

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
20 NOVEMBER 2024	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	John Gregg Executive Director Children and Young People's Service	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Cole Cabinet Member for Children's Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Sara Graves, Service Director, Targeted Support and Safeguarding	Tel. 07483 351428

PERFORMANCE DATA FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS SEPTEMBER 2024

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: <i>Enter who – e.g. Scrutiny Committee, Director, Cabinet, Cabinet Members</i>	Deadline date: <i>Enter relevant date for action – e.g. date of report to another body/meeting</i>
<p>It is recommended that members of the Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the content of the report, and 2. Raise any questions with the lead officer. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to the Corporate Parenting Committee to each formal committee as part of the standing work programme item in relation to performance.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Corporate Parenting Committee in respect of the numbers of children and young people being looked after by the Council as of 30th September 2024, providing a breakdown of the types of homes in which they are living. The background documents and appendix provide information in addition regarding the age, gender and ethnicity of those children and young people.

Additional information on adoption data and residential data has been included at the request of the Committee.

- 2.2 This report is for the Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.4.4.6 To monitor the quality of care delivered by the City Council and review the performance of outcomes for children and young people in care.
- 2.3 This reports to the Children in Care Promise by focussing on the placements for children in care and care leavers.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 As of 30th September 2024, there were 424 children in the care of Peterborough City Council. This is a decrease compared to that previously reported in the 24/25 year, with numbers falling over the past two months following an increase that began in Feb/March 24. The current numbers are back to a similar level prior to their rise, sitting at just over 420.

Fewer children have entered care over the past 12 months compared with 2022/23 and 2023/24 and the rate of children coming into care per 10,000 has fallen from 33.7 to 26.6 putting performance slightly better than last reported (2022/23) near neighbours and national averages.

Investment in Family Valued and Family Safeguarding is providing opportunity for further progress which will support better outcomes for children and families in Peterborough.

Of the 424 children:

- 133 (31.4%) were living with in house foster carers – a similar proportion to previous reporting period.
- 122 (28.8%) living with agency foster carers (Independent Fostering Agencies that work with the council to provide foster placements on a contractual basis). This is slightly more than that reported in previous period.
- 44 (10.4%) were living within their family and friends’ networks (Kinship) which is a slight reduction compared to the previous update provided. Kinship carers are formally assessed in the same way as in house foster carers are and they are presented to the fostering panel for approval through the same process and standard; they are supported with fostering allowances.
- From the above - 70.5% of our children in care are living within a family-based home and we know from research that this supports the best outcomes.

Performance achievement over the previous 9 months is better than the national average and in line with statistical neighbour authorities.

On the 30th of September 2024, the ‘Foster with Peterborough’ new in-house fostering service was launched. In a challenging local and national market, this fostering service improvement and development work, alongside fostering transformation progress, is helping sustain and will stretch further, the proportion of children in care in Peterborough who benefit from being looked after in this type of provision.

- 15 were living with their parents subject to full care orders - they are still considered to be ‘looked after’ as the Council is sharing parental responsibility with the parent(s). Such arrangements are in place when there is usually a plan for reunification.
- 5 children were living in their prospective adoptive home where the plan was for them to be adopted within that family.

The proportion of children in care in Peterborough who have achieved permanence through adoption has increased over the last year and is comparatively more than the national and nearest neighbour averages. 44% of these children benefitted from an early permanence home – higher than the rest of England. Notwithstanding the positive progress, there are challenges in finding adopters for some children with additional and complex needs. Links have been developed with neighbouring Regional Adoption Agencies to strengthen and create targeted opportunities to find suitable adopters for children where internal resources may be more limited. Work is also underway to develop training and learning for prospective adopters that will support progress to the contemporary, more open adoption agenda.

- One child was living in a residential educational placement.
- One young person was living in secure provision but moved on to Residential care, in the early part of September.
- 51 children were living in semi-independent, supported accommodation. These are young people aged 16–18 including separated migrant children, where the focus is preparation for adulthood.
- 51 children were living in residential provision – most usually accessed for older children when foster care is not able to meet more complex needs. Transformation and improvement work is supporting to reduce numbers of children in residential care in Peterborough in a continuing challenging sufficiency context. Compared to the previous reporting period, it is positive that there were less children under the age of 13 living in residential provision at the end of September 24. Residential provision is reviewed regularly to ensure children can move to a more suitably matched living arrangement for their need when appropriate to do so.

The 'Step Out' of Residential project has developed over September/October 24 to explore options for children and young people ready to move on from residential care. Dedicated resource in the service is having a positive impact on progress. Operational and strategic meetings have been strengthened to oversee and ensure appropriate planning for children and direction of travel for the project.

Two young people moved at the end of September, and this is progressing positively for them to date. Another two are being supported with moves that are due to take place in December and there are a further eleven children and young people for whom plans are in development to support transitions over the remainder of 24/25 and into 25/26, from residential care into arrangements that will support better outcomes in the longer term.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1 This report links to the following Corporate Priorities:

1. *Our Places & Communities*
 - *Places and Safety (including any rural implications)*
 - *Lives and Work*
 - *Health and Wellbeing*
2. *Prevention, Independence & Resilience*
 - *Educations and Skills for All Children*
3. *The Economy & Inclusive Growth*

- *Environment: The report contains no proposals for changes to service delivery and therefore there is no decision to take which may impact carbon emissions of the council or the city.*
- *Homes and Workplaces*
- *Jobs and Money*

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 N/A

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

7.1 This report provides the Corporate Parenting Committee with an overview of performance.

This is an accurate report of the current accommodation placements for children in care and care leavers.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

8.1 There are no recommendations as this report is for information only.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 No alternative options required for this report as this data is provided for information purposes only.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

10.1 There are no financial implications as this report is for information only.

Legal Implications

10.2 There are no legal implications as this report is for information only.

Equalities Implications

10.3 None.

Other Implications

10.4 This is high level data concerning our children in care population in Peterborough and how we are performing against some key measures.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 Monthly Performance Report September 2024.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1 – Scorecard September 2024