

Performance Overview – Children and Families August 2020 Dataset

Positive Areas

1. Percentage of referrals dealt with by MASH where time from referral received / recorded to completion by MASH was 24 hours / 1 working day or less

99% of referrals in August, and 97% of referrals have been dealt with within 24 hours for the past 12 months. This is despite the pandemic, and MASH managers have remained a constant presence in the office throughout. This shows rigour by the team and managers in ensuring that decisions for vulnerable children are made in a timely way. We have audited MASH decision making throughout the Covid period and assurance has been provided in all but a small minority of cases (which the management team have addressed promptly and appropriately). Meeting set in October 2020 with safeguarding partners to discuss multi-agency audit which will include quality of referrals.

2. Percentage of Single Assessments (SA) completed in 45 working days

89% of Single Assessments were completed in August within 45 working days, and 76% over the past 12 months. We are demonstrating a solid positive trend now, and our statistical neighbour average is 76% and regional and national averages are 81%. The service knows that the *quality of assessment* still needs to improve to be consistently good, however this is a strong base to build on. It is to be noted that there are additional staff in the assessment service area and that this is having a positive impact on performance.

3. Percentage of Looked after Children with an authorised care plan

96% of Care Experienced Children had an authorised care plan in August. This is at 95% for the past 12 months, again showing a good performance trend. The service knows that at times the *quality of planning* needs to be a focus. Timely completion however is a good foundation for our children, and we can build on this as we improve the quality of the planning in relation to their permanency journeys.

Areas for Development

1. Rate of children with Child Protection Plans (CPP) per 10,000 (0-17 year olds) at end of period

Southampton is unfortunately an outlier at 82 per 10,000 (SN average is 48; national is 44; regional is 41). The pandemic has to some extent impacted because professional networks are more cautious in respect of children's safety and this affects the number of new cases coming in and the number of children stepping down from planning. However, this does not account for this

metric alone. A review into thresholds for Child Protection Conferences and outcomes will be scheduled over the next 6 months.

Temporary additional staffing support has been secured for the Child Protection Conference Team to manage the increased demand of increased review conferences.

Workforce stability in the core social work teams, reduced caseloads, and partner confidence in practice (now in the context of Covid-19) will be critical factors in safely managing a downward trend from this point forward.

A stable staff group with lower caseloads where plans can be effectively driven is entirely key to reducing risks to children and this is a service priority.

2. Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) held within timescales (based on count of children)

Timeliness of ICPCs in Southampton was 73% in August 2020 with an average timeliness of 63% over the past 12 months (SN 84%, NA 79%, REG 77%). Our analysis shows that stability and caseloads in the core social work teams are the most significant issue in conferences progressing on time. A weekly live data report shows pending cases and the Child Protection Advisor also reports weekly on case / practice issues. A review of timeliness will be undertaken to fully understand the delays.

3. Looked after Children rate per 10,000

The Looked after children rate per 10,000 in Southampton remains an area of concern, when compared to statistical neighbours. It is notable that there was an increase of children entering care in July, although there has been a steady reduction again since this spike. Currently, there are 488 children who are in our care. Statistical neighbours are at a rate of 86 per 10,000, and whilst we levelled back to 97 per 10,000 in August, this statistic continues to demonstrate the pressure that the core services are under with the current caseloads, as they try to focus on intensive work to prevent family breakdown. As caseloads reduce it is probable that there will be further reductions in the numbers of children and young people who enter care, or those who are able to be safely rehabilitated home to their parents having had to enter care. We will be introducing an entry into care panel to ensure this is the right decision for the child.