

Dashboard Item 1 - Education, Health & Care Plans

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
Current EHCPs in borough (snapshot at end of period)	706	577	581	612	706	749	↑
Current EHCPs out of borough (snapshot at end of period)	405	365	402	381	402	404	↑
EHCPs issued within 20 weeks of the referral	29.6%	0%	12.3%	14.0%	35.1%	88.0%	↑

What does this show us?

The numbers of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) funded by Wokingham Borough Council continues to increase. The funded EHCP numbers between the end of 2019-20 (1,108) and the end of Quarter 1 2020-21 (1,157) have risen by 4%.

There has been a striking improvement in the number of plans issued within the 20-week timescale over the course of 2019-20 and into 2020-21. In the first quarter of 2019-20, no EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks of the referral. However, by Q1 2020-21, 88% of plans were issued within the timescale.

What is the background to this?

The SEND care management team – which had been operating at less than 50% capacity since early 2018 - achieved a full staffing complement in Quarter 2 2019-20. This has driven the continued improvement on performance into the last quarter.

What action is the service taking?

Improving the timeliness and quality of EHCPs remains a priority area for the council and its partners; it is the focus of a dedicated multi-agency Task and Finish Group which meets monthly and reports directly to the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Improvement Board. Robust tracking processes are used to monitor progress of the production of EHCPs, and the SEND Improvement Board is provided with data around timescales and the reasons behind any breaches.

What is the national context?

For the calendar year 2019, 58.7% of new EHC Plans across England were issued within 20 weeks, compared to 8.7% in Wokingham. The current 88% is well above the averages for England, the South East (46.4%) and Wokingham's statistical neighbours (61.5%)

Dashboard Item 2 – Early Help

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
No. of referrals to Early Help	203	203	159	251	239	224	↓
No. Early Help Assessments	184	184	176	181	197	250	↑
Avg. length of time in days between referral and assessment completion	35	35	25	33	42.3	38	↓

What does this show us?

The numbers of referrals to the Early Help service fluctuated over the course of 2019-20, with a dip in Quarter 1 2020-21. Nonetheless, this quarter has seen an increase on the same quarter last year. Meanwhile, the number of completed Early Help assessments increased quarter-on-quarter last year and reached a to-date peak in Q1 of this year.

After an increase toward the end of 2019-20, the average length of time taken to complete Early Help assessments has decreased in Q1 2020-21 – in spite of the growing number of assessments.

What is the background to this?

March and June 2020 saw unusually high numbers of Early Help referrals (83 and 100 respectively). The number of Early Help assessments on a monthly basis does not always correspond to the fluctuations in Early Help referrals. Assessments differ in length of time, meaning an assessment completed one month may have been referred quite a time before. Early Help has been experiencing increased activity as a result of the impact of Lockdown, and has branched out to deal with cases not previously within its remit. As a result, the improvement in assessment completion times is all the more commendable.

What action is the service taking?

While the number of referrals to Early Help may have dipped from the previous quarter, the number of assessments has increased and timeliness has improved. Both the child and parent/carer rating of the service remains above target. CSC will continue its efforts to improve completion times in the face of continued increased activity.

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	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
No. of referrals to CSC	1774	463	419	495	495	275	↓
% of referrals to CSC which are repeat referrals within 12 months	26.9%	32.4%	25.1%	20.2%	24.7%	27.3%	↑
% assessments completed within 45 working days	74.0%	87.1%	76.3%	71.6%	60.2%	62.9%	↑

What does this show us?

The implementation of Lockdown caused a substantial decrease in the number of referrals occurring, which has continued throughout Quarter 1 and therefore will not reflect the true level of service need in the Borough.

The percentage of referrals coming into CSC for children who have been the subject of a previous referral in last 12 months has increased slightly on Quarter 4 2019-20 after previously consistent decrease. However, the Q1 figure is nonetheless lower than the same quarter last year

The timeliness of initial assessments completed following a referral to CSC remains some way off the timeliness figure for Q1 2019-20 but has nonetheless improved slightly on Quarter 4 2019-20.

What is the background to this?

Prior to Lockdown, the figures for 2019-20 suggested that CSC could expect a 30% increase in demand for services on the previous year. As a result of Lockdown, this has not yet materialised.

What action is the service taking?

Children’s Social Care has been engaging in demand modelling to ensure it is prepared for the increase in front door activity as Lockdown continues to ease and schools return in September. CSC entered Lockdown with a backlog of referrals to assess and has managed to clear that and improve assessment timeliness.

Assessments are a priority for the Service moving forward, and the emphasis being placed on them at the moment should result in improvements in Q2 2020-21 so that the challenges of Q3 can be met.

What is the national context?

The South East and England averages for assessments completed within 45 days are 82% and 83% respectively. The Wokingham percentage of repeat referrals within 12 months (21.1%) is below the England average of 22.6% and the South East average of 25.1%.

Dashboard Item 4 – Child Protection

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
Children subject to CP Plans (snapshot at end of period)	142	131	129	145	146	132	↓
% of children starting a plan who had a previous one in the last 2 years	11.8%	13%	24%	5%	9.6%	3.3%	↓
% of child protection visits within timescale	71.0%	79.0%	73.6%	69.7%	75.9%	80.8%	↑

What does this show us?

The number of children on child protection plans has decreased since Q4 2019-20, but is in line with figures for the same period last year. There has been a substantial drop in the number of children who had been subject to a previous child protection plan within the last 2 years.

Following a dip in the middle of 2019-20, the proportion of visits occurring within timescale is increasing and has exceeded the average for last year. It is noteworthy that timeliness is improving despite the limitations and obstacles presented by Lockdown.

What is the background to this?

The drop in the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan reflects the decrease in referrals as a result of Lockdown. Given the relatively small size of the cohort of children in Wokingham, large families becoming subject to a Child Protection plan for a second or subsequent time within 24 months can distort the figures – as was seen in Q3 2019-20. The fact that the percentage of visits taking place within timescale increased during Lockdown demonstrates the flexible approach that CSC takes to service provision and its ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

What action is the service taking?

Building on the line by line review of all out-of-timescale visits last year, visits are examined in monthly performance meetings which ensures that reporting issues do not distort the performance picture. CSC is working to ensure that the difficulties presented by Lockdown are mitigated and that vulnerable children are put on Protections Plans. The Service continues its so far successful efforts to reduce the need for children to return to a Protection Plan, be it within 24 months or longer.

What is the national context?

Wokingham's Child Protection Plan per 10,000 rate has remained consistent at just over 32 for the past two years, which is in line with Statistical Neighbours (35.0). Wokingham and its neighbours are slightly below the England average of 43.7, but the Borough's current rate is a distinct increase on 2017-18, when the figure was 12.1, compared to an England rate of 43.3.

Dashboard Item 5 – Children in Care

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
No. children in care (snapshot at end of period)	100	117	114	105	100	105	↑
% visits to children in care within timescale	81%	79%	79%	80%	83%	86%	↑
% children in care who have more than 1 allocated social worker in 12m (snapshot at end of period)	21%	69.2%	70.2%	66.7%	66.7%	21%	↓

What does this show us?

The number of children in care has increased from Q4 2019-20 but remains lower than the same period last year. The timeliness of visits to children in care has declined since last year, however the number of children now had more than one allocated social worker has improved substantially on last year's figures. The percentage of children in care who have had more than one allocated worker in the previous 12 months has fallen by nearly 46 percentage points since the last two quarters of 2019-20.

What is the background to this?

Over the course of 2019-20, improvements in recording practices led to the data better reflecting the work social workers are carrying out. The impact of efforts towards workforce stability is reflected in the notable drop in the percentage of children allocated with more than one social worker.

What action is the service taking?

Increased focus by the Service on visits to children in care and a drive to ensure timely recording of visits has led to continuous improvement in performance over 2019-20 and into the first quarter of this year. Not only are more visits taking place than the previous quarter and the same time period last year, but the percentage of visits within time continues to increase quarter on quarter.

Filling the Social Worker vacancies has had a notable positive impact on the number of allocated workers each child has been assigned.

What is the national context?

The rate of Children in Care per 10,000 is 65.0 for England and 53.0 for the South East. The Wokingham rate for 2019-20 is significantly lower, at 28.0 per 10,000.

Dashboard Item 6 – Care Leavers

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
% of care leavers 'in touch' (snapshot at end of period)	87%	94.7%	89.0%	87.0%	91.8%	91%	↔
% of care leavers aged 18-24 who are NEET	37.2%	40.4%	40.9%	38.9%	25.1%	31.4%	↑
% of care leavers in suitable accommodation (snapshot at end of period)	94%	88%	80%	94%	86.9%	97%	↑

What does this show us?

The percentage of care leavers that remain in touch with CSC has been increasing over the last two quarters of 2019-20 and remains consistent into 2020-21. There has been a slight increase in the number of care leavers not in education, employment or training, returning to a comparable level with Q1 last year. The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation has increased noticeably, rising to 97%.

What is the background to this?

Wokingham generally maintains good relations with care leavers, and is in touch with the vast majority; the figures reflect this. The rise in care leavers not in education, employment or training reflects the difficulty of the current economic situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In spite of this, the NEET rate is lower than Q2 last year, and in line with the same period in 2019-20. The improvement in the suitable accommodation figures reflects the importance that CSC places on the experience for care leavers and results from a 42% in those living independently and the number of those living with their parents or relatives almost doubling.

What action is the service taking?

CSC continues to place emphasis on maintaining good relations with care leavers so that they can receive all the support they need, particularly during the current challenging times. Monthly multi-disciplinary meetings to review NEET Care Leavers are an established part of the Service's approach to care leavers. CSC strives to assist care leavers in entering education, training or employment, but the current economic climate may lead to an increase in the NEET in coming quarters. At the end of Q1 2020-21, five care leavers were in unsuitable accommodation and the accommodation status of two further care leavers was unknown. Of these: CSC is working to move the two in bed and breakfast accommodation to something more sustainable, and that two care leavers are in custody is beyond the control of CSC.

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 performs consistently in line or above comparable averages in regard to care leavers.

Dashboard Item 7 – Children Missing from Home/Care

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
Children missing from home/care	163	20	53	49	49	44	↓
% return home interviews carried out on time	48%	50%	63%	50%	50%	54%	↑
Children missing from education (snapshot at end of period)		8	5	4	4	3	↓

What does this show us?

The number of children going missing from home or care continues to fall as we enter the second quarter of 2020-21.

The Return Home Interviews (RHIs) taking place within timescale has increased since the last half of 2019-20, and is higher than the same period last year.

The number of children missing from education has fallen over the course of 2019-20. CSC continues to work ardently to ensure that children across the Borough are not missing from education.

What is the background to this?

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

What action is the service taking?

Children's Social Care engages fully with the quarterly meetings of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership and its various sub-groups to explore the issues around exploitation and ensure any emerging risks are identified.

Missing children and the issue of child exploitation is a focus for CSC, this has been reflected in the increase of timely return home interviews. The Service is currently examining the problem of and risks of child exploitation and working with neighbouring local authorities to gain insight and develop a joined up approach.

The Virtual School and its new Head will continue to look at and address the issues which are causing children to miss education.

What is the national context?

There is no national data available for comparison.

Dashboard Item 8 – Children’s Services Workforce

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
12 months rolling turnover of permanent qualified social workers	13%	17%	8%	8%	8%	10.4%	↑
% agency staff across qualified social work workforce (snapshot at end of period)	33%	28%	34%	31%	37%	30%	↓

What does this show us?

Although there has been a slight increase since 2019-20, turnover across the social work workforce remains stable, and is more so than the same quarter last year.

The percentage of agency social workers in Children’s Services has fluctuated throughout 2019-20, but is at its lowest since Q1 2019-20.

What is the background to this?

CSC has struggled to recruit for vacant social worker posts in previous years, meaning that a high proportion of social workers were agency staff. Turnover in agency social workers is by nature high (CSC has had fifteen staff leave since January), and the successful recruitment of permanent staff over 2019-20 – as demonstrated in previous Dashboard Items – is producing results.

What action is the service taking?

CSC continues with its recruitment drive in an effort to end the dependence on agency staff, ensure that cases are dealt with at the right level, and that the Service is equipped to meet the current and anticipated demands placed upon it.

What is the national context?

Wokingham’s percentage rate of social worker turnover for 2019-20 is 8% – a substantial drop on the previous year’s 13%. The Borough is performing considerably better than Statistical Neighbours (21.1) and England/South East at 15%.