

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Children and Young People Select Committee
Date:	15 April 2010
Title:	Children in Care
Report from:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Purpose of report

1.1 This report provides an overview of outcomes for children and young people in care in Hampshire. It also details current strategies for improvement and the importance of the role of 'corporate parent'.

2. What does being in care mean?

2.1 There are three main types of care. A child or young person may:

- be voluntarily living in a home run by a local authority or charity or a foster home, where the child's parents agree to the child being looked after;
- have been legally removed from the child's family without the parents' consent. This happens when a court feels that a child could be damaged by living at home and issues a Care Order. Nationally, three out of every five children in care are under a Care Order;
- remanded or detained by the courts to the Local Authority.

3. How many children are in care in Hampshire?

	September 2008	September 2009	Increase
Total number of children in care	1,040	1,085	4.3%
Number of children who had been in care for at least 12 months	718	751	4.6%

4. What are the issues?

4.1 There has been steady improvement in:

- the percentage of children in care experiencing three or more placement moves in a year (National Indicator 62);
- health checks;
- participation of children in their reviews;
- attendance at school.

4.2 However, further improvement needed in:

- corporate parenting;
- educational attainment (National Indicators 99; 100 & 101);
- quality of care plans;
- placement choice, particularly for teenagers;
- the proportion of care leavers in education, employment or training (National Indicator 148); and suitable accommodation (National Indicator 147).

4.3 See appendix 1 for key facts/performance against National Indicators.

5. Care Matters

5.1 A significant number of improvement activities are taking place in Hampshire as part of the Care Matters project

(<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/families/caring-for-children/care-matters.htm>). The objectives are to:

- respond to the [national framework for change for children in care](#) with systematic plans for change;
- exercise excellent [corporate parenting](#);
- set high aspirations for children in care including the engagement of children in school, good attendance and performance;
- ensure stable relationships for children in care and in school;
- listen to the voice of the child;
- secure improvements against the national performance indicators for children in care and compared to their peer group;
- monitor and evaluate progress via an effective performance framework with dynamic use of data and the inspection template for children in care.

5.2 Activities include:

Area for improvement	Activities
Educational attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion of personal education allowances for children educated outside of Hampshire – applications have ranged from laptops and personal tuition to sports equipment.• Schools with children in care are given £1500pa for each child in care to spend on additional support – findings indicate that schools mainly use the funding for extra tuition either 1:1 or in small groups; for educational trips; and study materials such as

Area for improvement	Activities
	<p>revision guides.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of laptops, internet access and a printer for 820 children in care and care leavers. • Restructure of the Team for the Education of Children in Care to enable them to more effectively challenge and support schools to improve outcomes (from January 2010). Area based managers for the education of vulnerable children will support children in educational provision; area based education support workers will provide short term support to children in care; and two development officers will support analysis of performance information and implementation of improvement plans. • Children in care are given priority for school places. The central admissions team support placing children in care in schools both in and outside of Hampshire. • Six additional education welfare officers are working to improve the school attendance of children in care. • All Hampshire schools have a Designated Teacher, with network meetings held to share information and improve practice in areas including: attachment disorder and links to learning; Personal Education Plans; planning for successful transitions; and understanding the care system. • A new system is being developed to enable tracking of progress for children in care. This will enable the local authority to intervene and ensure that schools provide the necessary support for the child and young person in order that they make good progress from their starting points and attain better outcomes. • Education District Managers and School Improvement Partners use pupil performance data in order to inform their single conversation, to engage school leadership in discussion about the progress of children and young people in care. • The literacy intervention project has been rolled out to all primary school age children in care. The pilot improved reading ages by one year in 11 weeks.
Quality of care plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional case file audits focusing specifically on care plans and placement plans. • Training for all appropriate managers and practitioners in care planning as a mandatory requirement, regardless of length of experience. The first course has been delivered, with six more courses by March 2010. • Departmental policy and procedure updated to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. • Challenge provided by the Independent Reviewing Service, who complete a quality assurance feedback sheet on each review. • Improve the quality of management decisions and case supervision. • Establish a work programme to ensure that an electronic records system is in place that is 'fit for purpose'

Area for improvement	Activities
Placement choice and stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the placement stability improvement plan, which has four components: improved front door (effective diversion from care and early intervention); management grip (strong tracking and case planning to avoid drift and achieve permanence); improved choice; and improved support (increased multi-agency and multi-disciplinary support to placements). • Positive Parenting Programmes available to foster carers of children who challenge to improve robustness of placements. • Funding for four Specialist Parenting Practitioners, offering targeted support covering prevention, substance misuse and mental health issues. They will offer an intensive, possibly long term intervention, which takes account of the needs of the whole family. In working to address the needs of the whole family, they will work closely with all other professionals involved to identify and fill gaps in provision. • Establishment of Intensive Support Service in the North and East and Western areas of the county (already in place in South East). The service works with children and families to prevent them entering care; or prevent placement breakdown. • Restructure of local teams to create dedicated children in care and care leaver teams.
Care leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of care leavers' strategy group. • Accommodation sub-group working on a proposed model for enabling foster care placements post 18 (about to go out for consultation). • Identifying and addressing any gaps in opportunities for care leavers with charity <i>Catch 22</i>. • Participation in the <i>Care 2 Work</i> programme through the National Care Advisory Service • New apprenticeship schemes within the County Council. • The transfer of responsibility for commissioning 16-19 education to the local authority should enable greater opportunities for securing provision that meets the needs of young people in care. • All young people leaving care are allocated a personal adviser, who works with them to revise their pathway plan three times a year.
Health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Children in Care Health Strategy is under development. • Work is taking place to improve recording of immunisations and health assessments, including weekly alerts to teams. • Recent appointment of a Lead Strategic Nurse for children in care is a significant step to champion the health needs of children in care, reflecting the commitment of Hampshire Community Health Care to improving outcomes for children and young people in care.

6. Corporate parenting

6.1 The minimum expectation is that every elected member and manager within the council will, in conjunction with members of the governing bodies of partner agencies:

- Be aware of the corporate parenting role and the shared responsibility for ensuring that the needs of children in care and care leavers are met.
- Have some knowledge of the profile and needs of the children their authority looks after and how these may be changing.
- Understand the impact on children in care of *all* council decisions.
- Receive information about the quality of care and the quality of services that children are experiencing.
- Consider whether this would be good enough for their child.
- Ensure that action is being taken to address any shortcomings in the service and to constantly improve the outcomes for children in care.

6.2 Activities to improve corporate parenting are also being co-ordinated by the Care Matters Implementation Board. This includes:

The Care Council
<p>The Care Council is a group of children and young people who are in care http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/families/caring-for-children/care-matters/info-cic/carecouncil.htm.</p> <p>In order to strengthen the Care Council, the role of 'Care Ambassador' has been developed. Care Ambassadors are young people aged 18-25 who have been in care. They now form the core of the Care Council, which is being restructured to allow more local representation and engagement of more children and young people in care. The Care Ambassadors will have regular meetings with the new Children and Families Advisory Panel, Hampshire's corporate parenting group.</p> <p>Five Care Ambassadors have been appointed (November 2009).</p>
The 'Pledge' for children in care
<p>The 'Pledge' highlights the six areas children in care would like the County Council to work on http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/families/caring-for-children/care-matters/info-cic.htm.</p> <p>The current Pledge includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extra tuition;• individual budget;• Care Council;• consistent adult;• better placement choice;• peer mentors. <p>An implementation plan for the Pledge is regularly monitored by the Care Matters Implementation Board; and will be monitored by the Children and Families Advisory Panel in future.</p> <p>The Pledge will be revisited as part of the priority work of the Care Ambassadors.</p>

Children and Families Advisory Panel

This new corporate parenting group will be chaired by the Assistant to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services. Regular reporting will include:

- Issues from the Care Matters Implementation Board;
- Activity of the Care Council/Care Ambassadors;
- Education of children in care;
- Health of children in care;
- Independent Reviewing Service;
- Adoption Service;
- Fostering Service;
- Residential Service.

Voice of the child

A clear service user engagement strategy is being developed, including systematic use of the outcome of complaints and/or concerns to inform service development.

Mentoring, independent visitor and advocacy services are also being developed; with a tender for services expected in Autumn 2010.

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Hampshire County Council Care Matters website	http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/families/caring-for-children/care-matters.htm
Care Matters: Time to Deliver for Children in Care (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008)	http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00279-2008&
Hampshire County Council corporate parenting web page	http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/families/caring-for-children/care-matters/info-cic/corpparents.htm
Hampshire Care Council website	http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/families/caring-for-children/care-matters/info-cic/carecouncil.htm

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. Successful delivery of the improvement strategies outlined in this report will result in a positive impact on outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the county.

2. Impact on crime and disorder:

- 2.1. Improvement strategies should have a positive impact upon crime and disorder, by reducing the number of children in care who offend.

3. Climate change:

- 3.1. No impact.

Key facts/performance

Appendix 1

General education:

	2007/08	2008/09	Direction
Number of children who had been in care continuously for at least one year on 30 September and were eligible to receive full time schooling during the school year just ended*	570	579	+1.58%
Percentage who were covered by a statement of special educational needs*	29.3%	29.7%	
Percentage who received a permanent exclusion from school*	0.53%	0.69%	▼
Percentage who missed at least 25 days of school for any reason*	18.42%	18.83%	▼

Key Stage 1 (school year 2):

	2007/08	2008/09	Direction
Number of children who had been in care continuously for at least one year on 30 September and were eligible for end of Key Stage teacher assessment*	22	24	+9.09%
Percentage who received a teacher assessment*	100%	87.5%	▼
Percentage who attained at least level 2 in reading*	45.45%	50%	▲
Percentage who attained at least level 2 in writing*	31.82%	50%	▲
Percentage who attained at least level 2 in maths*	50%	54.17%	▲

Key Stage 2 (school year 6):

	2007/08	2008/09	Direction
Number of children who had been in care continuously for at least one year on 30 September and were eligible for end of Key Stage 2 tests*	55	42	-23.64%
Percentage who sat and received a score on all these tests*	85.45%	69.05%	▼
Percentage of those eligible who attained at least level 4 in English (NI 99)*	34.55%	47.62%	▲

* Taken from the OC2 return (annual return on outcomes for children who have been in care continuously for at least one year as at 30 September – submitted to the Department for Children, Schools and Families in November each year)

	2007/08	2008/09	Direction
Percentage of those eligible who attained at least level 4 in maths (NI 100)*	30.91%	50%	▲
Percentage of those eligible who attained at least level 4 in science*	47.27%	66.67%	▲

GCSE (school year 11):

	2007/2008 (summer 2008 exams)	2008/2009 (summer 2009 exams)	Direction
Number of children who had been in care continuously for at least one year, in year 11 at school who were eligible to sit GCSE (or GNVQ equivalent) exam*	81	79	-2.47%
Percentage of these who sat at least 1 exam*	70.37%	72.15%	▲
Number who obtained at least 1 GCSE (or GNVQ equivalent) grade A*-G *	57	56	
Percentage of the total eligible to sit exam*	70.37%	70.89%	▲
Number who obtained at least 5 A*-G grades at GCSE (or GNVQ equivalent)*	34	37	
Percentage of the total eligible to sit exam*	41.98%	46.84%	▲
Number who obtained at least 5 A*-C grades at GCSE (or GNVQ equivalent)*	8	10	
Percentage of the total eligible to sit exam*	9.88%	12.66%	▲
Number who obtained at least 5 A*-C grades at GCSE, including English and Maths*	Data not collected	6	
Percentage of the total eligible to sit exam (NI 101)*	Data not collected	7.59%	

Health and well-being:

	2007/08	2008/09	Direction
Percentage of children aged over 10 who had been in care continuously for at least one year where were convicted or subject to final	8.95%	9.42%	▼

* Taken from the OC2 return (annual return on outcomes for children who have been in care continuously for at least one year as at 30 September – submitted to the Department for Children, Schools and Families in November each year)

	2007/08	2008/09	Direction
warning or reprimand during the year for an offence committed while in care*			
Percentage of children aged 5 or under who had been in care continuously for at least one year whose child health surveillance or child health promotion checks were up to date*	98.06%	95.12%	▼
Percentage of children who had been in care continuously for at least one year whose immunisations were up to date*	72.98%	70.31%	▼
Percentage of children who had been in care continuously for at least one year who had their teeth checked by a dentist*	86.21%	83.75%	▼
Percentage of children who had been in care continuously for at least one year who had their annual health assessment*	82.03%	78.03%	▼
Percentage of children who had been in care continuously for at least one year identified as having a substance misuse problem*	2.23%	2.26%	▲
Emotional and behavioural health of children in care (NI 58)	New indicator	21.1	N/A

Economic well-being:

	2007/08	2008/09	Direction
Percentage of those pupils who were eligible for GCSE examinations who were in full time education in the September immediately following the examinations*	67.90%	77.22%	▲
Percentage who were in full time training*	0%	3.80%	▲
Percentage who were in full time employment, with planned training*	4.94%	0%	▼
Percentage who were in full time employment with no planned training*	2.47%	1.27%	▼
Percentage who were in part time employment, education or training*	8.64%	5.06%	▼
Percentage who were unemployed as a result of ill health or a disability*	0%	1.27%	▼
Percentage who were unemployed for any other reason*	16.05%	11.39%	▲
Percentage of care leavers aged 19 who were in education, training or employment (NI 148)	58.6%	64.1%	▲

* Taken from the OC2 return (annual return on outcomes for children who have been in care continuously for at least one year as at 30 September – submitted to the Department for Children, Schools and Families in November each year)

	2007/08	2008/09	Direction
Percentage of care leavers aged 19 who were in suitable accommodation (NI 147)	84.8%	90.2%	▲

Safeguarding:

	2007/08	2008/09	12 months to Feb 2010	Direction
Timeliness of placements of children in care for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption (NI 61)	85.5%	100%	N/A	▲
Percentage of children in care who experienced three or more placement moves in one year (NI 62)	17.4%	16.4%	13.9%	▲
Percentage of children in care who have been in care continuously for at least two years who were living in the same placement for at least two years (NI 63)	67.7%	71.3%	66.4%	▼
Children in care cases which were reviewed within required timescales (NI 66)	89.1%	92.6%	89.7%	▼

* Taken from the OC2 return (annual return on outcomes for children who have been in care continuously for at least one year as at 30 September – submitted to the Department for Children, Schools and Families in November each year)