

**To the Chair and Members of the
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Performance Challenge of Doncaster Children’s Services Trust: Quarter 1, 2017/18

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nuala Fennelly Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools	All	None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides a review and analysis of the performance challenge carried out by the Director of People of the Doncaster Children’s Services Trust (the ‘Trust’) in Quarter 1 of 2017/18 arising from the challenge meetings held between both parties.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

2. Not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Panel is asked to:
 - i) Note and evaluate the headline performance information and the resultant analysis;
 - ii) Question the Director of People as to the challenge which he has made of this performance and the implications this has, or may have, for the children and young people of Doncaster;
 - iii) Use the information in this report, the evidence of the Director of People and the response of the Chief Executive of the Trust to the questions posed by the Scrutiny Panel in order to draw conclusions as to the potential impact arising from performance by the Trust in its improvement journey; and
 - iv) Make requests for follow up evidence in order to provide further assurance.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. The Overview and Scrutiny function has the potential to impact upon all of the Council’s key objectives by holding decision makers to account, reviewing performance and developing policy. This is achieved through making robust recommendations, monitoring performance of the Council and external partners and reviewing issues outside the remit of the Council that have an impact on the residents of the borough.

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION

5. The current arrangements for holding the Trust to account are set out in the service delivery contract between the Council and the Trust, which states:

...’The Council’s Director for Children’s Services (DCS) will report to the Council’s Scrutiny Committee twice per annum with an on – site visit between each of those meetings, in each contract year in respect of the Trust’s performance of its obligations under this agreement (including the provision of services) Where required by the DCS the Trust’s Chief Executive (or his nominee) shall attend such Scrutiny Committee to respond to any requests for additional information made by the Scrutiny Committee in respect of the Trust’s performance of its obligations under this agreement (including the provision of the services).’

6. The Trust is contracted to deliver services as specified within the contract with the Council. The current arrangements by which the Trust is held to account are extensive and far reaching, and were described in some detail in the report to the panel of 11 July 2016, and in essence take place through monthly, quarterly and annual reviews at operational, middle and senior management and at senior non – executive/senior political levels of both organisations.
7. At the July 2016 meeting, the panel agreed that a ‘split screen’ approach be adopted – by this arrangement there is a two phased approach. In the first phase, the Council is held to account for its monitoring of the Trust against the service delivery contract. Specifically, this means that the Council submits a report (this report) for the panel to review and question the DCS or his representatives. The second stage of this split screen is that the Trust responds to the Council’s report and the specific performance issues which this has raised.
8. The overall aim of this refined approach is that:
 - The panel achieves a much more rounded, but focused perspective of Trust performance;
 - The obligations within the contract will be properly discharged;
 - The Scrutiny Panel is able to ‘add value’ to the accountability process, which will no longer not duplicate or overlap with existing accountability arrangements;
 - The panel is more clearly able to identify areas of good performance and underperformance, the reasons for any under performance and request ‘exception’ or ‘deep dive’ reports, so as to become better appraised of the performance issues facing the Trust and thereby make recommendations to drive forward improvement.
9. In line with this approach, and following the approval of the report to the Children’s Scrutiny Panel of 11 July 2016, the arrangements for the Scrutiny Panel’s monitoring of the Trust were sharpened and revised to avoid duplication with the monitoring arrangements which are already in place and referenced above.
10. The first report of the revised arrangements was considered at the Children’s Scrutiny Panel at the 27 September 2016 meeting.

EXTERNAL SCRUTINY AND MONITORING ACTIVITY

11. On 31st July, 2017 the DCST hosted a fourth Ofsted monitoring visit from Ofsted. The fourth monitoring visit was not thematic, but had a focus on and visit to the ‘Front Door’ including case sampling, as well as sampling a number of assessments and child in need plans. The Monitoring report can be found in Appendix 4. Feedback was essentially positive overall, with more consistent quality of practice evident – in

particular cases at the front door, assessment, care planning and review, with again, praise for management oversight, performance management and Quality Assurance.

PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE OF THE DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRUST

12. The arrangements by which the Trust is held to account are extensive and far reaching (going beyond contractual requirements) – a point previously reaffirmed by Ofsted in its inspection report on the arrangements for children in need of help and protection and children in care (September 2015) and in addition to oversight by this committee, comprise:
 - A performance review of Finance and Operations on a monthly basis
 - Joint Quarterly monitoring meetings at Assistant Director Level of the Council and the Trust embracing Finance and operational performance as a focus, but including contract monitoring more widely, at which performance is forensically challenged and issues referred for 'deep dive' investigation or escalated to the High level meeting should there be any areas of concern;
 - A High Level Quarterly Performance meeting (QPM) at Chief Officer and Non – Executive level where operational, Financial performance and Quality assurance is monitored.
13. Both the Joint finance and Performance meeting and the High level QPM share overarching principles to ensure joint leadership and management to improve outcomes and value for money for children and young people across the partnership and thereby ensure robust contract management. At the same time, both meetings readily embrace shared principles of collective responsibility, mutual respect and support and a desire to explore opportunities for innovation, best practice and integrated working.
14. At the quarterly challenge meetings the Council holds the Trust to account for its performance during the relevant period. The review of that performance highlights areas of good performance, as well as those which represent areas of concern, or potential concern.
15. In line with the Annual Contract Review and the requirement to review the efficacy of the existing measures, the partners submitted and agreed with the DfE, a new basket of performance indicators, against which this reports. In order to ensure currency and relevance against important stages within the child's journey and where it is known that there are current pressures within that system.
16. There are 18 performance indicators which form part of the contractual measures within the service delivery contract.
17. There is a further suite of 46 'volumetric' measures which are not identified contractual measures, or measures of performance and which do not form part of the contractual assessment of the Trust, but which nonetheless provide important context.
18. The table below summarises the number of contract measures on target, within tolerance and outside tolerance as at the end of Quarter 1 2017/18.

Quarter 1 2017/18				
	Outside tolerance	Inside Tolerance	On or better than target	No target specified
Social Care Pathway	1	4	2	
Children in Care	1	2	2	
Youth Offending Services			3	
Family Support Services				2
Workforce		3	1	

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

19. The format of presentation of performance information consists of a summary of the Council's headline assessment of Trust performance by exception and is shown below in paragraphs 22.1 and 22.2 with indicators selected by the Council where there are areas of good and improving performance and areas of concern and potential concern, respectively.
20. The format adopted is similar to that of the Council's corporate report to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and is shown at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. Each appendix consists of two elements:
 - An Infographic overview which provides an immediately accessible illustration of the areas of performance which are good (illustrated in green), those which are of concern or potential concern (illustrated in red) and which cross reference by the index number to those itemised in paragraphs 22.1 and 22.2 and the tables in Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.
 - Tables which depict how the challenge takes place for each selected performance measure in a two stage process and provides the content of that challenge which is summarised for the assistance of panel members
21. The first appendix depicts performance indicators and volumetric measures where the Council has identified that the Trust is performing above target and /or where performance has improved and provides the Trust's response.
22. The second appendix illustrates where the Council has identified specific performance indicators and volumetric measures which are below target/outside tolerance or expectations, and as such are of concern or potential concern because of the impact or potential impact of below - target performance and the explanation provided by the Trust.

22.1 Areas of Good and Improving Performance – Headline conclusions drawn by the Council

- **A06: Child Subject to a Child Protection Plan (still on a plan - 2yrs or more).** An important measure of sterility (drift and delay) in the system where children may not be receiving proper oversight. However, there can be valid reason why a child remains on a plan. The Trust has provided welcome reassurance to the Council that it is carefully monitoring these cases and performance is within tolerance. Doncaster's (2016) outturn performance was better than the national

average, but worse than regional and statistical neighbour averages, but in quarters 4 and 1 has recovered and is better than that of statistical neighbours and also in Q1, better than the regional average.

- **A08: Children in Need with an open and current plan** - There is a new methodology attached to this PI which gives a more realistic assurance to oversight by including draft plans which is the point - all CIN should have a current plan and this new PI was agreed in the annual contract review. Current performance is almost at target and is within tolerance. Notwithstanding the methodological change, the trend is improving. The Trust has set a strict time limit for all open cases which should be reassessed every six months and which will lead to revisions and updates to the child's plan.

As the Trust states, there will always be a time-lag as cases move between levels of support and where numbers enter the system, which it states, explains the 7% shortfall. By way of assurance, where a CIN does not have a plan the Trust knows why and is closely sighted on the particular case, through regular sampling of open cases.

- **A09: Child Subject Child Protection Plan (second, or subsequent time with a 2 year period)** – This measure was redefined within the contract from the national PI ('second or subsequent time ever') to a local measure which is more sensitive and more reflective of its fundamental objective. Analysis needs to be satisfied that children are not being 'de-planned' prematurely. There may otherwise be valid reasons for becoming subject to a CPP but less so within a short period. This measure is easily skewed by small cohorts. It should be said though, that notwithstanding those caveats, performance is good, being consistently so for the fifth consecutive quarter, above target. Outturn performance for the national 'second or subsequent time measure ('ever') is slightly better than all local comparators.
- **B10: Short term placement stability of Children in Care (children with 3 or more placements in the year)** - This is an important measure of disruption and performance remains pleasing in that children have access to a more stable home environment and improved relationships with carers and their case worker and is better than target. The recent trend is well within tolerance. National outturn performance (2015) shows Doncaster to be in the second highest quartile and average across the region. This is particularly good performance in the context of the repatriation policy (which in itself is a positive) and given that a number of residential providers have given notice on placements.
- **B13: Care leavers in suitable accommodation** – The fall in Q4 performance, has improved in Q1 which represents a pleasing quarterly reported pattern overall. Best practice suggests that custody and 'sofa surfing' should be excluded from this figure, but there is inconsistency of reporting between LAs and commendably, the Trust adopts best practice. Whilst the last annual outturn (2016) Doncaster performance (76%) had fallen, The Trust reports that more recent performance will deliver an anticipated outturn for 2017 of 92%.

This is a continued and welcome improvement in performance since Q4 2015/16 and remains within threshold for the fifth consecutive quarter.

- **F01: Youth offending services % cohort in EET** - The employment rate is above target for the fourth out of five quarters. The figure for the cohort which is in employment education and training is noteworthy.
- **F03: Youth Offending Custody Rate** – This is a a new measure which is susceptible to being skewed by the small cohorts from what is a large national cohort. Early indications continue to be positive. . Custody rates have been at, or around target and despite a slight fall in quarters 3 and 4 are well within tolerance.
- **A3: Percentage of Case File audits rated ‘Requires Improvement or Better’** – Performance remains within tolerance. 48% of case file audits are rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' a decrease from 51% in Q4, however 'Outstanding' cases improved from 3% to 7%:
 - 7% Inadequate
 - 44% Requires Improvement
 - 41% Good
 - 7% Outstanding

There is a general trend of cases which require improvement or better and more cases are rated as good with a trend of fewer cases rated inadequate. Where cases are graded inadequate these have immediate action plans put in place that are monitored to completion by the Head of Service with an independent audit within 6 months. The DSCB receive a regular report of the audited cases from DCST.

Ofsted had rated some cases higher than the Trust’s own internal audit and the Trust plan to review thresholds. In addition, historical case file issues are affecting current gradings, even when current work is effective.

The Trust states that it has an internal; target to achieve 61% of cases judged ‘good or better’ by October 2017 which it reports it is confident of meeting and exceeding – with the latest monthly performance showing 75% and Ofsted in its 4th monitoring visit reported satisfaction, with the quality of practice, the audits and the assessments of those audits.

Volumetric measures

In addition, to a suite of performance measures which explicitly set out within the contract to measure the performance of services delivered by the Trust, there is a series of ‘volumetric’ measures which are not contractual measures per se, but which do provide context to the Trust’s performance.

Children in Care with up to date:
Health assessments: - June = 86%
Up to date Dental checks - June = 77%

The figure for Health assessments is showing a consistent performance level. The Trust reports that the challenge has been in accessing timely paediatric support so as to refer children more quickly. In addition, Children placed Out of Area is a challenge, as the Trust has less influence and control.

Following challenge by this and other fora, the Trust has discussed with the CCG which has commissioned a GP practise in Balby, which has 4 paediatric GP’s to

deliver all initial and review health assessments and have built in 250 initial health assessments a year into the contract and have retained an element of the commissioned service whereby a consultant will provide supervision and advice. There is also on-going training with GP's to develop their expertise and the evidence is that that this seems to be having an impact.

There has been a continuing and acknowledged problem with dental checks which is not unique to Doncaster and in part reflects a national problem with older children not registering with dentists, but nevertheless, performance since Q4 sees encouraging performance continued. Dental practice availability is being raised with the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Corporate Parenting Board, but the Trust reported that this is more of a practice issue. In addition, it should be further noted that older young people have the option to refuse treatment.

22.2 Areas of concern / potential concern – headline conclusions drawn by the Council:

- **A1: Re-referrals in the last 12 months** - An important 'bellwether' PI to demonstrate robustness of process. Performance remains outside target, just within tolerance. Current performance (27%) is slightly worse than 2016 annual outturns: Doncaster (23%) national average (22%) and Statistical Neighbour average (24.2%) but remains better than the regional average (30%). There can be a genuine requirements for a re-referral and the Trust analyses this information, but the Council needs to be assured against the risk areas, as to impact of demand pressures and that there has been no premature stepping down and premature de-planning. This indicator needs to be considered against a backdrop of increasing demand.

A recent external review by 'Ingson' of the 'Front Door' found that a closer analysis is needed in relation to 'step up' and step down' of cases which will provide further analysis of this issue. There are a number of factors at play:

- 1) Due to the duality of ICT systems i.e. EHM and LL it has at times been difficult to follow cases as they move between Early Help into Children Social Care, happily with effect from 2nd August, 2017 this system incompatibility has been resolved.
- 2) There was some evidence found of cases ending Social Care intervention which are being classified as no further action (NFA) where a step down to Early Help, 'Team Around the Family' outcome would have been more appropriate and potentially, these cases could reappear as re-referrals within 12 months because of this oversight. The peer review recognised that there is a need to improve the 'step up / step down' process, particularly the latter and the Early Help (EH) Strategy group is picking up this as a 'deep dive' investigation.

The EH Strategy Group is carrying out detailed investigation as to the effective functioning of the early help system and its interfaces, with a view to improve understanding of the pinch points and how these might be addressed across the partnership. (Q.v. commentary under 'contacts')

3) Other cases that are re-referred still do not meet the social care threshold which the Trust believes is a 'cultural legacy' of risk aversion. The peer review confirmed that thresholds are applied appropriately and consistently at the Front Door. Partly, there was a recognition at the last QPM of the need to review the effectiveness of the EH offer and work has commenced which has been taken to the EH Strategy Group on 28th July, 2017. SYP is the biggest source of contacts with a small conversion rate to referral and assessment. The South Yorkshire Policing (SYP) protocol is subject to review and a QPM action was to look at reviewing police notifications with an attendant resource, but progress is likely to be 12–18 months away. Additional funding of £200k has been allocated to early help of which £70k will fund a post with a profile of a police background to focus on Police referrals in terms of improved understanding and addressing inherited backlogs and this is anticipated to improve this pattern to some extent, but until there is a systemic change in the approach of SYP, social care contacts and NFAs will remain high.

- **A2: Timeliness of single assessments** - Timeliness has fallen further in Q1 and is below tolerance for the third quarter in the most recent 5 quarters. However, The target is a stretch target and performance is still above the most recent published benchmark averages of other Authorities, despite referral rates in the Trust being much higher than comparative Authorities. Assessment timeliness is indicative of demand pressures / caseloads and the numbers of children within the system will have an obvious impact, the numbers of assessments open and referrals have been showing at a high level over the last 12 months. The Trust has to balance efficiency of its process with assurance as to safety and is mindful of this. Of significance is the increasing number of referrals and some reported ICT 'glitches' at the Front Door.

The Trust states that it continues to set a high standard for assessments and will ask case holders to revisit them if they do not meet these standards, this will potentially extend timescales for the sake of quality. Tracking takes place by team and work is underway with team managers to recover performance and ensure tracking reports are used effectively. There have also been some individual issues with front line workers and managers which the Trust has had to address.

The Trust reports that it has agreed £360k of additional funding with the Council to secure temporary social work resource which will tackle caseload levels and which it believes should impact positively against this figure.

- **B14: Care leavers in Employment, Education or Training (EET)** - This indicator is acknowledged to be a challenging one which is reflected in performance figures across the region. In order to be compliant, 'Meaningful contact' must be maintained which can itself be a challenge. There is a recognised need to progress employment opportunities and qualifications locally and it is an Ofsted Improvement Action to strengthen pathways for vulnerable children.

This is an important indicator in meeting Ofsted improvement requirements and for the Council in its role as 'corporate parent'. Locally reported performance is showing an improving trajectory and is again within tolerance. Whilst, the latest published Doncaster outturn performance (36%) appears worse than 2015 and below comparator figures: (2016 outturn National average = 49%, Statistical

Neighbours = 58%). The Trust confirms that this figure reflects the problems with definitional reporting problems with the data, which was anticipated and which has previously been highlighted to this committee and which means that the published national outturn figure is an 'unrepresentative' figure. The locally reported figure (47%) is much improved and close to the latest published national average. The Trust reports an anticipated outturn figure for 2017 of 47%.

The Trust affirmed that if the 'Keys to your Future' programme becomes validated this cohort of children will automatically go onto this programme which would count as 'training'. This would put this figure to nearer 100%. Nationally, care leavers as a vulnerable cohort struggle to achieve compared with the general cohort and therefore need greater support mechanisms into further education training and employment. Opportunities are being explored by DCST and strategies implemented which have demonstrated some local improvement which will be taken forward by the newly established care leavers steering group. A series of actions have been agreed, which include emboldening existing links with employers and training agencies; innovative links via Social Enterprise and Collaboratives establishing a partnership steering group; development of a charter for Care Leavers and a Care Leavers strategy.

- **B8 – Care Proceedings on track to be completed within timescale (26 weeks)** – This is a new measure for 2017/18 brigaded against the national expectation and will be monitored for improvement as reporting continues each quarter. It is referenced for that reason and is not an example of 'bad' performance per se. Only 56% of cases met this target nationally and the national average for this measure is 28 weeks (Q1 2017). However, the nationally figure is a broader and not directly comparable methodology, embracing other care orders

Small cohorts will skew this measure as indicated by the Trust commentary and the Trust responds that its current average is 32 weeks, which is skewed by two specific complex cases.

This was always a 'stretch' target but was designed to protect children by securing permanence more quickly, reduce uncertainty and potential harm and there is a tension given the need to dispense a 'just' solution which allows the courts to extend the time limit by 8 weeks, although locally this is not being applied as a matter of policy. . That said, court proceedings have been streamlined and the national trend is looking healthier.

'Volumetric' measures

- **E1: Contacts to Social Care** – The June outturn shows a 13% increase in contacts since March 2017, noting, however, that there is a seasonal trend for contacts to increase towards the end of each school year. The conversion rate of percentage contacts to referral increased from 21% in March to 25% in June, but this is still very low.

National figures show that Doncaster has by far and away the highest proportion of referrals (37.6%) which result in a an assessment but which are then found not to be CIN compared with benchmark averages (23 – 25%). The commentary in A1 above is relevant in terms of threshold application by partners and the

interface with Early Help which remains a 'wicked issue' and whilst the number of enquiries into the EHH has increased by 31% between Q4 2015/16 and Q4 2016/17 – some of this is new demand.

Of relevance and impact, is the need to improve engagement across the Early Help partnership including engagement by identified Lead Practitioners (LP) with the early help cases allocated. Engagement is highest in schools and PAFSS, but is poor among Health visitors; school nursing and maternity services. School LPs exhibit high caseloads – which has also compromised the effectiveness of the Early Help offer. There is also evidence of a fundamental misunderstanding of the LP role amongst some partners and concerns as to capacity to undertake the role given that this is perceived to be an 'add on' to the 'day job'. There is an identified problem of early help cases not being picked up by LPs which are then becoming additions to the waiting list. The Early help Strategy Group has begun work to investigate and seek solutions to this problem.

There remains the ongoing problem of inappropriate referrals and re- referrals from a specific agency referred to earlier in A1, which will be addressed at least in the first instance, by the deployment of the additional staffing resource

- **E26-E32, SGO: Children in Care and Other Placements** – IFA numbers and DCST foster care numbers have increased this quarter, which is essentially good news, Special Guardianship Order (SGO) numbers are comparable to Q4. Independent fostering Agency (IFA,) Out of Area Placements (OOA) and (SGO) numbers exert considerable cost pressures on the contract. In house residential numbers have increased which in part, reflects the repatriation policy alongside new homes coming on stream. In house foster care numbers are showing a healthier figure, although this is flat lining somewhat, reflecting churn, or attrition, in the system, as numbers drop out, enter into adoption arrangements. Sibling groups and older children are, as ever, a challenge to place into Fostering. That said there is cause for optimism, an improving trend reflecting the new payment system; better advertising and awareness of the growing Trust 'brand'.

OOA placements (30) are higher than anticipated, in most part due to delays in refurbished residential provision coming on stream. The Trust has a strategy to reduce reliance on IFAs via SGOs and in-house provision with 20 forecast conversions. The new in house residential capability should increase capacity in 2017 by 12 beds, compared with 2016.

SGO numbers are higher than forecast reflecting local court practice in care proceedings which imposes a strict 26 week cut off and a preference for SGOs and Child arrangement orders, whilst these are cost incurring, they are more cost effective than IFAs.

23. IMPACT ON COUNCIL'S KEY OBJECTIVES

Outcomes	Implications
<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayoral priority – creating jobs and Housing • Mayoral priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans • Mayoral priority: protecting Doncaster's vital services 	<p>The Council and the Trust as major partners in the Children and Families Partnership Board share the Children's plan outcome that all children should achieve their potential – in removing barriers and developing good quality service delivery children will be able to access the benefits of a thriving economy and will themselves be participants in creating and sustaining the strength of the economy.</p>
<p>People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayoral priority: Safeguarding our Communities • Mayoral priority: Bringing down the cost of living 	<p>Ensuring children and young people are free and feel from harm are key ambitions of both the Council and the Trust.</p>
<p>People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayoral priority: creating jobs and Housing • Mayoral priority: Safeguarding our communities • Mayoral priority: bringing down the cost of living 	<p>Delivering against the service delivery contract between the Council and the Trust has clear implications for safeguarding communities, in reducing risk and exposure of risk to children; improved early help and thus better outcomes for families.</p>
<p>Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance</p>	<p>Ofsted, in its inspection report commented favourably on the relationship and governance arrangements between the Council and the Trust, recognising that formal arrangements for monitoring and challenge exceed the requirements set out in the contract between the two organisations.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

24. In addition to the extensive governance arrangements described in paragraph 13, risk is managed and monitored in accordance with the Council's risk management policy on the Council's Covalent system; at the Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Service meetings; within the corporate performance management framework and as a regular item on the high level Quarterly performance meeting agenda.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

25. The Council's contract with the Trust contains various monitoring powers so that that the Council can assure itself that services are being delivered correctly. Adoption of the split screen approach as set out in this report enables the scrutiny panel to more

effectively meet its remit to consider matters in the public interest

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

26. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. Please note financial monitoring of the DCST contract totalling £46.3m is challenged at the meetings outlined in the body of the report and is reported to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

27. There are re no equality implications directly arising from this report.

CONSULTATION

28. The Chief Executive of the Trust has been consulted on the content of this report.

ATTACHMENTS

- 'Infographic' depiction and summary record of performance challenge of highlighted performance indicators and volumetric measures – Appendices 1 and 2
- Doncaster Children's Services Trust – Quarter 1 report – Appendix 3
- Monitoring letter following visit to Doncaster on 31 July - Appendix 4

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Background Papers

Report of the Director of Learning Opportunities Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel – 11th July, 2016.

Damian Allen,
Director of People
Learning and Opportunities Children and Young People / Adults Health & Wellbeing
Directorates

Areas of Good and Improving Performance

AREAS PERFORMING WELL

Children on a Child Protection Plan 2 Years or More

A06

1.3%



Target 3%
Tolerance 5%

Children Become Subject of Child Protection Plan

A09

10%

For the Second or Subsequent Time



Target 10%
Tolerance 16%

Short Term Placement Stability

B10

% 3 or more placements in the year

9%



Target 9% Tolerance 12%

Care Leavers (19-21 yrs) in Suitable Accomodation

B13

85%



Target 85%
Tolerance 80%

F01

% Cohort in EET

Youth Offending Services:

85%

Target 75%
Tolerance 65%



Custody Rates

F03



0.22

Target 0.42
Tolerance 0.75

Children in Need with an Open and Current Plan

A08

93%

Target 95%
Tolerance 90%



Case File Audits

Rated Requires Improvement or Better

A03

93%

Target 95%
Tolerance 90%



Volumetric Measures

Children in Care with up to date:



Health Assessments
86% (June 17)



Dental Checks
77% (June 17)

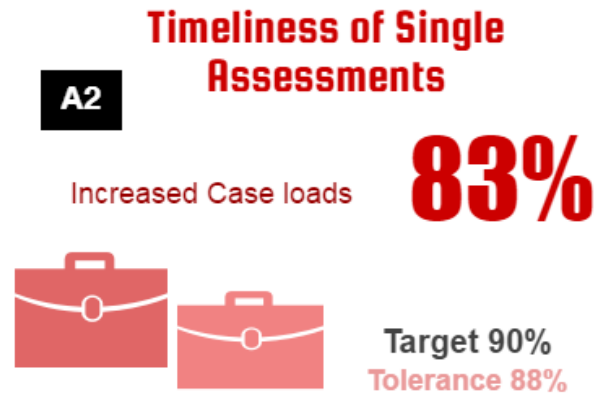
Measure	DMBC Response	Trust Comment
<p>A06 Children on CP Plan for 2 Years or More (still on a plan)</p> <p>Q1 = 1.3% Target: 3% Tolerance: 5%</p>	<p>An important measure of drift and delay in the system where children may not be receiving proper oversight. However, there can be a valid reason why a child remains on a plan. The Trust has provided welcome reassurance to the Council that it is carefully monitoring these cases and performance is within acceptable parameters.</p> <p>Doncaster's (2016) outturn performance was better than the national average but worse than regional and statistical neighbour averages, but has since fallen, albeit, this is still considerably better than the current target.</p>	<p>Remaining within target with a stable trend with very little variability. There has been a reduction in the total number of children subject to a plan 416 to 375.</p>
<p>A09 Children Subject CP Plan Second or Subsequent Time within a 2 year period</p> <p>Q1 = 10% Target: 10% Tolerance: 16%</p>	<p>Performance is good. This measure was redefined within the contract from the national performance indicator (PI) (second or subsequent time ever) to a local measure which is more sensitive and more reflective of its fundamental objective.</p> <p>Analysis needs to be satisfied that children are not being 'de-planned' prematurely. There may otherwise be valid reasons for becoming subject to a CPP but less so within a short period. This measure is easily skewed by small cohorts. It should be said though, that notwithstanding those caveats, performance is good, being consistently at or above target.</p>	<p>Performance remains at target with a stable picture. The number of children subject to a CPP shows low levels of variability month by month but all within target. The most recent month shows the same number of children as April but with a smaller cohort.</p>
<p>B10 Stability of Placement of CiC: percentage of 3+ moves</p> <p>Q1 = 9% Target: 9% Tolerance: 12%</p>	<p>This is an important measure of disruption and performance remains pleasing, and better than target. The recent trend is well within tolerance. National outturn performance (2015) shows Doncaster to be in the second highest quartile and average across the region.</p>	<p>Performance remains at target. 49 children have experienced 3 or more moves in the last 12 months. These will include children with very challenging behaviours as well as planned moves early in a child's care pathway where they may be move to long term or adoptive placements. Performance is better than national average, and compares favourably to LA's currently graded as Good or Outstanding.</p>
<p>B13 Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation (aged 19 – 21)</p> <p>Q1 = 85% Target: 85%</p>	<p>Performance is at target below the statistical neighbour average but above the national average and equal to the regional average and showing a better trajectory than the 2016 outturn performance. (76%) Best practice suggests that custody and 'sofa surfing' should be excluded from this figure, but</p>	<p>Performance has recovered from Quarter 4 to being back on target with little variability in the quarter. Regular tracking and management oversight means we are in touch with the vast majority of care leavers, and work hard to maintain</p>

<p>Tolerance: 80%</p>	<p>there is inconsistency of reporting between LAs and commendably, the Trust adopts best practice.</p> <p>Whilst the last annual outturn (2016) Doncaster performance (76%) had fallen, noting the lack of a commonly agreed definition for this measure, the Trust reports that that most recent performance will deliver an anticipated outturn for 2017 of 92%.</p>	<p>engagement with them. This means, unlike other LA's, we are aware of the accommodation status of the care leaver cohort, and set high expectations of what is deemed to be suitable accommodation. Some older care leavers choose to live in accommodation we would deem to be unsuitable (for example choosing to stay at friends rather than within their independent address), we consider this to be unsuitable and advise accordingly, but as adults the decision rests with them.</p>
<p>F01 Youth Offending Services - % cohort currently EET</p> <p>Q1 = 85% Target: 75% Tolerance: 65%</p>	<p>Data now available from the YJMIS system, which is the national youth justice database. This measure fluctuates in performance due to small numbers in the cohort, as is shown over the last three quarters. At the end of the quarter performance was above target for the second consecutive month in the quarter.</p>	<p>Quarterly data, for children of school age 95% of the children are EET, whereas those above age the figure is 71%. Doncaster has far better ETE rates than the region and England for both school-age and post-16 young people.</p>
<p>A08</p> <p>Children in Need with an open and current plan</p> <p>Q1= 93% Target: 95% Tolerance:90%</p>	<p>There is a new methodology attached to this PI which gives a more realistic assurance to oversight by including draft plans which is the point all CIN should have a current plan and this was agreed in the annual contract review. Current performance is almost at target, within tolerance. Notwithstanding the methodological change, the trend is improving. As the Trust states there will always be a time-lag as cases move between thresholds.</p>	<p>A known "lag" when cases are stepped down or up between CIN and CPP mean that plans appear to be delayed using this measure; this is in place to ensure all casework is completed prior to the next pathway being opened. Through sampling, analysis and audit it is likely that a rate of 93% to 96% is the range in which performance will sit. As there is no benchmarking information, and we are assured of the status of those without a live/draft plan, we believe that the tolerance range is appropriate.</p>
<p>A3</p> <p>Case File Audits – Requires Improvement or Better</p> <p>Q1= 93%</p> <p>Target: 95% Tolerance: 90%</p>	<p>Performance remains within tolerance. 48% of case file audits are rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' a decrease from 51% in Q4, however 'Outstanding' cases improved from 3% to 7%:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 7% Inadequate o 44% Requires Improvement o 41% Good o 7% Outstanding <p>There is a general trend of cases which require improvement or better and more cases are rated as 'good' with a trend of fewer cases rated 'Inadequate'. Where</p>	<p>The number of cases graded RI or better, has followed the long term trend for this measure, with over half of audits graded good or better for the last two months of 51% and 53% respectively. Outstanding cases are on the increase and doubled in this quarter. In the run up to the anticipated re-inspection in Autumn 2017, the QA team are taking an intelligence led approach to audit; targeting areas for improvement, in</p>

	<p>cases are graded inadequate these have immediate action plans put in place that are monitored to completion by the Head of Service with an independent audit within 6 months. The DSCB receive a regular report of the audited cases from DCST.</p> <p>Ofsted had rated some cases higher than the Trust's own internal audit and the Trust plan to review thresholds. The Trust has started work with audit to reassess the case level thresholds. In addition, historical case file issues have affected current grading even when current work is effective. The Trust states that it has an internal; target to achieve 61% of cases judged 'good or better' by October 2017.</p>	<p>particular focussing on CIN cases, to ensure case file quality is consistent throughout the organisation. This may lead to volatility in performance, but for the right reasons.</p>
<p>F03 Youth Offending Services: custody rates</p> <p>Q1 = 0.22 Target: 0.42 Tolerance: 0.75</p>	<p>Q1 figs are the best ever and improve upon the Q3 and Q4 figures which were outside target but within tolerance. Generally in 3 of the 5 quarters performance has been above target and within threshold for the remaining two quarters. Again the health warning as to low cohort numbers prevails.</p>	<p>Quarterly data shows that having had a rate far higher than all comparator YOTs 5 years ago, our custody rate is now 2nd lowest. In terms of actual numbers, there were 6 young people sentenced to custody in 2016/17 as against 11 in 2015/16. The strategy is to improve further on this by continuing to provide courts with good quality pre-sentence reports outlining robust community based alternatives to custodial sentences. .</p>

Areas of concern / potential Concern

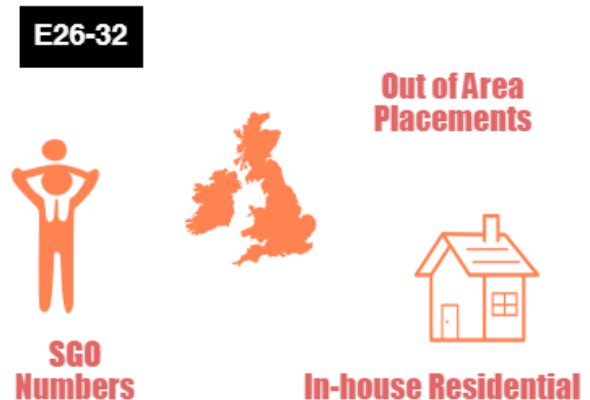
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT



Contacts into Social Care

Volumetric Measures

SGO: Children in Care and Other Placements



Measure & performance	DMBC Response	DCST Comment
<p>A1 Re-referrals in the last 12 months Q1 = 27% Target: 22% Tolerance: 28%</p>	<p>An important 'bellwether' PI to demonstrate robustness of process. Performance remains outside target, just within tolerance. Current performance (27%) is slightly worse than 2016 annual outturns: Doncaster (23%) national average (22%) and Statistical Neighbour average (24.2%) but remains better than the regional average (30%).</p> <p>There can be a genuine requirements for a re-referral and the Trust analyses this information, but the Council needs to be assured against the risk areas, as to impact of demand pressures and that there has been no premature stepping down and premature de-planning. This indicator needs to be considered against a backdrop of increasing demand. A recent external review by 'Ingson' of the Front Door found that a closer analysis is needed in relation to 'step up' and step down' of cases which will provide further analysis of this issue. There are a number of factors at play:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Due to the duality of ICT systems i.e. EHM and LL it is at times difficult to follow cases as they move from Early Help into Children Social Care. 2) There was some evidence found of cases ending Social Care intervention which are being classified as no further action (NFA) where a step down to Early Help – team around the family outcome would have been more appropriate and potentially, these cases could reappear as re-referrals within 12 months because of this omission. The peer review recognised that there is a need to improve the step up step down process particularly the latter and the EH Strategy group is picking up this as a deep dive investigation. 3) Other cases that are re-referred still do not meet the social care threshold which the Trust believes is a 'cultural legacy' of risk aversion. The peer review confirmed that thresholds are applied appropriately and consistently at the Front Door. Partly, there was a recognition at the last QPM of the need to review the 	<p>A slight dip in performance since Q2 and but still within tolerance. Monitoring will continue to check the impact of high demand levels on this measure.</p> <p>Current performance (26%), is worse than the 2015-2016 national average (22%), and slightly above the Statistical Neighbour average (24.2%) but better than the regional average (30%) (based on outturns)</p> <p>The number of referrals has increased this quarter. This goes against the trend since transfer</p>

	<p>effectiveness of the EH offer and work has commenced which has been taken to the EH strategy group on 28th July, 2017. SYP is the biggest source of referrals with a very small conversion rate. The SYP protocol is an issue and a QPM action was to look at reviewing police notifications with a resource to carry out this.</p> <p>What action is being taken with the partnership to ensure referrals are appropriate? Regarding point 2 above – how is this being addressed through advice to Front Door staff? Re: single Agency referrals – what progress has been made in sourcing some dedicated expertise to review notifications?</p>	<p>The Early help Strategy group is carrying out a ‘deep dive’ investigation as to the effective functioning of the Early help system and its interfaces with a view to addressing pinch points therein.</p> <p>The South Yorkshire Police protocol is subject to review. Additional funding has been secured to provide a specialist resource with an understanding of Police referrals.</p>
<p>A2 Timeliness of Single Assessments Q1 = 83% Target: 90% Tolerance:88%</p>	<p>Timeliness has fallen further in Q1 and is below tolerance for the third quarter in the most recent 5 quarters. The target is a stretch target and performance is slightly above the most recent benchmark averages. Assessment timeliness is indicative of demand pressures / caseloads and the numbers of children within the system will have an obvious impact, the numbers of assessments open and referrals had been showing high over the last 12 months. The Trust has to balance efficiency of its process with assurance as to safety and is mindful of this.</p> <p>The Trust states that it continues to set a high standard for assessments and will ask case holders to revisit them if they do not meet them, this will potentially extend timescales for the sake of quality. Tracking takes place by team and work is underway with team managers to recover performance and ensure tracking reports are used effectively.</p> <p>What is the prognosis for redressing the recent performance?</p>	<p>Assessments timeliness was below target threshold cases in the quarter 2017, in June this was by a margin 20 cases with 349 assessments completed in the month. Sixty seven cases were overdue in the month, with the vast majority completed within 53 working days. The trust continues to set a high standard for assessments, and will ask case holders to revisit them if they do not meet them, this will potentially extend timescales for the sake of quality. Tracking takes place by team. In Quarter One 1250 assessments took place an increase from Quarter Four, where 1043 were completed. Work is underway with Team Managers to recover performance and ensure tracking reports are used effectively.</p> <p>The Trust reports that recovery should be seen by the next quarter.</p>
<p>B8 (New) % Care Proceedings on Track to be</p>	<p>This is a new measure for 2017/18 brigaded against the statutory target and will be monitored for improvement as</p>	<p>This is a new measure for 17/18 designed to measure throughput of the care proceedings process</p>

<p>completed within 26 weeks</p> <p>Q1 = 79% Target: 90% Tolerance: 80%</p>	<p>reporting continues each quarter. Only 56% of cases met this expectation nationally and the national average for this measure is 28 weeks (Q1 2017).</p> <p>Small cohorts will skew this measure as indicated by the Trust commentary. This was always a 'stretch' target but was designed to protect children by securing permanence more quickly, reduce uncertainty and potential harm and there is a tension given the need to dispense a 'just' solution which allows the courts to extend the time limit by 8 weeks. That said, court proceedings have been streamlined and the national trend is looking healthier.</p>	<p>and to increase sample sizes. It will continue to be reported quarterly, and is therefore the first reported quarter. In the quarter we are out of tolerance by 1% that equates to one case. Further analysis will need to be undertaken once we have second quarter's data.</p>
<p>B9</p> <p>Long Term Stability of CiC: Placements 2 Years or More</p> <p>Q1 = 66% Target: 70% Tolerance: 60%</p>	<p>Another important indicator of stability, which is essential for this vulnerable cohort. Placement policy is an important feature of stability; need to review across the range for best results in care and financial terms</p> <p>The Trust's longer term ambition is to rely less upon 'Out of Area' placements which will bring some long term placements to a close, providing of course that this is in the child's best interests.</p> <p>In response to questioning, the Trust reports that the repatriation policy (whilst good for the child) and displacement by residential providers giving notice has impacted negatively against this indicator.</p>	<p>Performance remains within tolerance but showed a slight drop in May and June, relating to 8 children falling out of the measure. Placement changes are tracked weekly, including reason for placement breakdown and placement type ending. Long term stability performance is better within our in-house foster placements, compared to IFA. This measure also does not take into account planned moves that were in the best interests of the child. As the Trust continues to manage placement costs and develops the placement offer, this will mean that some young people in care will change placement, which will in turn impact on this measure.</p>
<p>B14</p> <p>Care Leavers in Employment, Education and Training (age 19-21)</p> <p>Q1= 47%</p> <p>Target: 48% Tolerance:42%</p>	<p>This indicator is acknowledged to be a challenging one which is reflected in performance figures across the region. In order to be compliant, 'Meaningful contact' must be maintained which can be a challenge. There is a recognised need to progress employment opportunities and qualifications locally and it is an Ofsted Improvement Action to strengthen pathways for vulnerable children.</p> <p>This is an important indicator in meeting Ofsted improvement requirements and for the Council in its role as 'corporate parent'. Locally reported performance is showing an improving trajectory and is again within tolerance. Whilst the latest published outturn performance = 36%</p>	<p>Performance is improving and back in tolerance, against this measure for young people currently in their 19th, 20th and 21st years. Out turn for 2016/17 was 47% compared to 34% last year. Care leaver EET status for 17-21 year olds are above this rate, at 54%. Excluding those unavailable to the labour market due to illness, disability or pregnancy, our EET rate is 67% against a latest national figure of 59% and last year's performance of 40%.</p>

	<p>appears worse than 2015 and below comparator figures: (2016 outturn National average = 49%, Statistical Neighbours =58%.) The Trust confirms that this figure reflects definitional reporting problems with the data, which has previously been reported which means that the national outturn figure is an unrepresentative figure. The locally reported figure (47%) is much improved and close to the published national average. The Trust reports an anticipated outturn figure for 2017 of 47%.</p> <p>The Trust affirmed that if the 'Keys to your Future' programme becomes validated this cohort of children will automatically go onto this programme which would count as 'training'. This would put this figure to nearer 100%. Nationally, care leavers as a vulnerable cohort struggle to achieve compared with the general cohort and therefore need greater support mechanisms into further education training an employment. Opportunities are being explored by DCST and strategies implemented which have demonstrated some local improvement which will be taken forward by the newly established care leavers steering group. A series of actions have been agreed, which include emboldening existing links with employers and training agencies; innovative links via Social Enterprise and Collaboratives establishing a partnership steering group; development of a charter for Care Leavers and a Care Leavers strategy.</p> <p>At the last quarter the Trust was requested to report back on the data issue which had led to incorrect reporting against this figure and which may have skewed the performance from its true value – does this explain the disparity with the 2016 published data?</p>	<p>The Trust confirmed that this does indeed explain the outturn figure for 2016 and that this is unrepresentative because of the previously reported data quality issue.</p>
<p>E1 Number of contacts into social care <i>(volumetric measure)</i></p> <p>Q1 average = 2097</p> <p><u>2016-17</u> Q4 average = 1823 Q3 average = 1607 Q2 average =1669 Q1 average = 1843</p>	<p>June outturn had a 13% increase in contacts since March. The conversion rate of percentage contacts to referral increased from 21% in March to 25% in June, but this is still very low.</p> <p>National figures show that Doncaster has by far and away the highest proportion of referrals (37.6%) which result in a an assessment but which are then found not to be CIN compared with benchmark averages (23 – 25%)</p>	

	<p>The commentary in A1 above is relevant in terms of threshold application by partners and the interface with Early Help which remains a 'wicked issue'.</p> <p>The number of enquiries into the EHH has increased by 31% between Q4 2015/16 and Q4 2016/17 – some of which is new demand.</p> <p>There have been delays within the Family Support service because of high caseloads and vacancies and in engagement by identified Lead Practitioners with the allocations provided. Engagement is highest in schools and PAFSS but is poor among Health visitors; school nursing and maternity services. School LPs exhibit high caseloads – all of which has compromised the effectiveness of the Early help offer. There is also evidence of a fundamental misunderstanding of the LP role amongst some partners and concerns as to capacity to undertake the role given that this is perceived to be an 'add on' to the day job. The Early help Strategy Group has begun work to investigate and produce solutions to this problem</p> <p>There remains the ongoing problem of inappropriate referrals and re-referrals from specific agencies. There is an identified problem of early help cases not being picked up by LPs which are then becoming additions to the waiting list.</p> <p>The Early help strategy group is rebooting its Early help offer and improving the rigour of its performance monitoring now that improved data capture and intelligence is becoming available.</p> <p>What prospects are there for the new front door arrangements to impact on the NFAs and IAGs?</p>	<p>There should be a positive impact along with the deployment of an additional dedicated resource to address contacts from Police sources - referenced earlier against measure A1.</p>
<p>E20-22 Children in Care with up to date: (<i>Volumetric measures</i>)</p> <p>Health Assessment: Q1 =84%</p>	<p>The June outturn shows positive improvement in up to date health assessments, however dental checks and PEPs are lower than at the end of Q4. Up to date PEPs remain lower than at transfer, and have fallen in the quarter. The roll out of the integrated system should impact positively on this measure</p>	

<p>Dental checks: Q1 =78%</p> <p>Personal Education Plans: Q1= 78% (joint DMBC / DCST)</p>	<p>and will be monitored. The virtual head reports that very recent systemic enhancements have seen performance increase to 86%</p> <p>The previously proposed 'professional portal' which had been in development for some time is not fit for purpose and the acquisition of an off the peg School Management system is actively being sought which it is known will deliver wider benefits and provide a much more cost effective solution.</p>	
<p>E26/29/30/32/SGO (Volumetric measures)</p> <p>CiC Placements</p>	<p>IFA numbers and DCST foster care numbers have increased this quarter. The latter is good news. SGO numbers are comparable to Q4. IFA, OOA and SGO numbers exert considerable cost pressures on the contract. In house residential numbers have increased which may reflect the repatriation policy and with new homes coming on stream. In house foster care numbers are showing a healthier figure, although this is flat lining somewhat probably reflecting churn in the system, as number drop out, enter into adoption arrangements. Sibling groups and older children are, as ever, a challenge to place into Fostering. There is cause for optimism, with an improving trend reflecting implementation of the new payment system; better advertising and awareness of the growing 'Trust' brand.</p> <p>OOA placements (30) are higher than anticipated, in most part due to delays in refurbished residential provision coming on stream.</p> <p>The Trust has a strategy to reduce reliance on IFAs via SGOs and in-house provision with 20 forecast conversions. The new in house residential capability should increase capacity by 12 beds. Compared with 2016.</p> <p>SGO numbers are higher than forecast but whilst cost incurring, are more cost effective than IFAs.</p>	<p>If the detail is disaggregated there is much positive news with increasing numbers of Foster carers, but some 'attrition' with turnover.</p> <p>OOA Placement repatriation has taken longer in some circumstances.</p> <p>SGO numbers are higher than forecast and reflect Court activity.</p>