



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday 19th September

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	Budget (under development)

Demand

	Year-End			2022/23			National (20/21)	North West (20/21)	Stat Neighbours (20/21)	Trend
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22				
Social care contacts	15086	10149	10732	897	1235	1098	-	-	-	
Early Help contacts	9973	12199	11128	645	930	715	-	-	-	
Referrals to social care	3997	3030	3254	193	401	287	-	-	-	
% of domestic abuse referrals to children's social care	23.2%	23.5%	27.3%	31.1%	21.2%	29.6%	-	-	-	
Child In Need rate per 10,000 population	369.0	379.9	382.9	367.8	383.5	389.3	321.2	367.0	403.5	
Child Protection rate per 10,000 population	41.9	47.0	57.4	58.3	56.5	55.6	41.4	47.0	51.8	
Children Looked After rate per 10,000 population	120.0	123.0	116.6	117.7	116.4	114.2	67.0	97.0	101.8	

Supporting narrative

Contacts into children's social care this quarter have followed a similar pattern to that seen in the previous year, for the same period. Whilst we have continued with a steady overall increase post covid, as anticipated, we saw a pronounced deviation in May 22 of contacts. It is of interest that the highest portion of contacts (more than a quarter) received during May, originated from VPRF's notifications generated from the police, the majority of which were related to concerns pertaining to domestic abuse.

The service is currently reviewing pathways and processes within the Integrated Front Door (IFD) to ensure that pathways for children in specific circumstances are robust and effective. All Domestic abuse rereferrals will be discussed at the daily morning meeting to ensure full information sharing and multi-agency decision making on threshold application. The daily morning meeting will include representatives from the domestic abuse hub and family matters to streamline engagement and intervention to victims of domestic abuse. It is positive that the domestic abuse hub, based within a community setting, is enabling stronger connection between statutory and non-statutory services, ensuring that children and young people are receiving the right level of support.

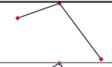
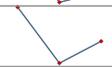
A further piece of work will be completed, alongside the safeguarding partnership to review and oversee the application of threshold with a view to achieving consistency and collective understanding across the partnership.

Despite the spike in contacts in May, these have continued to reduce in June and July, resulting in the end of quarter one referral numbers reducing by 30% - 401 (May) vs 283 (June) This brings us in line with our target range. Referrals for early help are following a similar trend.

Children in Need - the rate of CIN at the end of Q1 per 10,000 was 389.3 which places us in line with our target range.

Child protection - after seeing a slight rise in April 2022, the child protections rate per 10,000 has steadily declined in May and June 2022. In May 2022,

Keeping children safe

	Year-End			2022/23			National (20/21)	North West (20/21)	Stat Neighbours (20/21)	Trend
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22				
% of Early Help cases closed with outcomes met	80.3%	91.6%	83.5%	87.0%	89.3%	80.6%	-	-	-	
% Repeat referrals within 12 months period	27.6%	23.5%	21.6%	24.9%	26.2%	23.3%	22.7%	22.2%	22.6%	
% Assessments completed within timescale	82.6%	78.8%	81.0%	82.2%	84.2%	82.6%	88.0%	86.0%	87.0%	
Children who were subject to a section 47 enquiry Rate per 10,000 YTD	182.2	179.7	202.4	14.1	31.7	51.6	164.4	172.1	199.3	
% of children who were subject to a section 47 enquiry that led to an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)	33.3%	33.1%	37.4%	25.3%	31.9%	36.6%	-	-	-	
% Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) taking place in the month and within timescales	76.4%	57.6%	75.8%	85.3%	65.7%	78.8%	83.0%	82.0%	84.0%	
Child Protection Plans ceased Rate per 10,000 YTD	75.8	51.3	61.7	4.0	10.4	15.6	53.9	62.1	72.1	
% of children on second or subsequent Child Protection Plan	19.4%	28.7%	23.0%	33.3%	29.9%	32.7%	22.1%	22.6%	22.6%	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Child in Need (CIN)	-	-	82.8%	79.4%	84.0%	77.0%	-	-	-	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Child Protection (CP)	-	-	81.4%	86.5%	81.9%	84.0%	-	-	-	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Children Looked After (CLA)	-	-	90.5%	91.9%	94.6%	90.6%	-	-	-	
Reduce first time entrants into the criminal justice system	254	219	114	-	-	Data available Q2	-	-	-	
Reduce young people re-offending (%)	50	40	41.9	-	-	Data available Q2	-	-	-	
Reduce the use of Custody (rate per 100,000)	0.30	0.07	0.16	-	-	Data available Q2	-	-	-	

Repeat referrals – During April and May we have seen a slight increase in repeat referrals, June has shown this is starting to decline. As we say contacts increased in April and May, this would correlate to the rise in repeat referrals. Data analysis from performance in relation to repeat referrals. Identifies a high proportion have domestic abuse concerns as the referral reason. The developments at the IFD that include the engagement of the domestic abuse hub will enable a thorough response to victims of DA.

Early help episodes closing with needs met has reduced this month, recording the lowest percentage since 2019. Further work to understand this is being undertaken by the Early Help Service.

Assessments -the percentage of assessments completed within timescales during Q1 was 83.4 which is slightly under our target range. This is an improving picture and will continue to be monitored during regular service performance meeting.

Provisional statistics for 2021-22 show that Wirral has improved our position amongst the Northwest from 20th out of 23rd to eighth highest.

S47 enquiries - analysis of S47 activity, we are aware that at least 60% do not progress to an initial child protection case conference. A substantial proportion of S47 enquiries have an outcome of continue with assessment. This is due to be a feature at a mandatory all service wide learning event to ensure that alternative risk management processes are used effectively at the appropriate level.

Initial child protection conferences taking place in timescales for this quarter is 79.6%. Despite a promising start in April (85.3), we experienced a dip in May's performance 65.7), and slight improvement in June (78.8), which correlates to the increased demand we saw in May. We currently remain below our target range.

Performance will be reviewed at monthly PMQA meetings.

Child Protection Plans ceased, repeats and rate per 10,000

During Q1 we have had 9 children on a CPP for less than 3 months. In reviewing these cases the equate to

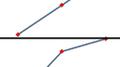
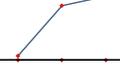
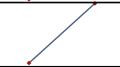
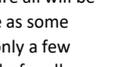
- 4 becoming children looked after.
- 3 transferred to another local authority
- 1 stepped down to a child in need plan
- 1 required no further social work activity.

The service will be undertaking a deeper analysis of children subject to CPP to ensure our current practice is robust and effective, this is particularly important given the increase in our repeat child protections plans.

The percentage of children subject to repeat plans has risen during Q1. We know that a high percentage of our referrals feature Domestic Abuse therefore further analysis to determine whether this also features in repeat child protection plans is required.

Statutory Visits - we continue to see consistency in our performance regarding our children being seen, with June performance for CP is 86% and 90.6% for children looked after. The exception to this is our child in need cohort, where current performance has dipped in June 22. The service closely monitors performance in relations to children being seen on a weekly basis, and it is anticipated this will increase during the next quarter to a satisfactory level.

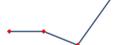
Looking after children well

	Year-End			2022/23			National (20/21)	North West (20/21)	Stat Neighbours (20/21)	Trend
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22				
% CLA visits completed within timescale	-	-	90.50%	91.9%	94.6%	90.6%	-	-	-	
% Completed health assessment reviews YTD	87.0%	87.0%	96.1%	2.0%	36.9%	50.6%	91.0%	94.0%	92.6%	
% Completed dental checks YTD	88.0%	31.0%	78.9%	3.9%	10.8%	17.8%	40.0%	40.0%	38.2%	
% Completed Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) YTD	97.0%	98.0%	98.1%	7.7%	54.4%	67.1%	80.0%	85.0%	83.0%	
% of CLA adopted in year	17.0%	15.0%	8.5%	22.2%	13.9%	17.7%	10.0%	11.0%	10.8%	
% of CLA placed with Foster carers	70.5%	70.8%	70.6%	69.9%	69.7%	70.3%	71.0%	67.0%	68.0%	
Timeliness of Adoption process A10 (426 days national target) Average days	486	363	809	232	455	496	375 (2020)	426 (2020)	not published	
% Care leavers in suitable accommodation (Age 19-21)	95.0%	92.0%	97.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	88.0%	91.0%	93.0%	
% Care leavers in Education, Employment or Training (EET) (Age 19-21)	48.0%	56.0%	57.5%	56.0%	57.7%	61.9%	52.0%	50.0%	50.7%	
Missing Episodes	1477	918	1385	117	103	119	-	-	-	
CAMHS referrals seen within 6 weeks	43.7%	67.6%	Not available	15.8%	18.3%	Not available	-	-	-	
CAMHS referrals seen within 18 weeks	64.9%	96.4%	Not available	47.4%	63.3%	Not available	-	-	-	

Supporting narrative

At only 3 months into the new financial year, over 50% of health assessments have already been completed. This puts us in a strong position to ensure all will be completed by the end of March 2023. Likewise with dental checks, 17.8% have been completed since April this year. This is a more concerning issue as some dentists continue to delay in the process of general checkup appointments. As most children receive one dental checkup per annum, and as we are only a few months into the year in the data that this report recognises, there is plenty of time to ensure that we have a high level of compliance for dental checks for all children looked after.

Education

	Year-End				2022/23		Trend
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1	Current	
% of under 5's who are engaged with the Early Years Service	68	76	45	51.11	40.25	-	
% of under 5's who have sustained engagement the Early Years Service (3 of more)	60	62	58	60.5	50.6	-	
% of 2 year olds benefitting from funded early education	78	78	76	83	87.05	62	
% of 3 year olds benefitting from funded early education	86	86	90	91	89.42	88	

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Current National	Trend
% of schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted	84%	85%	83%	83%	Available Q2	86%	
% of children in good or better schools as rated by Ofsted	84%	86%	84%	84%	Available Q2	86%	
% of early years settings good or better	94%	96%	98%	98%	Available Q2	97%	
% of young people aged 16 and 17 who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) or Not Known	4.90%	5.30%	5.00%	5.10%	Available Q2	5.50%	

	2017/18	2018/19	2021/22	Current National	Trend
Foundation Stage - % achieving a good level of development	70.5%	69.3%	TBC	71.8%	
Foundation Stage - % of children who are looked after achieving a good level of development	52.2%	59.5%	TBC	48%	
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	TBC	18	
% 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%	TBC	17%	
% achieving expected standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2	60%	60%	TBC	65%	
% 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%	TBC	21%	
The gap in progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at Key Stage 4	0.73	0.84	TBC	0.7	
Progress 8 Score for Wirral	0.03	0.01	TBC	-0.21	

Supporting narrative

It is pleasing to see the rise in engagement with early years early help activities since the removal of all Covid restrictions through Wirral's Children Centres, in the Spring term of 2022. As partners continued to return so did families and Qtr1 demonstrates a positive picture for early help support being reinvigorated through Wirral's communities for families with young children.

The take up of 3-4-year-olds combined is around 87% which is slightly below the national average of 90%. There are a number of factors contributing to the slow recovery of take up of this funding element, whereas the 2yo is improving well, for instance families through Covid have worked from home and experienced reduced childcare cost pressures so are choosing to continue with a new mixed model of informal childcare and home working. In addition the early years childcare workforce is in crisis with staff numbers depleting daily, therefore for the first time some providers do not have staff to meet demand so for some children they may actually bypass their early years nursery experience and go straight to school. This is being closely monitored through a Workforce Development Group and School Ready Working group, with nursery providers representation.

2017/18 attainment data has been included for the purpose of demonstrating trend. There was no published data relating to 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to the pandemic.

Detailed Standards reports containing latest attainment data will be presented to the committee as a separate report.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

	Year-End			2022/23	Current National	Current North West	Current Stat neighbours	Trend
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1				
% Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) issued within 20 week timescale (Excluding Exceptions)	37	58	24	40	58	62.5	80.44	
% of requests that went to tribunal	7.63	9.47	8.12	4.09	-	-	-	
% of Children Looked After with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	6.93	8.68	9.26	17.7	-	-	-	
% of Children In Need with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	14.12	17.59	16.45	21.7	-	-	-	
% of Child Protection with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	5.93	5.93	6.45	7.8	-	-	-	
% of Early Help Episodes with (SEND) Special Educational needs and disabilities	25.77	25.82	26.44	28.98	-	-	-	
% of Children Looked After with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	18.29	18.22	19.29	18.2	-	-	-	
% of Children In Need with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	11.66	15.83	16.2	14.3	-	-	-	
% of Child Protection with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	23.32	19.88	21.51	21.6	-	-	-	

	Year-End			Term	Current National	Current North West	Current Stat neighbours	Trend
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2021/22 Summer				
(EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan- Overall School Attendance %	88.9	90.6	88.9	88	89	84.7	83.3	
(EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan Overall Persistent absence %	31.2	25.6	37.1	38.2	42.2	44.3	30.9	
Number of pupils with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan who are electively home educated	10	18	12	12	-	-	-	
(SEN) Special Educational Need support - Overall School Attendance %	92.3	93.4	91	89.3	93.4	94.2	94.1	
(SEN) Special Educational Need support - Overall Persistent absence %	23.8	19.3	28.6	33.8	16.2	16.2	24.2	
Number of pupils with (SEN) Special Educational Need support who are electively home educated	2	39	54	54	-	-	-	

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2021/22	Current National	Current North West	Current Stat neighbours	Trend
Key Stage 2 (RWM) Reading, Writing, Maths EHCP - % at Expected Level	2.9	6	2.2	Available Q2	9	9	9.5	
Key Stage 4 Overall Progress 8 Score - (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	-1.08	-0.85	-1.12	Available Q2	-1.17	-1.31	-1.29	
Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing, Maths (SEN) Special Educational Need support - % at Expected Level	18	21	23	Available Q2	25	24	25.7	
Key Stage 4 Overall Progress 8 Score - (SEN) Special Educational Need support	-0.36	-0.29	-0.42	Available Q2	-0.43	-0.59	-0.5	

Supporting narrative

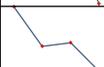
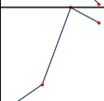
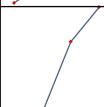
The upward trajectory in the percentage completion rate of EHC plans finalised within 20 weeks is due to different factors:

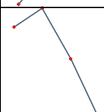
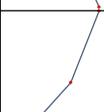
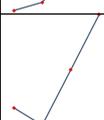
- Performance management of EHC coordinators' cases and providing appropriate challenge and support to move cases along efficiently and within timescales during one to one check ins
- The introduction of weekly case management meetings for SEND manager/coordinators/EHC plan writers to ensure actions from previous weeks are followed through in time
- The introduction of a weekly tracking spreadsheet (RAG Rated) which shows cases that are 20 weeks and above (red), cases which are 16-19 weeks (amber) and cases 16 weeks and below (green). Also tracked are priority plans for writing and plans that have been completed with dates. Expectation for this to be updated weekly before case management meetings
- Coordinators are now expected to write at least one plan each week regardless of other workstreams
- Ongoing work to expand provision to meet need so when plans are due to be finalised, an appropriate provision is identified and named
- Buddy system introduced for when coordinators are on leave/off. Previously cases were left dormant until lead caseworker returned but now there is a named person to pick up and case work for their 'buddy'
- Recruitment of temps to help fill gaps due to absence of core team and to increase capacity to manage increased demand

Reduction of percentage of requests that go to tribunal is due to:

- Improved working relationship between SEND team and Legal meaning decisions are quality assured
- Increase in the number of 'yes to assess' thus the LA not being taken to tribunal for refusals
- Improvement in collaborative working with parents to address issues through disagreement resolution at an informal stage
- Where provision identified and agreed by LA to be inappropriate, tribunals are conceded in advance

Schools

	Year-End				2022/23	Current National	Trend
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1		
% School capacity - places available vs pupil numbers (school)	89.4	89.8	89.6	Available end of summer term	-	-	
% Exclusions - suspensions	4.6	3.31	4.06	Available Q2	Available Q2	3.76	
% Exclusions - permanent	0.09	0.04	0.04	Available Q2	Available Q2	0.06	
Number of children known to be electively home educated	145	171	275	254	258	-	
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	253	-	

	Year-End				Term	Current National	Trend
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2021/22 Summer Term		
% of school age pupils eligible for (FSM) Free school meal	19.5	21.5	24	27.59	27.59	20.8	
Overall School Attendance %	94.9	94.3	94.9	93.3	91.4	80.8	
Overall Unauthorised Absence %	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.9	2.8	-	
Overall Persistent Absence %	12.6	15.9	14.0	20.1	26.2	-	

Supporting narrative

Electively Home Educated - Since September 2021, we have had strengthened capacity to undertake casework with our EHE families. Using covid funding, we now have 2 additional EHE Advisory Teachers who complete consultations and are able to contact new and existing EHE families at an early stage to offer advice and guidance, and to promote a return to school where EHE arrangements are unsuitable. We also have 1 Admin person for 1 day per week. After a successful bid, funding has been agreed for this to continue until 31st July 2023. There is close liaison between the Lead Officer for EHE and individual EHCP Co-ordinators in respect of EHE children with EHCPs (Total 12 out of the live total of 258 as at the end of June 2022: 5 are primary and 7 secondary.) There were 258 EHE students in total at the end of Q1. 37 EHE students were removed from the register in June as they are now beyond statutory school age. As the LA continues to be responsible to monitor the educational arrangements as part of the Annual Review. The main reason cited by parents for removing their child from school to Electively Home Educate during Q1 was mental health and EHE was seen as a way of getting their child in a more stable position before possibly returning back to a school.

Wirral Attendance Service is working hard to create a culture where all professionals and schools work together to advise parents to choose EHE when it benefits the needs of the child and not to be the solution for poor school attendance. EHE advisory teachers have worked to strengthen relationships with difficult to reach parents, changing the mindset has led to positive communication.

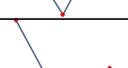
A business case has been sent to the Assistant Director of Education to consider extending covid funding beyond July 2022 as EHE numbers continue to rise. This has now been approved and is now in place until 31st July 2023.

Part Time Timetables (PTTT) shows a clear area of growth (year on year). The trend identifies a growing need for PTTT to be constantly reviewed and monitored to ensure CYP can access their right to a full time education (See White Paper). The risk may be mitigated by 2 existing vulnerable children's panels that meet to discuss school attendance.

Overall Attendance. The data indicates that in 19/20 we have a drop in attendance but in 20/21 we had a recovery period following on from Covid-19 interventions. Wirral Authority attendance rates are in line with national average so far this year.

Unauthorised Absence. Illness was identified as the main reason for absence when the Attendance Service was formed in Autumn 2019. The three year trend shows, the schools are tackling this area through a combination of whole school approach and enforcement measures. The evidence for this can be seen in our 360 degree reviews, of which 33 have been carried out in partnership with the schools. We will continue to work with and coach our schools to challenge absence. This approach ties in with the future DfE guidance for school attendance.

Workforce

	Year-End			2022/23	National	North West	Statistical Neighbourhoods	Trend
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1				
Vacancy rate – number of posts currently vacant / total no of posts Social Workers	31%	31%	30%	20%	-	-	-	
Agency rate – positions filled by agency staff Social Workers	15%	11%	22%	15%	-	-	-	
New starters - Social Workers	19	29	20	5	-	-	-	
Retention of staff – number of leavers - Social Workers	8	16	33	6	-	-	-	
Average FTE days lost to sickness absence - Social Workers	16.75	10.88	16.46	3.56	-	-	-	
Average caseload for social worker	14.6	14.2	15.5	16	16.3	17.9	17	
Vacancy rate – number of posts currently vacant / total no of posts Children's Services Directorate	25%	17%	20%	16%	-	-	-	
Agency rate – positions filled by agency staff Children's Services Directorate	6.80%	5.30%	6.29%	6.00%	-	-	-	
New starters - Children's Services Directorate	112	88	98	20	-	-	-	
Retention of staff – number of leavers - Children's Services Directorate	95	57.5	102	22	-	-	-	
Average FTE days lost to sickness absence Children's Services Directorate	14.54	10.92	12.55	2.86	-	-	-	

Supporting narrative

Difficult to grasp the direction of travel for vacancy rates, as the picture has remained steady for the first 3 months, however it looks very favourable (on paper) as we have recently undertaken an establishment cleansing exercise where we have deleted a number of social worker posts which has now likely distorted the figures, or in actual fact the figures in terms of vacancy rates were artificially high previously.

The direction of travel for sickness within social care isn't an improving picture and strategies are being put in place to try to change this. We are currently heading for 14.24 lost days per FTE (which is an improvement on last year's outturn) at the end of this financial year, however that is based on the first 3 months figures, and as we head into the winter period that is likely to increase as winter viruses etc come into the equation.

Budget
Supporting narrative

Under development - further work required to align performance and financial reporting.