

Performance, Workforce & Practice Quality Assurance Report July 2019

Workforce

Vacancies and Staffing

| Post type | Permanent | Agency | Vacant | Total FTE |
|----------------|-----------|--------|--------|-----------|
| HoS | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| SW Managers | 28 | 4 | 2 | 34 |
| Social Workers | 92 | 55 | 4 | 151 |
| NQSW | 11 | 0 | 1 | 12 |
| TOTAL | 135 | 59 | 8 | 202 |

In July there were 59 Agency Workers covering 55 social work vacancies across Children's Services; four agency workers are covering long-term absence and maternity leave. Within the 55 social work vacancies there are 12 posts being held for the Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) who are due to complete their Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) at the end of 2019. There are also a small number of social work posts being held for staff affected by the adoption regionalisation

There are currently 4 agency social workers and 1 agency Team Manager on-boarding and the offer continues to be extended to other agency social workers who meet our recruitment standards.

The current projected social work vacancy rate for December 2019 is 34 although, this may reduce further following the launch of a new recruitment campaign in September which will coincide with an article in The Guardian promoting the positive improvements made across Children's Services.

Caseloads

| Team | Av. Caseload March 19 | Av. Caseload May 19 | Av. Caseload July 19 |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Duty & Assessment | 15.6 | 15.6 | 17 |
| Intervention & Planning | 16.8 | 17.1 | 17.3 |
| Children in Care | 13 | 12.4 | 12.4 |
| 0-25 Disabilities | 15.6 | 15.2 | 16.5 |
| Onwards & Upwards | 19.1 | 19.3 | 19.5 |
| REACH | 10 | 8.8 | 14 |

There have been slight increases in caseloads across all services with exception to Children in Care and Onwards & Upwards. Although caseloads remain at manageable levels the volume remains subject to close monitoring by Heads of Service

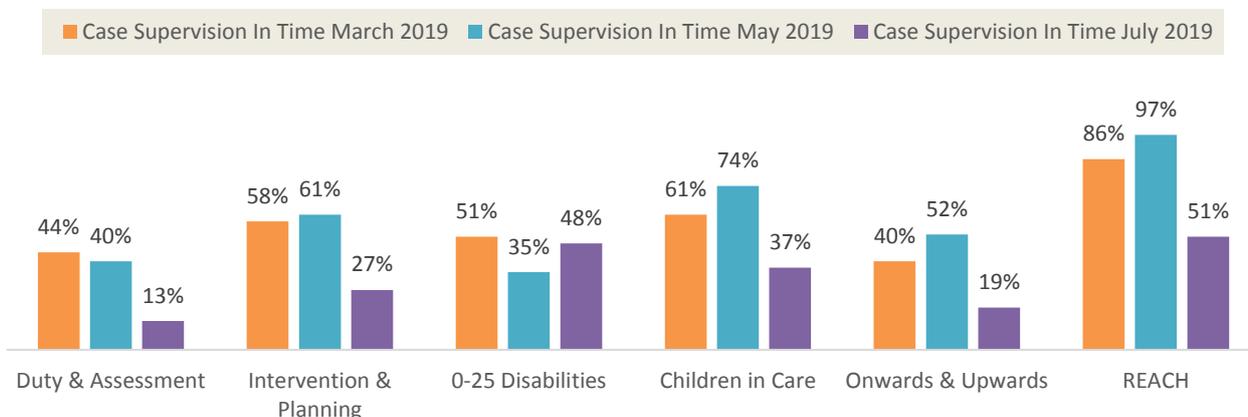
Supervision & Management Oversight

Supervision

| | DAT | I&P | 0-25 | CiC | O&U | REACH |
|--|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-------|
| Number of group supervisions within the last 3 months | 52 | 15 | 7 | 7 | 16 | 9 |

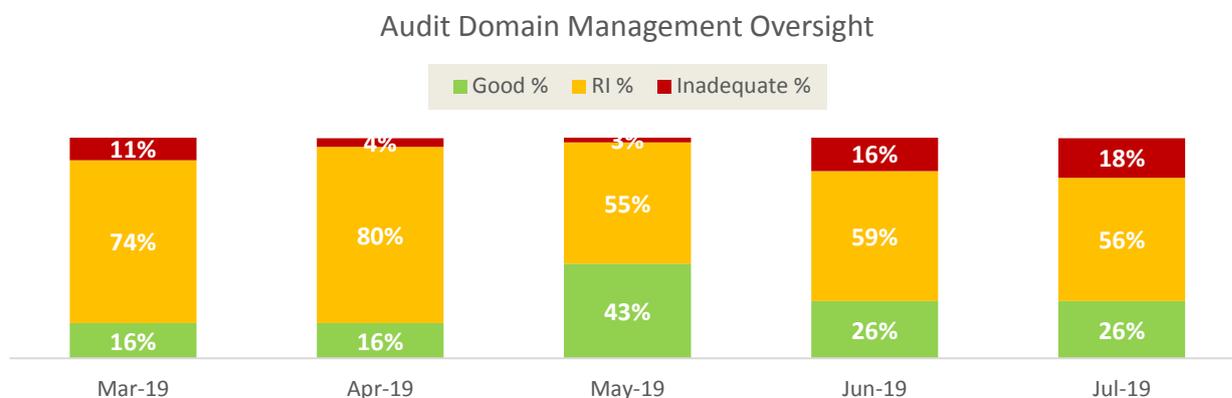
Duty & Assessment Teams (DAT) have embedded the group supervision model, supported by the Clinical Practitioner integrated within the service, the group supervision model has enabled staff to implement systemic principals in assessment which is having a positive impact on quality of practice, as demonstrated in the DAT audit data.

The group supervision principals applied in DAT are currently being developed in the Intervention & Planning (I&P) and Children in Care (CiC) Teams with the newly appointed Clinical Practitioners supporting the I&P Service



An in-depth review of the supervision audit domain indicates continuing improvement in the quality of reflective and child-centred supervision. There is a noted reduction in timeliness of 1:1 case supervision when compared to March Performance Matters.

Management Oversight



A cohort of 14 Team Managers and staff in practice leadership roles completed Year 1 of the Post Graduate Certificate in Systemic Practice in 2019. The impact of the training is evidenced in the high calibre of supervision seen in audited cases. Further staff and managers are finding

the systemic approaches that are embedding into management oversight, 1:1 and Group Supervisions are enabling a positive and supported learning experience which encourages multiple perspectives and creative intervention approaches.

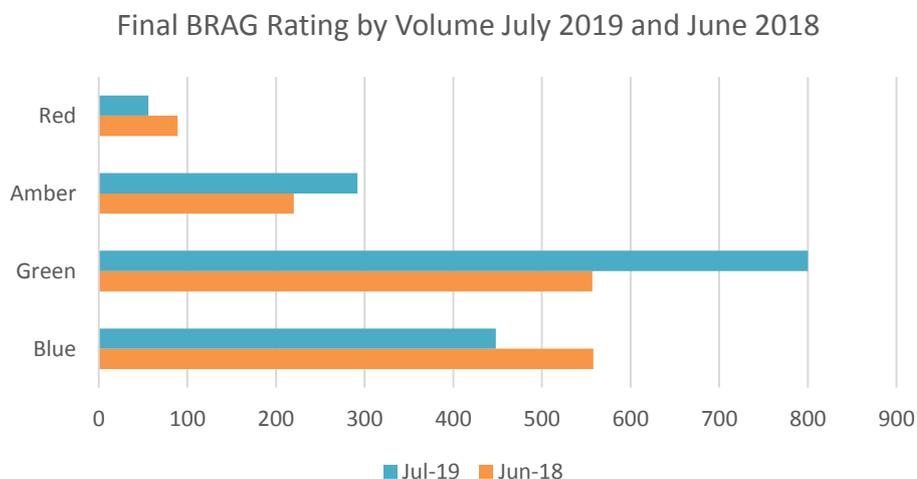
In October 2019/20 a further cohort of 40 practice managers and practice supervisors will be completing Year 1 of the PG Certificate in Systemic Practice which will further embed systemic approaches across the system.

The reported increase in inadequate audit grades in this domain of practice relates to six audited cases (from 2 teams) in which timeliness of supervision was over expected timescales. This is being monitored by the Head of Service. Overall, audit data is evidencing that children and young people are held at the centre of assessment, planning and decision making. Children's records demonstrate evidence of robust Management oversight with clear actions and timescales which are tracked to completion.

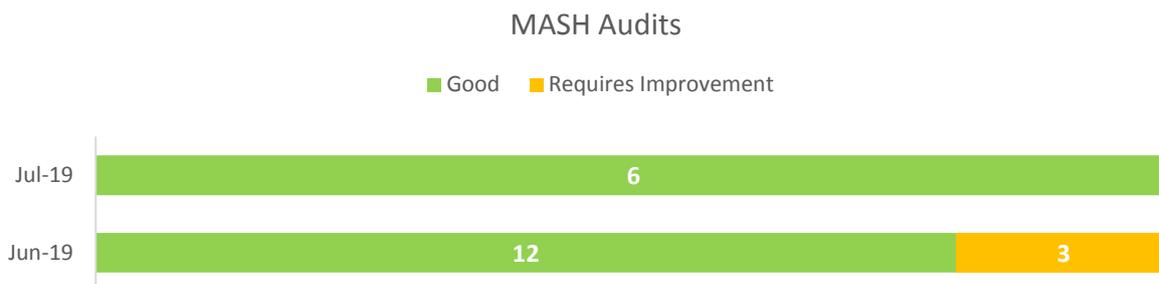
Social Work Practice

MASH

MASH has seen a consistent increase in contacts to the service over the past year and this is reflective of the broader understanding of the service and improved partnerships which is generating higher volumes of information requests. The re-modelling of 0-19 Early Help Services has also led to Early Help referrals being processed through the MASH. This is reflected in the high levels of Blue and Green contacts, the latter of which has increased by 46% since June 2018.



Reports are currently showing that almost half of the contacts received in the MASH are achieving a management decision within the prescribed 24 hours. There are factors that have impacted on timeliness of decision making and have included system outages resulting in backlogs of work and the appointment of new staff learning MASH processes. The MASH audits completed in June and July focussed on Amber and Red BRAG rated contacts and the timeliness indicator is not having an adverse effect on high priority (Red) contacts which continue to be responded to in good time and this is evidenced in the good audit findings over the reporting period. The MASH Head of Service will be prioritising a dip sample of green contacts with a focus on timeliness of decision making and the appropriateness of these contacts.



In the six-month period of February to August 2019, there were 9283 contacts to the MASH. Police contacts accounted for a third of these and on average a quarter of Police contacts resulted in the contact being progressed to a referral to Children’s Social Care (CSC). In the same period, Education contacts accounted for 14% of all contacts of which 23% progressed to CSC as a referral. Contacts from Health agencies accounted for 13% of all contacts of which only 12% progressed to a Referral to CSC.

The MASH Steering Group regularly interrogates the contact and referral data to ensure that referrals to the MASH are appropriate and are leading to timely and proportionate outcomes.

Early Help

The volume of open Early Help Assessments has risen by 28% from 719 in June 2018 to 919 in July 2019. Almost a third of Early Help work closed with all aspects of the work completed. A further third closed due to withdrawal of consent and the work having only been partially completed or incomplete. 17% of Early Help work was ‘stepped up’ to CSC due to safeguarding concerns arising. Families are effectively signposted to Universal or Universal Plus Services to complete remaining actions. Alternatively, families can take forward some outstanding actions without the need for professional support which is demonstrative of resilience.

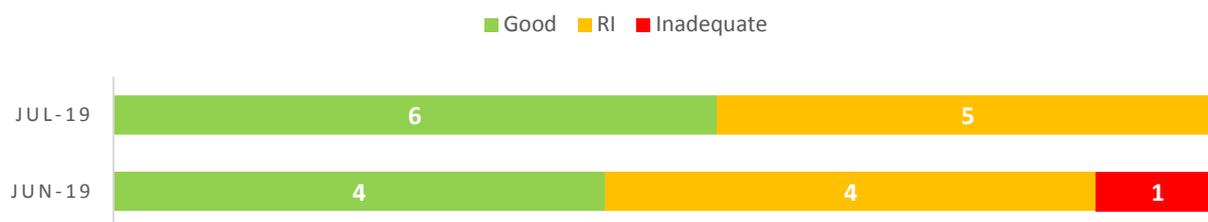
Early Help audit activity completed in the last quarter evidences strong engagement and relationship building with children and young people and excellent multi-agency working. Practitioners complete whole family Early Help Assessments and comprehensive child-centred Plans. 0-19 Practitioners have access to a bespoke training and workforce development offer, including dedicated Practice Development Workers and Quality Assurance Officers to ensure consistency in service delivery and targeted learning opportunities.

Duty & Assessment

Strategy Discussions, S47s & ICPCs

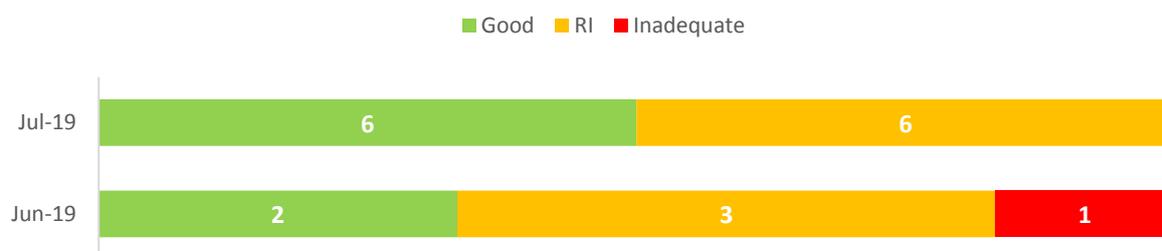
Multi agency attendance at Strategy Discussions remains consistent with exception to a drop in invitations to Health professionals recorded in July. In audits, the Strategy Discussion domain evidenced mostly ‘good’ quality in July and indicated that attendance of statutory partners was not only consistent but is leading to quality discussions and decisions. Audits evidence that Strategy Discussions and responses to risk were proportionate and timely and that information sharing with partner agencies was generally good.

AUDIT DOMAIN STRATEGY DISCUSSION



The volume of Strategy Discussions leading to a Child Protection Enquiry (s47) has remained even over the quarter. The volume of s47 enquiries leading to an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) was 35% in July which is in line with previous performance. There was an increase in ICPC's during June (large sibling groups), the July volume is back in line with previous reporting. There has been a slight reduction in the percentage of conferences held within 15 days to 82%, though this corresponds with the previous month's increase in ICPCs.

Audit Domain S47



Audit findings in the s47 domain of practice evidence some robust child protection enquiries. The audits found that practice could be improved with multi-agency training on key areas of risk and need i.e. the cumulative impact of chronic neglect, mental health issues and exposure to domestic violence. The audits also recognised some need for more explicit recording of the rationale for decisions where no further action would support information sharing between agencies.

Child Protection Conferences are well attended by multi-agency partners and this has contributed to the analysis of risks and protective factors. Audit findings demonstrate that the voice of the child is present in child protection planning with auditors being able to articulate clear examples of this in their feedback.

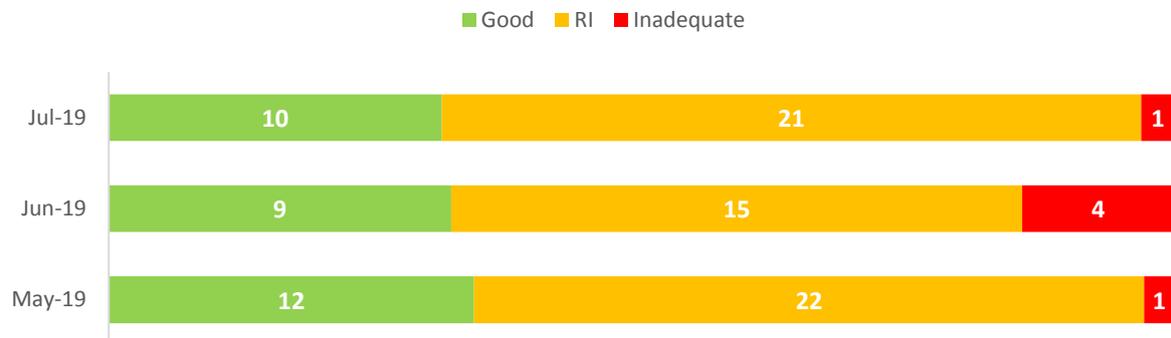
Assessments

The percentage of assessments completed within 45 days is 93.7%, which is an increase from 86.6% in the March data. It is expected that some assessments are more complex and will take longer to complete. The volume of children seen during assessment during July was 98.6% (97.6% of children seen and 1% unborn children).

Audit findings in this domain of practice demonstrate that there is good evidence that social workers are using research, engaging children in direct work to ascertain their views and demonstrating greater insight and analysis of risk and need. The audits provide evidence that social workers are mostly collaborating well with other agencies and the impact of reflective

group supervision can be seen. Positively, social workers are visiting children regularly and paying good attention to diversity and relationships.

Audit Domain Assessment



The audits recognise a need for some improved compliance with statutory timescales and demonstration of more sophisticated analysis of family functioning, capacity for change and complex issues i.e. personality disorder, gender identity and child mental health needs. The workforce development programme is responding to these identified learning points.

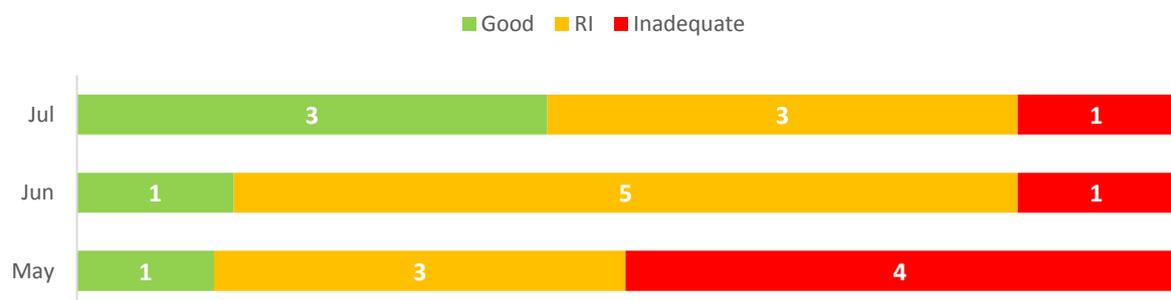
Intervention & Planning

Children in Need (CiN)

There are 550 children subject to CiN Plans which is in line the volume seen over previous months. In congruence with assessment data, there is a slightly higher ratio of boys subject to CiN Plans (54%) and a higher proportion of children from Black & minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds (64%) over the period February – August 2019.

Successful visits to children subject to CiN Plans over 4-week reporting cycles average 67% in time with a slight increase to 69% for recorded attempted/unsuccessful visits. Timeliness of recording can impact on reporting in this domain in addition to the availability of families.

Audit Domain CIN



Audit findings in this domain of practice demonstrates continued improvement with good evidence of social work practitioners developing effective working relationships with children and families. Audits show evidence of the use of direct work tools and creative engagement approaches to affect positive change. Findings evidence that most CiN Plans are reviewed

regularly and the views and contributions of professionals are clearly recorded and contribute to good multi-agency planning.

Areas of learning from audits point to the need for practitioners to confidently close or step down CiN cases by promoting access to universal, universal plus or targeted support services when safeguarding concerns within the Plan have been satisfactorily addressed.

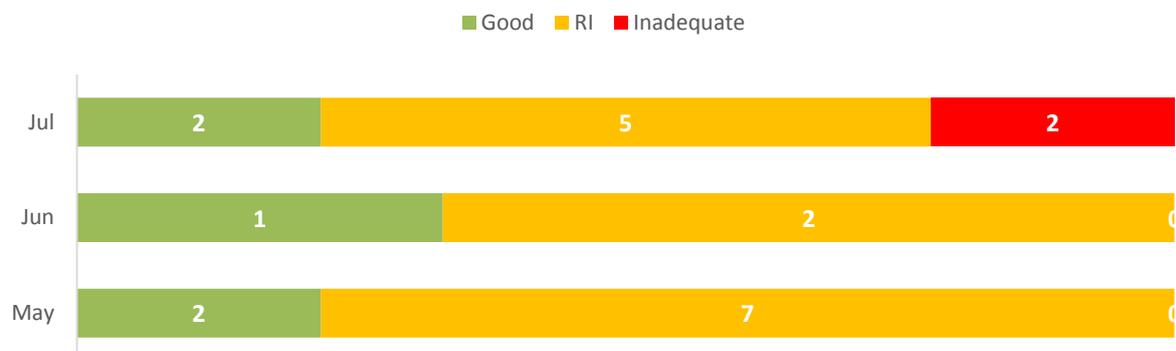
Child Protection Plans (CPP)

In July there were 202 children subject to Child Protection Plans which is the highest volume of CPP's reported in over 12 months. Almost half of this cohort, 94 children (46.5%), are subject to CPP's under the category of Emotional Abuse, this category is often relative to the presence of domestic abuse in the parental relationship. 75 children (37.1%) are subject to a CPP under the category of Neglect making this the second highest category. The lowest category is sexual abuse, against which 7 (3.5%) children are subject to a CPP.

174 CPP's have been open for less than a 1 year and 28 children have been subject to a CPP for more than one year but less than two years. No children have been subject to a CPP for more than two years.

The average timeliness of visits to children subject to a CPP has improved from the same point last year, however, has fallen in July due to one team reporting very low compliance. The July data notes that 67% of CP visits were successfully undertaken within 4 weeks; this increases to 71% when attempted but unsuccessful visits are included. As with CiN visit data, timeliness of recording visits can negatively impact on performance data.

Audit Domain CPC, Plan & Core Groups



Audit data evidences that the quality of social work practice against this domain is strong with consistent and appropriate thresholds being applied. Audit findings show an increase in children and young people attending their Child Protection Conferences and Core Group Meetings which is leading, together with increased parental engagement, to Plans that are co-produced and more effective interventions. Audits demonstrate that families clearly understand what they need to change and are clear on the help they will receive to enable change to happen swiftly for children. Communication and information sharing with other agencies across the partnership comes through as a strength.

There are some learning points from audits that will strengthen practice in this domain and

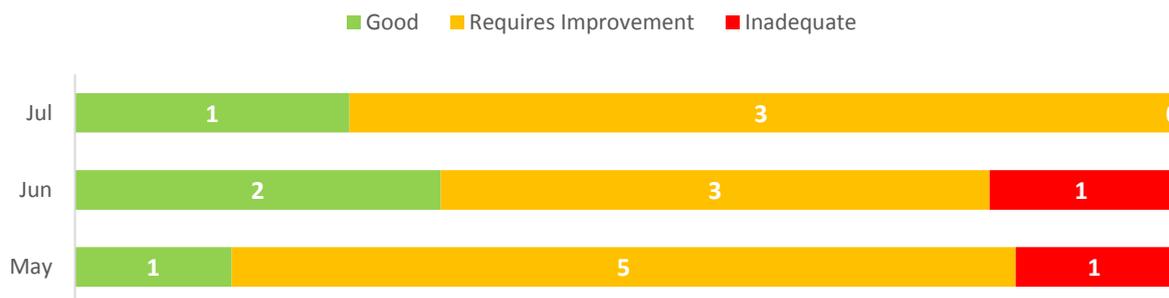
these are mostly related to compliance with statutory timescales and best practice i.e. sharing reports with parents and children (where appropriate) 5 days ahead of the Conference. The Conference Reviewing Officers have been delivering workshops to staff on expectations relating to child protection processes to support a stronger focus on compliance based practice whilst training is also being delivered to build on the positive progress made in practitioner observations, direct work with children and the analysis of risk and protective factors.

Children in Care (CiC)

In July, there were 319 Children in Care, which is an increase on the previous period but in line with monthly volume reported for the year to date and just a slight increase of 3 from the same point last year. There has been an increase in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) presenting directly within the Borough and requiring accommodation and support which has increased the number of children requiring accommodation. There was a net increase of 1 UASC recorded in July, bringing the total number to 64; 4 more than this time last year and 4 under the threshold.

The number children experiencing 3 or more placement moves has doubled to 8 since April. In the 12 months to July 31st this number totals 40. The YTD rate of 3+ placements stands at 2.5%, almost twice as many as reported in July 2018. We have been reviewing care plans and convened more placement stability meetings at an earlier stage, resulting in earlier and planned decisions where children and young people’s needs can be best met in alternative or more suitable placements. This is resulted in a reduction in crisis or unplanned moves and an anticipated increase achieving early permanence for some children. One of the factors leading to the reviewing of care plans is that we demand higher quality care for our children and young people which has in some instances resulted in a need for children to move placements. Audit data supports that the quality of work has not been affected by the increase in placement moves.

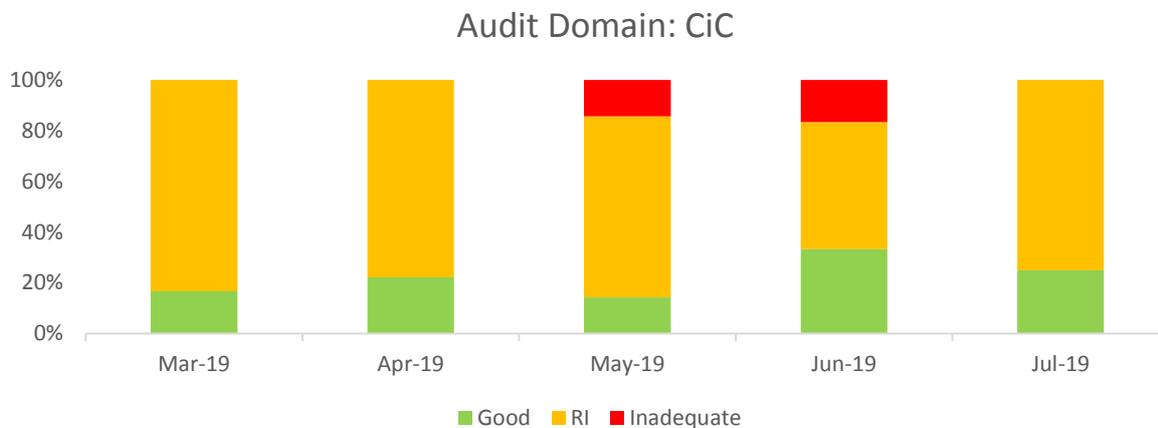
CiC Audits



Children living with Barnet approved fostering households continue to rise month on month and now accounts for just over 64% of all foster care. Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements have remained constant all year. For comparison, all Barnet provision across the service accounts for just 47%. The carer recruitment team have worked hard over the last year to further increase the number of approved in-house foster carers resulting in fewer IFA being used. We remain committed to our foster care recruitment drive #moretogive.

58% of Children in Care are open to the CiC Teams, with just over a quarter of children open to Duty & Assessment or Intervention & Planning Teams. 207 (65%) of children have been in

care for less than 12 months; 21% have been in care for over 2 years, which indicates that the seemingly high proportion of children in care held in I&P are there correctly. Audit data from the domain 'CiC' shows that standards of work for children in care remains consistent.



Learning points from this domain indicate that a continued focus on visits within statutory timescales and frequent reflective supervision will continue to drive practice improvements and demonstrate positive outcomes on our looked after children and young people. Increased mid-way tracking and monitoring by IRO's, the inclusion of wider family members at an earlier stage in contact arrangements and permanency planning would further enhance practice and outcomes.

The rate of statutory visits to Children in Care, in accordance with their plans, currently stands at 83%. Had those unsuccessful visits, which were conducted on time but ultimately failed to take place, happened, this figure would have been 85%. ChAT analysis shows the majority of visits for CIC are undertaken in 12 weeks.

Timely Initial Health Assessments of Children coming into care has remained relatively stable all year, with the figure currently standing at 70.2%; there are however 11 cases where details of their health assessments has not yet been recorded in LCS. Should these all be on time the figure would rise to 89.5%. Timely dental checks have fallen month on month, currently standing at 66.3% (from 81% at the end of April 2019).

The roll out of All About Me requires social workers to coproduce the document with their children and young people, which is a purposeful activity that takes place over more than one visit. This a new document requiring all information to be added new, as opposed to being imported from previous reviews which may have caused delay in completing the form on LCS. This could explain the fall in the rate of timely reviews across the past 18 months. Once the first new form is completed fully, then when it comes to updating this at the next review, this will be shorter and more purposeful exercise, and we expect to see this data improve.

The implementation of All About Me has supported improved case recording, which shows language of curiosity, reflection and collaboration. Children and young people are captured more accurately on their records with a clear focus on their thoughts and feelings about their plans. Smarter and more child focussed care planning is taking place with a clear focus on early permanence, early placement stability and early decision making when placement moves are needed in order to achieve permanence.

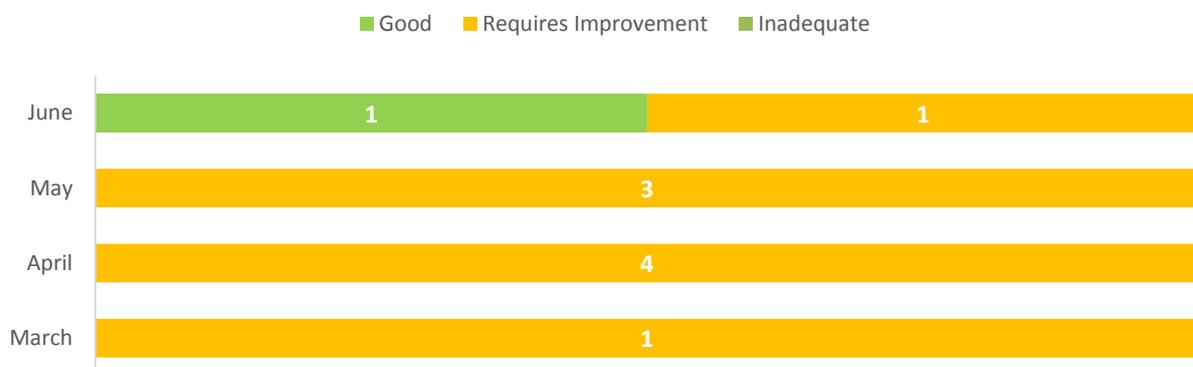
A continued focus on practice and direct work with children and young people in these teams has driven improvements in the quality of practice. Practitioners have received more frequent high quality reflective supervision and robust practice development support through group supervision and the workforce development offer which is having the positive impact on the overall quality of practice. Strong multi-agency working with education and therapeutic services is well embedded and supports strong social work practice and interventions well.

Practice has improved in relation to the way in which children and young people are supported through transitions, beginnings and endings. Transition planning is collaborative and coproduced with children and their network of family and professionals. Smarter and more child focussed transitions are taking place. Review of the CiC audit domain demonstrates that most practitioners have very strong working relationships with the children, young people carers' and families they work with and are able to anticipate their changing needs and support their journey into independence.

Care Leavers

Care Leaver figures have seen a significant rise in numbers, with a 24% increase from July 2018 (n=238) to July 2019 (n=296). This is due to the higher proportions of children aged 14+, who account for over half of those coming into care each year. There has also been an increase in the number of UASC coming into care aged 14+, and UASC currently account for 30% of all Care Leavers, which is a 46% increase from July 2018 (n=61) to July 2019 (n=89). The audit data shows that despite this increase, the quality of work has remained at requires improvement or good.

Onwards & Upwards Audit Gradings



Pathway Plans updated in the last 6 months, appears to be on a downward trend, with 66% recorded for July 2019. Managers have been closely monitoring the logging of this data to ensure it is updated and maintained effectively, so that it reflects meaningful work with our young people, as 72% of care leavers have been visited in the last 3 months. We have kept in touch with 91.2% of our Care Leavers aged 18 - 25, which has been consistently above the target of 90% for the past 12 months.

We are good at providing our care leavers with the right environment to flourish. 91.2% of our 19-21 cohort are in Suitable Accommodation, with Independent and Semi-Independent

constantly remaining the most common type of accommodation, and this continues to remain a positive outcome for our young people. 64% of our young people are in education, employment or training, with recent figures remaining consistently stable and within the parameters of our target of 65%, Barnet continue to perform above our statistical neighbours and the England average.