

# CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES SERVICE



Briefing for HWB Scrutiny  
Re-Referrals and Child Protection Plans

## **Re-Referrals to Children Young People and Families Service (CYPFS)**

When a family member or a professional reports a concern about a child that indicates a safeguarding issue or a complex situation which needs a child in need response, CYPFS take a referral and undertake an assessment. They complete any specific work needed to support the child or keep them safe. The case is then closed. We monitor the numbers of cases where a child is re-referred within 12 months as this is an indicator into the effectiveness of the system as a whole. Whilst some families will present with a completely different problem, many come back with the original problem which has resurfaced.

In 2016/17, 36.1% of referrals received were re-referrals. This was in the context of 22.3% across English local authorities and 23% for our statistical neighbours.

This was a significant practice concern and we have done a lot of work internally to understand and address this. In particular we have focussed on improving the quality of our single assessments, using a specific tool called the Resilience and Vulnerability Matrix (RVM) and set in place a set of Plymouth Best Practice Standards. Alongside this we have worked on ensuring that children whose cases are stepping down to partner agencies and early help are given an appropriate response.

We are pleased to note that this figure has come down to 31.2 % Q1 and 27.7 % Q2, against a target of 25% for 2017/18. However we recognise that we have more work to do in this area and we believe that our practice improvement work within Plymouth Referral and Assessment Service (PRAS) and Early Help will continue to drive this figure down.

## **Repeat Child Protection Plans**

When it becomes clear after assessment that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, a multi-agency meeting, called a child protection case conference, is convened. If the risk is substantiated then a child protection plan is agreed. Once the work is done to safeguard the child, the plan is ended. This often means that the child's case is stepped down to a child in need plan and then closed to CYPFS at an appropriate point, although work from other agencies often continues to support the family. As with the re-referrals described above, a second episode of child protection planning can often reflect that the original problem has re-surfaced and can indicate issues with multi-agency practice.

The English average figure for repeat child protection plans is 17.9% and for statistical neighbours is 17.7% although anecdotally we understand that many LAs are seeing a rise in recent months.

In Plymouth we saw a rise in repeat child protection plans to 29.6% in 2016/17. We have put a range of measures in place to address this, and raised the issue with our multi-agency partners through the PSCB. We have seen a gradual but sustained reduction in this figure during the first two quarters of 2017/18. At the end of Q2 we had achieved 25.4% against a target of 23%.

Siobhan Wallace

Head of Service CYPFS  
November 2017