

North Somerset Council

REPORT TO THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 29TH JUNE 2023

SUBJECT OF REPORT: PERFORMANCE MONITORING

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: BECKY HOPKINS – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S FAMILY SUPPORT & SAFEGUARDING

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is asked to note the performance information presented in this report and to give comment on both areas for improvement and areas of good performance.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Children and Young People's Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel receive regular performance management reports to help members evaluate the extent to which the council and its partners are achieving key plans and objectives for children and young people's services, and to provide appropriate challenge and suggestions to improve performance.

This report presents the following standard items:

- any recent Ofsted inspections of council services
- an analysis of the performance of the relevant Key Corporate Performance Indicators (KCPIs) for Quarter 4 2022/23, that fall under the remit of the Panel.
- an overview of the performance of various Key Service Measures for Support and Safeguarding services within the council.

2. POLICY

The Council's Performance Management Framework includes a requirement for quarterly reporting of our performance position so that members and officers can monitor progress against our key plans and objectives and take appropriate action where progress is below target or needs additional focus.

3. DETAILS

INSPECTION AND IMPROVEMENT

Children services inspection 13th March 2023. [Report published](#) 11th May 2023.

For all North Somerset schools (as of March 2023):

Primary schools

- 11% Outstanding (7)
- 80% Good (51)
- 4% Requires improvement (3)
- 3% Inadequate (2)
- 1% Not yet inspected (1)

Secondary schools

- 36% Outstanding (4)
- 27% Good (3)
- 36% Requires improvement (4)
- 0% Inadequate (0)
- 0% Not yet inspected (0)

Special schools and PRUs

- 50% Good (2)
- 25% Requires improvement (1)
- 25% Not yet inspected (1)

KEY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each year the Directorates within North Somerset Council produce an Annual Directorate Statement (ADS). This in effect translates the commitments in the North Somerset Corporate Plan into a series of Directorate level commitments. These commitments are then measured by a combination of Key Projects and Key Corporate Performance Indicators (KCPIs). North Somerset Council Scrutiny Panels are then updated quarterly with all KCPIs related to their area of work (fig 1.1 and table 1.1).

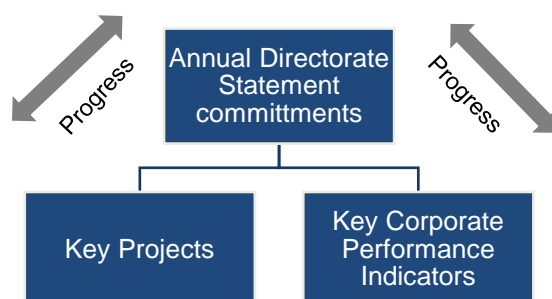


Fig 1.1 measuring corporate performance

Table 1.1 below shows the Quarter 4 position of all KCPIs related to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel. Please note that national benchmarking data is intended to provide a comparison of local data against the latest national data wherever possible. Where the data has not yet been published the latest available data has been given. Local measures cannot be benchmarked. Contextual measures do not have a target.

Table 1.1.

Measure	Year End 2021/22	2022/23				Year-End Target	National benchmarking England (Eng) Southwest (SW)
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
The percentage of assessment of completing within 45 working days (children social care only)	93.0%	84.9%	84.0%	64.6%	82.0%	Increasing trend <i>Higher is better</i>	Eng 87.6% SW, 86.8% (2020/21)
The percentage of re-referrals to children social care within 12 months of the previous referral	17.7%	13.2%	19.0%	15.5%	19.0%	Decreasing trend <i>Lower is better</i>	Eng 22.7% SW 22.7% (2020/21)
Rate of children on a child protection plan (rate per 10k)	21.2 per 10,000	23.05 per 10,000	22.36 per 10,000	24.3 per 10,000	25.0 per 10,000	Contextual (not targeted)	Eng 40.7 per 10k SW 41.4 per 10k
Rate of children in care (rate per 10k)	45 per 10,000	51.9 per 10,000	46.33 per 10,000	49.7 per 10,000	52.0 per 10,000		Eng 59.2 per 10k SW 67 per 10k
The percentage of child protection plans started that were a second or subsequent plan	35.3%	30.4%	21.74%	45.0%	38.9%	Decreasing trend <i>Lower is better</i>	Eng 25.2% SW 22.1%
The percentage of children in care with three or more placement moves - rolling 12 month period	13.0%	13.6%	16.0%	19.2%	14.5%	Decreasing trend <i>Lower is better</i>	Eng 9.0% SW 10.7%
The percentage of children in care in long-term placement stability	71.0%	70.1%	72.0%	70.0%	67.1%	Increasing trend <i>Higher is better</i>	Eng 70.0% SW 70.0%
The percentage of care leavers (19-21 year olds) in suitable accommodation	94.8%	88.2%	94.0%	90.2%	94.7%	Increasing trend <i>Higher is better</i>	Eng 88% SW 89%
The percentage of care leavers (19-21 year olds) in education, employment and/or training	58.2%	45.1%	44.0%	50.4%	49.0%		Eng 52% SW 52%

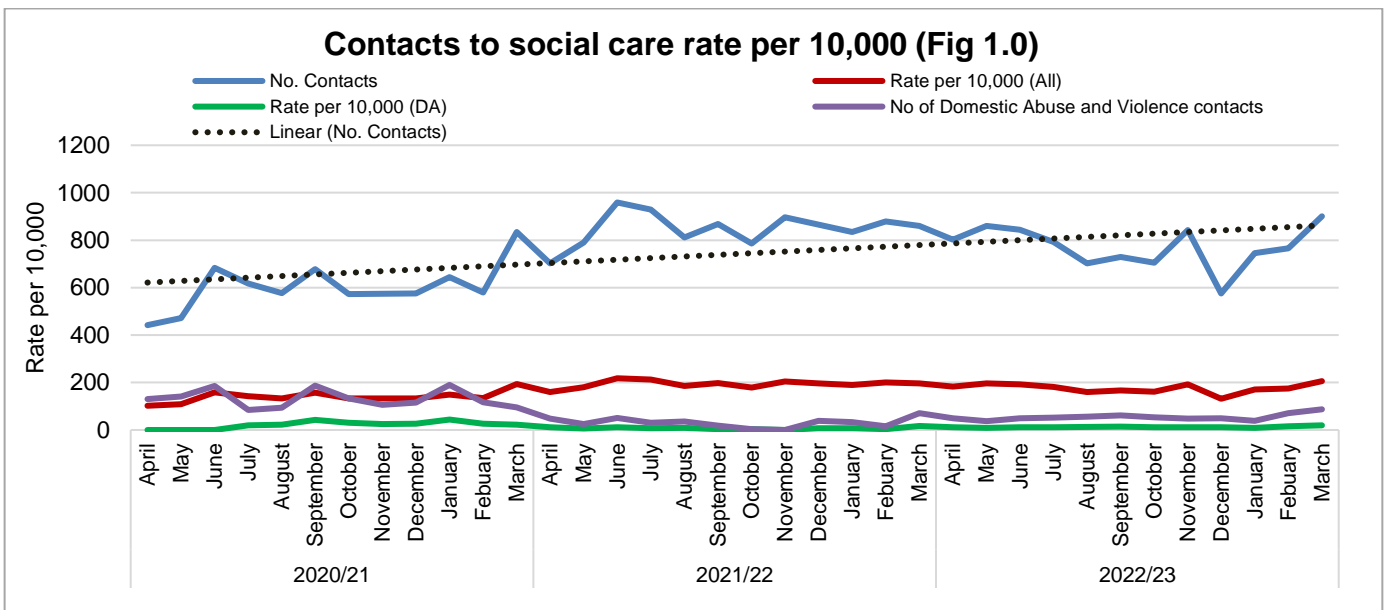
KEY SERVICE MEASURES FOR SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING

Contacts

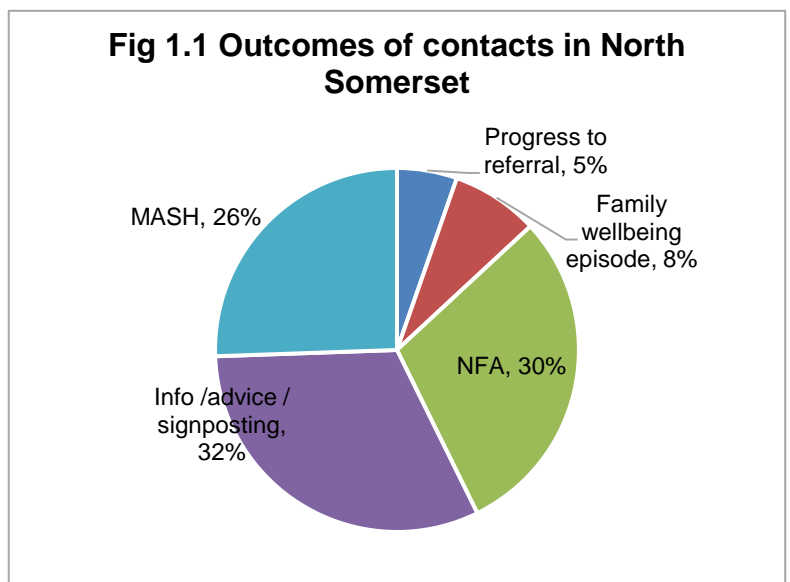
Where there is a need for advice and / or information or support from Children’s Services a contact is made. Since February 2021 we have operated a single ‘Front Door’ for all new contacts with the aim of ensuring children receive the Right Help at the Right Time.

Since Quarter 1 of 2020/21 there has been an increase in the number of contacts received. During the 2022/23 reporting period the rate of contacts has fluctuated for example, with November seeing a drop to 131 and December seeing a peak in the rate to 192. Over the course of Quarter 4 the rate has increased over the year with the average rate of contacts being 184 however, overall the average remains lower than the previous reporting year (195).

After a peak of 445 Domestic Abuse (DA) contacts during Quarter 1 2020/21, we saw a significant reduction in numbers during Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 2021/22 with 86 and 41 DA contacts respectively. However, during Quarter 4 2022/23 there has been an increase in DA contacts with 196 recorded for this period.

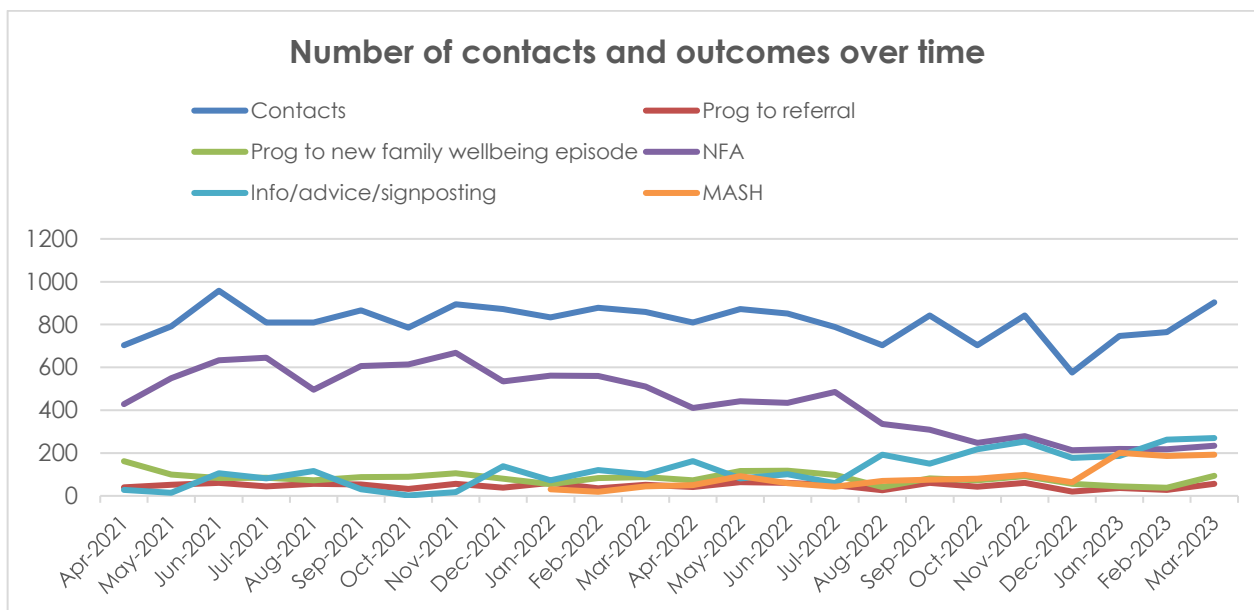


Outcomes for contacts to Family Support and Safeguarding vary (fig 1.1), but as at the end of Quarter 4 the main outcomes were: Info/advice/signposting (32%), No Further Action (30%), MASH (26%), Family Wellbeing episode (8%) and Progress to referral (5%).



Contact outcomes

The number of contacts with an outcome of No Further Action (NFA) was 234 in March. This is a decreasing trend over the past 6 months and is considered positive and a result of ongoing work at the front door in relation to decision making and how decisions are defined and also due to developments in our performance reporting.



For the month of March contact outcomes show that 32% were 'Info, advice or signposted' followed by 28% 'NFA'.

Since October 2022 the service will be undertaking regular Quality Assurance activity to provide assurance that decision making at the Front Door is appropriate to identified needs and work is ongoing with partners in relation to the number of contacts made where the outcome is No Assessment or Service.

Family Wellbeing (Children's Social Care Early Help Offer)

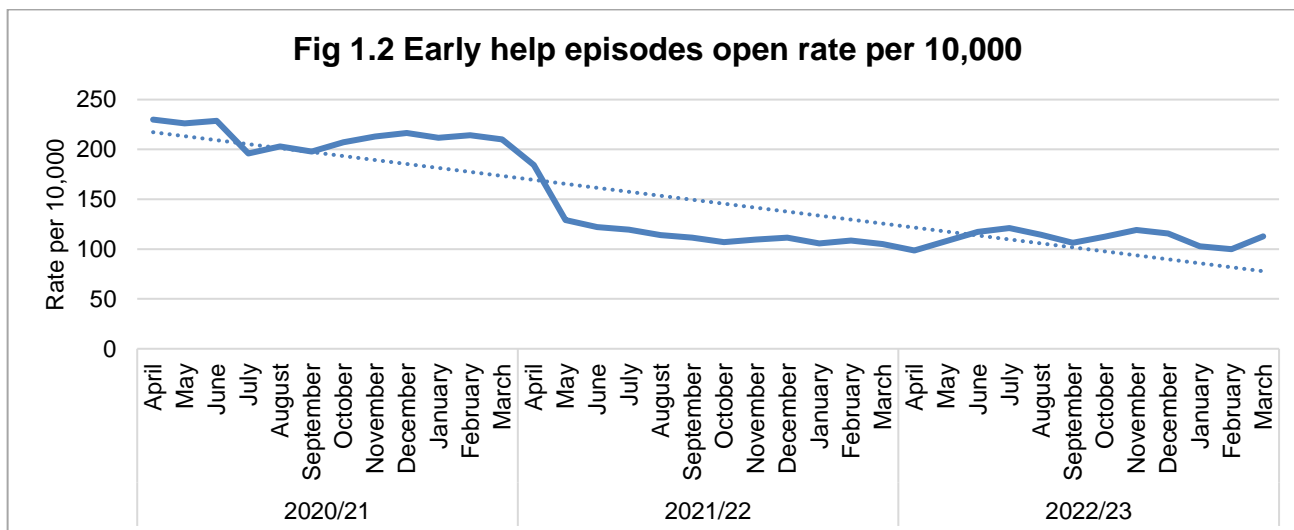
Across the partnership in North Somerset, we work together, share information, and put the child and their family at the centre, providing effective support to help them solve problems and find solutions at an early stage to prevent problems escalating.

All children and young people receive universal services, such as, maternity services at birth, health visiting, school nursing and family support delivered from our family hubs, schools and youth offending service. Universal services seek, together with parents and families, to meet all the needs of children and young people so that they are happy, healthy, and able to learn and develop securely.

The needs of children and their families change over time depending on their circumstances and it is our aim to offer a service which can respond to these changing needs and ensure children are happy, healthy, safe and can achieve their potential. In North Somerset, we want to offer help and support to these children and their families at the earliest opportunity. There may be times when the needs of the family are such that intensive early help or specialist statutory intervention is required.

The need for early help may occur at any point in a child or young person's life and in response to this we have extended our Family Wellbeing service to offer intervention and

support from age 0-18. The team works with children, young people and their family to identify strengths and needs and to find practical and achievable solutions.



At the end of Quarter 4 there were 493 Early Help episodes open, giving a rate of 113 per 10,000, which is a very similar to the previous 3 Quarters. The number of children open to Family Wellbeing has remained fairly stable since May 2021. 117 new episodes were started in March 2023, 56 more than the previous month of February.

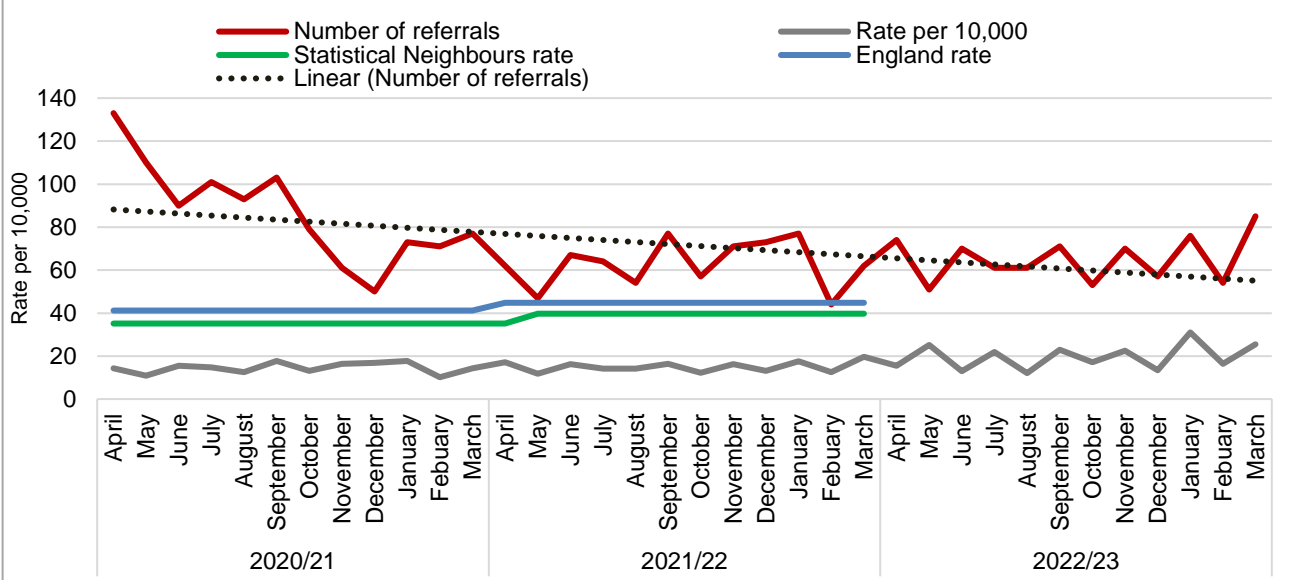
48 assessments were completed in March. On average across the last 6 months 33 assessments are completed per month within Family Wellbeing. The timeliness of assessments saw 65% of all assessments completed within 45 working days. This is a slight decrease compared to the months of February, 71% and January 72%. Across the last 6 months on average 71% of assessments are completed within timescales. Work is ongoing in Family Wellbeing to ensure assessments are proportionate.

Referrals

If a contact is made where the assessed level of need is that statutory intervention is required, a referral is made to one of our Family Support and Safeguarding teams. The number and rate of referrals varies by month. The 2022/23 annual average reported 85 referrals which compared to the annual average reported for 2020/21 was 65, showing an increase resulting in the trend overtime starting to even out.

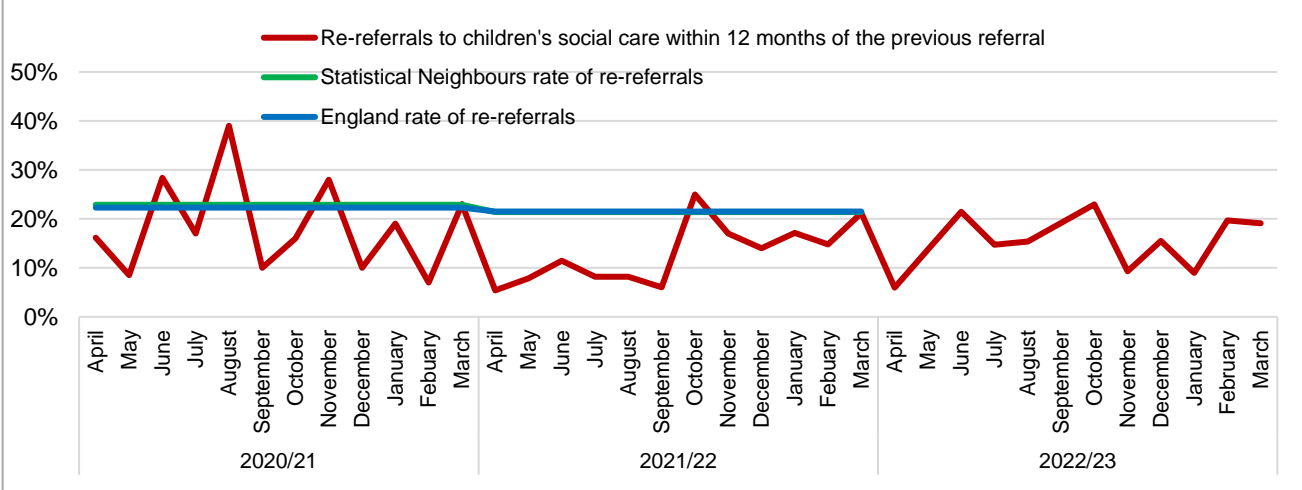
The North Somerset referral rates continue to remain lower than both our statistical neighbours and the national rate (fig 1.3). During Quarter 4 2022/23, the average rate of referrals was 24.3 per 10,000 children which is above the average referral rate when looking at the previous three quarters: Quarter 3, 17.7, Quarter 2, 19.0 and Quarter 1, 17.9.

Fig 1.3 Referrals to children's social care (rate per 10,000)



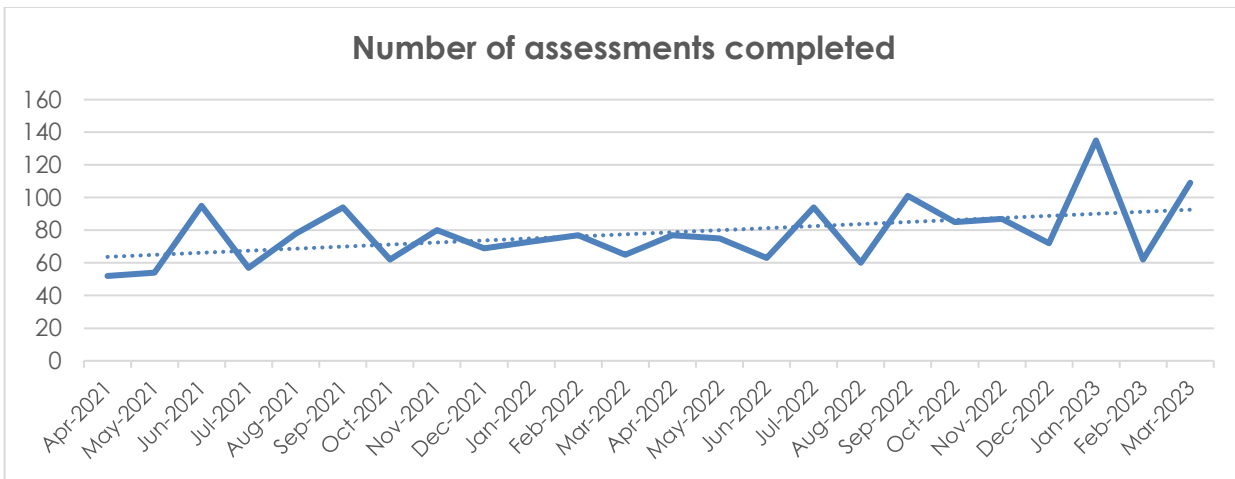
Re-referrals is a measure of where children with a previous referral in the last 12 months are re-referred into Family Support and Safeguarding. During Quarter 4 2022/23, the average rate of re-referrals was 16% which compares to 18% for the same period in 2021/22 (fig 1.4) and is lower than the statistical neighbours and national average, 21% and 22%. This indicates that intervention with children and their families is successful and that identified changes which are needed are made and sustained.

Fig 1.4 Re-referrals to children's social care within 12 months (%)



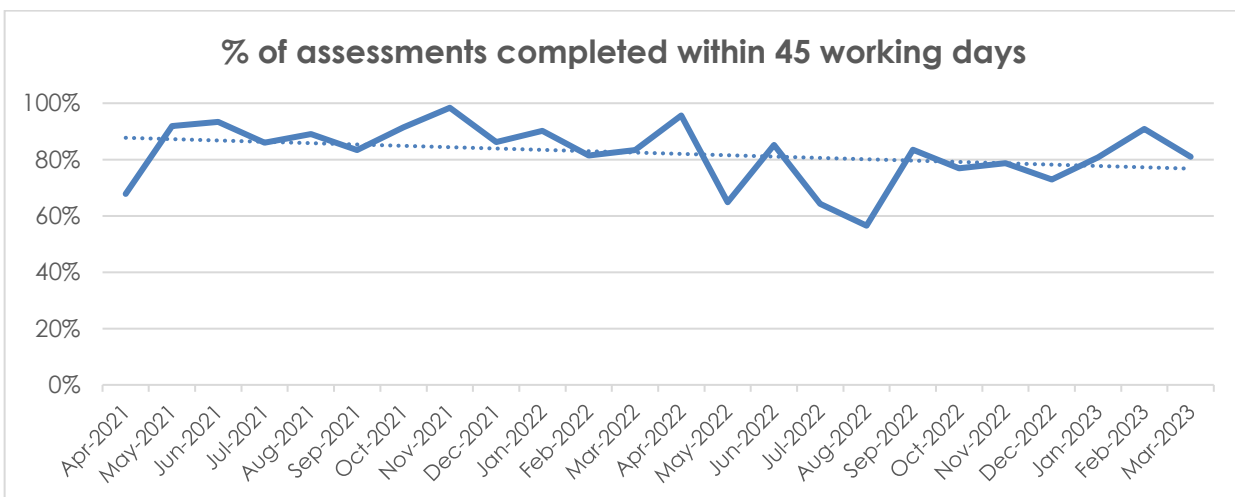
Assessments

109 assessments were completed during the month of March. This is significantly higher than the same period in 2021/22 where 65 assessments were completed. The number of assessments has fluctuated over the previous 6 months with an average of 91 assessments completed per month.



At the end of March, the % of assessments completed within 45 working days was at 81%. This is lower in comparison to the same time last year when performance was 92%. Timeliness of assessment performance is currently lower than statistical neighbours average of 83.1% and England average of 84.5%. On average for the past 6 months 73% of assessments were authorised within 45 working days.

Currently average caseloads (see below) are higher than previously, and this is having an impact on assessment timeliness. The teams have identified this issue and are working to improve and ensure that assessments are proportionate to identified need.



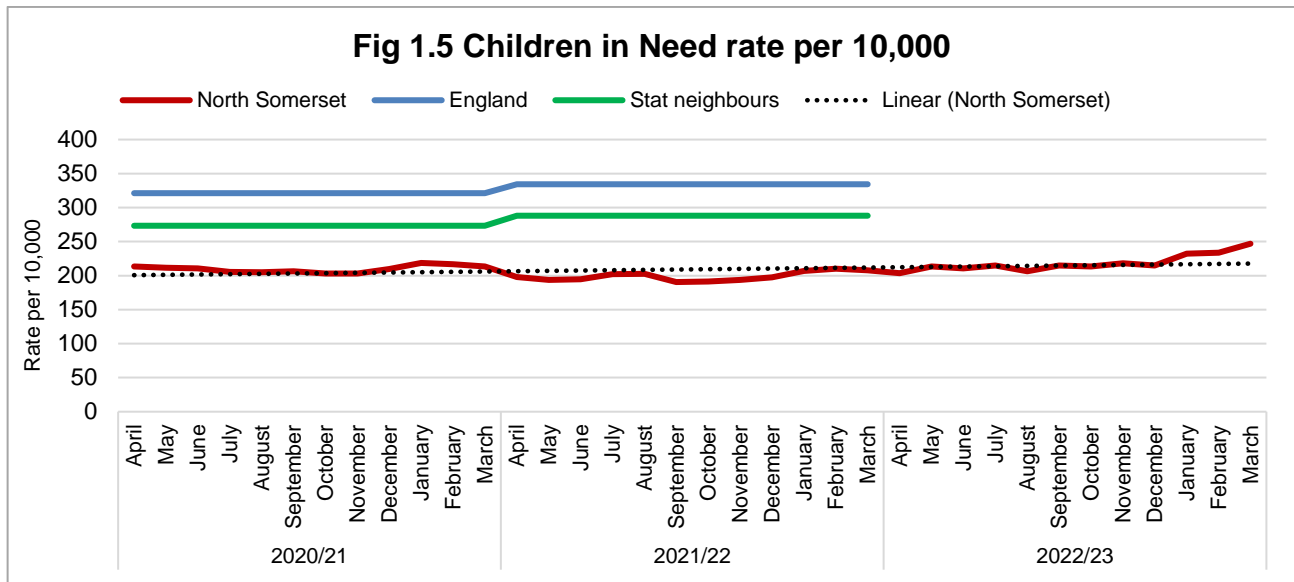
Children in Need

A child can be considered in need if:

- there is a need for statutory services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development
- there is a need for statutory services to prevent significant or further harm to health or development
- they are registered disabled

At the end of Quarter 4 2022/23, the rate was 246 children in need per 10,000 children which is higher in comparison to the same time last year when the rate was 207. From July 2020 onwards we have started to see the rate increase slightly overall. Even with this

increase the rate for children on a Child in Need plan in North Somerset is below that of our statistical neighbours and England averages (fig 1.5).



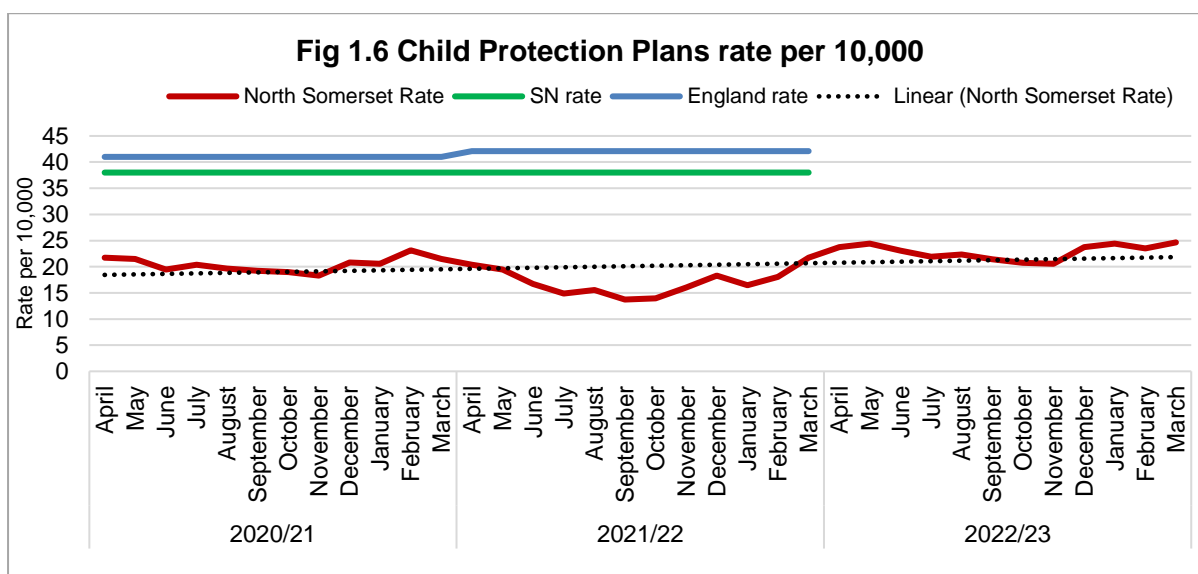
At the end of March, 257 children were on a child in need plan (open to a social worker). This is an ongoing increase over time with numbers now almost double what they were in March 2022 (163). Previously there has been a steady increase in numbers month on month but from November to March there has been a sharp rise in plans starting.

In Quarter 4, the main reasons for a CiN plan were ‘abuse and neglect’ followed by ‘family in acute stress’ and ‘family dysfunction’.

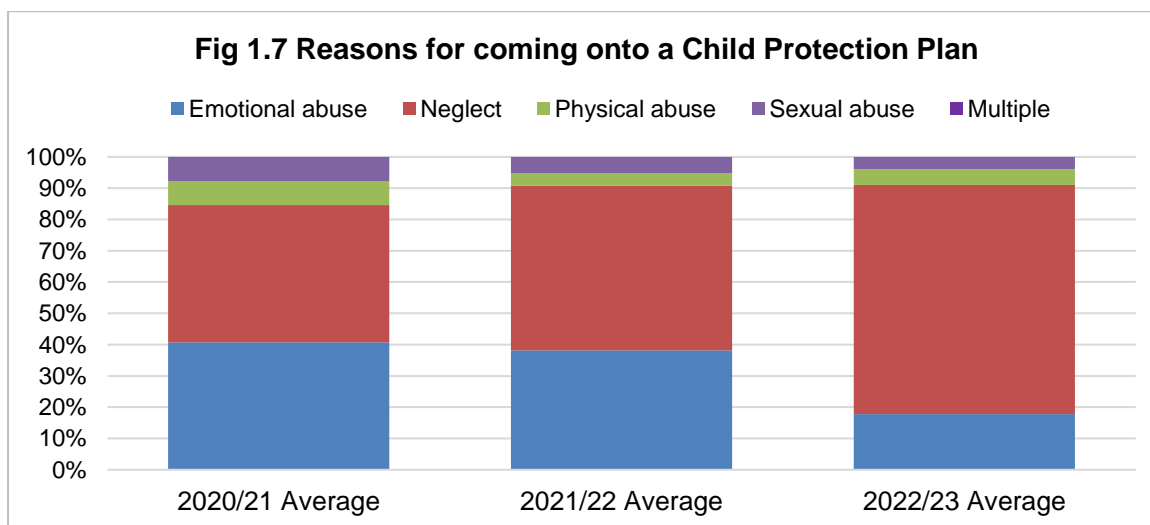
Child Protection Plans

Some children are in need of statutory intervention because they are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm. In these cases, a child protection conference is held. If the child protection conference decides that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, the local authority and partner agencies working with the child and their family will develop a child protection plan. The child protection plan sets out how the child can be kept safe, the strengths, the concerns and what needs to change and in what timescales.

Over the past three years there has started to be an upward trend (linear) in the rate of children subject to a child protection plan however, the rate is significantly lower than the national rate and the rate of our statistical neighbours (fig 1.6). At the end of Quarter 4 2022/23, there were 108 children subject to a child protection plan which is an increase on previous quarters.



The most common reasons for children being subject of a child protection plan continue to be neglect and emotional abuse. There has been an increase in 2022/23 for the category of neglect compared to the previous 2 years.



Contextual safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, children’s experiences of significant harm outside their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can present risks and may feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers can have little influence over these relationships and children’s experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

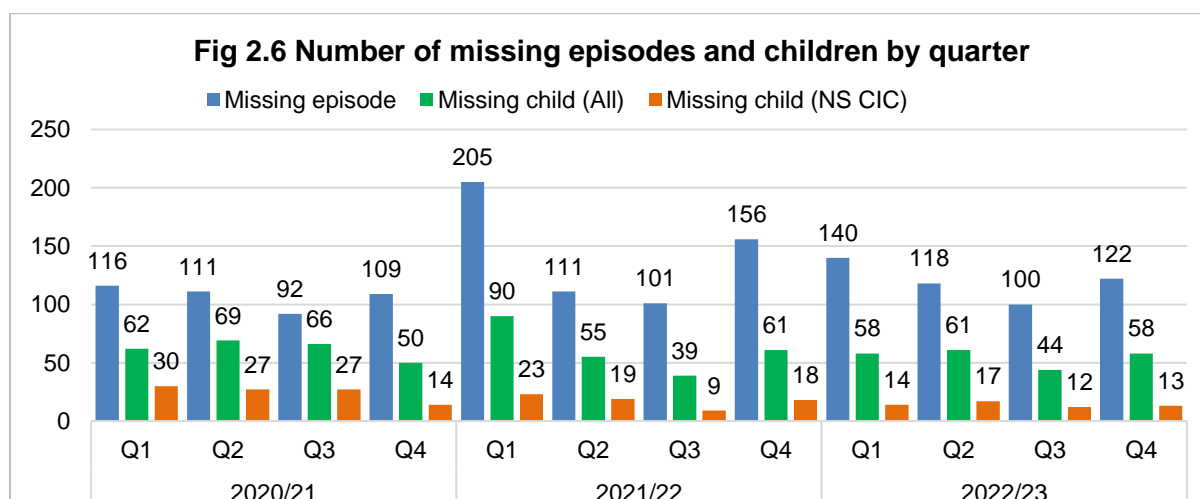
Contextual Safeguarding expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse beyond their front doors. Work in this area, which includes children who go missing and children who are vulnerable to or at risk of exploitation, is another key area of our children’s improvement plan across the partnership.

Missing Children

During Quarter 4 2022/23, there were 122 episodes of children going missing which related to 58 individual children who went missing. Out of those 58 children, 13 children were children in care, 5% out of the children in care cohort during Q4.

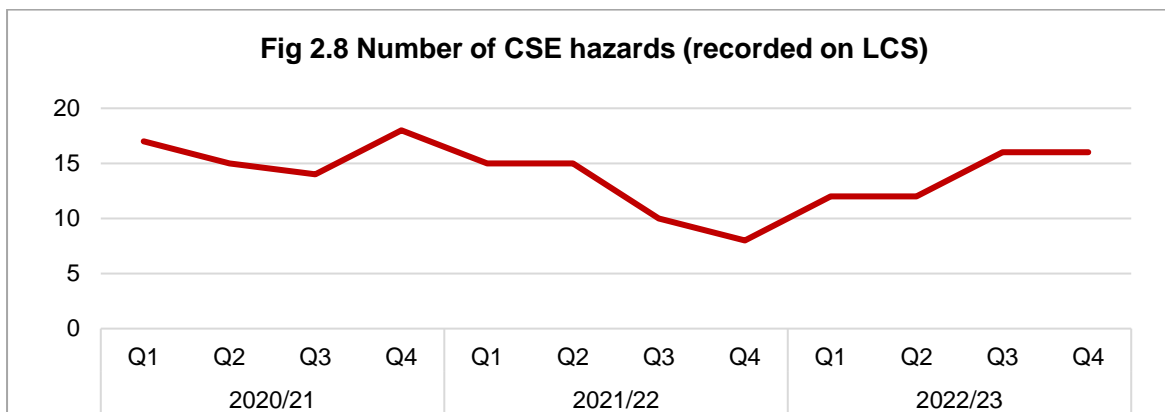
After a missing episode, children are offered a comprehensive Return from Missing Interview. During Q4 2022/23, 70% were offered and accepted an interview which is a great improvement on the previous quarter when the figure was 44%. Percentage of refused interviews was 30%, again improvement on previous quarter at 34%.

The main reason why children went missing during Q4 2022/23 was to have Contact with Family and Friends (45%).



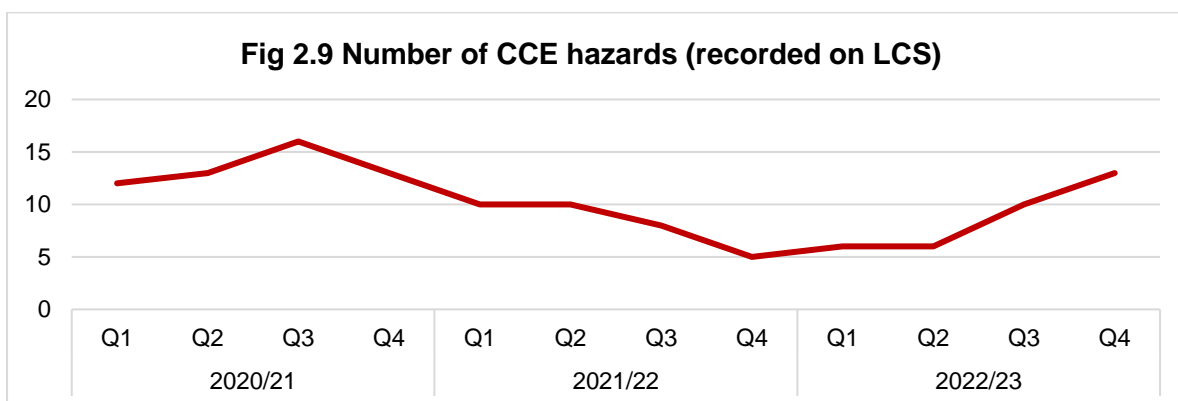
Child Sexual Exploitation

Fig. 2.8 shows the number of open sexual exploitation hazards on the children’s recording system (LCS) at the end of each quarter. At the end of Quarter 4 2022/23 there were 16 open child sexual exploitation hazards. This compares to 8 open hazards same time last year.



Child Criminal Exploitation

Fig. 2.9 shows the number of open criminal exploitation hazards on the children's recording system (LCS) at the end of each quarter. At the end of Quarter 4 2022/23 there were 13 open child criminal exploitation hazards. This compares to 5 open hazards same time last year.

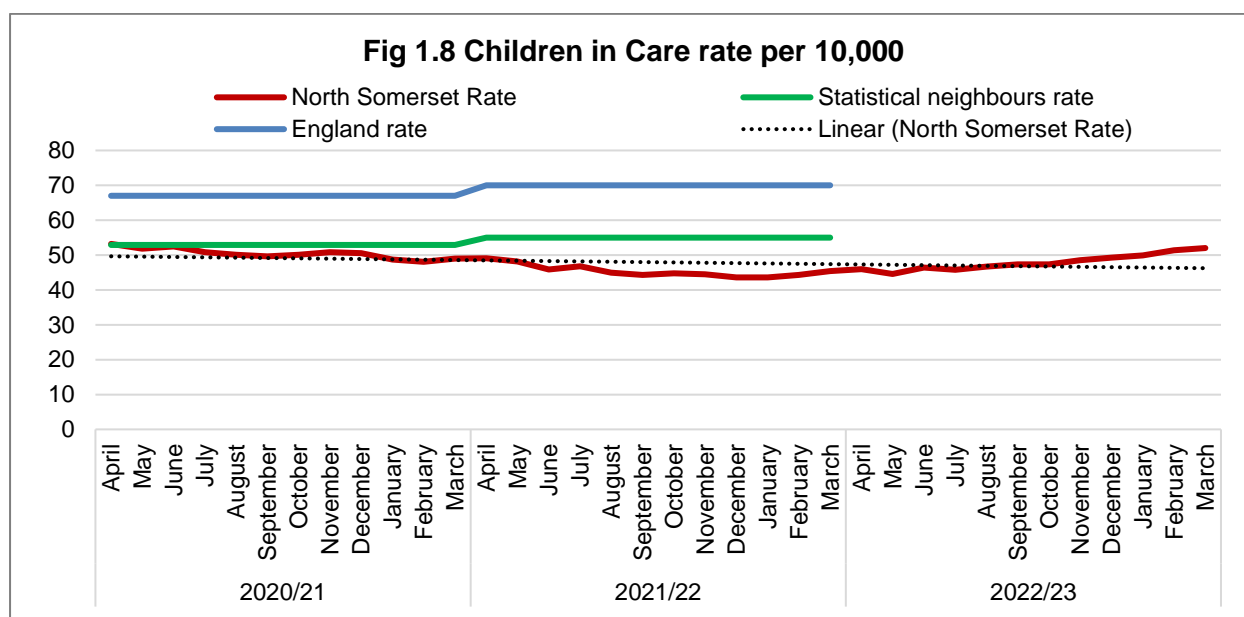


Children in Care

In some situations, it is necessary for children for their own safety and wellbeing to enter our care. This will be either through a voluntary arrangement with the parents under Section 20 of the Children Act where parental responsibility remains fully with the parent or through a court order, which gives the local authority a share of parental responsibility. In statutory terms these children are referred to as 'looked after' but we prefer to refer to them as children in our care. Young people cease to be looked after on reaching their eighteenth birthday, if they have not ceased to be looked after earlier. Senior managers oversee all requests for a child to become looked after. Every child's care plan is reviewed regularly to ensure their plan meets their needs is being progressed and that permanency is secured at the earliest opportunity.

In North Somerset at the end of Q4 2022/23, there were 223 children in care which gives a rate of 52 per 10,000 children. The number of looked after children has been gradually increasing since the start of the year and it is also higher than same time last year (199 children). This rate remains below both the national rate at 70 and our statistical neighbours' rate at 55.

It is noted that of the 223 children, 31 were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. This compares to 18 children at the end of 2021/22. This increase accounts largely for the overall increase in children in care.



The reasons for a child entering our care has remained consistent in recent years (table 1.2), with ‘abuse or neglect’ being the main reasons followed by ‘family in acute stress’, ‘family dysfunction’ and ‘absent parenting (and other)’. A new category of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child/Young Person was introduced at the beginning of Quarter 4 2021/22 and this has seen an increase of this reason being used during 2022/23.

(table 1.2)	Abuse or Neglect	Disability	Parent Illness or Disability	Family in Acute Stress	Family Dysfunction	Absent Parenting and other	UASC Child/Young Person
2019/20	39.6%	3.5%	3.7%	29.7%	16.3%	7.2%	-
2020/21	41.0%	3.0%	3.0%	28.0%	17.0%	8.0%	-
2021/22	49.0%	2.0%	2.0%	18.0%	18.0%	10.0%	1.0%
2022/23	42.0%	2.0%	2.0%	19.0%	19.0%	5.0%	11.0%

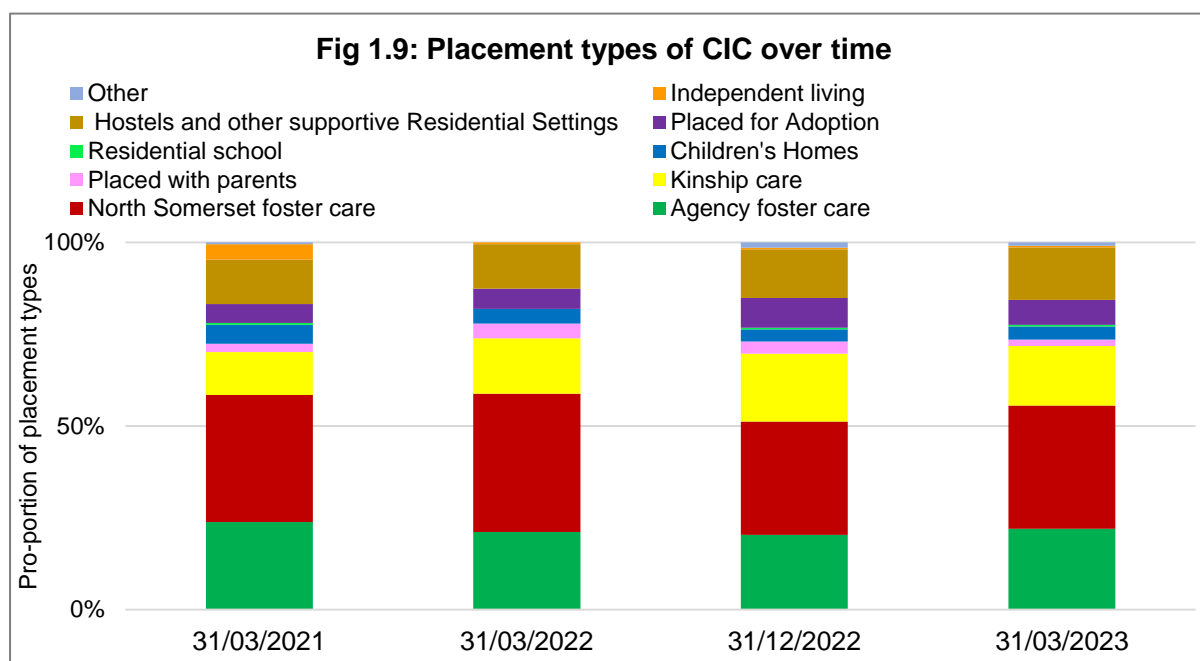
Placement types of Children in Care

There are various arrangements for a looked after child’s living arrangements known as placements. Nearly three quarters (72% at the end of Q4 2022/23) of North Somerset’s Children in Care live in foster care. This is similar to the latest figure nationally (70%). Other placement types include children’s homes, supportive residential placements, independent living and adoptive placements.

At the end of March 2023, out of the 72% Children in Care placed in foster care, 34% were placed within North Somerset foster care, 22% within agency foster care and 16% within kinship care. The percentage of agency foster care has remained at levels similar to previous quarters and it is 5 % lower than the England average. The

overall numbers of children cared for by North Somerset foster carers, including kinship, has also remained steady and it is 7% higher than the England average.

	Mar-2021	Mar-2022	Jun-2022	Sep-2022	Dec-2022	Mar-2023	England 31/03/2022
Agency foster care	24%	21%	21%	19%	20%	22%	27%
North Somerset foster care	35%	38%	36%	36%	31%	34%	43%
Kinship care	12%	15%	16%	16%	18%	16%	



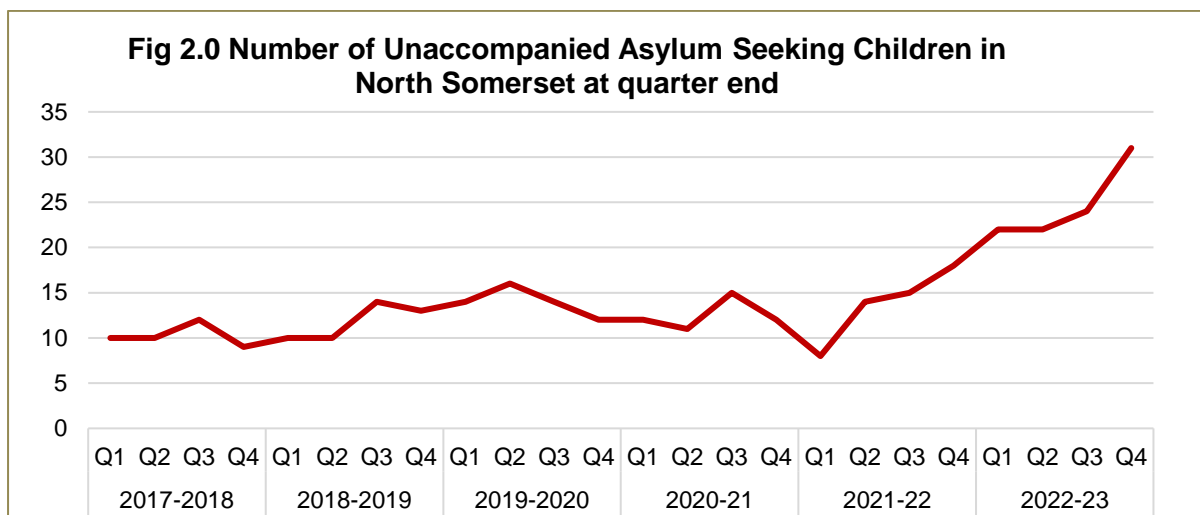
At the end of Q4 2022/23, 68% of all Children in Care were placed inside North Somerset (same figure for this time last year) and 25% were placed outside local boundary (compared to 26% same time last year). The figures are also better than the England averages of 56% placed inside LA boundary and 41% placed outside. This excludes children placed for adoption.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) has steadily increased over the last 6 years with 2022/23 showing the sharpest increase so far. At the end of Q4, we've reached a peak of 31 CIC who were UASC and this is the highest number we've ever had. This compares to 24 UASC at the end of the previous quarter and 18 UASC same time last year. There were a total of 29 new UASC children who were accommodated in North Somerset during 2022/23. National and statistical neighbours' figures have also shown an increase during 2021/22 compared to previous years, however the increase is not as sharp as ours.

Our cohort of UASC represents 14% of the total Children in Care cohort which compares to the latest England figure of 7% and our statistical neighbours – 8%. The majority of UASC are placed in semi-independent living accommodation such as hostels and other supportive residential settings– 74%, followed by 23% in foster care and 3% independent living.

Fig 2.0 shows the number of Children in Care who are UASC at the end of each quarter over the last 6 years in North Somerset.



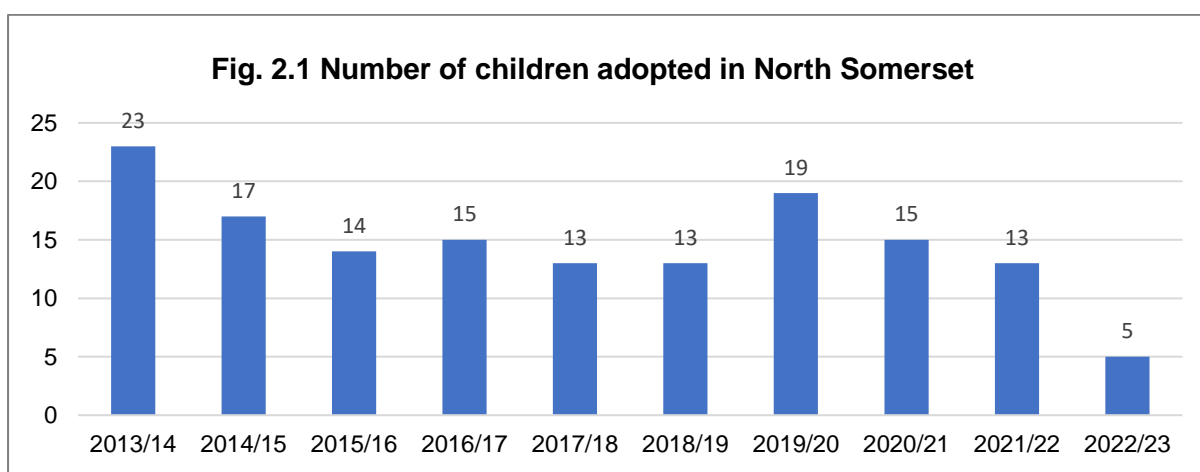
Demographics of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

Demographic analysis of the UASC cohort throughout Q4 2022/23 showed that:

- All the children were male
- The average age at the time of starting to be looked after was 16, with all the children being aged between 14 and 17 at the time of their arrival.
- There is a range of different nationalities with the main ones listed below: Sudanese, Iranian, Iraqi, Albanian, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Congolese, Moroccan, Afghan

Adoption

During the 2022/23 reporting year (1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023), we had 5 children adopted from care in North Somerset. The low number of children adopted in the last year has been affected by the Somerset Judgment. On average 14 children were adopted per year over the last 10 years.

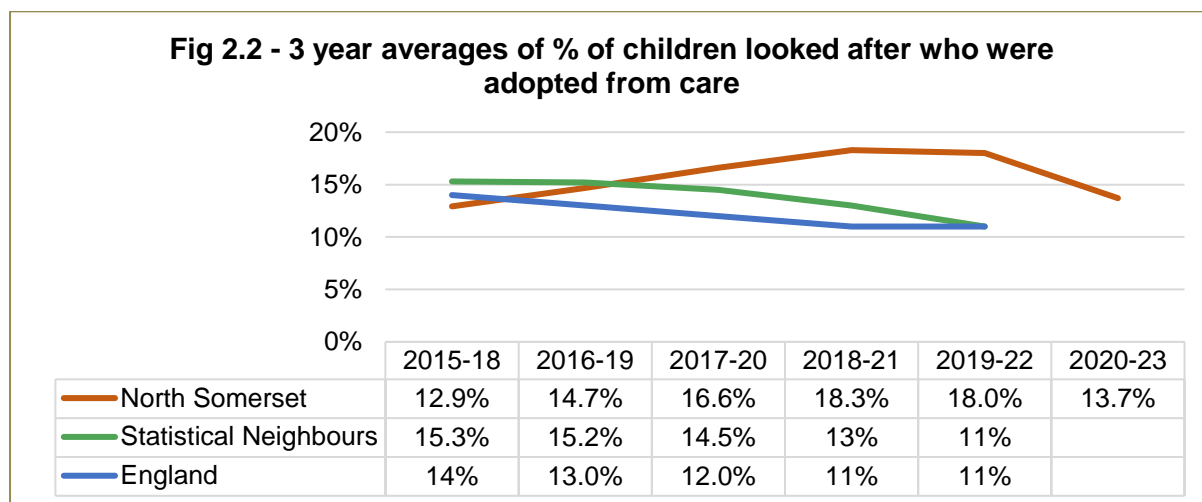


Nationally, the number of Children in care who were adopted increased by 2% in 2022, following a fall of 17% in 2021. The large decrease in 2021 was likely a result

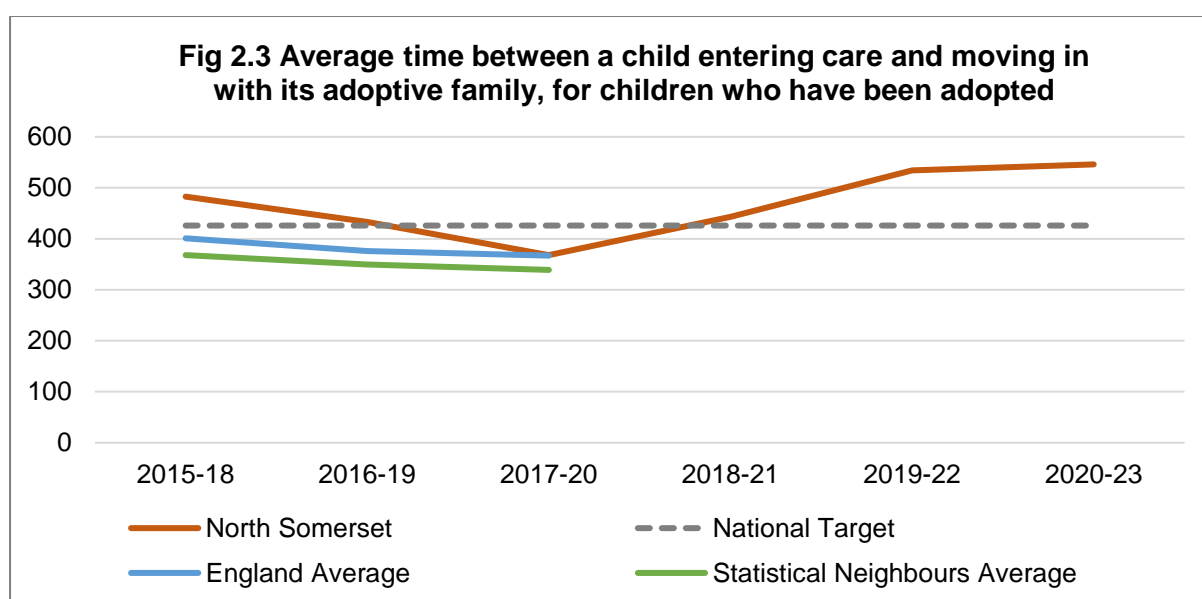
of the impact on court proceedings during the pandemic, where cases progressed more slowly or were paused.

The average age of a child at adoption for North Somerset during 2022/23 was 2.6 years. This compares to 2 years during 2021/22 and 3 years during 2020/21. Nationally, the average age at adoption during 2022 was 3 years and 3 months.

The current 3 year rolling average of percentage of children adopted from care is 13.7% which has fallen compared to previous years due to the lower number of adoptions in 2022/23. The figure is still above the latest available figure for England (11%) and statistical neighbours (11%).

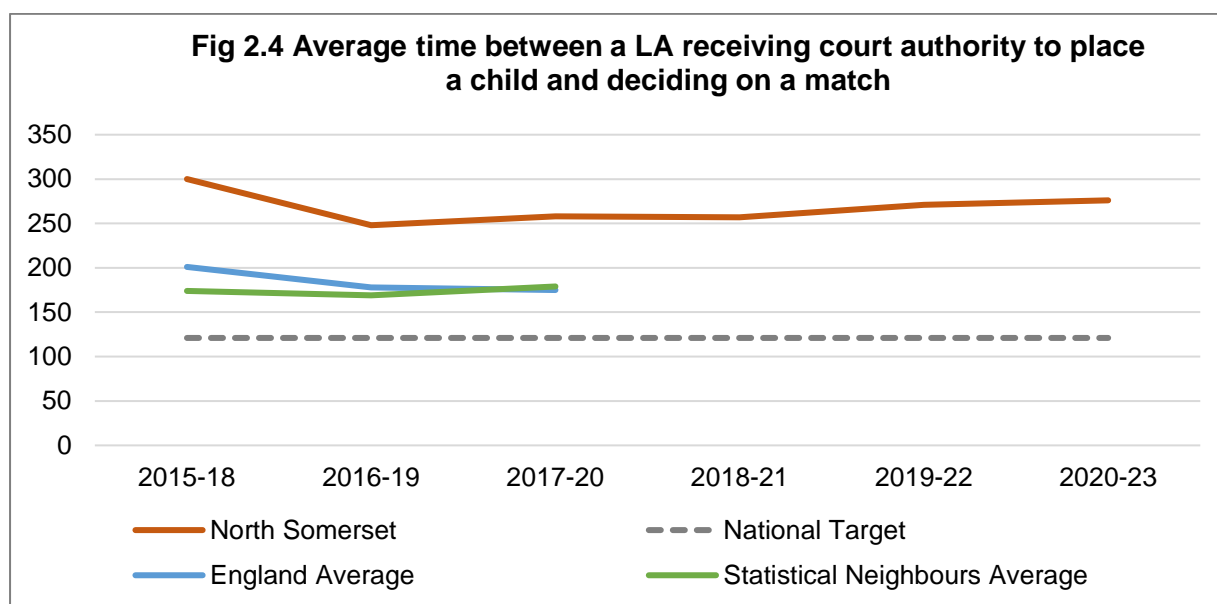


The current 3 year rolling average (2020-23) for the time between children entering care and being placed with their adoptive family stands at 546 days which is an increase on previous years. The current average is also above the latest published figures for statistical neighbours (339 days) and national average (367 days), however it should be noted that benchmarking data is not yet available beyond 2017-20.



The time between LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match has been consistent over the last few years however higher than both

statistical neighbours and England averages. The current rolling 3 year average for 2019-22 is 276 days which is above the latest published figures for statistical neighbours (179 days) and national figures (175 days).



Foster Carers

North Somerset Council has 87 registered foster carers.

As of the end of Quarter 4 there were:

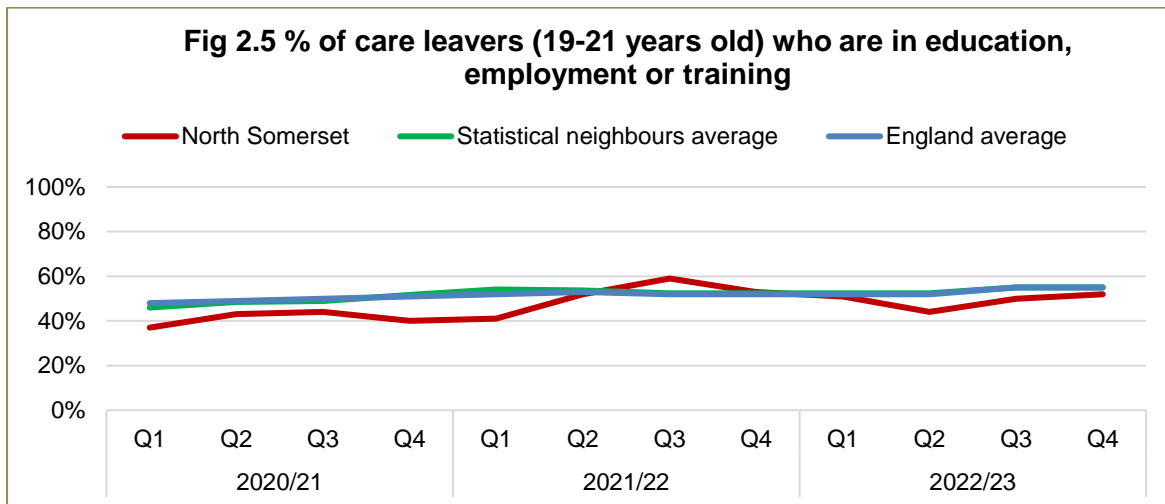
- 53 registered households known as mainstream foster carers who are recruited and assessed by the council
- 28 kinship carers that are friends or family of the children in care
- 4 supported lodgings households that provide support for a small number of older young people.

2 short term respite carers (Family link scheme) providing short term respite care for a number of children in need.

Care Leavers

The council has responsibility to continue to help and support young people that were previously in our care. Key areas of support are in housing and accommodation and employment and education.

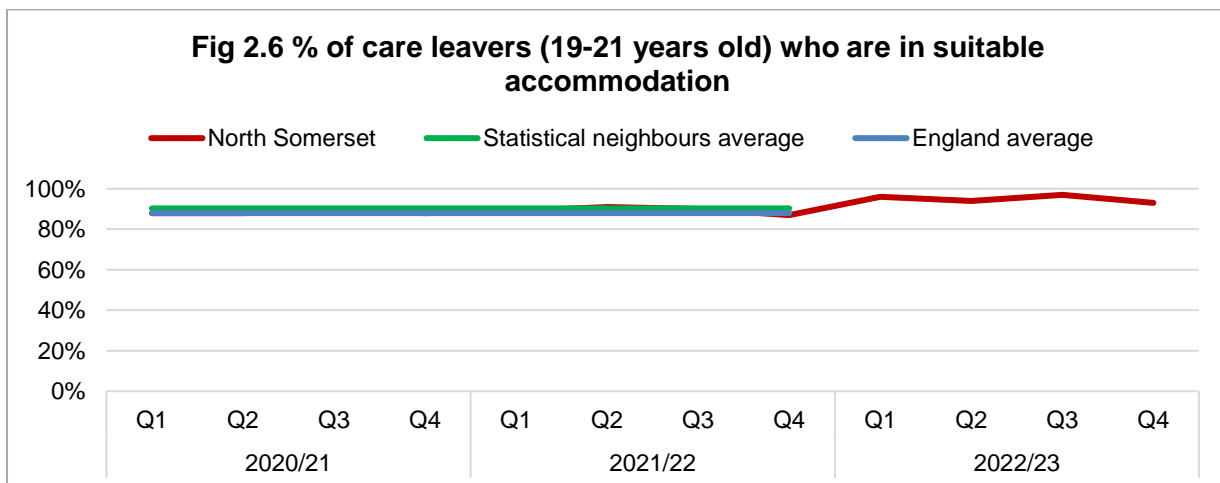
The percentage of 19-21-year-old care leavers who were in education, employment and/or training (EET) in North Somerset at the end of Quarter 4 2022/23 was 49%. This is lower than the same time last year at 61% and lower when compared to our statistical neighbours at 54% and England data at 55%.



There are varying reasons for young people not being in education training or employment (NEET) including: emotional and mental health needs, young parents caring for children, in custody and, previously unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who have not been given leave to remain in the UK post-18.

There is targeted work being undertaken through our children’s improvement plan to address this. This includes working across the partnership to consider what further steps we can take to both prepare our young people for employment and support them into education, employment, or training (EET).

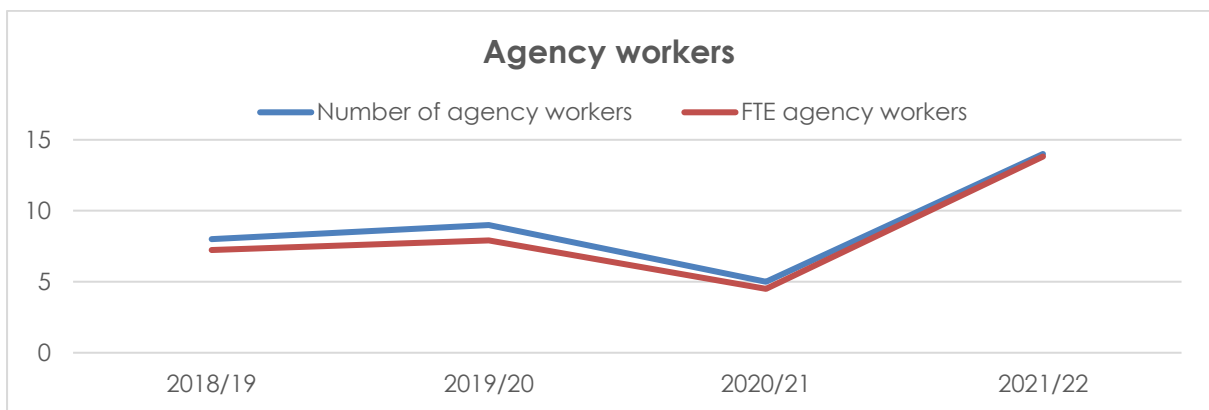
The percentage of 19-21-year-old care leavers who were in suitable accommodation at the end of Quarter 4 2022/23 in North Somerset was 93% which is the same as this time last year. This compares favourably against the most recent statistical neighbour and national averages of 88% (fig 2.5).



Workforce - stability and staff turnover

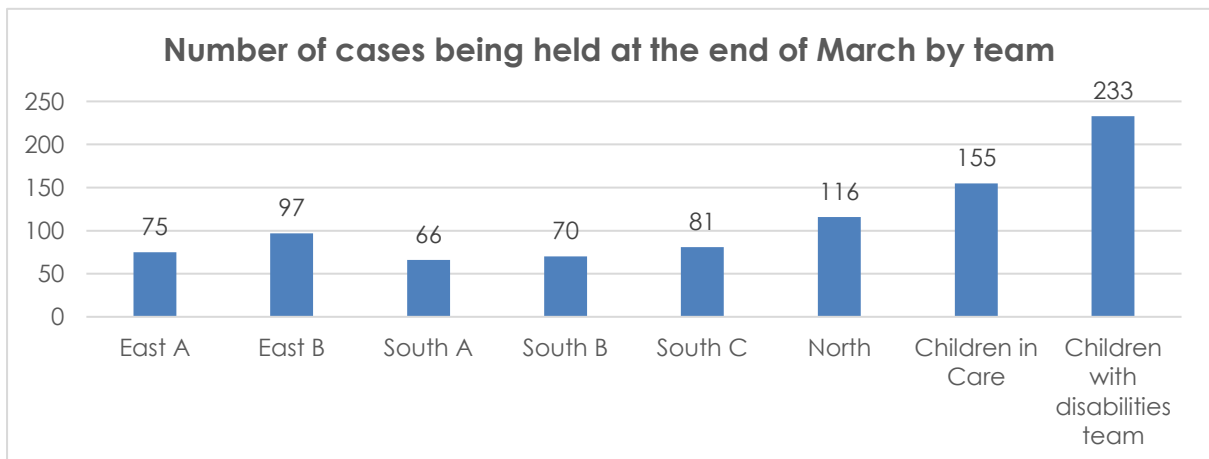
The information below is taken from the DfE statutory social care workforce return which is an annual snapshot from the 1st of September to the 31st of August. It only looks at those staff who are qualified social workers working in our authority in that time period. The March data is taken as a snapshot as of the 31st of the month. Challenges regarding recruitment and retention of social workers are ongoing and this is a national picture.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	March 2023
Number of social workers	92	91	92	78	76
FTE social workers	82.6	81.40	85.08	74.52	73.5
Number of agency workers	8	9	5	14	17
% Of agency workers (FTE)	9.07%	9.00%	5.02%	15.64%	18.42%
Turnover rate (FTE)	9.01%	9.82%	11.17%	37.18%	23.81%



Caseload by FTE

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	March 2023
Caseload	14.21	15.63	19.31	17.00



To note:

Glossary

- **EET:** In education, employment or training
- **NEET** - Not in Education, employment or training
- **CSE** – Child Sexual Exploitation
- **CCE** - Child Criminal Exploitation
- **LCS** – LiquidLogic care management system for children’s

- **UASC** – Unaccompanied asylum-seeking child
- **S20** Under **section 20 of the Children Act 1989**, children and young people can be accommodated with the consent of those with parental responsibility. If the young person is 16 or 17 years old, they do not need the consent of those with parental responsibility in order to be accommodated by the local authority.
- **Each reporting year runs from 1st April to 31st March**

List of statistical neighbours (from LAIT, updated March 2022)

- Worcestershire
- South Gloucestershire
- West Sussex
- Hampshire
- East Sussex
- Gloucestershire
- Essex
- Dorset
- Leicestershire
- Warwickshire

Useful links

- [North Somerset Children's Safeguarding Board](#)
- [North Somerset's threshold guidance](#)
- [Children's Act 1989](#)
- [Business Intelligence](#)

4. CONSULTATION

Directors have been fully consulted over the content of this report.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial implications as a consequence of this report.

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

N/A

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The equality objectives (part of the Corporate Performance Management Framework) are regularly monitored and are reported to the Corporate Management Team and the Council's Equality Scheme Implementation Group.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

It is important that we are aware of the areas in which we are performing well and where further action is needed to address any concerns.

11. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Support and Safeguarding Team quarterly reports (2019/20 to 2022/23)
- P&C Annual Directorate Statement
- North Somerset Council Corporate Plan