

Q1 2020/21 High-Scoring Service Risks

Risk ref	Service	Risk	Risk Owner	Impact	Likelihood	Residual Risk Score
CSDR006	Children's Services (Directorate)	Failure to manage within budget impacts the financial position of the Service and its ability to provide services	Gail Hopper	4	4	16

- **Explain the main reasons for the high risk score?** Locally, predicted pressures are being experienced as a result of an increase in demand for children's social care services generally. Since April 2019 there has been a slight bucking of the regional trend as figures start to stabilise, which has continued into 20/21; however key indicators of the volume of work with very vulnerable children and their families remain high. There has been a significant reduction in the number of children subject to a child protection plan, care proceedings being initiated and the number of children cared for, which have remained stable to date, since the outset of the pandemic. However, numbers remain relatively high compared with statistical neighbours. There continues to be a continuing increase in demand for children with special educational needs and / or disabilities and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This reflects the picture both regionally and nationally.
- **What have been the significant controls implemented to mitigate this risk?** Increased resources, in line with increased demand in Children's Social Care, have been agreed. Alongside this, the five year sustainability strategy is starting to see some improvements in placement sufficiency through innovation and market management. Due to the Strategy for 20/21 being fully funded, there is, as expected at this point, no overspend projected, however, this was the assumption prior to Covid-19 and the impact of this pandemic is not yet fully understood.
- **Are any reductions in the risk score anticipated in the future?** The Senior Leadership Team regularly considers budget pressures collectively and in their separate management meetings. There are monthly meetings with the Chief Executive, the S151 Officer and Director of Resources, as well as regular meetings with the Leader and Portfolio Holder. In the context of Covid-19 it would not be prudent to reduce the risk score at this time.

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CSCR002	Children's Services	Demand for a Children's Social Care Service continues to increase, leading to failure to manage within budget	Julia Hassall	4	4	16

- **Explain the main reasons for the high risk score?** The growing child population in borough and growing demand is causing increased budget pressures in children's social care and in the additional needs service (SEND).
- **What have been the significant controls implemented to mitigate this risk?** A five year sustainability strategy has been developed by reviewing and mapping levels of need and implications; reviewing the research and evidence base of what works; reviewing all children in external placements and working up a detailed investment strategy, which has now been agreed. Rochdale has been part of a Greater Manchester approach to implementing innovation programmes that have been successful elsewhere in the country. Progress is being made in Rochdale to develop these approaches, but will take time to deliver impact. However, we have seen an accelerated pace of change in implementing No Wrong Door, since being part of the national DfE strengthening families programme. During 2019/20 we have seen a reduction in external placements by 6 residential; 14 independent fostering and 4 semi-independent living placements – from the previous year end. Reductions in the number of external residential placements have continued (by a further 3), however, two of the small number of new placements made have been extremely costly, and so the picture is more complex than just counting numbers. One of the areas we cannot control is the inward migration; see below. The Family Service Model (FSM) and approach has been developed to manage demand through co-ordinated multi-agency early help. The FSM has been developed as part of the transformation programme and predicted deflections and mainstreaming have not been realised to date. Additional resource has been allocated in line with demand in Children's Social Care.
- **Are any reductions in the risk score anticipated in the future?** The sustainability strategy will over time support greater likelihood of managing demand within the designated budget. What the service is unable to predict is those demands emerging from children new to the authority. What is not known about these children is what level of social care needs they may present moving forward. The risk score cannot be reduced at this time until we have a better understanding of the impact of Covid-19, since the incoming work into children's social care has in general increased in complexity.

