



Northumberland

County Council

Families and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Date: 4th July 2019

Children in need census benchmarking - Annual Report 2018-19

Report of the Executive Director of Adults Social Care and Children's Services: Cath McEvoy-Carr

Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Councillor Wayne Daley

1. Purpose of report

To inform members of how Northumberland is likely to compare with other areas in 2018/19 based on provisional data in the field of children in need and child protection.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 1) Members acknowledge the data is provisional and subject to change.**

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2) **Members identify any issues for further scrutiny.**

3. **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the Living, Learning and Thriving corporate priorities.

4. **Key Issues**

With reference to the tables in Appendix A:

1. The report presents benchmarking data for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 years. The latter is provisional as at December 2018, and only available for the local authorities in the region; the national data is not yet available for 2018/19.
2. Northumberland has greater numbers of Child in Need (CIN) cases than the national average in 2017/18, but is lower regionally in 2018/19 (B1).
3. Northumberland is still higher than the national average on the rate of referrals received and assessments completed (C1; C2). Within the region, more recent data shows we equal the average referral rate and are slightly above the average rate of assessments undertaken, but the gap is closing. Northumberland re-referral rates had reduced but increased again recently. At 21%, they are equal to the latest regional average and are not of significant concern. The amount of assessments that result in no further action is an issue that is constantly scrutinised by the QPAG meetings (Quality, Performance and Audit Group).
4. Northumberland undertakes more s47 enquiries than is the case nationally (C2), but is lower than the regional average. This is because the rate of increase has been less in Northumberland than in many other parts of the region. Our practice regarding which cases require a s47 enquiry is constantly under scrutiny and a recent audit showed the decision-making to be appropriate overall. While we do consider the comparator data, it is making the right decisions on individual cases that is most important.

Timeliness for completing assessments and undertaking Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) continue to compare

well against the latest available national and regional averages (C2; C4).

5. Regarding table D1, from March 2017, Northumberland's Child Protection Plan (CPP) numbers had more than doubled by December 2018. Having previously decreased to 211 at March 2017, a rate of 35 per 10,000 population, it reached a high of 442 at December 2018, before reducing to 383 by mid June 2019, a rate of 65 per 10,000 0-17 year olds. This is significantly higher than the England and Statistical neighbour averages (45 and 44, respectively), and now just above the north east average (64). The numbers plateaued in summer 2018, rose sharply from September to December 2018, and have since reduced steadily. Significant work has been undertaken to understand the decision making behind those CPPs that started and ended in the last 3 months and quality of decision making for s47s. This work indicates that in the vast majority of cases, decision making was justifiable and ensured that children were not left unsafe, but in a small number of cases, support could have been offered at a lower level of intervention while still ensuring the child's safety. **Actions: In order to support appropriate decision making while ensuring that the interventions are proportionate to the level of risk and need,** we have put in additional senior management oversight into the decision to take a case to initial child protection conference (ICPC). The number of CPPs has decreased, from 442 at the end of December 2018 to 383 by 13.06.19. This issue was scrutinised at March 2019's NSCB meeting.
6. The percentage of second or subsequent CP plans (D3) has increased markedly in Northumberland from a low level, a trend also reflected in the latest regional average for 2018/19. This area of work has also been audited to reassure us that decision-making is appropriate. What was found was that the decision-making was justified as the level of change achieved whilst the children were on a CPP was not being sustained when the case was stepped down, and multi-agency input was again required.

7. BACKGROUND

- a. Members of this committee receive regular reports on Safeguarding Activity Trends. In June 2018, a request was made for an annual benchmarking report and this report provides that information for 2017/18 and 2018/19. It compares Northumberland against the national and regional average for 2017/18 and against the provisional regional averages for 2018/19 (up to December 2018).

- b. The provisional data will be finalised by each local authority by the end of July when they return their CIN census data to the Department for Education. Any significant changes in that information will be brought back to this committee.
- c. Appendix A provides this annual benchmarking, and the Key Issues in section 4 outline the main messages for Northumberland. From left to right, Appendix A describes the indicators; distinguishes between PREVALENCE / ACTIVITY and PERFORMANCE for the Northumberland (ND) data against the national average. It denotes if we are higher, equal to or lower than it, RAG rating it if the indicator is about performance, e.g. CP reviews in time scale, or not applying a rating if it is about prevalence or activity, e.g. duration cases are open. In the two far right columns, it shows Northumberland (ND) data for 2017-18 and partially for 2018-19 against regional average (provisional). It provides RAG ratings and ranks where Northumberland is placed amongst the north eastern local authorities, 1 being best, 12 being worst.

8. IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

Policy:	Comparing Northumberland's position assists with the reviewing of local thresholds.
Finance and value for money:	Analysing such comparative data helps identify potential efficiencies.
Legal:	None
Procurement:	None
Human Resources:	Social worker caseloads are reflected herein
Property:	None
Equalities Impact Assessment: NA	
Risk Assessment:	None
Crime & Disorder:	None
Customer Considerations:	None
Carbon Reduction:	None
Wards:	None

9. CONSULTATION

The Executive Director of Adults Social Care and Children's Services has been consulted about this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children in Need census 2017/18 statistical release

11. Report sign off

	Full name of officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	N/A
Interim Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	N/A
Relevant Executive Director	Cath McEvoy-Carr
Chief Executive	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Wayne Daley

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Appendix A

Ref.	Measure	Northumberland (ND) Prevalence : National 2017-18			Northumberland (ND) Performance : National 2017-18			ND : Region 17-18 and rank / 12	ND : Region 18-19 and rank
		Higher	Equal	Lower	Green	Amber	Red	RAG rating	RAG rating
B1	Rate per 10K of CiN at end of period 2017/18	457:341						6/12 457 : 460	4 / 12 430 : 454
B4	Duration case open: <3 mths	30 : 27						27 : 23	Not Yet Available (NYA)
	3-6 mths		12 : 12					12 : 12	
	6-12 mths			14 : 15				13 : 14	
	12-24 mths			14 : 16				16 : 17	
	24 mths +			30 : 31				33 : 34	
B5	Duration of ended episodes: 3 mths			30 : 46				41 : 38	
	3-6 mths		16 : 16					18 : 19	
	6-12 mths	17 : 16						18 : 17	
	12-24 mths	13 : 12						12 : 14	
	24 mths+	24 : 10						12 : 12	
C1	Referral rate						608 : 553	3/12 608 : 602	8 / 12 627 : 628
	% children with a re-referral				17 : 21			6/12 17 : 18	7 / 12 21 : 21
C2	Rate per 10K of completed assessments						735 : 532	9/12 735 : 618	9 / 12 732 / 701
	% assessments completed in 45 wkg days				90 : 83			3/12 90 : 82	2 / 12 90 : 82
C4	Rate per 10K of S47 enquiries						209 : 167	8/12 209 : 225	7 / 12 223 : 235

	Rate of ICPCs						103 : 67	6/12 103 : 99	10 / 12 114 : 82
	% ICPCs in 15 wkg days				83 : 78			2 / 12 83 : 83	5 / 12 92 : 86

D1	Rate per 10K of CPPs starting						87 : 58	7 / 12 87 : 88	NYA
	Rate per 10K of CPPs ending				59 : 56			10 / 12 59 : 82	
	Rate per 10K of CPPs at any time						126:101	126 : 148	
	Rate per 10K of CPPs at Dec 18						66 : 45	7 / 12 66 : 65	
D3	% CPPs which were second or a subsequent plan				16 : 20			2/12 16 : 20	
D6	CPRs in timescale				97 : 91			6/12 97 : 92	NYA
D7	Duration of CPPs ending: < 3 mths	22 : 20						14 : 19	
	3-6 mths		11 : 11					12 : 12	
	6-12 mths	47 : 42						43 : 41	
	12-24 mths			16 : 24				22 : 25	
	24 mths +		3 : 3					9 : 4	