

Children's Services Committee

Report title:	Performance Monitoring 2017-18
Date of meeting:	16 January 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Sara Tough Executive Director Children's Services
Strategic impact Robust performance and risk management is key to ensuring that the organisation works both efficiently and effectively to develop and deliver services that represent good value for money and which meet identified need.	

Executive summary

Performance is reported on an exception basis, meaning that only those vital signs that are performing poorly or where performance is deteriorating are presented to committee. Those that do not meet the exception criteria will be available on the Performance section of the Norfolk County Council web site. The two measures which are currently rated as Red (CP Child Seen and LAC Health Assessments) were reported via scorecards to the last Committee. A further measure also rated as red, children in need with no up to date CiN plan are made up in the main of children and young people currently undergoing social work assessment in assessment teams.

This report focusses primarily on data as at end of November 2017 and in addition to vital signs performance, this report and its appendices contain other key performance information via the (MI) Report (Appendix 2).

Locality-level performance information is available on the Members Insight area of the intranet.

Recommendation:

Review and comment on the performance data, information and analysis presented in the vital sign report cards and determine whether the recommended actions identified are appropriate or whether another course of action is required.

1. Introduction

1.1 Performance dashboard

1.1.1 The performance dashboard provides a quick overview of Red/Amber/Green rated performance for our vital signs over a rolling 12 month period. This then complements that exception reporting process and enables committee members to check that key performance issues are not being missed.

NOTES:
 Green is in line with high performing authorities; Amber within 10% (not percentage points) of high performing authorities; Red being more than 10% worse than high performing authorities.
 'White' spaces denote that data will become available; 'grey' spaces denote that no data is currently expected, typically because the indicator is being finalised.
 The target value is that which relates to the latest measure period result in order to allow comparison against the RAG colours. A target may also exist for the current and/or future periods.

Monthly	Bigger or Smaller is better	Nov 16	Dec 16	Jan 17	Feb 17	Mar 17	Apr 17	May 17	Jun 17	Jul 17	Aug 17	Sep 17	Oct 17	Nov 17	Target
{ChS} Percentage of Referrals into Early Help Services who have had a referral to EH in the previous 12 months	Smaller	18.0%	11.1%	11.3%	10.1%	13.7%	14.7%	18.4%	16.8%	21.7%	11.3%	11.2%	6.8%	9.4%	20.0%
{ChS} Percentage of Referrals into Section 17 CIN Services who have had a referral to S.17 CIN in the previous 12 months	Smaller	26.4%	20.0%	23.8%	22.2%	22.6%	26.3%	28.6%	22.8%	24.0%	21.9%	23.7%	23.7%	23.5%	<20%
		196 / 743	113 / 566	185 / 776	154 / 693	187 / 826	133 / 506	187 / 654							
{ChS} Percentage of Children Starting a Child Protection Plan who have previously been subject to a Child Protection Plan (in the last 2 years)	Smaller	7.8%	12.7%	4.2%	9.8%	7.6%	5.5%	5.7%	16.2%	8.4%	9.3%	8.6%	8.4%	8.3%	
{ChS} Child in Need (CIN) with up to date CIN Plan	Bigger	72.5%	70.6%	85.7%	86.7%	81.9%	78.3%	82.1%	79.9%	84.0%	80.0%	75.1%	71.5%	64.7%	100%
		1250 / 1649	1254 / 1707	1084 / 1265	1052 / 1213	997 / 1218	950 / 1213	958 / 1167	1057 / 1323	1052 / 1253	890 / 1112				
{ChS} Child Protection (CP) - % children seen	Bigger	87.5%	90.7%	89.1%	84.5%	93.3%	90.5%	90.0%	58.3%	68.6%	49.2%	67.3%	67.5%	58.1%	100%
		393 / 449	411 / 453	423 / 475	392 / 464	458 / 491	466 / 515	441 / 490	298 / 511	359 / 523	272 / 553				
{ChS} LAC with up to date Care Plan	Bigger	97.1%	98.5%	98.6%	98.0%	97.3%	97.1%	96.5%	96.6%	96.6%	96.2%	96.8%	97.0%	95.3%	100%
		1053 / 1085	1083 / 1100	1097 / 1113	1083 / 1105	1075 / 1105	1061 / 1093	1057 / 1095	1066 / 1103	1066 / 1103	1075 / 1117				
{ChS} LAC with up to date Health Assessment (HA)	Bigger	91.1%	88.4%	87.8%	89.4%	86.5%	85.4%	79.9%	78.1%	79.3%	80.1%	79.6%	79.1%	78.0%	100%
		683 / 750	661 / 748	652 / 743	666 / 745	641 / 741	624 / 731	591 / 740	580 / 743	606 / 764	622 / 777				
{ChS} Eligible Care Leavers with up to date Pathway Plan	Bigger	87.6%	91.5%	89.9%	84.4%	82.6%	84.1%	85.9%	83.7%	84.5%	83.6%	84.8%	84.9%	83.5%	
Quarterly / Termly	Bigger or Smaller is better	Dec 14	Mar 15	Jun 15	Sep 15	Dec 15	Mar 16	Jun 16	Sep 16	Dec 16	Mar 17	Jun 17	Sep 17	Dec 17	Target
{ChS} Percentage of Children Starting to be looked-after who have previously been looked-after	Smaller							17.6%	10.0%	9.0%	8.3%	7.0%	8.0%		<15%
{ChS} LAC with up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP)	Bigger	84.6%	86.5%	76.7%	63.5%		73.5%	88.1%	76.0%	83.2%	84.2%	89.5%	89.6%		100%
							527 / 717	597 / 678	541 / 712	570 / 685	591 / 702	445 / 691	610 / 681		

1.2 Report cards

1.2.1 A report card has been produced for each vital sign. It provides a succinct overview of performance and outlines what actions are being taken to maintain or improvement performance. The report card follows a standard format that is common to all committees.

1.2.2 Each vital sign has a lead officer, who is directly accountable for performance, and a data owner, who is responsible for collating and analysing the data on a monthly basis. The names and positions of these people are clearly specified on the report cards.

1.2.3 Vital signs are reported to committee on an exceptions basis. The exception reporting criteria are as follows:

- Performance is off-target (Red RAG rating or variance of 5% or more)
- Performance has deteriorated for three consecutive months/quarters/years
- Performance is adversely affecting the council's ability to achieve its budget
- Performance is adversely affecting one of the council's corporate risks.

1.2.4 Vital Signs performance is reported on an exception basis using a report card format, meaning that only those vital signs that are performing poorly or where performance is deteriorating are presented to committee. To enable Members to have oversight of performance across all vital signs, all report cards will be made available to view through Members Insight. To give further transparency to information on performance, for future meetings it is intended to make these available in the public domain through the Council's website.

2. Impact of Support For Education Improvement

(Achievement summary at Appendix 1)

2.1 Ofsted Outcomes

2.1.1 Published Ofsted outcomes for all Norfolk schools, as a percentage of schools with a judgement. National figures in brackets at 31st November 2017.

Primary	Secondary	Special	All
Outstanding 14% (19%)	14% (24%)	45% (39%)	14% (21%)
Good 77%	70%	55%	75%
Good or outstanding 91% (91%)	84% (80%)	100% (94%)	90% (89%)
Requires Improvement 8% (8%)	9% (15%)	0% (5%)	9% (9%)
Inadequate 1% (1%)	7% (5%)	0% (2%)	2% (2%)

The percentage of Norfolk schools judged good or better continues to be at or above national averages at all phases. All special schools are now at least good. There has been an increase in the number of primary and special schools judged outstanding.

2.2 Education Achievement

2.2.1 See Appendix 1 for a breakdown of performance at each key stage by groups of pupils.

An in depth analysis of validated outcomes up to 2016 is published online at www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/Supportforschoolimprovement/School-Performance/

Final Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and Key Stage 1 data has been published by DfE, alongside validated Key Stage 2 data (which takes into account test remarks). Most outcomes are now in line with national averages.

2.2.2 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (age 5) – Final DfE results

The percentage of pupils achieving expected standards remains in line with national averages. Differences in attainment between gender and disadvantage are similar to those seen nationally. Fewer pupils exceed expected standards.

2.2.3 Key Stage One

Phonics Screening Check – Final DfE results

The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in Year One (age 6) remains slightly below the national average. The percentage who achieve the standard by Year Two (age 7) is in line with the national average. Differences in attainment between groups of pupils (gender, free school meals eligibility and Special Educational Needs) are similar to national figures.

Teacher Assessment (age 7) – Final DfE results

In reading, the percentage of pupils who achieve the expected standard is in line with the national average. The percentage who achieve “greater depth within the expected standard” is slightly above the national average.

In writing, the percentage of pupils who achieve the expected standard and achieve greater depth is in line with the national average.

In mathematics, the percentage who achieve the expected standard is slightly below national averages. The percentage who achieve greater depth is in line with the national average. The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils eligible for Free School Meals and other pupils at Key Stage 1 is slightly wider in Norfolk at Key Stage 1 than nationally.

2.2.4 Key Stage Two Tests and Teacher Assessment – Validated DfE results

The percentage of pupils who achieve expected standards in all of reading, writing and mathematics has increased from 50% to 57%; this remains four percentage points below the national average. (National 2016 54%, 2017 61%).

Attainment in reading and writing is slightly below national averages.

The percentage of pupils reaching expected standards in mathematics has improved significantly from 62% in 2016 to 69%, but remains below national averages (national 2016 70%, 2017 75%).

The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils eligible for Free School Meals and other pupils at Key Stage 2 is slightly wider in Norfolk at Key Stage 2 than nationally. As is seen nationally, girls attain better in reading and writing, boys in mathematics. In Norfolk, the reading and mathematics gender gaps are slightly wider than national.

DfE have confirmed the floor and coasting schools standards for primary schools. The number of schools below the DfE minimum floor standard has fallen from 18 in 2016 to 15 in 2017. The number of schools meeting the DfE Coasting Schools definition has reduced significantly from 20 to 14.

2.2.5 Key Stage 4: GCSE and other qualifications (unvalidated DfE results)

Average attainment and progress from Key Stage 2

Attainment 8 averages each student's total grade across eight subjects from four groups.

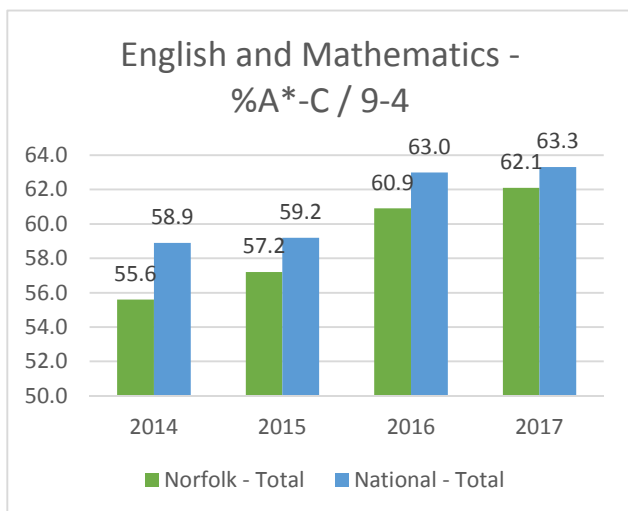
Progress 8 is the average grade difference from pupils Attainment 8 scores and national attainment of pupils with the same prior attainment at Key Stage 2. As Progress 8 is benchmarked to national attainment from different starting points, the progress of all pupils in mainstream schools nationally is always zero.

		A8 score	P8 score
Overall	Norfolk	44.7	-0.05
	<i>National</i>	46	-0.03
Gender	Male	42.2	-0.27
	<i>National</i>	43.4	-0.24
	Female	47.2	0.15
	<i>National</i>	48.7	0.18
FSM6	Non-FSM6	47.9	0.08
	FSM6	34.3	-0.48

Progress 8 overall in Norfolk is very similar to the national average, resulting in attainment slightly below average.

Disadvantaged (FSM6) students make significantly less progress than non-disadvantaged students. Resulting in average attainment well below other students. National attainment of disadvantaged students will be published in the Spring.

English and Mathematics



	%Grade 9-4	%Grade 9-5
Norfolk	62%	39%
Boys	58%	36%
Girls	66%	43%
Disadv.	41%	21%
Other	71%	47%
National	63%	42%
Boys	60%	39%
Girls	67%	45%
Disadv.	44%	25%
Other	72%	50%

2017 is the first year that pupils have taken the reformed GCSEs (graded 9 -1, with 9 being the highest grade) in English and Mathematics. In 2018, most GCSEs taken will be reformed. The new GCSEs have more demanding content and an increased focus on end of course examinations)

The percentage of pupils achieving a level 2 pass in English and Mathematics (grades A*- C or 9 – 4) has improved and one percentage point below the national average. The headline measure going forward will be the percentage of pupils who achieve a grade 5 or better. Norfolk attainment at grade 9-5 is not as strong, which is due to slightly lower performance in English.

Female pupil attainment improved from 2016, the attainment of males was similar to 2016. The gap between disadvantaged pupils is wider in Norfolk than nationally.

EBacc (the English Baccalaureate)

The EBacc is not a qualification in itself, but a measure of GCSE entry and attainment in five pillars: English literature and language, mathematics, sciences, a language and a humanity. 17% of Norfolk pupils achieve this measure, compared to 21% if pupils nationally.

DfE have stated that they aspire for 75% of pupils at be entered for all EBacc pillars by 2022, rising to 90 per cent by 2025. In 2017 38% of pupils nationally were entered for the EBacc, 34% in Norfolk. Almost all pupils are entered for English, Mathematics and Science. Most pupils are entered for a humanity. Less than half of pupils are entered for a language.

% students entered	English	Mathematics	Sciences	History or Geography	Languages
National	95.7	97.2	91.4	76.9	47.3
Norfolk	97.1	97.6	96.2	77.2	42.3

More female students than males are entered for all EBacc elements and more of them achieve all elements.

Far fewer disadvantaged students are entered the EBacc and less than a third of them achieve all elements compared to over half of all students.

From 2018 the headline EBacc measure will be an average, rather than threshold attainment measure, which may increase the number of lower prior attaining pupils being entered.

2.2.6 Post 16 Achievement (unvalidated results)

Average attainment in all state funded colleges and sixth forms

	A level students			Tech level students		Applied General students	
	APS per entry	APS per entry as a grade	% AAB (inc. 2 facilitating)	APS per entry	APS per entry as a grade	APS per entry	APS per entry as a grade
National	30.9	C	13.9	32.2	Dist -	35.6	Dist
Norfolk	29.4	C	11.4	30.0	Dist -	33.4	Dist

Average attainment APS at level 3 is slightly below national average across all three categories Of entry.

2.2.7 Achievement of Looked After Children

Official DfE data is not yet available. DfE publish National and LA statistics in March. Our internal calculations show significant improvements for looked after children.

	2016 DfE Final data (National in brackets)	2017
EYFS % achieving GLD	23%	31%
Key Stage 2 %Expected RWM	19% (25%)	30%
KS4 %GCSE English and Maths	15% (18%)	26%

2.2.8 Post 16 Participation

The key Department for Education indicator is the combined percentage of young people age 16 and 17 whose destination is unknown and those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). This is measured over the period of December to February each year. Last year Norfolk was in the second quintile nationally. This year we are continuing to perform strongly compared to the national average particularly in ensuring that there is a very low percentage of unknowns. We have steadily increased the percentage of Norfolk young people at 16 and 17 years old who are participating in learning since the introduction of the raised participation age in 2013 but recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that participation particularly at 17 increases.

2.2.9 Exclusion

The overall number of confirmed permanent exclusions from Norfolk schools, based on our own calculations, shows a (small) reduction for the 2016-17 academic year of 267, compared to 296 in 2015-16. Official 2016-17 DfE figures are yet to be released. For 2015/16 the DfE official national exclusion rate was 0.08% and Norfolk was much higher at 0.22%.

During the autumn term there were provisionally 119 exclusions compared to 134 in autumn 2016. Exclusions that have taken place during the latter part of the term could be withdrawn or overturned, so the final figure may be lower.

Proactive work by the Virtual School for Children in Care has ensured that no looked after child has been permanently excluded in the last twelve months.

3. Early Help

- 3.1 The percentage of conversion of referrals (requests for support) to allocations has steadily increased through September, October and November. There are some anomalies, e.g. in November the City conversion rate to allocation is 28%, which is a consequence of staff vacancies at that time and backlog of cases coming into the Family Focus team.
- 3.2 Greater understanding of the shift in threshold of families being worked with in Family Focus teams has resulted in an increased volume of cases being stepped down from social care and from the MASH. In addition the level of complexities families face within these individual cases has had an impact on capacity and ability to allocate timely in City, West and East. We have introduced a triage system so that all cases are screened and families contacted until they are allocated a worker as an interim measure. We are monitoring this closely to assess if this pressure is time limited or if we need to redistribute resources to manage effectively the increased workload.
- 3.3 Following concerns about the number of re-referrals, these are at a significantly lower level than in the summer, and have remained stable through September, October and November, with re-referrals across the county in November, this is a re-referral rate of 9%.
- 3.4 In October we saw an increase in the number of cases being closed, 256 and 209 in November compared to 136 closed in September. This reflects the localities working hard to put the appropriate level of support in place for families within tier 1 and 2 services, leaving capacity in the Family Focus teams for the more complex cases that Family Focus practitioners are now holding.
- 3.5 Understanding the quality of practice of our Family Focus teams is vital so that children and families receive a consistent and effective service to achieve the right outcomes for them. Over the last three months we have developed the following:
- Early Help Quality Assurance Framework
 - Early Help Audit Tool
 - Dimensions of Work interview for Early Help practitioners and managers
 - Early Help 'Tartan Rug'
 - Practice Standards for Early Help
 - Early help Audit Plan 2017/2018
 - Peer audit, learning and development workshops

Next steps will include embedding a quality assurance culture amongst teams and managers and ensuring there is a clear link between Audit findings and learning and workforce development.

4. Social Work (MI Report at Appendix 2)

4.1 Contact and Referrals

- 4.1.1 The number of referrals across the county continued to increase in November with nearly 1000 more referrals than was received in November 16 (and over 600 more than in October 17). Fewer contacts were converted into referrals than seen in the previous 3 months, this is in part due to a drop in the percentage of Police contacts converting to referrals. There continues to be concern regarding the number of contacts being made, the low conversion rate to referral and the impact this has on MASH capacity. This is explored further in the next section.
- 4.1.2 Recent data analysis of contact and referral forms shows that between 01/11/16 and 31/10/17 14,072 Police contacts regarding Children were sent to MASH. Of these only 16% met the threshold for Social Care. This represents a huge volume of work being processed by MASH that isn't resulting in the requirement for ongoing intervention. The quality and relevance of contacts being submitted by the Police will be explored via dip-sampling work in order that this issue can be effectively addressed with our Police partners. This needs to happen alongside continuing evaluation of the contacts we receive from all agencies to ensure we are working with partners to encourage good application of Thresholds at the point of considering making a contact. This includes conversations regarding other routes for support, i.e. FSP and referrals directly to NEHFF.
- 4.1.3 Despite the increase in contacts there has been a slight reduction in the number of referrals made across the county. North, from 150 to 184, and West, from 133 to 163. Both saw increases in referral rates and for both localities this represents the highest number they have had in the past 12 months. This is likely to impact on allocation levels and assessment performance over the next few months. Conversely Norwich saw its lowest number of referrals (189) since July, although it is noted that they had a very high referral rate of 35.7% and the reasons for this needs to be explored on a case level basis to ascertain whether the high levels of work coming into the assessment teams alongside high caseloads has impacted on decision making i.e. closing cases that may have benefitted from ongoing involvement or not closing Work that requires no further action thus remaining without ongoing intervention on a caseload.

4.2 Assessments

- 4.2.1 The increase in assessments being completed is likely to be as a result of the higher number of referrals received by assessment teams in the past few months. The only locality that completed significantly less assessments than in October was South. However the South's October figure of 111 was particularly high and November's figure of 84 was still significantly higher than usual.
- 4.2.2 The continuing drop in assessments being completed in timescales is a concern. The only locality that as achieved over 75% is West, although it is a drop from 91.7% and with 23 other assessments still open over 45 working days, this is likely to drop further next month. Gt Yarmouth have maintained their performance at 66.3%, however this is significantly lower than performance seen prior to March 17. Whilst Norwich has only seen a small change, they have 51 assessments open that are over 45 working days and therefore December's data will show a further drop in performance. North have shown a big rise in the percentage of assessments authorised in timescales, from 45% to 67.5%. Referral rates have been high over the past 3 months and it is acknowledged that this will have impacted on assessments being completed in 45 days. However issues around timeliness of assessments has been a concern prior to the rise in referral rates, and the cumulative effect of this has impacted on assessments completed data and high caseload levels in some assessment teams.

4.2.3 Too high a proportion of Social Work Assessments result in closed with information and advice. Q2 data shows that Norfolk had the second highest rate of assessments closing with no ongoing social care involvement (62.7%) in the Eastern Region, with the region's average being 33.5%. However it is positive to see that the percentage that stepped down to FSP/TS rather than closing has increased. South has the highest percentage of assessments with an outcome of ongoing involvement (45%) whilst North have the highest proportion that stepped down to FSP/TS (25.6%). This is significantly higher than previous months. Although their rate of ongoing involvement (26.5%) is still lower than the county average. Of most concern is in Breckland and Norwich where 63% of assessments were closed with information and advice. This raises questions about thresholds being applied either at the point of referral or the point of assessment completion. The QA team is testing thresholds through a dip-sampling exercise of decisions made in MASH followed decision making at the end of assessments in assessment teams.

4.3 Child Protection (CP)

4.3.1 Despite the increase in referrals the number of children subject to CP plans has not significantly increased and is in line with the Eastern Region average. Norwich continue to have a very high rate per 10k of 67.4, however this has reduced from the high of 77.0 in May 17. Whilst it is acknowledged that Norwich is an area of high deprivation, the CP numbers need to continue to be monitored and thresholds tested through audit and performance and challenge conversations.

4.3.2 Whilst the data indicates that 30% of ICPCs were not held in timescales, a quick dip sampling exercise indicates that this figure should be smaller as in many of the cases there are recording errors and it is clear that the ICPCs were held in timescales. Other cases show clearly that the initial, in timescale, ICPC was stood down and rearranged.

4.3.3 Whilst the numbers of children subject to a second to subsequent CP are lower than they have been, the % remains higher than statistical neighbour and national averages. A recent audit of cases in this cohort raised a hypothesis regarding a possible lack of robust support when previous CP plans have closed. If numbers rise in the next few months, further exploration of this will be needed to test the previously considered hypothesis.

4.3.4 It is concerning that the percentage of children on CP plans seen within the 10 day timescales has fallen to 58%. The timescale was reduced from 20 working days in July 17 and whilst an initially dip in performance was expected, it was expected that this practice would become quickly embedded. Breckland and South are both showing good performance at circa 84%, whilst North have shown a big drop in performance from 72% in October to 31.8%. The Head of Social Work in the North needs to work with team managers to ensure there is clear expectation regarding whether children have been seen or not (i.e. if it is a recording issue) and put plans in place to address this. Given the differences in performance, consideration is needed as to why some localities can meet the timescale and others are finding this more of a challenge. Is this a caseload/SW vacancy issue or a fundamental practice issue?

4.4 Looked After Children

- 4.4.1 The number of LAC in Norfolk has increased from 1085 in November 16 to 1131 at the end of November 17, an increase of 46 children in 12 months. Between November 16 and February 17 there was a small rise in numbers but this did start to decrease again and by April 17 the figure was 1093. It was hoped that new initiatives around 'Edge of Care' and Early Help, alongside identified practice changes would start to show a small impact on our Looked after Children numbers over the following months. Whilst initially we did see some decrease, this has not been sustained. An analytical report is being completed to look at the cohort of children who have become Looked After between 01/04/17 & 30/11/17 to ascertain whether there are any trends or indicators that could lead to hypothesis around the increase in numbers and any practice issues. It also considers all children who have ceased to be looked after in the same period of time, looking in particular at age groups and the length of time spent in care. It is currently too soon to speculate about the impact of the New Directions Service as it has only been fully operational since October 2017.
- 4.4.2 In respect of care planning, all localities aside from Norwich and Yarmouth have seen a small decline in performance from last month, although all still remain over 90%. The percentage of care leavers with Pathway plans has increased which is positive, although it is acknowledged more work is needed to return to the high performance seen in the Spring. What is even more encouraging is latest data from audit shows that more Pathway Plans that have been audited have been considered good (66% as at end October 17).
- 4.4.3 The figures for stability of placement remain reasonably in line with statistical neighbour and national averages. The issues of long term foster care as a permanency option for our looked after children is raised in recent analysis of LAC starts and ceases, whereby although it is acknowledged that long term foster/ residential care is the right permanency plan for some children, we need ensure we are not defaulting to care plans of long term care until independence without tenacious work to establish an alternative to care option for children alongside reassessment of children's care needs and their parents'(or wider family's) ability to meet these as they get older.
- 4.4.4 The number of children placed in residential placements has risen sharply in the past month, to the highest number seen in the past year. The Local Authorities goal was to reduce this number to 105 children by the end of 2017 and although it was acknowledged that this was unlikely to be achieved, it was hoped that numbers would continue to fall. There were 58 children who started to be looked after in November, and this is likely to account for some of the increase in residential placements, especially given the sufficiency and availability of some foster carers who can work with complex and challenging behaviour. More case level examination of those children who have recently been placed in residential settings is needed to fully understand the increase. We are continuing work to increase the number of in-house carers to provide suitable alternatives to residential.
- 4.4.5 LAC reviews in timescales data is at its highest for the last 12 months and evidences that alongside routine data checking to correct errors, the recording of meetings is more likely to be error free than previously. Thus the data gives a truer picture of performance than before and we can be assured that the majority of children have LAC reviews in timescales. Whilst over 90% of Looked After Children are still seen within timescales the figure has been dropping since July 17. The fall this month is due to small percentage decreases of between 2.5% and 5% in West, South and Gt Yarmouth. This may be due to the impact of increasing LAC numbers but needs scrutiny by managers within those localities to ensure they know which children haven't been seen, why and what the plan is.
- 4.4.6 The drop in Initial Health Assessment (IHAs) figures is disappointing as we want to see sustained improvement in this area. Previously delays in health assessment were primarily due

to our Health Partners capacity to offer appointments. They have addressed this and are now more able to offer timely assessments. The QA Hub log all reasons for delays and it is apparent that the drop in IHAs in timescales is due to 3 main factors - social work teams not forwarding the relevant paperwork within 5 working days of the child becoming LAC, difficulties in arranging IHAs for our children placed out of county and foster carers cancelling or not arriving for appointments. Whilst the issue of IHAs for out of county children is more complex, the other factors for the drop in performance can be remedied via strong messages to social work teams regarding the expectations around completing requests for IHA and Supervising Social Workers advising foster carers of the importance of the IHA and that they should not be cancelled (or not attend) without very good reason and agreement. The practice of completing PEPs is now embedded in the service and performance in this area continues to be good. Q2 data suggests that Norfolk is slightly above the Eastern Region average of 85.8%. The attendance of children at their LAC reviews has fallen slightly in November. Whilst this is still higher than before August it is important we do not lose the momentum of the good practice implemented by the IRO service and social work teams to facilitate reviews that encourage children to attend.

4.5 Care Leavers

4.5.1 Eastern Region Q2 data shows that Norfolk is the second best performing locality in the region for Care Leavers being in Education, Employment or Training and we are significantly above national average. It is important that we remain focused on being aspirational for our care leavers and the continuing improvements in the quality of Pathways Plans will support this.

4.6 Adoption

4.6.1 Our adoption performance continues to improve and we are evidencing that we secure permanence through adoption in timely way for most of our children with placement orders. There will be children who fall outside of these timescales, but these are often 'good news' stories where older children, or children with more complex needs, are placed in 'forever families' after a long time in foster care.

4.7 Caseloads

4.7.1 The caseloads within Assessment Teams are a concern across most of the localities. The allocations data on 06/12/17 showed that 12 Assessment team social workers across 5 localities had caseloads of over 40 children (the only locality where this was not the case was North). Whilst the increase in referrals has impacted on increased caseloads, there are also issues regarding staff vacancies and sickness and throughput of work, with many of these cases already having been assessed and awaiting either closure or step down. Whilst this is an issue that needs to be addressed strategically by CSLT, Heads of Localities and Heads of Social Work, it is also important that each worker concerned has a work plan devised with their team manager.

* Eligible care leavers are young people aged 16 or 17 who are currently looked after

** Relevant care leavers are young people aged 16 or 17 who have been **eligible** care leavers

*** Former relevant care leavers are Young People aged 18-21 who have been **eligible** and/or **relevant** care leavers

5. Financial Implications

5.1 As requested this is now contained in a separate report.

6. Issues, risks and innovation (Risk Register at Appendix 3)

6.1 Appendix 3 shows the list of children's services risks and mitigations.

6.2 These risks are regularly reviewed and updated as appropriate by the CS Leadership Team.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g. equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.