

Appendix A3

2019/20 Q4 and 2020/21 Q1 – CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Key Activities Q1

Work with and challenge schools' performance to ensure that all are good or outstanding

Ofsted has currently suspended all inspection activity for the autumn term 2020. At this stage it is unknown whether they will commence re-inspection from January 2021. They will be visiting schools to examine the response to Covid-19 but this will not contain a judgement.

All examinations were suspended in 2020 and therefore there will no new Island wide data relating to early years, end of primary education, GCSE or A levels until examinations are recommenced in 2021.

The work of the school improvement team has been switched to supporting the response to the coronavirus pandemic. Schools on the Island have performed well during lockdown with higher proportions of children being in attendance than seen nationally. A whole system approach was put in place to encourage vulnerable children and young people into school and this has resulted in higher proportions than national attending. The current focus is on preparing schools to re-open fully for September 2020.

Next term, school improvement will be reverting to more traditional activity however the focus of this will be on how each school is adapting the curriculum to ensure children and young people can make rapid progress to access age related education. There will also be a focus on making sure children from disadvantaged groups make strong progress. This work will stand Island schools in good stead for when Ofsted recommence inspection activity.

Maintain focus on children's safeguarding practice to ensure a high quality of service with effective systems to protect children and keep them safe

	The number of contacts received by Children's Reception Team (CRT)/Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	% progressed to Children in Need (CIN) referral
Q4 2018/19	3,153	36.0
Q1 2019/20	3,340	38.3
Q2 2019/20	3,415	38.0
Q3 2019/20	3,092	38.0
Q4 2019/20	3,154	39.4
Q1 2020/21	2,742	39.4

As with other local authorities, the number of contacts decreased initially during the coronavirus pandemic lockdown as most children remained at home. However, the percentage that progressed to a referral remained in line with previous quarters and demonstrates consistent thresholds being maintained at CRT/MASH. Thresholds in CRT/MASH have been tested in three recent Ofsted inspections and have been rated as outstanding in the last inspection. The rate of contacts and referrals had been above the average of the Isle of Wight's statistical neighbours and during lockdown Police rather than schools were the highest referrers locally.

	The number of children subject to child protection planning	% timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences (within 15 days)	% of repeat child protection plans (within 2 years of previous)	% of repeat child protection conferences held within timescales
Q4 2018/19	167	91	12.5	100
Q1 2019/20	133	100	12.5	94.9
Q2 2019/20	128	89	20.8% (13.3% within 2 years)	100
Q3 2019/20	123	89	8.6	100
Q4 2019/20	126	81	8.8	96.9
Q1 2020/21	136	91	9.2	100

The investment in the Transformation Programme continues with the focus on keeping more children safely at home. The steady number children on child protection plans in the last 12 months demonstrates the consistency of the application of threshold within Children's Services. This covers the Covid-19 lockdown period, where all conferences were enabled to be held virtually thus ensuring continuity of multi-agency safeguarding planning. The Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) timeliness remains above the target of 85 per cent as does the percentage of children subject to a second or subsequent plan above the target of 23 per cent and repeat conference in timescale at 100 per cent.

Average caseload numbers across the service continue to be stable. The average caseload, excluding fostering and adoption, has risen very slightly from 19 to 21 during this quarter. This continues to allow social workers to undertake direct work with families with effective interventions which sustain change to safeguard children and improves their outcomes. In anticipation of the rise in demand as lockdown eases and children return to school, four additional temporary agency social workers have been appointed to the Children's Assessment Safeguarding Teams (CAST).

	Children in Care (1)	Looked after children reported missing (2)	Care leavers supported	Care leavers in Education, Employment or Training (3)
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Q4 2018/19	244	2.9%	117	64%
Q1 2019/20	256	2.0%	110	63.6%
Q2 2019/20	256	2.3%	109	67%
Q3 2019/20	260	1.6%	114	66%
Q4 2019/20	267	1.1%	110	68%
Q1 2020/21	274	4.1%	113	68%

1. *The number of children in care remains a significant pressure on the service with regards to costs of placements. The national rise in numbers is 5 per cent although locally this is 7 per cent per annum. Numbers increased in Quarter 1 related mainly to parental mental health. Following Covid-19 lockdown and return to school it is anticipated that demand in this area will rise nationally and locally. 49 per cent of children in care are placed with Isle of Wight foster carers and an active recruitment campaign continues, with six new fostering households approved in Quarter 1. The new Transformation Programme is focussed on keeping children safely at home and returning them home when it is safe to do so.*
2. *There is a very small cohort of children that go missing regularly, usually these children are late returning to placement. Robust processes continue to be in operation in terms of multi-agency high risk strategy meetings and return conversations for children who go missing. A sexual exploitation risk assessment (SERA) is undertaken with each child and medium/high risk children are considered at a multi-agency risk assessment conference to ensure that information is shared, and effective collaborative plans are in place that reduces the risks to children.*
3. *The Local Offer for Care Leavers sets out the support provided to care leavers to access employment, education or training. The team work with Island Futures, JobCentre Plus and the Isle of Wight College. Each care leaver has an individual action plan in place. The pathways into independent adulthood supported accommodation is now in operation. A new Homelessness Personal Advisor continues to support care leavers who are at risk of homelessness.*
4. *The recruitment of experienced permanent and agency social workers continues to be a challenge locally and nationally. Targeted social media marketing has resulted in five permanent social workers being recruited, one experienced and four as the second cohort onto the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Graduate Entry Training Scheme (GETS). Four out of the five GETS in the first cohort have passed and one awaits assessment. The provision of a market supplement and payment of relocation expenses ensures that the Isle of Wight remains competitive in attracting staff compared to Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton. Agency workers, when used, are used to ensure that caseloads remain manageable during periods of staff absence and to cover vacancies that cannot be recruited to despite regular national advertising campaigns. Current agency social worker rate is 5 per cent.*

Work with and challenge schools in financial deficit to secure a more sustainable position for the schools and the council

Schools continue to be monitored through receipt of their formal 3 year budget plans, which for 2020/21 the deadline was extended to the 30 June to allow for Covid-19 related delays and to overcome logistical issues in relation to governor sign off of proposed budgets. At March 2020 year end, 13 schools were in deficit and the June 2020 budget plans indicate this reducing to nine over the course of 2020/21 through implementing active budget recovery plans, assisted by increases in school formula funding factors mainly

in the region of 4.6 per cent. The formal approval of the funding formula in January 2020 increased the amount of funding allocated to schools through the Dedicated Schools Grant. School budget plans and balances are reviewed by the Director of Childrens Services in July, with proposed actions or increased oversight applied to those considered to be higher risk financially ahead of the mid-year budget update scheduled for November.

Work to deliver an Island Higher Education (HE) Prospectus by April 2020, based on current opportunities offered on Island.

The Island HE Prospectus ("Blue Sky Thinking. Your guide to higher education on the Isle of Wight") was produced on time.

Encourage schools to work collectively in the delivery of improved sixth form provision on the Island.

As part of the i-Aspire project, the Isle of Wight Council is supporting an improvement in post-16 A level outcomes. The programme is currently suspended due to Covid-19 but will recommence as soon as it is possible.

Resolve the issue of surplus primary school places in the West Wight area.

This has now been resolved with the closure of All Saints primary school and the relocation of Yarmouth primary school

Through joint working across council services, work to ensure that care leavers housing needs are properly met.

This need was identified in the 2018 Sufficiency Duty update and raised by care leavers at the Corporate Parenting Board. A tender to create a 'Pathways to Independent Adulthood' supported accommodation offer is now in operation. This new offer available since September 2019 will need to be aligned with the new Housing tender for supporting people funded accommodation from 2020. The sufficiency of suitable housing to meet the needs of all care leavers who wish or need to live on the Island was one of four recommendations from the 2018 Ofsted inspection.

The pathways to independent adulthood supported accommodation is now available with four young people moving into the first house together and a further four living in other accommodation commissioned. As this has been established as a framework, new providers are planning on joining further increasing choice and availability locally.

Children's social care are working with Housing, Planning and Regeneration to ensure that the housing needs of care leavers are an integral part of future developments Council-wide. A further £200,000 capital grant has been set aside corporately to assist in purchasing/developing a transitions accommodation offer for care leavers.

Grow the number of foster carers and adoptive parents on the Isle of Wight.

The interim marketing and recruitment officer continues to support the service to increase the number of in-house foster carers and adoptive parents on the Isle of Wight to reduce the reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies and their associated high costs. The £200,000 capital grant allocated to fund internal adaptations to local authority foster carers to enable them to provide a home to more children in care is underway with one completed and another underway.

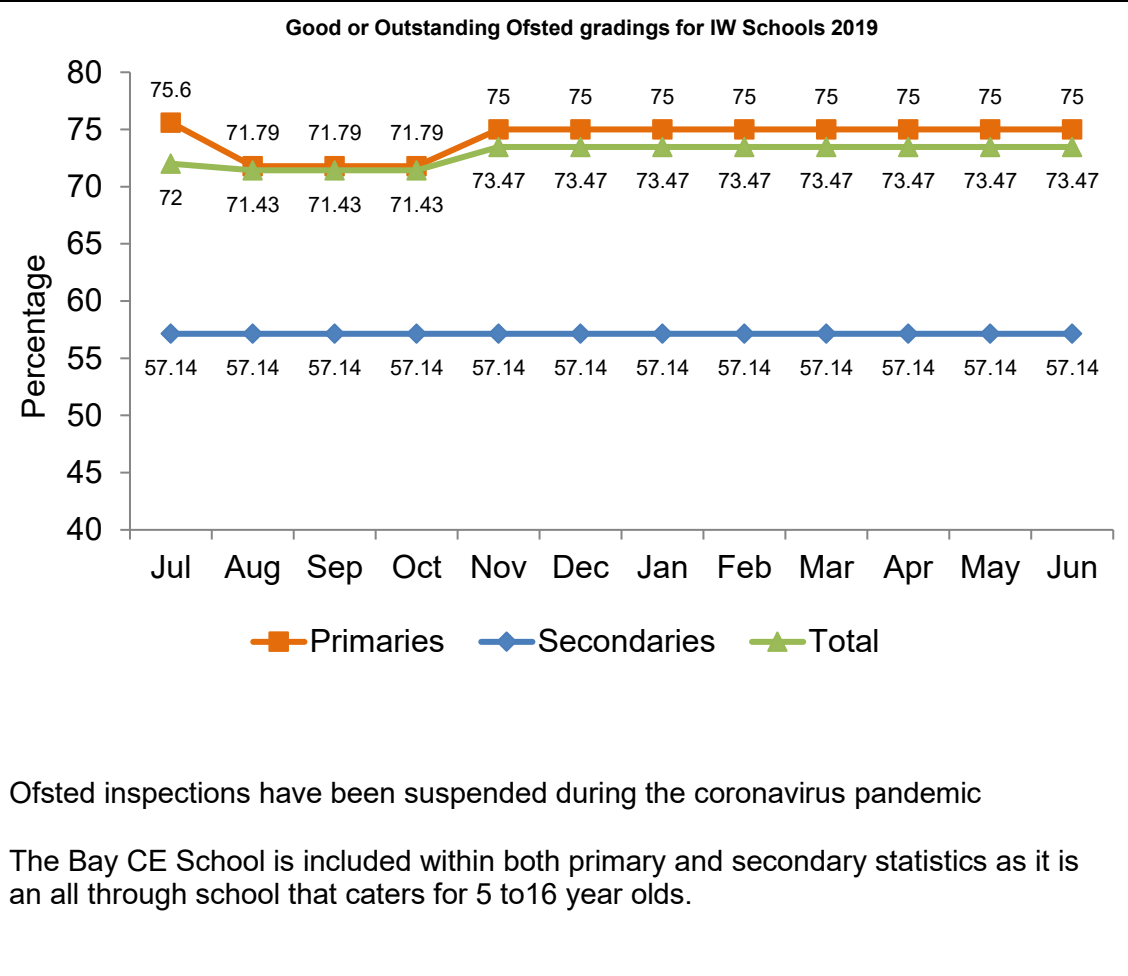
Short Term Measures

Percentage of schools graded as 'good' or outstanding in the most recent inspection (not including schools with no inspection score)

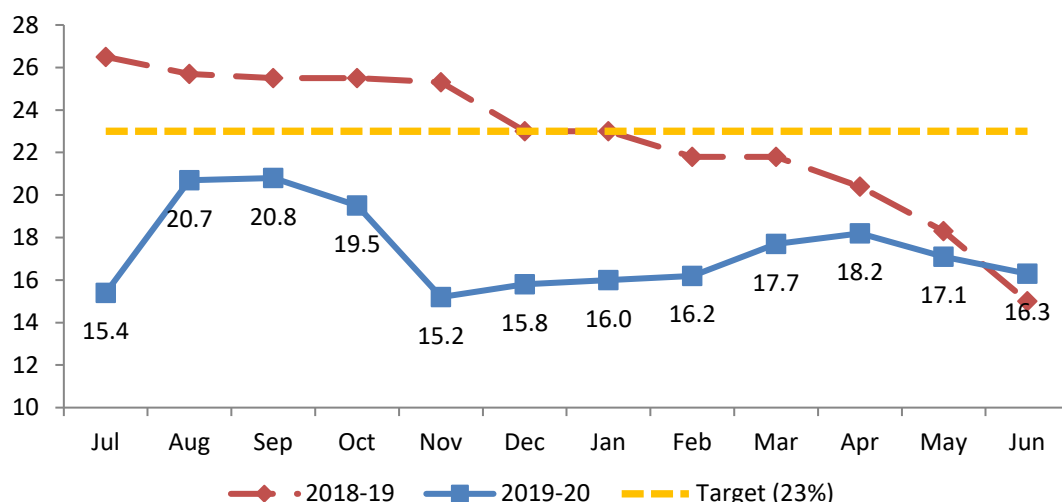
All young people will have the best start in life so that they can fill their potential

A well educated and skilled community

OPPORTUNITY

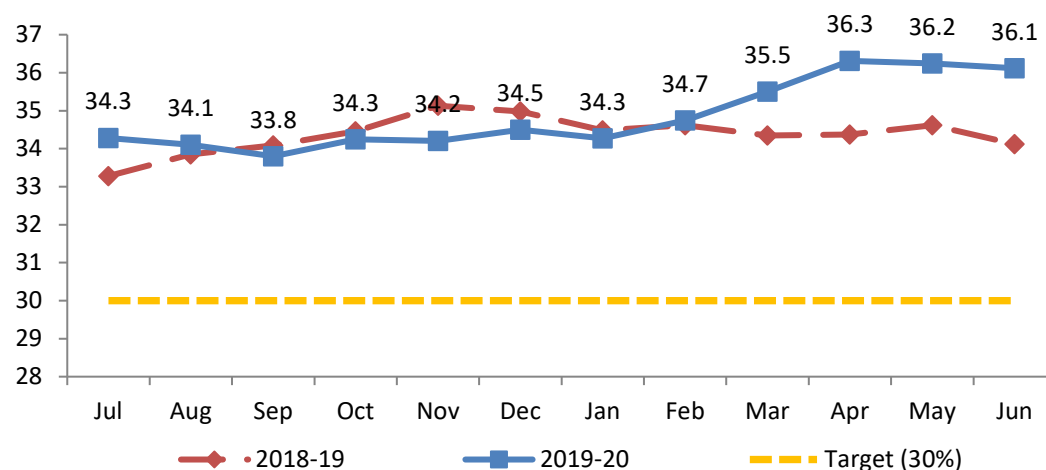


Percentage of children who are subject to a repeat child protection plan (within two years of the previous plan) (Rolling 12 months)



This remains below target. Child protection conferences continue to be held virtually. For a minority of children, their family circumstances will have multiple issues which will present back on a plan. It is anticipated following covid lockdown and the impact on vulnerable families previously on a plan, that this is likely to increase.

Percentage of children with re-referrals within 12 months (Rolling 12 months)



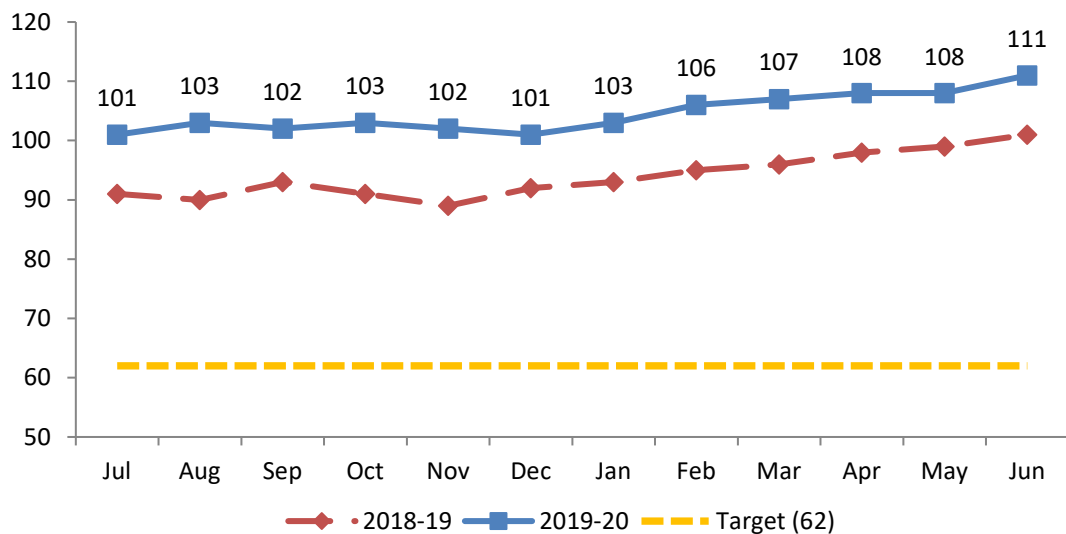
The re referral rate remains is higher than at the same point last year. Due to the complexity of the cases being referred during lockdown, cases are not able to be closed as quickly, so caseloads are anticipated to rise.

Number of children looked after at month end (rate per 10,000 population) (Rolling 12 months)

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The rate continues to rise locally as it does nationally. It is anticipated that Covid-19 and lockdown may impact disproportionately vulnerable families and could lead to a further long term increase in this rate.

Strategic Risks

Failure to improve educational attainment <i>(This risk will be reviewed following the release of 2018/19 academic year results during the summer)</i>			Assigned to: Director of Children's Services		
Inherent score	Target score	Current score	Previous scores		
			Mar 20 (pre-pandemic response)	Feb 20	Dec 19
16 RED	6 GREEN	11 AMBER	9 AMBER	9 AMBER	9 AMBER
Risk increasing					

Failure to identify and effectively manage situations where vulnerable children are subject to abuse			Assigned to: Director of Children's Services		
Inherent score	Target score	Current score	Previous scores		
			Mar 20 (pre-pandemic response)	Feb 20	Dec 19
16 RED	5 GREEN	7 AMBER	8 AMBER	8 AMBER	8 AMBER
Risk decreasing					