

Vulnerable Groups

Children in Need

Revised: 30/08/2017

Introduction

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 defines a child as being in need in law if:

- He or she is unlikely to achieve or maintain or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without provision of services from the LA;
- His or her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of services from the LA;
- He or she has a disability.

The definition will include any child or young person under the age of 18.

Local authorities are under a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in need in their area. LAs must do whatever possible to ensure sufficient services and measures are in place to promote a child being raised within its own family, if it is safe to do so

What do we know?

Although our numbers of children in need dipped at the end of 2013, they have since climbed to reach a very similar rate per 10,000 to that of our comparator group of authorities. However, we remain well below the national average.

42% of children who ceased an episode of need in 2014 were being actively worked with for a period of less than 3 months. Our profile in terms of the length of time children are 'in need' is broadly similar to the national picture. West Berkshire has a slightly lower percentage open for less than 3 months and a slightly higher percentage between 3 and 6 months.

The rate of children starting an episode of need has been fairly consistent in West Berkshire over the past few years. This is in contrast with both the national picture and our comparator group of authorities who have seen an increase between 2013 and 2014.

The rate of children ceasing to be in need in West Berkshire has dropped between 2013 and 2014. This is in contrast to the national picture and that of our comparators where there has been a rise.

What is the data telling us?

The numbers of Children in Need that West Berkshire is supporting appears to be increasing. This is more about a slowing down in the ending of periods in need rather than an increase in the numbers starting.

Recommendations for consideration

Our numbers of children in need should continue to be monitored closely, ensuring that cases are closed at the earliest point where it is safe to do so.

Other services and partner organisations

Children's Social Care
Health

Other chapters you might be interested in

Adult Safeguarding
Adults with Autism
Adults with Disabilities in Employment
Carer
Child Protection
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Absent Young People
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller People
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)
Looked After Children
Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment
Referrals to Children's Social Care

If you have any questions about this chapter, please contact Public Health and Wellbeing Team on publichealthandwellbeing@westberks.gov.uk or 01635 503437