

2020/21 Q4 – CHILDREN’S SERVICES, EDUCATION & SKILLS

Key Activities Q4

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

Ofsted has currently suspended all inspection activity. At this stage it is unknown when they will commence full re-inspection. They are now undertaking monitoring visits to schools currently graded as inadequate or requiring improvement. Over the past quarter monitoring visits have taken place at Christ the King College, Carisbrooke College, Medina College, Oakfield CE Primary, Brighstone Primary and Godshill Primary. In a section 8 monitoring visit there are one of two judgements – ‘Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances’ or ‘Leaders and those responsible for governance are not taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances’. All the monitoring visits have secured the positive statement indicating that the schools are continuing to improve.

All examinations were suspended in 2020 and therefore there is no new Island wide data relating to early years, end of primary education, GCSE or A levels. That position will remain the same in 2021 as traditional examinations have been paused again and replaced by school assessed grades.

Much of the work of the school improvement team has been switched to supporting the response to the coronavirus pandemic. Schools on the Island have performed consistently well during the pandemic with higher proportions of children being in attendance than seen nationally. The school improvement team worked alongside schools’ leaders to prepare for the re-opening of schools from the beginning of March. This work was successful with all schools on the Island reopening in full. Attendance remains high comparatively to the national average with high numbers of children attending school for the initial part of this term.

The school improvement team is working with public health and the media team to advise headteachers when there is a suspected or confirmed positive case. Where bubbles of children have to self-isolate the school improvement team are supporting schools to switch to remote learning. For primary aged pupils they have developed the first two days of lessons plans, linked to national curriculum year objectives, to assist schools. A multi-agency programme has been delivered based upon national initiatives to support students’ well-being as they return to schools. All well-being leads in all schools have been offered two free twilights of training to attend to support this activity.

School improvement officers have also reverted 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. In addition, the school improvement team are continuing to work alongside governors with headteacher and other senior leader appointments. There is also a focus on making sure children from disadvantaged groups make strong progress. In schools currently judged inadequate or requiring improvement by Ofsted the school improvement team is also working on core school improvement activities to strengthen provision. 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 investment in the Transformation Programme continues with the focus on keeping more children safely at home. The implementation of this programme has continued throughout this quarter, despite some of the challenges experienced throughout lockdown. Additional corporate investment has secured

the extra capacity the Island requires to prepare and respond to the rising demand across children's social care to support families and safeguard children.

Demand for children's social care on the Isle of Wight continues to increase and is higher when compared to statistical neighbours and the England averages.

	CONTACTS	REFERRALS	% PROGRESSED TO CIN REFERRALS
Q1 2018/19	3522	869	24.7%
Q2 2018/19	3319	923	27.8%
Q3 2018/19	4096	1101	26.9%
Q4 2018/19	3280	920	28.0%
Q1 2019/20	3346	972	29.0%
Q2 2019/20	3601	1074	29.8%
Q3 2019/20	3130	975	31.2%
Q4 2019/20	2923	994	34.0%
Q1 2020/21	2709	877	32.4%
Q2 2020/21	3138	998	31.8%
Q3 2020/21	2793	927	33.2%
Q4 2020/21	3055	1016	33.3%

As with other local authorities, the number of contacts decreased initially during the coronavirus pandemic lockdown as most children remained at home but has since risen as children returned to school and national lockdown ended. However, the percentage that progressed to a referral remained in line with previous quarters and demonstrates consistent thresholds being maintained at CRT/MASH. During lockdown, in line with national data, Police were the highest referrers locally.

By way of comparison the latest regional data identifies the South East regional average of referrals in quarter two 2020/2021 as a rate per 10,000 0 to 17-year olds as 149 compared to a local rate of 375. This evidences the high demand on children's social care locally which continues to rise as need increases. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight count all referrals whereas other local authorities only count referrals that progressed to a completed authorised assessment.

In quarter two 2020/2021, the percentage of contacts to referral as the South East average was 22 per cent compared to 31.8 per cent locally. The timeliness of work progressing within 48 hours in MASH was 95 per cent in quarter two rising to 98.7 per cent in quarter four against a target of 100 per cent.

	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 review child protection conferences held within timescales
Q2 2018/19	155	98	0	100
Q3 2018/19	170	80	19.6	98
Q4 2018/19	167	91	12.5	100
Q1 2019/20	133	100	12.5	94.9
Q2 2019/20	128	89	13.3	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
Q2 2020/21	146	92	10.5	100
Q3 2020/21	158	79	13.2	100
Q4 2020/21	188	70	10.5	100

- It should be noted that due to small numbers involved percentages can sometimes be misleading

After a 5-year incremental decrease in children subject to child protection planning, the last four quarters has seen an increase, this is in line with national trends and as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown period on children and families. Child protection conferences were enabled to be held virtually, thus ensuring continuity of multi-agency safeguarding planning. The Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) timeliness remained above the target of 85 per cent in the first two quarters. Performance dipped in the last two quarters as the numbers going to ICPC increased. It should be noted that the numbers remain small, so changes impact on the percentages. There was an increase in the size of families going to ICPC in. Purposeful delay is sometimes used to ensure full participation by all family members and if agreed by service manager then an exception will be made. The ICPC timeliness is now an area of focussed improvement. All staff being are reminded of the need to provide IRS with notification. Despite the increase in the numbers, the percentage of repeat child protection plans has remained consistent.

Comparisons with the South East averages demonstrates that despite higher demand locally, the Isle of Wight performs well in ensuring an effective and timely safeguarding response and oversight.

Average caseload across the service continue to be stable. The Children's Assessment and Safeguarding Teams, responsible for assessment, child protection and child in need planning have seen increased demand over the past year. This is being safely addressed through additional investment by the council in temporary agency social workers and planning for the recruitment of more permanent social workers. This continues to allow social workers to undertake direct work with families with effective interventions which sustain change to safeguard children and improve their outcomes.

	Children in Care	% Looked after children reported missing	Care leavers supported	% Care leavers in Education, Employment or Training
Q2 2018/19	240	2.0	119	56.3
Q3 2018/19	239	2.2	121	58.7
Q4 2018/19	244	2.9	117	64.0
Q1 2019/20	256	2.0	110	63.6

Q2 2019/20	256	2.3	109	67.0
Q3 2019/20	260	1.6	114	66.0
Q4 2019/20	267	1.1	110	68.0
Q1 2020/21	274	4.1	113	68.0
Q2 2020/21	277	3.0	110	66.0
Q3 2020/21	276	3.0	114	67.5
Q4 2020/21	272	1.5	114	71.1

Whilst there has been a slight increase in the past year in the number of children in care, this has not been at the same rate as demand in relation to child protection planning. The increases in this past 12 months have been mainly as a result of parental mental ill health. The service, through its strength based, family focused methodology (the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Approach) has supported families to ensure, where possible, children are able to remain safely at home. Effective work is undertaken by the Resilience Around Families Team (RAFT), a multi-disciplinary team with adult mental health, substance misuse, child mental health practitioners and family support workers. A volunteer programme has delivered the recruitment, training and deployment of over 50 volunteers to provide staff and families with additional support. The reunification programme identifies and supports children to return home from care if and when it is safe for them to do so.

The number of children in care remains a significant pressure on the service with regards to costs of placements. 49 per cent of children in care are placed with Isle of Wight Council foster carers and an active recruitment campaign continues, with more new fostering households approved. A Modernising Placements Programme is in development to transform the approach to placements, delivering more effective trauma informed training and support to our in-house carers and further improve the quality of placements.

The last 12 months has seen a significant reduction in the number of children who go missing. Daily updates are provided to the service and close and effective monitoring is in place. Most reports concern children who are late returning to placements. High risk strategies meetings are undertaken with multi-agency professionals as a swift response to higher level concerns. Return from missing conversations capture push and pull factors and identify any hot spots/areas of concern. These along with the results child exploitation risk assessment (CERAF), which are undertaken with each child feed into regular multi-agency risk assessment conferences to ensure that information is shared, and effective collaborative plans are in place that reduces the risks to children.

The recruitment of experienced permanent and agency social workers continues to be a challenge locally and nationally. Targeted social media marketing has resulted in permanent social workers being recruited, two as the third cohort onto the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Graduate Entry Training Scheme (GETS).

The provision of a market supplement (reviewed annually) and payment of relocation expenses ensures that the Isle of Wight remains competitive in attracting staff compared to other local areas. Current agency social worker rate is ten per cent. Due to a robust recruitment and retention strategy, action plan and working group, the Isle of Wight continues to have lower rates of social worker vacancies, turnover and use of agency staff when compared nationally.

The implementation of a new case management system is underway which will enhance our case management, management oversight of social work practice and our performance monitoring and analysis capabilities.

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 three-year budget plans, for which the main annual submissions are due at the end of May 2021. Day to day support is provided by the council's Education Finance Team and termly sessions with Education Finance and the school business manager network have continued throughout the pandemic. The mid-year refresh of school budgets was

completed by all schools on time for the 30 November deadline and gave intelligence to work with some schools on monitoring their position as year-end approached. At last March 2020 year end thirteen schools were in deficit, and the draft year end position for March 2021 is suggesting a significant reduction in the number of schools in deficit to seven (out of forty-one maintained schools), mostly in line with the expectations from the November 2020 budget plan updates. This has been achieved despite a turbulent year both in relation to the practical impact of Covid-19, but also in managing the variety of grant funding streams that have been communicated by government departments throughout the pandemic. The May 2021 school budget plans and balances will be reviewed by the Director of Childrens Services in July 2021, refreshing compliance requirements as necessary.

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.

Isle of Wight children's social care has developed a 'Pathways to Independent Adulthood' commissioned offer of supported accommodation. This is a tiered approach providing different levels of linked supported accommodation depending on need which leads to as full independence as possible. This includes a 'training' house whereby a group of four are supported to learn to live together as a household to prepare them for the private rented sector, a housing application or to buy a house together. The Council's decision, as corporate parents, to waive payment of council tax for care leavers is a key contributory factor to enable care leavers to live independently. The Homelessness Personal Advisor continues to support care leavers who are at risk of homelessness and our innovative supported accommodation approach is part of the Council's Local Offer.

In quarter four 2019/2020, the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation was 88 per cent compared to 79 per cent in quarter four 2020/2021. In quarter four 2019/2020, the percentage of care leavers that the leaving care team were in touch with was 96 per cent compared to 89 per cent in quarter four 2020/2021. This small reduction is likely due to the impact of lockdowns. The numbers are small so the change in percentages is magnified. The leaving care team is proactive in keeping in touch with all care leavers, but some have decided not to keep in touch.

The Local Offer for Care Leavers sets out the support provided to care leavers to access employment, education, or training. The team works with Island Futures, Job Centre Plus and the Isle of Wight College. Each care leaver has an individual pathway plan, which is updated regular and ensure support is tailored to young people's needs. Young people report that lockdown provided them with the time and space to think about their futures and to start making plans in terms of education, employment, and training.

In quarter four 2019/2020, the percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training was 65 per cent compared to 61 per cent in quarter four 2020/2021. In quarter four 2019/2020, the percentage of care leavers that the leaving care team were in touch with was 96 per cent compared to 89 per cent in quarter four 2020/2021. Again, the numbers are small so the change in percentages is magnified. The leaving care team is proactive in keeping in touch with all care leavers, but some have decided not to keep in touch.

This data represents the success that children's social care teams have in supporting children and young adults get the best start in life. The service is exploring how to create Kick Start opportunities within the service.

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

Securing island foster care and adoptive homes for island children when they cannot remain safely at home is a priority. Following a restructuring of fostering and adoption at the start of quarter one, the new combined permanence (fostering and adoption) is in operation.

During 2020/2021, the service successfully recruited and approved nine new fostering households (short of the target of 15, although given the pandemic this progress was a significant achievement). The total of fostering households in Q4 was.

145 registered and approved foster carers.

This figure is made up of 90 fostering households plus a further 55 connected carers who are members of the extended families who are assessed as being able to care for children in their extended families. There are currently eight household undergoing assessment. This means more Island children that cannot live at home or with their extended families, can still live locally whilst also reducing the reliance and cost of using Independent Fostering Agencies.

The service continues to work with Adopt South.

Scorecard 1 – Average time between a child entering Care and moving in with their adoptive family.

For the 9 children adopted between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, the average time in days between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family was 395 days which is within the government's threshold of 426 days. This compares to 337 days in the same period last year.

12.2 Scorecard 2 – Average time between the Local Authority receiving Court Authority and the Local Authority identifying a match.

For the 9 children adopted between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, the average time between Placement Order and the Local Authority identifying a match was 225 days which exceeds the government's threshold of 121 days. This is predominantly due to an older sibling group of two boys that required more extensive family finding activity, 9.6 months, to achieve a match. One child with a disability of Curzon's syndrome that required 26.6 months to achieve a match. One child required 7.2 months to achieve a match. The other five children were all placed well within the target. One was placed at 111 days, 2 x 62 days, 1 at 131 days and 1 at 46 days. It is positive that we found adoptive families for these children. This compares to 100 days in the same period last year.

12.3 Scorecard 3 – % of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with an adoptive family.

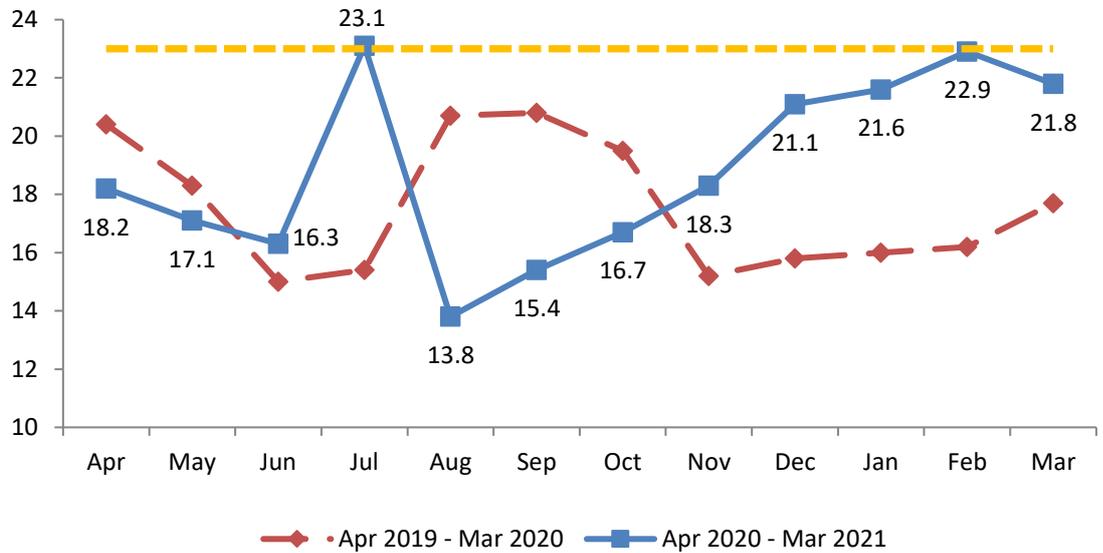
For the children adopted between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, 88.8 per cent (8 of the 9) waited less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with an adoptive family. This compares to 85.7 per cent (6 out of 7) in the same period last year.

As part of the departments transformation programme children's social care will be working closely with Hampshire Children's Services over the next twelve months to deliver the 'Modernising Placement Planning' workstream which will address the following areas to further enhance our sufficiency of placements and the quality of provision.

- *Develop a culture of Trauma Informed Parenting*
- *Review our foster carers' fees*
- *Develop a 'Hive' foster care network*
- *Develop Urgent and Extended Care Services*

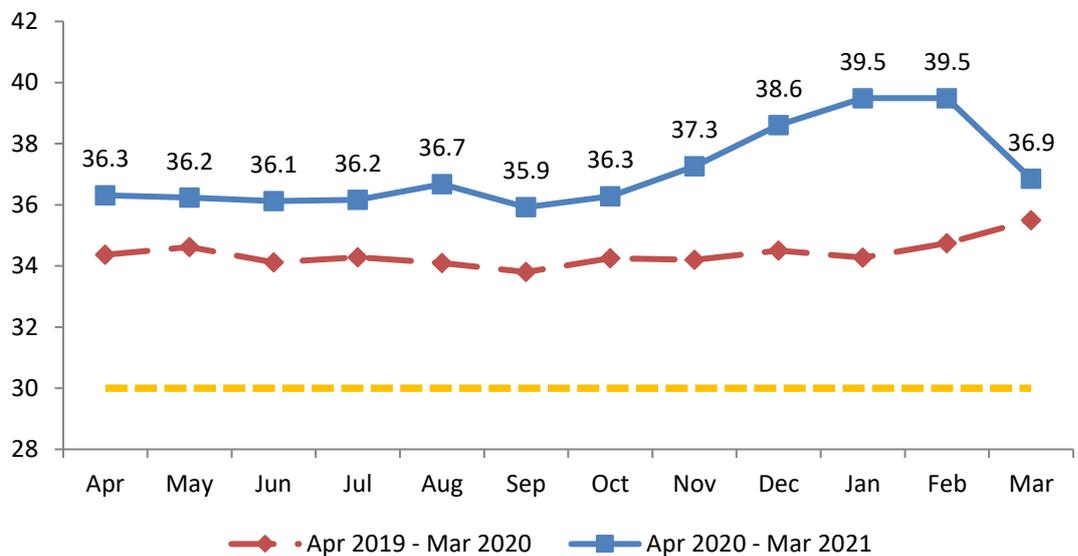
Short Term Measures

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



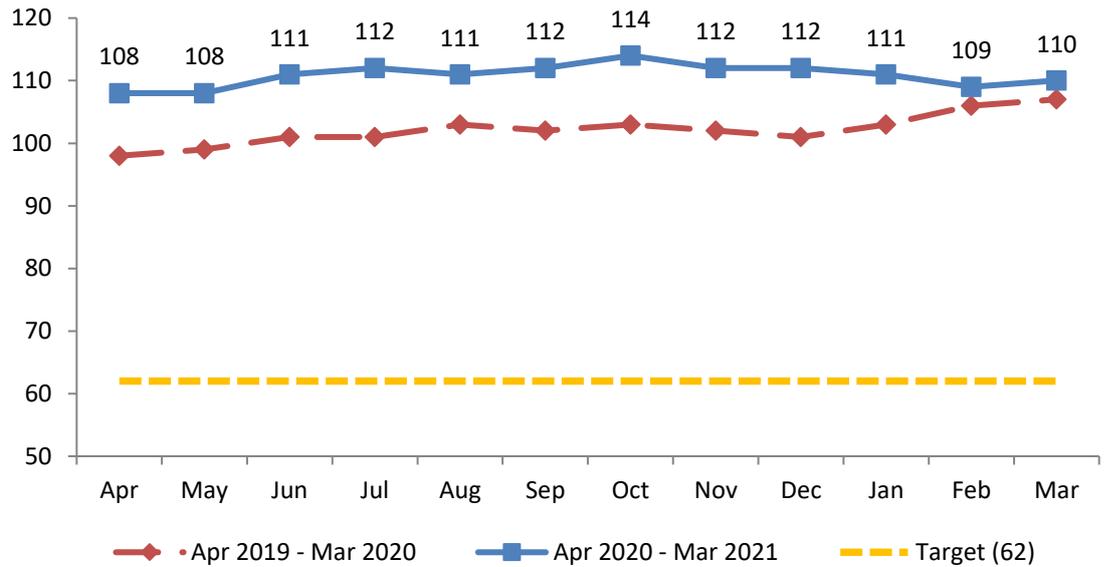
As anticipated the numbers have increased but remain below target. The reasons for a second or subsequent plan are for different but associated issues from the first plan and include adult mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse.

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



The re-referral rate continues to be around 35 similar to Hampshire who share the same 'front door' Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. Unlike other local authorities, MASH counts all re-referrals to ensure a more accurate view rather than only counting those re-referrals that originally progressed to an authorised completed assessment.

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



The rate has stabilised but remains twice the South east average. The work of the Resilience around Families team evidences children are supported to remain safely at home and the reunification work supports children to return home when it is safe for them to do so.

The rates and projections are factored into the Isle of Wight Sufficiency Duty report to inform future commissioning of places for children to live.

Strategic Risks

Failure to improve educational attainment			Assigned to:		
			Director of Children's Services		
Inherent score	Target score	Current score	Previous scores		
			Feb 21	Sep 20	Jun 20
16 RED	6 GREEN	10 AMBER	10 AMBER	10 AMBER	11 AMBER
No change to risk score					

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		
			Feb 21	Sep 20	Jun 20
16 RED	5 GREEN	7 AMBER	7 AMBER	7 AMBER	7 AMBER
No change to risk score					