

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

Scorecard commentary

The following comments relate to the four areas within the scorecard which are RAG rated as red.

Stability of placements of looked after children

This indicator measures the overall percentage of looked after children who have more than 3 placement moves in a year.

The Q3 performance is slightly above the target. However, lower LAC numbers in Brent combined with a higher proportion of starters who are older, means that those who are looked after tend to have more complex needs and are therefore at greater risk of placement breakdown. The difference between our performance and the target is 7 children (i.e. if 7 fewer children had 3 or more placement moves, we would be on target).

This indicator is being monitored closely by managers. Specialist training has been commissioned to support foster carers to retain young people with challenging behaviour and this started in December. The social care teams also have access to the Tier 2 CAMHS workers to discuss strategies to support placements.

Percentage of care leavers in Education, Employment or Training

This indicator measures the percentage of young people who were looked after, who are now care leavers and whether or not they are engaged in education, training or employment.

Previously, this indicator measured their engagement in activities aged 19yrs and when this was the case, Brent's performance in 2013/14 was above that of statistical neighbours.

The definition changed in 14/15 to measure the engagement of young people in such activities at age 19, 20 and 21yrs. On that basis, performance for this indicator was anticipated to reduce, partially because there was a reduced likelihood that they would be engaged in education, training or employment across all three years and partially because some young people as they grow older, disengage from contact with their social workers, meaning that they could not be added to the denominator.

Managers however, regularly monitor the monthly data to ensure that all information is accurately recorded. This data is also reviewed by Connexions and Prospects. Greater liaison with the Virtual School and Connexions to support young people into and maintain attendance on FE courses as well as closer working with the Brent Apprenticeship Programme to promote and support YP is now in place.

Percentage of LAC & care leavers with an up to date Pathway Plan

This indicator measures the percentage of 16+ years old who are either in care or have left care and who have had a Pathway Plan completed within the past 6 months. The indicator is lower than it should be as there are a number of young people in care where the care plan has not yet been converted to a pathway plan. This does not mean that there is no plan, but simply that the information on the type of plan is not reporting properly. This is being monitored by managers and senior managers and is expected to improve within the next 6 weeks. There is also a proportion of

young people who disengage from the support offered as they get older and therefore the pathway plans are out of timescale.

The percentage of permanent social workers and managers in the LAC service

This indicator measures the percentage of permanent social workers and managers within the four teams which work with looked after children. There has been deterioration in the percentage of permanently employed social work staff over the last 18 months both nationally and across London. We are acutely aware of this and of the difficulties that it causes and have a range of strategies in place to address it. In relation to recruitment, these include, high profile advertising campaigns, refreshed website and dedicated "landing page" for interested staff and a range of benefits to working for Brent amongst others. In terms of retaining staff we have invested in Ipads and IPHones to support staff, worked to reduce social work caseloads and are working with an Innovations Fund programme to deliver a social work training programme, Signs of Safety, which will benefit all staff.

The percentage of looked after children placed with Brent foster carers

The target for in-house carers has not been met however, this is within the context of lower LAC numbers, lower numbers in residential care (26 vs 32 previously), lower numbers in Independent Fostering Agency placements and higher numbers in kinship (family) placements. Taken overall, this is a positive picture for children and reflected in the balanced placement budget.