



Scrutiny Panel Performance Report

Southampton Children and Learning Service Improvement Board
July 2022

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Priority Areas

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Effective assessment and intervention	4	Medium
Purposeful Direct Contact	5	Medium
Management Support for better practice	6	High
Right service at the right time	7	High
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Common practice framework	11	Medium
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Systems and support services	15	High

Practice and Performance Summary

We can see green shoots in the latest performance, alongside challenges and inconsistency in some areas. We are seeing the positive impact of D22 in the work of our Brief Intervention Teams and Young People's Service. Child protection plans and the number of children entering care are reducing. All our leaders and managers including practice managers are now permanent and most of our newest recruits have joined the service and completed their induction. Caseloads for our South African colleagues are increasing, some now have a full caseload, and our newly qualified social workers are approaching graduation and registration.

The staffing situation across the service remains fragile due to the unplanned departure of a number of agency social workers, many of whom were experienced, trusted staff. Most have joined innovation teams in neighbouring LAs. These staff were an important part of our 'towards sustainability' plan for the coming months: their exit has created significant workload pressures in the service and we are worried about our permanent staff. Positively, we have continued to build our senior social worker cohort (the second panel took place in May).

Our practice development team ran a successful practice week on purposeful direct work, alongside the launch of our supervision policy and practice standards. The first phase of workforce academy training has begun, with systemic practice and motivational interviewing training rolled out, and Safe Together training starting over the Summer. Our 'Ask one person', fostering campaign is gaining traction with increased enquiries and a favourable conversion rate. Our next staff recruitment campaign, through which we plan to fill all or most of our remaining vacancies, is imminent.

Direct contact for children in need, children looked after and children with Child Protection Plans (two weekly PI) needs to improve. This is primarily a recording issue but is still a concern. Similarly, there is significant inconsistency in supervision performance; again this is primarily (but not solely) recording. We are tracking this closely via assurance clinics. Expectations are clear, and all our practice managers are undertaking a week's core management skills training in June and July. This clearly sets out practice standards and expectations. We will monitor performance closely in our assurance clinics.

As the workforce stabilises, reducing demand is a priority. We are focusing on three areas: reunification, placement stability and threshold decision making in the Children's Resource Service. We are undertaking too many unnecessary statutory assessments and we need your help to think more creatively about what these families need from our services. In terms of practice, the quality of our child protection and pre-proceedings work is critical in promoting family stability and safety, and improving outcomes.

We are pushing hard on improving access to early local support for families; three locality events will take place in October 2022. Please promote these events within your services. Finally, from 26 September, we will be holding our second 'Love our Children Week' celebrating our looked after children. I hope you will join us.



Steph Murray
Deputy Director
Children's Social Care



What the data tells us

Indicator	Outturn type	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Target	Southampt on 19/20	Southampt on 20/21	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Percentage of re-referrals within 12 months	PERCENTAGE	24%	24%	27%	25%	29%	29%	22%	23%	26%	23%	28%	22%	28%	23%	N/A
Number of Early Help assessments completed	NUMBER	180	223	195	200	111	119	99	125	137	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rates of Single Assessments completed per 10,000	RATE	376	436	496	540	595	653	62	116	171	700	898	672	637	554	518
Percentage of C&F assessments completed within 45 working days	PERCENTAGE	85%	92%	88%	91%	93%	90%	79%	82%	86%	90%	79%	77%	74%	70%	69%

Analysis

Re-referrals have risen in June above target and from a lower figure in April and May. The service are reviewing if this indicates that the changes to Brief Intervention Teams are having a positive impact. Provisional data for single assessments per 10k at year end are below Southampton's 20/21 performance, below target and moving closer to SN activity despite a 25% increase in contacts during the year. Performance on assessments completed within timescale has been strong all year and has been above target and the performance of our statistical neighbours.

Action/next steps

Re-referral audit is still required to understand any relevant trends and this has now being included in the annual audit schedule. BIT teams are holding a high number of cases, with a high % not going on to statutory support. We will be focusing on CRS decision making, and interface with Early Help, in the coming months. There is a significant partnership challenge here, we collectively need to focus our statutory resource on the families who need this most.

What the data tells us

Indicator	Outturn type	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Target	Southampt on 19/20	Southampt on 20/21	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Percentage of children subject to Child Protection Plan for whom a visit has taken place within last 2 weeks (10 Working Days)	PERCENTAGE	58%	62%	71%	45%	44%	65%	71%	67%	86%	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of children subject to Child Protection Plan for whom a visit has taken place within last 4 weeks (20 Working Days)	PERCENTAGE	78%	91%	92%	93%	76%	84%	91%	94%	97%	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within statutory timescales (6 weeks or less visits)	PERCENTAGE	96%	90%	73%	83%	71%	74%	78%	84%	83%	90%	95%	TBC	97%	53%	67%
CIN on a plan visited within 4 weeks	PERCENTAGE	70%	73%	66%	68%	62%	42%	85%	76%	88%	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Analysis

The recording of visits to children on a Child Protection Plan within 10 working days has improved in June. This is closely scrutinised by managers using their Power BI dashboards and Assurance Clinics and these are seeing a positive impact on recording in a timely manner on Care Director. A performance culture is developing in the safeguarding service with a strong commitment to improvement. CLA visits within the statutory 6 weeks are much improved. Many of the children who are not being visited every 6 weeks have 3-monthly visiting patterns, agreed by managers and IROs. Visits to Children in Need on a plan have also improved, we need to sustain this improvement moving forward.

Action/next steps

Managers continue to receive regular reports on visiting frequency and our assurance clinics are supporting the focus on improving performance. However, the level of demand upon the service remains high, with a resulting impact upon caseloads. To provide clear expectations for better practice and management oversight, revised practice standards were launched in our practice week in June 2022. Staffing stability is a particular risk in this area due to the loss of a number of experienced agency social workers. Case holding capacity will increase from September 2022 and we will need to continue to focus on practitioner confidence, skill and the quality of practice.

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Percentage of CIN who have had their supervision and within timescale	PERCENTAGE	67%	66%	72%	62%	50%	51%	81%	50%	69%	80%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CPP who have had their supervision and within timescale	PERCENTAGE	71%	63%	65%	64%	54%	60%	87%	53%	88%	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA who have had their supervision and within timescale	PERCENTAGE	58%	70%	50%	53%	46%	59%	76%	73%	81%	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of Care Leaver who have had their supervision and within timescale	PERCENTAGE	82%	70%	59%	27%	25%	25%	78%	39%	44%	80%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Analysis

Performance with supervisions continues to fluctuate. This is an ongoing focus for all service areas and at assurance clinics. The supervision form has been reviewed to be systemically focused and much quicker and easier to populate on Care Director. This is in test and will go live very soon. This will support the improvement and timeliness of recording supervisions across all services. It is reassuring to see supervision for children on CPP and CLA are significantly higher.

Actions / next steps

Managers are increasingly demonstrating that they have a clear understanding of performance vs recording and are supporting/challenging individual practice managers as required. Performance, particularly the recording of supervision, is affected by demand across the service and practice managers ‘stepping down’ to support casework. The service launched a bespoke management induction programme in June 2022 which, alongside the updated Practice Standards, sets out the service expectations in respect of good supervision. Focus on Practice days, with reflective teams discussions with managers and practitioners, have continued. To date the Practice Development Team has worked with the Children with Disabilities, Fostering and Adoption Teams, Early Help and Young People’s Services.

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Number of Early Help assessments completed	NUMBER	180	223	195	200	111	119	99	125	137	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rates of Single Assessments completed per 10,000	RATE	376	436	496	540	595	653	62	116	171	700	898	672	637	554	518
Percentage of C&F assessments completed within 45 working days	PERCENTAGE	85%	92%	88%	91%	93%	90%	79%	82%	86%	90%	79%	77%	74%	70%	69%
Number of contacts	NUMBER	1,922	1,874	1,689	2,018	1,696	2,011	1,663	2,091	1,860	<17k	15657	17661	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of referrals in the month	NUMBER	391	396	366	308	300	318	259	369	344	N/A	N/A	4092	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rates of referrals per 10,000 of Under 18 Population	RATE	511	587	658	717	775	836	49	121	192	700	944	790	647	561	494
Number of CLA at the end of the month	NUMBER	525	540	544	551	560	563	566	565	555	540	486	495	615	N/A	N/A
Number of children with an active Child in Need Plan not allocated to CWD (CIN*)	NUMBER	532	523	515	528	411	421	392	414	417	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of children who are subject of a Child Protection Plan as at the end of month	NUMBER	388	413	453	472	492	483	455	414	413	406	396	310	406	N/A	N/A
Number of care leavers	NUMBER	164	171	173	209	218	226	212	221	204	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A

Right Service at the Right Time

Analysis

There was a 25% increase in the number of contacts in 21/22 compared to 20/21. The trend has continued into 22/23. Ongoing conversations are being held across the partnership, especially with Police colleagues, to focus on this increase in contacts. This translates into significant activity for CRS. A high % of assessments do not result in statutory support. The brief intervention work being undertaken alongside and just after assessment is beginning to have an impact. The YPS are now undertaking assessments in line with our trajectory model. We will report on this more fully in September. We have seen a plateau and now considerable reduction in numbers of children on a child protection plan and a reduction in numbers of children entering care. End of June activity shows we had 540 children looked after, a net reduction of 15 children in the past 6 weeks and current projections are that new entrants will reduce by 20% in comparison with previous 12m. We need to sustain this reduction in numbers of children coming into care.

Action/next steps

A meeting has taken place with HIPS and police colleagues, with a plan for the four LAs to maintain close oversight of the appropriateness of police contacts. Southampton specific discussion will take place with police in September 2022.

Decision making by the Children's Resource Service will be an area of focus. This is to provide assurance and challenge about threshold decision making and to ensure that demand is at the correct level.

The plan to address the high number of children subject to child protection planning has been launched and partners were briefed at the Safeguarding Children's Partnership in June 2022.

What the data tells us

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Number of CLA at the end of the month	NUMBER	525	540	544	551	560	563	566	565	555	540	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rate of CLA per 10,000 under 18 population	RATE	101	104	105	106	108	108	109	109	107	100	95	TBC	100	53	67
Number of CLA at the end of the month who are UASC	NUMBER	25	24	27	25	25	26	25	26	24	<37	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within statutory timescales (6 weeks or less visits)	PERCENTAGE	96%	90%	73%	83%	71%	74%	78%	84%	83%	97%	95	TBC	97	53	67
Percentage of CLA children with an up to date review	PERCENTAGE	97%	96%	96%	96%	97%	98%	99%	98%	95%	95%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of children in care for at least 12 months for whom health assessments are up to date.	PERCENTAGE	81%	78%	72%	88%	94%	67%	63%	55%	65%	95%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of initial health assessments delivered within 20 working days of date child became looked after.	PERCENTAGE	17%	40%	89%	35%	20%	28%	64%	36%	TBC	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA at end of month with 3 or more placements during the year	PERCENTAGE	17%	18%	17%	7%	11%	8%	14%	13%	15%	<10%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of CLA allocated to CWD	NUMBER	29	29	29	31	31	32	32	31	31	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Voluntarily Accommodated Section 20s (520) at period end excluding UASC	NUMBER	54	51	55	26	28	30	31	40	29	N/A	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Percentage of Looked after Children (LAC) with a permanence plan in place within 6 months of BLA	PERCENTAGE	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Looked after Children placed for adoption at period end	NUMBER	13	12	12	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA placed with IFAs at end of period	PERCENTAGE	31%	30%	31%	43%	51%	50%	47%	43%	46%	<36%	37%	N/A	36%	38%	36%

Robust Corporate Parenting

Analysis

Visiting to children in care continues to improve. Performance for Initial and Review Health Assessments is inconsistent. Several partnership meetings and workshops have been held to review and improve processes and access to health assessments. There are two major challenges, one is capacity from CLA Nurses to undertake reviews in a timely manner as our CLA numbers have increased, the 2nd main challenge is for children in care placed outside of Southampton.

Undertaking the Initial Health Assessment then becomes the responsibility of the Local Authority in which the child resides. Due to delays in required paperwork being completed, capacity of the responsible LAs' CLA health team and the timeliness of completing paperwork it is the children in care who live outside of the LA who are most affected by resource challenges. We are performing above target for the number of children with 3 or more placement moves within a rolling 12 month period, also there has been a service wide focus on the review and recording of permanence plans for all children in care. Accurate reporting it is anticipated will be available from next month onwards. We are concerned about the number of placements that are at risk of breakdown and the summer is likely to be a challenging period in relation to placement availability, locally and nationally.

Actions / Next Steps

The recent peer review of looked after children and care leavers was timely and supports the service focus on the quality of management oversight (which needs to improve), staff stability and recruitment.

For looked after children, the areas of focus continue to be around senior level oversight of unregulated placements and unplanned entries into care (alongside planned activity through the Legal Gateway Panel). Better tracking by managers is also a priority to ensure the completion of chronologies and case summaries, follow through on IRO challenge and outcome resolutions, more timely responses to children where SGO or reunification is the plan and a focus on children where specific aspects of life story work are needed.

For care leavers, the priorities are: improving access to emotional and mental health support, links with adult services, housing pathways and commissioning arrangements, improving ETE outcomes and communicating the service offer to post 21 young people who are closed to the service. In addition, the service is going to audit and speak to the last 15 leavers in August to consider what their experience has been of leaving care and what we can learn from this to include to what extent they feel prepared, aware of their entitlements etc.