

SUBJECT: Performance report Q2 2019/20 – Children’s Social Services

MEETING: Children and Young People Select Committee

DATE: 28th January 2020

DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present the committee with latest, quarter 2 2019/20, performance of Children’s Social Services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members use this report to scrutinise how well the authority is performing and seek clarity from those responsible on whether performance can improve in any areas of concern identified.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 This report card sets out the performance of Children’s social services during the first half of 2019/20 alongside the latest available performance benchmarking data. This comprises of quantitative (numerical) performance data from the performance measurement framework introduced in 2016/17 as part of the Social Services and Well-being Act and further information that is used to evaluate performance.
- 3.2 This year the Statutory Director of Social Services Annual Report, presented to the committee in September 2019, took a different approach. The report combined evidence from a range of sources including performance data and stories to provide an extensive analysis of performance covering many aspects of Social Services. This report continues to build on this approach of utilising wider evidence sources to assess performance so far during 2019/20, alongside performance measures set in the framework.
- 3.3 Since 2016/17 annual questionnaires, set under the performance measurement framework, have been sent to children and parents that social services are supporting asking them about their experience of social services. It has been advised that there is no longer a requirement to complete these in this set format for 2019/20. Understanding children and parents experience of children services and the impact this has had on their well-being remains imperative. The Annual Directors Report set out a range of evidence that is currently utilised to achieve this and some further examples are included in the report. The service are currently exploring a more interactive, engaging model that will enhance the ability of children to share in their own words their experience.
- 3.4 Welsh Government have again not published local authority level performance data for 2018/19. Wales level means and quartile data for 2018/19 have been published and are included in this report. Qualitative benchmarking data for 2018/19 was not published by Welsh Government for a second year.
- 3.5 Officers have continued to participate in ongoing discussions and workshops with Welsh Government on revising the standards and measures as part of the Social Services and Well-being Act performance framework in the future. In the summer of 2019 Welsh Government consulted on a revised code of practice for measuring the

performance of social services. This included; how local authorities performance should be measured, the quality standards that all local authorities should be working towards and a new performance and improvement framework that local authorities will be required to collect. The outcome of which is likely to change the mechanism and information we are required to utilise to give account of our performance in future. While this work continues nationally, we continue to develop our approaches and the information we utilise locally in Monmouthshire to assess our performance and understand the impact on the lives of people we support, as exemplified by the Annual Directors Report.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 To ensure that members have an understanding of current Children's Social Services performance and how we compared during 2018/19.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6 WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, CORPORATE PARENTING AND SAFEGUARDING)

- 6.1 There are no specific implications identified as a result of this report although some of the performance indicators relate to our safeguarding and corporate parenting responsibilities.

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Quarter 2 2019/20 Performance Report

Children's Social Services 2019/20 Quarter 2 Performance Report

Corporate Plan Goal Contributed to : Best possible start in life

Why we focus on this

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 came into force in April 2016 and is transforming the way care and support is delivered. The Act is ambitious in its desire to change the way in which we provide Social Services with a focus on improving the well-being of people who come to Social Services for support. The Act shares similar principles with a number of key national, regional and local strategies which all influence our direction of travel, in particular, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, A Healthier Wales, and Monmouthshire's Corporate plan.

Monmouthshire Social Services has, over the last few years, been developing a model of delivery which is based around a relational and strengths based approach. We want to help people to take control of their own lives and that any contact with us enhances the opportunity for greater wellbeing.

Children Services have completed a 3 year improvement programme (2016-2019) which concentrated on, securing stability in the workforce, developing a delivery model of practice, commissioning and service critical issues, the service is now moving onto a further 2 year programme (2019-2021). The focus will be on practice development and will shape the way we work with families over the next number of years. The importance of relationships and how we work with families to support their strengths, manage risks and achieve good enough outcomes will be key indicators of success.

The Act introduced a performance measurement framework for local authorities in relation to their social services functions. This framework forms the basis of information in the report, supported by further data and information that is used to evaluate performance. The information is used to assess how we are progressing in delivering against the quality standards as set by the Social Services & Wellbeing Act.

What progress are we making?

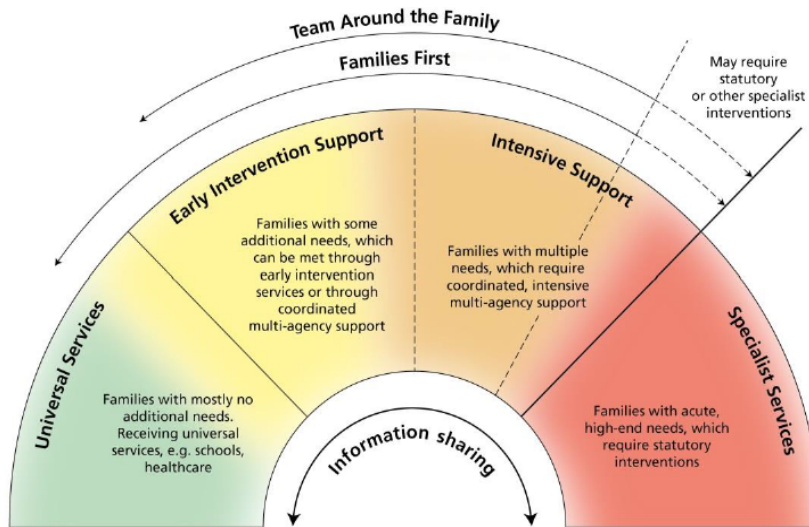


Figure 1: The spectrum of services for children

Prevention and Early Intervention

The importance of preventive work and early intervention is well-recognised and is a fundamental principal of the Act. The Act clearly aligns itself with the belief that the provision of early intervention and preventive services will ultimately contribute to the prevention, delay or reduction of people needing care and support, including children suffering abuse and neglect.

There has been a real focus in the last year in Children's Services to implement a co-ordinated approach to early intervention and prevention. Early help and support services are developing well. Such services enable the earlier identification of a family's strengths and needs and can support positive family change including signposting of families to universal provision.

Preventative resources in Children's Services have been joined up and targeted through the 'Building Stronger Families' offer. Practitioners now work directly with families to support them in setting and working towards their own family goals and aspirations.

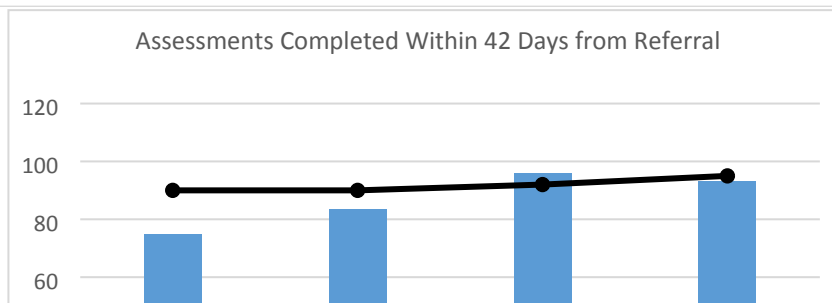
An Early Help Panel has been established, this helps families get the right help when they need it and for agencies to understand each other's 'service offers' better. SPACE (Single point of Access for Children's wellbeing) has been integrated into the Early Help panel to support children, young people and their families with positive mental health and well-being.

An Edge of Care Team has been established and is now fully implemented to support families and to help ensure that wherever possible and safe, children can remain at home.

We are measuring the outcomes of all our preventative and family support services to understand where there is a case for increasing the resource. Work is ongoing to ensure Step up Step down and early help statutory interventions are working well and to evaluate performance.

Front Door

Children's services received 2,551 contacts on 1,262 children in the first two quarters of the year, an increase on the 2,311 contacts on 1,142 children received in the same period last year. An increase in



activity and complexity were particularly noted during the summer months which coincided with staff leave, putting pressure on services. Contacts are most commonly received from police, education and health. 486 children and families received advice or assistance followed by case closure at the front door.

The percentage of assessments completed on time (measure 24) improved during 2018/19 so that Monmouthshire was amongst the top performers in Wales. There has been a slight reduction in timeliness so far this year, in part due to an increase in activity at the front door (see figure 2).

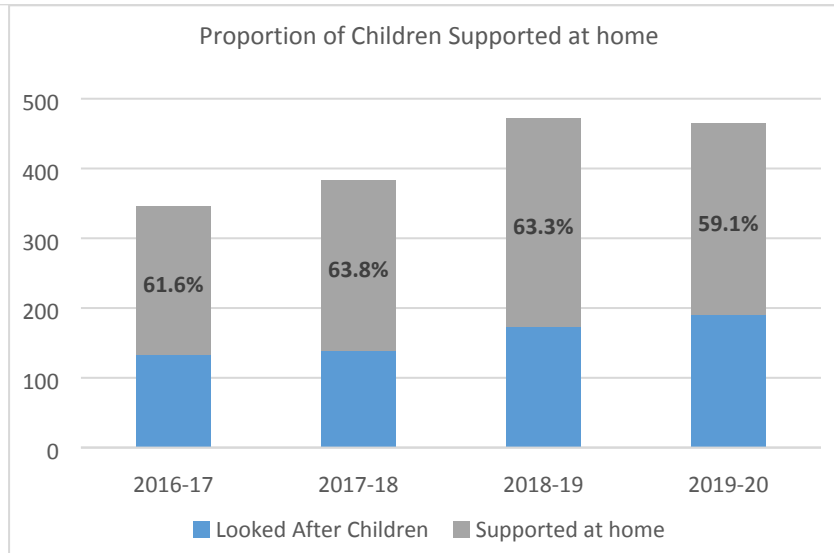


Figure 3: The proportion of children supported at home

Children Receiving Care and Support

Following an assessment care and support may be arranged if a child or family required additional support. This is set out in a care and support plan which is reviewed to ensure it remains appropriate.

The recently completed census of children receiving care and support in Monmouthshire shows that over a third of the children supported have parents experiencing mental ill health and almost one quarter have parents with substance misuse issues. This remains broadly consistent with last year.

The Edge of Care service aims to help ensure that wherever possible and safe, children can remain at home. However, against an increase in the number of Looked After Children (LAC), the percentage of children supported at home (measure 25), has decreased so far in 2019/20 (see figure 3).

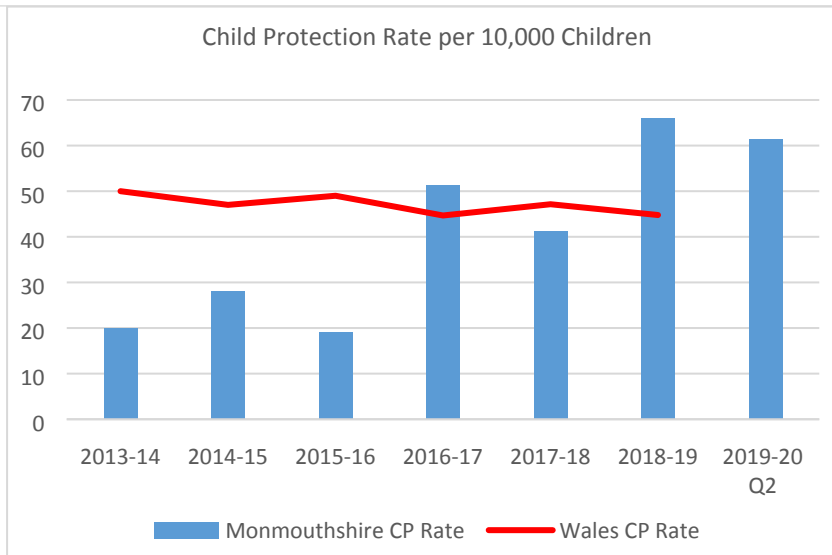


Figure 4: The rate of children on the child protection register

Child Protection

The number of children on the child protection register in Monmouthshire increased substantially from 73 to 116 at the end of 2018/19, this is contrary to the overall Welsh trend which showed a 5% decrease during the same period. The increase during 2018/19 meant the rate per 10,000 child population exceeded the Wales rate at the same point in time (see figure 4). Children are mostly commonly registered under the categories of neglect or emotional abuse, this is also the case across Wales.

At the end of September 2019 there were 108 children on the register, which, while a decrease, remains above the most recently published Welsh rate.

We are conscious there could be some false lows from previous practice. An increase in demand could possibly be due to greater safeguarding awareness and how we respond to risk and need. The outcomes of the children on the child protection register will always be the priority.

69 children were registered during the first 6 months of 2019/20 compared to 105 during the same period last year. Meanwhile, 77 children were deregistered between April and September this year, compared to 41 during same period last year.

Of the children added to the child protection register during the first six months of the year, 2.9% had a prior registration ending in the preceding 12 months (measure 27). This is a broadly positive indication that previous child protection interventions have been effective.

Children have regular reviews while on the child protection register at which the plan is reviewed and the child's continued registration is considered. The children deregistered during the period spent an average of 269 days on the register (measure 28).

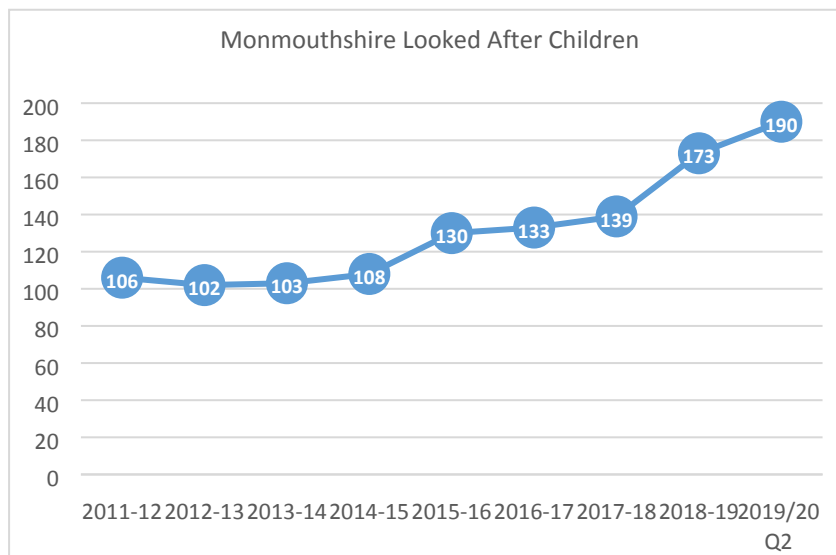


Figure 5: Number of Monmouthshire Looked after Children

Looked After Children

The number of looked after children in Monmouthshire has increased from 173 at the end of 2018/19 to 190 at the end of September 2019 continuing the upward trend (see figure 5). On average across Wales there was an increase in the number of looked after children of 7% during 2018/19, in Monmouthshire there was a 24% increase (see rates of look after children in figure 6).

Of the 190 looked after children at the end of September, 44 were placed with their own parents and 40 cared for by extended family members or friends. This is 44% of the total LAC population and is significant, as generally children benefit from being placed within their extended family or existing social networks.

Whilst we develop interventions to address early identification, and manage appropriately pre- and post-statutory intervention with families, the growing numbers mean that services are under pressure. Work is underway to maximise the opportunities to reduce the current trends, Welsh Government recently carried out a Looked after Children's review across Wales. As part of this we have submitted plans to reduce the numbers of children being looked after. This relies heavily on all parts of the system being geared to support the plans for reduction.

Monmouthshire is aiming to attract more foster carers to offer placements to looked after children. Active campaigns are being run to increase the rates of in house foster carers. During 2018/19, the overall number of foster carers increased from 51 to 65 (see figure 7). By the end of quarter 2 there was an increase to 71 foster carers which includes kinship carers (friends or relative caring for a specific child). Although this is a positive increase, the increasing number of looked after children means that demand remains high and therefore recruitment campaigns are continuing.

The local authority must promote the health and well-being of looked after children and has a responsibility as Corporate Parents to ensure that all Looked After Children within our County have the opportunity to live a safe, happy, healthy and fulfilling life. A care leavers consultation event has been held, the outcomes of which have been used to formulate an action plan for the corporate parenting panel. One of the outcomes following the care leavers

BEST POSSIBLE START IN LIFE



65 foster carers
providing homes
for children and young people

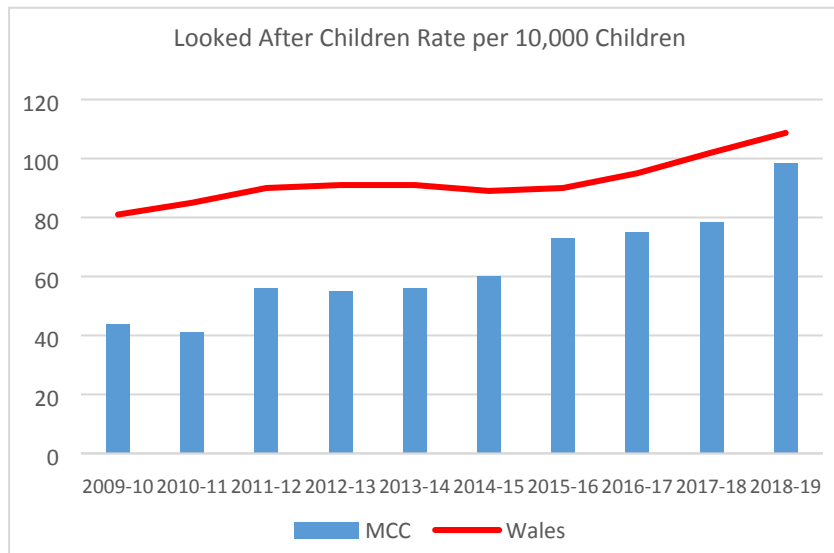


Figure 6: The rate of looked after children

consultation event is care leavers residing in Monmouthshire now have access to a free leisure pass.

So far in 2019/20 just under half of looked after children were recorded as having a dental check within 3 months of becoming looked after (measure 30). While 92% of looked after children were registered with a GP within 10 days of entering a placement (measure 31).

Looked after children benefit from stability and where possible placement and school moves are minimised. The percentage of looked after children moving schools was in the top quartile in Wales last year and remain low at 2.7% so far this year (measure 32).

The percentage of looked after children who experienced 3 or more placements during the year (measure 33) is currently at 4.2%. Placement moves happen for a variety of reasons and can be in order to find the most appropriate placement. The increase in foster carers is key to ensuring there is not only enough capacity but also the most appropriate placement available for children.

There are varying and individual reasons for children leaving care and it isn't always possible for children to return home. At quarter 2, 11 children returned home from care, exceeding the total for the whole of last year (measure 26).

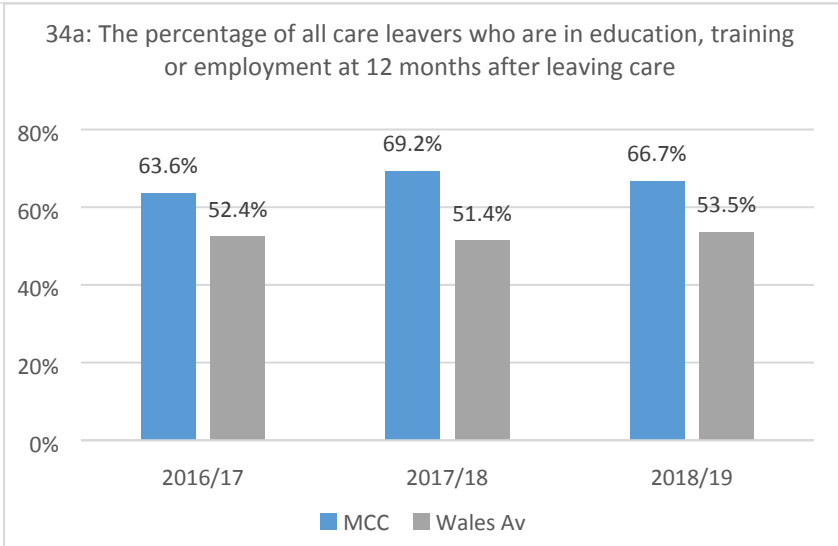


Figure 8: The percentage of care leavers in education, training or employment at 12 months after leaving care, Monmouthshire compared with Wales

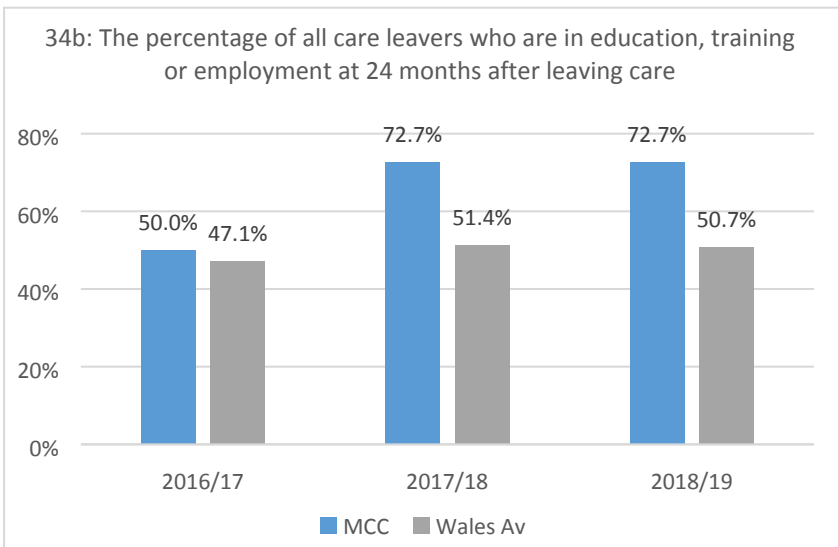


Figure 9: The percentage of care leavers in education, training or employment at 24 months after leaving care, Monmouthshire compared with Wales

Care Leavers

Local authorities have a responsibility to assist children to prepare for, and transition to, leaving care. At the end of quarter 2 there were a total of 58 care leavers ranging from 16 year olds preparing to leave care to care leavers aged over 21 and still in education.

Of the care leavers who left care 12 months ago, half are engaged in education, training or employment (measure 34a). Of those who left care 24 months ago, one third are engaged in education, training or employment (measure 34b), the numbers of care leavers included in this indicator at quarter 2 is low and will increase throughout the remainder of the year. Charts 8 and 9 shows Monmouthshire's previous performance has been consistently higher than Welsh averages.

Of all care leavers, 1.7% have experienced homelessness at some point during the year (measure 35). As to be expected, the reasons for care leavers becoming homeless are varied and can be complex.

As the recent Corporate Parenting Annual Report to council details, despite the many adversities and challenges care leavers have faced, there are many notable recent achievements to celebrate, including securing apprenticeships, University degrees and participating in volunteering programs.

Service
Comments

Head of Service Comments:

The report highlights that the service remains under pressure in terms of the numbers of children and families who require our support. We have continued to respond to this pressure, expanding and developing services particularly through our family support offer so that the right help is provided at the right level of intensity. Early evaluation of our family support services indicates clear and positive outcomes for families (for example our Achieving Change team is currently working with 50 plus children on the 'edge of care' to enable them to remain living safely with their parents).

The coherency and range of family support services, together with our focus on strengths based practice within a risk assessment framework, continues to provide confidence within the service that whenever it is safe to do so children are supported within their own homes and communities. Never-the-less, the number of looked after children remains higher than we would wish, particularly in light of the national drive towards addressing the rates of looked after children across Wales. Consequently, over the next year as well as continuing to embed preventative services, we are expanding our offer to ensure that children are equally supported to leave care safely. Our 'Families Together' mini-team will be working specifically to support this endeavour. Our rates of children exiting care so far this year are an early indication of positive movement on this front.

Aiming to enhance our in-house fostering provision remains a high priority at a corporate level and has seen Monmouthshire lead the way in terms of the quality of its marketing and recruitment campaigns. Progress remains slow but steady and it is hoped that the *20 for 20 reasons to foster* will create an additional boost and impetus. Reducing our reliance on private and independent fostering services is a cornerstone to our aspirations of reducing the overspend within children's services, whilst at the same time achieving the best possible outcomes for children. The introduction of our therapeutic fostering service (MyST) working intensely with a small cohort of our most vulnerable and complex young people similarly speaks to this agenda.

The children's services workforce remains its most valuable resource and asset. Our approach to workforce planning and long-term sustainability remains proactive resulting Monmouthshire Children's Services maintaining a positive position comparatively within Wales regarding levels of sickness absence, use of agency workers and labour turnover. Over the next 18 months we will continue to focus on practice development supporting and enabling practitioners across all of children's services to support families using strengths based approaches.

Jane Rodgers

Collaboration/ Partners we are working with	Gwent Police, Education, Youth Offending Service, Action for Children, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and South East Wales Adoption Service.
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What we
have spent
on this
objective

The 2019/20 net budget for Children Services is £11.9m, over half of which relates to looked after children, in particular, placements for looked after children.

At month 2 Children's Services are forecasting a £2.069m overspend, experiencing significant demands placing pressure on the placement budget, plus the knock on effect in the associated legal and transport provision to support care packages and the need to cover internal staff shortages.

How are we performing?

Performance Measures:

Performance Indicators	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Q2	2019/20 Target	Performance Against Target	Performance Trend	2018/19 Wales Av	2018/19 Quartile
Number of Looked After Children	133	139	173	190	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Children on the Child Protection Register	91	73	116	108	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
24: The percentage of assessments completed for children within statutory timescales	74.69%	87.31%	95.9%	93.2%	95%	x	↓	88.9%	Top
<i>Numerator: Number of assessments for children completed within statutory timescales</i>	611	688	720	234					
<i>Denominator: Number of assessments for children completed during the year</i>	818	788	751	251					
25: The percentage of children supported to remain living within their family	61.56%	63.80%	63.35%	59.1%	65%	x	↓	64.7%	Middle
<i>Numerator: The number of children supported to remain living within their family</i>	213	245	299	275					
<i>Denominator: The number of children supported at 31 March</i>	346	384	472	465					
26: The percentage of looked after children returned home from care during the year	14.44%	13.81%	4.55%	5.4%	15%	x	↑	9.6%	Bottom
<i>Numerator: Number of looked after children who return home from care during the year</i>	26	25	9	11					
<i>Denominator: Number of looked after children during the year</i>	180	181	198	205					
27: The percentage of re-registrations of children on local authority Child Protection Registers (CPR)	2.38%	5.26%	3.49%	2.9%	<8%	✓	↓	5.1%	Middle
<i>Numerator: Number of re-registrations of children on the CPR during the year</i>	*	6	6	*					
<i>Denominator: Total number of registrations on CPR during the year</i>	*	114	172	*					
28: The average length of time for all children who were on the CPR during the year	230	227	260	269	≤ 270 days	✓	↓	253	Middle
<i>Numerator: The total number of days each child had been on the CPR if they were removed from the CPR during the year</i>	15,660	29,946	33,794	20,693					
<i>Denominator: Number of children who were removed from the CPR during the year</i>	68	132	130	77					
29a: Percentage of children achieving the core subject	68.75%	68.75%	69.57%	N/A	Not Set	N/A	N/A	58.3%	Top

indicator at key stage 2									
<i>Numerator: The number of children who achieved the core subject indicator at key stage 2</i>	11	11	16	N/A					
<i>Denominator: The number of children who need care and support and are in the final year of key stage 2</i>	16	16	23	N/A					
29b: Percentage of children achieving the core subject indicator at key stage 4	29.41%	6.67%	11.11%	N/A					
<i>Numerator: The number of children who achieved the core subject indicator at key stage 4</i>	5	*	*	N/A	Not Set	N/A	N/A	10.9%	Middle
<i>Denominator: The number of children who need care and support and are in the final year of key stage 4</i>	17	*	*	N/A					
30: The percentage of children seen by a registered dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after	56.52%	75.86%	73.33%	47.6%					
<i>Numerator: The number of children who became looked after during the year who have been seen by a dentist within 3 months</i>	13	22	22	10	80%	x	↓	59.5%	Middle
<i>Denominator: The number of children who became looked after during the year who should have been seen by a dentist within 3 months</i>	23	29	30	21					
31: The percentage of children looked after at 31 March who were registered with a GP within 10 working days of the start of their placement	98.33%	100%	100%	91.7%					
<i>Numerator: Number of children looked after at 31 March who were registered with a GP within 10 working days of the start of their placement</i>	59	56	74	66	100%	x	↓	90.6%	Top
<i>Denominator: Number of looked after children at 31 March who had a placement start during the year</i>	60	56	74	72					
32: The percentage of looked after children who have experienced 1 or more changes of school, during a period or periods of being looked after, which were not due to transitional arrangements, in the year to 31 March	8.14%	9.47%	5.26%	2.7%					
<i>Numerator: The number of children of compulsory school age looked after at 31 March who have had one or more changes of school, which were not due to transitional arrangements</i>	7	9	6	*	10.0%	✓	↓	10.0%	Top
<i>Denominator: The number of children of compulsory school age looked after at 31 March</i>	86	95	114	*					

33: The percentage of looked after children on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year	5.26%	5.76%	6.94%	4.2%					
<i>Numerator: The number of children looked after at 31 March who had three or more separate placements during the year</i>	7	8	12	8	6.5%	x	↓	9.2%	Top
<i>Denominator: The total number of children who were looked after at 31 March</i>	133	139	173	190					
34: The percentage of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at: a) 12 months after leaving care	63.64%	69.23%	66.67%	50.0%					
<i>Numerator: Number of care leavers who were engaged in education, training or employment 12 months after they left care</i>	7	9	6	*	75%	x	↓	53.5%	Top
<i>Denominator: The number of young people who became care leavers during 2016-17</i>	11	13	9	*					
34: The percentage of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at: b) 24 months after leaving care	50.00%	72.73%	72.70%	33.3%					
<i>Number of care leavers who were engaged in education, training or employment 24 months after they left care</i>	*	8	8	*	75%	x	↓	50.7%	Top
<i>Denominator: The number of young people who became care leavers during 2015-16</i>	*	11	11	*					
35: The percentage of care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year	5.45%	9.62%	3.64%	1.7%					
<i>Numerator: The number of care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year</i>	*	5	*	*	0%	x	↑	11.5%	Top
<i>Denominator: The number of care leavers aged 16 to 24 on 31 March</i>	*	52	*	*					

*Numerator and denominator removed due to low numbers

National Performance Indicators – How we compare:

Limited comparable data for 2018/19 was released, what is available has been used to show how our current performance compared to Wales in 2018/19. Below are the indicators of Children's Services which are also included in the Public Accountability Measures set by Data Cymru.

How do we compare other areas

