

# CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE Wednesday 19th June 2024

REPORT TITLE:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

# **Children, Young People & Education Committee - indicator sets**

Demand	Keeping children safe	Looking after children well	Schools
Education	SEND	Workforce	



#### Demand

		Year-end			202	3/24		1			
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	National (22/23)	North West (22/23)	Stat Neighbours (22/23)	Trend
Social care contacts	10149	10732	12252	5810	5592	6040	6604	-	-	-	
Early Help contacts	12199	11128	9148	2446	2399	3050	3031	-	-	-	
Referrals to social care	3030	3254	3365	1043	989	987	1117	-	-	-	
% of domestic abuse referrals to children's social care	23.5%	27.3%	19.4%	20.3%	26.8%	22.7%	23.6%	-	-	-	
Child In Need rate per 10,000 population	379.9	392.2	399.8	417.1	428.5	428.7	429.1	342.7	386.8	447.3	
Child Protection rate per 10,000 population	47.0	58.6	57.1	51.5	55.3	56.5	56.6	43.2	49.1	57.1	
Children Looked After rate per 10,000 population	126.0	121.0	118.0	117.1	118.7	118.4	118.3	71.0	96.0	111.0	

#### Supporting narrative

Contacts - contacts into children's social care this quarter have continued to increase. At the end of Q4 contacts are 13% higher than Q1 figures. Towards the end of Q4 we have seen a marked increase in concerns relating to parental mental health.

If we review the annual figures for 2023/24 the Integrated Front Door received 24,103 contacts. A third (7,729) of all contacts received were from police with 60% (4,649) relating to domestic abuse. I would also note that 68% (16,352) did not meet the threshold for Level 3 or Level 4 services with 15% (3,596) of children requiring multi agency support through Early Help Level 3 and 17% (4,155) of children requiring statutory intervention at Level 4.

Referrals - along with the increase in contacts we have seen referral rates increase during Q4 to 1,117 in comparison with Q1, Q2 and Q3

A further piece of work will be completed, alongside the safeguarding partnership to review and oversee the application of threshold with a view to achieving consistency and collective understanding across the partnership.

#### **Child Protection**

We are ending Q4 with a slight increase from the previous quarters, but our annual figures have reduced to 55 per ten thousand from 57.1 per ten thousand in 2022/23. This brings us in line with our statistical neighbours, North West and England average.



#### Keeping children safe

		Year-end			2023/	24		<u> </u>			
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	National (22/23)	North West (22/23)	Stat Neighbours (22/23)	Trend
% of Early Help cases closed with outcomes met	91.6%	83.6%	88.2%	86.5%	79.9%	82.6%	85.3%	-	-	-	
% Repeat referrals within 12 months period	23.5%	21.5%	23.3%	25.6%	23.8%	20.6%	23.1%	22.4%	22.4%	21.3%	
% Assessments completed within timescale	78.8%	81.1%	75.5%	75.0%	68.0%	71.0%	76.0%	82.0%	79.0%	80.0%	
Children who were subject to a section 47 enquiry Rate per 10,000 YTD	179.7	207.3	214.9	55.7	102.5	158.6	209.6	191.6	209.9	274.5	
% of children who were subject to a section 47 enquiry that led to an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)	35.7%	37.4%	34.4%	33.3%	32.6%	31.7%	30.1%	1	-	-	
% Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) taking place in the month and within timescales	57.6%	75.6%	59.5%	61.8%	71.0%	65.1%	74.6%	78.0%	80.0%	83.0%	
Child Protection Plans ceased Rate per 10,000 YTD	51.3	63.5	63.4	18.3	27.9	42.8	56.0	54.3	59.3	75.8	
% of children on second or subsequent Child Protection Plan	28.7%	23.0%	31.4%	9.8%	19.8%	35.4%	20.2%	23.6%	23.8%	22.5%	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Child in Need (CIN)	-	82.8%	78.9%	79.7%	83.7%	67.1%	70.2%	-	-	-	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Child Protection (CP)	-	81.4%	74.7%	78.4%	85.4%	89.8%	85.5%	-	-	-	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Children Looked After (CLA)	-	90.5%	90.7%	91.9%	91.4%	95.1%	91.4%	-	-	-	
Reduce first time entrants into the criminal justice system (rate per 100,000)	219	114	86	28	80	118	141		-	-	
Reduce young people re-offending (%)	40	41.9	41	55.6%	44.4%	18.2%	75%	-	-	-	$\overline{\ \ }$
Reduce the use of Custody (rate per 1,000)	0.07	0.16	0.16	0.07	0.1	0.1	0.13	-	-	-	
Children currently open to MACE (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation)				58	51	53	56	-	1	-	
Children removed from MACE due to lowered risk				15	21	11	12	-	-	-	

Repeat referrals – there has been a slight percentage reduction, however we are not yet where we need to be. The highest percentage of repeat referrals is as a result of domestic abuse, although some of our figures have been increased due to organised crime activity. As part of performance monitoring we are now looking at our repeat referrals data monthly, this includes team managers completing audits on families that have a repeat referral in the month of receipt back in to the service. This will be reviewed by the Integrated Front Door and Assessment & Intervention Operational Leads and Heads of Service to identify key themes and actions.

Assessments completed in timescale - Q4 evidences a slight improvement but further focused work to be completed in this area to make greater improvements. A significant number of later referrals have been impacted on from workers being sick or leaving. Social Work case loads continue to cause a challenge in the timely completion of assessments.

Section 47 enquiries - there has been a slight decline in the percentage of S47 enquiries completed this quarter. Of these approximately 32% progressed to Initial Child Protection Conference. A substantial proportion of S47 enquiries have an outcome of continue with assessment/current plan.

Initial Child Protection conferences - during this quarter 124 Initial Child Protection Conferences were held. Of these, 75.8% (94) were in timescale with the remaining 30 that were held out of timescale due to the timeliness of reports or available of parent/carers and social worker. The child protection chairs continue to ensure interim safety planning is in place for children prior to a formal multi agency child protection plan being implemented. Performance will be reviewed at monthly Performance Management & Quality Assurance meetings.

Child Protection Plans - during Q4, 90 child protection plans were ceased. We have had 15 children on a CPP for less than 3 months. In reviewing these cases 5 children became looked after however 10 were stepped down to a child in need plan. Audits will be undertaken to understand the application of threshold in these cases given the short duration of the child protection plan. The service will be undertaking a deeper analysis of children subject to Child Protection Plans to ensure our current practice is robust and effective.

Repeat Child Protection Plans - the percentage of children subject to repeat plans has reduced during Q4 to 20.2% from 35.4% in Q3. Our performance is in line with our statistical neighbours, northwest and England average.

Child protection visits completed in time, there are a number of children where visits have been over by 1 or 2 days. There are some visits where families avoid the social worker.

Youth re-offending - the 75% re-offending rate equates to just eight young people between January 2024 - March 2024 of which six of these (75%) had re-offended.



# Looking after children well

		Year-end			202	3/24					
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	National (22/23)	North West (22/23)	Stat Neighbours (22/23)	Trend
% CLA visits completed within timescale	1	90.5%	90.7%	91.9%	91.4%	95.1%	91.4%	i	i	-	
% Completed health assessment reviews YTD	87.0%	91.0%	78.0%	37.7%	58.0%	83.3%	91.2%	89.0%	92.0%	92.6%	
% Completed dental checks YTD	31.0%	86.0%	79.0%	23.6%	43.7%	61.2%	76.8%	76.0%	77.0%	78.8%	
% Completed Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) YTD	98.0%	96.0%	97.3%	68.2%	84.7%	93.4%	97.3%	75.0%	80.0%	79.0%	
% of CLA adopted in year	15.0%	8.0%	10.7%	4.3%	11.6%	10.1%	9.2%	9.0%	9.0%	11.0%	
% of CLA placed with Foster carers	71.0%	71.0%	68.8%	69.6%	69.1%	69.0%	70.1%	68.0%	66.0%	66.1%	
Timeliness of Adoption process A10 (426 days national target) Average days	363	809	652	700	633	594	565	not published	not published	not published	1
% Care leavers in suitable accomodation (Age 19-21)	92.0%	94.0%	94.0%	97.0%	96.0%	97.0%	97.0%	88.0%	90.0%	87.6%	
% Care leavers in Education , Employment or Training (EET) (Age 19-21)	56.0%	54.0%	58.6%	59.5%	62.1%	57.4%	59.5%	56.0%	54.0%	54.6%	
Missing Episodes	918	1385	1281	384	390	318	236	i	i	-	
CAMHs referrals seen within 6 weeks	67.6%	67.6%	N/A	42.5%	26.9%	52.9%	43.8%	1	ı	-	
CAMHS referrals seen within 18 weeks	96.4%	96.4%	N/A	67.9%	80.8%	70.6%	90.0%	i	i	-	$\sim$

## Supporting narrative

There has been a drop in performance around CLA visits this is due to some staffing capacity and recording issues across the services which has now been addressed.

Improving Health Outcomes meetings has ensured that significant focus has been in place regarding attendance at health appointments and SDQ's this is reflected in the much improved data in this area. Consistent focus is now in place which should see continued improvement in these areas going forward.

Timeliness of Adoption processes has improved slightly, however there remains some challenges within the court arena regarding delays in the final adoption order being granted. This is felt to be in part due to the judiciary trying to ensure that adoption orders are appellant free at the final order stage.

CLA placed in foster care has risen slightly in Q4 and remains above regional and national averages.

Care Leavers in suitable accommodation remains consistently high and recognises the joint working between Leaving Care and colleagues in Housing.



## Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

		Year-end			20	23/24		1			
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current National	Current North West	Current Stat neighbours	Trend
% Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) issued within 20 week timescale (Excluding Exceptions)	58%	24%	36.60%	49%	44%	40%	18%	50.70%	62.70%	66.54%	1
% of requests that went to tribunal	9.47%	8.23%	2.65%	3.70%	0.03%	9.06%	6.19%	-	-	-	
% of Children Looked After with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	8.68%	9.26%	19.90%	20.50%	21.10%	21.90%	22.90%	30.20%	26.70%	28.06%	
% of Children In Need with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	17.59%	16.45%	20.80%	17.10%	17.20%	19.10%	19%	-	-	-	1
% of Child Protection with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	5.93%	6.45%	8.80%	10.10%	11.30%	12.70%	10.70%	-	-	-	
% of Early Help Episodes with (SEND) Special Educational needs and disabilities	25.82%	26.44%	30.40%	30.64%	32.60%	30.30%	31.60%	-	1	-	
% of Children Looked After with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	18.22%	19.29%	16.10%	15.80%	15.50%	16.50%	17.10%	27.20%	26.50%	26.37%	/
% of Children In Need with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	15.83%	16.20%	14.30%	14.11%	13.10%	14.40%	12.90%	-	-	-	
% of Child Protection with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	19.88%	21.51%	21.20%	24.20%	23.70%	19%	20.90%	-	-	-	

		Year-end						
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23 Summer Term	2023/24 Autumn Term	2023/24 Spring Term	Current National	Trend
(EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan- Overall School Attendance %	90.60%	88.90%	87.30%	86%	87.60%	86.40%	87.60%	$\wedge$
(EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan Overall Persistent absence %	25.60%	37.10%	27.20%	28.80%	34.60%	32.20%	34.60%	
Number of pupils with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan who are electively home educated	18	12	20	15	17	17	-	
(SEN) Special Educational Need support - Overall School Attendance %	93.40%	91%	89%	88.30%	89.70%	88.60%	0.9	$\wedge$
(SEN) Special Educational Need support - Overall Persistent absence %	19.30%	28.60%	23.80%	27.40%	29.80%	26.50%	29.80%	$\wedge$
Number of pupils with (SEN) Special Educational Need support who are electively home educated	39	54	59	62	28	26	-	

	2017/18	2018/19	2021/22	2022/23	Current National	Current North West	Current Stat neighbours	Trend
Key Stage 2 (RWM) Reading, Writing, Maths EHCP - % at	6%	2.20%	2.50%	5%	8%	8%	8.30%	/
Expected Level	070	2.2070	2.5070	370	0,0	0,0	0.3070	
Key Stage 4 Overall Progress 8 Score - (EHCP) Education	-0.85	-1.12	-1.33	-1.02	-1.12	-1.28	-1.27	\ ,
and Health Care Plan	-0.65	-1.12	-1.33	-1.02	-1.12	-1.20	-1.27	$\sim$
Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing, Maths (SEN) Special	21%	23%	20.70%	25%	24%	23%	24.50%	. /
Educational Need support - % at Expected Level	2170	2370	20.70%	25%	2470	2370	24.50%	/ \
Key Stage 4 Overall Progress 8 Score - (SEN) Special	-0.29	-0.42	-0.46	-0.44	-0.45	-0.59	-0.59	1
Educational Need support	-0.29	-0.42	-0.46	-0.44	-0.45	-0.59	-0.59	•

# Supporting narrative

The first quarter of 2024 has been challenging. Continued sufficiency restraints and pressures on schools have meant that the SEND Referral and Assessment Team's focus was on successfully meeting the statutory February 15th deadline for phase transfer reviews (N1-N2 and Y6-Y7) had a real impact on the teams to maintain output of new EHCPs. The early part of 2024 has seen a focus on completing plans that had exceeded 20 weeks, so despite the decline in 20-week completions, for January-March as a whole, 167 plans were finalised in 2024 compared to 157 in 2023.

Over the same period a new manager has been recruited on a secondment basis to lead the referral and assessment team. Since starting in February, the manager has been focussed on recruitment into vacant posts in the team. This prioritisation has yielded success and there are, as of 19th April, only two vacancies, down from 10 expected at this point in the year. This has been achieved through agency staff, secondments, and existing staff deciding they want to remain with Wirral. However, the prioritisation of recruitment will have affected oversight and support and impacted in the short term on performance results.

The Head of SEND has developed an EHCP and Annual Review Compliance and Recovery Plan. This was presented to, and approved by, the new Local Area SEND Partnership Group on the 29th April 2024. Some of the actions contained in plan, aimed at improving performance complaince rates for EHCPs and Annual Reviews inlcude a full restructure of the SEND Referral and Assessment Teams and the implementation of a new Quality Assurance Framework for EHCPs.



# Schools

		Year-end			202	3/24			
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current National	Trend
% School capacity - places available vs pupil numbers (school)	89.60%	90.10%	90.10%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-	
% Exclusions - suspensions	4.06%	0.09	0.04	1.72%	2.16%	2.35%	2.10%	3.13%	
% Exclusions - permanent	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04%	0.03%	0.04%	0.03%	0.04%	
Number of children known to be electively home educated	275	254	296	286	309	344	407	-	
Number of Pupils who are not in receipt of full-time education and subject of an agreed part time timetable (Indicator once named - Pupils who are missing more than 25hrs of education a week (CME25)	171	254	317	99	69	129	387	-	

		Year-end			202	3/24			
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current National	Trend
% of school age pupils eligible for (FSM) Free school meal	24%	27.59%	28.90%	28.90%	28.95%	28.95%	29.39%	23.80%	
Overall School Attendance %	94.90%	93.30%	91.80%	91.20%	93.60%	92.40%	92.30%	93.70%	
Overall Unauthorised Absence %	1.50%	1.90%	2.70%	3.30%	2.10%	3.80%	2.50%	0.0	
Overall Persistent Absence %	0.1	20.10%	27.90%	23.80%	19.60%	22.30%	23.80%	0.2	
Overall School Attendance Open to Social Care %	-	-	82.60%	82.90%	0.9	0.8	0.8	-	

#### Supporting narrative

The number of part time timetables continues to rise due to more schools making us aware of young people who are on reduced timetables. Locality Attendance Officers are undertaking a data cleansing exercise to ensure part time timetable reviews are tracked accurately in our case management system and are closed down when the plan ends. The Locality Attendance officers are gaining more confidence in challenging schools where the paperwork has not been completed properly.

The number of children who are Electively Home Educated continues to rise. Our numbers remain inline with other Liverpool City region authorities.

Suspensions are currently well below the national average. This is partly due to the greater use of interventions by schools alongside support and strategies and advice from the Local Authority. Permanent Exclusions are mostly inline across the Local Authority per quarter and below the current national average. There has been a greater increase in the use of managed moves facilitated by the Inclusion Team to reduce the amount of Permanent Exclusions. There has also been a greater increase in support from the Local Authority Inclusion Team in response to Schools at risk of Permanent Exclusion protocols and the graduated approach.



#### Education

		Year-end						
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Trend
% of under 5's who are engaged with the Early Years Service	45%	51.11%	43.64%	44%	45%	45%	45%	
% of under 5's who have sustained engagement the Early Years Service (3 of more)	58%	60.50%	47.94%	48%	48%	49%	47%	-
% of 2 year olds benefitting from funded early education	76%	83%	77.89%	88%	88%	96%	94%	
% of 3 year olds benefitting from funded early education	90%	91%	90.96%	89%	89%	89%	85%	

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Current National	Trend
% of schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted	83%	83%	81.60%	83.20%	84%	89.7%	
% of early years settings good or better	98%	98%	97%	97.80%	Not available yet	96%	
% of young people aged 16 and 17 who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) or Not Known	5.00%	5.10%	4.10%	4.50%	Not available vet	5.20%	

	2017/18	2018/19	2021/22	2022/23	Current NCER National	Trend
Foundation Stage - % achieving a good level of development	70.5%	69.3%	62.9%	65.2%	67.2%	
Foundation Stage - % of children who are looked after achieving a good level of development	52.2%	59.5%	48.10%	42.9%	41%	
The gap in progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers achieving good level of development in early years foundation stage profile	17.7	23.5	20.2	19.5	17.9	
% Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving a Good Level of Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile	18%	23%	21.5%	20.2%	20%	
% achieving expected standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2	60%	60%	52%	55.6%	60%	
% Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the 'expected standard' in English, reading, English writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2	23%	22%	24.1%	27.2%	22%	
The gap in progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at Key Stage 4	0.73	0.84	0.92	0.44	0.6	
Progress 8 Score for Wirral	0.03	0.01	-0.03	-0.11	-0.02	

# To be published

Two-year-disadvantaged funding takeup - this is taken from the spring headcount which always dips slightly potentially due to the Christmas period and the number of weeks in the term for parents to organise a place.

Three-year-old funding takeup - this appears to be lower than anticipated, the data will be reveiwed to understand and plan next steps.

Early years settings - since last reported, 1 provider has recieved a requires improvement judgement. Wirral currently has 3 requires improvement childminders and 2 not met wrap around provision. All providers are recieving tailored support based on their inspection report. In the next 6 months the majority of these providers should have been re-inspected, it is hoped all will recieve a good or above judgement.

Registration with Early Childhood Service (ECS) remains high at 90%, ECS is a more targeted service and now tries to support families who are identified as needing support: those receiving statutory support from Children's Social Care, children entitled to 2 year funding and those living in targeted areas. Take up of services from this cohort is 67%. Quarter 4 saw increase of those families supported at CIN and CP engaging with ECS.

Good Level of Development The figure has increased by 2.3% compared to the previous year and the gap to national has narrowed to 2%, the school improvment has offered significant support to support early years practioners over the last year and we will monitor the imapct as the 2024 results are published.

The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged has also reduced in the last academic year by 0.7% but the Wirral is still higher the national average by 1.6%

Key Stage 2 outcomes The number of children achieving the expected standard at KS2 has increased by 3.6% and the gap to national has reduced to 4.4%, this is the smallest gap in the last 5 years. We have seen an increase in the number of children achieving the expected standard in Maths, which has been a key focus for the last acadmeic year.

Key Stage 4 outcomes Progress has reduced at KS4 has reduced from -0.03 to -0.11 which is a reduction 0f 0.08 and the gap to national has increased to 0.09. The Gap between disadvantaged and non-disavantaged. This has reduced from 0.92 to 0.44, we now have a smaller gap then national by 0.16.



# Workforce

	Year	r-end	2023/24							
	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	National	North West	Statistical Neighbours	Trend
Vacancy rate – number of posts currently vacant / total no of posts Social Workers	30%	26%	25%	22%	22%	23%	-	-	-	
Agency rate – positions filled by agency staff <b>Social Workers</b>	22%	21%	20%	19%	18%	22%	-	-	=	
New starters - Social Workers	20	33	3	13	7	4	-	-	-	
Retention of staff – number of leavers - <b>Social Workers</b>	33	36	3	6	4	4	-	-	=	
Average FTE days lost to sickness absence - <b>Social Workers</b>	16.46	14.82	3.35	2.97	3.41	3.19		-	=	
Average caseload for social worker	15.5	14.96	15.5	16.17	16.66	15.32	16.3	17.9	17	
Vacancy rate – number of posts currently vacant / total no of posts Children's Services Directorate	20%	15%	15%	17%	18%	17%	-	-	-	
Agency rate – positions filled by agency staff <b>Children's</b> Services Directorate	6.29%	6.10%	5.60%	4.80%	4.60%	6.10%	-	-	-	
New starters - Children's Services Directorate	98	93	13	33	14	31	-	-	-	
Retention of staff – number of leavers - <b>Children's Services</b> <b>Directorate</b>	102	86	18	32	13	21	-	-	-	
Average FTE days lost to sickness absence <b>Children's</b> Services Directorate	12.55	12.06	3.19	4.1	4	3.4	-	-	-	

#### Supporting narrative

In the last financial year, the data shows that the Social Work Workforce Strategy is starting to really take hold. If we look at recruitment and retention (turnover) for 2023/24, the Net for social workers = +10 social workers through the door, compared to 2022/23 = -3 social workers, 2021/22 = -13.

Similarly, the vacany rate 2023/24 = average 19.75%, compared to 2022/23 = 26%, 2021/22 = 30%.

Sickness in Social Care for 2023/24 has also seen a similar trend, with an outturn of 12.92 FTE days lost compared with 2022/23 = 14.82 FTE, 2021/22 = 16.46 FTE.

The data for the whole of Children's Services is quite steady across all parameters, except for sickness which has rose from the last financial year. However when you look at the post filled over time (which isn't outlined above), the start to mid 2022/23 the Directorate had 829 people in post, they now have around 870 (50 extra staff onboard), and have had this level of staffing for a number of months now, and this will impact the sickness figures.

Acronym	Description
CIN	Child in need
СР	Child protection
CPP	Child protection plan
CLA	Child looked after
DA	Domestic Abuse
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
MACE	Multi-Agency Child Exploitation
SDQ	Strength & Difficulties Questionnaire
EET	Education, Employment & Training
NEET	Not in Education, Employment & Training
CAMHs	Child & adolescent mental health service
SEND	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan
GLD	Good Level of Development
FSM	Free School Meals
EHE	Electively Home Educated
DfE	Department for Education
CYP	Children & Young People
PA	Persistent Absence
FTE	Full Time Equivalent