



9 June, 2021

To the Members of the Cabinet

## Performance Challenge of Doncaster Children's Services Trust: Quarter 4, 2020/21

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities	All	None

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. As part of the Management Agreement and governance arrangements for Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST) the Trust provides a quarterly report of operational and financial performance.
2. This report provides an opportunity to feedback on performance successes and issues against the 2020/21 key performance indicators and management information.

### EXEMPT INFORMATION

3. Not exempt.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

4. That the Cabinet note the progress of DCST performance outcomes and the contribution that the Trust makes to support the Council's strategic priorities.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

5. This report includes current progress of DCST's performance, including the response to the Covid local epidemic curve which may impact on the delivery of services to the people of Doncaster, as well as the reputation of public services across the Borough. The Trust has taken steps to mitigate this risk, working closely with DMBC and DMBC's Director of Children's Services.

### BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION

6. New governance arrangements were introduced in April 2019 and officers in DMBC and DCST have worked together to devise a new service specification with associated metrics. The 39 KPIs are separated out into 12 contractual KPIs and 27 strategic partnership indicators, two of which are annual measures, two are measures externally provided from the Youth Justice Board and are not available due to Covid.
7. In addition to these operational performance indicators, the latest monthly management accounts will be shared with officers in DMBC and are within this report.
8. The Trust continues to respond to Covid, risk rating all children and young people and ensuring all visits to children and young people are at the forefront. Performance

demonstrated through the DfE Covid-19 Vulnerable Children Survey is comparable with national, regional and statistical neighbours.

## 9. **Summary of Operational Performance and Management Information**

10. All metrics with the tolerance or better than target with the exception of a metric that moved was suspended in quarter 3 and reinitiated in quarter 4. Contractual performance indicators as follows:

- a. Five indicators performing better than Business As Usual target
- b. Four are reporting within target range;
- c. Two have been suspended due to Covid
- d. One is below target

11. High level six month trend:

- a. Five contract measures are showing improvement
- b. Three are considered stable
- c. Four are declining. However, one of these metrics is performing better than target; two are within tolerance and one currently sits below target

12. Breakdown of the strategic partnership indicators as follows:

Service Area	Performance			Unavailable Measures	
	Outside tolerance range	Within tolerance range	On/Better than target	Not available due to Covid19/ Suspended	Annual KPI not Yet Available
Parent & Family Support		1	1		
Child & Family Assessment	1	1	3		
Child Protection		1	2		
Looked After Children	1	2			1
Placements (Adopt., Foster and SGO)	2	2	1		
Care Leavers		1	2		
Youth Offending				2	
Workforce			2		
Governance					1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>% of reported</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>

13. Of the 27 strategic partnership indicators two are annual measures and data is not currently available and two are measures externally provided from the Youth Justice Board and are not available due to Covid. The Ministry of Justice are focussing on priority analysis and statistics due to limited PNC access and therefore these KPIs have been excluded.

14. The strategic partnership measures reported this quarter breakdown can be seen in the above table. Where set and available each target is based upon national benchmarking data, which sets an ambition for performance to be at least comparable to good and outstanding organisations; however, some indicators are locally derived and therefore have no benchmark. In these cases targets are derived

using historical trends and ambitious targets have been set. 19 out of the 23 (c.83%) are within or better than target range, 4 strategic partnership measures sit outside target range and are covered in more detail later in this report. The measure for case file audits was suspended during quarter 3 so that action plans could be put in place and this measure recommenced in quarter 4.

15. Contacts and referral rates are monitored daily and contacts have increased during the quarter by 1,084 (c.16%) and 612 (c.9%) on the same period last year. Contacts from the Police has seen the biggest volume increase since quarter 3 with an additional 218 (c.13% uplift) and contacts from Health Services have seen the biggest percentage increase with an increase of 87 (c.46%). Police remain the highest source of contact accounting for 1,947 (c.39%) of the overall Trust volume. Contacts with the outcome of 'No Further Action & Information and Advice Only' has increased by 934 (c.33%) and transfers to Early Help have increased by 481 (c.115%) quarter on quarter as a result of the work undertaken as part of the improvement journey in managing this demand through improving the early intervention service and managing the front door Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) more effectively.
16. During quarter 4 there were 1068 referrals, 217 (c.20%) fewer referrals in comparison to quarter 3 and as a result of directing more contacts to the Early Help channels however volumes were largely comparable with this time last year with only 16 (c.1%) difference. At the end of quarter 3 we forecast an outturn increase of 855 (c.22%) referrals in comparison to 2019/20 but actuals showed an increase of 679 (c.16%). The reduction of referrals can be attributed to the changes to the MASH operating model described above. Based on limited data points since the operational change the current referral forecast for 2021/22 suggests we will see a reduction in referrals of up to 30%, however more data points will be required to increase confidence in that forecast as the new process embeds.
17. Referrals indicating Abuse or Neglect continue to be the most prominent category of need and although they have reduced by 120 (c.12%) from quarter 3 to quarter 4 we still have had 23 (c.2%) more referrals in comparison to the same period last year.
18. A total of 1,140 assessments were initiated in quarter 4 which is a decrease of 75 (c.7%) from quarter 3 and we are seen increased activity in comparison to the same period last year with 350 (c.31%) of the assessments proceeding to a statutory service. The number of children in need stood at 2,333 at the end of 2020/21 which is a reduction of 194 (c.8%) from quarter 3 but an increase of 57 (c.3%) from the same period last year. The rate of children in need per 10,000 has dropped over the past two quarters and currently stands at 344.

	2019/20			2020/21				%Change against...	
Demand Measure	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Previous quarter	Same quarter last year
Contacts to CSC	5590	5262	6150	5349	5624	5678	6762	16%	9%
Referrals	924	946	1052	1117	1331	1285	1068	-20%	1%
Children in Need	2289	2221	2264	2317	2580	2511	2333	-8%	3%
Children on Protection	299	311	300	322	383	395	430	8%	30%
Looked After Children	537	519	509	513	519	522	553	6%	8%

19. The number of children in care have increased from quarter 3 to 553 (c.6%) higher than the year end figure for children care for every year since 2010/11 other than 2017/18 (569). There are permanence plans as follows:
- 84 children (c.15%) had a permanence plan of return to birth family
  - 70 children (c.13%) had a permanence plan of adoption
  - 30 children (c.6%) had a permanence plan of Special Guardianship Order
  - 12 children (c.2%) had no permanence plan recorded
20. Strategic leaders in Doncaster have decided that establishment of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was a key priority to achieve improvements locally and direct more cases through Early Help to ensure that they are on the right trajectory without any delay. The number of children open to the Early Help partnership therefore has increased by 100 (c.5%) from quarter 3 and there are 84 (c.4%) fewer children compared to the same period last year. The Early Help pathway volumes remain stable with 1,008 (c.50%) of children are open as single-agency and 1,026 (c.50%) have a multi-agency response.
21. Due to the increased demand in quarter 3 average caseloads naturally saw an upturn and the Trust recruited agency staff in order to meet the demand and safeguard children. During quarter 4 we have seen average caseloads reduce as a result of the operating model changes to direct more cases through Early Help and increased resource therefore as at the 26<sup>th</sup> April the average caseloads as follows:

Locality	Average Caseload FTE
Assessment Service	12.7
Area Child Protection Service	18.0
Children in Care Service	14.4
Child Exploitation Service	13.8
Children with Disabilities Service	12.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.3</b>

22. As caseloads have reduced from quarter 3 to quarter 4 and initial forecasts suggest we will see a continued drop in demand the Trust is undertaking an activity to review workforce against the social worker caseload policy, ensuring workload is distributed appropriately, and looking for opportunities to reduce the agency workforce.
23. **Operational performance against contractual KPIs indicators**
24. Analysis against each indicator is provided below and at appendix one.
25. **Contract KPIs On or better than target range**

- **Percentage of children subject to child protection plan seen within expected timescales.** There are 430 children on a Child Protection Plan and this has increased month on month since February 2020 and we have 130 (c.43%) more than at the same period last year. A total of 156 new CP plans started within quarter 4, while 99% of children have been seen within the last four weeks.

The Rate of CPP per 10,000 children aged 0-17 is 63 in Doncaster – higher than the average in England (43) however is lower than our statistical neighbours (67) Emotional abuse & Neglect are main reasons cited on Child Protection Plans.

- **Percentage of child protection conferences held within 15 working days of section 47 enquiry.** This continues to be a strength for the Trust with 172 out of 173 children subjected to ICPCs completed within 15 working days.

The high rates mean that families that are taken through this process do not experience the anxiety of delay.

- **Proportion of children in care experiencing three or more placements in a 12-month period. This measure is known as the “short term stability measure”.** Performance has improved throughout 2020/21 to c.7.3% at the end of the year, where only 40 out of 551 children have experienced three or more moves in the last 12 months. This will include children with very challenging behaviours as well as planned moves early in a child’s care pathway where they may be moved to long term or adoptive placements and placement moves are in the child’s best interests
- **Percentage of care leavers that the Trust remains in touch with.** Performance has improved as a result of the use of the case tracking and management oversight meaning we are consistently in touch with 193/194 of care leavers in their 17th-21st year and work hard to maintain engagement.

From the cohort 181 (c.93%) are in suitable accommodation and 100 (c.52%) are in employment, education or training.

- **Proportion of care leavers with pathway plans within timescale.** Performance has increased for the second consecutive quarter to 99% and exceeding target with 192/194 care leavers having an active pathway plans which an increase of 23 (c.14%) in comparison to quarter 3 and 20 (c.12%) in comparison to last year. The Trust continues to see an increase in the overall timeliness. A further 141 mid-way reviews were undertaken by the child’s Independent Reviewing Officer which in an increase of 96 (c.213%) in comparison to quarter 3.

Young People are encouraged to take innovative and creative approaches to their reviews, such as videos, PowerPoints and journals. The Trust have trailed video conferencing for distant reviews and for contribution over the last two quarters due to Covid and children were consulted with via a range of multimedia options. Children and Young People appear to embrace these changes.

## 26. Contract KPIs within target range albeit exceeding Covid adjusted targets

- **Timeliness of single assessments.** Overall performance increased across the quarter to c.85% with an extra 183 (c.20%) conducted and total of 1,073 C&F assessments completed within timescale. The child was seen in c.95% of completed C&F assessments.
- **Children in need with an appropriate and current plan in place.** Performance is consistently above 90% and has improved by 3% from quarter 3 to with a total of 1,657 plans in place. The monitoring of plans through regular case supervision, case tracking, audit and six monthly reassessment has stabilised performance.
- **Percentage of LAC reviews completed in timescale.** Performance has fallen to c.91% with 472 of the 519 reviews recorded in timescale. There were participation in reviews by 243 children and young people of which 205 (c.84%) made a meaningful contribution in their review while 94% of care plans were in timescale. Young People are encouraged to take innovative and creative approaches to their reviews, such as videos, PowerPoints and journals.

- **Front line staff receiving supervisions in timescale.** Supervision of Front Line Staff in tolerance with 880 front line staff supervisions undertaken throughout this quarter out 1,045 opportunities. There was a downward trend across the quarter Jan c.98%, Feb c.84%, Mar c.73%, although some may be under-recording.

27. Contract KPIs currently outside target range

- **Percentage of Audit Cases Graded Good or Better.** A performance, Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Framework (QAF) has been established with the objective to improve our understanding of whether we are supporting the right children, in the right way, at the right time, and whether we are making a difference to the progress that children make and the outcomes they achieve.

The revised QAF is based on a performance reporting cycle and designed to promote informed commentary from Heads of Service, which is then subject to scrutiny and validation. The key objective to the updated QAF is the triangulation of performance information with quality measures, i.e.:

- Audit, including the recently established Moderation Panel
- Quarterly reports from Advocacy and Participation
- Quarterly reports from the IRO and CPC service
- Quarterly Reports from the Legal Gateway Panel
- Quarterly Reports from the Customer Experience Manager

The plan is to also incorporate feedback from the Practice Forum that we will shortly implement. This information will be analysed to identify our strengths and areas of improvement so that we can act appropriately to improve performance and the experience of the child and family.

Further work is required to ensure that the monthly audit report captures all of the audit activity undertaken in the Trust. This will improve connectivity between the auditing already undertaken in specific services, e.g. Front Door, Fostering, and strengthen audit in areas such as MST-CAN, Domestic Abuse Navigators.

28. Contract KPIs currently suspended

- **Percentage of Children who wait less 14 months between entering care and move in with adoptive family.**
- **Percentage of Freedom of Information requested responded to within expected timescales.**

The above two metrics will be reviewed during quarter 1 2021/22 to determine if these can be reinitialised.

29. Strategic Partnership Indicators

30. The Trust has 27 “strategic partnership” indicators. These are differentiated from the contractual measures as they measure outcomes and activity that are either:

- not entirely within The Trust’s direct control and therefore impacted by the partnership’s response and practice during Covid; or
- closely linked to an existing contractual indicator, so reported in addition.

31. The table at paragraph 12 above provides a summary of these indicators reporting that 19 (c.71%) are within or better than target range, 4 (c.15%) outside target range, and with a further 4 (c.15%) not reported this quarter for varying reasons.
32. **There are 19 reported Strategic Partnership Indicators on/better than target or within target range:**
- Families demonstrating improved outcomes at point of closure to Parenting and Family Support Team
  - Length of intervention from family support services
  - Referrals that are re-referrals within 12 months
  - Assessments completed within 20 days
  - Percentage of Children in Need open for >6 months < 1 year
  - Percentage of Children in Need open for >1 year < 2 years
  - Becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for second or subsequent time in a two year period
  - Percentage of monthly case file audits rated as 'requires improvement' or better
  - Percentage of Child Protection Plans lasting two years or more which have ended during the year
  - Long term stability of placement of children in care; percentage of long term children in care in stable placements
  - Percentage Trust residential settings rated good or better
  - Average time in days between the Local Authority receiving a court order to placing a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family.
  - Children ceasing care to be looked after under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
  - Rate of Children adopted from care.
  - Rate of 19 & 20 year olds Staying Put with their foster carers after their 18th birthday
  - Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (age 19-21)
  - Care Leavers in Employment, Training and Education (age 19-21)
  - Full time equivalent posts covered by agency staff
  - Staff turnover rate
33. **There are four Strategic Partnership Indicators outside tolerance:**
- **Percentage of CIN > 2 years.** Albeit this has just fallen out of tolerance range at 31% there has been very little variation for the past two years. Doncaster has improved its position from 32 to 23 per 10,000 children have been in need for longer than 2 years since 2019/20. Doncaster is also performing better than national & statistical neighbours.
  - **Care Proceedings on Track to be completed within 26 weeks.** Despite the various challenges and being outside tolerance, performance has improved for two consecutive quarters and Doncaster has received positive feedback from CAFCASS and a recent Ofsted inspection report. There are 197 cases subject to legal proceedings with 120 cases on-track to complete in timescale. Performance is dependent upon HMCTS, CAFCASS etc so not entirely within the Trust's control. Due to this it is important that quarterly meetings with CAFCASS service managers continue to take place with legal services, the ACPS Head of Service and Principal Social Worker in order to review performance, to identify any requirements for thematic audits and share practice improvement ideas.
  - Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. This measure will be highly volatile as the numbers of children

adopted is low. During quarter 4 we had 8 children adopted and during the year we had a total of 21 which is 11 (c.34%) lower than 2019/20.

- Children ceasing to be looked after due to a Child Arrangement Order (CAO). Due to the low numbers of children leaving care performance will be volatile as moves to independence, adoption or Special Guardianship Orders increase.

No children ceased to be looked after in this quarter through a child arrangement order and 12 (c.39%) of children leaving care moved onto independent living or returned home but not through a Child Arrangement or Special Guardianship Order, 3 (c.10%) left on a Special Guardianship Order (SGO). There were 8 children adopted in quarter 4.

34. **Financial performance – Summary**

35. The 2020/21 outturn is an **operating overspend of £2.2m** (inc. £0.16m funding for quality work that is not available due to the effect of Covid on the Council's finances) which the Council has fully funded. In March 2021 the Council made a payment of £2.4m to the Children's Trust based on the forecast at month ten (£0.15m less than forecast at quarter three mainly due to more funding received from the DfE than previously expected); the year end outturn is an improvement of £0.18m (to be returned to the Council).
36. Some cost-pressures (particularly care ladder) were brought forward into 2020/21, on a reduced budget. During 2020/21 there was an agency cost pressure due to, at times, roughly double social work staff on maternity compared to average, and increased caseloads. The Trust has plans to manage the cost pressures, including care ladder and agency. Some cost pressures are phasing rather than not achieved.
37. The Trust received £1.3m from the Council for estimated Covid costs. At year-end a review of the estimated Covid costs was carried out and, based on the assumptions used, cost pressures totalling £1.36m were identified. It should be noted a different set of assumptions increased the total estimated cost pressures due to Covid to £1.9m. These cost pressures, and potentially new ones, will continue into 2021/22.
38. The main Covid pressures were increased Out of Authority (OOA) Placements £0.58m (based upon 50% of the 2020/21 net increase in numbers), increased Fostering Placements £0.17m (from November onwards), a six month delay to the opening of two-bed homes £0.2m, and Agency costs of £0.27m due to a spike in referral numbers from July onwards which continued for the rest of the financial year.
39. In July 2020-March 2021 the Trust saw an increase in referrals of 720 (+24%), C&F assessments 886 (+26%), S.47s initiated 451 (+56%), and CiC numbers increased from 517 at the end of January 2021 to 550 at the end of March 2021. The Trust is still concerned about what may happen in 2021/22, due to both local and national lockdowns, and the "lag" of the effects, with an adverse impact on next year's costs.
40. In the DfE Vulnerable Children and Young People Survey Summary Wave 8 over 80% of LAs estimate an increase in the cost of fostering and residential placements.
41. The operating overspend of £2.2m not due to Covid is mainly OOA Placements £1.6m, 16+ CiC Placements £0.31m, and Staffing (mainly agency) £0.48m. The 2020/21 projected outturn summary is:



Overall Heading	2020/21 Budget			2020/21 Outturn			2020/21 Variance			Variance due to Covid 19	Change from Q3 non Covid 19	Change from Q3 due to Covid 19
	Gross £000's	Income £000's	Net £000's	Gross £000's	Income £000's	Net £000's	Gross £000's	Income £000's	Net £000's	Net £000's	Net £000's	Net £000's
Children Looked After	32,421	-3,948	28,474	35,432	-4,404	31,028	-3,011	457	-2,554	-992	117	-19
Other Children and Family Services	1,544	0	1,544	1,739	0	1,739	-195	0	-195	-44	-94	-44
Family Support Services	3,044	0	3,044	2,703	0	2,703	340	0	340	0	101	0
Youth Justice	1,817	0	1,817	1,972	0	1,972	-155	0	-155	0	-148	0
Safeguarding Children and Young People's Services	13,179	-39	13,140	13,771	-115	13,656	-593	77	-516	-280	243	0
Services for Young People	292	0	292	417	0	417	-125	0	-125	0	-11	0
Contract Value	0	-51,322	-51,322	0	-55,126	-55,126	0	3,803	3,803	1,304	2,405	0
Support Services and Management Costs	4,605	-1,591	3,013	4,774	-1,342	3,432	-170	-249	-419	-46	180	12
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>56,900</b>	<b>-56,900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60,809</b>	<b>-60,988</b>	<b>-179</b>	<b>-3,909</b>	<b>4,088</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>-58</b>	<b>2,793</b>	<b>-51</b>

## 42. **Financial report - Introduction**

43. The 2020-21 contract value was £55.4m and at outturn there was an operating overspend of £2.2m. In December 2020 the Trust received £1.3m of funding from the Council for the estimated costs due to Covid and in March 2021 the Council made a payment of £2.4m to the Children's Trust based on the forecast operating overspend at month ten; the £0.18m improvement / balance will be returned to the Council.
44. The number of Children in Care of DCST at the end of March 2021 is 550, an increase of 33 since the end of January 2021. The average Children in Care numbers for April 2020 to January 2021 was 515; ranging from 507 in 2020 to 529 in November. The increase of 33 in the February and March numbers has resulted in an 8.5% increase compared to April 2020. Due to the recent lockdown and school closures there are workload and cost pressures that will impact on the MTFS and 2021/22 budget. The number of 550 may increase if the status of some 16+ children are re-categorised as Children in Care by a review being carried out by the Trust and nationally; there may be additional costs too.
45. At year-end a review of the estimated Covid costs was carried out and assumptions were used to identify additional costs on the Care Ladder. 50% of the 2020/21 net increase in OOA placements numbers and an increase in the Fostering numbers from November onwards being due to Covid were the assumptions used. Other assumptions contemplated increased costs of Covid to £1.9m. It is complex and difficult to estimate the exact costs that are a direct consequence of Covid, but £1.3m to £1.9m is the current range. It is likely that the impact of Covid 19 on 2021/22 will be of a similar, or greater, magnitude if the Children in Care numbers continue to rise and the full-year effect of increased Care Ladder numbers.
46. At the end of March there were 53 OOA placements plus 3 parent and child placements; an increase of 5 since the end of quarter three. With the closure of Tickhill Square there are 5 fewer in-house residential beds. The 4 x two-bed homes could reduce OOA placements by 8 by October 2021. The timing of the planned opening of the two-bed homes has been pushed back to 2021/22 due to Covid.
47. The split of fostering placements at the end of March was 40.3% Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and 59.7% In-House Fostering against an MTFS target of a 40% / 60%. There has been a nil reduction overall in the number of IFAs in 2020/21 whereas the number of In-House Foster Carer placements have increased by 23 since April 2020. In February and March IFAs increased by 8 and In-House Fostering by 15 – a correlation to the increased Children in Care numbers.
48. The Trust had a higher level of agency in 2020/21, mainly social workers, of which 6 are due to the increased referral numbers from July onwards, whereas the budget for agency cover has been reduced in the MTFS, causing an overspend. Plans to reduce agency numbers have been shared with the Council linked to Social Worker Pay and the new Social Worker Academy.

49. In addition to the contract sum, the Trust has drawn down its £0.22m underspend from 2018/19 that was in the Council's earmarked reserves to use on Ofsted preparation and to offset the current overspend. Prior to Covid the Trust requested £0.16m of its £1.24m 2019/20 underspend to support its quality work; this is no longer available due to the impact of Covid on the Council's finances. The £0.16m was previously reported as a Covid pressure but from month six onwards this is included in the operating overspend to be consistent with the Council's reporting.
50. Key Variances over/under £250k:
51. There are five significant (£250k+/-) variances - Looked after Children, Safeguarding, Family Support Services, Support Services and Management costs, and Contract Value; details below:
52. **Looked After Children - £1.56m operating overspend** (£2.55m total overspend including £0.99m due to Covid):
  53. In the DfE Vulnerable Children and Young People Survey Summary Wave 8 over 80% of LAs estimate an increase in the cost of fostering and residential placements.
  54. **In-house Residential, including two-bed homes, £0.13m operating overspend** (£0.04m total underspend including £0.17m net cost savings due to Covid)
  55. No significant change since quarter three. There was an overspend of £0.26m for the existing In-House Residential homes, mainly due to staffing being over-establishment. The staff over-establishment were due to transfer to the two-bed homes in the second half of the financial year but the timing of the planned opening of the two-bed homes has been delayed to the second quarter of 2021/22 due to Covid. The revised assumptions resulted in a £0.30m saving for the two-bed homes in 2020/21 less £0.11m additional cost of the staff over-establishment in the second half of the financial year; therefore the overall savings due to the delays from Covid is £0.19m. This is offset by loss of savings being delivered in OOA Placements of £0.4m:
  56. **Out of Area (OOA) Placements - £1.6m operating overspend** (£2.58m total overspend including £0.98m due to Covid)
  57. At the end of March 2021 there were 53 OOA placements plus 3 parent and child placements, which is an increase of 5 since the end of quarter three. There were 13 new placements in Q4 (forecast assumed 2 new placements): 7 new placements to the care ladder, 3 transferred from an IFA placement, 1 transferred from In House Fostering and 2 new parent and child placements. The new placements have been offset by in January from 1 back to Family, 1 transferring to In House Residential Home and 1 transferring to In House Fostering, and 5 placements transferring to CiC 16+ placements in March. The outturn was £0.07m more than forecast at quarter three. The timing of the planned opening of the two-bed homes has been delayed to the first quarter of 2021/22 due to Covid.
  58. The year-end total of 53 OOA placements plus 3 parent and child placements is a net increase of 13 more than at the start of the financial year. The Trust's 2021/22 budget assumes OOA numbers would be reduced to 43 for April 2021

meaning a significant pressure (assumed at least 50% Covid related) will be carried into 2021/22.

59. At year-end a review of the estimated Covid costs was carried out and an assumption of 50% of the 2020/21 net increase in OOA placements numbers was used to identify additional costs of £0.58m. There was also a six month delay to the opening of two-bed homes due to Covid resulting in OOA savings of £0.4m not being achieved.
60. The budgeted funding from the DSG High Needs Block was increased to £3.2m for 2020/21, and the income at outturn was £0.28m above this which offsets the OOA overspend but increases pressure on the High Needs Block.
61. **Independent Fostering Agencies - £0.02m operating underspend** (£0.04m total overspend including £0.06m due to Covid)
62. The outturn was £0.13m less than forecast at quarter three. The forecast assumed £0.17m for a potential 5% increase the numbers due to Covid but the increase was only seen in February and March; a net increase of 8 placements incurring costs of £0.06m. The split of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements at the end of March was 40.3% against an MTFS target of 40%. There has been a nil reduction overall in the number of IFAs in 2020/21 whereas the number of In-House Foster Carers have increased by 23 since April 2020.
63. **In-House Fostering - £0.1m operating overspend** (£0.2m total overspend including £0.1m due to Covid)
64. No significant change from quarter three. The overspend is due to the average cost of placements being above budget and due to Covid as there has been a net increase of 30 placements from November onwards. The split of In-House Fostering placements was 59.7% at the end of March against an MTFS target of 60%. The target has been achieved by the number of In-House Foster Carers increasing by 23 since April 2020 rather than IFAs reducing.
65. **16+ CiC Placements - £0.3m operating overspend** (£0.31m total overspend including £0.01m due to Covid)
66. No significant change from quarter three. There are currently 11 high cost 16+ packages costing and these cases are being reviewed in the same way as the OOA packages.
67. **Allowances Savings target - £0.18m not achieved in 2020/21**
68. As part of the MTFS for 2020/21 there was a savings target of £0.3m from the review of allowances. Savings of £0.12m have been achieved in 2020/21, from in-year audits carried out and the new policy going live in January 2021. The number of adopters receiving an allowance have reduced by c. 30% during 2020/21. The remainder of the savings will be achieved in 2021/22.
69. **Family Support Services - £0.34m operating underspend**
70. There is an underspend due to staffing vacancies in 2020/21.

71. **Safeguarding Children - £0.24m operating overspend** (£0.52m total overspend including £0.28m due to Covid):
72. The reason for the overspend is mainly due to agency cover for vacancies, high maternity leave, Front Door Covid impact and caseload cost pressures, against a reduced budget. The outturn is £0.27m less than at quarter three mainly due to the expected Agency costs being less than previously forecast. Agency costs of £0.25m were incurred for 6 workers that were needed following a significant increase in referral numbers from July onwards due to Covid, which will continue into 2021/22.
73. **Support Services and Management Costs - £0.37m operating overspend** (£0.42m total overspend including £0.05m due to Covid):
74. Prior to Covid the Trust requested £0.16m of its £1.2m 2019/20 underspend for Ofsted preparation work; this is no longer available due to the impact of Covid on the Council's finances. The £0.16m was previously reported as a Covid pressure but from month six onwards this is now included in the operating overspend to be consistent with the Council's reporting. The one-off £0.22m from the Council's earmarked reserves is allocated here. The Trust received DfE income in 2020/21, higher than forecast in quarter three, but lower than budgeted.
75. **Contract Value - £3.8m additional funding (£1.3m to fund Covid pressures):**
76. In December 2020 the Trust received £1.3m from the Council for the estimated costs of Covid and in March 2021 the Council made a payment of £2.4m to the Children's Trust based on the forecast operating overspend at month ten; the £0.18m balance will be returned to the Council. The other additional funding of £0.1m is in-year grant increases passed onto the Trust and budget to cover an increase in the DIPS SLA.
77. **Key action being taken to achieve efficiencies into 2021/22**
78. The Trust will continue to actively review costs across a number of headings in 2021/22 (but noting Covid pressures will continue), such as:
- OOA placements will continue to be reviewed via monthly with "deep dives" into the best options for bringing children closer to home safely
    - Specific CiC packages will also be reviewed monthly
  - The cost of agency is planned to reduce as a consequence of:
    - increased social worker pay across some (but not all) areas to result in attraction and retention of employed social workers
    - the new social worker academy to "grow and retain our own"
    - changes to the Front Door processes to improved caseloads
  - Implementation of the remaining changes to adoption allowances
  - Pursue the Future Placements Strategy proposals, namely:
    - More children's homes (two-bed and 16+)
    - Increase use of In-House Foster Carers / reduce IFAs
  - Other budgeted efficiencies:
    - savings that accrue from homeworking
    - other overhead savings

79. **External scrutiny and evaluation within Quarter 4 2020/21**

80. Due to Covid, Ofsted has made fewer visits to children's services, homes etc during 2020/21, including Doncaster. Inspection activity restarted in quarter 4 with offsite "virtual" assurance visits taking place. Physical Inspections of children's homes began from April 2021. It is anticipated that the full inspection regime for children's safeguarding services will return to normal from autumn 2021.
81. The "virtual" Focussed Assurance Visit of Doncaster Children's Safeguarding services took place in February 2021 (published 9 April 2021). The scope had a focus on quality of practice and decision making during Covid. There was no graded judgement at the end of the process (e.g. Outstanding, Good) due to how Ofsted are conducting Focussed Assurance Visits during Covid.
82. The process went smoothly due to good partnership working between the Lead Inspector, Trust, DCS and DMBC.
83. The report concluded that no children were found to be at immediate risk of harm, and the letter does not identify priority actions. It does identify four areas for improvement that are consistent with our existing self-evaluation and improvement plan. These are:
- The focus on the quality and impact of intervention in case-file audits
  - The analysis of risk for children experiencing long-term neglect
  - The consistency of recording to provide evidence of multi-agency reviews of plans and progress
  - Visits to care leavers and management's oversight of the support provided to them
84. Following feedback the Trust established an Ofsted action plan to address the areas identified above. Delivery of this plan is underway with all but one action on-track for delivery and aligned to our wider partnership improvement plan. The one outstanding action will remain a focus for the Trust's leadership team until it is back on-track
85. The inspection team reported back that DCST and DMBC know ourselves well. They could see and reported back positively on our Covid response, including the role of partners. There was praise for our staff with the lead inspector saying it was to their credit that they continued to practice in the community throughout the last year.

86. **Activity in Quarter 4 2020/21**

87. The Trust was involved in the following activities in quarter 4:
- 11 January at 4.30pm to 7.30pm – Adoption Information Event
  - 13 January at 11am and at 3pm – Fostering Information Event
  - 28 January – Big Steps Challenge
  - 1-7 February – Children's Mental Health Week linked to national campaign
  - 9 February – Safer Internet Day linked to national campaign.
  - 9 February – LGBT History Month
  - 10 February at 4.30pm to 7.30pm – Adoption Information Event
  - 10 February at 11am and at 3pm – Fostering Information Event
  - 15 February - #CareDay21
  - 24 February – Step Up to Social Work
  - 2 March – Recruitment Event 7pm – 8pm.
  - 8 March – International Women's Day
  - 10 March at 11am and at 3pm – Fostering Information Event

- 15 March at 4.30pm to 7.30pm – Adoption Information Event
- 16 March – World Social Work Day
- 18 March – National Child Exploitation Awareness Day linked national campaign
- 18 March – Star Awards presentation ceremony

88. **Activity in Quarter 1 2021/22**

89. The Trust will continue to work with colleagues in DMBC on the delivery of the Integrated People's Solution (DIPS project).
90. The Trust will continue to take action in response to Covid including regular meetings with the Council, the Council's DCS and the Children's Directorate, develop action plans to support our work, support vulnerable children to attend school, update internal performance measures and work with Team Doncaster partners.
91. We will continue to use Public Health England and local Public Health to guide our decisions, operate 'business as usual' when possible, review the contract with DMBC to reflect current circumstances, promote the wellbeing of our colleagues and use technology where possible e.g. virtual CP conferences.
92. The following events are scheduled or have taken place in quarter 1 2021/22:
- 1 April – Stress Awareness Month
  - 6 April – Easter celebrations
  - 9 April – Care Experience Month
  - 14 April at 4.30pm to 7.30pm – Adoption Information Event
  - 14 April at 11am and at 7pm – Fostering Information Event
  - Spring Staff Summits – 20 and 26 April
  - 20 April – The Big Ask
  - 28 April – Deaf Awareness Week
  - Foster Care Fortnight – 10 to 23 May
  - Mental Health Awareness Week – 10 to 15 May
  - 10 May at 4.30pm to 7.30pm – Adoption Information Event
  - 12 May at 11am and at 7pm – Fostering Information Event
  - 19 May at 11am and at 7pm – Fostering Information Event
  - Volunteers Week – 1 to 7 May
  - 16 June at 11am and at 7pm – Fostering Information Event
  - 16 June at 4.30pm to 7.30pm – Adoption Information Event

93. **IMPACT ON COUNCIL'S KEY OBJECTIVES**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayoral priority – creating jobs and Housing</li> <li>• Mayoral priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</li> <li>• Mayoral priority: protecting Doncaster's vital services</li> </ul>	<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"> <li>• Mayoral priority: Safeguarding our Communities</li> </ul>	<p>Ensuring children and young people are free and feel from harm are key ambitions of both the Council and The Trust.</p>

Outcomes	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayoral priority: Bringing down the cost of living</li> </ul>	
People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayoral priority: creating jobs and Housing</li> <li>• Mayoral priority: Safeguarding our communities</li> <li>• Mayoral priority: bringing down the cost of living</li> </ul>	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.
Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance	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.

94. **RECOMMENDED OPTIONS**

To note the report.

95. **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS [RM 07/05/2021]**

Risks and assumptions specific to the key performance indicator set, operational and financial context are identified in the body of this report.

96. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [RM 17/05/2021]**

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report except for the potential aforementioned amendments to contractual measures to reflect Covid.

97. **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [LE 17/05/2021]**

There are no equality implications directly arising from this report.

98. **HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS [LE 17/05/2021]**

There are no specific human resources implications directly arising from this report.

99. **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [RM 17/05/2021]**

There are no information technology implications directly arising from this report.

100. **HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [JT 17/05/2021]**

Health and social care services are inextricably linked and are working in robust partnership to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families. The move towards integrated health and social care delivery models supports these partnerships and create shared outcome objectives. Health colleagues are keen to support Doncaster Children's Trust to achieve the quality and performance levels they aspire to as this will impact on the wider health and wellbeing outcomes for Doncaster families.

101. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [RM 17/05/2021]**

Included within the body of the report. The financial impact of Covid for 2020/21 has been estimated and will continue to be felt into 2021/22.

## **102. CONSULTATION**

Consultation has taken place with key managers and Directors.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix 1: Summary of key performance indicators for quarter 4 2020/21

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## **ACRONYMS**

<b>BAU</b>	<b>Business As Usual</b>
<b>CAFCASS</b>	<b>Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service</b>
<b>C&amp;F</b>	<b>Child and Family</b>
<b>CiC</b>	<b>Children in Care</b>
<b>CiN</b>	<b>Children in Need</b>
<b>CP</b>	<b>Child Protection</b>
<b>DCST</b>	<b>Doncaster Children's Services Trust</b>
<b>DfE</b>	<b>Department for Education</b>
<b>DMBC</b>	<b>Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council</b>
<b>DSG</b>	<b>Dedicated School's Grant</b>
<b>IFA</b>	<b>Independent Foster Agency</b>
<b>IRO</b>	<b>Independent Reviewing Officer</b>
<b>KPI</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicator</b>
<b>LA</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>
<b>MASH</b>	<b>Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub</b>
<b>MTFS</b>	<b>Medium Term Financial Strategy</b>
<b>OOA</b>	<b>Out of Authority</b>
<b>OSMC</b>	<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Management Committee</b>
<b>PAFSS</b>	<b>Parenting and Family Support Service</b>
<b>PNC</b>	<b>Police National Computer</b>
<b>Qtr</b>	<b>Quarter</b>
<b>RAG</b>	<b>Red Amber Green</b>
<b>SGO</b>	<b>Special Guardianship Order</b>