

## Appendix 2: Children's High-Scoring 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	Sharon Hubber	4	3	12

- **Explain the main reasons for the high risk score?** The number of cared for children and children subject to child protection planning is rising sharply in line with need in the borough. **What have been the significant controls implemented to mitigate this risk?** A 5 year financial model has been established, additional funding has been invested by the LA for the pressures facing the service. The additional investment tapers over the 5 years in line with the innovations imbedding and benefits of the innovations being realised. Due to the Strategy for 20/21 being fully funded, there is, as expected at this point, no overspend projected. This was the assumption prior to Covid-19 and the impact of this pandemic is not yet fully understood but to date the financial position of the Directorate is stable.
- **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 bi monthly meetings with the Chief Executive, the S151 Officer and Director of Resources which includes key performance indicators to ensure the service stay on track, 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 further at this stage.

Risk ref	Service	Risk	Risk Owner	Impact	Likelihood	Residual Risk Score
CSCR001	Children's Social Care	Retain a workforce able to successfully deliver a quality Children's Social Care service.	Julia Hassall	4	3	12

- **Explain the main reasons for the high risk score?** Recruitment continues to be a priority area; whilst the turnover rate has stabilised as a result of the Covid pandemic we continue to experience difficulties in attracting good calibre applicants for posts.
- **What have been the significant controls implemented to mitigate this risk?** A monthly Recruitment and Retention Group continues to be chaired by the Head of Service for Practice Improvement and Performance. An action plan and a strategy to ensure Rochdale is the employer of choice, with revised approaches to advertising vacancies which will attract more attention. This includes increased financial investment in the service to support a reduction in social work caseloads and an increase in student placements. Rochdale is a pilot authority for implementing NAAS (the National Assessment and Accreditation System) for social workers / social work supervisors and this has now been reintroduced following the Covid pandemic.
- **Are any reductions in the risk score anticipated in the future?** If the activity described above is successful in attracting more applicants to the service it is anticipated that the risk score could reduce.

Risk ref	Service	Risk	Risk Owner	Impact	Likelihood	Residual Risk Score
CSC002	Children's Services	Demand for a Children's Social Care Service continues to increase, leading to failure to manage within budget	Julia Hassall	4	3	12

- **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. We have implemented No Wrong Door, part of the national DfE strengthening families programme. During 2020/21 and into 2022 we have seen a continued reduction in external placements by 9 residential; 14 independent fostering and 4 semi-independent living placements – from the previous year end. Whilst reductions in the number of external residential placements have continued (a small number of new placements are 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.

Risk ref	Service	Risk	Risk Owner	Impact	Likelihood	Residual Risk Score
CSC003	Children's Social Care	Performance/ practice is not of consistent quality which compromises the safety and outcomes for children which lead to death or serious injury of a child damaging the reputation of Rochdale Council.	Julia Hassall	5	3	15

- **Explain the main reasons for the high risk score?** Poor performance of the service not sufficiently addressing concern that is considered to leave a child in a situation which leads to harm for that child is a reputational risk for the Council. This links directly to workforce stability as the quality of practice is impacted by the quality and consistency of social work intervention; also with higher caseloads currently, this could impact adversely on the quality of work with children and families.
- **What have been the significant controls implemented to mitigate this risk?** The revised Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework was updated in 2020 to ensure that the service has a detailed understanding of the quality of practice. Whilst we are seeing improvements there is more to do to ensure that practice is consistent. This is reflected in Children's Improvement Plan. In addition we are reviewing our approach to recruitment and retention which will enhance and improve workforce stability. There has been a whole system change to culture and practice with a strong emphasis on relational practice which considers what life is like for a child. The service has continued to invest in strengthening relational practice to improve quality of service delivery. Direct advice and expectations of close monitoring in place, more regular team meetings held virtually and no relaxation in expectations in the audit and moderation of case files. Increase in themed audits to provide assurance across a range of practice areas.
- **Are any reductions in the risk score anticipated in the future?** The controls to systematically support consistent practice have improved however the residual risk score must continue to recognise the need to remain continuously alert to the potential impact of work with children and families which is not of the correct standard. The quality of practice is subject to continuous review through service wide performance clinics.

Risk ref	Service	Risk	Risk Owner	Impact	Likelihood	Residual Risk Score
EHSR004	Early Help & Schools	Insufficient school places.	Debra Kay	4	3	12

- **Explain the main reasons for the high risk score?** Increasing numbers of children entering secondary school means that current school capacity will possibly be exceeded. There is still in-year movement which continues to place pressure on the sufficiency of school places. The Council is dependent on the DfE funding and one new secondary school has opened in 2021 on a temporary site and a second is planned for 2022.
- **What have been the significant controls implemented to mitigate this risk?** Extra capacity was secured in current schools for 2020 with agreement gained from most secondary schools to take additional pupils as needed, all schools have again been approached for September 2021 with those having capacity agreeing to do the same should it be necessary. Early opening (September 2021) for Edgar Wood Academy on a temporary site has been agreed and further contingency plans have been discussed with the DfE. The Council has clearly explained the inability to create sufficient capacity for future years and is working with the DfE to progress plans for the secondary free school in Pennines (Star Academy) to open in September 2023.
- **Are any reductions in the risk score anticipated in the future?** Until the Local Authority has firm confirmation of build and opening dates for the two new free schools, the high risk score cannot be reduced.