

## Children in Care Performance Update

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### Report Summary

**Purpose:**

This report seeks to increase Corporate Parenting Panel's awareness of the performance measures used to assess outcomes for children in care and provides an opportunity to identify the relative strengths and challenges for the service through comparison of the major performance indicators with both our statistical neighbours and national average data.

**Background:**

Changes to local authority performance arrangements were announced in 2011, including the ending of the National Indicator Set. However, some data collection has continued as part of the single data list for government. Whilst under review, many of the NIs relating to Looked After Children remain in place.

This report is prompted by a recent Statistical First Release from the DfE: "Outcomes for Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England, as at 31 March 2012"

**Corporate Priorities:**

Improving the outcomes for Milton Keynes' Looked After Children is central to our corporate parenting responsibilities. This is in line with the council's Children & Families 2012/13 priority 4: To develop and maintain effective intervention that prevent the most vulnerable children and young people in our communities from experiencing additional difficulty and prevents them from suffering significant harm.

**Performance Information:**

The figures are taken mainly from the recently released DoE Statistical First Release and our own local performance data. Where the indicator is part of the National Indicator set (**NI**) a brief narrative is provided.

**Equality and Diversity Impact:**

The Corporate Parenting Service is provided for children from across the Milton Keynes community. It therefore needs to provide services that can meet the diverse needs of all the children and young people in the Council's care.

**Recommendations /Proposals:**

Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to note and discuss/challenge the report.

## Performance Overview – Outcomes for Children in Care

	PI Reference and description	England Average 31.03.12	Statistical Neighbours 31.03.12	Milton Keynes 31.03.12	Milton Keynes 30.11.12
	No. Children in Care per 1000 of 0-17 population.	5.9 31.03.11	6.1 31.03.11	4.8 31.03.11	4.7
HEALTH	Emotional & Behavioural Health of CLA (SDQ) <b>NI58</b>	13.8 (31.03.12)	14.2 (31.03.12)	13.2 (31.03.12)	N/A
	Percentage of eligible children with an SDQ score considered Borderline.	13%	14%	14%	N/A
	Percentage of eligible children with an SDQ score considered of concern.	36%	42%	32%	N/A
	Number of children looked after at 31 March who had been looked after for at least twelve months whose immunisations were up to date.	83.1%	86.0% SE region as SN N/A	97.4%	N/A
	Number of children looked after at 31 March who had been looked after for at least twelve months whose dental checks were up to date.	82.3%	86.9% SE region as SN N/A	92.1%	N/A
	Number of children looked after at 31 March who had been looked after for at least twelve months who had had their Annual health assessment.	86.2%	84.7% SE region as SN N/A	97.4%	N/A
	Number of children looked after for at least one year, and aged 5 or younger at 31 March 2012 whose development assessments were up to date.	80.2%	83.5% SE region as SN N/A	100%	N/A
STABILITY	Stability of looked after children adopted following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption <b>NI61</b>	74.0%	68.2%	92.3%	100%
	Stability of placements of looked after children: number of moves <b>NI62</b>	10.7%	11.0%	16.5%	12.5%
	Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement <b>NI63</b>	68.8%	68.6%	54.0 %	57.4%
EDUCATION	Percentage of CIC who achieved at least Level 2 in Reading at Key Stage 1 :	67%	71%	67%	N/A
	Percentage of CIC who achieved at least Level 2 in Writing at Key Stage 1 :	57%	48%	67%	N/A
	Percentage of CIC who achieved at least Level 4 <sup>6</sup> in English at Key Stage 2: <b>NI99</b>	60%	56%	37.5%	N/A
	Percentage of CIC who achieved at least Level 4 <sup>6</sup> in Maths at Key stage 2: <b>NI100</b>	56%	51%	37.5%	N/A
	Percentage of CIC who achieved at least Level 4 in English& Maths at Key stage 2:	50%	47%	37.5%	N/A
	Children in Care achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths) <b>NI101</b>	15.1%	16.7%	13.6%	N/A
	Percentage of children in Care with at least one fixed term exclusion.	12.4%	12.1%	8.5%	N/A
LEAVING CARE	Care leavers in suitable accommodation <b>NI147</b>	90%	86.8%	81.3%	96.6% (31.12.12)
	Care leavers in Education Training or Employment <b>NI148</b>	61%	61.7%	53.1%	62.4% (31.12.12)

## *Key outcomes for Children in Care nationally*

Evidence from the Department of Education nationally suggests that care can be a positive experience for most children and that outcomes are improved compared to 20 years ago and in relation to other vulnerable groups of young people today. There has been a heightened awareness of the needs of children in care particularly in relation to health and education outcomes.

### **Health**

The comparator data shows Milton Keynes performing very well in relation to both our statistical neighbours and the national figures for immunisations and dental checks for children in care for twelve months or more. In both areas our performance is in the nineties and 10 percentage points plus above our statistical neighbours and the all England figures. Similarly, the percentage of children having completed health assessments is in the high nineties.

#### NI 58 Emotional and Behavioural Health of Children in Care (NI 58)

Measurement: The average score of all Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires for Children in Care aged 4 – 16, who have been in care for 12 months at period end. Good performance is indicated by a lower number.

Children and Young People in care experience significantly worse mental health than all children. This performance measure assesses progress in improving the emotional and behavioural health of children and young people in care. Milton Keynes performance in 2011 at 14.4% was better than the average for the South East Region (14.9%) but trailed the England average (13.9%) by half a point. The 2012 figure show an improvement and the Milton Keynes average score is now below both the National and South East average. In addition, the numbers of children in care with borderline or mental health concerns in Milton Keynes has dropped from 57% in 2011 to 46% in 2012

### **Stability**

#### NI 61 Timeliness of Placements of Looked After Children for Adoption following an Agency Decision

Measurement: The number of children who were placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision that they should be placed for adoption, excluding children who were placed within 12 months of the decision whose placement broke down before being adopted. Good performance is typified by a higher percentage.

In 2010/11 Milton Keynes experienced a reduction in the number of children being adopted within 12 months of the decision compared to the previous year. At 70% this represented a decrease of 8.6% in performance although the overall figure remained favourable comparable with our statistical neighbours. 2011/12 saw an increase in adoption activity and timeliness with 92.3% of children being successfully adopted within the timescale.

The number of children waiting for and placed for adoption is directly linked to the number coming into care, particularly through care proceedings, and the plans that are then made for each child's permanent future. The government focus and Adoption Action Plan has helped to consolidate and drive the improvements made in our adoption service. This is an area where we anticipate performance will continue to improve and the half year figure for this indicator in 2012/13 is standing at 100%

#### NI 62 Stability of Placements of Children Looked After

Measurement: The percentage of children looked after at 31<sup>st</sup> March with three or more main placements during the year. Good performance is indicated by a low percentage

This indicator is an important measure of the stability of the care that a child has experienced. On the whole, stability is associated with better outcomes. Proper assessment of a child's needs, an adequate choice of placements and effective placement support to meet the varied needs of different children are essential if appropriate stable placements are to be made.

This indicator is cumulative. The number of LAC who have experienced 3 or more placements since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 therefore increases monthly. At the end of November 2012, there were 34 LAC in this group, from a total care population of 280 (i.e. 12%). This is likely to increase further by financial year end and may exceed the Milton Keynes performance target of 13.6%. The 2010/11 England figure was 10.7% and the statistical neighbour average was 11%.

The MK rate of children in care per 10,000 of the under 18 population is currently 47.1. The England 10/11 rate was 59.3 and the statistical neighbour average rate was 61. Numbers of LAC in other LAs have reportedly risen since these figures were reported. If the overall number of children in MK care were to increase over the next few months, performance on this indicator would improve.

Unplanned placement moves must be minimised. However, moves can be positive. They can also, typically, be part of the care experience of older young people who may move around as a result of personal choice or, in some cases, due to the continuing impact of the behavioural and other issues which contributed to the breakdown of their original family situations.

24 of the 34 who have experienced 3+ placements so far this year entered Milton Keynes' care within the current or last financial year.

Only 8 children of the 34 were aged under 12. Of those, 6 moved for very positive reasons (e.g. a move into an adoptive placement or being placed with their parents or extended family as part of a rehabilitation or assessment plan during care proceedings).

20 of the 34 were aged 15 or over (and 13 of that older group of 20 had come into Milton Keynes' care within the current or last financial year).

13 of the 34 moved to a placement with relatives, with a view to moving out of the care system if this were successful. Some of these placements did not succeed, and led to a further subsequent move. However, they needed to be explored in order to satisfy court requirements or in order to support an older young person who wished to move "home" and could not settle elsewhere until this had been tried.

Other positive reasons for moves included 2 extended admissions to hospital and extended periods of respite care (which counted as 3 placements, even when one young person returned to her stable long term placement).

There continued to be a drive to improve placement stability and monitoring of those young people who are at risk of 3 or more placements moves in contravention of their care plan. A stronger link with operational staff and permanency planning has been established through the Permanency Tracking forum which we believe is adding to our collective understanding of the factors impacting on placement stability and more readily influencing planning decisions.

Measurement: The percentage of children under 16, who had been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years at 31<sup>st</sup> March and were living in the same foster placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption. Higher percentages indicate good performance.

Placements break down because they are not sufficiently well-matched to children's needs, or of sufficient quality, or because they are not well supported. Placement breakdown has a significant impact on children's wellbeing and disrupts their education and access to other key services.

More than one financial year's performance impacts upon this indicator. At the start of the current financial year, the highest possible performance figure was 72.2%. At that point, all the children in the cohort of 108 children who could have been in care for 2.5 years on 31.3.13 were known; the figure could only stay the same (assuming no moves – positive or negative) or deteriorate. The England and SE 10/11 benchmarks are 68.6% and 68.8% respectively. Our current performance (at the end of November 2012) is 57.4%.

The change from the start of the year involves 14 of the children having left the care system for positive reasons (mostly adoption). A further 9 moved placement.

Placement moves can be both positive and negative. Negative reasons generally relate to placement breakdown due to very challenging behaviour on the part of the young person or to the foster carer's changing personal circumstances (e.g. ill health). Positive reasons, relating to better meeting the needs of the young people, can include extended stays in hospital, moves which enable a young person better to maintain contact with relatives (with a view to future family reunification) or a move to a "permanent" care placement which, for an older young person with particular needs, can take more than 6 months to identify.

As with NI 62, the relatively low rate of MK children in care per 10,000 0-18 is likely adversely to impact upon the performance of this indicator.

**Previous years' performance:** The comparative figures relate to very small numbers of LAC (**not statistically significant**). Potentially "stable" LAC at the start of 12/13 is a lower percentage than in previous years.

Year	Starting position on 1 <sup>st</sup> April	Final position on 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Exits in year (positive)	Moves in year (positive & negative)
12/13	78 potentially "stable", from a cohort of 108 LAC aged 0-15 who would have been in care for 2.5 years by 31.3.13 (72%)	November figure: 54 of 94 (57%)	November: 14 (18% of the initial 78)	10 (13% of the initial 78)
11/12	57 of a cohort of 75 (76%)	34 of 63 (54%)	12 (21% of the initial 75)	11 (21% of the initial 57)
10/11	49 of a cohort of 64 (77%)	32 of 54 (59%)	10 (20% of the initial 49)	7 (20% of the initial 49)

To increase the long-term stability of children who remain in care for significant periods of time is a corporate priority. The Permanency Tracking Forum has been focusing on both long and short term placement stability and it is believed that more proactive planning for permanence will impact on this indicator. The service will seek to improve monitoring and tracking of permanence through a robust permanence planning process which takes account of a number of routes to permanence, including special guardianship, residence orders and adoption.

### **Education**

A more detailed report outlining the educational attainment data for 2011/12 was presented separately to the November 2012 Corporate Parenting Panel. This report outlined that at KS2 36% of pupils in the Milton Keynes Cohort achieved L4+ in English and Maths compared to 33% in 2011 and 11% in 2010.

Of the children in the cohort in 2012, only one child has no identified special needs, (five had a statement, one at school action plus and one at school action) three of the eight children attended specialist provisions.

For the all CiC cohort only 6 of the 11 pupils were in mainstream education and 66% of these achieved L4+ including English and maths.

#### NI99 – CLA reaching L4 in English at Key Stage 2

*Measurement:* Number of LAC eligible to take Key Stage 2 SATs who have been in care for 12 months or more who achieve Level 4 or above in English. Good performance is characterised by a higher percentage.

The national educational achievements of children in care are generally poor compared to all children the aim of this indicator is to measure the progress towards narrowing the gap between children in care and all children.

In 2011/12 three children in a cohort of nine succeeded in achieving level 4 in English in Milton Keynes giving us performance figures of 37.5%. This compares with a 2009/10 figure of 22% and a 2010/11 figure of 41.3%.

#### NI100 – CLA reaching L4 in Maths at Key Stage 2

**Measurement:** Number of LAC eligible to take Key Stage 2 tests who have been in care for 12 months or more who achieve Level 4 or above in Maths. Good performance is characterised by a higher percentage.

The 2011/12 examination results from this year indicate that we have succeeded in improving performance in mathematics this year to 33.3%. While still below the national and statistical neighbour data this represents an improvement from 11% in 2009/10 and 33% in 2010/11.

#### **NI 101 CLA achieving 5 A\*-C including English and Maths**

**Measurement:** % of CLA, who have been in care for at least 12 months, achieving 5 A\*-C including English and Maths. Good performance is characterised by a higher percentage.

The national educational achievement of children in care at GCSE level is currently significantly lower than that of all children. The aim of this indicator is to measure the progress towards narrowing the gap between children in care and all children.

The performance of KS4 pupils who had been in care for 12 months improved slightly with 3 of the 22 gaining 5+ GCSEs A\*-C including English and maths, equivalent to 13.6 % compared to 0% last year and 4.7% in 2009/10.

There were twenty two children this year in the reporting cohort. Nine of the students had identified special educational needs. One student was placed in year 10 and did not sit exams. One student did not achieve in a secure unit although academically he had been predicted to get 7 GCSEs A\*-C including English and Maths. Two other students were supported to remain at school, one was on the verge of exclusion and although they achieved some qualifications they were unable to achieve 5 GCSEs A\*-C including English and Maths.

#### **Care Leavers**

##### **NI 147 Care leavers in suitable accommodation**

**Measurement:** Young people aged 19 who were previously looked after under any legal status and are placed in suitable accommodation at or near their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday: Accommodation is regarded as suitable if it provides safe, secure and affordable provision for young people. It would include short-term accommodation designed to move young people on to stable long-term accommodation, but would exclude emergency accommodation used in a crisis.

In the first two quarters of 2012-13 100% of young people who met the above criteria were in suitable accommodation. Although unconfirmed in quarter three there were 9 out of the 10 young people in suitable accommodation with the 10<sup>th</sup> being in prison. If this figure is confirmed a cumulative figure of 96.6% is achieved going into the final quarter. There are a further 8 young people in the cohort who will turn 19 in the final quarter of the year, 7 of whom are currently in suitable accommodation. If this is maintained we will achieve a year end figure of 94.4. We are therefore hopeful that we will meet or exceed the overall year end target of 80%

##### **NI148 Care leavers in Education Training or Employment**

**Measurement:** Young people aged 19 who were previously looked after under any legal status aged 16 who are in employment, education or training on their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday: they must be engaged either full or part-time (less than 16 hrs per week) in one of the following: Higher education; Education other than higher; Training or employment;

According to internal records, 7 out of 10 young people who turned 19 years of age in Quarter 3 were in education, training or employment making an unconfirmed Q3 figure of 70% in EET and an overall performance of 62.4% at the end of December. Of the remaining 8 in the cohort who will have a 19th birthday, 7 are currently in education giving a potential 88% figure for the final quarter and a 68.8% end of year figure.

The main reason why YP are not in ETE is pregnancy and ill health, confinement in prison, immigration status or lack of engagement with Options for Independence team who have no legal enforcement over them to participate in ETE post 18.

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