leavers	Care Leavers - LOCAL (non-UASC)	NUMBER	217	221	229	234	244	257	279	245	208	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Care Leavers	Care Leavers - UASC (non-LOCAL)	NUMBER	30	30	33	34	36	40	42	38	23	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Care Leavers	Percentage not in employment, education, or training (NEET) on their 17th and 18th Birthday	PERCENTAGE	55%	58%	53%	61%	51%	52%	48%	46%	45%	20%	31	TBC	31	28	31
Care Leavers	Percentage not in employment, education, or training (NEET) on their 19th to 21st Birthday	PERCENTAGE	72%	77%	72%	76%	79%	76%	77%	74%	49%	20%	65	TBC	87	N/A	N/A
Audit	Average Caseload per Worker - All Teams	NUMBER	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	21.5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Audit	Percentage of CiN who have had their supervision and within timescale	PERCENTAGE	85%	65%	55%	59%	53%	55%	67%	66%	66%	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Audit	Percentage of CPP who have had their supervision and within timescale	PERCENTAGE	88%	66%	56%	66%	49%	63%	71%	63%	59%	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Audit	Percentage of CLA who have had their supervision and within timescale	PERCENTAGE	80%	68%	51%	65%	66%	70%	58%	70%	45%	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Audit	Percentage of Care Leaver who have had their supervision and within timescale	PERCENTAGE	81%	64%	48%	72%	83%	69%	82%	70%	24%	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Audit	Number of Cases Audited	NUMBER	12	2	28	105	22	17	3	0	1	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Audit	Percentage of cases that are Good or Outstanding	PERCENTAGE	33%	0%	36%	66%	41%	65%	33%	0%	0%	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

What the data tells us

Analysis

The service continues to respond to a high level of demand for statutory intervention across the piece. Contacts remain very high, with the majority coming from the police. The level of contacts (the majority of which do not progress to referral) impacts upon the capacity of the MASH to triage cases effectively, which is evidenced through our audit activity.

Feedback from partners indicates that there are general concerns about moving to a less risk adverse response to children and families needs and this will impact upon the effectiveness of the service improvement plans moving forward. Support from senior strategic leaders is necessary to ensure performance that is more in line with cities like Southampton.

The rate of re-referrals over the year to date show a higher level trend than during the previous year, more in line with 19/20 performance. The implication is that families are not getting their needs met effectively and are then subject to re-referral. The additional capacity across Early help and social care will help respond to this trend. Heads of Service are undertaking deep-dives to assure themselves on the social worker contact with children with children who have fallen out of timescale.

Action/next steps

- The Executive Director is involved in discussions, with police colleagues, at a HIPS level regarding the level of contacts received by the service.
- A plan to address the issue needs to be confirmed. The service is launching We are launching its new Children's Resource Hub after consultation has concluded. This will ensure easier pathways of support for children and families. Aligned with this, the new threshold document will be launched and it will be important for safeguarding partners to support the roll out .
- Targeted sessions with Assessment/ BIT regarding systemic approach. Launch of programme February to March 2022.
- Development of the Family Safeguarding Model business case is progressing, with support from Walsall LA and our PIP.
- Deployment of newly recruited social workers across the all teams starting from January 2022. Recruitment into practice manager posts.
- Engagement with new heads of service on performance and practice standards through assurance clinics. Focus on team and individual performance; robust service response to service underperformance.
- PSW-led reflective sessions with teams and managers across the service have commenced and will continue over February / March 2022. Launch of systemic practice training to support reflecting team approach is being planned, with regular communication to ensure staff continued interest.
- Purchase of direct work toolkits for staff and PDT sessions to be progressed.

What the data tells us

Analysis

Performance has deteriorated since the last Scrutiny meeting, except in regards to children subject to child protection planning. The services have stated this is due to a range of issues. The impact of management changes within the Destination 22 programme were expected and performance improvement is anticipated now that service leads have been recruited and recruitment of practice managers is in train. There is reportedly a backlog of statutory activity that has taken place but has yet to be uploaded onto PARIS this in particular is said of CPP and CLA visits which require improvement. CLA performance has been affected by staffing issues across PACT and CLA. However, additional business support has been secured to help with recording issues.

Action/next steps

- Practice Development Team-led reflective sessions with teams and managers across the service have commenced. PSW has also commenced training some management groups in a) facilitating reflective groups b) facilitating a reflecting team approach to daily practice. This will continue and grow across the service. Launch of systemic practice training to support reflecting team approach has been planned and considerable communications efforts to ensure staff continued interest, for example, systemic presentations at the launch of the Making the Difference Practice Development Forum, IFT presentations at the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Practice Week in December 2022.
- Supervision policy rewrite and tool redevelopment and launch to raise the profile of supervision. This will include a review of supervision frequency to 4 weeks in line with newly authored Practice and Management Practice Standards. Audit & Practice learning days scheduled for February / March 2022 to link audit to systemic reflecting teams activity.
- We will continue to interrogate supervision performance in the assurance clinics (at a service, team and social worker level).
- The conclusion of the Destination 22 service consultation on November 19th has enabled the service to move onto the next stage of its redesign. This will support better service access for children and families through the progression of key workstreams: Early Help, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Young People's Service, Safeguarding).
- The service is launching its alternatives to care panel in January 2022 to better meet the needs of children at risk of coming into care and to support reunification with families.

Robust Corporate Parenting

Analysis

The number and rate of looked after children remain stable in Southampton, at a level that is notably higher than statistical neighbours. Principal areas of concern for the service are: the level of recorded direct contact with children; placement stability and health outcomes. Regarding the final area of focus: our performance manager is liaising with Solent NHS to make sure that we get a better picture.

As a senior leadership team we are not yet confident that the service has sufficient grip on improvements for our looked after children and care leavers. The appointment of new managers into this area is positive and we are undertaking internal quality assurance activity regarding quality of practice, however, we are also requesting a review of practice to maintain focus in this area (see below).

Positive developments since the last Scrutiny meeting include increased engagement of elected members, ongoing development of our Children in Care Council and significant progress against key documents and strategies.

Action/next steps

- Building on the audit activity carried out by the Quality Assurance Unit, the service is requesting an independent review of Care Leavers and In Care to check on progress, identify any barriers to improvement and to support greater service accountability.
- Completing the management team by recruiting additional practice managers in January 2022, as part of the wider service recruitment campaign.
- The Deputy Director is leading a project group from across the service, to deliver on a Placement Action Plan, which has three high level objectives: 1. Prevention of care and return home from care; 2. Substantially reduce the number of children in residential provision, by improving the sufficiency of in-house placements and increasing our access to IFA placements 3. Promote stability and better outcomes for children by reducing placement moves and placement breakdowns. This work is complex and time consuming, but necessary, to ensure the right permanence plan for each child and to ensure that the service is financially sustainable.
- The service has invested in participation activity, bringing additional staffing resources into the service to coordinate and develop the involvement of our looked after children and care leavers in the design of our service, aligned with wider service and corporate participation objectives. The service improvement activity takes into account feedback from our Children in Care Council, Southampton Voices Unite.

What the data tells us

Analysis

Reduction in graded audit activity in Quarter 3 due to reduced practice development team capacity as a result of staff sickness absence. The remaining staff member prioritised thematic learning reviews (15 audits), MASH audit liaison (65 audits completed Oct – Dec), YOS thematic audit (10 audits – not yet moderated), Social Work England activity and the review of the service self evaluation.

Permission was granted to secure additional support, but this took time to find good candidates. An additional auditor has been secured. Audits across service areas are scheduled to begin in February 2022, after launch of Care Director. All management teams have now benefitted from the audit training developed with our Partner in Practice.

Review of child safeguarding practice / serious case review action plan has been undertaken with DfE advisor oversight. Next areas for review are: review of SSCP and C&L training plans; partnership workshop; ongoing scrutiny.

Action/next steps

- 2022 / 23 audit schedule has been drafted and will be signed off by the senior leadership team in February 2022.
- Case Review discussion/reflection has been introduced at Learning and Improvement Panel to enable learning from audits to be embedded into practice on broader scale within safeguarding teams. We also use our Learning and Improvement Panel to review our local CHAT analysis. In this way, we are identifying areas for scrutiny either through audit or dip sample.
- Examples of good/outstanding practice are shared with PSW on monthly basis to encourage practitioners to maintain good standards where this is identified and to encourage other practitioners to emulate this with a view to improving practice within teams
- Team focused audit and reflection days are being launched in February 2022. These will involve managers auditing with practitioners and learning and reflective sessions delivered by the Principal Social Worker.

What the data tells us – Assurance Clinic Overview

Assessment			
Assessment cases open 4+ Weeks who have had a visit within the last 4 weeks	Green	Percentage of Plans On Time	Yellow
Percentage of Assessments by the Assessment service that	Green	Percentage of Plans On Time	Green
Percentage of S47 NFA (37/89)	Green	Percentage of Supervisions On Time	Yellow

SWwF			
SWwF visits on Time	Yellow	Number of complaints into SWwF	Red
Percentage of Children with an up to date plan in the last 3 months	Red	Number of reviews adjourned with CLA due to no plan	Red
Number of adjourned CPP reviews due to no SW reports in SwWF	Red	Percentage of Supervisions on time	Yellow

CLA			
CLA with a visit within 6 weeks	Red	Percentage of plans in timescale	Yellow
Percentage of reviews on time	Red	Percentage of CLA with 3+ placements	Red
Number of reviews adjourned with CLA due to no plan	Red	Percentage of Supervisions On Time	Red

Care Leavers			
Care Leavers with a visit within 8 weeks	Red	Percentage of EET	Red
Percentage of care leavers in suitable accomodation	Yellow	Percentage of Supervisions on time	Red
Percentage of Pathway Plans in Timescale	Red		

Permanence			
Children in IFA	Red	Percentage of Children in Residential	Red
Percentage of Children placed with parents	Red	Number of Equiries from new foster carers	Yellow
Percentage of Children in unregistered provision	Yellow		

Analysis

Assurance clinics are running on a rolling weekly schedule. Managers have been engaged in identifying the priority areas for their areas. Data is reported at team and worker manager level and used to track progress (see examples of assessment service and PACT). Assurance clinic discussions are analytical; exploring the service strengths and challenges that sit underneath performance trends.

Action/next steps

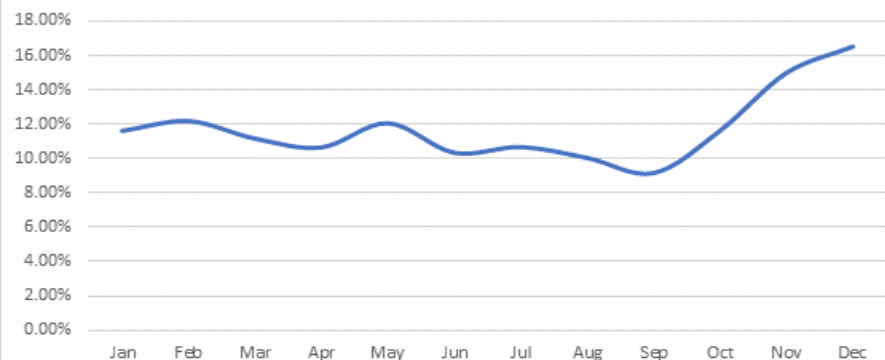
It is the intention to present the data for the improvement board as 1 dashboard from January 2022 and beyond. Now that the data set has progressed we will set targets against each indicator. These will be SN average where bench marking is possible. Where it isn't, we will analysis the local performance trends and also consider the available SESLIP data.

The data set will also be available as a power BI report with additional indicators enabling service areas and TM's to drill down on performance to child level exception data.

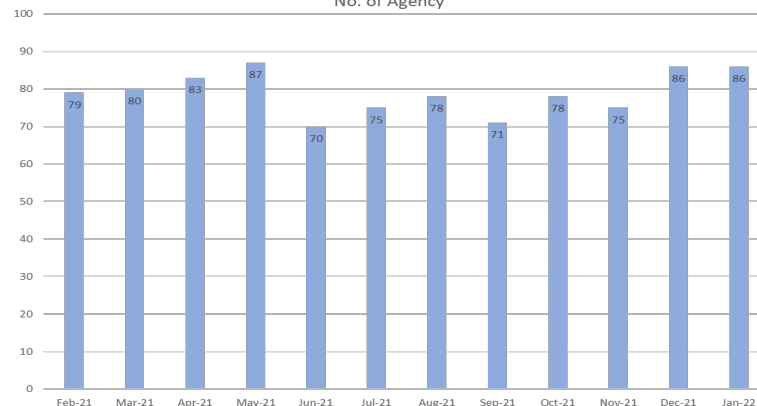
The improved set of PI's, many of which we can benchmark against, the functionality of an interactive Power BI dashboard and the assurance clinics will provide a performance structure and PI information which will give Southampton the tools and insight it has long needed to drive good practice as our minimum standard.

What the data tells us

Social workers - rolling 12 months turnover (12 months)



No. of Agency



Analysis

As predicted, the Destination 22 has created a period of change within the service as some managers and practitioners have chosen to leave. Frontline social work stability will begin to improve from the end of January 2022 as our new South African social workers start. We have 29 new recruits starting over three cohorts.

Increase in agency takes into account temporary business support officers to help with demand and staff changes. More detailed reporting has started with HoS required to provide oversight of agency staff in their areas.

We have expanded the number of placements and routes into social work training. Work is well underway in commissioning the large scale training that is required to fulfil the ambition of the practice framework. Funding has been secured. PSW is leading change to learning culture and there is evidence that this and senior leadership team engagement is having impact.

Concerted efforts are being made in respect of recruitment: major new recruitment campaign, newly designed adverts and recruitment resources, attendance at recruitment and career fairs, lectures at universities. In order to remain competitive SCC required to develop senior social work post. JDPS completed and evaluated. Progression Panel guidance in draft.

Current position: 20 students with us on placement; 4 students flourishing in our Frontline Hub; 9 social work apprentices across 3 cohorts progressing well; 5 Step Up to Social Work students commence January 2022.

Action/next steps

- Project team has supported the development of a clear recruitment and retention plan as part of Destination 22.
- Recruitment of a second CSW to facilitate an additional Frontline hub next academic year (recruitment day February 2022).
- Exit interview analysis completed and with PSW for review.
- ASYE caseload analysis continues and the position has moved from routinely being over limit in some areas of the service, to now rarely being over the limit. Managers have been congratulated for this improvement.
- Business case in respect of bringing ASYE assessment and support fully in-house.
- Progression panel guidance for Senior Social Work Post has been completed and communications launched.
- Large scale training procurement activity – approval by CLCMC scheduled for January 2022.
- Working with IFT regarding implementation of systemic practice training across the service and ensuring that there is the clinical supervision structure in place.
- Launch of Practice Educator CPD Club – 13 staff have come forward wanting to undertake Practice Educator training.

Care Director Case Management System

- The new case management system, Care Director will go live on 31st January 2022.
- Comprehensive User Acceptance Testing is well underway. Staff have begun to use the test environment. Service champions identified
- Training programme has been designed with project team and training partner. Management briefing arranged for 13th January 2021.
- Cut over and Live Migration planning ongoing.
- **Timeline:**
 - **Training Jan 3rd – 28th**
 - **PARIS Switch off 27th Jan**
 - **Live 31st January**