



Improvement Report

Southampton Children and Learning Service Improvement Board
May 2022

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A city of opportunity where everyone thrives

Priority Areas

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Effective assessment and intervention	4	Medium
Purposeful Direct Contact	5	Medium
Management Support for better practice	6	Medium
Right service at the right time	7	High
Robust corporate parenting	9	High
Common practice framework	11	Medium
Rigorous quality assurance	12	Medium
Performance Culture	13	High
Workforce Academy	14	Medium
Systems and support services	15	High

Practice and Performance Summary

Last time I reported to the Improvement Board, the service was really feeling the significant impact of Care Director implementation. Two months on, there have been some improvements, but we are still not where we want to be. The continued issues with data reporting makes understanding service and partnership performance more challenging. However, the suite of available reports we to inform our line of sight is growing and we have secured additional performance staff to get us to a solid position by the end of the summer.

We remain focused on levels of contact with children, management oversight and recording, with signs of improvement. We are having courageous and sometimes difficult conversations with colleagues whose performance falls short of our expectations. We also know that many practitioners are working in an environment which, for many, does not support practice. This is linked to high caseloads in some teams and agency turnover. We now have very few vacancies across children's social care and early help the service, with 112 permanent appointments made since January. By the end of the Summer we predict that 80% of our staff will be permanent compared with 45% this time last year. But, not all new recruits are in post yet, and around half of our new social workers will not be registered until the Autumn.

It has been almost a month since we launched our new ways of working, via Destination 2022. I am grateful for the interest, support and patience of our partners, and colleagues across the service. Our safeguarding teams are now organised in localities, and we are beginning to build links between these teams and the services withing their localities. We have reduced those in residential care by 20% and by October we envisage that we will have 80% of our staff as permanent compared to 45% this time last year. Induction for new staff and management training are critical: our practice development team have developed a comprehensive programme to support these staff and managers in their new roles.

We have launched *Focus on Practice* days, which have been well received and are increasing service engagement in audit and reflective practice. Our Workforce Academy programme is being rolled out, with systemic practice and motivational interviewing training now launched for staff. In June we will focus our practice week on direct contact, including 'collecting memories', life story work and practice standards.

The Board will hear today from the Local Government Association peer review team. We are already acting on the recommendations from this review, starting with detailed analysis of cost benefits and forecasts linked to improvement activity. Whilst it was pleasing to hear that the review team thought that our strategic direction is right, we know we need to revise our targets in line with the impact of increased levels of demand for social care, in Southampton and nationally.

I'd like to finish by asking you to support our ask1person fostering campaign. We believe that we all know someone who could be a great foster carer, perhaps just for a few weekends a year or in an emergency. Please share the promotional materials across your services when you receive them.



Steph Murray
Deputy Director
Children's eph Social Care



What the data tells us

Indicator	Outturn type	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	Target	Southampt on 19/20	Southampt on 20/21	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Percentage of re-referrals within 12 months	PERCENTAGE	31%	24%	24%	27%	25%	29%	29%	22%	23%	28%	22%	28%	23%	N/A
Number of Early Help assessments completed	NUMBER	196	180	223	195	200	111	119	99	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rates of Single Assessments completed per 10,000	RATE	320	376	436	496	540	595	653	62	TBC	898	672	637	554	518
Percentage of C&F assessments completed within 45 working days	PERCENTAGE	89%	85%	92%	88%	91%	93%	90%	79%	TBC	79%	77%	74%	70%	69%

Analysis

Re-referrals have been above target for most of the year, mainly due to the step-down process required in PARIS for a transfer to Early Help, however February and March data are higher than desired at 29% each month, although have dropped to 22% in April. Provisional data for single assessments per 10k at year end are below Southampton's 20/21 performance despite a 25% increase in contacts during the year. Performance on assessments completed within timescale has been strong all year, although we have seen a dip in April figures. We are analysing our 'NFA following Assessment' cohort against our re-referral cohort to see if these are any themes or practice that require review.

Action/next steps

An audit re-referrals will be convened in order to provide greater insight around practice themes and trends. This was highlighted by the LGA peer review team as a recommendation. Findings will be presented to the improvement board in July 2022.

What the data tells us

Indicator	Outturn type	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	Target	Southamt on 19/20	Southamt on 20/21	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Percentage of children subject to Child Protection Plan for whom a visit has taken place within last 2 weeks (10 Working Days)	PERCENTAGE	73%	58%	62%	71%	45%	44%	65%	71%	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of children subject to Child Protection Plan for whom a visit has taken place within last 4 weeks (20 Working Days)	Percentage	86%	78%	91%	92%	93%	76%	84%	91%	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within statutory timescales (6 weeks or less visits)	PERCENTAGE	97%	96%	90%	73%	83%	71%	74%	78%	TBC	95%	TBC	97%	53%	67%
CIN on a plan visited within 4 weeks	PERCENTAGE	71%	70%	73%	66%	68%	62%	42%	85%	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Analysis

The number of children on a CPP have increased considerably over the past year which has increased pressure on resources and visits. We are committed to delivering visits within a 10-working day timeframe, hence we have added a 10-day performance measure above, we have also included our previous measure of CPP within a 20 day visit schedule to highlight the focus and improvement we are committed to delivering. The majority of CLA have a 6-week visiting schedule in line with statutory requirements, however there are some children in long term care and settled placements that have an agreed longer visiting schedule. Our focus on improving visiting and recording of visits has seen the biggest impact for our CIN on a plan cohort with a 50% improvement on last months activity. We are committed to sustaining and building on this.

Action/next steps

Managers are now receiving regular reports on visiting frequency, after the transition to Care Director, and our assurance clinics continue to support the focus on improving performance. However, the level of demand upon the service remains high, with a resulting impact upon caseloads. In this context, we believe it is right to have the focus on contact with children where the child protection threshold is met, and we anticipate CIN performance will improve as new social workers start in the service. To provide clear expectations for better practice and management oversight, revised practice standards are being launched in our next practice week in June 2022.

What the data tells us

Indicator	Outturn type	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-21	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	Target	Southampt on 19/20	Southampt on 20/21	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Percentage of CIN who have had their supervision and within timescale	PERCENTAGE	55%	67%	66%	72%	62%	50%	51%	81%	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CPP who have had their supervision and within timescale	PERCENTAGE	63%	71%	63%	65%	64%	54%	60%	87%	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA who have had their supervision and within timescale	PERCENTAGE	70%	58%	70%	50%	53%	46%	59%	76%	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of Care Leaver who have had their supervision and within timescale	PERCENTAGE	69%	82%	70%	59%	27%	25%	25%	78%	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Analysis

The whole service focused on recording being up to date and within timescales. This has been driven by the Deputy Director and all Heads of Service. Particular attention has been given to visits and supervisions and is being monitored closely. This focus has seen performance on supervisions within an 8 week timescale improve considerably in April.

Actions / next steps

April performance data will be analysed and discussed in the service's performance clinics throughout the next month. The service is launching a bespoke management induction programme in June 2022 which, alongside the updated Practice Standards, will set out the service expectations in respect of good supervision. Focus on Practice days, with reflective teams discussions with managers and practitioners, have launched. To date the Practice Development Team has worked with the Children with Disabilities and Fostering and Adoption Teams and will work with the Early Help and Young People's Services for the remainder of May.

What the data tells us

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Number of Early Help assessments completed	NUMBER	196	180	223	195	200	111	119	99	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rates of Single Assessments completed per 10,000	RATE	320	376	436	496	540	595	653	62	TBC	898	672	637	554	518
Percentage of C&F assessments completed within 45 working days	PERCENTAGE	89%	85%	92%	88%	91%	93%	90%	79%	TBC	79%	77%	74%	70%	69%
Number of contacts	NUMBER	2,075	1,922	1,874	1,689	2,018	1,696	2,011	1,663	TBC	15657	17661	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of referrals in the month	NUMBER	442	391	396	366	308	300	318	259	TBC	N/A	4092	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rates of referrals per 10,000 of Under 18 Population	RATE	435	511	587	658	717	775	836	49	TBC	944	790	647	561	494
Number of CLA at the end of the month	NUMBER	517	525	540	544	551	560	563	566	TBC	486	495	615	N/A	N/A
Number of children with an active Child in Need Plan not allocated to CWD (CIN*)	NUMBER	536	532	523	515	528	411	421	392	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of children who are subject of a Child Protection Plan as at the end of month	NUMBER	387	388	413	453	472	492	483	455	TBC	396	310	406	N/A	N/A
Number of care leavers	NUMBER	162	164	171	173	209	218	226	212	TBC	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A

Right Service at the Right Time

Analysis

There has been a 25% increase in the number of contact in 21/22 compared to 20/21. However we have not seen the same increase across referrals into CSC. Unfortunately we do not have reliable data to indicate if there has been an increase in open cases to Early Help during the period.

The number of completed assessments in the year has reduced slightly on 20/21 activity, although we have seen increases in outcomes to continued children's services support. There has been a 23% decrease in CIN on a plan cases open to Social Work with Families (SWWF), however CLA numbers have increased 12%, CPP numbers have increased 30% and Care Leaver numbers have increased 31% from the start of 21/22.

Action/next steps

The level of contacts from the police remains very high. A meeting has taken place with HIPS and police colleagues, with a plan for the four LAs to maintain close oversight of the appropriateness of police contacts.

The service has launched Children's Resource Hub, Early Help Offer and Young People's Service and it is anticipated that once the services are fully operational children and families will experience more effective, earlier intervention.

A focused plan has been developed to address the high number of children subject to child protection planning and partners will be engaged at the Safeguarding Children's Partnership in June 2022.

What the data tells us

Indicator	Outturn type	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	Target	Southamt on 19/20	Southamt on 20/21	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Number of CLA at the end of the month	NUMBER	517	525	540	544	551	560	563	566	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rate of CLA per 10,000 under 18 population	RATE	99	101	104	105	106	108	108	109	97	95	TBC	97	53	67
Number of CLA at the end of the month who are UASC	NUMBER	26	25	24	27	25	25	27	21	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within statutory timescales (6 weeks or less visits)	PERCENTAGE	97%	96%	90%	73%	83%	71%	74%	78%	97%	95	TBC	97	53	67
Percentage of CLA children with an up to date review	PERCENTAGE	96%	97%	96%	96%	96%	97%	98%	99%	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of children in care for at least 12 months for whom health assessments are up to date.	PERCENTAGE	89%	81%	78%	72%	88%	94%	67%	62%	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of initial health assessments delivered within 20 working days of date child became looked after.	PERCENTAGE	13%	17%	40%	89%	35%	20	28	TBC	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA at end of month with 3 or more placements during the year	PERCENTAGE	16%	17%	18%	17%	7%	11%	8%	14%	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of CLA allocated to CWD	NUMBER	29	29	29	29	31	31	32	32	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Voluntarily Accommodated Section 20s (S20) at period end excluding UASC	NUMBER	56	54	51	55	26	28	30	31	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Percentage of Looked after Children (LAC) with a permanence plan in place within 6 months of BLA	PERCENTAGE	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Looked after Children placed for adoption at period end	NUMBER	12	13	12	12	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA placed with IFAs at end of period	PERCENTAGE	29%	31%	30%	31%	43%	51%	50%	47%	<36%	37%	N/A	36%	38%	36%

Robust Corporate Parenting

Analysis

The number of Children in Care has risen 12% over 21/22 and we are now significantly above our SN's at 108/10k. This is in part due to our increased number of unaccompanied children via the NTS, however this is only part of the narrative. We have seen a large number of new-borns enter care over the period also. The majority of CLA have had their visiting timeliness brought back into a 6 week visiting schedule. This and the introduction of a new MIS Care Director has seen visits in timescale drop. This has been a targeted area for focus and improvement over the past 6 weeks with many visits having taken place, however they were not completed and authorised on the system, and therefore were not being calculated in performance reports. This has resulted in improved performance reporting in recent weeks.

IHA's delivered within timescale remains a challenge, with a year end figure of 40% completed within 20 working days of becoming looked after. This has been an area of concern and focus across the partnership. We also have an number of children with multiple placement moves within the year which is more than we would want. The cause and learning from these placement moves is under review. We also have too many children placed in residential and with private providers. We have a targeted action plan to reduce these numbers and increase in house fostering capacity.

Actions / Next Steps

New Pathways Through Care service was launched in April 2022. In this context, the forthcoming Partners in Practice peer review of looked after children and care leavers is timely. The review will involve at least 40 audits of looked after children and care leavers (20 involving the SCC managers and practitioners); alongside a review of strategy and performance, targeted focus groups and meetings with looked after children and care leavers. Feedback will be provided to the Improvement Board in the July meeting. A review of the corporate parenting committee is planned by the Deputy Director with the launch of a revised format in the new reporting year.

Work with health partners to tackle completion of IHAs for children who are new into care has involved a 'whole-system' review of the process for initial health assessments, chaired by the Deputy Director. A new referral pathway has been agreed and there are signs that performance is improving from a low base. The service participated in a regional NHS led workshop around the theme of children accommodated outside of their home areas. The HoS for Pathways through Care has begun to chair a dedicated forum to improve education, training and employment outcomes for our looked after children and care leavers. Southampton Voices Unite and our positive activities sessions continue to be well attended. Senior leaders are part of 'Supper Club' every Wednesday, cooking and spending time with care leavers.

What the data tells us

Training	No. of attendees
Restorative Practice	385
Trauma Informed Practice	309

*Partnership training numbers
2021 / 22*

Analysis

Safe City Partnership has agreed to common practice framework: restorative practice, trauma informed practice, Strengthening Families. Training plan needs to be confirmed with support from SSCP partnerships team, taking into account local TI project group. Making the Difference Board now established and will provide oversight. Neglect strategy and toolkit has been finalised through partnership task and finish group.

Action/next steps

- Launch of Strengthening Families training resources had been delayed because of capacity issues within the Child Protection Conference Team. However, dates for virtual training are now being finalised.
- Presentation to Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership is scheduled for June 2022 to cover local child protection trends and to discuss the Strengthening Families training.
- Neglect toolkit has been successfully launched and neglect training is now being rolled out.
- Service is continuing discussion with Hertfordshire Children’s Services about adopting their Family Safeguarding Model.

What the data tells us

Type	Number	Analysis
Youth Justice	15	The numbers of audits being completed alongside managers and practitioners in the teams are increasing and it seems like the model of linking audit to reflective discussions is viewed positively. The quality of practice is still assessed to be requiring improvement in most cases, after moderation by the Quality Assurance Unit. Detailed practice findings are included in the Quality Assurance Unit report
Placement Team	17	
Care Leavers	40	
Stability	24	

Action/next steps

- 2022 / 23 audit schedule has been drafted and includes priority areas from self-evaluation.
- Case Review discussion/reflection has been introduced at Learning and Improvement Forum to enable learning from audits to be embedded into practice on broader scale within safeguarding teams. Last presentation covered stability audit. Next session will address the learning from the Hampshire CIN audit.
- Examples of good/outstanding practice are shared with PSW on monthly basis to encourage practitioners to maintain good standards where this is identified and to encourage other practitioners to emulate this with a view to improving practice within teams
- Team focused audit and reflection days have been launched. These involve managers auditing with practitioners and learning and reflective sessions delivered by the Principal Social Worker.

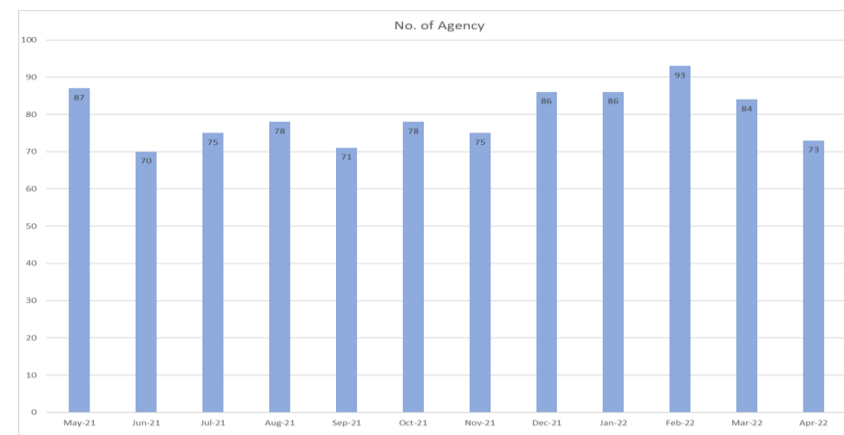
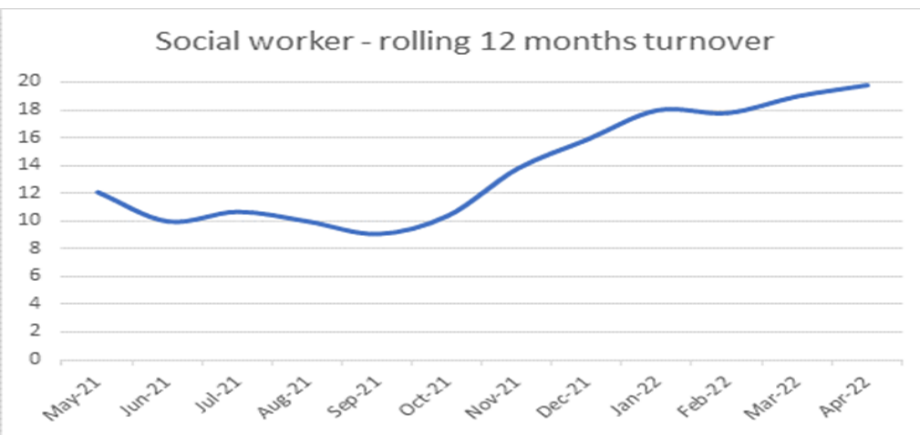
Analysis

Assurance clinics are running on a rolling weekly schedule. Managers have been engaged in identifying the priority areas for their areas. Data is reported at team and worker manager level and used to track progress. Assurance clinic discussions are analytical; exploring the service strengths and challenges that sit underneath performance trends. The service has embraced 'data cleansing' weeks. This remains red due to the need for further improvement in some critical areas of performance/recording compliance.

Action/next steps

Data reporting issues have been escalated to an executive level. Data team senior manager will be attending Improvement Board to outline plan for improved data reporting.

What the data tells us



Analysis

Turnover remains high due to the changes in staff as a result of the Destination 22 programme. Recruitment focus has impacted positively: 112 appointments since January 2022. Two of three South African social worker cohorts have started.

Learning needs of new starters (SA and newly qualified) are being addressed through induction and assessed and supported year in employment programmes. Management induction also in development.

Agency staff performance shows a consistent positive trend as a result of recruitment activity. There is a caveat that agency staff have been approved in the Quality Assurance Unit as sign off of temporary contracts have not been approved.

Action/next steps

- Project team has supported the development of a clear recruitment and retention plan as part of Destination 22.
- Much tighter focus on agency approvals and exits linked to recruitment, overseen by deputy director and project management team.
- ASYE caseload analysis continues and the position has moved from routinely being over limit in some areas of the service, to now rarely being over the limit. Managers have been congratulated for this improvement.
- Business case in respect of bringing ASYE assessment and support fully in-house.
- Progression panel for Senior Social Work Post has been launched.
- Large scale training activity has been launched
- Working with IFT regarding implementation of systemic practice training across the service and ensuring that there is the clinical supervision structure in place.
- Practice Educator CPD Club becoming business as usual

Care Director Case Management System

- The new case management system, Care Director launched on 31st January 2022. Reporting issues remain significant; additional staff have been recruited on a temporary basis.
- Training compliance has been addressed through the development of knowledge checks – simple checks which will be mandatory across the service.
- Phase two planning and change control panel started (CCM programme Board, May 2022)
- Distance travelled tool will form part of Care Director phase 2.

Business Support Pilot

- Business support pilot is in full draft but has been delayed; will be included in Star Chamber activity.
- Conversion of agency posts to fixed term contracts has also been delayed.
- This puts pressure on operational areas and is not cost effective.