

Children & Learning Service Performance Report Scrutiny Panel

September 2023



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Contents

Section	Page
Purpose	3
Right support, right time	4
Strong & vibrant localities	5
Children remain within or return to birth families	6
Promote permanence and placement stability	7
Permanent & stable workforce	8
Embedding practice framework and standards	9
Performance review	10



Purpose

In order to evidence that Children & Learning Services are making a positive difference for children in the city, we consider our monthly performance data that is linked to the key outcomes of our governing strategy, Building for Brilliance 2023.



Building for Brilliance 2023 Key Priorities:



Ensure that children get the **right support at the right time**, meeting need early, reducing demand and spend on statutory services



Develop **strong, vibrant localities** where families can receive the help they need and practitioners can share their knowledge and expertise



Support children to **remain within, or return to, their birth families**, seeking out and reuniting family members, reducing care costs and freeing up placements for other children.



Promote **permanence and placement stability**, creating strong forever families and reducing increasingly costly alternatives



Build a **permanent, stable, energised workforce**, increasing consistency for children and reducing agency spend



Embed our **practice framework and practice standards** across the whole service, doing the basics brilliantly and being ambitious in our practice expectations



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Right support at the right time

Outcome – Improved shared understanding of thresholds resulting in less contacts a month, an increase in referrals and assessments for Early Help, a reduction in statutory referrals and assessments and children open to statutory services. This will result in more focused and intensive work with families requiring statutory services resulting in less children subject to CP planning and coming into our care.

Progress analysis - The number of children open to the service has reduced by 12.6%. The rate of children in our care has reduced from 112 to 103 towards our target of 100. The rate of children on child protection planning is down from 79 to 70. Having previously been an outlier of Section 47s, the reduction is positive. August is a difficult month as a benchmark due to schools (our highest referrers) being closed.

Indicator	Aug-22	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Target	RAG	Direction of travel	So'ton 21/22	Statistical Neighbourhoods	South East	England
Number of referrals into Early Help	196	183	131	181	154	172	161		-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of contacts in the month	1959	2023	1544	1828	1948	1804	1467		-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of referrals into statutory service in the month	286	433	282	301	285	310	260	273	●	↑	-	-	-	-
Number of C&F assessments completed	369	400	309	425	283	292	255	274	●	↑	-	-	-	-
Number of children with Child in Need Plan (not CWD)	618	535	639	524	493	467	457	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of strategy discussions held	183	217	184	185	207	144	148	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of Section 47 enquiries completed	134	169	138	126	124	121	70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Percentage of Strategy discussions resulting in Section 47	73	78	75	68	60	84	47							
Number of children subject to CP Plan at end of month	389	315	347	355	351	345	347	295	●	↓	-	-	-	-
Rate of children subject to CP plans	79	64	70	72	71	70	70	60	●	→	-	-	-	-
Number of children in our care	551	539	505	517	518	507	510	495	●	↓	497	640	10480	80850
Rate of children in our care per 10,000	112	109	102	105	105	103	103	100	●	→	96	100	53	67
Number of children open to the service (Assessment, CIN, CP, CLA, CL)	2417	2425	2326	2304	2297	2259	2112	-	-	-				



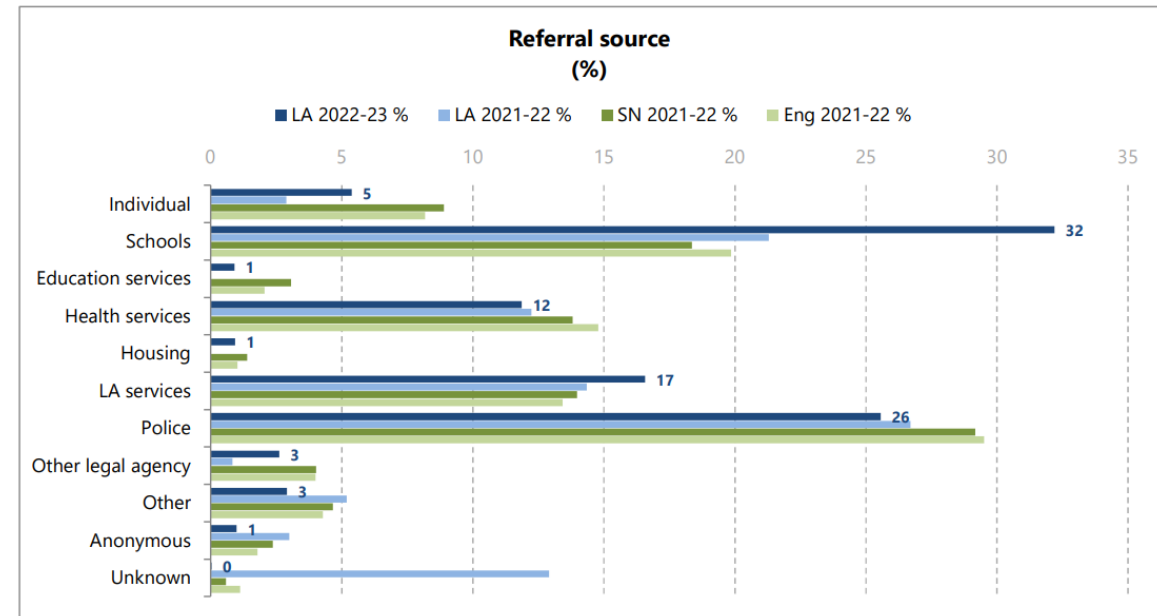
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Strong & vibrant localities

Outcomes – Stronger partner relationships will lead to a better understanding of referral thresholds. Multi-agency plans will be effective at increasing the safety and wellbeing of children. This will lead to a reduction in the referrals from schools, increase in partner agency led Team Around the Family plans, timeliness of Core Group activity, decrease in children with more than one period of CP planning, and increase in Child In Need Plans concluding within 6 months.

Progress analysis – The Child in Need Census for 2022/23 highlighted that referrals from schools accounted for 32% of all referrals received. This is significantly higher than the previous year and above the statistical neighbours. In August, when schools were closed, only 3 referrals were received, which has resulted in a lower number overall. Schools are key partners in multi-agency meetings, which impacts upon reviews for CP and CIN plans taking place during the summer. The Safeguarding Children Partnership Education Sub-group have started to engage schools regarding the referral trend.



Indicator	Aug-22	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Target	RAG	Direction of travel	So'ton 21/22	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Percentage of re-referrals within 12 months	28%	28%	27%	25%	35%	26%	18%	23%	●	↑	27%	21%	26%	21%
Percentage of referrals leading to NFA	1%	8%	7%	5%	8%	9%	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Percentage of children subject to 2nd or more CP plan	28%	32%	33%	34%	33%	33%	31%	24%	●	↑	24%	24%	24%	23%
Percentage of children subject to child protection plans with recent core group held in time	73%	78%	77%	85%	83%	79%	62%	95%	●	↓	-	-	-	-
Percentage of children with Child in Need Plan (not CWD) with CIN review within last 6 weeks		63%	54%	67%	62%	64%	37%	95%	●	↓	-	-	-	-



Children remain within or return to their birth families

Outcomes – Children in our care return to live with their birth families, and more children are enabled to remain with their birth families so we bring less children into our care through intensive working with families at child in need and child protection.

Progress analysis – On average, we are achieving 5 reunifications for children with their families each month. This is up from 0 in August 2022. We have also achieved an average of 4 children finding permanence within their extended family, an improvement from 1 in August 2022. As a result, fewer children are in placements with parents and connected carers.

Indicator	Aug-22	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Target	RAG	Direction of travel	So'ton 21/22	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Number of children in our care	551	539	505	517	518	507	510	495	●	↓	497	640	10480	80850
Rate of children in our care per 10,000	112	109	102	105	105	103	103	100	●	→	96	100	53	67
Number of new CLA in month	14	14	3	31	17	10	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of new CLA in month who are UASC	3	5	1	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of Ceased CLA in the month excluding UASC	18	18	34	15	18	13	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of CLA achieved CAO or SGO	1	3	6	4	4	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of CLA returned home as part of care planning	0	5	8	2	5	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of CLA placed with parents at the end of the month	50	48	42	48	44	39	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of CLA placed in Connected Carer placements at the end of the month	67	59	54	52	50	47	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Our brief intervention hub continue to work with families where risks are significantly high to prevent children coming into care in the first place, and the young peoples' service work intensively with young people for the same goal. Both services have contributed to the reduction in children coming into care.





Promote permanence and placement stability

Outcomes – Children remaining in our care will have long term, stable placements with less children in residential and unregulated placements. Children will be placed with in house carers rather than independent fostering agency placements as we grow our resources.

Progress analysis – Fewer children are in our care, but more are placed with independent fostering agencies, semi-independent, and unregulated placements. Numbers of children in residential placements have reduced but have plateaued since the initial reduction. Placement stability is down from this time last year, but up from the last 3 months. Placements for children with our own foster carers have reduced by 50 in the last year; a continued downward trend. In the last few months, there has been an increase in foster carer applications and assessments, which should filter through to an increase in capacity in the next year. The Placement Action Plan is being re-launched with targeted workstreams to focus on increasing resilience in vulnerable placements.

Indicator	Aug-22	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Target	RAG	Direction of travel	So'ton 21/22	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Number of children in our care	551	539	505	517	518	507	510	495	●	↓	497	640	10480	80850
Percentage of CLA at end of month with 3 or more placements during the year	19	14	15	15	14	16	17	12	●	↓				
Number of CLA placed in IFA placements as at the end of the month	126	139	140	144	146	141	147	100	●	↓				
Percentage of CLA placed in IFA placements as at the end of the month	22	25	27	27	26	27	28							
Number of CLA placed in Residential placements including semi-independent	66	75	71	70	70	75	76	60	●	↓				
Number of CLA placed in residential - Independent Sector	47	42	42	43	43	42	43	41	●	↓				
Percentage of CLA placed in Residential placements - independent sector	9	8	8	8	8	8	8							
Number of CLA placed in unregulated/ unregistered settings at the end of the month	23	33	30	30	36	42	42	20	●	→				
Percentage of CLA placed in unregulated/ unregistered settings at the end of the month	4	6	6	6	7	8	8							
Number of CLA placed for adoption at period end	45	30	20	19	19	13	15							
Number of children placed with SCC foster carers (including connected carers)	241	214	202	213	206	195	192	285	●	↓				
Percentage of children placed with SCC foster carers (including connected carers)	44	40	40	40	39	38	38							
Percentage in touch with the authority from 17th to 18th birthday	85	76	80	85	87	86	87							
Percentage in touch with the authority from 19th to 21st Birthday	92	92	92	92	92	92	92							



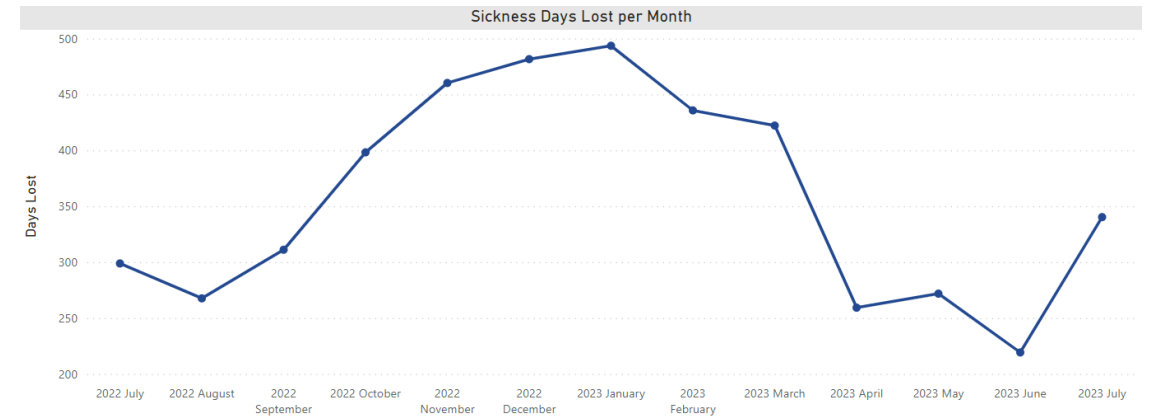
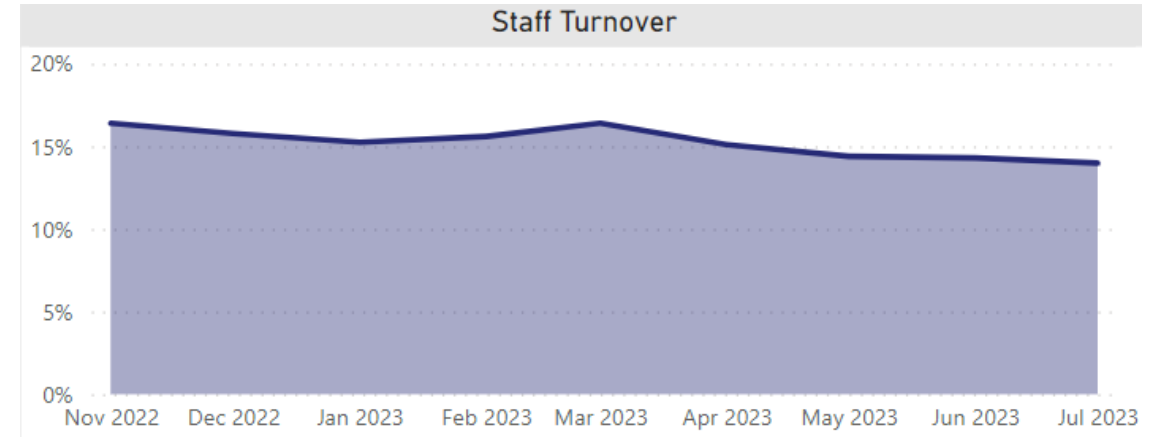
Permanent, stable workforce

Outcomes – Children and families maintain working relationships with consistent practitioners, who benefit from stable management support and oversight. Agency staff numbers will reduce contributing towards financial responsibility.

Progress analysis – The number of agency staff has continued to reduce and is on track to meet the target of 21 in September 2023. Staff turnover has been gradually reducing since March 2023. During Ofsted, we had 94% staffing for managers and social workers. There is further recruitment ongoing following the Good outcome from the Ofsted visit. The number of sick days lost per month has reduced since the peak in January 2023, but spiked in July.

Staff stability within the pathways through care service has resulted in the consistent increase in duration of relationships for children in care with their social workers.

Indicator	Aug-22	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Target	RAG	Direction of travel
Percentage of CLA that have been in care for 12+m, with same social worker for last 6 months		49	47	59	62	68	74	80	●	↑



Embedding Practice Framework and Standards

Outcomes –

Audits will evidence

- An improved quality of supervision and standard of practice.
- Contingency planning will be clear in all plans from the beginning of interventions and involvements.
- Systemic practice will be evidenced in care recording audits of visits, assessments, plans, supervisions, chronologies.
- Safe & Together will be evident in work with families increasing involvement of perpetrators, partnering with survivors and achieving long term safety for children.

Progress analysis – July Audit overview:

- 40 audits allocated across 9 service areas, 33 (85%) completed.
- Outstanding (6%), Good (42%), Requires Improvement (53%), Inadequate (0%)
- Highlights of good practice:
 - 100% of Children & Family First - the interventions matched the needs of the family
 - 100% of BIT audits – Case Summary present on child's record, all visits were in timescales.
 - 83% of SWwF assessments contained robust analysis
 - CWD – Purposeful and effective direct work with children, independent skills of child observed
 - YPS - Effective multi-agency work articulated
 - PTC – Children being enabled to understand their care Journey
- Highlights of areas for improvement
 - Children & Family First – 50% evidenced taking the views of CYP into account.
 - Direct tools to be used more consistently along with neglect toolkit.
 - BIT – increase consistency in the timeliness and quality of recorded visits, ensure plans outline specific actions to address attendance.
 - SWwF – Focus on clear structure of interventions to avoid drift and delay.
 - CWD – Completion of chronology, case summary and cultural genogram
 - YPS – Quality reflective supervision with clear detail, analysis and action plan
 - PTC – More evidence of parents input and views and comprehensive care planning meetings.



Performance - Visiting

Outcomes

Children and their families receive regular visits and case holder supervision that result in robust assessments, direct work and increased safety for children. Plans and interventions are timely and effective resulting in CIN plans and CP plans concluding within 12 months, and re-referrals reducing.

Indicator	Aug-22	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Target	RAG	Direction of travel
Percentage of children open to Early Help with a visit in the last 4 weeks	52%	62%	71%	61%	60%	66%	67%	95%	●	↑
Percentage of children with an active Child in Need Plan (not CWD) visited within last 6 weeks	95%	97%	96%	98%	95%	96%	94%	95%	●	↓
Percentage of children with an active Child in Need Plan (CWD) visited within agreed timescales	84%	86%	85%	86%	95%	88%	76%	95%	●	↓
Percentage of children subject to Child Protection Plan visited within last 10 working days	82%	87%	90%	92%	90%	84%	86%	95%	●	↑
Percentage of children subject to Child Protection Plan visited within last 4 weeks	98%	98%	97%	98%	98%	97%	96%	95%	●	↓
Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within agreed timescales	81%	86%	89%	92%	89%	89%	82%	95%	●	↓

Progress analysis

Visiting patterns to children with disabilities with a Child in Need Plan has reduced to 75% in August. This was linked to unforeseen management absence over the month alongside a number of practitioners contracting Covid.



Performance - Supervision

Outcomes – Social workers receive regular, reflective supervision regarding children and families they are working with to identify patterns, risks, progress, and agree a work plan. With quality management oversight, plans for children will progress and escalate or step down in a timely way resulting in children being open to the service for a shorter period of time, 80% of assessments will complete within 30 working days, CIN plans and CP plans lasting less than 9 months, more children exiting pre-proceedings, and less children entering legal proceedings.

Indicator	Aug-22	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Target	RAG	Direction of travel
Percentage of children open to Early Help with supervision in timescales	75%	74%	78%	82%	72%	82%	88%	95%	●	↑
Percentage of children open for assessment who had supervision in timescales	88%	93%	93%	91%	91%	97%	91%	95%	●	↓
Percentage of children with a Child in Need Plan (not CWD) who had supervision within timescales	80%	89%	90%	96%	85%	79%	80%	95%	●	↑
Percentage of children with a Child in Need Plan (CWD) who had their supervision within timescales	99%	98%	96%	86%	84%	79%	77%	95%	●	↓
Percentage of CPP who had their supervision and within timescales	89%	86%	91%	98%	87%	85%	87%	95%	●	↑
Percentage of CLA who had their supervision and was within the timescale	81%	78%	85%	94%	88%	90%	74%	95%	●	↓
Percentage of Care Leavers who had their supervision and was within the timescale	78%	81%	86%	92%	92%	88%	83%	95%	●	↓

Progress analysis –

Supervisions in the CWD team were impacted by the unplanned manager absence and staff sickness following a number contracting Covid.

The decline in supervision timeliness since May is being reviewed with team managers and service leads in assurance clinics this month.



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