

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

**Performance Challenge of the Doncaster Children's Services Trust: Quarter 2,  
2016/17**

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

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. This report provides a review and analysis of the Performance Challenge carried out by the Director of Learning and Opportunities, of the Doncaster Children's Services Trust (the 'Trust') in Quarter 2 of 2016/17 arising from the challenge meetings held between both parties.

**EXEMPT INFORMATION**

2. Not exempt.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

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

## BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION

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

*... 'The Council's Director for Children's Services (DCS) will report to the Council's Scrutiny Committee four times per annum each contract year in respect of the Trusts' performance of its obligations under this agreement (including the provision of services).... Where required by the DCS the Trust's Chief Executive (or his nominee) shall attend such scrutiny committee to respond to any requests for additional information made by the scrutiny committee in respect of the Trust's performance of its obligations under this agreement (including the provision of the services)'*

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

cohort; the quality of work on pre-proceedings, the application of the voice of children and the effective use of performance and quality assurance work. Overall, and acknowledging that there is further work to be undertaken, the report found that the Council and the Trust had made 'significant progress' in improving the quality of work since the inspection in 2015. Inspectors praised the continued pace of improvement and noted that, as in the previous monitoring visit, no children were seen to be in situations of unassessed, unmanaged or unacceptable risk.

A copy of the report letter can be found attached at Appendix 4.

## PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE OF THE DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRUST

- At the quarterly and monthly challenge meetings the Council holds the Trust to account for its performance during the relevant period. The review of that performance highlights areas of good performance, as well as those which represent areas of concern, or potential concern.

There are 18 performance indicators which form part of the contractual measures within the service delivery contract.

There are a further suite of 46 'volumetric' measures which are not identified contractual measures, or measures of performance and which do not form part of the contractual assessment of the Trust, but which nonetheless provide important context.

- The table below summarises the number of contract measures on target, within tolerance and outside tolerance as at the end of Quarter 2 2016/17.

	Quarter 2 2016/17			
	Outside tolerance	Inside tolerance	On or better than target	No target specified
<b>Social Care Pathway</b>	2		5	
<b>Children in Care</b>		1	4	
<b>Youth Offending Services</b>			2	1
<b>Workforce</b>		2		1

(one additional measure yet to report due to unavailability of national data)

The basket of performance measures is jointly reviewed by the Council and the Trust as part of the annual contract review in order to ensure currency and relevance against important stages within the child's journey and where it is known that there are current pressures within that system.

## PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

- The format of presentation of performance information consists of a summary of the Council's headline assessment of Trust performance by exception and is shown below in paragraphs 14.1 and 14.2 with indicators selected by the Council where there are areas of good and improving performance and areas of concern and potential concern, respectively.

The format adopted is similar to that of the Council's corporate report to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and is shown at appendix 1 and appendix 2.

Each appendix consists of two elements:-

- An Infographic overview which provides an immediately accessible illustration of the areas of performance which are good (illustrated in green) and those which are of concern or potential concern (illustrated in red) and which cross reference by the index number to those itemised in paragraphs 14.1 and 14.2 and the tables in Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.
- Tables which depict how the challenge takes place for each selected performance measure in a two stage process and provides the content of that challenge which is summarised for the assistance of panel members

The first appendix depicts performance indicators where the Council has identified that the Trust is performing above target and/or where performance has improved and the Trust's response.

The second appendix illustrates where the Council has identified specific performance indicators which are below target/outside tolerance, or expectations and as such are of concern, or potential concern, because of the impact or potential impact of below - target performance and the explanation provided by the Trust.

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

- **A1: Re-referrals in the last 12 months** - a minor increase in the last two quarters, mainly as the Trust advises, due to increases in demand across all Agencies. The Trust reports there is no issue of premature 'stepping down' which impacts against the re-referral rate. Performance remains good and is approximate to the national average and has consistently been so, since Q1 2015/16 compared with historical performance. This needs careful monitoring though, to check impact of high demand levels at the 'front door'
- **A3 Percentage of Case File Audits rated 'Requires Improvement or Better'** – Performance since July shows a welcome improvement, with no cases rated 'Inadequate' in August and September. It is far too early to infer a trend but this is encouraging and worthy of note nonetheless.
- **A4: Child Protection visits in timescale** - an important barometer for safeguarding. Though Ofsted noted some delay in the timing of these visits
- **A09: Child Subject CP Plan (second subsequent time)** - This measure is easily skewed by small cohorts. Performance though is good.
- **A06: Child Subject CP Plan (2 years or more)** - The Trust has provided welcome reassurance to the Council that it is carefully monitoring these cases. At the last annual Outturn, Doncaster is in the second upper quartile nationally with third best performance in the region.
- **B9: Long Term Stability of Placements** - The improved performance since the 2015 outturn has been sustained and is above target for the second consecutive quarter. Performance in the preceding 3 quarters has been at the national average and is now above the national average (68%) which represents a very good recovery.

- **B13: Care Leavers in suitable accommodation** - A further improvement in performance which is above the national average, due to what the Trust reports, as increased tracking and contact with the extended care leaver cohort.
- **F03: Youth Offending Custody Rates** - Early indications are positive but as the Trust has previously stated, it is early to draw too many significant conclusions at this stage.

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

- **A2: Timeliness of Single Assessments** - Assessment timeliness is indicative of demand pressures / caseloads. The Trust has to balance efficiency of its process with assurance as to safety and is mindful of this. The Council has received assurance that the Trust is addressing this issue but Q2 is a marked deterioration on the previous 3 quarters. The Council is maintaining a monitoring brief and whilst performance still remains slightly above national average, the Council will nonetheless continue to challenge this performance, should it fail to show sustained improvement.
- **A8: Children in Need Open and Current Plan** – Whilst performance appears to lie outside tolerance and has been since its inception, this reflects the methodology of the indicator which is subject to the Annual Contract review process so as to redefine this measure to more accurately capture those plans which should be recorded not those which are incomplete for legitimate reasons. The Trust has provided assurances that all CIN have a plan, which Ofsted confirmed in its most recent monitoring visits based on its sample of cases although it did raise concerns as to the quality of the CIN reviews and how this is captured in the CIN plan.
- **B13: Care Leavers in EET** - This is an important indicator in meeting Ofsted improvement requirements and for the Council in its role as Corporate parent. A welcome slight improvement in Q2 Performance, which is being tracked by both the Trust and the Council to meet with improvement plan requirements and a steering group, has been established across Agencies to that end. Nationally, care leavers struggle to achieve compared with the general cohort and therefore need greater support mechanisms into further education training and employment. However, the Trust has cited unvalidated figures which suggest significant improvement at the year-end which would place Doncaster in the top quartile for good performance.
- **C14: Frontline FTE posts covered by agency staff** - Agency staff add to the cost base of the operation and may not be good for employment stability and continuity thereby introducing an element of risk. There will always be a need for a number of Agency staff but numbers need to be relatively low which they were until Q1 – a slight improvement at Q2 acknowledging the impact of the competitive market, this is a measure which the Council is keeping under observation. It is acknowledged, however, that absence and turnover rates are good and that the Ofsted monitoring visit commented favourably as to workforce stability and the employee feedback from staff working for the Trust.

#### **‘Volumetric’ Measures**

- **E1: Contacts to Social Care** - A high figure is not necessarily indicative of poor performance and if children need to be referred to social care then that is good performance. The problem here is that a significant number of the contacts which convert to referrals and assessments which are inappropriate. High demand pressures are unhealthy for the work of social work teams and in ‘clogging up’ the machinery. Contacts below threshold and those which could have gone to the Early Help offer are deemed inappropriate. The LGA peer review highlighted this concern, but recognised that these are ‘whole system’ issues, not exclusively in the gift of the Trust, which in part reflects national trends in demand but also locally, means

partners, have to be challenged to apply thresholds and comprehend the Early Help Strategy, consistently.

- **E20-22: Up to date Children in Care Assessments** (Health assessments / dental checks / Personal Education Plans) - The Trust response is valid but performance does need to improve. The Trust is to feedback on RDaSH action to address shortcomings. Acknowledged problem with dental checks which is not unique to Doncaster but there needs to be earlier tracking. Management of PEPs is the responsibility of the Council's Virtual head in which the social worker employed by the Trust plays a part. There is a disconnect between paper and electronic systems - an ICT solution has been identified. An ICT Portal which will address the systemic weakness is being created which will be trialled in December 2016 and implemented in January 2017 and which should address in large part the problem of return rates, timeliness and quality.

## 15. 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"> <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> <li>• Mayoral priority: Bringing down the cost of living</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>
<p>People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment:</p> <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>	<p>Delivering against the service delivery contract between the Council and the Trust has clear implications for safeguarding communities, in reducing risk and exposure of risk to children; improved early help and thus better outcomes for families.</p>
<p>Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance</p>	<p>Ofsted, in its inspection report commented favourably on the relationship and governance arrangements between the Council and the Trust, recognising that formal arrangements for monitoring and challenge exceed the requirements set out in the contract between the two organisations.</p>

## **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

16. Adoption of the split screen approach should further reduce the risk of underperformance leading to a material detriment for children young people and families in the Borough.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

17. Adoption of the split screen approach enables the Council and the Trust to discharge their respective obligations under the terms of the service delivery contract between the two parties.

Adoption of the split screen enables the scrutiny panel to more effectively meet its remit to consider matters in the public interest.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

18. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

19. There are no equality implications directly arising from this report.

## **CONSULTATION**

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

## **ATTACHMENTS**

21. 'Infographic' depiction and summary record of performance challenge of highlighted performance indicators – Appendices 1 and 2

Doncaster Children's Services Trust – Quarter 2 report – Appendix 3

Second Monitoring Visit – Letter from Ofsted – Appendix 4

## **CONTACT OFFICER AND REPORT AUTHOR**

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Commissioning and Opportunities  
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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Service Delivery Contract between Doncaster Council and Doncaster Children's Services Trust

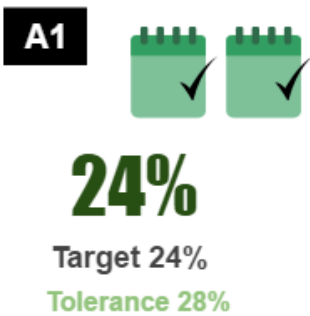
Report to the Director of Learning Opportunities and Skills to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2016

**Damian Allen**  
**Director, Learning Opportunities and Skills (DCS)**

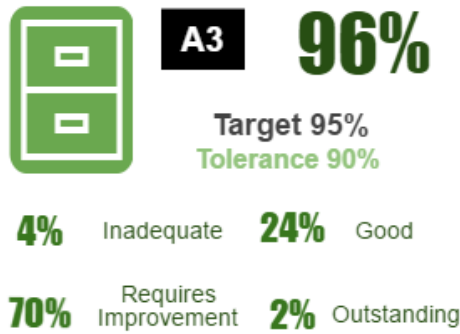
Areas of Good and Improving Performance

**AREAS PERFORMING WELL**

**Repeat Referrals into Social Care within 12 months**



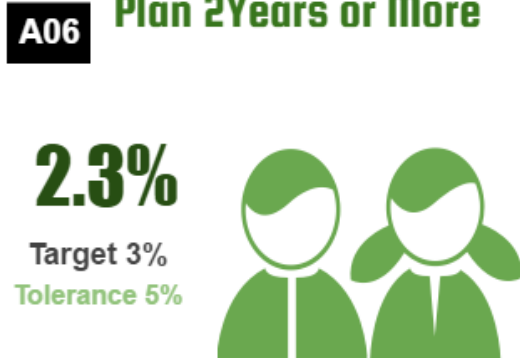
**Case File Audits – Requires Improvement or Better**



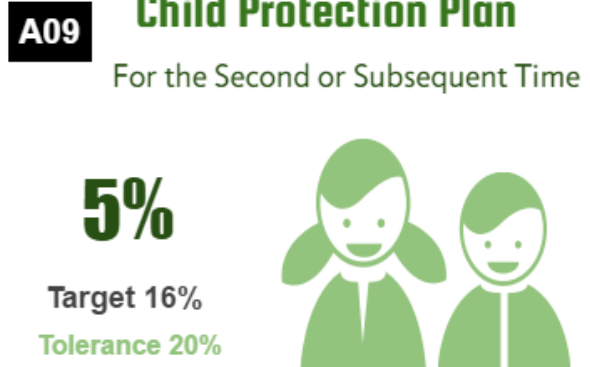
**Child Protection Visits within Timescale**



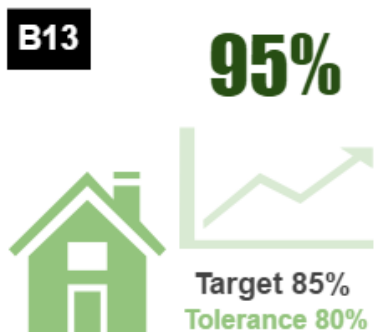
**Children on a Child Protection Plan 2 Years or More**



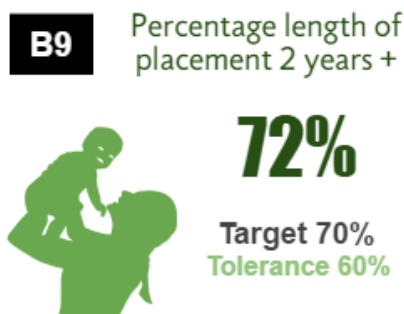
**Children Become Subject of Child Protection Plan**



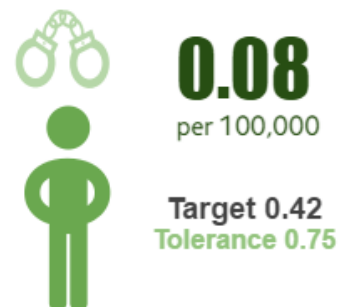
**Care Leavers (19–21 yrs) in Suitable Accommodation**



**Long Term Stability: Children in Care**



**F03 Youth Offending: Custody Rates**





Measure	DMBC Comment	Trust Response
<p><b>A1</b>  <b>Re-referrals in the last 12 months</b></p> <p>Q2 = 24%  July 2016 24%</p> <p>Target: 24%  Tolerance: 28%</p>	<p><i>An important PI to demonstrate robustness of process. There can be genuine requirements for a re-referral and the Trust stated that it was analysing this information, but we need to be assured as to impact of demand pressures and that there has been no premature 'stepping down'</i></p> <p><i>At the moment no real cause for concern, but how is the Trust monitoring developments?</i></p>	<p>Re-referral rates have remained better than target for the last six quarters, showing sustained performance in this area. The re-referral rate in September has seen a slight rise. Greater rigour has been applied to contact and referrals, and application of thresholds, with an emerging reducing trend in referrals and assessments being initiated. This may have a short term impact on re-referral rate as agencies react to these changes. Therefore re-referral rate will need to be observed over the next quarter before conclusions can be determined. The increase in re-referral rate has been compounded by a number of large sibling groups being re-referred. The HOS for Front Door is sampling re-referrals to improve understanding of the underlying reasons.</p>
<p><b>A3</b>  <b>Case File Audits – Requires Improvement or Better</b></p> <p>Q2 = 96%  Target: 95%  Tolerance: 90%</p>	<p>The Trust has set a commendably high threshold which the LGA review recognised and which has reflected the journey towards the improved performance which has taken time to filter through. Although the improvement is to be welcomed, there are two caveats:- Firstly, it is too early to suggest this represents a 'trend' based as it is on one quarter; secondly. As ever the sample size is small and therefore subject to some variability.</p> <p><i>How can this progress be sustained?</i></p>	<p><i>Performance is now above target for the last two months at 100%, this is due to an increase in cases rated good and outstanding. Cases are being graded outstanding for the third month in a row and no cases were rated as 'Inadequate' in the last two months. This is an on-going trend and is starting to demonstrate the impact of robust QA framework and practice focused training. Recent audits completed during the LGA peer review and Ofsted monitoring visit have confirmed the accuracy of our audits and appropriate application of thresholds.</i></p>
<p><b>A4</b>  <b>Child Protection Visits in Timescale, Child seen by Social Worker</b></p> <p>Q2 = 90%  Target: 80%  Tolerance: 75%</p>	<p>Performance has remained above target since March. This measure is an important barometer for safeguarding and requires careful monitoring. Need to link with CIN and CiC visits for a rounded view.</p> <p>Despite good performance – how is the remaining shortfall explained?</p>	<p>Remains well above target due to daily monitoring and a focused effort by team managers to keep on top of key casework timescales. The most recent month's data has shown an improving picture. Visits for CIC and CIN are also monitored in a similar way</p>
<p><b>A06</b>  <b>Children on CP Plan for 2 Years or More</b></p> <p>Q1 = 2.3%  July = 2.1%  Target: 3%  Tolerance: 5%</p>	<p>An important measure of sterility (drift and delay) in the system where children may not be receiving proper oversight. However, there can be valid reason why a child remains on a plan</p>	<p>Remains above target with a stable trend. The re-assessment of all cases open for greater than 6 months is providing some immediate scrutiny and management oversight to current casework and addressing any previous issues of drift and delay</p>
<p><b>A09</b>  <b>Children Subject CP Plan Second or Subsequent Time within a 2 year period</b></p> <p>Q2 = 5%  Target: 16%  Tolerance: 20%</p>	<p><i>Continues to improve from 8% in Q1 to 5% Q2. This measure has been redefined within the contract from the national PI (second or subsequent time ever) to a local measure which is more sensitive and more reflective of its fundamental objective. Performance at Q4 and Q1 is better than target. Sibling groups can inflate</i></p>	<p>Performance remains above target with an improving picture. The number of children subject to a CPP shows low levels of variability month by month but all within target. Only two children were recorded in September as being subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second time.</p>

	<i>this figure. Analysis needs to be satisfied that children are not being 'de-planned' prematurely. There may otherwise be valid reasons for becoming subject to a CPP but less so within a short period.</i>	
<b>B9</b> <b>Long Term Stability of CiC: Placements 2 Years or More</b>  <b>Q2 = 72%</b> <b>Target: 70%</b> <b>Tolerance: 60%</b>	<p>Another important indicator of stability, which is essential for this vulnerable cohort. The trust is closely monitoring. Placement policy is an important feature of stability need to review across the range for best results in care and financial terms. Placement and Sufficiency strategy is awaited and is an important strategic document for this measure and other CiC measures. 2015 annual outturn performance (56%) was bottom quartile nationally and bottom in regional rankings.</p>	<p>Continues to take an upward trajectory and has now been above target level for three months in a row. The Trust's longer term ambition to rely less upon out of Borough placements will bring some long term placements to a close, providing it is in the child's best interests. To assist this teams are reviewing placements on a case by case basis.</p>
<b>B13</b> <b>Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation (aged 19 – 21)</b>  <b>Q2 = 95%</b> <b>Target: 85%</b> <b>Tolerance: 80%</b>	<p>Continues to improve from 88% Q1 to 95% Q2. Pleasing quarterly reported figure. Best practice suggests that custody and 'sofa surfing' should be excluded from this figure. At last annual outturn (2015) Doncaster performance (83%) was middle ranking nationally, but relatively low in the region, but noting the lack of a commonly agreed definition between LAs as to what constitutes 'suitable accommodation'.</p>	<p>For the second quarter in a row this measure is above target in this quarter, with a significant improvement in quarter 2. Improvements in practice and recording have contributed to the positive trajectory. The term "suitable" relies on local interpretation (for example some LA's will determine Custody as suitable whilst we do not), making comparison challenging. At the end of Quarter 2, seven young people were recorded as being in custody which will have contributed to this figure. Focussed work between Targeted Youth Support and Performance is contributing to this improved performance, through regular tracking of activity to remain in touch with this cohort.</p>
<b>F03</b> <b>Youth Offending Service Custody Rates</b>  <b>Q2 = 0.08</b> <b>Target: 0.42</b> <b>Tolerance: 0.75</b>	<p>This is a new measure established in Q4 which is susceptible to small cohorts from what is a large national cohort.</p>	<p>Data now available from the YJMIS system, which is the national youth justice database. Performance remains better than target for a sustained period. These rates, reported in this format, are the lowest in the Borough's history.</p>

Areas of Concern / Potential Concern

**AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

**A2** **Timeliness Single Assessments**

Increased Case loads



**82%**

Target 92%  
Tolerance 90%

**A8** **Children in Need with Open and Current Plan**



**87%**

Target 95%  
Tolerance 90%

**B14** **Care Leavers in Employment, Education & Training**



**41%**

Target 45%  
Tolerance 40%

Ofsted Improvement Plan Action

**C14** **Agency Staff: FTE Posts**



**11%**

Target 8%  
Tolerance 12%

**E1** **Contacts into Social Care**



**1669**

546 at Transfer

**E20-22** **Children in Care: With Up-to-date Assessments**



Health Assessments  
Dental Checks



Personal Education Plans

Measure & performance	DMBC Comment	DCST Response
<p><b>A2</b>  <b>Timeliness of Single Assessments</b></p> <p><b>Q2 = 82%</b>  <b>July = 88%</b></p> <p><b>Target: 92%</b>  <b>Tolerance:90%</b></p>	<p>Timeliness performance continues to decline and has been below target and tolerance for the past 3 quarters, although this is slightly ahead of the latest reported national outturn average (81.5%) 'Assessments open' are showing increasingly high figures and referrals are increasing, reflecting higher demand pressures within the system. High caseloads can impact on assessment timeliness – although this is not cited as a problem by the Trust when challenged. The significant percentage of NFAs which should be closed is skewing the figures and this is the focus for Trust action and for Council challenge. Recent numbers of assessments open has increased</p> <p>Are there specific pinch points in area teams?</p> <p>What more is being done to improve the team management / closure of assessments?</p>	<p>A reduction in assessment timeliness was experienced in September, which was largely due to performance in 3 teams, which has not been addressed. There are too many assessments leading to NFA that take longer than 45 days (24%), which implies workers are ensuring children are safe but not then completing the assessment process. This will continue to be a focus of weekly tracking and challenge activity until performance recovers to over 90%</p> <p><i>Work to be done to ensure people do not always use the full 45 days to complete assessments. Weekly tracking is taking place. PI software investment to highlight issues to HOS earlier, particularly NFA's</i></p> <p><i>DCST deployed temporary agency resource. What is the status of this?</i></p> <p><i>SG - Agency staff are due to leave at the end of October. This reflects that caseloads are more manageable.</i></p>
<p><b>A8</b>  <b>Children in Need with Open &amp; Current Plan</b></p> <p><b>Q2 &amp; July 2016 = 87%</b></p> <p><b>Target: 95%</b>  <b>Tolerance:90%</b></p>	<p>This is a new measure which emerged from the Ofsted inspection - Performance has shown no improvement since Q4. Assurances from Trust that CIN have a plan, but there are children in transition. 'No Further Actions' are being tackled and files closed where appropriate. DCST has suggested this PI should be re-evaluated and discussed in the next annual contract review, as methodology could be misleading, as the count excludes drafts awaiting sign off and those awaiting sign off for closure.</p> <p>Reassurance from the Trust that all CIN have a CIN plan – what is the prognosis for addressing closure of draft plans and those awaiting closure ?</p>	<p>Performance remains outside tolerance, despite case sampling showing that there are appropriate reasons for an absence of a plan at the point of analysis. This can be for example that a case is at closure or being escalated or de-escalated so a new plan is being drawn up. A number of cases will have an open draft plan that will not be counted until it is made final, including these drafts the figure is 91%. This measure requires review during the annual contract review process. Monthly Self Evaluation Activity and dip sampling is testing for the presence of plans, to provide assurance that all cases that require a plan have one.</p> <p><i>The Council and Trust are jointly revising this indicator under the Annual contract review process which will more accurately capture those plans in draft/ transition etc.</i></p>
<p><b>B14</b>  <b>Care Leavers in Employment, Education and Training ( age 19-21)</b></p> <p><b>Q2= 41%</b></p> <p><b>Target: 45%</b>  <b>Tolerance:40%</b></p>	<p>A welcome improvement. DCST has made some progress with this as can be seen in its commentary. This is a very challenging PI for LAs given the attainment and readiness problems of this cohort and the need to maintain meaningful contact. Performance is being tracked and addressed by both the Trust and the Council to meet with improvement plan requirements. National average = 48%.</p>	<p>Performance is now within tolerance, although 20% of care leavers are NEET due to illness/disability or pregnancy/early parenthood. The impact of the 18+ service's strategy of taking an individual targeted approach is beginning to show. IDP's for each of these young people are comprehensively reviewed and intervention targeted at securing suitable provision. The medium term</p>

	<p>Regional average = 52%. DMBC and DCST meeting 18/10/16 has progressed joined up working with partners and secure wrap around pre-employment and training support. Steering group between partners met on 18<sup>th</sup> October with Charter and subsequent strategy. Quick wins identified and an action plan to take forward initiatives.</p> <p>What is the prognosis for the outturn figure? Can the improved performance be sustained?</p>	<p>strategy will be focused on increasing opportunities across Doncaster, securing pathways to apprenticeships for care leavers and increasing the offer available to care leavers. We will review this strategy on a quarterly basis in order to measure the impact.</p> <p><i>Have hard to shift group 20% - work that has been done. Longer term vision will help the stability of performance for this</i></p>
<p><b>C14</b> <b>FTE posts covered by Agency Staff</b></p> <p><b>Q2 = 11%</b> <b>Target: 8%</b> <b>Tolerance: 12%</b></p>	<p>Performance shows an improvement from Q1 and is now within tolerance, but caveat is that this is only one quarter's figures. Pressures from competing providers in a highly competitive market are driving this trend and recruitment initiatives are being trialled as well as reviews of existing pay bands in order to mitigate this reliance.</p> <p>How does Doncaster compare with other LAs? Is the trend likely to reduce?</p>	<p>Over the last few months agency staff has reduced by 7.56 FT despite an overall increase in front line staff to meet increased demand and the need for agency staff to pick this up. One member of staff has moved from an agency to permanent contract in the last month.</p> <p><i>Agency staff can go to other authorities and earn more money so are reluctant to convert to permanent contracts. Currently exploring the option of offering short term contracts. These findings need to take into account finder's fees for different agencies and length of contracts. This work is on-going.</i></p>
<p><b>E1</b> <b>Number of contacts into social care (volumetric measure)</b></p> <p><b>Q2 average =1669</b> <b>Q1 average = 1843</b></p>	<p>A fall between the two most recent quarters. Most understood to be requests for IAG and NFAs up to 50%; demand in the community is an issue. Contacts are now correctly counted. Inappropriate referrals which should have gone to early help less than 3%</p> <p>Trust applying an initial triage for contacts so that the case finds its way to correct destination more quickly which should reduce demand on teams and localities. Noted that conversion rate remains low.</p> <p>Some front door 'redesign' has recently taken place.</p> <p>When can the impact of the new triage and the MASH be seen?</p> <p>What progress has been made with Agencies in correctly applying the thresholds?</p>	<p><i>Impact of new triage and MASH to be seen in Q3/Q4 2016/17 – process is underway to challenge number of NFA's in system.</i></p>
<p><b>E20-22</b> <b>(Volumetric measures)</b></p> <p><b>Children in Care with</b></p>	<p>A further decline in up to date health assessments and dental checks but up to date PEPs continues to improve.</p> <p>To what extent is MALAP capturing this issue?</p>	<p><i>MN - MD to provide a response on this.</i></p> <p><i>Action: MD to provide further commentary regarding % of CiC with up to date health assessment/ dental</i></p>

<p><b>up to date:</b></p> <p><b>health assessment</b> Q2 =83%</p> <p><b>dental checks Q2</b> =76%</p> <p><b>Up to date Personal Education Plans</b> Q2 = 81%</p>	<p>What specific plans are in place and when can improvement be expected?</p>	<p><i>checks.</i></p>
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**QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT – Quarter 2 2016/17**

Reporting Period 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1. To provide an overview of Doncaster Children's Services Trust's performance position for Quarter 2, 2016/17

**2. SUMMARY POSITION**

2.1. The contract indicator set was revised during the fourth quarter of 2015/16, as agreed through the first annual contract review.

2.2. The table below summarises the number of contract measures on target, within tolerance and outside tolerance as at the end of Quarter 2 2016/17.

Quarter 2 2016/17				
	Outside tolerance	Inside tolerance	On or better than target	No target specified
Social Care Pathway	2		5	
Children in Care		1	4	
Youth Offending Services			2	1
Workforce		2		1

2.3. There are currently two measures that lie outside tolerance. These are discussed later within the report. Two measures are without a target, but demonstrate good performance.

2.4. There are currently two "hard to shift" measures – those which have been outside tolerance for 2 or more consecutive quarters. They are:

A2 - Timeliness of Single Assessment

A8 - Percentage of Children in Need with an open and current Plan

**2.5. Measures at or better than Target as at end of Quarter 2 2016/17**

A1 – percentage of re-referrals in last 12 months

A3 - Percentage of monthly case file audits rated as 'requires improvement' or better

New - Percentage of Child Protection visits in timescale where child was seen by their Social Worker

A5 - Percentage of children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time.

New – Percentage of children in child protection plan for 2 years or more

B8 - Average length of care proceedings (weeks)  
B9 – Long term placement stability of looked after children  
B10 - Stability of Placement of CiC: percentage of 3+ moves  
New – Care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation  
New - Youth Offending Services – %cohort currently EET  
New – Youth Offending Services – Custody Rate

## 2.6. Measures within Contract Tolerance as at end of Quarter 1 2016/17

New - Percentage of Care Leavers in Employment, Training and Education (age 19-21yrs)

C14 - Percentage of frontline FTE posts covered by Agency Staff

NEW – Frontline staff receiving supervisions in timescale

## 2.7. Measures outside Contract Tolerance as at end of Quarter 1 2016/17

A2 – timeliness of single assessment

New – Percentage of children in need with an open and current plan

## 2.8. Measures with no target currently set

New – Youth Offending Services – reoffending rate after 12 months

New – Staff turnover

2.9. Further detail on each measure, along with trends and narrative can be found in appendix A

## 3. OPERATIONAL MEASURES AND CONTEXT

3.1. In addition to the contract performance measures, 37 operational volumetric measures are also provided. These are supplied within appendix A. A summary of the key themes emerging from this dataset is listed below

- **Contacts:** will have dropped in quarter 2 due to the seasonal drop during the school summer break. Comparisons with same period last year are not possible due to changes in recording practices from September 2015. Two thirds of contacts lead to no further action with advice or information given, but still need to be recorded, with a decision against them. This is an obvious distraction from the core work that is being channelled through this route. The largest number of contacts come from Police (43%), of which the majority proceed to no further action. This is a regional challenge, relating to SYP policy of referring all incidents involving children, without an initial risk assessment. The Trust continues to challenge this approach, using sub-regional levers to encourage a different approach.
- **Referral rates:** Prior to the school summer break, referral rate had risen to almost 500 per month. An anticipated dip in August continued into September. Although this is still early, this gives an indication that reorganisation of front door pathways is reducing referrals rates, and in turn the number of



assessments to be completed. The trend will not be established until late October/early November. Only a quarter of contacts lead to referrals. However, the percentage of referrals leading to an assessment dropped from 95% to 85% in September 2016, suggesting the Front Door is beginning to “hold back” referrals. As the number of referrals leading to an assessment reduces, it would be expected that the proportion of assessments leading to no further action also reduces (as the quality of referrals improves). However, as the statutory timescale for completion of assessments is up to 45 days (9weeks), more time is required to measure this.

- **Early Help:** Early Help enquiries have increased since June 2016, with 491 recorded in September 2016. Almost one quarter come from schools, with 17% coming from MASH/R&R thus diverting statutory intervention. Enquiries from Health services (GP, A&E, Health Visitors) remain relatively low. Over half of enquiries lead to a continuation of the Early Help pathway, with 15% leading to no further action and a similar proportion leading to a single agency response. A decreasing proportion are leading to step up to social care, supporting evidence from contacts and referrals that Front door services are beginning to direct requests for support to the most appropriate point. IFST (29%), Family Support Teams (32%) and Education settings (33%) account for 92% of lead professional roles for open early help cases. Of the 509 EH cases closed in quarter 2, 60% ended with the “action plan complete” or “all needs being met.” Although the Trust has not yet developed a re-referral to Early Help indicator, there is no evidence through audit or dip sampling that cases closed in this way are leading to high levels of repeat requests for Early Help intervention or statutory services.
- **Children in Need:** numbers have shrunk to 90% of those reported at the end of quarter 1 This is due to focussed efforts by each locality area to progress CIN cases by identifying drift/delay in order to step down or close. This has been supported by reduced referrals (85% of rate at quarter 1 end). This is also reducing overall caseloads, in particular the number of workers with high caseloads.
- The number of children on a **child protection plan** has seen a modest decrease, compared to the end of quarter (2% reduction), from 439 to 429.
- The number of **children in care** is showing a low, but increasing trend, with a 2% increase from quarter 1, from 504 to 512. This is placing additional pressure on placement costs.
- **Caseloads** for staff have decreased across locality teams due to the reduced referral rates and targeted closure work. Average caseload has dropped by one case (18.1 to 17.1) between the two quarters, with the percentage of workers with “high” caseloads dropping from 21% to 10%. Average caseloads range from 17 to 21 in Assessment and Child Protection Teams, with lower rates in CIC teams (13 to 14). The highest caseload was 28 at the end of September, compared to 34 in May 2016. Caseloads of this size will comprise

a mixture of open CIN/ CPP cases, cases approaching closure and new referrals requiring assessment. Weekly monitoring of caseloads, and case progression is in place in order to prevent returns to these figures. However, it is also dependent upon volume of demand and Front Door procedures to maintain these levels.

#### **4. KEY EXCEPTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS**

4.1. Fourteen operational measures currently remain within tolerance or are performing at or above target level, and two were outside tolerance in quarter one. Outlying measures are detailed below:

A2 - Timeliness of Single Assessment

A8 - Percentage of Children in Need with an open and current Plan.

4.2. **Timeliness of Single Assessments.** There has been a reducing trend in assessment timeliness during quarter 2, which correlates to an increase in referral rates (and therefore overall workload) during the previous period (quarter 1). As assessments can take up to 45 working days, there is an inherent lag between referral rate and assessments to be completed. For example an increased referral rate in June is likely to impact on assessment completion rates in August. This is exactly what happened in the quarter, with June's referral rate peaking and August's assessment performance dipping. This is also exacerbated by worker and team manager availability during the holiday period. Completion of assessments is a transactional process where manager has to approve an assessment or return for further work. There is, therefore, a seasonal trend for a drop in assessment timeliness in August. Therefore, strategies will be developed to avoid this being repeated. It is anticipated that a reduction in referrals, and therefore assessments initiated, will improve assessment timeliness.

Both LGA and Ofsted visits highlighted the need for further work and attention to be given to ensure a larger proportion of assessments are completed within 10 and 20 working days, rather than taking the full allocation of 45 working days. This is particularly the case for assessments that lead to no further action, of which too many are still taking too long to reach this conclusion. Performance reporting has been changed to identify teams and workers who are not closing an appropriate proportion of cases within these timescales. Additional audit activity is scheduled to better understand causes for delay, so that they can be identified and removed.

4.3. **The Proportion of Children in Need with an open and current Plan:** Caseworkers have been tasked with reassessing all cases open for 6 months or longer; this should lead to revisions or new plans, escalation and de-escalation (step down). 87% of cases open for 6 months or longer had an identified updated plan on LiquidLogic during the quarter. Including plans in draft form the percentage increases to 91%. In writing this report, an audit of 20 open cases with no plan in June was undertaken, with the following themes

- When reviewed, case had been closed or are at closure stage.
- Some related to plans for children transferring out of the Borough
- Some had a draft in place
- Some related to children with pre-birth plans
- Some were still in assessment
- Recording issues had been resolved with others

This demonstrates that in the majority of cases where plans do not exist, there is a reason. Similar dip-samples have been completed by Heads of Service when writing their monthly self-evaluation forms with the same findings. A task to expedite closures continues. If this measure is to be included in the 2016/17 contract indicator set, then it will require review/revision so that it better reflects practice.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1. This report reflects performance against the revised contract indicator set for the second quarter of 2015/16. Although some of the initial challenges in recording and reporting have been resolved to ensure stability of measurement, further work needs to be done to improve recording of casework to ensure indicators are as accurate as possible.
- 5.2. The majority of measures are within tolerance or at/above target. Two social care measures currently lie outside tolerance. Reasons for this are set out in the report, as are strategies for their recovery. Both are dependent upon demand management. Demand remains excessive, but it is being better managed through Front Door services. However, the total demand, measured as contacts, remains very high and continues to place pressure on the Trust to process and risk assess each case. Further whole system transformation work is required to strengthen the quality and impact of early help provision.
- 5.3. The continued trend in improving case file quality is welcome and encouraging. It demonstrates that the commitment to practice improvement through intensive training, deployment of advisors and a reinforced QA framework is now yielding sustained improvement.
- 5.4. A robust performance framework that is flexible and reactive to the Trust's improvement journey is also contributing to the improved performance outturn for this quarter.

Report prepared by James Thomas, DCST