



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# Children's Services Dashboard

Quarter 4 2021-22

## Contents

Introduction .....	2
Dashboard Item 1 - Education, Health & Care Plans .....	2
Dashboard Item 2 – Early Help .....	3
Dashboard Item 3 – Children's Social Care Front Door .....	4
Dashboard Item 4 – Child Protection.....	5
Dashboard Item 5 – Children in Care.....	6
Dashboard Item 6 – Care Leavers .....	7
Dashboard Item 7 – Children Missing from Home/Care.....	8
Dashboard Item 8 – Children's Services Workforce .....	10

## Introduction

This report covers Children's Services performance during January, February and March 2022, which will be referred to as quarter four (Q4) throughout this report.

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

Measure	2020-21	Q4 20-21	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22	Q3 21-22	Q4 21-22	Direction of Travel
Current EHCPs placed in borough (snapshot at end of period)	814	814	827	806	865	912	↑
Current EHCPs placed out of borough (snapshot at end of period)	434	434	437	462	511	514	↑
EHCPs issued within 20 weeks of the referral	75%	78.4%	86.4%	87.7%	71.8%	69.0%	↓

### What does this show us?

The numbers of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) funded by Wokingham Borough Council where the children are placed in the borough have increased this quarter. The number of EHCPs between the same period last year and this quarter have risen by 14%.

The percentage of plans issued within the 20-week period has decreased by 2.8% from last quarter.

### What is the background to this?

The total number of requests during January to March 2022 is 99, slightly higher than between October to December 2021, when it was 94.

Timeliness of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks had started to improve from 55% in December to 77% in February, with a slight reduction in March (68%). There have been delays in receiving information from other partners as a result of service capacity issues, combined with the increased volume in requests received. When information is not received on time, the timelines of the assessment process administered with SEND is restricted.

As Wokingham does not have a Further Education college, most of the post-16 cohort were placed in out of Borough provision.

### What action is the service taking?

The service's focus remains on continuing to enhance the timeliness of EHC Plans. The SEND Team is proactively working with the partners to improve the information submission timescales.

### What is the national context?

This quarter's timeliness is well above both the national average (55.6%) and that of statistical neighbours (57.4%).

## Dashboard Item 2 – Early Help

Measure	2020-21	Q4 20-21	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22	Q3 21-22	Q4 21-22	Direction of Travel
No. of referrals to Early Help	1118	222	449	314	362	349	↓
No. Early Help Assessments	1095	263	321	337	281	294	↑
Avg. length of time in days between referral and assessment completion	24	26	19	23	30	25	↓

**What does this show us?**

The number of Early Help referrals reduced slightly from the previous quarter, although this quarter shows a significant increase of 57% in referrals, when compared to the same period last year.

The average length of time taken to complete an assessment has reduced by 5 days from the previous quarter and reduced by 1 day from the same period last year.

**What is the background to this?**

There are no targets for the number of referrals received by Early Help, nor any for the number of assessments carried out, as they are considered on a case-by-case basis. According to the Children's Services Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating system for performance management, an average of 30 days or less between referral and assessment completion is on target (Green), 31 to 35 is Amber, and 36+ is of concern (Red).

**What action is the service taking?**

Early Help Service provides targeted support to the children, young people, and families at the stage of a problem first arising, to prevent the need of statutory intervention at a later point. The service will continue to carefully monitor demand, ensure there is capacity to address the increase of the demand, and further improve timeliness despite the increases in demand. A designated person is assigned to monitor cases on the waiting list and parents are kept informed.

**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	2020-21	Q4 20-21	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22	Q3 21-22	Q4 21-22	Direction of Travel
No. of referrals to CSC	1383	414	416	327	383	448	↑
% of referrals to CSC which are repeat referrals within 12 months	21.8%	20%	14.9%	15.9%	19.1%	21%	↑
% assessments completed within 45 working days	72.8%	73.3%	70.6%	61.8%	69.9%	67%	↓

**What does this show us?**

There has been a 17% rise of referrals this quarter and a 14% rise for the full year 2021-22, compared to the previous year. The proportion of referrals to Children's Social Care (CSC) which are repeat referrals has increased this quarter. In Q4, 94 out of 448 referrals were repeat referrals within 12 months.

Timeliness of assessments completed within 45 working days slightly decreased this quarter. In Q4, 272 out of 406 assessments were completed within 45 working days.

**What is the background to this?**

When an agency shares information with the local authority on a Multi-Agency Referral form, or a member of the public shares concerns about a child, this is considered a Contact. A Contact progresses to a Referral when a decision has been taken to complete an Assessment. There is no target for the number of Referrals to CSC as each Contact is individually assessed.

CSC aims for less than 20% of its referrals to be repeat referrals within 12 months and strives for 90% of assessments to be completed within 45 days. Repeat referrals are within target this quarter, with the average rate of 17.7% over the course of the year.

**What action is the service taking?**

The increase of referrals coupled with a high rate of staff sickness from November 2021 through to the end of Q4 has been a challenge for the social care teams. This has been further affected by staff turnover as the pandemic has begun to subside.

The Service is reviewing the number of Contacts that have not progressed to Assessment to ensure that thresholds are being applied consistently. All assessments are being closely checked to ensure that those assessments approaching 45 days are completed within timescales where possible and the back log addressed.

Given that the Service continues to see cases of increased complexity, it assesses and closely monitors them to ensure children receive the right help and support and therefore reduce the need for a second referral.

**What is the national context?**

The statistical neighbours and England averages in 2020 - 21 for assessments completed within 45 days are 89% and 87.6% respectively. The Wokingham percentage of repeat referrals within 12 months in Q4 (21%) is better than the England average of 22.6% and the statistical neighbours average of 23.9%.

## Dashboard Item 4 – Child Protection

Measure	2020-21	Q4 20-21	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22	Q3 21-22	Q4 21-22	Direction of Travel
Children subject to CP Plans (snapshot at end of period)	161	149	169	166	160	164	↑
% of children coming onto a CP plan for a second or subsequent time ever	18.4%	14.3%	17.5%	27.6%	0.0%	32.3%	↑
% of child protection visits within timescale	80%	80%	73%	71%	72%	77%	↑

**What does this show us?**

The number of children on a Child Protection Plan (CPP) has slightly increased this quarter and higher than the figure for the same period last year.

There were 65 children who became subject to a CPP in Q4 and 21 of these had a previous plan.

The proportion of CP visits occurring within timescales has increased slightly in Q4 to 77%.

**What is the background to this?**

Subject to thresholds, CSC places no limits on the number of children that can be made subject to a CPP.

CSC places great emphasis on preventing the need for children to return to a Protection Plan. The Service aims to have less than 19.5% of children starting the plan for a second time ever. Over the whole year in 2021-22, 20% of the children starting new plans had previously been the subject of a CP plan at some time in their life.

Wokingham sets itself a best-practice standard of carrying out each Child Protection visit within 10 working days of the previous visit. The service has a target of 80% of visits within this timescale.

**What action is the service taking?**

The Service will continue its work towards the timeliness targets and maintain its flexible approach in order to have the capacity to deal with demand as it rises or remains consistent.

**What is the national context?**

Wokingham's Child Protection Plans per 10,000 at the end of Q4 was 40.7, which is below the England average of 41.4 in 2021. Since 2019-20, the increase in number of Children subject to CP Plans has placed Wokingham above our statistical neighbour's average of 32.75.

Across 2021-22 Wokingham's repeat referrals to CPP is 20% which is in line with the national average (22.1%) and statistical neighbours (21.53%).

## Dashboard Item 5 – Children in Care

Measure	2020-21	Q4 20-21	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22	Q3 21-22	Q4 21-22	Direction of Travel
No. children in care (snapshot at end of period)	106	106	112	113	119	136	↑
% visits to children in care within timescale	79%	76%	83%	76%	76%	76%	↔
% children in care who have more than 1 allocated social worker in 12m (snapshot at end of period)	21%	21%	20%	34%	22%	25%	↑

**What does this show us?**

The number of children in care have increased this quarter.

There has been consistency in the percentage of visits to children in care taking place within timescale, representing 364 out of the 478 visits carried out in Q4.

The percentage of children in care who have had more than one allocated worker in the previous 12 months has increased since last quarter. This 3% increase is due to nine more children with more than one allocated social worker.

**What is the background to this?**

There has been a high proportion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children coming into care in Q4, through the national transfer scheme and the asylum seekers hotel. There is also a higher number of children coming into care through court proceedings.

Wokingham's children in care figures are historically lower than those of statistical neighbours and regional averages, which reflects the boroughs demographic our approach to only taking children into care when all other safe alternatives have been explored and found not viable.

The timeliness of visits taking place has remained the same as Q3.

The target is to have less than 10% of children allocated to more than one social worker in a twelve-month period. Whilst it is our ambition for this indicator to be as low as possible, we acknowledge that there will always be some occasions where a change of social worker will be in the best interests of the child.

**What action is the service taking?**

The number of visits carried out within timescale has increased quarter-on-quarter this year. CSC emphasises a child-focussed approach to social work; in some instances, visits will be allowed to go outside of timescale to ensure that children are visited by the same social worker to provide reassuring continuity in relationships and case planning.

Furthermore, greater weight is being placed on visits and their recording as part of the service's performance scrutiny so that the figures reflect the work carried out by social workers.

The breakdown of face-to-face visits and virtual visits follows on the subsequent page:

	Children in Care			All visits carried out by CSC	
	F-to-F	Virtual	% Virtual	All visits	% Virtual
<b>Apr-21</b>	111	8	6.7	731	8.9
<b>May-21</b>	116	x	2.5	699	7.9
<b>Jun-21</b>	128	8	5.9	801	6.4
<b>Jul-21</b>	126	9	6.6	751	6.9
<b>Aug-21</b>	131	4	3.0	709	2.3
<b>Sept-21</b>	129	7	5.1	752	3.6
<b>Oct-21</b>	140	x	1.4	787	3.9
<b>Nov-21</b>	129	4	3.0	825	3.5
<b>Dec-21</b>	156	13	7.7	842	7.6
<b>Jan-21</b>	138	10	6.8	785	9
<b>Feb-21</b>	144	4	2.7	821	5
<b>Mar-21</b>	182	0	0	878	2.3

x small number suppressed to preserve confidentiality

In the event of positive COVID cases, CSC carries out risk assessments ahead of visits to establish if a face-to-face visit is possible or if a virtual visit is more appropriate.

#### What is the national context?

The rate of Children in Care per 10,000 at the end of March 2021 is 67.0 for England and 46.3 for statistical neighbours with Wokingham rate being significantly lower, at 34 in March 2022.

## Dashboard Item 6 – Care Leavers

Measure	2020-21	Q4 20-21	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22	Q3 21-22	Q4 21-22	Direction of Travel
% of care leavers 'in touch' (snapshot at end of period)	96%	96%	95%	96%	94%	99%	↑
% of care leavers aged 18-24 "in touch" and who are NEET	40%	40%	38%	30%	32%	34%	↑
% of care leavers "in touch" in suitable accommodation (snapshot at end of period)	92%	92%	97%	100%	97%	97%	↔

#### What does this show us?

The percentage of care leavers that remain in touch have increased slightly with the Service often maintaining a good working relationship with those formerly in its care.

There has been a very slight increase in the number of care leavers not in education, employment, or training - the number now at 30, a rise from 28 in last quarter.

The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation has remained the same as last quarter.

**What is the background to this?**

The target is to stay in touch with at least 90% of care leavers, which continues to be achieved. Amongst the reasons for care leavers not being in touch with CSC are a simple refusal to engage with the Service and young people no longer needing the support provided by CSC.

The Service aims to have high levels of care leavers in education, employment, or learning. Despite the increasingly challenging economic situation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, Care Leaver employment, education and training figures have remained consistently high throughout 2021-22.

CSC endeavours to ensure at least 90% of care leavers are in suitable accommodation, which it continues to achieve.

**What action is the service taking?**

CSC will continue 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.

The Service places great importance on the futures of the children for which it has responsibility, and addresses each care leaver's situation individually, helping them either re-engage with education or training or supporting them to find suitable employment opportunities where possible. Efforts in this have increased in response to the current economic situation.

The number of care leavers in unsuitable accommodation has decreased over the course of this year, and the number living independently and semi-independently has increased.

**What is the national context?**

Nationally in March 2021, 95% of care leavers were in touch with their Local Authority; 41% of care leavers were NEET; and 88% were in suitable accommodation. Wokingham consistently performed above the bench marking averages.

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

Measure	2020-21	Q4 20-21	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22	Q3 21-22	Q4 21-22	Direction of Travel
Children missing from home	74	21	25	21	34	28	↓
Children missing from care	46	6	5	9	19	15	↓
% return home interviews carried out on time*	56%	50%	56%	83%	62%	39%	↓
Children missing from education (not currently on a school roll)**	7	7	14	22	12	8	↓
No. of permanent exclusions	8	x	x	x	4	8	↑

\*Combined figure for children missing from home and from care

\*\* Snapshot figure at the end of the period.

x small number suppressed to preserve confidentiality

### **What does this show us?**

The number of children going missing from home or care (43) shows a decrease in Q4 2021-22. Children missing from care includes those looked after from other local authorities who live in Wokingham.

CSC aims to have 100% of Return Home Interviews (RHIs) taking place within timescale. The figures had increased significantly in Q2 but decreased since then. It is also lower than the same period in 2020-21.

The number of children not currently on a school roll has decreased in this quarter and is in range with the same period last year.

There have been eight permanent exclusions in Wokingham schools during this quarter and 14 in total for the whole year. The figures are not comparable as schools were operating under pandemic restrictions during the same period last year.

### **What is the background to this?**

It can be difficult to persuade children who have gone missing to engage with a Return Home Interview (RHI), achieving the timeliness target of 100% is therefore difficult to reach. Regardless, CSC's emphasis on tackling child exploitation risks has led to a focus on RHIs. While not always within the timescale, every child that goes missing is interviewed about the motivations and reasons behind their leaving.

The number of children not currently on a school roll has decreased in this quarter compared to the previous quarters, as admissions service managed to find places for all the children who were waiting for a school place at the start of the academic year.

### **What action is the service taking?**

Children's Social Care works closely with the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the issue of child exploitation remains a focus. The Service is currently examining the problems and risks of child exploitation, working with neighbouring local authorities to gain insight and develop a joined-up approach.

The Ofsted focussed visit May 2022 identifies RHI and the learning from aggregated data as an area for improvement. An Action Plan is being drawn up in response to this area of improvement.

### **What is the national context?**

Comparative national figures are not available for children missing education.

## Dashboard Item 8 – Children's Services Workforce

Measure	Q4 20-21	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22	Q3 21-22	Q4 21-22	Direction of Travel
12 months rolling turnover of permanent qualified social workers	12%	10%	14%	14%	19.43%	↑
% agency staff across qualified social work workforce (snapshot at end of period)	21%	17%	14%	16%	26%	↑

**What does this show us?**

During Q4 2021-22, the percentage of 12 months rolling turnover of permanent qualified social workers and agency staff has increased significantly compared to the same period last year and the previous quarter.

**What is the background to this?**

Permanency of workforce has been a continuous focus for CSC, though we have seen an increased turnover across the whole organisation this quarter.

**What action is the service taking?**

Recruitment of permanent social workers is ongoing via various mediums including social media, and specialist publications. We have also signed up to the refreshed Memorandum of Cooperation across the Southeast.

The MoC is an agreement between the 19 authorities in the Southeast to work in a cooperative and collaborative way. It is designed to help control costs and reduce churn of both agency and permanent social workers.

It also aims to improve the quality of information sharing between authorities when supplying references for agency social workers. In 2022 Wokingham will also be recruiting a new cohort of newly Qualified Social Workers, as they leave university and begin their career in social work.

**What is the national context?**

The Borough has performed considerably better than statistical neighbours (21.41%) with a staff turnover rate of 16.8 throughout 2021-22, just missing the England average of 15.4%. The benchmarking is not yet available for 2022, but it is predicted that the figures for other local authorities may rise as well.