

Report of the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) to the Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 5 November 2018

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Subject:

Updated information for Members on the outcomes for Looked After Children at 31 March 2018.

Summary statement:

The report provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with comprehensive information regarding outcomes for Looked After Children. It is a summary of information known about Looked After Children in Bradford as at 31 March 2018 and draws on the same data used to provide statistical returns to the Department for Education (all figures are provisional, DfE publish the final figures March 2019) . Comparison is made to performance levels at 31 March 2017 and to the first National Statistical Release for 2016-17.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.2 The report provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with comprehensive information regarding outcomes for Looked After Children. It is a summary of information known about Looked After Children in Bradford as at 31 March 2018 and draws on the same data used to provide statistical returns to the Department for Education (DfE) (all figures are provisional, DfE publish the final figures March 2019) . Comparison is made to performance levels at 31 March 2017 and to the first National Statistical Release for 2016-17.

2. BACKGROUND

These outcomes are reported on children who are Looked After at 31 March 2018, and have been in care continuously for at least one year on that date.

This is reported annually to the DfE as part of the wider Looked After Children's return (SSDA903) and performance is fed back to Through Care Strategy group to support and improve the work of individual services.

The data provided through the Looked After Children return provides information on performance indicators which are used to form part of the National Indicator Set (NIS). Although the NIS as a central entity has been abolished by the Coalition Government, these performance indicators are still a key local tool in managing the quality of outcomes for Looked After Children in the District. They also contribute to Ofsted's annual evaluation of children's services in Bradford and provide key baseline information for any Ofsted inspection of services to Looked After Children that may take place.

Headlines:

- There has been an increase in the number of looked after children, 986 children were in care at 31 March 2018 compared to 927 last year.
- The numbers of adoptions and Special Guardianship Orders have decreased since last year.
- Numbers of young people with up to date Immunisations have increased.
- Numbers of Care Leavers in Employment, Education or Training and living in suitable accommodation has improved.
- Young people who were convicted or subject to a youth caution in the year has fallen.

2.1 Overall Numbers

- 2.1.1 There were 986 children looked after at 31 March 2018, which is a 6.4% increase on last year of 927. Nationally the number of looked after children has continued to rise; it has increased steadily over the last nine years. The rate of looked after children per 10,000 population aged 0-17 is at 66 which is an increase on last year of 60. This compares favourably with statistical neighbours rate of 81.8 but slightly higher than the England average of 62.

- 2.1.2 There has been a 3.7% decrease in the number of children becoming Looked After at 31 March. 338 children started to be looked after, which is a decrease on last year's figure of 351.
Nationally at 31 March 2017 there was a 2% increase in the numbers starting to be looked after compared to the previous year.

298 children ceased to be looked after compared to 281 last year. Nationally the number of children ceasing care has fallen.

2.2 Placements and Adoptions

- 2.2.1 Ensuring looked after children and young people are in stable placements is a key priority for Children's Services. At 31 March 2018, 66% of children and young people were in long term stable and secure placements, which is a decrease on last year's figure of 73%. This compares unfavourably with the England average of 70% and the statistical neighbours' average of 70.9%. Short term placement stability remains fairly stable; 11% of children and young people had 3 or more placements in the year compared to 10% last year. This is slightly higher than the National average of 10% and compares unfavourably with the statistical neighbours' average of 8.6%.
- 2.2.2 29 children (10%) were adopted at 31 March 2018 this is a decrease on last year of 42 (15%). This compares unfavourably to the national average of 14% and to the statistical neighbours average of 20% (comparison from the first National Statistical Release for 2016-17).
- 2.2.3 The importance of finding the right family for a child cannot be under-estimated. This has long taken primacy over timeliness in Bradford, particularly when dealing with children who are 'hard to place' (children who are disabled; children who are part of a sibling group; and children from a BME background). In 2017/18, 16 children out of the 29 adoptions in the year (55 per cent) were classified as hard to place, this is the same percentage as the previous year (23 children out of 42; 55 per cent). In the last year 74% of Bradford children were placed in house compared with 51% in 2016/17.
- 2.2.3 The number of Special Guardianship Orders granted has also decreased 23 (8%) in 2018 from 33 (12%) in 2017.
- 2.2.4 The average time taken between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family has also improved in the year in question from 357 days in 2016/17 to 344 days in 2017/18.
- 2.2.5 A permanence panel process has been established since January, this has started to make an impact in terms of discharges from the care system. Since January 22 care plans have been discharged with 6 moving to Special Guardianship Order. Currently filed with the legal department are another 15 to move to special guardianship and 18 discharge of care order.

2.3 Health

2.3.1 Physical Health

- 96% of looked after children had all their immunisations up to date increase from 92% in 2017.
- 92% had their teeth checked by a dentist in the year, a slight decrease on last year's figure of 94%.
- 93% of Looked After children had an annual health assessment in the year; this is the same as last year's figure.

2.4 Emotional Health

- 2.4.1. It is recognised that Children and Young People who have been abused and suffered loss of their primary carer are at greater risk of poor emotional resilience. Concerns remain for the outcomes of young people leaving care whose future is impacted by issues of poor emotional health which, for a minority, can lead to social exclusion.
- 2.4.2 The emotional health needs of children and young people (Looked After for more than a year) are assessed through a 'Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). A SDQ generates an individual score for an individual child (between 1 – 40), 0-13 as normal level of emotional need, 13-25 some concerns, 25-40 very concerning. The highest figures are a predictor of emotional difficulties.
- 2.4.3 During the initial health assessment a strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) is completed with the child or young person, this is a nationally used questionnaire that simply looks at a base line of a child or young person emotional wellbeing. The questionnaire can be repeated with different professionals and the child or young person to get a more rounded view of their emotional well-being. From the initial assessment completed by health colleagues, the process then comes over to the Through Care Service to review and repeat with the 'team around the child'. In service the scores from the questionnaire are used as a tool to prioritise referrals to the TSW (Therapeutic Social Worker) service. The Through Care Service are looking at more user friendly tools to capture his information in order to have richer data and analysis about the wellbeing of our looked after children and young people. The average value for completed questionnaires at 31 March 2018 is 13.8 compared to 12.2 last year. This rate compares favourably with the England and Statistical average rate of 14.10 and 14.2 (2016-2017 Statistical Release Figures).
- 2.4.4 The Through Care Service is exploring an online SDQ system that is used in Calderdale and will enable the carer, young person and education provider to all contribute to the SDQ form, this will link to our children's LCS system and enable data to be reported from.
- 2.4.4 To respond to the emotional wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers Social Care Services have implemented specific partnerships with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS):

- A model of care informed by PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) is rolled out across the internal residential and fostering service. We expect all our carers to use this model of care when working with young people in Bradford
- The Therapeutic Social Workers (TSW) are in the early stages of embedding themselves within the Through Care Service. The team are ambitious for our looked after children and want to have offered all foster carers at least one session of Therapeutic Thinking Time (TTT) for the children they are caring for. The TSW Team are supporting the training of foster carers in PACE intervention and foundations of attachment in order to increase foster carers resilience and see themselves as a tool to 'heal' children who have suffered trauma by nature of them having being separated in their lives from their initial primary carer giver. TSW's will work alongside the looked after children nursing team and LAAC (Looked After and Adopted Children) service as a middle tier of intervention.
- Leaving Care Workers and young people have early access to CAMHS Social Work service to provide preventative therapeutic work or access to specialist CAMHS and Adult Services.

2.5 Children's Homes

2.5.1 Changes to the Children's Homes Regulations and Ofsted Inspection Framework were introduced in April 2015 with residential care settings and provisions being inspected against a rigorous inspection framework twice a year. Inspectors consider the information that Ofsted has about the service which includes:

- previous inspection reports
- the home's statement of purpose
- concerns and complaints received
- notifications of serious events received
- written reports following a visit by an independent visitor
- any quality assurance reports required by regulation
- any changes to registration, including change of manager
- any current or recent enforcement activity.

2.5.2 Judgements of the home are made in relation to:

- The Overall Experiences and Progress of Children and Young People living in the home
- How Well Children and Young People are Helped and Protected
- The Impact and Effectiveness of Leaders and Managers

2.5.3 With overall judgements in relation to the care delivered being made using a four-point scale:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Inadequate

2.5.4 Inspectors will investigate how the manager and staff:

- Understand each child or young person's starting point
- Measure success
- Know they are making a positive difference to children and young people's lives
- Understand and act on the strengths and areas for improvement in practice.

2.5.6 Any judgement of inadequate for the overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home at an inspection of a children's home will lead to an urgent case review. There will also be an urgent case review where the issues identified at an interim inspection give sufficient cause for concern.

Currently Bradford has 11 Residential homes and respite provisions, the outcomes for 2017-2018:

Full inspection outcomes

- 1 - Requires Improvement
- 7 - Good
- 2 - Outstanding

Following changes in inspection processes only one home completed an Interim Inspection during the 2017-2018 period, with the outcome being

- 1 improved effectiveness

2.6 Achievement

The information on the attainment of looked after children for the academic year 2017/2018 is not yet available and is the subject of a report to this Committee at a later date.

2.7 Positive Contribution

- 98% of Looked After children participated in their reviews at 31 March 2018 which is an increase on last year of 96%.
- 97% of Looked After children had all their reviews on time during 17-18; this is a slight fall on last year of 98%.
- The percentage of Looked After young people who were convicted or subject to a youth caution in the year has fallen; 5% in 2018 compared to 6% in 2017. There are three dedicated Police Officers working closely with the children's homes to work restoratively and reduce offending and missing episodes.
- The number of children looked after who have been missing in the last year has reduced by 41%.

2.8 Economic Wellbeing

- 2.8.1 At 31 March 2018, 63% of Care Leavers were in education, employment and training, which is an increase on last year of 57%. Bradford performance compares favourably with the England average of 50%, Yorkshire and Humber average of 50% and with statistical neighbours average of 50.6% (2016-2017 Statistical Release Figures).
- 2.8.2 90% of Care Leavers were living in suitable accommodation; this is an increase on last year figure of 84%. Bradford's figure compares favourably with the England average of 84% and in line with the statistical neighbours average of 87.3% and Yorkshire and Humber average of 86% (2016-2017 Statistical Release Figures).
- 2.8.3 6% of Care Leavers were in higher education, a slight decrease on last year's figure of 7%. Bradford's figure of 6% is in line with the England and Yorkshire and the Humber average of 6% but slightly lower than the statistical neighbours' average of 7% (2016-2017 Statistical Release Figures).

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

None.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

None.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

None.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

None.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

None.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

None.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None.

7.6 TRADE UNION

None.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

See report.

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

N/A

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

None.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the members of the Corporate Parenting Panel note this report.

11. APPENDICES

None.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

National Statistical Release for 2016-17.