



To the Members of the Cabinet

Performance Challenge of Doncaster Children's Services Trust: Quarter 2, 2021/22

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Rachael Blake 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?

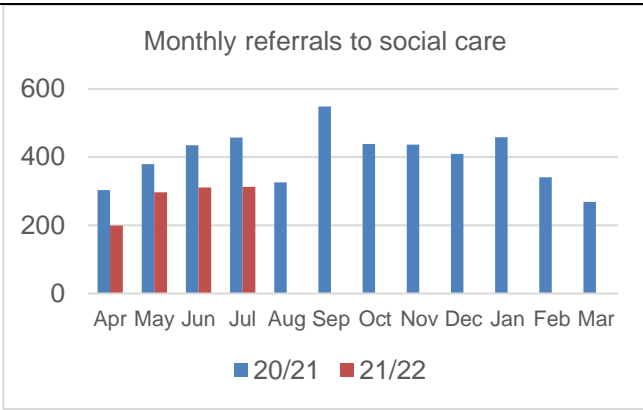
5. This report includes current progress of DCST's performance, including the response to the Covid local epidemic curve that may impact on the delivery of services to the people of Doncaster, as well as the reputation of public services across the Borough. The Trust has taken steps to mitigate this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

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION

6. In August 2021 Early Help, Children's Social Care and Leaving Care services transitioned from Liquid Logic case management and recording system to MOSAIC. This decision was made so that children and adult services were using the same case recording system. The transition to MOSAIC has introduced significant challenges in relation to performance reporting and this is impacting across most data areas. This impact had been anticipated and work is underway to address the issues that need to be resolved in order to restore confidence with regard to the performance. Some of these impacts will be more easily resolved than others as what is needed it to re-

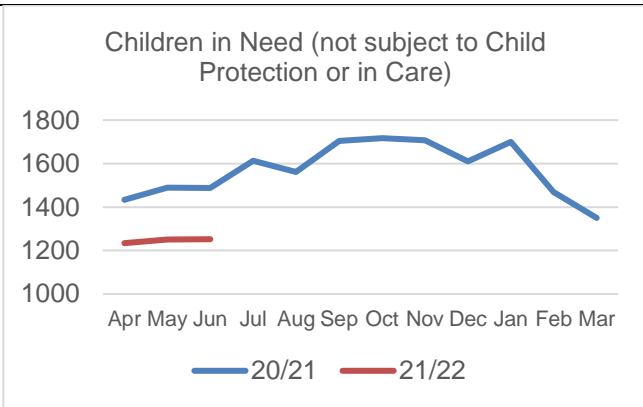
establish internal reporting pathways. Other issues will prove more complex as they relate to the data generated by the system.

7. This report provides data for those areas where there is some confidence about the accuracy of the information available. Unfortunately there are a number of areas where the information is clearly incorrect or has clear gaps in it. One example of the former is the number of reviews for children in care which, according to the system, stood at 2% at the end of Q2. Prior to this rates have been consistently above 90%.
8. Where possible, performance is benchmarked against national, regional and similar authority statistics. Although national comparator data for the period 2020/21 has recently been published (28th October 2021) this is currently only published at a national level. Given this, the comparisons are against latest available information which is currently 2019/20.
9. **Current Demand and activity levels – setting the context for Trust Operational and Financial Performance.**
10. Demand for children's social care services has been impacted by Covid, with significant variances from quarter to quarter. The charts below seek to demonstrate changes in demand for different sections of the social care pathway, the reasons behind this, and the impact on services and children and families.



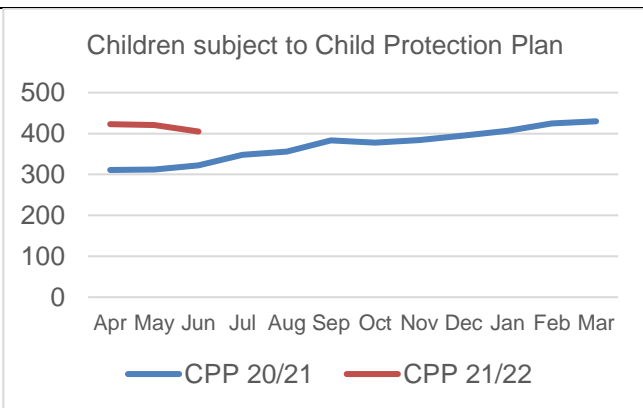
Referral levels is one of the areas where the data available is known not to be accurate as the report available only includes referrals in July 2021 during Q2. When this is cross-referenced with other data sources the results are so inconsistent they can only be inaccurate¹. What available data does suggest is that the position is stabilising at a level broadly similar to the referral rates prior to Covid. It should be noted however that in addition to the data quality issues highlighted above this is a volatile measure.

The local guidance regarding thresholds has been subject to further review in order to respond to a challenge about where services for children in need sit within this continuum. This work has been progressed jointly by colleagues in DSCT and DMBC to ensure there is a consistent position across early help, targeted support and social care services.



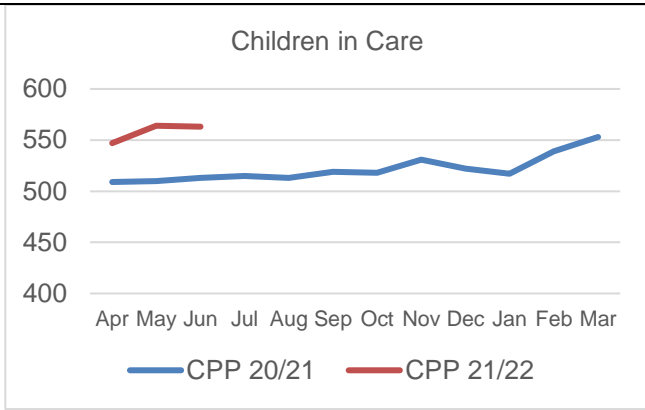
The issues in relation to the reporting of referrals impact on our understanding of the number of Children in Need. This is perhaps best demonstrated by the variation in the figures in the Children’s Analysis Tool (ChAT) report which looks at demand and performance over the preceding six months. In August ChAT recorded 3227 children in need while the September figure was 5634.

A more reliable as at figure comes from the Caseload report which on 18.10.21 recorded 2047 cases open to a social worker, although this would include children in care and those subject to a protection plan.



For children subject to a protection plan there is a higher degree of confidence about the accuracy of the reported position. That said there is currently no validated way to end a plan at a point where a child moves to another authority or becomes looked after. On 15.10.21 there were 10 children within this category. This issue is broadly typical of the reporting issues we are encountering in the system as children tend to be over-counted rather than missed

Our rates of children subject to a protection plan continue to be higher than previous levels in Doncaster and comparator authorities. ChAT indicates that at the number of children subject to a plan in August was 410. The figure in September was 434, although we know the figure will be lower than this for the reasons set out above



The reported increase in the number of children in care has continued. There is a correlation between the numbers of children subject to a protection plan as the majority of children who come into care do so because of concern regarding their safety.

The number of Children in Care (CIC) in August was 565 and in September stood at 580. This was a 2% increase from August to September 2021. There were 60 more children were in care in September 2021 when compared to September 2020. Benchmark data in August indicates that the rate of Children in care per 10,000 was 84. Of the 580 children in care 480 (c.83%) have been looked after >= 6 months and 390 (c.67%) have been looked after >= 1 year.

In August 2021 79% of children in care were subject to either an Interim Care Order or Care Order. A further 3% of children were subject a Placement Order (i.e. have a court authorised plan for adoption). This means that the court has judged that it was right for these children to be in care.

In August 2021 6 children (1%) of children in care were unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC). We anticipate that this figure will increase as a consequence of various measures taken by national government to relocate families and young people seeking asylum to alleviate pressures in areas such as Kent.

11. Work has been undertaken by our Performance Team to produce a caseload report which now incorporates caseloads in the Inspiring Futures (Leaving Care) service area. Figures for the Inspiring futures team relate to the number of young people allocated to a Personal Advisor. Outside of this caseload information relates to the number of children allocated to a qualified social worker. The Caseload report does not yet include information about Parent and Family Support Services (PAFSS) and the plan is to incorporate this into the report moving forward.
12. The allocation position as at 18/10//21 was that there were 14 staff with 26 or more cases (25 cases or more is deemed to be a high caseload). This is an increase in the

¹ Referral figures in Q2 July 298, August 242, however this includes 144 where the date is unclear in the record. Convention is unclear, September 405 however there are also significant number of other referrals where the date is not clearly recorded by the system.

position reported at the end of Q1 6 social workers held caseloads at this level. Of those staff with caseloads in excess of 25 in October 2021:

- 3 were in the Inspiring Futures team
- 11 were in the assessment services, where caseloads are inherently more volatile due to the nature of the work undertaken in this area
- 1 was in our Area Child Protection Service (ACPS)

The Average caseload across the Trust in October was 16.2 cases per worker. The position by service area² was

- Assessment Service – 21.6. The highest caseload in this service area was 37. 6 of the 11 workers with high caseloads had 30 or more cases.
- ACPS – 16.5. The highest caseload in this service area was 26
- Children in Care – 13.2. 2 workers had caseloads of 19 which was the highest caseload in this service area.
- Inspiring Futures – 19.2. The highest caseload in this service area was 31

13. Previous Caseload information:

		2018/19	2019/20				2020/21				2021/22	Latest performance against last qtr / Trend		Movement			
		Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1		Since Qtr 1 2020/21		Since Qtr 4 2020/21		
Caseloads	Average Social Worker Caseloads	23.0	24.1	18.4	17.8	18.5	19.1	18.2	19.1	15.8	18.1	▲		-1.0	-5.2%	2.3	15%
	Average PAFSS Worker Caseloads	13.1	10.9	9.1	10.0	10.3	13.3	9.6	11.5	11.7	11.9	▲		-1.4	-10.5%	0.2	2%
	Maximum Social Worker Caseload	38	38	28	29	27	35	44	41	29	32	▲		-3.0	-8.6%	3.0	10%
	Maximum PAFSS Caseloads	18	20	13	16	13	19	17	18	17	20	▲		1.0	8%	3.0	18%
Workforce	Percentage days lost to sickness	5.0%	3.4%	4.4%	5.8%	5.1%	4.5%	4.3%	5.8%	4.8%	4.4%	▼		-0.1%		-0.4%	
	Turnover of Staff (rolling 12 months)	15.0%	12.4%	13.8%	12.0%	13.5%	14.6%	15.0%	16.3%	12.9%	13.5%	▲		-1.1%		0.6%	
	% frontline FTE posts covered by Agency Staff	4.0%	5.7%	6.2%	7.0%	7.0%	7.4%	6.4%	5.0%	6.0%	7.7%	▲		0.3%		1.7%	

14. The benchmark for considering a caseload as high does not give a clear picture of the current level of demand. The Trust has an aspiration for social workers to have caseloads of 16 – 18. On 15.10.21 58 of 139 staff had caseloads in excess of 18, with 79 having caseloads of 17 or higher.

15. **Summary Position of Contract Indicators and wider Strategic indicator set.**

16. One of the measures taken in response to the Coronavirus pandemic was that performance targets were revised for the twelve core contract measures. It was agreed that we would return to pre-Covid targets from Q2. However, as already indicated, the impact of the transition to MOSAIC has significantly compromised our ability to report

² There are two teams not included in these figures, the CSE Team (av caseload 12.3) and the children with disabilities team (av caseload 13.8)

with confidence against these measures. 5 of the 12 Core performance targets have discrepancies that are at a level of magnitude which indicates they are incorrect:

- % of children in care reviews held within timescale
- % Children in Need with an Appropriate and Current Plan in Place
- % of cases where the lead social worker has seen the child/young person in accordance with the timescales specified in the child protection plan. For all children who were the subject of a child protection plan during the year
- % of care leavers the LA is in touch with
- % of Care Leavers with pathway plans which have been reviewed in timescale

17. 3 of the remaining measures are taken from sources outside of Mosaic and so we have higher confidence in these, although we know there is a data latency issue linked to the supervision performance measure. The performance information report in relation to the remaining 4 measures has information cross referenced from multiple points in the system and is therefore more likely to be accurate. Commentary with regard to these 7 measures is included in the following section of this report.

18. Of the measures where there is some confidence:

- 3 exceeded the target measure
- 2 were within 5 % of the target
- 2 did not meet the target, although it should be noted that 1 of these targets was suspended during Covid and performance in relation to the other exceeded the revised Covid target

19. Summary of contract measure position at the end of the quarter. Contract KPIs On or better than BAU target range

- **Percentage of Initial child protection conferences achieved within the statutory 15-day timescale**

Performance	97%	Target	95%	Trend	Stable
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Making timely multi-agency decisions with regard to the safety of children identified as having suffered, or being at risk of, significant harm is critically important. We saw a small deterioration in performance as a consequence of the transition to MOSAIC, and staff having to familiarise themselves with new systems and processes. Despite this performance remained above target (Q1 performance was 98%).

Doncaster's performance has been consistently above local and national comparators since 2018/19.

- **Short Term Stability of Placement of CiC: Percentage of 3+ moves in last 12 months (lower the better)**

Performance	8%	Target	9%	Trend	Stable
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There will inevitably be a small number of children who have to move placements and sometimes this can be a positive outcome as they will be moving on to long-term carers. That said promoting consistency for children in care is key to improving outcomes. There has been considerable national attention given to the state of the children's placement market.

Our Future Placement Strategy has been developed to expand the range of in-house placements we offer. We have invested in creating additional Service Manager capacity in residential care to support this expansion and have recently secured new properties to increase in-house residential care provision. In-house provision not only offers better value for money than external provision it enables children and young people to remain living in their own communities.

Although performance slightly declined in Q2 (Performance in Q1 was 7%) it is positive that performance remained with target. Performance in Doncaster is better than regional and national comparator performance.

- **Timeliness of single assessments**

Performance	94%	Target	90%	Tolerance	75%	Trend	Stable
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During Q2 we completed 800 initial assessments, 750 of which were within 45 days (the position in Q1 was 720 children and family assessments with 641 completed within 45 working days).

Assessments are the foundation of effective social work intervention as they represent our understanding of a families strengths and challenges and how these impact on children. Work undertaken during the assessment should be a core part of the support offered to family. We have recently introduced Family First meetings, which brings together the agencies working with families as a way of ensuring there is effective joint working from the outset of our work with children and families.

20. Contract measures with 5% of the target.

21. At the end of quarter 2 there were 2 measures within 5% of the target. These are listed below, along with narrative explanation and remedial plans.

- **Percentage of Freedom of Information requested responded to within expected timescale**

Performance	92%	Target	95%	Tolerance	90%	Trend	Stable
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Performance in this area is the same as the position at the end of Q1. The Trust processes FOI requests relating to children’s social care and youth justice as well as those relating to Trust business activity. Within the quarter, 2 out of 24 requests were not delivered in timescale. We continue to track FOIs from point of receipt and will apply for extensions where the 20 working day expectation is not achievable. All FOI are approved by the Director of Social Care in the Trust.

- **Percentage of cases audited graded as “Good” or better**

Performance	76%	Target	80%	Tolerance	60%	Trend	Improving
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Our audits focus on the quality of practice and how this impacts on improving outcomes for children and families. They are comprehensive, focussing on all aspects of casework, including the role of supervision and evidence of the child’s voice and lived experience. A sample of audits are moderated each month to ensure consistency of grading, with the audit moderation panel being chaired by the Director for Social Care. No audits were undertaken in August in recognition of the impact of the transition to MOSAIC.

Although the measure is outside tolerance for the quarter this represents a significant improvement from the position at the end of Q1 where 56% of audits were graded as good or better.

In addition to the routine audits we are about to implement a rolling programme of dip sampling to explore particular practice themes. This will include a focus on early permanence, pre-birth assessments and cases referred to children’s social care by the LADO. The findings of these dip sampling exercises will be incorporated into future performance reports.

The dip sample activity will allow for a deep dive into certain areas, some where we know there have been issues, such as early permanence but also some where we want further assurance or to explore if there are issues present.

22. Contract measures below performance target

- **Percentage of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family**

Performance	47%	Target	60%	Tolerance	56%	Trend	Variable
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The national measure for this is the proportion that of children in care who move into their adoptive family within 14 months. Our current performance is 47% which represents a small improvement compared to the Q1 position of 45%. The number of children involved in the adoption process is very small and so this is a volatile performance measure. We also know that Covid did mean delays in court hearings and medical checks for prospective adopters which impacted on performance.

A key issue for the Trust at this point in time is that our adoption numbers have reduced. Although there has been a national trend of reduction in adoption and increased use of Special Guardianship our reduction is more significant than the other authorities involved in the South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency. Work is currently underway to explore the factors which have impacted on this. The findings of this activity will be include in a future performance report.

- **Percentage Frontline Staff Receiving Supervisions in line with supervision policy**

Performance	73%	Target	90%	Tolerance	70%	Trend	Deteriorating
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We have seen a deterioration performance in relation to this figure in Q2 (Q1 performance was 92.4%). Although this is not directly attributable to the transition to MOSAIC as the data is captured outside of the system, feedback from staff is has been that they encountered a number of additional pressures during August and September that were linked to moving to a new system. This is thought to be the key factor in this deterioration. There will be on-going management attention on this area of performance as we recognise that regular effective supervision is a core component of good practice with children and families.

23. Strategic Partnership Indicators

- 24. In addition to the 12 contract measures, the Trust reports quarterly performance against an additional 27 strategic partnership indicators. These are indicators of the effectiveness of the wider children’s social care system, which are also influenced by

performance and activity of our strategic partners. 2 of these measures are produced annually and are therefore not available in-year.

25. As with the Core Contract measures there are a number of performance targets where the discrepancies are so stark that we know these are reporting issues. These are

Parent and Family Support

- Improved outcomes for families that have received Family Support on closure
- Length of intervention from Family Support services (Days)

Child and Family assessment

- % Re-referrals in last 12 months
- Timeliness of Single Assessment (less than 20 days)
- Duration of open children in need cases (3 separate measures).

Child Protection

- % Becoming Subject of CPP for Second or Subsequent Time within 2Yr Period
- % of Protection plans lasting two years or longer

Children in Care

- Long Term Stability of Placement of CiC: % length of placement >2yrs

Adoption, Fostering, SGO and Child Arrangement Order

- % of children who left care through adoption. NB although we cannot provide this figure as a percentage 3 children were adopted during Q2. Although this represents an increase from Q1, where 1 child was adopted our in year adoption figures are lower than the number of children adopted from the other three authorities that form the South Yorkshire adoption Agency (Sheffield – 24, Barnsley – 20, Rotherham – 13)
- % of children ceasing to be looked after because of an SGO
- % of children ceasing to be looked after because of an CAO

Care Leavers

- Number of 19 & 20yr olds on a Staying Put placement with Former Foster Carers after their 18th birthday
- % of young people in employment, education or training.

26. Performance in relation to the remaining partnership indicators at the end of quarter 2 is as follows:

Strategic Partnership Indicators performing at or better than target			
Measure	Performance	Target	Commentary
% of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation	94.1%	85%	We have seen a slight deterioration in the proportion of young people living in suitable accommodation but this remains above target. The young people who are not in suitable accommodation are either in custody/on remand or in unsecured/temporary accommodation, e.g. staying with friends.
% FTE posts covered by Agency Staff	8%	8%	There has been a small increase in the rates of posts covered by agency staff in

			Q2 as compared to Q1 (7%). Although it would be preferable to have more front line workers employed on a permanent basis there is a national challenge in recruiting experienced social workers and we have to off-set the aspiration for more permanent staff against the impact of increased caseloads.
Staff turnover (leavers in month in a rolling 12 month as a % of FTE)	12%	16%	This is a reduction on the position reported at the end of Q1 (14%). This represents 10 staff. Performance has been at or below target since 2019/20
First Time entrants in to the Youth justice system	117	212	This is positive performance and represents a reduction from Q1 (225). Performance is below the national average of 172
Young offenders who re-offend	23.1%	37%	This is positive performance and represents a reduction from Q1 (25.7%). Performance is below the national average (33.1%)

Strategic Partnership Indicators performing within tolerance

Measure	Performance	Target	Commentary
Percentage of monthly case file audits rated as 'requires improvement' or better ³	94%	95%	Our ambition is to achieve close to 100% good or better. The position at the end of Q2 was <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate – 6% • Requires Improvement – 17% • Good – 70% • Outstanding – 6% Where an audit is graded as inadequate or requires improvement the case will be re-audited within 3 months to review whether practice and outcomes for the child have improved.
% of Trust residential settings rated good or better	80%	100%	Of our 5 homes 1 is currently rated as Requires Improvement; an action plan is in place to address the issues raised during the inspection. The grading of this home will not be changed until the next full inspection by Ofsted. Our other 4 homes are Good or Outstanding.
Average time in days between Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family	149	121	This is a considerable improvement on the performance in Q1 (220 days) although this remains outside of target. It is important to stress that this is a performance measure that involves a small number of young people. Our performance in Q2 was 3 rd of the 4

³ This is a summary of 4 separate performance measures which look at audit outcomes against each of the four grading outcomes.

			<p>authorities that comprise the South Yorkshire RAA.</p> <p>We work closely with colleagues in the South Yorkshire Regional adoption Agency to oversee adoption timeliness.</p>
Strategic Partnership Indicators performing at outside tolerance			
Measure	Performance	Target	Commentary
Percentage of Care Proceedings on Track to be completed within 26 weeks	51%	80%	<p>Timeliness remains below target and has reduced from the position at the end of Q1 which was 58%. 51% equates to 106 children.</p> <p>The proportion of care proceedings cases on track to meeting the national expectation of 26 weeks remains a challenge for the Trust as well as other authorities. There are national factors with the key one being the impact of Covid. There are also local issues with the key local challenge being the repeated expert witness testimony. We plan to address the latter issue through regular meetings with CAFCASS and the Local Family Justice Board.</p>
Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family	478	426	<p>Although this represents an increase in the length of time before children are placed when compared to Q1 (437 days). It is important to stress that this is a performance measure that involves a small number of young people. Our performance in Q2 was 3rd of the 4 authorities that comprise the South Yorkshire RAA.</p> <p>Covid did mean delays in court hearings and medical checks for prospective adopters, making the whole process more challenging.</p>

27. Current Challenges which Impact on Children:

- **Placement Pressures:** As highlighted above this is a national issue that impacts on authorities across the country. Our Future Placement Strategy is critically important in addressing the challenge however for there to be a fully effective response national action is required This is an issue that is currently being explored through work by both the Competition and Markets Authority and in the national review of social care, led by Josh MacAllister. Earlier this year the review produced interim findings in The Case for Change and this states:

“While local authorities have a duty to ensure there is sufficient provision in their area to meet the needs of the children in their care, it is increasingly the case that they are operating in a national market where providers are able to set the terms of engagement. In this environment, local authorities struggle to shape their market”

<u>Provision</u>	<u>Number</u>
Number of Children in Care (CIC)	580
Number In House Fostering	218 children (17 are NOT in Doncaster)
Number Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	175 children (101 are in Doncaster)
Residential – in house	18 children (including 4 in 16+ in house unregulated provision)
Residential – private	53 Children

- **Recruitment and Retention:** As highlighted previously this continues to be a challenge. This is also a national issue that has been identified in the Case for Change, which states:

There is more to do to recruit, retain and support social care staff, including a high quality social work workforce. Burnout is high (Department for Education, 2020a), supervision is often infrequent and inadequate, the use of agency staff is costly (Kantar, 2020), and leadership turnover is too high (ADCS, 2021).

28. Financial performance

29. The 2021/22 forecast outturn is an operating overspend of £2.8m against the contract sum, with further costs of £1.6m attributed to Covid, of which the Council has provided funding of £1.3m to offset, making a £3.1m forecast overspend; an increase in spend of £2.3m since Q1, mainly due to increased numbers on the Care Ladder, revised savings assumptions, and continuing caseload pressures.
30. Some cost-pressures (particularly care ladder) were brought forward into 2021/22. Additionally, as expected, Covid cost pressures have continued into 2021/22. The main Covid pressures are increased Out of Authority (OOA) Placements £0.93m, increased Fostering Placements £0.25m, CiC 16+ Placements £0.31m, and Agency costs of £0.16m mainly due to increased Legal caseloads.
31. CiC numbers have increased from 517 at the end of January 2021 to 580 at the end of September 2021 (561 June 2021). The 2021/22 increase is, on average, half of the Q4 increase, but the Trust remains cautious about what may happen in 2021/22 due to lockdowns, and the “lag” of the effects of these. This is against a backdrop in 2019/20 of over 80% councils overspent on children’s social care budgets (Trust budget rebased by £6.7m for 2019/20 but subsequently underspent by £1.2m).

32. Future Placements Strategy Homes

33. The Future Placement Strategy has moved into the implementation stage and a project management board has been established, which meets weekly, chaired by Rebecca Wilshire, Director of Social Care / Deputy Chief Executive of the Trust. There are currently 5 properties in various stages of development. These are as follows

- Skylarks estate, Brodsworth. 2 new build properties, expected to be ready for habitation in December 2021. These 2 properties will provide 4 beds total with a single registered manager overseeing both homes.
- Cambourne Close, Adwick. This is an internal Asset transfer, presented to and approved at Asset Board on 19.10.21. Trust residential service managers are working with DMBC colleagues regarding the designs and adaptations to the property. Expected date for completion March 2022.
- Tickhill Sq, Denaby. This is an internal Asset transfer, presented to Asset Board on the 19.10.21. Tickhill sq will be repurposed as two adjoining homes, with a single Registered Manager overseeing both provisions. Expected date for completion April 2022.
- Also in the pipeline and quite far down the purchasing route is a property in that can be repurposed as a 4 bed children's home with its own Registered Manager. A full building survey and valuation has been completed by DMBC colleagues and is expected to be circulated in early November. Following evaluation of the condition survey and valuation it is hoped that an offer will be submitted week beginning 15/11/21. There is no projected date for completion until the condition survey and subsequent work required has been reviewed.

34. In total the above provision creates a total of 14 new in-Borough places for children.

35. The current risks associated with the project are largely centred around the recruitment of Registered Managers and appropriately qualified residential staff. A recent unconnected recruitment episode for one of the Trust's registered children's homes yielded no external applicants. As such the Trust will look to initiate some market engagement events, supported by social media activity to generate interest in future recruitment episodes.

36. The totality of this activity remains well within the designated budget for purchases, design and adaptations and there are no anticipated risks at the current time with design and building adaptation activity itself.

37. For all the above properties, engagement events with elected members has already happened or is planned. Community engagement event dates are being considered by the project management group.

38. The 2021/22 projected forecast financial summary is:

Overall Heading	2021/22 Budget			2021/22 Outturn			2021/22 Variance			Variance due to Covid 19	Operating costs variance	Change from Q1 Operating costs	Change from Q1 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	35,406	-3,771	31,635	40,324	-4,728	35,596	-4,918	957	-3,961	-1,498	-2,463	-1,517	-473
Other Children and Family Services	1,546	0	1,546	1,525	-106	1,419	20	106	126	-104	230	135	0
Family Support Services	3,440	0	3,440	3,462	0	3,462	-21	0	-21	-5	-17	22	0
Youth Justice	1,741	0	1,741	1,729	0	1,729	12	0	12	0	12	12	0
Safeguarding Children and Young People's Services	12,880	-45	12,835	13,702	-439	13,263	-822	394	-428	-19	-409	-465	143
Services for Young People	430	0	430	442	0	442	-12	0	-12	0	-12	-11	0
Contract Value	0	-56,373	-56,373	0	-57,691	-57,691	0	1,318	1,318	1,318	0	0	1,318
Support Services and Management Costs	4,746	0	4,746	4,941	0	4,941	-195	0	-195	-21	-173	-183	0
Grand Total	60,190	-60,190	0	66,126	-62,965	3,161	-5,936	2,775	-3,162	-329	-2,832	-2,008	989

39. The original 2021-22 contract value was £59.06m. An additional £0.93m for Care Ladder pressures identified in January 2021 has been agreed at Q1. The budget includes this additional funding and is allocated to OOA £0.53m, Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) £0.25m and In-House Fostering £0.15m. The original contract value includes £0.84m to fund Covid Care Ladder (£0.71m) and agency (£0.13m) pressures identified as part of budget setting, £0.59m of the additional £0.93m is due to Covid. The 8 September Cabinet agreed to provide further Covid funding of £1.32m based upon Q1, making a total of £2.75m to cover Covid pressures.
40. A review of the estimated Covid costs for 2020/21 was undertaken and assumptions used to identify additional Care Ladder costs such as 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, resulting in £1.3m being estimated for Covid in 2020/21. Different scenarios resulted in potential costs of Covid of up to £1.9m, evidencing it is complex and difficult to estimate costs that are a direct consequence of Covid. Based on the same assumptions used in 2020/21, the Care Ladder assumes Covid costs of OOA £1.76m, Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) £0.42m, In-House Fostering £0.31m and CiC 16+ Placements £0.31m, of which the Council has provided funding of £2.47m; the current net Covid Care Ladder pressure is £0.33m.
41. The number of Children in Care at the end of September 2021 is 580, an increase of 19 since Q1. The increase since January 2021 is 63; an increase of (+14.4%) compared to April 2020. The rate of increase has slowed compared to Q4 by c. 50%. Due to the recent lockdown and school closures there is anticipated workload and cost pressures that will impact on the MTFS and 2021/22 budget.
42. At the end of September 2021 there were 56 OOA placements; a reduction of 2 since the end of June 2021 (had increased by 2 in the previous quarter and by 5 in Q4 of 2020/21). The forecast now assumes that no new homes will be operational in this financial year, the revised assumption is that the homes will be open in the first 6 months of 2022/23. In addition to the OOA placements there are also 16 external expensive packages ranging from, £2,375 to £9,758 per week being funded from the 16+ budget. At the end of September there are 385 foster placements, an increase of 4 since Q1, split 41% Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and 59% In-House Fostering, no % change in IFAs from the end of Q1. The revised assumption from month 4 onwards is that the split by the financial year end is 37.5% / 62.5% following a discussion with DMBC.
43. The Trust is actively reviewing OOA and high cost placements and identifies c. 70% (46 children) who could move; this will impact positively on placement costs. This is a process that must be managed very carefully to ensure the long-term effects are positive for children and, as a consequence, can and does take several months. The Trust is reviewing children that can exit care and this number stands at 158 (132 last month). This will impact positively on children and families, as well as on placement costs and reduce staffing levels, including agency. There will, of course, be new entrants to care and high cost placements but, hopefully, at a lower rate than leaving.
44. In August and September there have been an additional 9 UASC. The funding from the Home Office covers the cost of the placements but there has been a knock-on financial implication as 2 have been at Cantley SILS (vacancies that were planned to be filled by 2 expensive 16+ placements resulting in the forecast increasing by £130k).
45. The Trust has implemented a Social Worker Academy from April 2021 and made changes to Social Worker pay in January 2021 with the intention to recruit and retain permanent social workers and reduce agency social workers. The Council have provided funding of £286k towards the Social Worker Academy in 2021/22. In Q1 6

ASYEs have been appointed with a further 13 in September. The forecast is that the academy will reduce agency workers by 11 by 31 March 2022. The average number of agency workers for September was 30.7 FTE and broadly on-target for the year, and 9.3 FTE better than last year.

46. The Trust has submitted a business case to the Council for funding of £501k due to increased caseload demand for the following: to retain 3 agency workers (CiC numbers c.54 above forecast levels with an average of 18 cases per agency worker) £200k, unable to deliver IRO saving in 2021/22 £100k, additional Legal staffing resources £106k, and an increase to the agency hourly rate to retain and appoint agency social workers £95k. The forecast assumes that, subject to approval, the business case will be funded by the Council.
47. **Key Variances over/under £250k:**
48. There are three significant (£250k+/-) variances - Looked after Children, Safeguarding Children and Contract Value; details below:
49. **Looked After Children - £3.96m overspend (£1.5m Covid)**
50. **Out of Area (OOA) Placements - £2.64m overspend (£0.93m Covid)**
51. At the end of September there were 56 OOA placements (58 June). There were 7 new placements in Q2: 2 new to Social Care, 2 transferred from an IFA placement, 1 transferred from In-House Fostering, and 2 Parent & Child placements. The new placements have been offset by 9 placements ending: 1 transferred to an IFA placement, 3 transferred to CiC 16+, 1 transferred to Cantley SILS, 1 transferred to a In House Residential Home, 2 returned home and 1 has become an SGO with a family member. There has been no overall increase in numbers since 1st April compared to 5 increase in Q4.
52. The forecast now includes growth of 1 per month from October onwards, and that no new homes will be operational in this financial year; the revised assumption is that the homes will be open in the first 6 months of 2022/23. The budget allocated for the new homes has been moved back to OOA for 2021/22 to cover the revised assumption. There are likely to be 4 vacancies in the In-House Residential homes in the coming months which the forecast assumes will be filled by 4 OOA placements, 3 children are expected to move to Keys to Your Future at the end of November, 3 children are turning 18 this financial year, and there are 2 Parent & Child placements due to end after 12 weeks. As detailed above, and in separate reporting, the Trust is actively reviewing OOA placements; the forecast assumes that this will result in a reduction of 6 OOA placements between October 2021 and March 2022.
53. The revised forecast assumes the number of OOA placements at 31st March 2022 is 44; an increase of 10 from Q1. Overall the forecast spend has increased by £0.82m since Q1 due to revised assumptions for growth (none was included at Q1), leavers, the new homes opening, and new packages being more expensive than the ones that have ended. If the placements numbers don't reduce from 56 to 44 as forecast then there is a risk that the overspend could increase by up to £1m. In addition to the forecast spend increase, the savings expected from Vulnerable Adolescents in 21/22 have been reduced from £250k to £125k; DCST have implemented its structure, but partners have had delays.
54. The 2021/22 year-end total was 53 OOA plus 3 parent and child placements. The Trust's 2021/22 budget was set on the assumption OOA numbers would be 43 for April 2021 meaning a significant pressure (assumed at least 50% Covid related) has been

carried into 2021/22. Funding for additional Care Ladder pressures of £0.93m identified in January 2021 has been agreed by the Council; £0.53m of this additional funding is for OOA.

55. Based on the same assumptions as year-end, the Care Ladder forecast assumes Covid costs of £1.76m for OOA of which £0.47m is funded via the contract sum and £0.35m is funded from the additional funding; this leaves a net Covid pressure of £0.93m in the forecast.
56. **Out of Area (OOA) Placements Education (DSG) Funding – additional funding of £0.88m**
57. The budgeted funding from the DSG High Needs Block was reduced to £2.89m for 2021/22 based on the savings targets to reduce OOA placements. £0.19m of the additional £0.93m for Care Ladder pressures identified in January 2021 relates to Education costs therefore the revised budget is now £3.08m. The 2021/22 forecast is £3.96m; additional funding of £0.88m to the Trust to offset the OOA overspend but an increase to the pressure on the High Needs Block.
58. **Independent Fostering Agencies & In-House Fostering - £0.64m overspend (£0.25m Covid)**
59. The combined forecast for Fostering is an overspend of £0.64m of which £0.25m is due to the impact of Covid. The projected overspend has increased by £0.26m since Q1 as IFA placements have increased by 2 and In-House Fostering by 2. The MTFs target by end of March 2022 is a 35% / 65% split but the forecast since Q1 now assumes 32.5% / 67.5%. The revised assumption is that IFA placements reduce by 11 between October 2021 and March 2022; 6 of these transfer to In-House Fostering and 5 to SGOs.
60. The overall numbers of 385 at the end of September are an increase of 5 since the end of March 2021; Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements are 5 more. In addition to the revised split assumptions by year-end, an increase in IFA placements from April to August rather than a reduction is also the reason for the fostering overspend. Funding for additional Care Ladder pressures of £0.93m identified in January 2021 has been agreed by the Council; £0.40m of this additional funding is allocated to Fostering.
61. Based on the same assumption as year-end, the forecast assumes Covid costs of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) £0.42m and In-House Fostering £0.31m of which £0.24m is funded via the contract sum and £0.24m is funded from the additional funding; this leaves a net Covid pressure of £0.25m in the forecast.
62. **16+ CiC Placements - £1.74m overspend (£0.31m Covid)**
63. The projection at Q2 is an overspend of £1.74m; an increase of £1m since Q1 mainly due to 6 new expensive placements, 3 of which have moved from OOA placements, and the assumptions for placements reductions being pushed back. The previous quarter's forecast assumed 2 expensive placements would move to vacancies at Cantley SILS in September but these beds were filled by 2 UASC placements, increasing the overspend by £130k.
64. There are now 16 expensive 16+ packages ranging from, £2,375 to £9,758 per week; these cases are being reviewed in the same way as the OOA packages. There is a risk to the forecast as it includes an assumption that 3 of the expensive packages move by December to Cantley SILS as 1 bed is due to become vacant and 2 more may become

vacant subject to age assessments and the long-term plan for the UASC. The forecast also assumes 4 move to Keys to Your Future in February 2022. If these placement moves don't happen before March 2022 the forecast may increase by up to £0.45m. As detailed above, and in separate reporting, the Trust is actively reviewing the potential move of high cost placements.

65. **Safeguarding Children - £0.43m overspend (£0.02m Covid)**

66. The reason for the overspend is due to increased staffing costs, mainly due to agency cover for vacancies, maternity leave and the retention of some agency SWs for longer (based upon demand / caseloads). The forecast assumes that, subject to approval, the business case due to increased caseload demand that includes £395k for retaining 3 agency workers (£200k), unable to deliver IRO saving in 2021/22 (£100k), and an increase to the agency hourly rate (£95k) will be funded by the Council.

67. **Contract Value - £1.32m additional income**

68. Cabinet on 8th September agreed per the Council's Q1 Finance report to provide further funding of £1.32m to cover DCST's Covid pressures at Q1 above the budget already provided. In month 7 this funding will be allocated to offset the Care Ladder Covid pressures reported above.

69. **MTFS and key actions being taken to achieve efficiencies in 2021/22**

70. Included in this year's budget was monies for a new ASYE Academy and Social Worker Pay – both with the intention to recruit and retain Trust social workers and thus reducing the agency social workers. The average number of agency workers for September was 30.7 FTE and broadly on-target for the year, and 9.3 FTE better than last year.

71. The care ladder savings will be a challenge, as highlighted above, due to the impact of the care ladder costs brought into 2021/22 and the Covid impact.

72. The Trust will continue to actively review costs across a number of headings in 2021/22 (but noting Covid pressures will continue), such as:

- In House fostering has not increased significantly – Covid has impacted on the number of enquires we have had but work underway to review how we increase further, such as:
 - reduced council tax for carers
 - review of fostering offer – what support and benefits are accessible to carers
 - financial review of carer payments underway
 - new marketing strategy being developed
 - reviewing how partners can help, support and promote fostering for Doncaster via the Trust
 - reviewing how we might attract IFA carers to convert to the foster for the Trust
 - build and recruit specialist carers, such as Parent and Child Placements, foster carers for children with disabilities
- OOA placements will continue to be reviewed via monthly with “deep dives” into the best options for bringing children closer to home safely. Also:
 - specific CiC packages will also be reviewed monthly
 - the new Director is reviewing all OoA Placements
 - the new acting HoS is reviewing 16+ placements

- Keys to Your Future has 4 children identified for November and 4 for February
- 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 improve caseloads
- Future Placement Strategy Implementation
 - a specific focus by the previous Fostering Manager on IFA reduction
 - opening of the two-bed homes
 - registering Cantley (or the new 16+ home)
 - opening of a 16+ home
- The continued implementation of the changes to adoption allowances
- Other budgeted efficiencies (lead officer to work on these further)
 - savings that accrue from homeworking
 - other overhead savings

73. **Benchmarking Information**

The Yorkshire Benchmarking data from May 2021 (Leeds and some Bradford Wakefield and Sheffield data missing) shows for Children’s Services:

- 7 of 8 Yorkshire LAs had an overspend in 2020/21
- All 8 Yorkshire LAs are forecasting an overspend in 2021/22
- 4 are forecasting a LAC increase in 2021/22, including the Trust
- Although highest, the Trust percentage of OOA reduced from 10.7% to 9.6%
 - The 31 March 2022 forecast of 44 OOA, assuming CiC of 554, will reduce this to 8% (Yorkshire average 7%), with further reductions planned in the Future Placements Strategy
- Yorkshire agency social workers decreased by 1.5% since March; Trust reduced by 10%
 - Overall Trust planned reduction in 2021/22 is 21.5%
- In-House Foster has increased by 1.5% in Yorkshire; Trust currently 0% (Trust increased 10% last year)
- IFAs as a percentage of all foster children is 38% in Yorkshire; Trust 41%
 - The Trust’s ambition is to reduce to 25% by March 2025

In relation to national benchmarking for 2019/20 and total average costs per CiN and Episodes, Doncaster is in the second quartile for 19 “similar” and regional LAs

74. **Activity in Quarter 2 2021/22**

The Trust was involved in the following activities in quarter 2:

- 1 July – Campaign for Agency Social Workers
- 7 July – Fostering Information Event
- 20 July – Eid Mubarak
- July/ August – Summer Activities/ Mental Health videos

- 2 August – Yorkshire Day
- 6 August – Unsung Heroes (continuing weekly)
- 12 August – International Youth Day
- 10 August – A ‘Level Results Day
- 12 August – GCSE Results Day
- 16 August – MOSIAC ‘Go Live’
- 18 August – Social Worker Recruitment Event
- 7 September – Youth Mental Health Day
- 14 September – Adoption Information Evening
- 22 September – Fostering Information Event

75. **Activity in Quarter 3**

The following events are scheduled or have taken place in quarter 3:

- October – Domestic Abuse Awareness Month
- October – Black History Month
- October – Foster Network Sons and Daughter Month
- October – Unsung heroes
- 20 October - Fostering Information Event
- 25 to 31 October – Care Leavers Week
- 4 November - EDI awareness training - What I would tell my younger self as a child of colour?
- 6 November – Stress Awareness Day
- 13 November – World kindness day
- 15 to 21 November – Anti-Bullying Week / Odd Socks Day
- 19 November – Children in Need Day
- November – Staff Summits
- November – Unsung Heroes
- November – Launch of Trust Star Awards
- 24 November – Fostering Information Event
- December – Toy Appeal

76. **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 	<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;</p>

Outcomes	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayoral priority: Safeguarding our communities • Mayoral priority: bringing down the cost of living 	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.

77. **RECOMMENDED OPTIONS**

To note the report.

78. **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS [RM 04/11/2021]**

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

79. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [RM 04/11/2021]**

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

80. **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [LE 04/11/2021]**

There are no equality implications directly arising from this report.

81. **HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS [LE 04/11/2021]**

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

82. **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [RM 04/11/2021]**

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

83. **HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [RW 04/11/2021]**

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.

84. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [RM 04/11/2021]**

Included within the body of the report.

85. **CONSULTATION**

Consultation has taken place with key managers and Directors.

ACRONYMS

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

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