

Scrutiny

Year end 2023-24 Performance Summary

Referrals: In 2023/24, 81.4% (1,119 / 1,374) of the children had their referral completed within 1 working day. This is decrease when compared with 84.1% in 2022/23, and not meeting our 90% target. 1.7% of referrals took over 3 working days to be completed in 2023/24 which is outperforming our target of 5%.

Re-Referrals: During 2023/24, 332 children from 198 families have had a new referral within 12 months of their last referral starting. This is a continued year-on-year increase in re-referrals compared to 2022/23 (286 children), 2021/22 (106 children) and 2020/21 (143 children). Due to the reduction in referrals made to social care, and an increase in re-referrals, it has resulted in at total of 24.2% of our referrals this year being repeated within 12 months of a previous referral starting. Re-referrals are being scrutinised during the weekly WRM meeting to ensure best practise and learning outcomes are shared.

Building Stronger Families: At the end of 2023/24, there were 197 families, 423 children open to the Building Stronger Families team. A further 64 families with 125 children were open to an external agency and supporting the families. 1,417 Early Help Assessments (EHA) were started in 2023/24, a -14.1% drop in the 1,650 completed during 2022/23. 14.4% (204) of the EHA's started, were initiated by external agencies.

Missing: The total number of missing episodes in 2023/24 was 423 involving 122 individual children and young people. This is a reduction compared to 2022/23 which saw 691 episodes of missing involving 162 individual children. 93 (76.2%) children in 2023/24 had 3 or less missing episodes, 20 (16.4%) children were reported missing between 4 and 9 times in the year. 9 (7.4%) young people were reported 10 or more times during 2023/24, all except one are/were a child in care. In 2023/24, all Return Home Interviews (RHI) (excluding children from other authorities) were offered except for 2, 87.8% of which were offered within 72 hours and 76.9% of the RHI's had the child's engagement. This is a positive increase in children engaging with their RHI compared to previous years (2022/23, 84.6% in 72hrs with 59.1% engagement and 2021/22, 75.8% in 72hrs with 51.2% engagement).

Children & Families Assessments: 1,554 children had a C&F assessment completed in 2023/24. This is a continual increase when compared to 2022/23 (1,461), 2021/22 (806) and 2020/21 (692). 62.7% (975 / 1,554) of our C&F assessments were completed within timescale in 2023/24. This is significantly below target of 90.0% but focused work on C&Fs has been done in the second half of this year which is evident in the increase in assessments outcomed within 45 days. Between April and October 2023, assessments were averaging at 52.5% completed in timescale in a month, since then, this has increased to an average of 80.5% a month.

Section 47 Enquiries: 372 section 47 enquires were started in 2023/24, involving 693 individual children, 22 of which were already on an open Child Protection (CP) plan.

Child Protection Conference timeliness: 79.5% of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) were held within 15 working days from the strategy meeting / section 47 being initiated, excluding children who were transferred-in conference, in 2023/24. This measure continues to be negatively below the target of 95% although an increase in performance compared to the last 2 years.

Child Protection Plans: 146 children were subject to a Child Protection plan (CP) as at the end of March 2024 with a rate of 65.6 per 10,000 population with a CP plan. This is an increase on previous years and comparable to the increase in CiN plans open and decrease in Children in Care. Of the 196 children who became subject to a CP plan in 2023/24, 7 became subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years of the previous plan ending (3.6%), and 35 children (17.9%) had been subject to a CP plan for a second time ever.

Child Protection Statutory visits: 69.0% (2,050 / 2,973) of Child Protection statutory visits were completed within 10 working days in 2023/24 and 90.4% (2,688 / 2,973) of the visits were completed within 15 working days. In comparison to 2022/23, the number of visits carried out has had a 16.5% increase (from 2,553 to 2,973 visits) along with the percentage that were carried out within timescale (67.8% within 10 days and 90.0% within 15 days).

Children in Care: 300 children were in care as at March 2024, 18 of which are unaccompanied asylum-seekers. The rate of children in care per 10,000 population has started to fall this reporting year and was at 134.8 at the end of March 2024, compared to 142.3 at March 2023 and closer to pre-covid levels of 120.0 at March 2021. 121 children came into care in 2023/24 from 81 families. This is a decrease when compared with the 149 children who came into care in 2022/23 from 104 families. 11 of the young people came into care after accepted by the Home Office as UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child) during 2023/24, a reduction on the 18 who came into care during 2022/23. 143 children and young people, from 112 families ceased to be in care in 2023/24. This is the highest yearly number of children ceasing care we have seen. We have also seen a reduction in the number of children coming into care who have previously been in care (13 in 2023/24 from 22 in 2022/23). The proportion of children who returned home to their parent(s) (42.7%) has doubled when compared to 2022/23 (21.0%), 2021/22 (28.3%) and Q1 2020/21 (27.5%).

Children in Care Reviews: 100.0% of Children in Care (CiC) were allocated to a qualified social worker. 93.5% of the reviews have been completed within required timescales in 2023/24.

Children in Care Statutory visits: 81.0% (3,079 / 3,801) of statutory visits for Children in Care (CiC) were completed in timescale in 2023/24. This is a year-on-year decrease in performance from 93.1% in 2020/21, 90.1% in 2021/22 and 83.4% in 2022/23. Reviews of the new locality allocations for the A&S teams is occurring and where appropriate are amended to ensure a fair and even distribution of allocation and workloads.

Children in Care Placements: 17.0% of our Children in Care, as at March 2024, have had 3 or more placements within the previous 12 months. This is negatively above internal target (10.0%). Currently, 61.1% of our Children in Care aged under 16 (who have been looked after for at least 2.5 years) have been in their current placement continuously for at least 2 years. This is negatively below our 68% target however an improvement when compared to 2022/23.

10.4% (29 / 278) of our Children in Care have been placed 20 or more miles away from home as at March 2024 which is the lowest number of children this year and compared to March 2023 which saw 37 children placed 20 or more miles from the family home. This relates to young people who have been placed in residential care due to their disability / placed with family / or placed for adoption, and this provision is not available within 20 miles.

Initial Health Assessments: 65.5% of IHA's completed in 2023/24 were completed within the required timescale of 5 days and 60.7% of those children received a health assessment within 20 days.

Health and Dental Reviews: 91.1% of children due a review health assessment by March 2024 have had one completed and 90.7% of the children in care have an up to date health check. Currently only 1.3% of the children and young people are refusing to attend a health review. 83.1% of children due a dental health assessment by March 2024 have had one completed and 83.5% of the children in care have an up to date dental check. Currently 3.0% of the children and young people are refusing to attend a dental check-up. The young people are continually reminded of the benefits of having a check-up and encouraged to take part.

Care Leavers: 98.4% of our care leavers aged 19-21 and 97.9% of our care leavers aged 22-25 were in suitable accommodation at the end of March 2024. The percentage of care leavers who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) continues to be positively below the target set of 30% at 22.6% for care leavers aged 19-21 and 14.6% for those aged 22-25 at the end of March 2024. 193.4% of the young people, aged 19-21, were engaging in education (including studies beyond A level) and 58.1% of the young people were in training or employment (including apprenticeships). 8.3% of the young people, aged 22-25, were engaging in education (including studies beyond A level) and 77.1% of the young people were in training or employment (including apprenticeships).