

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES DASHBOARD – QUARTER 2 2019-20

### Dashboard Item 1 - Education, Health & Care Plans

Measure	2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q2 2019-20	Direction of Travel
Current EHCPs in borough (snapshot at end of period)	560	n/a	581	↑
Current EHCPs out of borough (snapshot at end of period)	349	n/a	402	↑
EHCPs issued within 20 weeks of the referral	30%	40%	12.9%	↓

#### What does this show us?

The numbers of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) funded by Wokingham Borough Council are increasing, for both children and young people educated within Wokingham, and those educated outside. The modest increase in funded EHCP numbers between the end of 2018-19 and the end of Quarter 2 2019-20 masks the fact that, since January 2018, funded EHCP numbers in Wokingham have risen by almost 9%.

Between September 2018 and June 2019, no EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks of the referral. This explains 30% reported for 2018-19 (itself a reduction of 66 percentage points from 2017-18). However, in Quarter 2 2019-20, a number of EHCPs were issued within the 20-week timescale, which indicates a short-term improvement in performance in this area.

#### What is the background to this?

The service's ability to issue EHC Plans within the required timescales is dependent on its ability to appoint appropriately qualified and experienced workers. After operating at less than 50% capacity since early 2018, the SEND care management team achieved a full staffing complement in Quarter 2 2019-20. This has been the catalyst for the short-term improvement of EHC Plans issued within timescales, and will enable further improvements in this area.

#### What action is the service taking?

We will continue to monitor the numbers of EHCPs to ensure resource levels remain appropriate. It is intended that the 20 week assessment timeliness will achieve 100% target by early 2020, and the indicator will be monitored monthly to track progress against this target.

#### What is the national context?

For the calendar year 2018, 60.1% of new EHC Plans across England were issued within 20 weeks.

## Dashboard Item 2 – Early Help

Measure	2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q2 2019-20	Direction of Travel
No. of referrals to Early Help	840	160	159	↓
No. Early Help Assessments	638	122	176	↑
Avg. length of time in days between referral and assessment completion	40	38	25	↓

### What does this show us?

The numbers of referrals to the Early Help service has remained stable; 159 in Quarter 2 2019-20 compared to 160 in the same period in 2018-19. Meanwhile, the number of completed Early Help assessments has increased significantly compared to Quarter 1 2018-19.

The average length of time it is taking to complete Early Help assessments has fallen in Quarter 2 2019-20 compared to both the 2018-19 average and Quarter 2 2018-19 average.

### What is the background to this?

Over previous months, Early Help workers had been under additional pressure due to the volume of social work support activity the service was undertaking (such as supporting supervised visits for children who enter care, undertaking parenting assessments and providing co-working support for children who are subject to child in Need or Child Protection Plans).

Although the number of completed assessments has risen significantly between Quarter 2 2018-19 and Quarter 2 2019-20, the rise in the number of involved families has been less significant. Larger families being the subject of Early Help assessments in Quarter 2 2019-20 have contributed to the rise in the number Early Help assessments completed.

### What action is the service taking?

All out of timescale assessments have been reviewed and the service is ensuring that appropriate focus is given to Early Help and prevention activity.

Early Help assessment timeliness will continue to be monitored monthly as part of our internal performance monitoring.

### What is the national context?

Comparative national figures are not available for Early Help activity and timeliness.

### Dashboard Item 3 – Children’s Social Care Front Door

Measure	2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q2 2019-20	Direction of Travel
No. of referrals to CSC	1,787	412	419	↑
% of referrals to CSC which are repeat referrals within 12 months	21.7%	23.1%	25.1%	↑
% assessments completed within 45 working days	67.4%	57.2%	76.3%	↑

#### What does this show us?

The number of referrals to Children’s Social Care (CSC) has risen slightly; 419 in Quarter 2 2019-20 compared to 412 for the same period in 2018-19.

The percentage of referrals coming into CSC for children who have been the subject of a previous referral in last 12 months has increased in 2019-20 compared to the overall 2018-19 figure, and the figure for Quarter 2 2018-19.

The timeliness of initial assessments completed following a referral to CSC has improved significantly in recent months.

#### What is the background to this?

The front-door team were dealing with unprecedented demand in 2018-19, which impacted on the team’s ability to meet their target (90%) of assessments completed within timescales. While demand remains high, the impact has been lessened by appropriate resourcing in the front-door team.

#### What action is the service taking?

As part of its Quality Assurance activity, the service has carried out an audit of 80 recent cases where a referral to social care was made within 12 months of a previous referral. The findings of this have been shared with Service Managers and an action plan has been drawn up with the intention of embedding any learning and ensuring appropriate action is taken after the first referral. Both the final report and the action plan will be presented to the Quality Assurance Board in December

Further management information tools are also being developed for Team Managers to ensure that assessment timeliness and levels of activity within teams can be better monitored.

#### What is the national context?

Nationally, in 2018-19, 82.7% of assessments were completed within 45 days, and 21.9% of referrals were re-referrals to CSC within 12 months.

## Dashboard Item 4 – Child Protection

Measure	2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q2 2019-20	Direction of Travel
Children subject to CP Plans (snapshot at end of period)	124	159	129	↓
% of children starting a plan who had a previous one in the last 2 years	8.7%	4.1%	24%	↑
% of child protection visits within timescale	65.2%	58.0%	73.6%	↑

### What does this show us?

The number of children on child protection plans is slightly higher at the end of Quarter 2 2019-20 than at the end of 2018-19, but is lower than at the end of Quarter 2 2018-19.

Of those children who came onto a child protection plan in Quarter 2 2019-20, 24% had been subject to a previous child protection plan within the last 2 years. This is around 15 percentage points higher than the 2018-19 figure.

More child protection visits are now happening within mandated timescales compared to previous periods; in Quarter 2 of 2019-20, 74% of visits were in time.

### What is the background to this?

In Quarter 2 2019-20, two large families accounted for 7 of the 8 children coming onto a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time within 24 months. The entire cohort of children coming onto a plan in the period was only 34, so performance against this measure is heavily influenced by the size of the families involved.

### What action is the service taking?

Where children become subject to child protections plans for a second or subsequent time, Service Managers go back through the case files to look for any points of learning that can be applied to future cases.

Further management information tools are being developed for Team Managers to ensure that visit timeliness can be monitored. The new Quality Assurance Framework will also set out expected standards around recording of visits on the management information system.

### What is the national context?

Nationally, there is a child protection plan rate of 45.3 per 10,000 children. In Wokingham, this was 35.1 at the end of quarter 1.

## Dashboard Item 5 – Children in Care

Measure	2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q2 2019-20	Direction of Travel
No. children in care (snapshot at end of period)	114	101	114	↑
% visits to children in care within timescale	68.4%	65.4%	74.3%	↑
% children in care who have more than 1 allocated social worker in 12m (snapshot at end of period)	65.0%	69.3%	70.2%	↑

### What does this show us?

The number of children in care remains relatively stable, but there has been significant improvement in the number of visits taking place within timescales.

The percentage of children in care who have had more than 1 allocated worker in the previous 12 months has risen by 5 percentage points since the end of 2018-19.

### What is the background to this?

There was some concern in 2018-19 that visits to children in care were not being recorded in a timely manner and that performance was artificially low as a result. Some work was done alongside social workers to remove barriers to recording, with the expectation that the visit timeliness indicator would begin to move in line with the anecdotal reality.

The Ofsted report published in July 2019 drew attention to repeated changes of social work for children, “making it difficult for them to establish and maintain meaningful relationships with [social workers]”. The turnover of staff and the high proportion of agency workers across front-line teams makes Wokingham vulnerable in this regard.

### What action is the service taking?

The visit timeliness is monitored on a monthly basis to ensure the expected improvements in performance are being seen since the barriers to recording have been removed. Team Managers are also provided with a weekly dataset to assist them in identifying where cases may be falling out of visiting timescales.

The recruitment and retention policy is being further developed to ensure Wokingham can not only recruit high quality social workers, but can retain them as well. Alongside this, work is underway to enable Wokingham to ‘grow our own’ social work staff, using our existing, high quality offer for those on an assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) to train and keep good social workers.

### What is the national context?

The national rate of Children in Care per 10,000 is 64.0. In Wokingham, the equivalent figure is 31.4.

## Dashboard Item 6 – Care Leavers

Measure	2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q2 2019-20	Direction of Travel
% of care leavers 'in touch' (snapshot at end of period)	94.4%	95.1%	89.0%	↓
% of care leavers aged 18-24 who are NEET (snapshot at end of period)	45.8%	39.3%	44.3%	↑
% of care leavers in suitable accommodation (snapshot at end of period)	91.7%	86.9%	80.5%	↓

### What does this show us?

There has been a decline in the percentage of care leavers that we are in touch with compared to the end of 2018-19 and Quarter 2 2018-19.

The percentage of care leavers aged 18-24 who are NEET has decreased slightly since the end of 2018-19, but increased compared to Quarter 2 2018-19.

The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation has deteriorated since the end of 2018-19, falling by 11 percentage points.

### What is the background to this?

Wokingham generally maintains good relations with care leavers, and is in touch with the vast majority. However, due to the age of the children and their individual preferences, it is not always possible to remain in contact; some children actively refuse contact with the service.

Some care leavers are housed in temporary accommodation as part of their housing journey.

### What action is the service taking?

The service takes steps to understand the reasons why Care Leavers are not in education, employment or training - some will be due to a disability or maternity leave which means they will remain NEET for a long period of time. Care Leavers are visited regularly and supported to engage and remain in education, employment or training, as appropriate.

Conversations have been taking place with Housing colleagues to ensure that all care leavers can be placed in suitable accommodation, and to reduce the need to place care leavers in bed and breakfast accommodation.

### What is the national context?

Nationally, 93% of care leavers are in touch with their LA; 39% of care leavers are NEET, and; 84% are in suitable accommodation. Wokingham compares favourably to all these.

## Dashboard Item 7 – Children Missing from Home/Care

Measure	2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q2 2019-20	Direction of Travel
Children missing from home/care	123	27	53	↑
% return home interviews carried out on time	38%	33.3%	62.5%	↑
Children missing from education (snapshot at end of period)	13	n/a	5	↓

### What does this show us?

The number of children going missing from home or care has fallen in Quarter 2, based on an annualised average against 2018-19.

More return home interviews are happening within timescales, improving by 24 percentage points from 2018-19 to Quarter 2 2019-20.

There are 8 fewer children missing from education at the end of Quarter 2 2019-20 than there were at the end of 2018-19. These are children who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise.

### What is the background to this?

Return Home Interviews are carried out by a Return Home Interview Coordinator who is based in the Early Help Service. Ofsted spoke positively about the quality of interviews in their latest inspection report.

Although a child may agree to an interview taking place initially, it is often hard to engage them in completing the interview within timescales. This is particularly the case with older children or children in care placed outside the Borough.

Ofsted judged the LA's oversight of children who are missing education to be effective in their latest inspection report.

### What action is the service taking?

It has been recognised that on some occasions our process flow for missing children upon return has not been as efficient or effective as it could be which has erroneously led to reported delay. A full review of the missing child process is underway.

Children missing in education will continue to be tracked by the Virtual School

### What is the national context?

There is no national data available for comparison.

## Dashboard Item 8 – Children’s Services Workforce

Measure	2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q2 2019-20	Direction of Travel
12 months rolling turnover of qualified social workers	22%	28%	8%	↓
% agency staff across qualified social work workforce (snapshot at end of period)	34%	34%	34%	↔

### What does this show us?

Stability across the social work workforce is improving, with turnover falling by 14 percentage points between the end of 2018-19 and Quarter 2 2019-20.

The percentage of agency social workers in Children’s Services has risen slightly between the end of 2018-19 and the end of Quarter 2 2019-20.

### What is the background to this?

Children’s Services has struggled to recruit to vacant social worker posts over the last few years, meaning that a high number of social workers have been agency staff. A number of extra-establishment agency social workers have also been recruited to meet increased levels in demand.

Turnover amongst permanent staff has been steadily improving in recent quarters. However, turnover amongst agency social workers is high, and subsequently social worker changes for looked after children in particular remains high.

### What action is the service taking?

A review of the establishment is under way with the intention of setting an appropriate budget for 2020-21 alongside the appropriate number of establishment social worker posts to meet the current levels of demand. This is likely to reduce the number of extra-establishment posts currently occupied by agency staff, and allow for recruitment in line with the service’s recruitment and retention policy.

A retention and recruitment worker has also been recruited to assist with this.

### What is the national context?

Nationally, the percentage of agency social workers across the entire social work workforce is 15.4%, which is lower than Wokingham’s 34%.

The national 12-month rolling turnover of social workers is 16.2%. Wokingham has now surpassed this national average.