

Report sponsor: Director Early Help and
Children's Social Care
Report author: Head of Strategy and
Performance

Annual performance update – children in care and care leavers

Purpose

- 1.1 Each year all local authorities submit information on the children and young people that they look after to the Department for Education (DfE). This information is collated centrally and published annually, to inform local understanding of the profile, demand and performance in relation to key children in care performance indicators.
- 1.2 National performance information is a key source of insight that shapes national policy, alongside local service developments, and is also used by Ofsted as part of their inspection of local authorities services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers (ILACS).
- 1.3 Derby's services for children and young people were inspected in March 2022, which included a judgement against services for looked after children and care leavers.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to present the Committee with the latest provisional performance highlights, in the context of the national information (**Appendix 1**).
- 1.5 Key highlights from the 2022 inspection relating to children in care and care leavers are also presented, with the full letter available in **Appendix 2**.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the latest performance information relating to our children in care and care leavers (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 To note how Derby compares to national and comparator benchmarks.
- 2.3 To note the inspection findings presented in paragraph 4.8, with the full letter available at Appendix 2.
- 2.4 To note that an improvement plan in response to any areas identified for development will be submitted to Ofsted by 19 August 2022, in line with the principles within the inspection guidance.

Reason

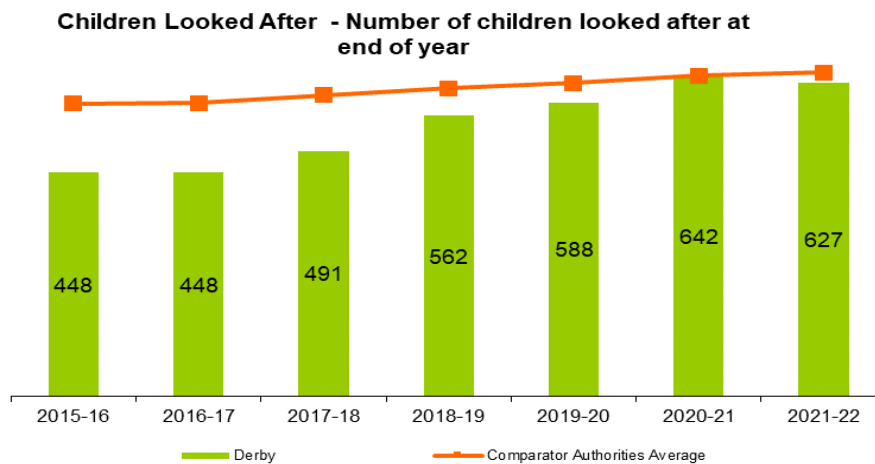
- 3.1 It is essential that the Corporate Parenting Committee are aware of performance information relating to looked after children and the outcomes achieved for them,

providing the Committee with the opportunity to recognise and challenge services as appropriate; supporting improved services and outcomes.

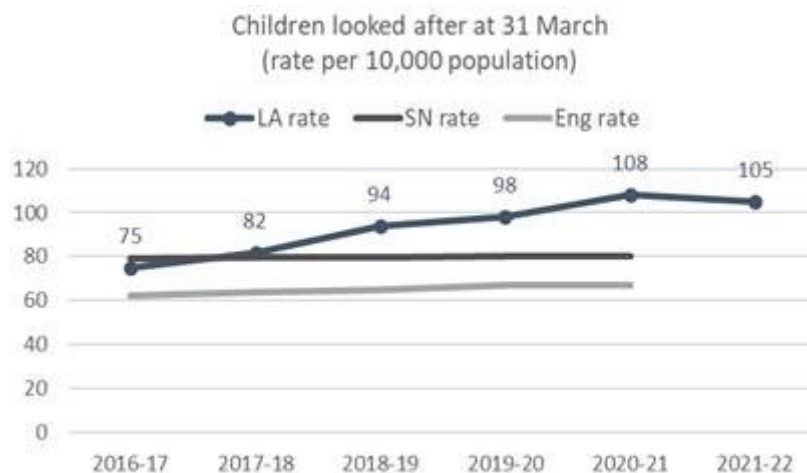
Supporting information

Children in care overview

- 4.1 At the end of March 2022, Derby had 627 children in care. This was a decrease from 642 children seen at the end of March 2021, which is a reduction of 15 children equating to a 2.3% decline. This is the first reduction in the total number of children in care seen over the past five financial years, as illustrated below.



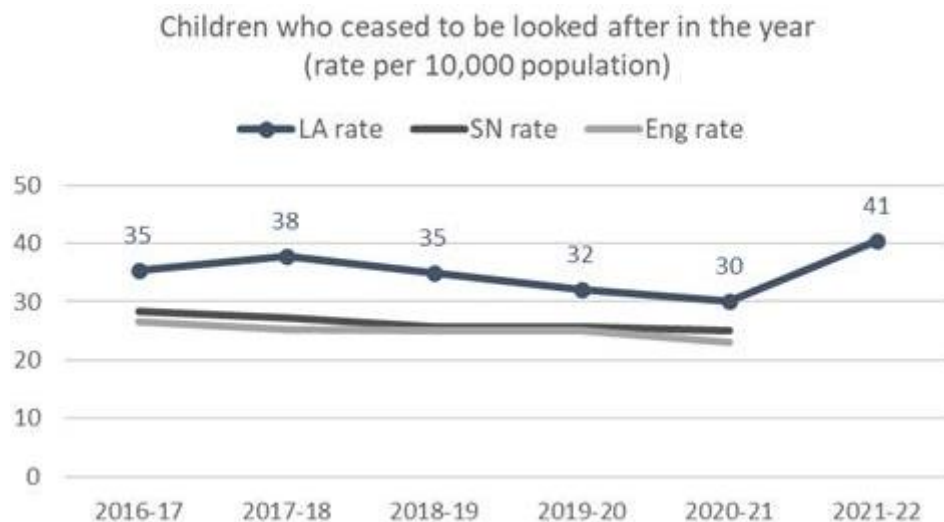
- 4.2 Derby's March 2022 rate of children in care was 105 per 10,000, 0 to 18-year olds, which despite reductions remains above the national average (67 per 10,000), our comparator average (83 per 10,000) and also the East Midlands rate of 64 per 10,000.



- 4.3 During 2021/22, Derby had 229 children who started to be looked after, a decrease of 10 children (4.2%) compared to the previous financial year. Despite the rate of children per 10,000 who started to be looked after declining from 40 per 10,000 in 2020/21 to 38 per 10,000 in 2021/22, we remain higher than the national average of 24 per 10,000.
- 4.4 It should be noted that the total number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) increased in Derby during 2021/22. At the end of March 2022,

Derby had 29 UASC children in care, which compared to 20 at the end of March 2021 and is a 45% increase.

- 4.5 Between April 2021 and March 2022, Derby had 242 children who ceased to be looked after. The rate of children per 10,000 who ceased to be looked after increased from 30 per 10,000 in 2020/21 to 41 per 10,000 in 2021/22, which places the rate of those exiting care significantly higher than both national and comparator averages.



- 4.5 14% of those young people that exited care during 2021/22, were adopted. This is above the 2020/21 national average (10%), the comparator authority average (12%) and the East Midlands average (13%).
- 4.6 The highest percentage of our children in care are placed within a foster care placement. Over the last 12-months, we have increased the total number of Derby City mainstream foster carers to 110. This increase, alongside more creative use of the places that we have available has resulted in a decline in Independent Fostering Agency placements from a high of 76.2% in June 2020 to the position of 67.5% at the end of March 2022.
- 4.7 Young people in Derby benefit from stable placements. 74% of children in care for two and a half years or more, under the age of 16, have lived in the same placement for 2 years or more, which is above both comparator and national averages.

Key performance outcomes

4.8 Presented below is a summary of key outcomes for 2021/22, based on 2020/21 national comparisons, with a full summary presented in **Appendix 1**.

| Areas of strength | Areas for development |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on provisional data for 2021/22 health outcomes are good for our children in care, with children and young people benefitting from up to date health assessments, timely immunisations and up to date dental checks (<i>NB – there can be some reporting delays, which may impact provisional information</i>) Missing incidents or young people being away from their placement without authorisation are lower than national averages Outcomes for our care leavers are strong, with many in suitable accommodation and engaged in employment, education or training; aided by regular contact with Personal Advisers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficiency challenges remain on-going for placements, compounded by the small geographical boundary of the city meaning fewer young people are placed within the city, or within a 20 mile radius (<i>NB – inspection recommendation</i>) The average score (15.2) for young people eligible for completing a strength and difficulties questionnaire remains above national and comparator averages More young people were convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand during the year, but it should be noted that numbers remain very low (12 in total) and subsequently small changes can impact performance significantly |

Inspection highlights

4.9 Before 2022, Derby's last judged inspection of children's services was in 2017 under the 'single inspection framework' or the 'SIF', when we were assessed as 'good' for our overall effectiveness, children in care and care leavers.

4.10 For the ILACS inspection, inspectors (HMI) were onsite for five days from Monday 21 March 2022 to Friday 25 March 2022; focusing on social workers' direct practice with families by:

- scrutinising and discussing a sample of children's cases that reflected the scope of the inspection, alongside discussions with practitioners working with the child or young person
- where possible and appropriate, having meetings with children, young people, care leavers, parents and carers, foster carers and adopters
- shadowing staff in their day-to-day work
- where possible and appropriate, observing practice in multi-agency/single-agency meetings or, more likely, parts of meetings that relate to the protection of children and young people and in reviews for children in care.

4.11 The final inspection report was published on 11 May 2022, reporting the overall effectiveness of services for children and young people in Derby as 'outstanding', with the judgement grade breakdowns set out below:

| Judgement | Grade |
|--|-------------|
| The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families | Outstanding |
| The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection | Outstanding |
| The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers | Good |
| Overall effectiveness | Outstanding |

4.12 Key findings to note in relation to our children in care and care leavers included:

| What is working well? | Development opportunities |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people come into care when this is in their best interests • Children's views are listened to, and social workers know children and young people well, young people are encouraged to attend reviews and supported to express their views through advocacy and independent visitors • Children and young people's needs are reflected within mostly SMART plans that are regularly reviewed and discussed • The Independent Reviewing Officer footprint is strong on cases • Children in care visits, in most cases are appropriate, meeting needs • Children and young people receive support that is responsive to their language, culture, heritage and diversity, with interpreters used to ensure they can fully participate • Placements at risk of breakdown are pro-actively managed to assess what support can be provided to limit this further for children and young people • Spending time with family and friends and maintaining contact is promoted, with siblings enabled to keep in touch • When in the best interests of young people, in-depth assessments are completed to support them to return home • Of the cases considered, the children placed in unregulated and unregistered placements were in the right placements for them, with clear safety plans evident and robust senior management oversight on these cases • UASC children and young people receive a sensitive response to help, support and protection by a highly skilled and knowledgeable team • There are specialist placements for disabled children and young people where their emotional, therapeutic and educational needs are met • The Virtual School has a grasp of children and young people on their register, pupil attendance was sustained in COVID, they promote the education and welfare of children and young people and are highly valued by schools • There has been a focus on recruitment which has increased carers • Foster carer assessments are good and there is appropriate scrutiny at panel • There is an effective relationship with Adoption East Midlands, where there are good quality assessments and oversight on behalf of Derby • Personal Advisers were persistent in supporting young people through regular visiting, including when young people are out of area or in custody • Young people benefit from comprehensive pathway plans and assessments, which are focused on their wishes, feelings and needs • Personal Advisers know young people well, they are passionate about supporting them and dedicated to their role • All young people are registered with a health provider, attend appointments and have access to all the health information that they need • Multi-agency working assists with planning and supporting young people to positive outcomes in adulthood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in workers sometimes means children and young people have had to re-tell their story • When children and young people in care need access to emotional health and wellbeing services this cannot always be accessed promptly • There are insufficient placements for children in care in Derby, and an overall shortfall of foster carers • Some children and young people benefit from Life Story work and Later Life Letters, but this is inconsistent at present, however actions have been taken since the Focused Visit to address this |

- 4.13 Inspectors identified two areas for improvement, both relating to our children in care and care leavers:
- Access for all children to life-story work that helps them to understand their histories.
 - Sufficiency of placement choice and location for children in care.
- 4.14 An action plan responding to the findings of the inspection, specifically the identified areas for improvement, must be submitted to Ofsted by 19 August 2022, and the development of this plan has already commenced.
- 4.15 The full inspection letter, setting out the details behind each judgement is set out in **Appendix 2**, and is available to read on the Ofsted website – [Derby ILACS \(ofsted.gov.uk\)](https://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 The purpose of this report is to brief key stakeholders through the Corporate Parenting Committee on key performance data and any emerging issues.
- 5.2 Engagement in inspections are coordinated by Ofsted, with children in care and care leavers being spoken to, to inform the findings and judgements.

Other options

- 6.1 None.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 Any financial implications of the total number of children in care, their individual needs or placement locations will be reported, as appropriate, separately to the Corporate Parenting Committee by the Strategic Director of People Services or the Service Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care.

Legal implications

- 8.1 The contents of this report only cover children and young people legally looked after by the local authority.
- 8.2 Inspectors carry out inspections under section 136(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA). Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has the power to carry out ILACS functions as listed in section 135 of the EIA.

Climate implications

- 9.1 Not applicable to this report.

Other significant implications

- 10.1 Not applicable to this report.

This report has been approved by the following people:

| Role | Name | Date of sign-off |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Legal | Director of Legal, Procurement and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer | 14/07/2022 |
| Finance | Director of Financial Services | 14/07/2022 |
| Service Director(s) | Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care | 06/07/2022 |
| Report sponsor | | |
| Other(s) | | |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Background papers: | |
| List of appendices: | Appendix 1 - 2020/21 Annual Performance Update – Children in Care Appendix 2 - Ofsted ILACS Inspection Letter – Derby |