

Overview & Scrutiny

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission

All Members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission are requested to attend the meeting of the Commission to be held as follows

Monday 2 November 2020

7.00 pm

Until further notice, all Council meetings will be held remotely

Contact:

Martin Bradford - martin.bradford@hackney.gov.uk

☎ 020 8356 3315

✉ martin.bradford@hackney.gov.uk

Tim Shields

Chief Executive, London Borough of Hackney

Members: Cllr Sophie Conway (Chair), Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice-Chair),
Cllr Humaira Garasia, Cllr Katie Hanson, Cllr Ajay Chauhan, Cllr Sade Etti,
Cllr Clare Joseph, Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr Clare Potter and
Cllr James Peters

Co-optees: Luisa Dornela, Shabnum Hassan, Justine McDonald, Jo Macleod, Shuja
Shaikh, Ernell Watson and Michael Lobenstein

Agenda

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- | | | |
|----------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | Agenda & Papers | (Pages 5 - 130) |
| | Agenda and Papers for 1 st November CYP 2021 | |
| 2 | Minutes of 2nd November 2020 | (Pages 131 - 150) |

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Further Information about the Commission

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<http://www.hackney.gov.uk/individual-scrutiny-commissions-children-and-young-people.htm>



Public Involvement and Recording

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Rights of Press and Public to Report on Meetings

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Overview & Scrutiny

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission London Borough of Hackney

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Monday 2nd November 2020 at 7.00pm

This meeting is being held virtually. To view the meeting live (or replay) please use the following link:

<https://youtu.be/NVYT5xITMIM>

Contact: *Martin Bradford, Overview & Scrutiny Officer*
0208 356 3315
martin.bradford@hackney.gov.uk

Tim Shields
Chief Executive, London Borough of Hackney

Members:	Cllr Sophie Conway	Cllr Margaret Gordon	
	(Chair)	(Vice Chair)	
	Cllr Ajay Chauhan	Cllr Sade Etti	Cllr Humaira Garasia
	Cllr Katie Hanson	Cllr Clare Joseph	Cllr Sharon Patrick
	Cllr James Peters	Cllr Clare Potter	

Coopted Members: Justine McDonald, Luisa Dornela, Shabnum Hassan, Jo Macleod, Ernell Watson, Shuja Shaikh, Michael Lobenstein, Aleigha Reeves, Clive Kandza and Raivene Walters

Agenda

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

1.	Apologies for Absence
2.	Urgent Items / Order of Business
3.	Declarations of Interest
4.	Hackney Schools Group Board (19.10) A work update from Hackney Schools Group Board - current and planned. Eleanor Schooling, Chair of Hackney Schools Board

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5.	<p>Hackney Education Service - Budget Monitoring (19.35) An overview of Hackney Education Service Budget 2020/21.</p> <p>Annie Gammon, Director of Education Yusuf Erol, Head of Finance, Children, Adults & Community Health</p>
6.	<p>Election of Chair for item 7 (20.00) Members of the Commission to elect a Chair for item 7..</p>
7.	<p>Ofsted Inspection Action Plan - Progress (20.00) An update on progress against the Ofsted Inspection Action Plan.</p> <p>Anne Canning, Group Director Children, Adults & Community Health Lisa Aldridge, Head of Safeguarding & Learning Huw Bevan, Head of Family Intervention & Support Service</p>
8.	<p>Children and Families Service Bi-Annual Report to Members Full year to end of March 2020 (20.45) A report on children's social care activity 2019/20 to include current in-year financial monitoring for the Children and Families Service and an update on Recruitment & Retention of Foster Carers (review).</p> <p>Anne Canning, Group Director Children, Adults & Community Health Lisa Aldridge, Head of Safeguarding & Learning Huw Bevan, Head of Family Intervention & Support Service</p>
9.	<p>Community Engagement & Involvement (21.25) To note and agree the community and engagement plan for the Commission for 2020/21.</p>
10.	<p>Off-rolling in schools (21.30) The response of the Cabinet member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care to the Commission's recommendations on off-rolling in schools.</p>
11.	<p>Work Programme (21.30) To note and agree the work programme for the remainder of 2020/21.</p>
12.	<p>Minutes (21.30) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2020.</p>
13.	<p>Any other business</p>

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Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: Monday, 2 November 2020
Title of report: Report from the Independent Chair of the Hackney Schools Group Board
Report author: Eleanor Schooling CBE, Chair of the HSGB
Authorised by: Annie Gammon, Director of Education
<p>This report provides the Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission with an update on the progress made by the Hackney Schools Group Board since its launch on 13 November 2019.</p> <p>This report includes an outline of the three key priorities that the HSG Board has agreed will be the focus of their work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Belonging for all,(ii) Leading the Curriculum in Hackney,(iii) Reading for all. <p>These priorities will be pursued through the HSG Board Panels, the details of which are outlined below (please see section 3).</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 The Hackney Schools Group Board was established by Hackney's Cabinet in April 2019 as an independent advisory board to champion educational excellence in the local school system, promote improvement and high standards, and underpin inclusion and wellbeing for all young people.
- 1.2 The Hackney Schools Group (HSG) Board has been developed to respond to the changing educational landscape in England, and ensure stability within the local school system. It has been shaped by the Council's Schools for Everyone consultation. Current Government policy continues to support schools to convert to academy status, while the local authority (LA) role in education continues to be circumscribed and downplayed. In local authorities where this has happened it has led to fragmentation and loss of direction and oversight in the school system.
- 1.3 More than 2,500 people responded to the Schools for Everyone consultation. The responses demonstrated that Hackney residents care about education. Some of the key findings showed that, on the whole, respondents recognised education in Hackney has improved; they opposed to academic selection and forced academisation; they believed that the Council should be involved in shaping the local education system, including overseeing the school admissions process - ensuring that it's fair and supporting our schools to be inclusive.
- 1.4 The HSG Board acts in an advisory role, championing educational excellence in the local school system, promoting improvement and high standards, the mental health and well-being of children and young people, and underpinning fair access and inclusion for all children and young people. The HSG Board has been designed not only to guard against the fragmentation of the local schools' system, but also ensure local democratic accountability. Our schools will continue to serve their local communities.
- 1.5 The HSG Board gives schools a clear remit to be system leaders, working firmly in partnership with Hackney Council. To strengthen and improve the schools' system, our schools will be able to collectively share in the leadership and oversight of a collaborative school system. Schools will play a role in setting the direction for school improvement and performance in Hackney, taking collective responsibility for collaboration and sharing of policy, as well as contributing to capacity building through the development of new education strategies and pedagogic practice.
- 1.6 The HSG Board is the practical realisation of the extensive research into what makes good schools systems better. Hackney can retain educational expertise and build professional capacity in the local system. Through the HSG Board school improvement expertise can be mobilised in our schools, promoting research-based innovation and the sharing of excellent practice across the local system.

2. HSG Board Membership

Since the Board was established, the progress made by the HSG Board has been swift and purposeful.

Board members met on Friday 11 October 2019 for a facilitated strategic planning workshop. At this meeting it was agreed that the effectiveness of the HSG Board would be underpinned by sound governance and a clear code of conduct to promote a collective sense of decision-making and collegial relationships.

2.1. Appointment of HSG Board Members

The HSG Board's membership has been appointed to bring a range of skills and experience to the role. Members are drawn from a range of professional backgrounds, to contribute their

time, knowledge and authority to provide the required leadership and challenge to improve the education system to one that is truly world class.

2.2. Appointment of the HSG Board Chair

On 16 September 2019, the Hackney Cabinet appointed Eleanor Schooling CBE as Chair of the Hackney Schools Group Board, for a term of three-years beginning on 1 October 2019.

2.3. Appointment of HSG Board members

On 16 October 2019, the Hackney Cabinet appointed the following people to serve as members of the HSG Board for a term of three years, commencing on 13 November 2019.

Elected member	Position
Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care
Cllr Caroline Woodley	Cabinet Member for Families, Early Years and Play
Headteachers	School
Ben Hasan	Headteacher of Wentworth Nursery School
Louise Nichols	Executive Headteacher of the Kingsmead/Mandeville/Gayhurst Federation
Justine McDonald	Headteacher of Our Lady's Convent High School
Chairs of Governors	School
Kristofer McGhee	Princess May
Marisa Childs	Lauriston/Daubeny/Sebright and a parent of an SEND child.
Independent Board members	Position
Jermain Jackman	Chair of Young Futures Commission
Andrea Powell	Ernst & Young, a local parent and has worked on gender and routes into work.
Debra Robinson	Assistant Headteacher of Mossbourne, also involved in the Young Black Men project.
Executive Directors	Position
Anne Canning	Group Director for Children, Adults & Community Health
Annie Gammon	Director of Education, Hackney Education

2.4. A further Independent Board member, Dr Tracey Allen, was appointed on 16 March 2020 by the Chair and members of the HSG Board. Dr Allen has extensive knowledge of educational research and was appointed to the board to provide expertise in this area.

2.5. Responsibilities of HSG Board members

Appointed members of the Board will act in the best interests of the Hackney Schools Group Board as a whole. The members of the Board of the HSG will have key responsibilities in the following areas:

- (i) Strategic leadership - Contributing to the setting of a clear strategic approach for the Hackney Schools Group Board,
- (ii) Overseeing System Performance and Development - Supporting and guiding the Board in the assessment of performance and advising on development of the Hackney local schools' system, and
- (iii) Advocating on Behalf of the Hackney Schools Group Board - Taking a lead role in championing excellence in the local school system, promoting improvement and high standards, and ensuring fair access for all young people.

3. HSG Board Panels

At their inaugural meeting, the HSG Board established three panels (sub groups of the Board). These will focus on the Board's priorities and will be asked to carry out specific pieces of work. The HSG Board will be able to establish a further Board Panel, if this is required.

The HSG Board panels have been designed to draw on the expertise and experience of Board members, and others, to contribute innovation, challenge and quality assurance of the Hackney schools system; offering creative, practical solutions to tackle the challenges our schools system faces.

Membership of the panels consists of two board members (based on their area of expertise) co-opted members and senior staff from Hackney schools and other relevant bodies (such as Children's social care, NHS etc. as appropriate). The panels:

- Provide informed, authoritative voices in policy debates;
- Identify, articulate, and evaluate issues, and contribute to the development of proposals to address these;
- Contribute informed insights into emerging challenges, interpreting issues and policies and their relevance to Hackney;
- Provide a constructive forum for the exchange of ideas and information, drawing on the expertise of key stakeholders in the local system.

3.1. Belonging for all

One of the Hackney Schools Board's key priorities is to promote belonging within the local education system, to ensure every child feels respected, accepted and supported by their teachers and peers.

The Enhancing Belonging for all Board Panel will work to prioritise belonging within Hackney's family of schools, colleges and settings to ensure:

- (i) Support for children's emotional and social development,
- (ii) Enhance children's motivation and achievement throughout their years of education.

The Panel has begun working with Hackney Education and schools directly to inspire and promote a greater sense of belonging so that all children have that sense of being somewhere where they feel confident that they will fit in, be welcomed and be safe in their identity. The Panel carried out two very important pieces of work in the last academic year, the findings of which have been included in the below publications;

1. [Leading in the New Era](#)
2. [Listening to Parents Talking about Race](#)

3.1.1 **Leading in the New Era** - This project was led by Professor Riley and initiated at the earlier stages of lockdown due to the COVID-19 situation. Professor Riley organised sessions with

headteachers of 6 schools in Hackney to explore aspects of their leadership approach, their responses to lockdown and reflecting on the implications for the future of school leadership. The sessions provided a space for Headteachers to openly discuss the challenges faced in these unprecedented times.

3.1.2 Listening to Parents Talking about Race - The focus on equalities has heightened this year and the Co-Chairs of the Panel were keen to utilise this opportunity to support schools in creating a fairer, equal environment where children can feel like they belong. In July 2020, the Co-Chairs of the Panel along with the Chair of the HSGB carried out a number of parental engagement sessions with 6 volunteer schools in Hackney on the topic of race and racism. The sessions were designed as an initial conversation to help school leaders hear from their parents and carers on the issue of belonging as well as provide some specific areas schools can focus on continuing this work from the next term.

The sessions were a great success in supporting constructive engagement between schools and their parents and supporting schools to hear directly from parents and carers about their experience of belonging and actions that can be taken as a result.

The Belonging Panel will be conducting further parental engagement sessions with Hackney schools in November 2020 and are currently in the planning stages of this work.

3.2. Leading the Curriculum in Hackney

The curriculum lies at the heart of education. It determines what learners will know and be able to do during and after their education. Leadership of the curriculum, including using and carrying out research about the design of an effective curriculum for each school, is a key priority for the Board.

The Leading the Curriculum in Hackney Panel will:

- (i) Lead a discussion across the local education system on what Hackney's children and young people want and need from the curriculum, including ideas of cultural capital
- (ii) Use and disseminate relevant research into curriculum
- (iii) Broker links with other research hubs and institutions with the aim of extending innovation and best practice re curriculum in all Hackney schools.

The aim of this work will be to:

- (i) Produces outputs available to all Hackney educational settings about a suitable curriculum for Hackney children
- (ii) Informs training and development of leaders of the curriculum for all phases and specialisms
- (iii) Articulates excellent practice in developing cultural capital for Hackney children
- (iv) Is relevant to the different priorities of all schools and their outcomes.

3.3. Reading for all

Reading is an essential element at all stages of education. If a child cannot read they will not be able to access the curriculum and be disadvantaged for life. A key priority for the Board is to inspire reading for all and to support schools, colleges and settings endeavour to develop students' reading and the ability to access knowledge. Giving students the skills to engage with, understand and appreciate the world around them will be central to the Reading for all Panel's work.

Reading is an essential component of all stages of education. The vocabulary children need to learn successfully across the curriculum is not always in everyday speech, and as much as 90% of it is only found through reading. A research based approach to the development of a broad range of reading skills can create expert readers able to read actively and learn across a wide range of subjects.

The HSG Board and Panel will oversee the development of initiatives to promote reading in schools, settings, in the home and in local facilities such as libraries to:

- Support a reading culture to ensure all children become and remain confident, enthusiastic and proficient readers,
- Embed reading across all relevant curriculum subjects to develop key skills promote an understanding of using language that is appropriate for particular situations,
- Promote a coherent system-wide strategy for promoting lifetime reading, and
- Develop best practice, based on the understanding that being able to read confidently and well is a key life skill for children, whatever their background.

The Panel will work with Hackney Education to ensure an informed, research-based approach that builds on existing strategies and good practice in Hackney education. The campaign will also draw upon the expertise and resources from the Council and partner agencies.

The three Panels establish an approach whereby the HSG Board can contribute most effectively to ensuring that every pupil in Hackney feels valued and can fulfil their full potential. There is an expectation that the theme of the workforce and CPD will be cross cutting in the three main priorities.

Hackney has a strong family of schools that frequently work collaboratively. The focus of the priorities is to further strengthen partnership working on the three themes. Schools are invited to shape the work on the three themes by participating in the Panels that will lead the priorities. This enables schools to have a deeper involvement in the leadership of the system.

CYP Scrutiny Commission Report

Overview & Scrutiny

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: Monday 2nd November 2020
Title of report: Hackney Education Finance Update
Report author: Yusuf Erol, Head of Education Finance
Authorised by: Annie Gammon, Education Director
Brief: This report provides the most recent financial forecast for Hackney Education for the 2020/21 financial year.

Report title: Hackney Education Finance Update 2020/21 (August 2020)

Meeting date: 2nd November 2020;

Report originator: Yusuf Erol, Head of Education Finance

1. Purpose of the report

1.1. This report provides a routine update on the Hackney Education finance position and identifies any financial-management issues and risks.

1.2. Please note that the recent IT disruption has meant that the education finance team could not produce an up to date forecast as at the end of September 2020.

2. Recommendations

2.1. That CYP Scrutiny Commission notes the current budgets, issues and risks for the 2020/21 financial year.

2.2. That CYP Scrutiny Commission notes that schools finances are not covered in this report.

3. Budget summary

3.1. The following table summarises the budgets across Hackney Education divisions/activity groupings. The budgets are net of income such as traded income or childcare fee income:

Division/activity group	Budget (£)
High Needs and School Places	47,578,226
Education Operations	3,684,178
Early Years, Early Help and Wellbeing	41,318,215
School Standards and Performance	1,842,884
Contingencies and recharges	11,055,264
Delegated school funding to maintained mainstream schools	133,843,580
DSG income	(213,611,335)
TOTAL	25,711,012

4. Summary issues and risks

COVID-19

4.1. As with many Council departments, the education department's finances have been significantly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. This is mainly due to:

- I. Loss of traded income for those services where delivery has not been possible whilst schools have only been partially open for small groups of children and young people (CYP);
- II. Loss of childcare fee income where it has not been possible to deliver usual childcare whilst children's centres have only been partially open for small groups of children;
- III. Potential cost of having to compensate schools who manage children's centres for loss of childcare income;

SEND – (in the High Needs and School Places division)

4.2. For several years, SEND has been reported as a considerable and continuing risk with significant year-on-year growth in spending. This has largely been due to significant increases in CYP with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's).

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- 4.3. The 2020/21 forecast currently assumes a significant growth in SEND spending when compared to 2019/20. A group of Council officers responsible for forecasting will be meeting regularly to develop a more detailed forecast.
- 4.4. The Interim Head of High Needs and School Places is also working with officers to develop a cost reduction plan.

Children’s Centres – (in the Early Years, Early Help and Wellbeing division)

- 4.5. Children’s centres are highlighted in this report as a budgetary risk as a result of costs exceeding budgets in the previous year 2019/20. This is for both Children’s centres managed by the Council and those managed by schools who receive funding from the Council.
- 4.6. The budget set aside for children’s centre activity by the education department has been subject to reductions – as part of agreed savings schedules - in recent years and the current children’s centre model does not seem affordable within current budgetary limits. Hackney Education senior leadership agreed in March 2020 to undertake a review of Children’s centre finances with a view to design a sustainable three-year budget plan.

5. The commentary supplied for the Council’s forecast outturn report (OFP)

- 5.1. CYP Scrutiny Commission are asked to note the commentary supplied in the Council’s consolidated forecast outturn report, which is as follows:

Hackney Education has a budget of £25.7m net of budgeted income of circa £240m. This income is primarily Dedicated Schools Grant of which the majority is passported to schools and early years settings or spent on high needs placements.

As at the end of August 2020, Hackney Education is forecasting to overspend by around £8.8m. Approximately £3m of this is the forecast financial impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. The balance of the overspend (£5.8m) is mainly as a result of a £8.4m forecast over-spend in SEND, offset by forecast £2.6m of savings in other areas of HLT. The £8.4m over-spend in SEND is a result of previously reported factors, mainly a significant increase in recent years of children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP’s).

The Government has formally confirmed its intention to ensure that local authorities are not left with the burden of SEND cost pressures and have issued new funding regulations which state that deficits arising from DSG shortfalls will not be met from local authorities’ general funds unless Secretary of State approval is gained. The finance teams are working on what exactly this will mean for the Council’s finances and are also consulting with the auditors and other Councils. At this time it is thought that it is unlikely these changes to funding regulations will have a material impact on the forecast.

Government expectation is that the DSG overspend will remain in the Council’s accounts as a deficit balance which will then reduce in future years as additional funding is received. However, Government’s commitment to this additional funding and the level this will be at is not clear. There is therefore a financial risk to the Council of carrying this deficit forward and we will need to consider options for mitigating this risk which might include setting aside a reserve equivalent to the deficit at year end.

6. High Needs and School Places

- 6.1. The following table shows the current forecast variance in High Needs and School Places. The reasons for the forecast over-spend are mainly due to increasing numbers of CYP with EHCP’s. £468k of the £8.9m over-spend forecast is due to forecast loss of traded income as a result of the C19 outbreak. A group of officers are reviewing this forecast in detail and will provide further forecast reports in the future.

Current budget	Actuals to Date	Full year forecast	Variance to budget	Variance %	C19 impact within forecast
47,578,226	9,943,868	56,480,324	8,902,099	19%	468,329

7. Education Operations

7.1. No material issues to report.

Current budget	Actuals to Date	Full year forecast	Variance to budget	Variance %	C19 impact within forecast
3,684,178	1,745,472	3,801,873	117,695	3%	140,541

8. Early Years, Early Help and Wellbeing

8.1. C19 has had a significant impact in Early Years (see 5.1 (ii)). In addition to C19, other factors contributing to the over-spend forecast are:

- I. The budget has been reduced in 2020/21 in anticipation of the closure of childcare services at Millfields Children's Centre. The closure is going to happen in-year (August 2020) and so there are costs to be incurred until then;
- II. The budget was reduced in 2019/20 in anticipation of additional income to be generated as a result of the new fees structure. That new structure has not yet been fully implemented so it is still not possible to generate the desired level of income;
- III. Beyond the fee structure implementation delay, there was a general situation of budgets not covering costs in 2019/20 and a review has commenced to try to establish more sustainable budgets for children's centres;

Current budget	Actuals to Date	Full year forecast	Variance to budget	Variance %	C19 impact within forecast
41,318,215	16,604,948	42,937,878	1,619,663	4%	1,017,875

9. School Standards and Performance

9.1. There are no issues to report in School Standards and Performance beyond the impact of C19. The forecast variance can be wholly attributable to the impact of C19 on traded income.

Current budget	Actuals to Date	Full year forecast	Variance to budget	Variance %	C19 impact within forecast
1,842,884	1,236,618	2,320,930	478,046	26%	462,241

10. Summary budget position

10.1. The following table summarised the HLT forecast by division/activity group:

Division/activity group	Current budget	Actuals to Date	Full year forecast	Variance to budget	Variance %	C19 impact within forecast
High Needs and School Places	47,578,226	9,943,868	56,480,324	8,902,099	19%	468,329
Education Operations	3,684,178	1,745,472	3,801,873	117,695	3%	140,541
Early Years, Early Help and Wellbeing	41,318,215	16,604,948	42,937,878	1,619,663	4%	1,017,875
School Standards and Performance	1,842,884	1,236,618	2,320,930	478,046	26%	462,241
Contingencies and recharges	11,055,264	176,177	10,420,192	(635,072)	-6%	906,000
Delegated school funding to maintained mainstream schools	133,843,580	52,571,002	132,900,000	(943,580)	-1%	0
DSG income	(213,611,335)	(86,122,179)	(214,336,918)	(725,583)	0%	0
TOTAL	25,711,012	(3,844,094)	34,524,280	8,813,268	34%	2,994,986

11. Conclusion

OFFICIAL: Nov 20 CYP Scrutiny Commission Report Finance Update August 20

11.1. As at the end of August 2020, Hackney Education is forecasting to overspend by around £8.8m. Approximately £3m of this is the forecast financial impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. The balance of the overspend (£5.8m) is mainly as a result of a £8.4m forecast over-spend in SEND, offset by forecast £2.6m of savings in other areas of the education department. The over-spend in SEND is a result of previously reported factors, mainly a significant increase in recent years of children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP's).

Report originator: Yusuf Erol, Head of Finance

Date: 15 September 2020 (updated 22 October 2020)

Cleared by: Yusuf Erol

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London Borough of Hackney **Children's Action Plan**

June 2020

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Foreword

We write this introduction during the third month of 'lockdown' as a result of Covid-19. Our residents have never needed our services more, and we're incredibly proud of how the Council and our public sector partners and volunteers in Hackney are responding to the pressures they are facing.

The crisis has shone a light on some of the vital services that Councils like ours carry out every day. Supporting vulnerable children is one of the most important responsibilities we have as a Council, and despite the challenges we currently face, we are more determined than ever to make sure we are providing the services our children need and deserve.

Following our Ofsted inspection at the end of last year, we set out our aspiration that services will perform at a level that would be judged 'good' within one year and 'outstanding' within two years. It's an ambitious target but one which the whole Council is committed to. We are clear that this will require renewed and consistent political leadership, and that every service within the Council has to take responsibility and work together to reach this goal.

We have worked with our staff and partners to produce an action plan to bring about quick and sustainable improvements. We have held a number of workshops, invited written feedback and received valuable input from staff on the frontline that has shaped this plan. The action plan is a shared commitment across all partners, and sets out the actions that we are taking to address not just the findings in the Ofsted inspection report, but to go further to reach outstanding and ensure that these services deliver for the most at risk in the borough.

The political leadership of the Council is continuing to shape and lead this work, overseeing and reflecting on what we as a Council do well and where we need to improve; ensuring that the most vulnerable in the borough are at the heart of everything that we do. There is also a firm focus on equalities and disabilities throughout this plan, with an even deeper commitment to improve services and outcomes for families and disabled young people.

Clear governance arrangements to monitor progress against the action plan have been put in place, including a senior officer board, chaired by the Chief Executive, and a Member-led board, co-chaired by us both. As a Council, we will continue to focus on consistently

providing highly effective support and intervention to the children and families that use our services to ensure we deliver the best outcomes for children and young people in Hackney.

We have already made significant progress in improving some of the areas of practice identified as requiring attention by Ofsted, including strengthening oversight and processes in relation to children living in private fostering arrangements, improving the effectiveness of pre-proceedings work, and working with partner agencies to agree clear expectations in relation to strategy discussions. The action plan outlines how we are addressing all areas for development identified in the Ofsted report. In doing so we continue to build on the considerable areas of strength and good practice that were also identified by Ofsted to ensure that practice is consistently good across all areas of the service.

The action plan sets out a timeframe for all of this work. The original dates have been reviewed to take into account the impact of Covid-19 and resulting pressures on the service to make sure they can be thoroughly implemented. The timeframes stipulated will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure these are an

accurate reflection of our accomplishments and developments in the service. This plan will be updated on a regular basis along with associated performance indicators, creating a clear framework for quarterly public updates on our progress on delivering this action plan alongside regular briefings to scrutiny and the annual report to Full Council.

Finally, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Council staff and partners who have contributed to this plan. The way they have approached it demonstrates how seriously we are all taking this, and how determined we are to do our very best for Hackney's children, young people and families.

**Mayor Philip Glanville and
Deputy Mayor Cllr Antoinette Bramble**



RECOMMENDATION 1

The quality of information- sharing and decision-making within Strategy Discussions

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

Rated level of impact of Covid-19 on original intended timeframes

R=High A=Medium G=Low

IMPACT - WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- At the point there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, their case is brought to a multi-agency Strategy Discussion.
- In which all appropriate partners share relevant information known to them, in order to agree a shared plan of action which increases safety for the child whilst further assessments take place.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

R1.1 Update, implement and embed local practice guidance on Strategy Discussions to include information about mutually agreed expectations with police, health and other multi-agency partners around appropriate levels of participation and information sharing. This is to ensure that all decisions made within Strategy Discussions are attuned to the child's individual needs and informed by key information about the child and the circumstances of their family and significant others.

R1.2 Implement working agreements with the police to set out pathways for engaging officers in Strategy Discussion from different service areas. With a specific focus on children at risk of domestic abuse and extra-familial risk, this will ensure timely decision making and a coordinated partnership response for all types of abuse.

R1.3 Deliver targeted joint training and development sessions for relevant practitioners in relation to roles and expectations at Strategy Discussions in order that all children receive a consistent response.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

June 2020

Complete
December 2019

June 2020

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

R1.4 Scope opportunities for co-location of key partner agencies in the Hackney Service Centre, alongside First Access Screening Team, and improvements in ICT facilities to enable more effective multi-agency information sharing through Strategy Discussions and other face-to-face contact (either in person or remotely via video conferencing facilities).

R1.5 Agree and action Hackney Learning Trust representation in First Access and Screening Team to strengthen the input of education in Strategy Discussions and decision-making and ensure that information held by schools is fully considered.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

June 2020

September 2020

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE OUTCOMES WE HOPE FOR?

- Monthly data reports consistently show:
 - 100 % of Strategy Discussions include Police colleagues.
 - At least 75 % of Strategy Discussions include Health colleagues.
 - An increase in the % of S47s that result in Initial Child Protection Conference, in line with statistical neighbour and national averages.
- Bi-monthly dip sample of the quality of information sharing in Strategy Discussions - at least 90 % of cases are rated 'good' or better and 0 % are rated 'inadequate'.
- Externally commissioned audit of Strategy Discussions to scrutinise the effectiveness of our partnership contributions - at least 90 % of audits are rated 'good' or better and 0 % are rated 'inadequate'.



RECOMMENDATION 2

The assessment of the impact for children of living in neglectful environments to inform authoritative and child-centred practice

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

Rated level of impact of Covid-19 on original intended timeframes

R=High A=Medium G=Low

IMPACT - WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- All planning for children in need of help and protection, which is undertaken collaboratively with families, is child focused and informed by research and professional understanding of the impact of abuse and neglect on children.
- The right support is offered to children and their networks to support parents and carers to make the changes their children need to experience.
- It is always clear for families what needs to happen, by when, if things do not change for children.
- Risks and protective factors for children are regularly re-evaluated. In doing so practitioners are always mindful of the cumulative effect of neglect on children's long-term well being and pay explicit attention to parental capacity to change and the support needed to achieve this.
- Where change does not happen within a timescale appropriate for the child, timely action is taken to escalate the level of intervention, ensuring that families understand what actions are being taken and why and are offered every opportunity to remain engaged in the on-going planning for their child.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

R2.1 Continue to develop and embed a goal focused, outcome orientated approach to planning for children, to ensure that children, families and their networks are clear about what professionals are worried about, what changes are needed in children's day-to-day experiences, by when, and what actions professionals may need to take if change is not achieved.

R2.2 Deliver (and evaluate) a training and development programme for all staff on neglect, in order to promote understanding of the cumulative impact on children of neglect. To include the following areas of focus:

- Messages from research on the impact on children of neglect;
- The importance of chronologies in identifying patterns in family functioning over time.
- Embedding practice guidance around analysis of parental capacity to change, which includes the use of standardised measurement tools to track change over time;
- Assessing the needs of pre-verbal children in the context of neglect e.g. through observation.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

Complete
May 2020

July 2020

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

R2.3 Define expectation and processes for re-assessments and ensure that all re-assessments of children include an analysis of risks, strengths and protective factors over time and the cumulative impact of harm to children, in order to make the most appropriate plans to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

R2.4 Enhance children's participation in creating their plans and expressing their views in decision-making forums for Children in Need and Child Protection cases to include:

- ii) Child Protection Advocacy to go live for all school age children with review after 3 months.
- ii) Workshops and guidance to Units on direct conversations with children about their daily lived experiences and views about our concerns.



TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

July 2020

March 2020

June 2020

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE OUTCOMES WE HOPE FOR?

- Bi-annual audits of Goal Focused Plans and child centred decision making in all formats - at least 90 % of audits are rated 'good' or better and 0 % are rated 'inadequate'.
- Audit of the quality of routine management oversight of longer-term cases at key trigger points - at least 90 % of audits are rated 'good' or better and 0 % are rated 'inadequate'.
- Case Review Day on Neglect and Parental Capacity to Change.
- Audit of repeat assessments - at least 90 % of audits are rated 'good' or better and 0 % are rated 'inadequate'.
- Audit of Child Protection Plans and Child in Need Plans to identify how children's views are being shared and considered as part of the plan - at least 90 % of audits are rated 'good' or better and 0 % are rated 'inadequate'.
- Monthly data reports consistently show:
 - Reduction in average length of assessment.
 - Reduction in average length of Child in Need Plans.
 - Repeat Child Protection Plans at or below statistical neighbour average.
 - Child Protection Plans over 2 years at or below statistical neighbour average.
 - Child Protection Plans under 3 months at or below statistical neighbour average.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The quality of assessment and planning for children subject to private fostering arrangements.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY
 Rated level of impact of Covid-19 on original intended timeframes
 R=High A=Medium G=Low

IMPACT - WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- The safety and well-being of all children living in private fostering arrangements is assured through robust assessments and reassessments of their carers' ability to meet their needs.

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WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

R3.1 Review all current open Private Fostering cases to identify any immediate actions required to ensure the safety and well-being of children in these arrangements.

R3.2 Update Private Fostering Policy and roll out new case management responsibilities for private fostering arrangements, to promote consistently high quality practice in safeguarding children in private fostering arrangements.

R3.3 Develop information letters for parents and carers on the new Private Fostering processes, to ensure they are aware of what we do and why to ensure children in private fostering arrangements are safe and well.

R3.4 Update Private Fostering Policy and implement new case management responsibilities for private fostering arrangements, to promote consistently high quality practice in safeguarding children in private fostering arrangements.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

Complete
Jan 2020

Complete
March 2020

Complete
April 2020

Complete
Feb 2020

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

R3.5 Develop Private Fostering dashboard in QlikSense to provide real-time management information on Private Fostering cases.

R3.6 Actively promote the launch of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership Private Fostering App within Hackney Children and Families Service and across the partnership to increase awareness and knowledge of roles and responsibilities.

R3.7 Work alongside partner boroughs in the North London Consortium to further develop publicity materials and activities relevant across the consortium, to increase public awareness of the local authority's roles and responsibilities in assessing and monitoring the safety of children in private fostering arrangements.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

July 2020

June 2020

July 2020

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE OUTCOMES WE HOPE FOR?

- Monthly review of performance management information - number of new and total Private Fostering cases, average length of Private Fostering assessment, timeliness of Private Fostering reviews.
- Bi-annual reviews of all children in Private Fostering Cohort by No Recourse to Public Funds and Private Fostering Team Service Manager - at least 90 % of cases are rated 'good' or better and 0 % are rated 'inadequate'.
- Annual Report to City and Hackney Safeguarding Partnership on private fostering.
- Peer Review on Private Fostering to be undertaken within the North London Consortium - Autumn 2020.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The timeliness and effectiveness of pre-proceedings work, including the quality of contingency planning.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

Rated level of impact of Covid-19 on original intended timeframes

R=High A=Medium G=Low

IMPACT - WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- When positive changes to a child's day-to-day experiences are not being achieved through a Child Protective Plan, in a timeframe that is appropriate to the child's age, development and need, planning is escalated to a legal framework.
- Within the Public Law Outline process, we seek to work in partnership with families to keep children together with their parents, as long as it is safe to do so. However, in parallel we will work with families to explore alternative options for their long-term care, within and outside their family networks. This - alongside ensuring all appropriate assessments and interventions are pursued during the Public Law Outline process - means the period of uncertainty children face about their future care arrangements is minimised, if and when their cases escalate to care proceedings.
- Any parallel planning for the child undertaken within pre-proceedings will be informed by the views and knowledge of the independent child protection chair (who will have the dual role of becoming the child's Independent Reviewing Officer if the child becomes looked after), to ensure that the long-term interests of the child are considered.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

R4.1 Develop and implement new information leaflets for parents on the Public Law Outline process, to ensure they fully understand the process from the start, including all potential outcomes, including the possibility of their children being permanently removed from their care, and the steps we will take to parallel plan with them and their families should permanent separation be necessary.

R4.2 Develop a new contingency section in Public Law Outline minute template on the case recording system (Mosaic) to ensure that parallel planning for children is clearly discussed and recorded in all Public Law Outline meetings with parents and legal representatives, to ensure alternative options to children remaining safely with their parents in the long-term are always explored in a transparent and timely way.

R4.3 Introduce a process for Permanency Planning Meetings chaired by the Head of Service for the Family Intervention and Support Service, to take place for children within the Public Law Outline process, to ensure that children's long-term permanency is considered at the earliest available opportunity. Child Protection Chairs to be invited to contribute to these meetings.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

Complete
Nov 2019

Complete
Nov 2020

Complete
Jan 2020

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

R4.4 Permanency Planning reporting to be developed in Mosaic and QlikSense data dashboards and reporting systems to be developed to enable tracking of decision-making processes from the Children's Resource Panel, through Public Law Outline, to the conclusion of care proceedings and permanency, to help managers ensure decisions about children's long-term care plans are progressed without delay.

R4.5 Re-draft of Public Law Outline letter template, to improve clarity of information for parents about concerns for their children, what they need to do now and contingency planning.

R4.6 Produce Public Law Outline practice guidance for staff to improve consistency and effectiveness of the process.

R4.7 Introduce an offer of advocacy from Children's Rights Officers to all children in Public Law Outline, to help ensure that children's voices are strongly represented in the Public Law Outline process and their needs remain at the centre of decision-making.

R4.8 Embed new Joint Protocol with the Legal Department to ensure consistency in our legal contribution to Public Law Outline and proceedings work, to support high quality decision-making for children.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

June 2020

Complete
Dec 2019

Complete
March 2020

Complete
March 2020

June 2020

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE OUTCOMES WE HOPE FOR?

- Live management information about cases operating within a legal framework tracked through QlikSense - from March 2020.
- Public Law Outline Case Review Day in Feb 2020.
- Follow up audits to be undertaken in June 2020, with consideration to commissioning external or peer review as part of this process - at least 90 % of cases are rated 'good' or better and 0 % are rated 'inadequate'.
- Monthly data reports consistently show:
 - A reduction in the % of children subject to pre-proceedings for longer than 3 months.



RECOMMENDATION 5

The welfare of children who are missing education or who are home educated is safeguarded

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

Rated level of impact of Covid-19 on original intended timeframes

R=High A=Medium G=Low

IMPACT - WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?	WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?	TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY	WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?	TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY	HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE OUTCOMES WE HOPE FOR?
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- Demands of the new Elective Home Education guidance & changes to legislation met, with clear and accessible advice and guidance available for parents & carers.
- Processes in place to register and monitor Elective Home Education referral and application rates.
- Operational aspects of the 'suitability of education' assessments being met consistently.
- Processes in place to manage impact on pupil placement in light of the closure of registered Independent School(s) and the ongoing identification of unregistered settings.
- Checks on children (including vulnerable children) de-registered from mainstream school are timely & robust.

R5.1 Develop the structure for bi-annual teaching and learning forum to support parents in securing positive outcomes for children and young people.

R5.2 (i) Develop protocol to set out our approach to foster improved relationships with the Orthodox Jewish community to establish whether or not children and young people are electively home educated.
(ii) Protocol to set out procedure if concerns emerge about safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

R5.3 Review & update Elective Home Education policy. Launch revised policy alongside information campaign to both public, schools and professionals.

R5.4 Redesign Elective Home Education assessment framework in accordance with statutory guidance, in order to annually assess the quality of Elective Home Education teaching and learning.

Nov 2020

Sept 2020

June 2020

June 2020

R5.5 Improve processes across the Council to ensure a more effective cross service/multi agency approach to unregistered settings as soon as these are identified, ensuring children attending these settings are safeguarded and attending appropriate education.

July 2020



- Feedback from children and families on their experience of the quality of the service provided.
 - 70% of parents/carers educating their child(ren) at home report that the information provided by staff, supports teaching, learning and outcomes of children and young people.
- Elective Home Education assessment framework in place and being used by qualified staff to ensure all assessments are consistent and of high quality.
- Monthly data reports consistently show:
 - Reduction in number of children awaiting a suitability assessment once identified as Electively Home Educated.
 - All suitability assessments are completed within three months of notification.
 - All suitability assessments involve sight of and conversation with the pupil.
 - All Electively Home Educated children with an education, health and care plan receive an annual review of their plan.

RECOMMENDATION 6

a. The effectiveness of management oversight by leaders and managers at all levels.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY
Rated level of impact of Covid-19 on original intended timeframes

R=High A=Medium G=Low

IMPACT - WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- Effective leadership at all levels of the organisation ensures improved outcomes for children through high quality and timely decision-making.
- Practice that is not of the required standard - either in individual cases or systemically - is appropriately identified and challenged by frontline and senior managers. This includes offering sufficient challenge to multi-agency partners where appropriate.
- Where practice that is not of the required standard is identified, timely action is taken to understand, learn from and take remedial action to address this, both for individual children and systemically.



WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

- R6a.1** Scope and review Senior Management resource to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to provide effective oversight of children and families cases and to ensure that practitioners and unit leaders are effectively supported to meet children's needs.
- R6a.2** Undertake initial scoping of practitioner and frontline manager capacity to respond to the immediate workload pressures identified and ensure effective support and intervention to families.
- R6a.3** Scope and review longer term practitioner and frontline manager capacity, approach and priorities within Children's Social Care to ensure staff are supported to do skilled, direct work with children and families and to ensure that units are structured to support best practice in working with children and families. To include benchmarking with Practice and Finance colleagues in other local authorities.
- R6a.4** Clarify respective roles and responsibilities for all positions in the management structure, particularly with respect to strategic development and service-wide practice improvement.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

- Complete Dec 2019
- Complete Jan 2020
- Sept 2020
- Sept 2020

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

- R6a.5** Introduce a system for regular audits of the quality of management oversight at key points in case management on Mosaic (including peer audits) to promote consistent drive and progress in meeting children's needs.
- R6a.6** Review and strengthen the support and development offer available for Consultant Social Workers and Practice Development Managers including through the induction programme.
- R6a.7** Deliver systemic leadership programme for the senior leadership team to ensure that a consistent practice leadership approach is established and embedded.
- R6a.8** Construct a professional development programme on professional challenge for all staff, including challenge to partners. This will be delivered through workshops, training and live observations to achieve cultural change with respect to challenge and escalation and working effectively with multiple professional perspectives.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

- June 2020
- June 2020
- June 2020 to February 2021
- July 2020

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE OUTCOMES WE HOPE FOR?

- External scrutiny of the effectiveness of senior management and leadership.
- Monthly data reports consistently show:
 - Average caseloads are in line with our agreed levels (which will be informed by the review which will consider best practice from statistical neighbours and other LAs).
- Feedback from children and families on their experience of the quality of practice.
- Direct observations of the quality of practice by leadership team.
- Audits to review consistency in quality of practice and outcomes for children - at least 90% of cases are rated 'good' or better and 0% are rated 'inadequate'.
- Evidence of effective professional challenge where required identified through audit programme and in partnership work.

RECOMMENDATION 6

b. The effectiveness of the Quality Assurance Framework in driving practice improvement

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY
 Rated level of impact of Covid-19 on original intended timeframes
 R=High A=Medium G=Low

IMPACT - WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?	WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?	TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY	WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?	TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY	HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE OUTCOMES WE HOPE FOR?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved outcomes for children are driven by an effective and well coordinated learning and improvement cycle, involving managers at all levels. Access to timely analysis of performance data enables managers to effectively identify and respond to trends and needs for children. Triangulation of all qualitative and quantitative information ensures an effective understanding of strengths and areas for practice development and targeted responses are implemented to ensure that the needs of children are met. 	<p>R6b.1 Quality Assurance Strategy to be revised on the basis of a self evaluation completed in Jan 2020, with action plan implemented to include revision to the audit programme, learning from complaints and compliments, family feedback, feedback loops from staff surveys, exit interviews and focus groups, the connection between quality assurance and priorities within the Workforce Development Strategy and development of a robust communication strategy.</p> <p>R6b.2 Further develop and embed the existing Practice Standards to provide detailed guidance on expected best practice in working with children and families and ensure that these are informed by systemic practice principles and organisational values.</p> <p>R6b.3 Review terms of reference for the Performance and Practice Oversight Group to ensure that this forum is considering both quantitative and qualitative measures to effectively oversee the quality of services offered to children and families.</p>	<p>July 2020</p> <p>July 2020</p> <p>Complete Jan 2020</p>	<p>R6b.4 Continue to develop the QlikSense reporting system's capabilities, to provide access to effective and accurate live performance data enabling managers at all levels to understand trends in organisational performance in working with children and families via an 18 month development programme of QlikSense dashboards to be overseen via Children and Families Management Team.</p> <p>R6b.5 Review our performance data and analytical capacity across Children and Families Service and Management Information and Systems Analysis to ensure efficient and coordinated provision of accurate and meaningful data to enable managers to effectively understand trends and children's needs.</p> <p>R6b.6 Develop programme of commissioned 'external expert' audits to provide an external perspective to our oversight in ensuring best practice working with children and families.</p>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>Autumn 2020</p> <p>August 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission external review of implementation of revised Quality Assurance Strategy and Framework. Thematic audits of children in specific circumstances to confirm if practice is consistently in accordance with Practice Standards - at least 90 % of cases are rated 'good' or better and 0 % are rated 'inadequate'.



ADDITIONAL AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Disabled Children's Service

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

Rated level of impact of Covid-19 on original intended timeframes

R=High A=Medium G=Low

IMPACT - WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- All disabled children receive a good or better service, with a timely response to their needs.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

A1.1 Continue to implement Disabled Children's Service improvement plan, with focus on upskilling staff with specialist training and rolling out comprehensive suite of Disabled Children's Service policies and procedures.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

Quarterly reviews:
April 2020
July 2020
October 2020
January 2021

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?



TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE OUTCOMES WE HOPE FOR?

- Monthly programme of brief audits undertaken by Service Manager for Disabled Children's Service at least 90% of audits are rated 'good' or better and 0% are rated 'inadequate'.
- Explore opportunity for Peer or External Review to help benchmark progress later in 2020.

ADDITIONAL AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Engagement of children and young people in their individual care planning

- Children at risk of significant harm outside of home have a safety plan in place in order to increase their level of safety in the community at any given time.
- Children who go missing from home or care access a safe space with a trusted adult to explore their experiences when missing, through a timely return home interview.
- The safety for all children is increased through effective multi-agency planning and interventions, which addresses contexts of harm outside of the home environment, through an embedded whole-Council Contextual Safeguarding approach.

A2.1 Safety Plan guidance circulated to staff with request for these to be completed for all children at risk of extra-familial harm.

A2.2 Safety planning workshops for practitioners to be delivered led by Children's Rights Officers to support staff in co-producing and reviewing safety plans with young people

A2.3 Promote and systematise timely and quality recording of Missing Episodes and Return Home Interviews.

Complete
Dec 2019

June 2020

July 2020

A2.4 Consider options for capturing planning for children in one place to support greater integration of vulnerable adolescent response.

- Review of Children in Need/Child Protection/Care Plan episodes in response to change of circumstances, as well as regular points of review
- Use case summary tab
- Develop new stand alone episode e.g. risk assessment
- QlikSense for Missing Children

A2.5 Leadership plan for embedding Contextual Safeguarding by each service area with support from Contextual Safeguarding Team.

August 2020

Autumn 2020

- Data on offer and completion of Return Home Interviews.
- Audit of safety plans for young people experiencing extra-familial harm at least 90% of audits are rated 'good' or better and 0% are rated 'inadequate'



ADDITIONAL AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Engagement of children and young people in their individual care planning

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

Rated level of impact of Covid-19 on original intended timeframes

R=High A=Medium G=Low

IMPACT - WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- Children and young people are fully supported to make meaningful contributions to their own intervention plans.
- Children and young people are fully aware of their rights and feel confident and able to advocate for these when necessary.
- Children and young people are active participants in wider Children and Families Service strategic planning and development.

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WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

A2.6 Audit of cases where we have concerns around extra-familial harm and where we need to use contextual safeguarding approaches.

A2.7 Design and implement plan for Safeguarding Adolescent Unit to ensure timely and bespoke Children and Families Service responses to young people experiencing extra-familial harm.

A2.8 Engage Integrated Gangs Unit in design and implementation of Safeguarding Adolescent Units to ensure effective and well coordinated response to extra-familial harm.

A3a.1 Ensure assessments/care plans are updated in response to significant change of circumstances - go live with updated case recording system (Mosaic) and decision about how practice will be monitored.

A3a.2 Pathway Plans are co-created with young people (through regular visits, including with care leavers) - plan to explicitly record reasons where this has not been possible and evidence of efforts made to engage young person.

A3a.3 Consistent Independent Reviewing Officers escalation in response to concerns when plans do not progress in line with children's wishes.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

Complete
May 2020

June 2020

June 2020

June 2020

Complete
Feb 2020

June 2020

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

A3a.4 Develop protocol to increase children's participation in foster carers' and connected persons annual reviews both of children and young people directly, and of their social workers (sharing their perception of the carers' ability to meet the child's needs).

A3b.1 Increase awareness of children in care about their rights and access to support, throughout their involvement with our services including:

- When children enter care
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- Care leavers

This will include raising awareness of the Children's Rights Service.

A3c.1 Increase participation of younger children in Hackney of Tomorrow (Hackney's Children in Care Council).

A3c.2 Increase opportunities for Hackney of Tomorrow (Hackney's Children in Care Council) to speak directly to senior leaders and Members on a range of issues.

TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY

June 2020

Complete
February 2020

Complete
February 2020

Complete
February 2020

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE OUTCOMES WE HOPE FOR?

- Audit of Pathway Plans June 2020. At least 90 % of audits are rated 'good' or better and 0 % are rated 'inadequate'.
- Monitoring of children's views in annual reviews for foster carers and connected person carers and feedback from Fostering Independent Reviewing Officers to Corporate Parenting Management meeting in April 2020. At least 90 % of audits are rated 'good' or better and 0 % are rated 'inadequate'.
- Monitoring number of young people attending the Junior Hackney of Tomorrow.
- Monitoring our engagement of Hackney of Tomorrow in discussions and meetings with senior leaders and Members.





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**CHILDREN
& FAMILIES**

**Full Year
Report to
Members**

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2019/20



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Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Children and Families Service (CFS) annual report for 2019/20. While most of the data included in this report comes from the financial year 2019/20, due to the huge amount of challenges and changes the service has faced in recent months, the updates on our services cover the period up to September 2020.

Ofsted conducted a full inspection of services in November 2019 and, while they found a lot of good practice and dedicated work, provided a clear framework of areas where the organisation must seek to improve. While the overall rating of 'requires improvement' was disappointing, the report was met with a constructive and energetic response from staff and leaders. An action plan was submitted to Ofsted in March 2020. Hackney was clear all parts of the council would contribute to

getting us to where we want to be, namely at a level that would be judged 'good' within the year and 'outstanding' as soon as possible thereafter. The Children's Member Oversight Board, chaired jointly by myself and the Mayor, continues to oversee the robustness of our response and progress against the plan.

The lockdown in response to coronavirus has had a significant impact on the way we deliver services to vulnerable young people and their families. Again while this was a difficult and unusual time for our workforce, they rose to the challenge and continued to provide vital services to the residents of Hackney. Throughout the various restrictions, workers have been creative in meeting needs and developing new ways to keep in touch, even when unable to work face to face. The service has always

kept children, who were also greatly affected by the changes to their daily lives, at the heart of all their work. From the Virtual School making sure young people had laptops to continue their education to Young Hackney providing space and time for young people to reflect on their experiences, all elements of CFS have had their role to play. Statutory services have also had to balance new and competing risks as they safeguard the most vulnerable children. I would like to thank all staff for their hard work and dedication during this period.

Over the summer, the Black Lives Matter protests highlighted once again the importance of anti-racism being an integral value for the whole service. The recent Side by Side exercise looking at staff experience and practice across Children's Social Care highlighted this as a key issue for both staff

and the families we work with. Although there is creative work taking place in this area, we recognise there is more to do and our Anti-Racist Practice action plan will continue to support staff, families and partners in embedding anti-racist practice into all of our work. The Anti-Racist Practice action plan which was developed over the summer sets out how we will combat racism both within Hackney CFS and in work with families, children and partner agencies.

Councillor Anntoinette Bramble

Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care



Overview of Performance



5,031 referrals were received over the course of 2019/20, a 20% increase from 4,190 received in the previous year.



4,923 assessments were completed, a 14.8% increase from the 4,290 completed in 2018/19.



251 children were on Child Protection Plans as at 31 March 2020, a 29% increase compared to the 194 at the same time in 2019.



432 children were looked after as at 31 March 2020, a 7% increase from 405 at the same time the previous year.



228 children entered care during 2019/20, an 8% increase from 212 in 2018/19.



66% of children under 16 who have been looked after for more than 2.5 years were in stable placements of more than 2 years in 2019/20, a 1% increase from 65% last year.



793 (15.8%) referrals were received within 12 months of a previous referral, a 0.5% decrease from 16.3% the previous year.



119 children between 14 and 17 entered care in 2019/20, a very slight decrease compared to 120 young people from this cohort entering care in 2018/19. This represented 52% of the total number of children who entered care in 2019/20, compared to 56% in 2018/19.



18.6% children became subject to a Child Protection plan for a second or subsequent time during 2019/20, a 4.4% decrease compared to 23% in 2018/19.



170,780 attendances by named children and young people aged 6-19 years during 2019/20 - at the wider youth provision delivered through Young Hackney and commissioned services for young people. This is a 3.6% decrease compared to 2018/19 when there were 177,299 attendances by named children and young people.



12% of looked after children had three or more placements in 2019/20, a 1% decrease compared to 13% in 2018/19.



313 care leavers aged between 17 and 21 were being supported by the Leaving Care service at 31 March 2020, a 2% increase compared to 308 at the same point in 2019.

Priorities for the year ahead



Delivering on the areas for improvement identified in the November 2019 Ofsted inspection report (further details in the Ofsted inspection section).



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Ensure that children and young people's views inform all aspects of our practice and organisational development, including responding to the findings of the Hackney Young Futures Commission.



Ensure that our resources are used as effectively as possible to ensure that children receive the right support at the right time, including through a refocusing of front door activities, the completion of an extensive review of Early Help services and a review of caseloads across the service.



Ensure our systemic principles are embedded throughout our practice with children and families and that our approach and vision for CFS is understood by our practitioners and at the centre of all that we do.



Promote anti-racist practice and ensure that issues relating to identity, diversity, inequality and discrimination are considered and addressed in all aspects of our work and in our workforce development.



Review the unit model to ensure that it is robust, provides effective management oversight of cases, and supports new ways of working following COVID-19.

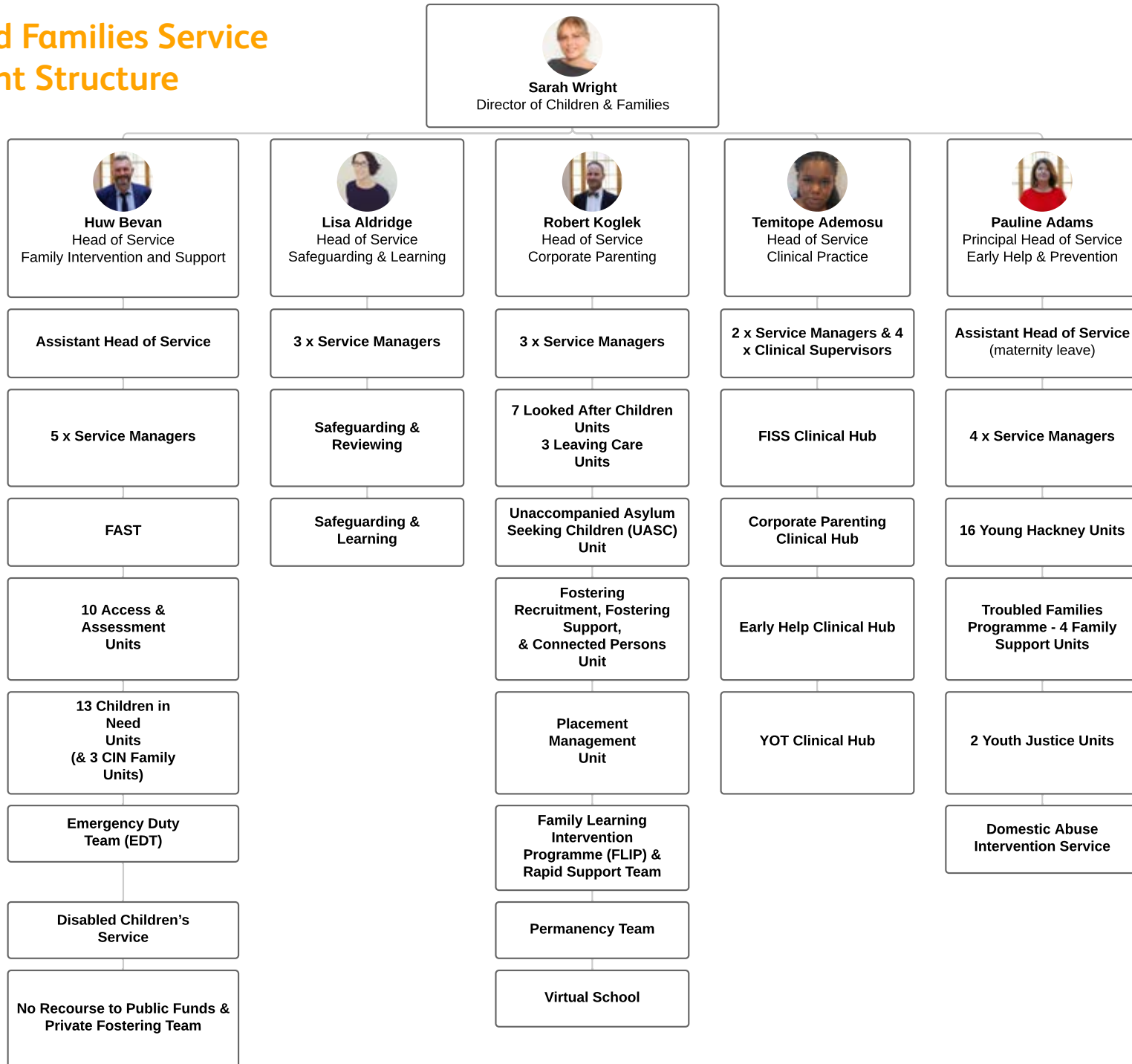


Undertake an analysis of children coming into care to understand how we can better support families to stay together safely and develop an Edge of Care Strategy to ensure children are only coming into care when this is in their best interest.

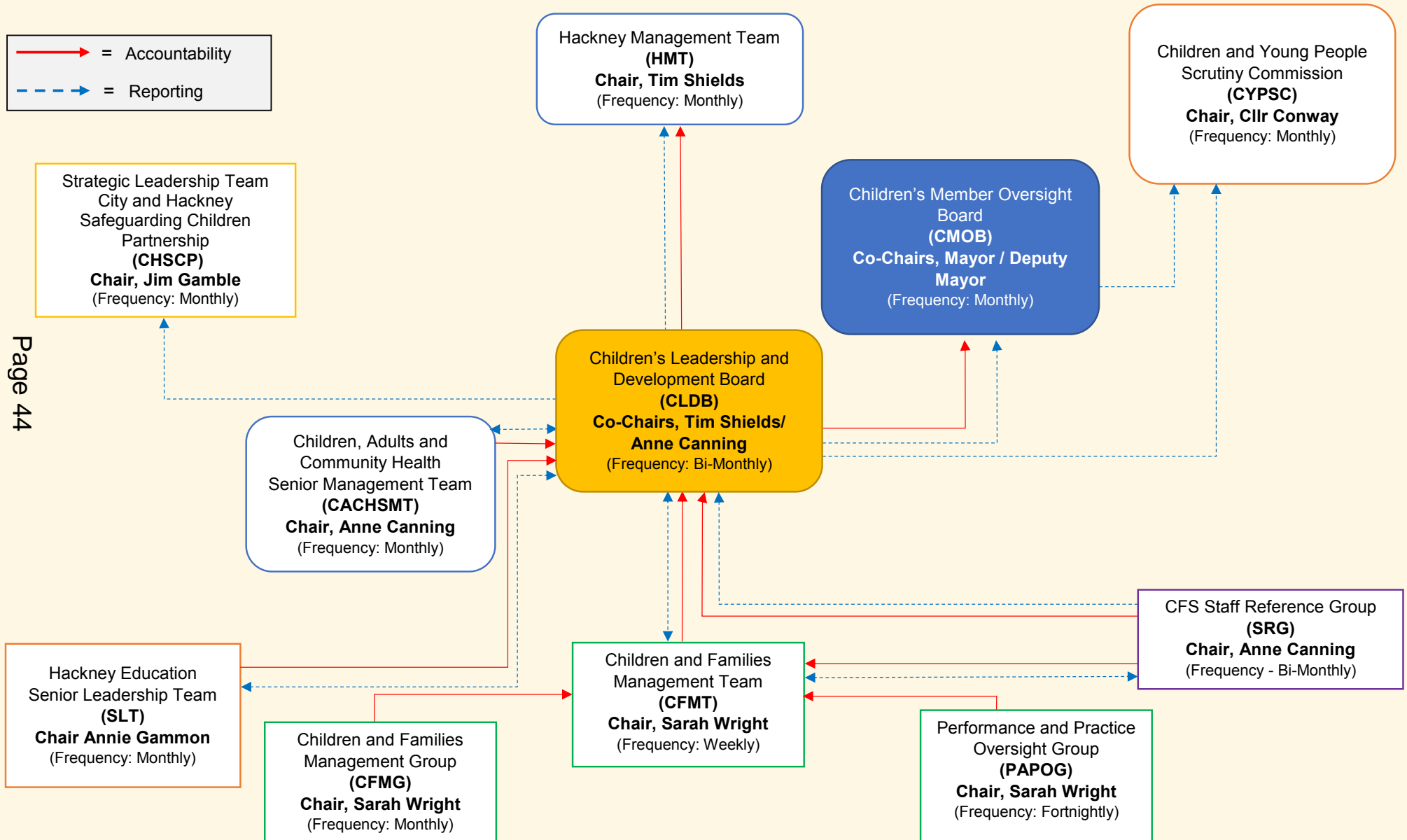


Continue in our journey to embed Contextual Safeguarding approaches to address extra-familial risk through the creation of a Context Intervention Unit.

Children and Families Service Management Structure



Children's Leadership and Development Governance Map



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Ofsted Inspection and Action Plan



Hackney Children’s Services was inspected under the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) framework in November 2019. The inspection report was published in December 2019 and the outcome of the inspection was as follows:

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Requires improvement
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires improvement
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement

Hackney takes feedback from Ofsted very seriously. Our aspiration is to take Children’s Services back to ‘good’ within one year, with a view to being ready to be judged ‘outstanding’ by our next inspection.

An action plan was developed in response to the Ofsted inspection at the beginning of the year and submitted in March 2020. In parallel, a series of workshops were held with all CFS staff (in excess of 230 staff attended) in February 2020 to support the wider development of the service alongside

the action plan. Feedback from the groups has guided the direction of a significant amount of the work that has taken place over the last six months. Quarterly updates will be provided to staff, to update on the Children’s Action Plan and on embedding staff feedback.

Progress against the action plan continues to be monitored by the Children’s Member Oversight Board (CMOB) and a Children’s Leadership and Development Board (CLDB). The Mayor and Deputy Mayor co-chair the Children’s Member Oversight Board and the Chief Executive and Group Director co-chair the Children’s Leadership and Development Board.

While progress against the action plan has been positive, the key next stage of our work to improve practice is to monitor the impact these changes have had on practice and most importantly for the children and families we work with. The Service is also in the process of developing a Phase 2a Action Plan which will set out a more ambitious vision for the service over the next two years beyond the areas identified for improvement by Ofsted. In addition, a Phase 2b plan is also in development, involving wider partners in the establishment and implementation of a wider Hackney Children’s Partnership Plan which will report into a sub-group of the Council’s Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB)

Progress against the plan

Area for improvement 1: The quality of information sharing and decision making within strategy discussions

- Working agreements for engaging officers from the various police teams who may respond to concerns about significant harm about our children and young people in strategy discussions were signed in December 2019.
- A draft protocol has been developed around mutually agreed expectations with partners including appropriate levels of participation and information sharing in strategy discussions. This is to ensure that all decisions are attuned to the child's individual needs and are informed by key information about the child and the circumstances of their family and significant others. The protocol will be embedded via virtual training over the autumn once it is completed.
- As part of an ongoing review of the front door, we aimed to have increased the number of co-located partners within the Hackney Service Centre but this has been delayed by the coronavirus restrictions. Improvements to remote working with partners and more effective use and sharing of ICT systems is ongoing.
- During lockdown, managers within Hackney Education worked closely with FAST to respond to attendance and engagement queries from schools related to lockdown. This had a really positive effect on relationships with schools and supporting them in making appropriate referrals. A member of Hackney Education is located in FAST for the autumn term and options for long term arrangements are being considered. This will enhance the ability of partners to participate and inform decision making.
- Bi monthly dip samples of this area are ongoing to establish the impact of the changes made.

Area for improvement 2: the assessment of the impact for children of living in neglectful environments to inform authoritative and child-centred practice

- A practice week on neglect was held in July 2020 to support understanding of neglect and improve practice. The week consisted of training opportunities, resources provided to staff and practice guidance was developed and shared with staff. The practice guidance outlined research and best practice in the area of neglect and set expectations around standards for ensuring quality assessments and timely interventions.
- Further work over the winter will focus on developing, delivering and embedding a programme of training around neglect and assess the impact.
- A new risk assessment process has been developed which will support work being done to strengthen the expectations and processes around re-assessments to ensure they are reflective of cumulative harm and look at all strengths, risks and protective factors.
- Direct work tools have been developed in consultation with Children's Rights Officers' to support children to effectively participate in Child Protection Conferences. They will be designed and disseminated through a workshop in autumn 2020. Further work to support children to participate in their planning will be completed over the next six months.

Area for improvement 3: the quality of assessment and planning for children subject to private fostering arrangements

- A new Private Fostering Policy was developed in January 2020 which outlined case management responsibilities to promote consistently high quality practice in safeguarding children in private fostering arrangements. Cases were transferred to the new No Recourse to Public Funds and Private Fostering Team in March 2020, a structural change to

embed best practice. At the same time all open cases were reviewed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and the ability of their current carers to meet their needs.

- Work has also been completed during summer 2020 across the City and Hackney Safeguarding Board to increase awareness of privately fostered children, and agencies roles and responsibilities in relation to them including the development of an app for practitioners to use.
- Improvements to the management information available in this area are ongoing with the creation of a new management information dashboard being completed in September 2020.
- Bi annual audits will continue to review the well being of, and arrangements for, children in private fostering arrangements. Work is also continuing with the North London consortium to share learning and best practice in this area.

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Recommended area for improvement **4: The timeliness and effectiveness of pre-proceedings work, including the quality of contingency planning**

- A new permanency planning meeting process, with meetings chaired by the Head of the Family Intervention and Support Service was developed in January 2020 in order to ensure that permanency is considered at the earliest possible opportunity for children and that contingency plans are in place when legal proceedings are being considered.
- Practice guidance to support practitioners in understanding appropriate escalation, timescales and processes in pre proceedings was developed in March 2020, with the aim of ensuring timely and effective intervention for children. Ongoing audits are measuring how effectively it has been embedded.
- There have been developments in the way Mosaic supports the Public Law Outline process and improvements in management information available to support this work are ongoing.

- Work is ongoing with colleagues in Legal Services to develop and embed a joint protocol to ensure consistency in our pre proceedings process and ensure high quality decision making for children.

Recommended area for improvement **5: The welfare of children who are missing education or who are home educated is safeguarded**

- The Elective Home Education (EHE) policy was updated in June 2020 in order to ensure annual reviews of the quality of teaching and learning in this area.
- Further work to launch and embed the Elective Home Education policy is ongoing but has been delayed in some areas by the pandemic.
- A protocol to ensure a more effective cross service / multi agency approach to unregistered settings as soon as these are identified, ensuring children attending these settings are safeguarded and attending appropriate education was launched in July 2020.
- A bi-annual teaching and learning forum to support parents in securing positive outcomes for children and young people who missing education or are home educated was planned but has been affected by the pandemic. Options for virtual alternatives are being considered.

Recommended area for improvement **6a: the effectiveness of management oversight by leaders and managers at all levels**

- A scoping exercise to establish practitioner, frontline manager and service manager capacity was completed in January 2020 and additional resources provided where needed. A further benchmarking exercise is also underway with other local authorities to look at this area and is expected to be completed in autumn.
- As part of constructing a professional development programme on challenge for all staff, including challenge to partners, a systemic leadership development training programme commenced in June 2020.

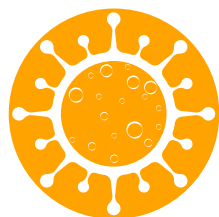
- A new induction programme was devised in July 2020 which includes an introduction to systemic practice. Training on performance management for all managers also started in July 2020.
- Roles and responsibilities for all managers were clarified within a new handbook produced in September 2020.
- A review of the unit model is currently taking place to ensure practitioners have the time to do high quality direct work with children and families and frontline managers are able to maintain effective oversight of the cases held in their units to support best practice. The outcome of this review is anticipated in October 2020.
- Quarterly case review days already monitor management oversight of cases in general but a schedule of audits looking at management of different points in case progression will be completed over the winter.

Recommended area for improvement **6b: the effectiveness of management oversight by leaders and managers at all levels**

- The Hackney CFS quality assurance framework was self evaluated in January 2020 and a new framework was developed in March 2020.
- Practice guidance on working with fathers and male carers, child sexual abuse and neglect have been completed and a forward plan of practice guidance is being developed and will be monitored by the Systemic Strategy Group.
- A peer review of completed audits with neighbouring local authorities will be completed in autumn 2020 and a peer audit of cases is planned for early in 2021.
- A 'Side-by-Side' quality assurance exercise was run during September 2020 where 52 frontline managers and practitioners explored cases across the service and the impact of COVID-19. The findings from this exercise will be published later in the Autumn.
- A programme of 'Learning Visits' has been established, where senior managers will join frontline staff in practice activities in a two-way opportunity to share learning and insight on staff's day-to-day experiences are planned for late Autumn.
- Following service-wide recruitment, 10 staff members were appointed to our CFS Staff Reference Group (SRG). The group has been established to provide an effective feedback loop between senior management and staff from across the service, working as a sounding board and 'consultative body' on developments in the service. Membership reflects staff from a range of service areas and pay grades. The group have met twice, issues discussed have included feedback on the CFS rebranding, feedback loops, practice guidance and reviewing communication channels in the service. The group continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis.



Impact of COVID-19



The impact of coronavirus, and the measures taken to mitigate it by the government, have inevitably had an effect on the way Hackney CFS works. Nevertheless, we continued to provide a full service during the lockdown. Our business continuity plan was activated on 16 March 2020 and senior management team meetings were held up to three times a week, to plan and coordinate operational activities to ensure that we were able to serve the community safely.

Impact on children and young people:

The closure of educational, childcare and leisure facilities, as well as contact centres, meant that children were isolated from their usual support networks and from family members they did not live with. This was particularly challenging for children in vulnerable or at risk households.

Education and early help input into the front door team was strengthened during the lockdown period. This was effective in responding to school concerns about children that were not open to CSC and assisted early engagement with families.

Work took place jointly with colleagues in Hackney Education to liaise with schools and ensure that an appropriate plan was agreed for each individual child confirming the level of contact that the school would maintain and whether a setting could support continued attendance, particularly for vulnerable children. Some children were offered places within schools during the lockdown period although take up of this offer was low, as it was across much of the country especially in London.

All service areas have worked hard to ensure they continued to work with children as meaningfully and creatively as possible during this difficult time. (Please see the sections on each service area for further details of the different measures put in place). Some of the techniques and approaches tried with families have been very successful, for example more regular virtual contact with looked after children, and will be incorporated into practice long term.

Service continuity:

At the beginning of lockdown senior managers asked practitioners to rate all of their cases red, amber or green to decide on the level of contact to have with families, which balanced the risk to children with the risks of spreading coronavirus. As the restrictions continued a MOSAIC risk assessment tool was created to assist practitioners in deciding whether visits should take place face to face or virtually and how often these visits should take place to ensure that children who were at risk of harm or in need of support had the most appropriate level and form of contact. We recommended that the risk assessment be regularly reviewed but allowed practitioners and their line managers to use their professional judgement to be responsive to stable or changing circumstances dependent on the needs of the child(ren). Once the lockdown measures eased we resumed face to face direct visits in the vast majority of cases, unless family health prevented this, and paused use of the risk assessment tool. Our approach to visits was iterative and evolved over time in response to changes in Government guidance and in our recent Side by Side exercise some staff commented that changes in advice and requirements had sometimes been difficult to keep up with. The feedback from the Side by Sides will be used to inform development and dissemination of the tool should it be needed again.

Impact on staff:

At the beginning of the lockdown period there were a high number of COVID-19 cases within Hackney. Whilst relatively few of our staff had periods of sickness, many staff have additional vulnerabilities including a high number from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds and a large number of staff had caring responsibilities for children or family members. There was therefore a significant number of staff that were either unwell, self isolating or otherwise restricted in their availability to complete face to face work. The unit model was supportive in ensuring other staff could step in as needed.

The challenges for staff, both in terms of changes to ways of working and the impact of lockdown on their wellbeing, were recognised by senior managers. There are a large number of staff with increased caring responsibilities due to the restrictions in place and the Council has increased the paid dependency leave allowance to 30 days, and many staff have been working reduced or flexible hours.

All staff have continued to have regular supervision meetings and more informal catch ups with their line managers using Google Meet. Unit meetings have taken place virtually but more regularly and of shorter length. Staff forums have also continued to take place online. A staff survey in May 2020 found that 88 % of CFS staff felt they had been 'extremely supported' or 'very supported' by their line managers and peers in the previous 4 weeks.

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Anti-Racist Practice



The following statement expresses Hackney Hackney Children and Families Services' aims and intentions in relation to anti-racism:

“Hackney’s Children and Families Service is committed to eradicating systemic racism, discrimination and injustice and to making anti-racism a foundation of our practice. We will be a voice and force for change, for every child and family that we work for and with, to recognise and address the impact of racism on children and families within our practice, to apply our anti-racist principles in all of our interactions with and decision-making about children and to determinedly and actively, demand the same from our partners. As an organisation, we acknowledge that the experience of our Black staff and those from other marginalised ethnic groups, is not the same as that of our White staff. We are committed to ensure that all voices are represented and heard at every level where decisions are made and that our workforce reflects the community which we serve, especially at the senior leadership level.”

Pages 5-7

The Anti-Racist Practice action plan was developed in the summer of 2020 in the context of the murder of George Floyd in the USA, protests and the ongoing Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement across the world. Developing the plan included self-reflection and an increased recognition and awareness of racism and the issues of power and privilege that are prevalent within and across all levels of society. The plan is monitored by the Children and Families Management Team and developed in consultation with the Black Leadership Group. In addition there will be three working groups formed over October 2020 contributing to and progressing the actions under each goal of the plan, and a Google Currents community open to all staff to make their contributions.

The plan has three main aims:

- Inclusive Recruitment and Aspirational Support for Staff: Staff workforce is representative of child and family population in Hackney at all levels including at senior leadership levels
- Anti-Racist Leadership and Practice with Children and Families: Leadership and practice with children and families take a pro-actively anti-racist stance to address racism, discrimination and inequality
- Promoting Anti-Racist Practice to influence broader systems that affect children and families lives: Leaders and Practitioners across CFS take action to address structural racism and proactively lead, support and constructively challenge the broader system including in partnership discussions as required

In relation to the goal around Inclusive Recruitment and Aspirational Support for Staff, we acknowledge that the diversity of our workforce is inconsistent across the service and disproportionately White at senior management levels which is why the following actions have taken place:

- Anonymous recruitment started in July 2020
- Verbal reasoning tests ended in July 2020
- Diverse interview panels were introduced in Spring 2020
- Current data on the workforce, diversity and disproportionality at all levels has been confirmed as baseline measure for future change
- Black leaders have set up a Black Leadership Group which will support the plan including recruitment and support for staff, as well as identifying an external consultant to offer coaching and facilitate conversations with the senior management team.



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Further goals in all areas include:

- Quarterly monitoring and analysis of workforce by role and ethnicity as one indicator and measurement of change which will form part of the Corporate Dashboard
- Future surveys to collect information and measure progress in workplace experiences of Black and minority ethnic staff
- In Autumn 2020, review with HR and Corporate options for reporting incidents of racism in a way that staff feel safe and supported which may include the option of a restorative approach as well as formal action as required



- Review advert content, job descriptions, interview questions, assessments and role-play to ensure that language and content is inclusive and promotes diversity by Spring 2021
- Development of systemic tools to support approach to chairing and facilitating meetings (including interview panels) which include attention to power dynamics by January 2021
- Monitor and ensure equitable access to training opportunities, particularly those that support staff to move into leadership roles
- Establish a peer support group for Black practitioners in Autumn 2020
- Explore how we will provide culturally sensitive emotional support in response to racialised trauma
- All training developed and commissioned will include explicit reference to anti-racist practice requirements
- Develop systemic and anti-racist tools and approaches to facilitate conversations with families and to facilitate meetings that attend to power dynamics, racism and discrimination in Spring 2021
- Explore the potential for an Anti-Racist Continuum of Practice as a tool for self reflection, goal setting and inquiry into practice developed and being shared with the Black Leadership Group for consultation
- Developing a position statement on Anti-Racist Practice
- Introductory Anti-Racist Practice training for all CFS in Autumn 2020 delivered by British Association of Social Workers following a pilot session



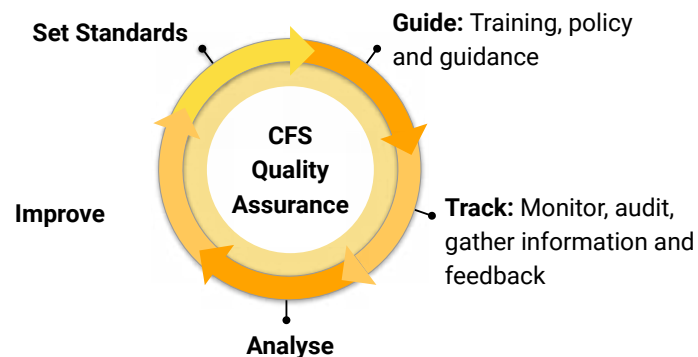
Quality Assurance



The Children and Families Service is a complex system and many tools are used to understand performance and identify learning opportunities, themes and trends to enable the service to continue to adapt and respond to new demands. A revised quality assurance framework was developed in March 2020, to ensure our quality assurance is soundly evidence-based.

The framework sets out how Hackney learns from all quality assurance activity completed to ensure children and families are being supported in the right way at the right time, and to ensure we understand what difference has been made. The framework sets out the approach and how learning is embedded and evidenced in practice. The quality assurance framework for CFS was evaluated in January 2020 by the Safeguarding and Learning Service, working closely with the management teams of each service area in CFS. The evaluation was modelled on an evidence-based approach to quality assurance in Children's Services developed by Research in Practice (*Building a Quality Culture in Child and Family Services*).

The Quality Assurance Framework provides insight into current levels of confidence about the quality of service delivery and the degree to which this is having a positive effect on children and their families in Hackney. Key to this is measuring impact - it is critical to understand what difference Hackney Children and Families Service and our partners are making for children. Outcomes for children are at the centre of our framework.



There are 5 stages in the framework cycle:

- **Set standards:** Setting out our expectations from practitioners
- **Guide:** Deliver training, policy and guidance to reach standards
- **Track:** Monitor, audit, gather information and feedback
- **Analyse:** Consider and evaluate the information gathered - what did we learn, what was the impact for children?
- **Improve:** Identify actions to continuously improve

Once improvements that we want to see are identified, we will refresh and update our standards, using research to inform best practice and the cycle begins again - monitoring and auditing to understand whether changes have the desired impact for children. The role of the Performance and Practice Oversight Group is critical in overseeing the quality assurance cycle for the Children and Families Service.

Role of Performance and Practice Oversight Group (PPOG) in Quality Assurance

The fortnightly Performance and Practice Oversight Group, chaired by the Director of Children and Families, has a critical role in the quality assurance of the Children and Families Service as the forum where quantitative and qualitative learning is brought together and improvement actions are tracked. The purpose of this meeting is to quality assure against the standards that have been set for practice across CFS and to respond

to changes in the flow of cases through the child protection system. To this end:

- Weekly data on caseloads is produced and key performance information is reviewed at each meeting.
- Every month, a focused meeting on either audits or 'feedback loops' is held - to ensure that qualitative information about the quality of practice is being considered and triangulated alongside data. Feedback loops include family feedback, child protection chair/Independent Reviewing Officer escalations, learning from Children's Rights Officers, complaints and compliments, feedback from staff, feedback from partners and learning from elsewhere.
- PPOG highlights issues and areas requiring further exploration and triangulates multiple sources of information.
- PPOG directs audit/brief reviews/ feedback/ other quality assurance activity and looks at findings.
- PPOG directs improvement actions and measures the impact of these actions.

Audits

A comprehensive programme of audits for 2020 is in place, with 415 audits and dip samples completed between 1st January and 30th September 2020. The programme consists of scheduled and unscheduled (in response to emerging issues) full and brief audits, as well as dip samples - all tracked centrally. Alongside this, each service area undertakes routine audits that they administer themselves. Audits are discussed with units as they are undertaken and we ask children/carers/families to share their views and experiences about our social work intervention so this can inform our analysis of impact. Learning from multiple audits is pulled into reports to analyse themes and identify improvement actions - these reports are shared with practitioners and discussed at the Performance and Practice Oversight Group. An action tracker monitors progress against these actions.

CFS undertakes quarterly Case Review Days which comprise a number of full case audits undertaken by all Service Managers. The Case Review

Days in 2020 have focused on the Public Law Outline process, long term cases, and 16 and 17 year olds coming into care. These are all areas which were identified as particularly challenging or have been included in the post Ofsted service improvement plan. Each audit looks at five areas when considering the quality of work: child focused practice, outcome focused plans, quality of interventions, management oversight, and identity. Audit scores through Case Review Days have been consistent across the year with an average score of 2.6 overall (where 4 is outstanding and 1 is inadequate), meaning practice requires improvement to be good, with 62 % of these audits rated as good (3) or outstanding (4). It is expected that practice as evidenced through audits will improve further as the changes and developments introduced through the post Ofsted service improvement plan embed and the impact of these practice changes can be evidenced. These audits provide a baseline to measure our progress against and further quality assurance activity will focus on these areas of developing practice.

Particular areas of strength identified in Case Review Day audits include child focused practice (2.8 average score and 68 % good or outstanding), work around identity (2.7 and 64 % good or outstanding) and the quality of interventions (2.6 and 61 % good or outstanding). Audits consistently highlighted the strength of direct work with children and relationships with families.

Areas which continue to require further improvement include management oversight (2.5 and 49 % good or outstanding) and outcome focused plans (2.5 and 42 % good or outstanding). The common theme for improvement identified in audits was around having a clear plan of intervention as well as a contingency plan to be enacted if the intervention was proving ineffective. Audits identified a number of administrative changes which could support practitioners in these aims for example improving ICT systems and increasing management oversight. Further work is also taking place in relation to embedding practice standards and effective interventions, and significant improvement activity has taken place over recent months in relation to management oversight and outcome focused plans (further details are included on pages 10 and 11).

Further learning from these and other audits can be found in the service specific sections of this report.

Side by Side exercise

In September 2020, CFS undertook a 'Side by Side' exercise, meeting with frontline practitioners to:

- Understand how practice has been affected by COVID-19
- Understand current practice
- Identify strengths within the service and also areas which may require improvement

In total 52 meetings took place with frontline staff, conducted by Service Managers, Heads of Service and the Director of Children's Services. The interviews had two parts, the first looking at staff well being and the second looking at particular types of cases which may have proved challenging or were a concern. The aim of the process was to look at CFS systemically to identify strengths and areas of concern. The feedback from this exercise is still being collated and a formal report and action plan will be developed in October 2020. Staff have highlighted that contributing to and learning from such processes being shared with them is important and makes the exercise meaningful.



Discussions on staff well being highlighted both positive and negative effects of lockdown:

- Practitioners felt supported by managers with 89 % saying they had been as or more available during the pandemic than usual.
- Staff also felt that within their units they were able to work with each other to ensure they managed to continue good practice with children and families despite the restrictions.
- Units are meeting more frequently virtually and staff appreciated this regular contact.
- Staff also reported the emotional challenges of the new arrangements - difficult conversations being held within practitioners' homes can leave workers feeling without a private space to relax.
- Many staff reported missing the ad hoc support, both from colleagues and managers, provided within an office environment.
- Reduced travel time allowed more time for work to be completed - meetings with other professionals were an area where it was highlighted that new ways of working might be taken forward after the pandemic, both due to travel and the effectiveness of meetings.

Areas of practice which were 90% rated 'good' or above included:

- Cases where change had been achieved for a child
- Managing high risk cases during the pandemic
- Working with young people who go missing
- Working with hard to engage fathers or male caregivers
- Working with at risk children under the age of 1

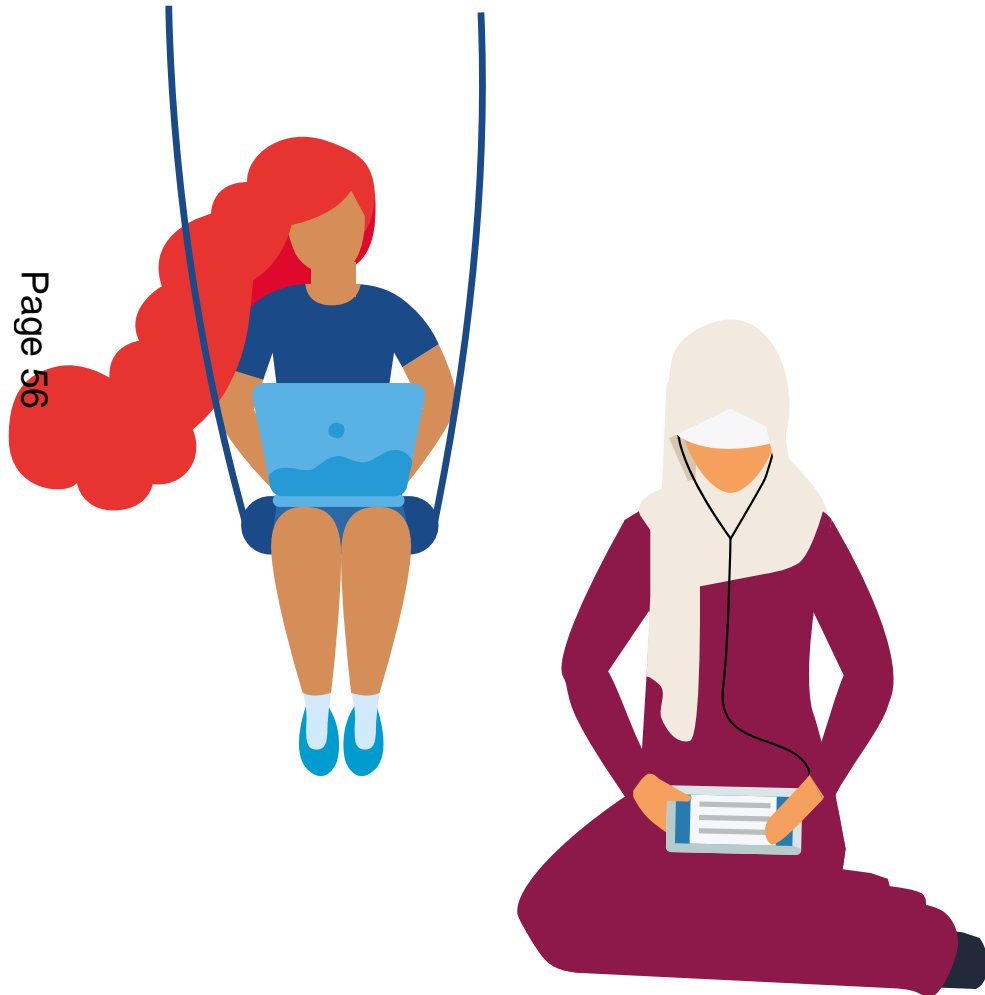


Other positive areas of practice included:

- Children and families being involved in planning developing the effectiveness of the intervention
- More frequent contact with children and families was possible in some cases and supported the development of relationships to create change
- Hard to engage young people responding more positively to virtual contact than in-person meetings including with the clinical service

Areas where staff identified more challenges included:

- Assessing risk and developing relationships during lockdown
- Obtaining the voice of the child through virtual visits
- Difficulties in support from partners, especially intervention services who had not been available during lockdown
- Having time to use the practice standards effectively to support work with families
- Support with placement stability for Looked After Children
- Cases with extra familial risk as a concern
- Some difficulties in closing or transferring cases during the pandemic



Workforce Development



The Children and Families Service is committed to ‘growing our own’ staff. A Workforce Development Strategy for 2019 - 22 is in place to further develop our workforce to meet the need for accountable, flexible and highly skilled practitioners and support staff. This strategy covers recruitment and training and is managed via the fortnightly Workforce Development Board, chaired by the Director of Children and Families.

There is an extensive training and learning programme which includes a comprehensive ASYE (Assisted and Supported Year in Employment) programme for newly qualified social workers with 17 social workers in placement at September 2020, a staff training programme, and service-wide Practice Development Days that all practitioners attend. The training programme is informed and developed with feedback from staff.

Hackney also organises Practice Weeks where training is provided by staff on areas of specialist knowledge on topics which have been indicated as important by quality assurance work. There have been two Practice Weeks organised this year, one on working with fathers in January 2020 and another on neglect in June 2020. The week on neglect was held virtually and featured 14 sessions covering 10 different topics including chronologies, systemic approaches and children with additional needs. There were 225 attendees, an average of 16 participants per session. Feedback for the sessions was overwhelmingly positive with 81 % of respondents saying they found the session Excellent or Very Good, and 87 % saying they would be Very Likely or Likely to make use of the training in their future practice.

A new exit interview process has now been in place since April 2020. All staff leaving the organisation are being offered the opportunity to contribute feedback through exit interviews. Over the past 3 months, 11 exit interviews were conducted with staff leaving the organisation. Key findings from exit interviews are being analysed in more detail and are discussed at the Performance and Practice Oversight Group meetings focused on ‘feedback loops’, where actions and next steps are identified.

Following feedback from the staff workshops held in February 2020 that staff felt they could be more supported in ensuring their wellbeing and personal development needs are effectively met, our Workforce Development Action Plan includes a review of staff check-ins to ensure they are appropriate for this purpose. This work will include consultation with staff on what they want from this process and how this could be implemented.

Cases per social worker (based on FTE equivalents)

	2017	2018	2019
Hackney	19	17	18
Statistical Neighbour	16	15	15
Inner London	16	16	15
England	18	17	17

Hackney’s caseload is slightly higher than the average for England and significantly higher than those in other inner London and statistical neighbour boroughs. During the coronavirus lockdown, the number of referrals, and therefore caseloads in Access and Assessment and Children in Need teams, decreased.

Percentage of agency staff

	2017	2018	2019
Hackney	26.7	27.6	28.1
Statistical Neighbour	23.3	23	23.1
Inner London	27.7	25.5	25.2
England	15.8	15.4	15.8

There has been a slight increase of 0.5% in the number of agency staff, in line with the increase of 0.4% across England. The number of agency workers in Hackney partially reflects measures that were put in place during the year to temporarily increase social work capacity to respond to increases in demand. As these roles are temporary they cannot be recruited to on a permanent basis.

Percentage rate of social worker turnover

	2017	2018	2019
Hackney	12.7	12.4	8.3
Statistical Neighbour	16.4	18.3	16.8
Inner London	15.9	19.1	16.1
England	13.6	15.2	15.1

Hackney's social worker turnover was already lower than both its statistical neighbours and England and it has substantially reduced by 4% over the past year. Social worker turnover in Hackney is now half the rate of its statistical neighbours.



Early Help and Prevention



Strengths and Progress

Creative response to COVID-19 by Young Hackney - At the start of lockdown the team mobilised quickly to develop an online youth hub providing a virtual programme of activities and support for children and young people. Following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, Youth, Play, Sports and Business Support staff worked closely with Health and Safety colleagues to adapt services and successfully reopen our youth hubs, adventure playgrounds and borough-wide youth sports programme on 29 July 2020. The team worked collaboratively with Council colleagues and voluntary sector partners to ensure children and young people have access to a wide range of activities and support this Summer. The service held a really successful programme of activities for 6-19 year-olds (and up to 25 with special educational needs) throughout the holiday period. Young Hackney Targeted Early Help teams have continued to support children and young people through physical and virtual support and are helping young people to re-engage with education. Young Hackney's online youth hub continues to compliment physical delivery 5 days a week.

Trusted Relationships detached outreach project - The project is working to create an innovative and effective detached outreach project that supports some of our most vulnerable young people to access support and engage with mental health services. The detached outreach team includes youth workers and an embedded clinical psychologist and has continued to operate throughout lockdown. The flexible, agile nature of the support offer has allowed the team to have wide-reach across Hackney with evidence of high engagement, and repeat engagement. Complementing the direct provision, the Hackney team has worked with a number of partner organisations to develop a network of trusted relationships and safe spaces; by upskilling external staff and practitioners, and the wider

community on concepts of community psychology and learning from contextual safeguarding.

Domestic Abuse and Intervention Service continues to support victims in Hackney - there was a 50 % increase in referrals relating to domestic abuse during lockdown. Additional resources were allocated to the team and support for victims remained operational throughout the lockdown period. When the COVID-19 crisis took hold and lockdown measures were put in place to limit how and when people could meet, delivery of the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP) was suspended due to a lack of evidence supporting the effectiveness of delivering DAPPs using video conferencing software and caution about increasing the risk to victims. In the interim, referrers are being supported to engage with perpetrators and manage risks adopting the Safe and Together approach. The team continues to work with social workers across CFS to embed the Safe and Together model and to support the development of effective interventions which protect victims and support perpetrators in changing their behaviour.

Reduction in youth reoffending - the number of young people reoffending in the youth justice system fell by 33 % from 2018/19 to 2019/20. The number of first time entrants rose but only slightly. In response to COVID-19 restrictions all YOT cases were risked-assessed and then reviewed weekly, relating to the level of wellbeing, harm and re-offending that each child was assessed as being at risk from, or posing to others. All young people were provided with a high level of contact throughout lockdown; ranging from daily to weekly contact depending on their risk and vulnerability. This included weekly contact with children in custody. Reparation activities have been innovatively developed to ensure young people have been able to meet the requirements of their community order, for example through a project of mask-making kits compiled and delivered by post.



Areas for development

The Early Help review is continuing - this review will consider options for delivering Early Help services and will respond to the work being undertaken within Integrated Commissioning workstreams in relation to neighbourhood approaches and emotional health and wellbeing and the development of CAMHS provision in schools.

Management information in relation to early help - work is taking place to develop and improve current management information and reporting systems for early help to improve management oversight and understanding of the impact and effectiveness of early help interventions as well as monitoring levels of demand. The QlikSense dashboard for early help services went live in autumn 2019, providing accessible early help performance information. This system is being developed further to provide enhanced performance information to early help managers and practitioners.

Addressing disproportionality in youth justice - four key activities have been identified and agreed by the Safer Young Hackney Board to focus efforts on reducing disproportionality. These are:

- Exploration of a deferred prosecution scheme for the borough.
- Improving parental understanding and engagement with Early Help and Youth Justice Services.
- Working with the Safer Young Hackney Partnership to increase oversight and accountability of school exclusions.
- Training for partners on SYH Board, Magistrates and District Judges, on SaLT, Unconscious Bias and Trauma Informed Practice and a review of sentencing decisions by ethnicity, age and gender.



Young Hackney is the Council's early help, prevention and diversion service for children and young people aged 6-19 years old and up to 25 years if the young person has a special education need or disability. The service works with young people to support their development and transition to adulthood by intervening early to address adolescent risk, develop pro-social behaviours and build resilience. The service offers outcome-focused, time-limited interventions through universal plus and targeted services designed to reduce or prevent problems from escalating or becoming entrenched and then requiring intervention by Children's Social Care. Young Hackney's approach to early help is based on a systemic understanding of the key relationships in a child or young person's life and, in particular, the critical influence of peers and family members. Young Hackney works closely with schools to support the delivery of the core Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme as well as to support behaviour management interventions. A curriculum has been developed that is delivered in schools and focuses on topics such as healthy relationships, substance misuse, e-safety and youth participation and citizenship. The majority of secondary schools in Hackney have an allocated Young Hackney team who will work with them to identify students who require additional support to participate and achieve. If schools identify students who would benefit from individual support, Young Hackney will create an appropriate intervention with the school.

Universal Support Hubs

The number of named individuals accessing Young Hackney universal provision decreased by 5% in 2019/20 compared to the previous year. 22,787 named individuals accessed Young Hackney provision in 2019/20, compared to 24,024 named individuals in 2018/19. There were 170,780 attendances by named children and young people aged 6-19 years during 2019/20 at the wider youth provision delivered through Young Hackney and

commissioned services for young people. This is a 3.6% decrease compared to 2018/19 when there were 177,299 attendances by named children and young people. Part of this decrease may be explained by the increasing concerns from parents about the risk of COVID-19 which began in March 2020, before the Government official lockdown date of 23 March 2020. Many people began to work from home, and vulnerable children or children in families with those at risk began to be educated virtually/at home.

Substance Misuse Team

The Substance Misuse Team supports children and young people aged 6-25 years who are directly affected by substance misuse, or affected through their parent's misuse. Interventions take a tailored and holistic approach that builds young people's resilience and addresses issues of family and relationships, finances, education and housing, while liaising with other services/partners as necessary. Over 2019/20, the team worked with 210 young people on a targeted basis – as compared to 202 in 2018/19. The service also delivered outreach sessions to young people in schools and youth hubs.

Individual Tailored Support

At any one time, Young Hackney are working with approximately 600 young people through the Early Help teams, providing tailored individual support. The most common presenting areas of need include: difficulties with emotional wellbeing and mental health, difficulties with familial, peer and intimate relationships, vulnerability to criminal exploitation and other types of extra-familial harm, challenges with expected behaviour in school, attendance and truanting, risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) and risk of offending. Young Hackney targeted interventions were delivered to 1,434 individual young people requiring bespoke early help support in 2019/2020, including the Substance Misuse and Prevention and Diversion teams. This was a 12% increase from 1,283 young people in 2018/19.

Young people not in education, employment or training

The out of school careers service provided by Prospects has continued to ensure young people are supported to re-engage in education training or employment. The combined NEET and unknown data for the 30 June 2019 (Final Data Directory) was 4.2% which is ranked third lowest within eight Central London Boroughs (average 6.1%). The latest data (September 2020) shows Hackney's combined NEET and unknown data to be 4.1%. (London 4.2%, National 5.5%) hidden young carers.

Young Carers

Young carers are children and young people under 18 who provide regular or ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances. A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of care giving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child, impacting on his or her emotional or physical well-being or educational achievement and life chances. The multi-agency Hackney Young Carers Steering Group monitors and support the Hackney Young Carers Project.

The Young Carers Project came in-house in November 2019 and the Young Carers team was established to deliver consistency for existing young carers and to continue to identify and support children and young people with caring responsibilities in the home. 40 new referrals were received for Young Carers in the first 3 months of the service coming in-house, a large number coming in following a Young Carers Awareness Day in January 2020. At the end of March 2020, there were 290 identified young carers in Hackney. Hackney Young Carers Project provides a variety of support services which includes group work, and one to one work with children in more complex situations.

Term-time clubs took place weekly such as cooking and homework clubs, and one additional term time group that varied by term consisting of drama, sewing or cinema club. Positive activities and fun holiday sessions were well attended by the young people, and there were support groups in four secondary schools in Hackney.

A weekly Young Carers youth group was established at the Forest Road Youth Hub which had small but consistent attendance, and regular trips were popular across all ages. Two of the support groups at secondary schools were restarted with plans to expand this offer.

A template for practitioners to use when completing a Young Carers Needs Assessment was developed and rolled out across Young Hackney for use. Young Carers with support needs were allocated 1:1 support through the Targeted Support Units in Early Help. An identified gap for Young Adult Carers led to collaborative working between Adult Carers Services and Young Carers.

Areas for development over the next year will include ensuring we consistently meet the statutory requirements for annual reviews of Young Carers assessments, transition assessments and work around identifying hidden young carers.



Youth Justice

The Youth Justice Service works with all young people in Hackney who are arrested or convicted of crimes and undertakes youth justice work including bail and remand supervision and supervising young people who have been given community or custodial sentences.

Young people are supported by a multi-agency team including a Forensic Psychologist, the Virtual School, Speech and Language Therapists, the Police, a Nurse, Probation Services, a Substance Misuse Worker and a Dealing Officer. Education can be a strong protective factor for young people at risk of offending. The Youth Justice Service has a strong focus on securing access to education, training and employment and is supported by the Virtual School. At the end of March 2020, 59 % of young people on youth justice orders were attending and engaging in full time education, training or employment (ETE), a decrease compared to 70 % at the end of March 2019. This is due to a change in the reporting rules for this data rather than

a decline in performance – we now include the ETE attendance of young people on post court orders, which includes older children with more previous offences and poorer educational engagement histories.

Overall, Hackney has a relatively low proportion of 10-18 year olds involved in the youth justice system. The number of young people re-offending in Hackney within a 12 month period has significantly decreased over the last year, from 71 at the end of March 2019 to 47 at the end of March 2020, a 33 % decrease year on year.

The number of young people entering the Youth Justice System for the first time in Hackney increased from 82 in 2018/19 to 88 in 2019/20. Hackney's first time entrant rate per 100,000 has increased from 326 in 2018/19 to 349 in 2019/20, this is higher than the most recent 2018/19 statistical neighbour average (312).



Family Support Service

The Family Support Service Units are primarily social work-led delivering targeted support to families in need of additional and/or intensive support, including those identified as 'Troubled Families' meeting a minimum of two of six headline criteria:

- Parents and children involved anti-social behaviour
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion or young people at risk of worklessness
- Children who are not attending school regularly
- Children who need help: children of all ages, who need help, are identified as in need or are subject to a Child Protection Plan
- Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
- Parents and children with a range of health problems



Domestic Abuse Intervention Service

The Domestic Abuse Intervention Service (DAIS) joined the Children and Families Service as part of the Early Help and Prevention Service in April 2017 and is co-located with other services in CFS. DAIS works with anyone experiencing domestic abuse who is living in Hackney, aged 16 or over, of any sex and gender, and of any sexual orientation. The service assesses need; provides information and support on legal and housing rights; and supports service users with court attendance and to obtain legal protection. The service also works with perpetrators of domestic abuse to try to reduce risk. The team works closely with professionals across the Council and external partnerships and DAIS provides support through a linked worker in the First Access and Screening Team (FAST), where referrals for early help and safeguarding services for children and families are received and processed. DAIS workers provide consultation and expert advice, guidance and training to other staff in the Children and Families Service. A Domestic Abuse Housing Specialist has been seconded to the Housing Needs Service to support with the response to domestic abuse across the Housing Partnership.

Hackney Children and Families Service is embedding the Safe and Together model within their social work and early help interventions, to improve their response to domestic abuse. The belief of Safe and Together is that children are often best served when kept 'safe and together' with the adult domestic abuse survivor. This does not mean allowing children to continue to be exposed to harm and thresholds for the protection of children do not change. Safe and Together aims to reduce the necessity for the removal of children into care by holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour and protecting survivors of domestic abuse. The domestic abuse specialist agency Respect along with the London Boroughs of Hackney and Waltham Forest are working together to implement the Safe and Together Model across the two boroughs until March 2021.

DAIS received an average of 25 referrals per week in 2019/20, similar to the rate received in 2018/19. This followed a 61 % rise in referrals between 2015/16 and 2018/19. The impact of the lockdown in response to coronavirus led to a 50 % increase in referrals between 23 March 2020 and 4 July 2020 as compared to the same period in 2019. DAIS adapted its core service delivery to ensure continuity of service while at the same time leading within the Council and across the Hackney partnership on the promotion of a joined up, adaptive and resilient response. DAIS remained fully operational and the Council has allocated additional resources to expand the staff team to meet this demand. Referral numbers have now stabilised to an average of 26 between August and September 2020.

For those victims of domestic abuse who have been identified and assessed as high risk, Hackney holds a fortnightly Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), chaired by the Police, and scrutinised by the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) lead. 492 cases were heard at MARAC in 2019/20, a 9 % increase from 2018/19 when 450 cases were heard. 110 of the total number of cases heard at MARAC in 2019/20 were 'repeat' referrals, a 3 % decrease from 2018/19 when 113 of the total were repeat referrals. In 2019/20 of the 492 cases, 253 (49 %) there were children in the household.



Clinical Service



The Hackney Children and Families Clinical Service is an integrated and specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for children accessing Children's Social Care Services, the Family Support Service, Young Hackney and the Youth Justice Service. It works in partnership with the City and Hackney CAMHS Alliance and is accountable through integrated CAMHS commissioning arrangements.

The Clinical Service operates on an outreach basis in order to promote accessibility for families. The Clinical Service offers a wide-range of evidence based therapeutic support to children and families experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties; relationship issues and mental health issues. Approaches offered include Systemic Family Therapy, Child Psychotherapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Video Interaction Guidance (VIG), Art Therapy and Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP).

Clinical Service Activity Data April 2019 - March 2020

Number of new cases	476
Total number of cases	992
% of positive CHI-ESQ* feedback	83 %
% of positive SDQ** improvement	78 %

*The Children Experience of Service Questionnaire (CHI-ESQ) was developed by the Health Care Commission as a means of measuring service satisfaction in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

**The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief emotional and behavioural screening questionnaire for children and young people.

Systemic Approaches

Family Therapy, Multi-Family Group Therapy and Couples Therapy are available to families where there are relationship difficulties, including risks of abuse, neglect and extra-familial risk. Three Family Therapy clinics run each week, including an evening clinic for working parents. Systemic approaches also inform reflective practice groups for Children and Families Service practitioners. In 2019 the Clinical Service started training in 'Family Ties' a multi-family group for children and families experiencing separation or divorce, a joint venture with the Anna Freud Centre. The first group began in September 2019.

Training and consultation to colleagues, clinical assessments and direct work

In addition to direct clinical work and assessments, the Clinical Service delivers training to social workers, foster carers and other frontline practitioners. This includes topics such as managing self harm and risk, and recognising and responding to the attachment needs of looked after children. Consultations are offered to colleagues on request to inform decision making and ensure children's mental health needs are met.

The Trusted Relationships Project

The Clinical Service has a Clinical Psychologist based in the Trusted Relationships project. The project aims to provide a detached youth work and mental health service that operates around the borough in areas frequented by young people. The aim is to provide an alternative, accessible and less stigmatised pathway into targeted support. The Cool Down Cafe

launched early Spring 2020, supported by our Trusted Relationships Clinical Psychologist and in collaboration with the wider CAMHS Alliance. The Cool Down Cafe aims to provide children and young people with a relaxing and informal space to discuss their health and wellbeing, connect with peer mentors, and be signposted to support where necessary.

Moving Forward

This new five-week group aims to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children/young people, facilitated by a Clinical Psychologist to help address problems that unaccompanied asylum seeking children experience whilst settling in to the U.K. Upon screening, many of the attendees were experiencing trauma symptoms, involving sleep and anxiety problems. Psychoeducation was covered in addition to relaxation and grounding techniques, sleep hygiene, and practical living skills.

Fostering Changes Nurturing Attachments

The Fostering Changes and Nurturing Attachments training for foster carers aims to develop foster carers' skills in managing complex relationships with young people and provides a safe space for foster carers to reflect on their own attachment histories. This training is run regularly throughout the year.

Therapeutic Support Group for Foster Carers

The Therapeutic Support Group for Foster Carers provides a supportive and reflective space for Foster Carers to discuss challenges they may experience in their caring roles. Solutions and reflections are shared in relation to specific instances of challenges to continue to build a therapeutic parenting approach, in accordance with techniques described in the *Foster Changes, Nurturing Attachments groups*.

New Beginnings

The New Beginnings twelve-week group aims to support new mothers in the facilitation of attachments to their newborn babies. The group encourages mothers to reflect on their own experiences of childhood, and to develop an awareness and understanding of which behaviours help to create a secure attachment.

Family Ties

The Family Ties group for children and parents aims to reduce the impact of parent conflict on children. This group is run in collaboration with the Anna Freud Centre and was piloted with our service throughout Autumn 2019 with success.

Kidstime

Kidstime is a group for children, young people, and their parents who are affected by mental health issues in their family, and uses drama so that young people can explore things they are worried about. Children and young people begin to develop new ways of coping with difficult situations at home, in school, or in their daily lives.

Compassion Focused Therapy Group

The Compassion Focused Therapy Group is a six-week group aimed to provide parents with the opportunity to develop ways of being more kind and compassionate to themselves. The group is likely to benefit parents that have a tendency to criticise themselves or their parenting, as well as parents that report low self-esteem and low confidence. The group focuses in part on supporting parents to identify some of the barriers to being compassionate to themselves, and the impact this can have, particularly on their children.

Weapons Awareness Programme

The Weapons Awareness Programme is facilitated by our Forensic Psychologist linked to the Contextual Safeguarding team following the violent attacks that happened in Hackney.

Family Intervention and Support Service - Access and Assessment



The Access and Assessment Service is part of the Family Intervention and Support Service and undertakes statutory assessments of children in need and child protection investigations for all new referrals to Children's Social Care.

The First Access and Screening Team (FAST) acts as a single point for contacts and referrals to the Children and Families Service for children in need of support or protection. The multi-agency and co-located team of police, probation, health, social work and research staff work together to share intelligence and jointly assess risk. All contacts with FAST are progressed as a referral to Children's Social Care if the threshold for a statutory assessment is met. If the threshold is not met but the family is still in need of support, FAST supports them to access universal and targeted early help provision such as the Family Support Service, Young Hackney, or Children's Centres.

Access and Assessment units complete assessments in response to referrals accepted by FAST and complete short term work with families. If further statutory support is needed, the case is transferred to the Children in Need service at a time which is beneficial to the family.

The Out of Hours Social Work Service, or Emergency Duty Team (EDT), forms part of a 24-hour and seamless front line child protection service delivered by experienced and senior social work staff from across CFS working on a voluntary rota basis. The service meets the local authority's out of hours statutory social care responsibilities in safeguarding the welfare of children.

The Disabled Children's Service is also managed within the Access and Assessment team, assessing disabled children's needs and providing appropriate support to them and their families.

The No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Team supports families with No Recourse to Public Funds advice and practical support, which can include

among other things the provision of accommodation, subsistence payments and immigration advice. During 2019/20 the NRPF team worked with 87 families and 134 children. In January 2020, this team was renamed the No Recourse to Public Funds and Private Fostering team and now provides support to children living outside their immediate families in what are known as private fostering arrangements. There were 9 children in the borough known to be living in private fostering arrangements as at 30 September 2020. As with other local authorities, there may be private fostering arrangements which we are not aware of, however this figure is in line with our statistical neighbours.



Strengths and Progress

Front Door Review - a review of arrangements for the front door for CFS was initiated in April 2020. The review aimed to ensure timely and appropriate decisions are made at the front door so children can access the right services to meet their needs or be protected from harm at the right time for them. The review includes actions in response to the Ofsted inspection along with a First Access and Screening Team (FAST) Strategic Plan. The review is focused on improving partnership working and information sharing along with streamlining referral processes for early help and children's social care. Significant progress has been made and the review is due to be complete by the end of October 2020. There is further work to be completed in relation to ICT systems changes, a new referral form and support for staff in decision making around risk.

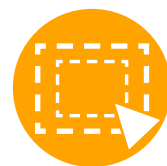
Co-located workers in FAST - as part of the response to coronavirus in March 2020, the input from education and early help practitioners into the front door was strengthened. When schools referred children who they were having difficulty making contact with to FAST, FAST had access to a group of managers from Hackney Education who could provide expert advice and support, which reassured both social care and schools. Workers from Early Help were able to support referrers to understand what support they could provide and, more widely, share knowledge and support informal training.

Improved involvement of partners in strategy discussions - In December 2019, working agreements were signed with the Police to set out pathways for engaging officers in strategy discussions, with a specific focus on children at risk of domestic abuse and extra-familial risk. As at 31 July 2020, strategy discussions this financial year have included Police 99 % of the time and health colleagues 72 % of the time.

Improvement in the quality of plans made during strategy discussions - an audit of the quality of the plans made to safeguard children as a result of strategy discussions in June 2020 had an average score of 2.6 (where 1 is rated inadequate and 4 is rated outstanding), indicating practice requires improvement to be good. As a result of our improved partnership involvement, a subsequent sample of strategy discussions completed in September 2020 rated practice in this area at 3 (good). Bi-monthly samples of strategy discussions will continue to monitor progress in this area.

More timely assessments - 64 % of assessments were completed in 45 days in 2019/20. Performance in 2019/20 was impacted by a significant increase in referrals between October 2019 and February 2020. As at 31 August 2020, 80 % of assessments were completed within 45 days in the financial year and in the week ending 25 September 2020, 97 % were completed within 45 days. Some of this increase will be attributable to the reduction in caseloads as a result of the impact of coronavirus restrictions.

Changes to private fostering - responsibility for assessing private fostering arrangements was moved from the Children in Need service to the No Recourse to Public Funds team in January 2020. The team reviewed open cases which transferred to them and strengthened our support for children



Areas for Development

Further work to improve strategy discussions - the audit completed in June 2020 identified that strategy discussions are timely but that more work needs to be done to ensure that other partners such as schools are present and that they contribute meaningfully to plans. Local practice guidance on strategy discussions is being updated to include information about mutually agreed expectations with police, health and other multi-agency partners. This will be embedded by delivering targeted joint training and development sessions in relation to roles and expectations delivered in autumn 2020. The attendance and contribution of partners continues to be monitored via the bi-monthly samples.

Improvements to working with partners - further opportunities for co-location of key partner agencies alongside FAST are being considered once Hackney Service Centre is COVID secure. Improvements in ICT to enable more effective multi-agency information sharing are being developed.

Assessment of neglect - A practice week for staff on the topic of neglect was held for staff in June 2020. This included a number of training opportunities and development of practice guidance and information being shared with staff. However there is further work to develop and deliver a full training programme to understand the cumulative impact of neglect and to ensure staff have the right tools to measure it. This will be developed over winter 2020.

Improving review assessments - practice guidance will be updated to define expectations and processes for review assessments and to support improvement in the quality and strength of those review assessments.

Child Sexual Abuse practice guidance and training - an audit of cases where sexual abuse within the family was suspected was completed in January 2020 and had an average score of 2.5, indicating that practice requires improvement to be good. New practice guidance was developed to support practitioners in response to the audit in March 2020. This has been embedded with virtual training delivered by a forensic psychologist and the Assistant Head of FISS. Additionally, 20 practitioners are undertaking specialist practice lead training with the Child Sexual Abuse Centre, an independent organisation which seeks to improve best practice and prevention in this area. The training aims to develop practitioners' understanding, skills and confidence and they will also be supported to disseminate information and learning throughout the organisation. A review audit is planned for autumn 2020 to see the impact of the new guidance.



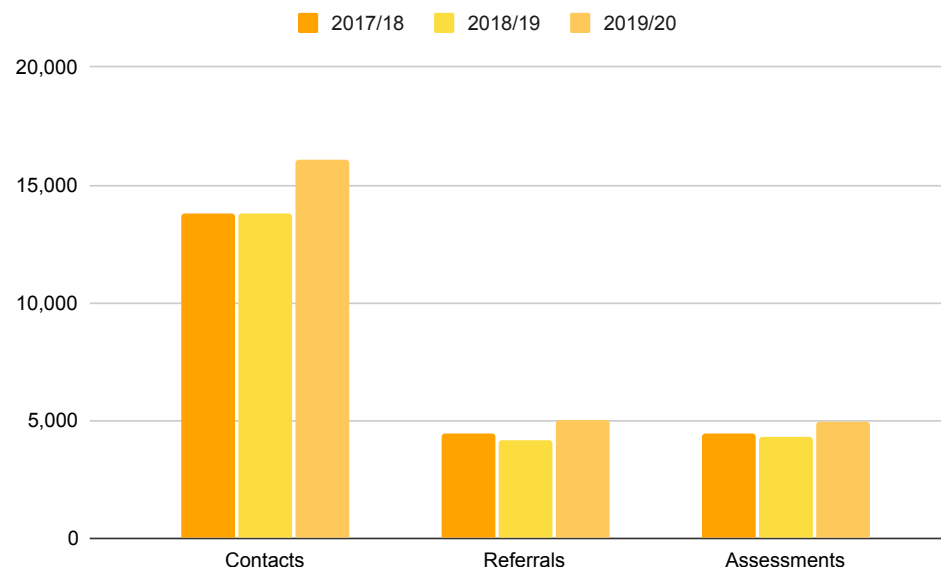
Contacts, referrals and assessments

Contact: when an agency or member of the public provides information to our First Access and Screening Team (FAST). This might be a discussion about a child or family, or be for advice about services.

Referral: when a contact is about a specific child and this requires further investigation, the FAST team may progress the contact to a referral into the Access and Assessment Service for an assessment to be completed.

Assessment: when a referral has been accepted, an assessment is undertaken to understand more about the child and their family in order to check that they are safe.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Contacts	13,802	13,767	16,044
Referrals	4,430	4,190	5,031
Assessments	4,438	4,290	4,923



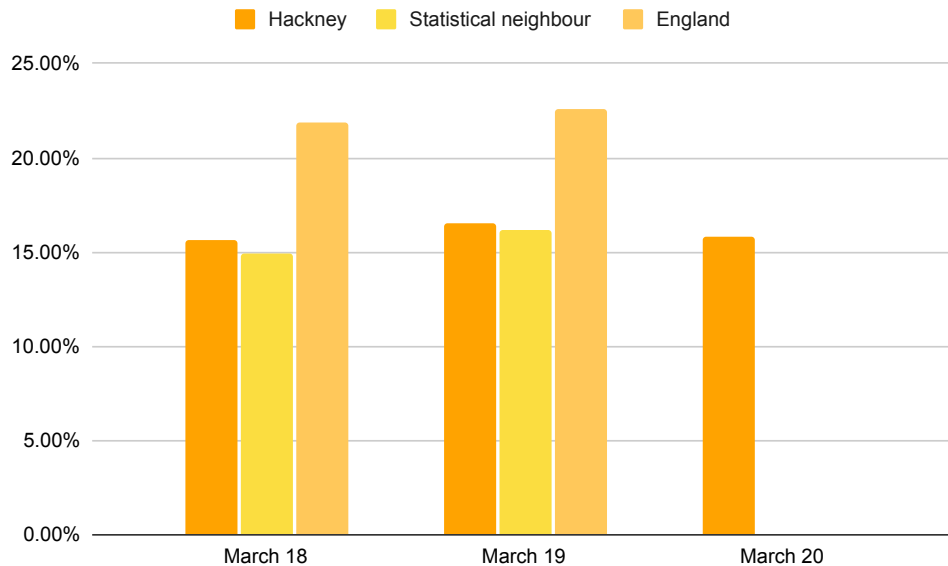


During this period there was a 16.5% increase in the number of contacts and a 14.8% increase in the number of assessments completed. The percentage of contacts accepted as referrals increased slightly from 30% to 31%.

Percentage of cases which were re-referrals which had been open in the past 12 months

	March 18	March 19	March 20
Hackney	15.6%	16.5%	15.8%
Statistical Neighbour	14.9%	16.2%	n/a
England	21.9%	22.6%	n/a

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Length of assessments

Between April 2019 – March 2020, 64% of assessments were completed within 45 days. This is lower than the most recently published statistical neighbour data – 88% of their assessments were completed within 45 days over a 12 month period as at 31 March 2019. Our assessment timescales have improved since March 2020, with 80% of assessments between April-August 2020 completed within 45 days, and 94% of assessments in September completed within 45 days. There was a significant increase in the number of assessments completed in the second half of 2019-20, from November 2019 onwards that impacted on our ability to improve assessment timescales following a continued focus on this area in 2019-20. Once this high volume of cases moved through the system, the decrease in the number of assessments in 2020-21 has meant that assessment timescales have improved significantly.





Private Fostering

A child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) who is cared for, or proposed to be cared for, and provided with accommodation by someone other than a parent, person with parental responsibility or close relative for 28 days or more is described as being privately fostered. Local authorities do not approve private foster carers, but are required to assess a private fostering arrangement to ensure that the welfare of privately fostered children is being safeguarded and promoted. A review of all private fostering arrangements open to Children in Need units, 15 in total at the time, was conducted in January 2020 and a new Private Fostering Policy was rolled out the following month. As at 30 September 2020, only nine private fostering

arrangements were open to Hackney. Seven of these are held by the No Recourse to Public Funds and Private Fostering team, with the remaining two being held by Child in Need units who were already making arrangements for permanency for the young people in question when the new policy was put in place. The team had been in the process of assessing a number of new arrangements but these children returned to their families due to COVID-19. All open cases have been known to Hackney for over a year and have been ratified by the Care Planning Panel (CPP). All private fostering cases were audited in June 2020 and in five out of the nine cases rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. Practice in all cases was seen to be improving and there were no safeguarding concerns identified. Further work needs to be done however to ensure the whole of the host family and the children's fathers are included in work to assess private fostering arrangements.

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Disabled Children's Service

The Disabled Children's Service (DCS) was part of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) service within Hackney Education until line management responsibility transferred to the Family Intervention and Support Service in April 2019. DCS operates a social model of disability in offering assessment and intervention in line with the Children Act to families who are experiencing crises due to the disability of their child and or social isolation as a result of their child's disability in accessing universal or targeted services. All referrals for an assessment from DCS are made through the First Access and Screening Team (FAST).

At the end of March 2020, the service was working with 402 children and young people. Of these, 267 were male and 132 were female (3 children were not yet born). This is an increase of 20 % compared to 2018/19, when the service was working with 336 children and young people.

The Disabled Children's Service worked hard during the lockdown period to be responsive to the needs of disabled children and their families. Many young people's education was disrupted which impacted on their routines and stability. There were also heightened concerns about children's health needs. Initially there were concerns about maintaining existing support packages but these continued where families were happy for them to do so (some families did not want the risk of carers entering the home). DCS maintained high levels of contact with families and put in additional support where needed.



Age breakdown of children open to Disabled Children's Service

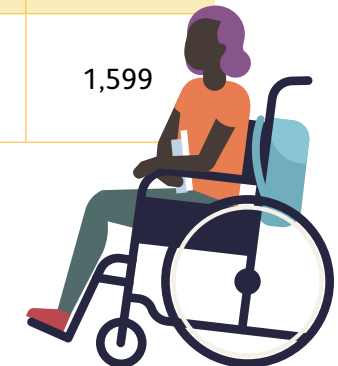
Age	Number of Children
5 or under	39
6 - 8	67
9 - 11	104
12 - 14	79
15+	113
Total	402



Short Breaks Service

Short breaks are defined as any service or activity outside of school hours which gives the family of a disabled child or young person a break from their caring responsibilities, and gives the disabled child or young person an enjoyable experience. There are currently seven commissioned short breaks providers in Hackney, including providers offering support specifically within the Orthodox Jewish community.

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Number of young people accessing short breaks	1,257	1,400	1,599



Family Intervention and Support Service - Children in Need



The Children in Need Service is responsible for the safeguarding of children and young people assessed as being 'at risk'. Work undertaken in the service includes child in need interventions, child protection interventions, court proceedings and statutory family support to help children remain safe with their families.

Children thought to be at risk of significant harm are discussed at an Initial Child Protection Conference to determine whether a Child Protection Plan is necessary. The plan will outline the multi-agency interventions and support that will be put in place to reduce the risk of harm to the child and to achieve change within the family. Child Protection Plans are reviewed at regular intervals, and will end when the multi-agency group agrees that the child is no longer at risk of significant harm (in some cases this will be because the child has become looked after by the local authority).

making good quality decisions and effective plans for children. Further work to embed these changes is ongoing.

Long term cases including neglect - an audit of cases which had been open for more than 12 months was undertaken in April 2020. The average score for overall practice in these cases was 2.6. The findings as part of this audit supported the development of the training offered as part of practice week in July 2020 including around goal focused planning, tools to measure change and communicating with children. As part of this audit, it was identified that parents with learning disabilities are over-represented in this cohort. In addition to holding a training session with Adult Services, a case consultation forum is in the process of being set up to support work in this area.

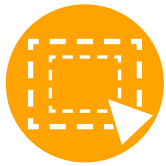


Strengths and Progress

Strengthening the Public Law Outline (PLO) process - in order to strengthen the work undertaken with families as part of pre-proceedings work before a case is taken to court, a number of actions have been undertaken to support workers in ensuring decisions are timely and all options for children are considered as early as possible. This included strengthening the initial information sent to parents when PLO is initiated with a clearer initial template for letters to parents and a leaflet explaining the importance of the process and possible outcomes being produced in November 2019. The letter template is due to be refreshed again in December 2020. In January 2020, the permanency planning meeting process was strengthened to include early contingency planning, additional management oversight and ICT changes made to support this process. In March 2020, practice guidance in this area was updated to support staff in

Improved oversight - Child in Need cases which have been open over 9 months and new assessments where more than three assessments have been carried out in 18 months are now audited by a Service Manager. An analysis of these audits is planned for October 2020.

Missing young people - from July 2020 all children who have gone missing are offered a return home interview with a Children's Rights Officer. Children's Rights Officers are independent of children's social care and provide a consent based intervention which supports young people. In addition to this there has been work to strengthen links between Police and CFS to support information sharing. A Missing Children dashboard containing this information is being created on our management information software and is expected to go live in by the end of 2020.



Areas for Development

Further work needs to take place to strengthen the Public Law Outline process - an audit undertaken in February 2020 showed that overall practice in this area scored 2.6 (where 1 indicates practice is inadequate and 4 indicates that practice is outstanding) indicating that practice requires improvement to be good. A further audit in June showed the same score. Areas identified for improvement included embedding a new joint protocol with Legal Services to ensure high quality, timely decision making for children and timely responses to escalating concerns. The protocol is due to be completed in October 2020. A further audit to test whether improvements have been embedded and are improving practice is planned for December 2020.

Enhancing children's participation - work is underway to further involve young people in creating their plans and expressing their views in decision-making forums for Children in Need (CIN) and Child Protection cases using the successful child-centred approach of LAC Reviews 'Our Reviews, Our Choice' to inform the approach. Direct work tools were developed in September 2020 to support practitioners in enabling children to express their views. A sample to establish a baseline is planned for the autumn and a full audit to monitor the impact of these changes is planned for January 2021.

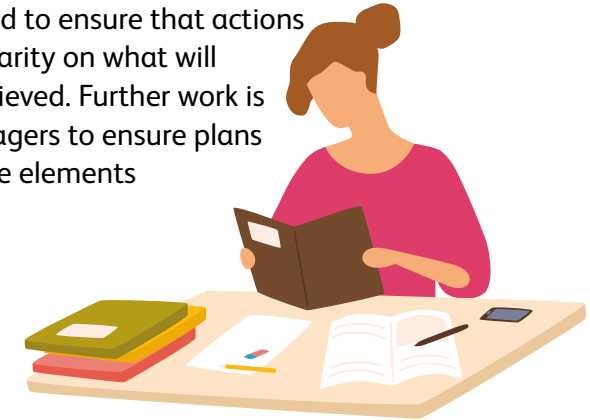
Goal focused planning - a dip sample of goal focused plans completed in June 2020 rated the quality of plans as 2.6, requires improvement to be good. The audit found that while plans had clear and understandable



goals, more work was needed to ensure that actions have clear timescales and clarity on what will happen if change is not achieved. Further work is planned with frontline managers to ensure plans are not signed off until these elements are complete.

Contextual safeguarding -

An audit of cases where there was extra-familial harm, focusing on cases moving from Access and Assessment to Children in Need units, was undertaken in May 2020. The average score for these cases was 2.6, requires improvement to be good. While thresholds were being applied well, further work was needed on ensuring the focus of intervention was clear. An audit of cases featuring extra familial risk in August 2020 also identified that workers were struggling to make change and wanted clarity on their roles and responsibilities. This feedback has been incorporated into the plans for the new Contextual Intervention Unit, who will provide consultation and advice to social workers and review currently open cases to ensure interventions are appropriately targeted.



Number of Child Protection Plans

March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
200	194	251

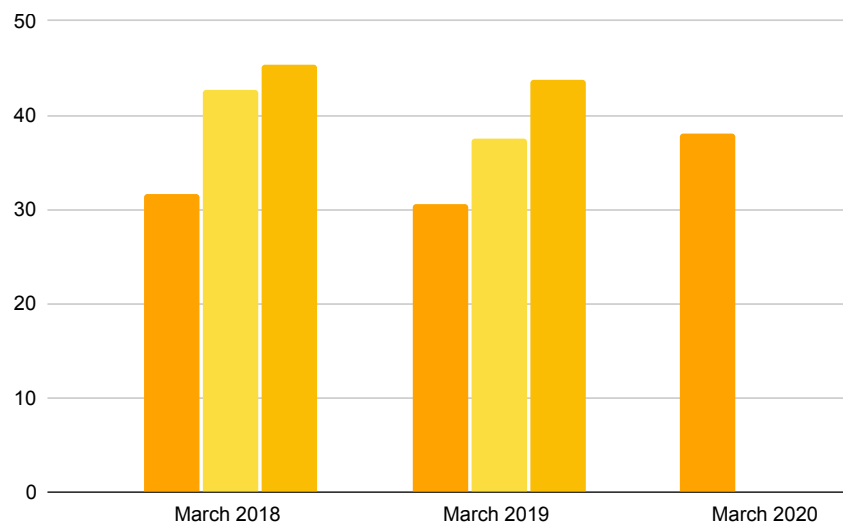
Children subject to Child Protection Plan per 10,000 population aged under 18

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Hackney	31.7	30.5	38.0
Statistical Neighbour	42.7	37.5	n/a
England	45.3	43.7	n/a

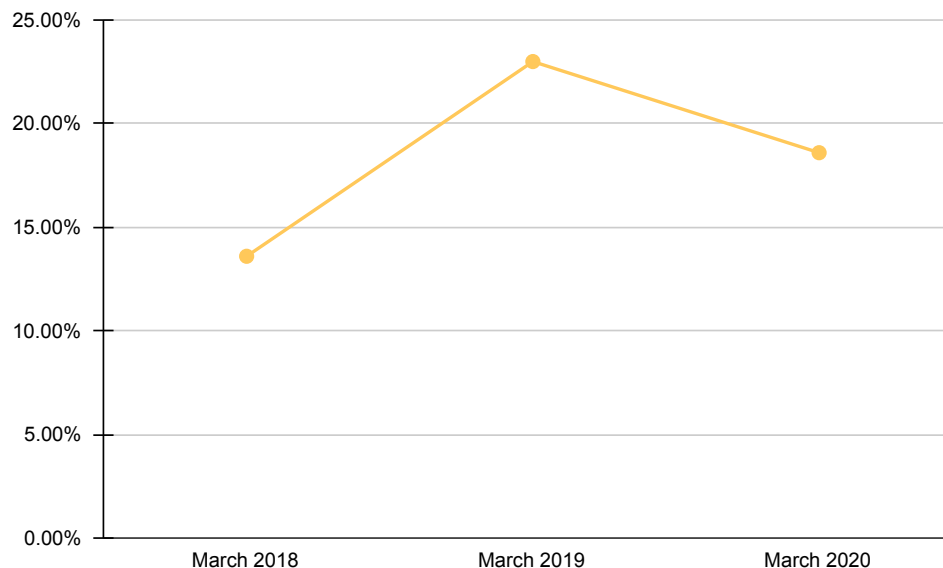
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The number and rate of children on Child Protection Plans increased significantly over the course of 2019/20 following increased management oversight after Ofsted's focused visit in February 2019.



Percentage of children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time



	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Hackney	13.6%	23%	18.6%
Statistical Neighbour	15.8%	16.5%	n/a
England	20.2%	20.8%	n/a



The number of children on repeat Child Protection Plans decreased in 2019/20 compared to 2018/19, following increased focus on the effectiveness of interventions before plans come to an end. This rate has continued to improve and between April - August 2020, currently stands at 15.4%.

Duration of Child Protection Plan (percentage)

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Under 3 months	33 %	27 %	24 %
3 - 6 months	12 %	30 %	17 %
6 - 12 months	22 %	24 %	40 %
1 - 2 years	34 %	13 %	16 %
2+ years	3 %	6 %	3 %



The percentage of children on Child Protection Plans lasting 2 years or longer has decreased from 6 % in 2018-19 to 3 % in 2019-20.



The time taken to complete care and supervision proceedings was an average of 32 weeks in Hackney in 2019/20, compared to a national average of 34 weeks. This is an increase for Hackney from 28 weeks in 2018-19, and the national average of 32 weeks. This has increased nationally since April 2020 due to the pressures on the court system as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown. The national average target for the length of court proceedings is 26 weeks.

Court proceedings

The number and rate of care applications increased in 2019/20 and was higher than the national rate of care applications.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Hackney number of care applications	83	66	107
Hackney care applications per 10,000 child population	13.1	10.3	16.4
England care applications per 10,000 child population	11.9	11.3	10.8

Corporate Parenting

The Corporate Parenting Service is responsible for all areas related to the safeguarding and welfare of children who are in the care of the local authority. This includes planning for their future placements via fostering and adoption, supporting rehabilitation home whenever possible, and supporting young people who have previously been in care up to the age of 25.

The 'Hackney Promise to Children and Young People in Care' outlines 16 promises around what to expect from the Council and partner agencies when a young person is in care. The Promise was developed by our children and young people and has formed the basis for Hackney's Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Hackney's Children in Care Council, now known as Hackney of Tomorrow (HoT), provides looked after children with an opportunity to share their experiences of the care system and increase their ability to influence and improve the services they receive. The group also runs fun events, trips and workshops with other young people in care to ensure a wide range of views are captured.

Hackney of Tomorrow continued meeting virtually throughout the lockdown period, with weekly meetings taking place. The meetings have been used as a platform from which young people can continue to participate in and influence the services they receive from Hackney. In order for Care Council Members to maintain communication with their Corporate Parents, these meetings have also been attended by Service Managers.



THE HACKNEY PROMISE TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

WE PROMISE THAT WHEN YOU BECOME A LOOKED AFTER CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON, WE WILL LOOK AFTER YOU THE BEST WE POSSIBLY CAN.

COMING INTO CARE

WE PROMISE THAT WE WILL BE HONEST WITH YOU ABOUT THE REASONS FOR BEING LOOKED AFTER BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND TELL YOU ABOUT DECISIONS THAT ARE BEING MADE.

WE PROMISE WE WILL SHARE AS MUCH INFORMATION WITH YOU AS WE CAN ABOUT YOUR FUTURE CARERS.

WE PROMISE WE WILL LISTEN TO YOU ABOUT WHERE AND WHO YOU WOULD LIKE TO LIVE WITH. IF WE CAN'T PROVIDE EXACTLY WHAT YOU HAVE ASKED FOR WE WILL EXPLAIN WHY THIS IS.

BEING IN CARE

WE PROMISE THAT WE WILL LISTEN TO YOU AND TAKE TIME TO GET TO KNOW YOU AND DO OUR BEST TO MAKE SURE YOU FEEL SUPPORTED BY US.

WE PROMISE THAT, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, YOU WILL KNOW ABOUT AND BE READY FOR ANY CHANGES THAT ARE COMING.

WE PROMISE THAT WE WILL TALK TO YOU AND DISCUSS IF AND HOW YOU CAN BE SUPPORTED TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

EDUCATION

WE PROMISE TO LISTEN, RESPECT AND SUPPORT YOU IN WORKING OUT YOUR DREAMS AND AMBITIONS AND IN HELPING YOU ACHIEVE THEM, INCLUDING THROUGH MAKING SURE THAT YOU GET GOOD EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES THAT MATCH YOUR NEEDS.

GETTING WELL AND STAYING WELL

WE PROMISE TO DO OUR BEST TO HELP YOU TO GET BETTER WHEN YOU ARE UNWELL AND TO HELP YOU TO STAY WELL.

WE PROMISE TO HELP YOU TO LEARN TO LOOK AFTER YOURSELF AS YOU GET OLDER.

MEETINGS

WE PROMISE TO MAKE SURE THAT YOUR NEEDS, THOUGHTS AND IDEAS ARE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, THAT YOU ARE AT THE CENTRE OF ALL MEETINGS ABOUT YOU (EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO ATTEND) AND THAT YOU ARE SUPPORTED TO TAKE PART IN A WAY THAT YOU FEEL HAPPY WITH.

YOUR RIGHTS

WE PROMISE THAT AT EVERY STAGE IN YOUR LIFE, YOU WILL KNOW WHAT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU TO BE ABLE TO MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICES.

WE PROMISE THAT WE WILL HELP YOU TO FIND SOMEONE WHO YOU CAN SPEAK TO IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY ABOUT ANYTHING, INCLUDING ANYTHING THAT WE ARE DOING OR HAVE DONE.

BECOMING AN ADULT

WE PROMISE THAT WE WILL PREPARE YOU TO BECOME AN ADULT AND SUPPORT YOU TO MAKE THE DECISIONS THAT ARE RIGHT FOR YOU.

WE PROMISE THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE SOMEONE TO TALK TO.





Strengths and Progress

Hackney of Tomorrow - our Children in Care Council, Hackney of Tomorrow, has grown in size and increased activity over the past year, with weekly meetings taking place virtually during the lockdown and involving senior leaders as well as the Deputy Mayor. The group has also expanded to increase the participation of younger children. At every Corporate Parenting Board meeting, young people speak directly to senior leaders and Members on a range of issues that are important to them. During the lockdown, young people were allocated funds in response to the pandemic and assembled boxes of books, puzzles, activities, and treats that were then sent out to fellow looked after children and care leavers during the lockdown. Inside the boxes, Care Council members also enclosed letters from themselves and the Deputy Mayor. The aim of the project was to support other young people through this difficult time and 50 boxes were produced and sent to care leavers and looked after children nominated by their social worker.

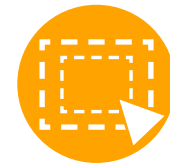
Looked After Child review timescales and participation - 87 % of reviews were held within timescale in 2019/20 compared to 85 % in 2018/19. This increased to 95 % as at 31 August 2020. 92 % of children over the age of 4 participate in their reviews.

Creative practice during lockdown - social work units in the Looked After Children and Leaving Care Services have been creative in carrying out virtual visits with children and young people. Examples of this include virtual cake baking competitions with a group of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, and social workers carrying out singing and dancing competitions by recording video clips and sharing these with their children and young people.

Support with education during lockdown - the Virtual School has ensured that children and young people have the ICT equipment they need to continue learning during the lockdown period.

Increased Rapid Support Service - Staffing capacity was increased in our Rapid Support Service from March 2020 during lockdown. This service provides additional support to prevent family breakdown, and supports placements for looked after children that are at risk of breakdown. This was in recognition that for some of our families, including foster families, there was likely to be increased pressure upon family relationships while the lockdown was in place.

Improvements to care plans - for Looked After Children a new standalone care plan went live in September 2020 that can be updated in between LAC reviews if there are changes to child's needs which require an updated plan. If needed, the plan can also trigger a new LAC review.



Areas for Development

Protocol for homeless 16 and 17 year olds to be further developed - an audit of this cohort who had presented to CFS in the previous 12 months had an average practice score of 2.6, requiring improvement to be good. The existing protocol is in the process of being redeveloped and will be published in the autumn. A follow up audit will look at the impact the revised protocol has in ensuring these young people get the support which best meets their needs.

Children on edge of care - in response to the continuing increase of adolescents entering care, an edge of care strategy is in development. The first phase of this will include an in depth analysis of the drivers behind the increase in the number of children coming into care in Hackney to be able to identify effective responses and interventions.

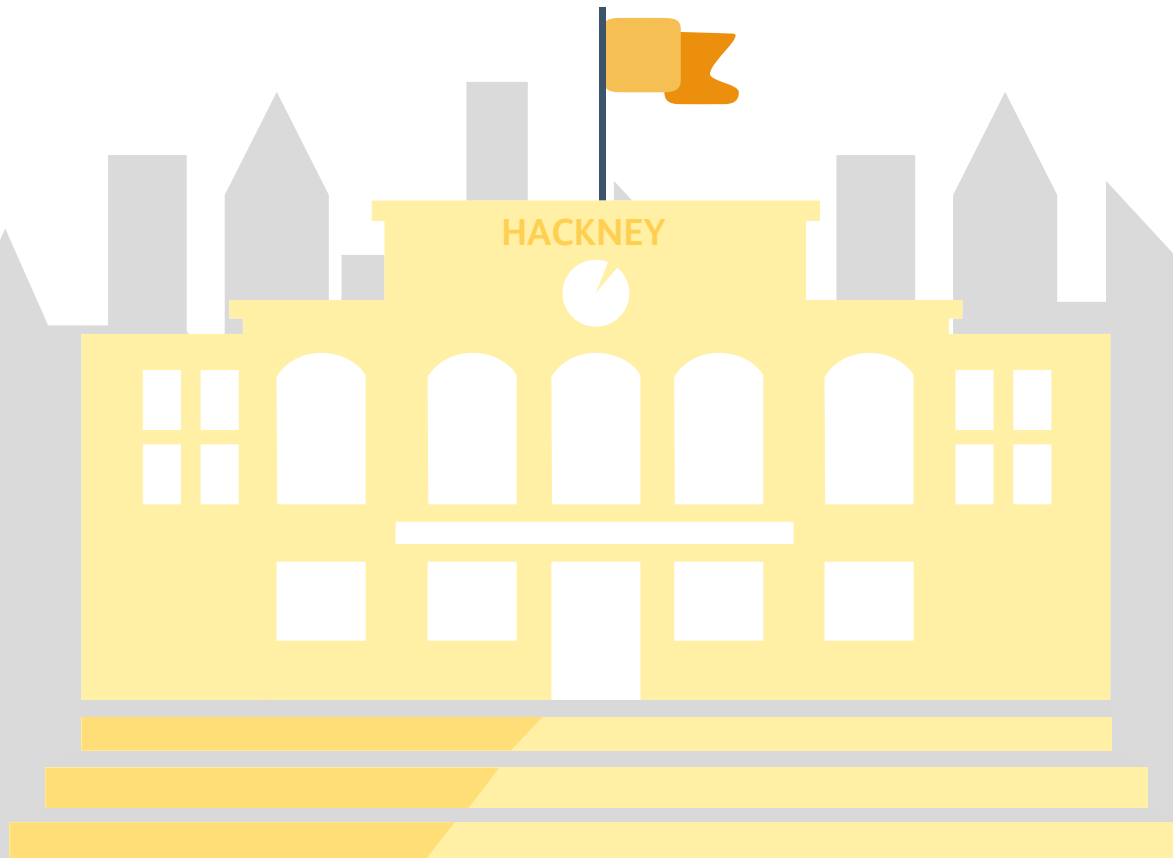
Plans which are not in line with children's wishes - these cases are to be consistently escalated to the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) for review and support to ensure children's views are heard. There have been delays in training staff in the new procedures due to the pandemic. Training was scheduled for March 2020 but is now anticipated in September 2020. Additional recruitment is also underway to support this work.

Children's participation in their carers annual review - a protocol is being developed to increase children's participation in foster carers' and connected persons annual reviews; this will also include the child's social worker view of how well the carer is able to meet the child's needs

Looked After Children's immunisations - the number of children recorded as having up to date immunisations is low and work is ongoing with the Council's Public Health Service to identify the reasons for this low figure and improve it across City & Hackney. Collecting and recording data on immunisations and dental treatment is a challenge nationally and the Hackney looked after children health team are required to contact General Practitioners for this information. Children and young people do not always see immunisation as a priority, in particular, they do not like having

injections and often exercise their right to withdraw their consent despite discussions about the benefits of immunisation. When children are identified at their health assessment to have an incomplete immunisation status, a recommendation is made in the health plan to complete the immunisations and allocated to a named person to follow up. Future work plans include uploading the information onto Mosaic in an easy to report way.

Pathway plans for care leavers - the percentage of pathway plans reviewed within the last 6 months for care leavers aged 18 and over as at 30th March 2020 was 61 %. A focus on improving these timescales over the past few months has resulted in an increase in performance in this area to 78 % as at the end of August 2020. Work will continue to drive improvements in the timeliness of pathway plan reviews.



Looked After Children

Number of looked after children

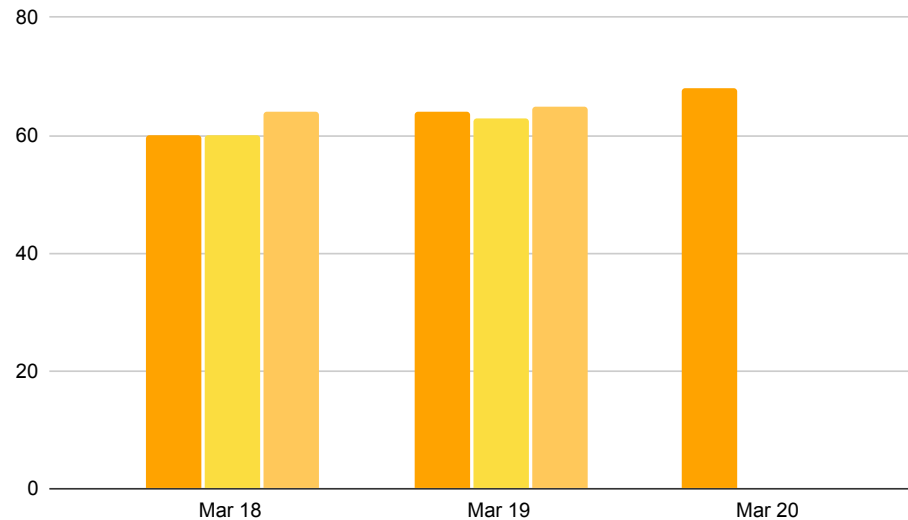
March 18	March 19	March 20
381	405	432



There was a 7% increase in the number of looked after children at March 2020 compared to the previous year. This is a significant increase and this trend has continued, with 457 children cared for as at the end of September 2020.

There are some areas where the local authority has no influence on whether children become looked after. The number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), accommodated by the local authority as at 31 March 2020 was 45, 10% of the cohort. This is in line with the 44 looked after children (11% of the total cohort) who were UASC as at 31 March 2019.

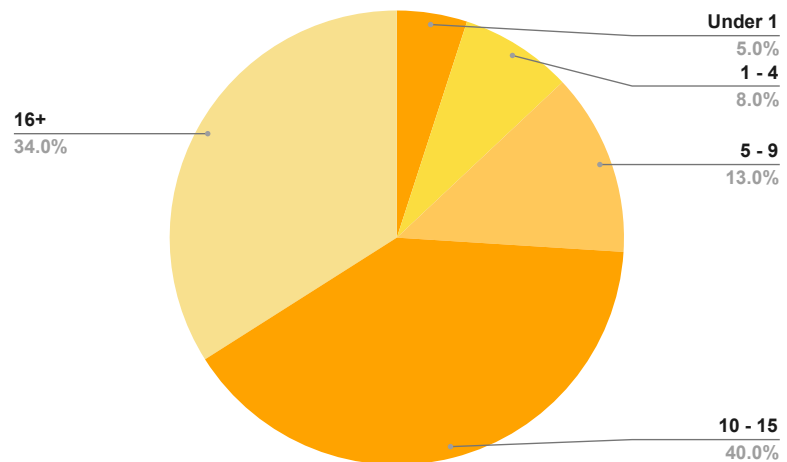
Looked after children



	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Hackney	60	64	68
Statistical Neighbour	63	60	n/a
England	64	65	n/a

Age breakdown of looked after children at 31 March 2020

Age	2018		2019		2020	
	England	Hackney	England	Hackney	England	Hackney
Under 1	6%	25 (7%)	5%	19 (5%)	n/a	11 (3%)
1 - 4	13%	28 (7%)	13%	26 (6%)	n/a	36 (9%)
5 - 9	19%	64 (17%)	18%	58 (14%)	n/a	55 (13%)
10 - 15	39%	143 (38%)	39%	153 (38%)	n/a	163 (40%)
16 +	23%	121 (32%)	24%	149 (37%)	n/a	148 (35%)



Age of children entering care

Age	2018		2019		2020	
	England	Hackney	England	Hackney	England	Hackney
Under 1	19%	32 (15%)	19%	24 (11%)	n/a	22(10%)
1-4	18%	22 (10%)	18%	22 (10%)	n/a	28 (12%)
5-9	18%	23 (11%)	18%	19 (9%)	n/a	26 (11%)
10-15	28%	68 (31%)	28%	58 (27%)	n/a	71 (31%)
16+	17%	72 (33%)	18%	89 (42%)		81 (36%)
Total		217		212		228

There was an 8% increase in the number of young people coming into care in 2019/20 from 212 to 228.

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The number of children leaving care was 208, compared to 195 in 2018/19. The destinations of these children included:

Returned home	56	Custody	6
Special Guardianship Order	16	Other	110
Adoption	11		



Placement Stability

Percentage of looked after children with three or more placements in one year

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Hackney	11%	13%	12%
Statistical Neighbour	12%	11%	n/a
England	10%	10%	n/a



The number of looked after children with three or more placements in one year decreased from 13% in 2018/19 to 12% in 2019/20.

The proportion of adolescents coming into care who have more complex needs and experience greater placement instability has increased. In recognition that this will be an ongoing issue in Hackney due to older children entering care, the Looked after Children Service holds a regular multi-agency meeting to focus on improvement work around placement stability and has focused on this issue in the 3 year Sufficiency Strategy.

Percentage of children under 16 who have been looked after for more than 2.5 years were in stable placements of more than 2 years in 2019/20

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Hackney	62 %	62 %	66 %
Statistical Neighbour	69 %	70 %	n/a
England	70 %	69 %	n/a

Although this is a large percentage increase in stability for longer term placements, this refers to a small cohort of children in our care, meaning that small changes in numbers have a large impact on percentages, the difference between 62 % and 66 % relates to the difference of 6 children in a cohort of approximately 118 children. The placement stability working group continues a close focus on the experiences of all children in long term placements.

Placement Types

Placement type	Number of LAC
Foster placements	323 (75 %)
Placed for adoptions	5 (1 %)
Placement with parents	16 (4 %)
Secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living accommodation	83 (19 %)
Other	5 (1 %)
Total	432 (100%)

The vast majority of Hackney's looked after children are placed with foster carers and the Service continues to increase the number of in-house carers available to support them. At 31 March 2020, 221 children were placed with in-house carers including connected persons carers and 102 children were placed with Independent Fostering Agency carers.

Placements for looked after children by location at 31 March 2020

Placement location	Number of LAC
Hackney	100 (23 %)
Under 20 miles from Hackney	229 (53 %)
Over 20 miles from Hackney	58 (13 %)

There has been an increase in the percentage and number of children placed within 20 miles of Hackney, with 329 (76 %) of children placed within 20 miles during 2019-20, compared to 300 (74 %) in 2018/19. This is in part due to the increased use of in-house fostering placements. The majority of Hackney's looked after children are placed within commuting distance of Hackney. There is a strong focus on ensuring that all children, regardless of where they are placed, receive the same level of support.

(Note - distance for unaccompanied asylum seeking children is not captured within this performance statistic)



Fostering Service

The Fostering Service approved nine mainstream foster carer households and five Supported Lodgings Hosts during 2019/20. This is fewer foster carers than the twelve mainstream carers approved in 2018/19 but more hosts; collectively this is a total of fourteen approvals for the year. The Fostering Service continues to develop their recruitment and retention strategy, using learning from recent years.

A total of 15 foster carers resigned or had their approvals terminated during 2019/20 due to a change in their circumstance, a standard of care issue or retirement. Research has shown that on average, approximately 13 % of foster carers leave their service each year nationally.

At the end of March 2020, there were 93 in-house mainstream foster carer households and 20 friends and family carers.

At the end of March 2020, there were 432 looked after children in care at the end of March 2020, there were 383 children in fostering placements. Of these, 56 were placed with friends or family carers, 165 were placed with in-house carers and 102 were placed with independent fostering agency carers.

Placement costs

Placement Type	Average weekly cost 2018/19	Average weekly cost 2019/20	Movement %
In-house fostering	£430	£453	5.35 %
Independent Fostering Agency	£910	£927	1.87 %
Semi-independent	£913	£1,208	32.31 %
Residential	£3,640	£3,575	(1.79 %)

The table above illustrates the difference in the average weekly costs for In-house Fostering placements (excluding Fostering Service staffing costs, foster carer training and other associated costs), Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements, Semi-Independent placements and Residential placements. We have seen a steady increase in the number of residential placements which has added to the financial pressures, with placements on average costing approximately £200k per year. As well as an increase in the number of placements we have also seen an increase in the unit cost (with semi-independent under 18 being the most significant increase. compared to the previous year). Residential placements represented 25 % of the total placements cost in 2019/20 however only 6 % of the young people in care placements. There has been a steady number of in-house fostering placements and an increase in number of IFA placements between 2018/19 and 2019/20. IFA placements on average are twice as expensive as in-house fostering placements. IFA placements made up 62 % of the total fostering placements in 2019/20. Residential and IFA placements collectively represent 59 % of the total care placements costs.

Mockingbird Project

The Fostering Network’s Mockingbird programme is an innovative research-based method of delivering foster care using the Mockingbird Family Model, developed in the USA. The model centres on a constellation where one foster home acts as a hub, offering advice, training and support to 6-10 satellite foster or kinship families. The hub home builds strong relationships with all those in the constellation, empowering families to support each other and to overcome problems before they escalate or lead to breakdown. Evaluations of the Mockingbird Family Model show improved outcomes for children, young people and carers, with improved placement stability, connection with siblings, and foster carer support and retention.

Hackney has committed to delivering the Mockingbird Family Model with the Fostering Network. The project launched Hackney’s first hub home in August 2019 and intends to launch a second constellation by the end of 2020 within Hackney. The service has started to identify satellite families who could potentially make up this constellation, and they are a diverse, eclectic and skilled group of foster families with a range of different needs.

The current constellation has been able to work well together and have managed to offer stability and support to the children and carers within it. The aims of the project have certainly promoted stability for children, offered support for carers and offered family membership within a community of foster families in a way that we have not seen before.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Unit

The UASC Unit was established in September 2019 to provide consistency and specialist support to newly arrived young people in the country who were claiming asylum. In part the thinking behind creating a UASC Unit came about following the Controlling Migration Funding we received from the Home Office. We recruited an outreach worker to support our UASC to integrate in Hackney as well as a fostering social worker to recruit foster carers to look after UASC as an alternative to semi independent accommodation.

Previously Access and Assessment received all Home Office referrals via a London wide rota as well as referrals for any unaccompanied young people presenting in borough and would transfer cases to the LAC Service at the first LAC Review, unless the age of the young person was disputed. This meant changing social workers early on for the majority of UASC, for whom forming a significant relationship is key. The majority of UASC are also aged 16 or 17 so may not have been held in the LAC Service for very long before transferring to the Leaving Care Service at 18, again limiting the time for developing a relationship with one social worker. UASC do not always have a Home Office decision by the time they are 18, and so this can be an anxious time and not a good point to have a change in social worker. By creating a specialist UASC Unit, young people can keep the social worker they are initially allocated to and also do not transfer to Leaving Care until they have had a favourable Home Office Decision. All 18+ Former UASC waiting on a Home Office decision are held by the personal advisor in the UASC Unit and as a result of the unit model, this advisor already knows the young people.

The Controlling Migration funding ends in October 2020 but a number of changes have already been embedded. The UASC unit has worked with

Hackney of Tomorrow (HoT) to develop a group specifically for UASC. We also recruited a Consultant Social Worker whose specialism is UASC who has been key in developing support for UASC and the knowledge base of social workers when completing Child & Family Assessments or Age Assessments. The CSW has developed links across LAC Health, Clinical Services, Legal and the No Recourse to Public Funds team to ensure that UASC receive support in their placements.

In August 2020, the Home Office commissioned beds at the Old Street Holiday Inn to disperse asylum seekers, some of whom applied to be age assessed as children. Due to their location the duty to assess falls on Hackney. We received ten referrals in August 2020, one in September 2020 and a further five in the first two weeks of October 2020. This has placed a great demand on the UASC Unit so an additional social work post has been created and the creation of an additional personal advisor role is being considered.



The Virtual School

The Virtual School team provides additional educational support for children looked after, from early years all the way through to post-16 education and training opportunities, which provides continuity for children and young people in care. The Virtual School is well-resourced and includes a variety of roles including social pedagogues, learning mentors, an occupational therapist and speech and language therapists.



Key Stage 2

Pupils in year 6 are identified for additional teaching support according to their academic level and the Virtual School intervention teacher delivers creative one to one sessions in Maths and English. Feedback from children and schools is very positive and the accelerated progress of each child is evident. All pupils are offered support for the transition to secondary school, and links are made with designated teachers before children transition to their new school.

% of KS2 Pupils achieving the required standard or above in maths, reading and writing in 2019

	Reading	Writing	Maths
Hackney	70 %	70 %	70 %
DfE region	55 %	54 %	58 %
England	49 %	50 %	51 %

Hackney continues to perform well above average in both the local area and nationally.

Key Stage 4

Pupils in Key Stage 4 are offered additional sessions of one to one tutoring in maths and English in both Year 10 and Year 11. Progress is monitored throughout and where necessary individual targeted support is offered. All Year 11 pupils receive support to identify appropriate pathways once statutory schooling has ended, and when necessary, are accompanied to college open days and interviews by a member of the Virtual School staff.

Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 in 2019

Attainment 8 is calculated by adding up a student's points for their eight subjects and dividing by 10 to get their score. Students don't have to take eight subjects, but they score zero for any unfilled slots. (The maximum score possible is 80, assuming 8 A* results).

	Attainment 8
Hackney	24
DfE region	20
England	19

Hackney continues to perform above average in both the local area and nationally.

Health of looked after children

The Hackney Looked After Children (LAC) health service is delivered by a dedicated team closely aligned with Hackney's universal school-based health service and is co-located with the Virtual School to promote the delivery of a more holistic and integrated service to our looked after children and young people.

Percentage of looked after children whose health checks were in time during a 12 month period

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Hackney	97 %	91 %	96 %
England	88 %	90 %	n/a

The number of children with an up to date health assessment continues to improve.

Percentage of looked after children whose immunisations are up to date

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Hackney	77 %	70 %	57 %
England	85 %	87 %	n/a

The number of children with up to date immunisations is low, and work is underway with public health to understand this across City and Hackney.

Percentage of looked after children who have an up to date dental check

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Hackney	82 %	71 %	81 %
England	84 %	85 %	n/a

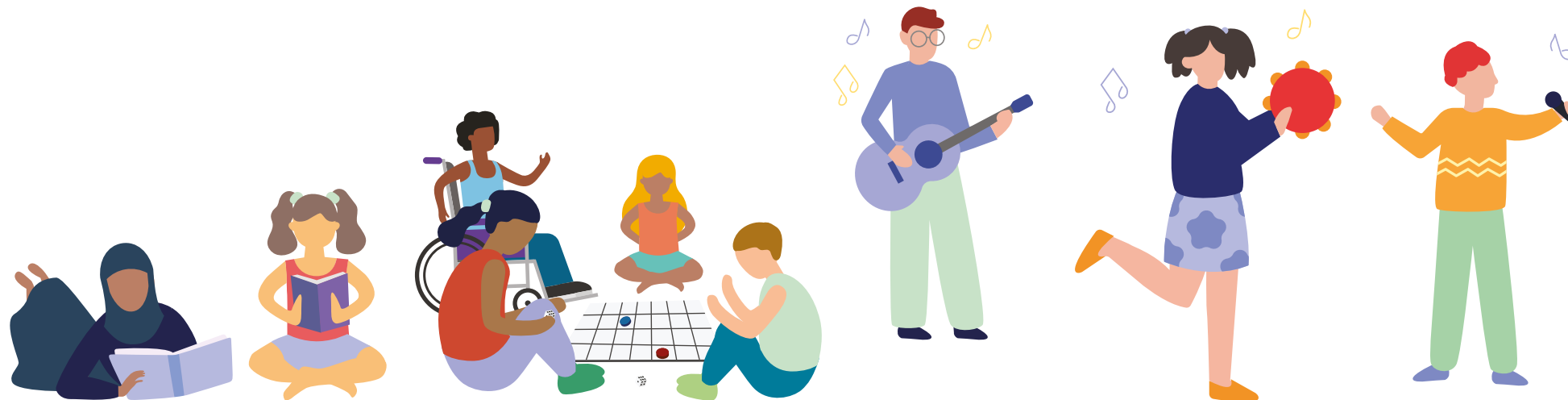
The number of children with an up to date dental check is improving but we need to do further work in this area.



Permanency Team

Following the transition of responsibility for the recruitment and support of adopters transitioned to the Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt London North, the Permanency team no longer provides any post adoption support. This means that access to records, intermediary work, letter box support, and support through the Adoption Support Fund for adopters has all moved to Adopt London North.

The core of the work held by the Permanency team is the assessment and support of Special Guardians including accessing the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) for this group of carers to provide therapeutic parenting support from externally commissioned providers. The team continues to work to increase awareness and uptake of the ASF with Special Guardianship families, who traditionally have been less aware of the potential benefits of therapeutic support. Recently, the Permanency team has assumed the oversight of our connected carers. This involves the ongoing support, training and supervision of 25 connected carer households.





Adoption

All local authorities are required to become part of a Regional Adoption Agency by April 2020. In London the majority of local authorities are participating in the development of Adopt London which has four sub-regional Adoption Agencies. Hackney is now part of Adopt London North which consists of six local authorities (Hackney, Camden, Islington, Enfield, Barnet and Haringey). In October 2019, Adopt London North took over responsibility for adoption services in Hackney - this means that they manage the recruitment of prospective adopters, matching children to adoptive families and the adoption process for children and families, as well as post-adoption support.

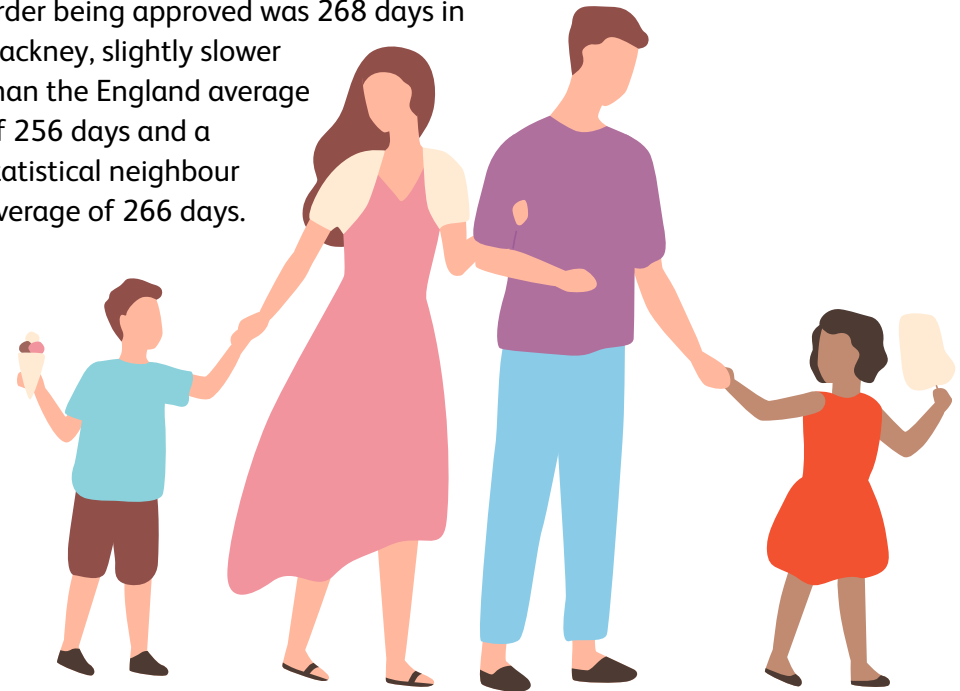
In 2019/20, 11 looked after children ceased to be looked after and were adopted in Hackney (5% of those children who ceased to be looked after in 2019/20) - similar to 12 children in 2018/19 and 12 children in 2017/18. This is in line with our statistical neighbours, who had an average of 12 children or 6% of children leaving care via adoption in 2018/19.



The average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with its adopted family (adjusted for foster care adoptions) in Hackney in 2019 was 268 days, this is faster than the England average of 363 days and a statistical neighbour average of 355 days.

The average time in days between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family was 111 days in Hackney, this is faster than an England average of 170 days and a statistical neighbour average of 221 days.

The average time in days between a child entering care and a placement order being approved was 268 days in Hackney, slightly slower than the England average of 256 days and a statistical neighbour average of 266 days.





Leaving Care

The Leaving Care Service ensures that young people are supported to develop independent living skills, offered career advice and training and educational opportunities, and supported to reach their full potential in all aspects of their life.

313 care leavers aged 17-21 were being supported by the Leaving Care Service, as at March 2020, a 2% increase compared to the 308 being supported at the same point in March 2019. This number has continued to rise and the service was supporting 326 care leavers aged 17-21 at the end of August 2020.

79 care leavers aged 22-24 were being supported at March 2020.

This is a 20% increase compared to the 66 care leavers aged over 21 who were being supported by Leaving Care, as at March 2019. This number has continued to increase and the service was supporting 82 care leavers aged 22-24 at the end of August 2020.

As at 31 March 2020, 29 young people were living in Staying Put arrangements (continuing to live with their previous foster carer after they have turned 18), an increase compared to 25 young people as at the end of March 2019. This has increased to 36 as at the end of August 2020. In addition there are a number of young people who return to their foster carers during university holidays.

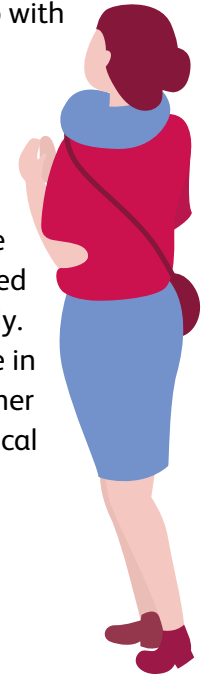
The percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 who were in suitable accommodation in 2019/20 was 87%, an increase from 80% last year. This is higher than the statistical neighbour average of 83% and the national average of



85%. Housing is a challenge both locally and nationally but the Service will continue efforts to improve the number of care leavers in suitable accommodation in partnership with the Council's Housing Needs Service.

The consistent support offered by the team during the last year has again resulted in a low number of care leavers who are NEET (not in education, employment or training). 65% of Hackney care leavers aged 19 - 21 were in education, employment or training in 2019/20 compared with 54% in our statistical neighbours and 52% nationally.

The percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 who were in higher education in 2019/20 was 10%. This is higher than the national average of 6% and the statistical neighbour average of 9%.



Safeguarding and Learning

Local Area Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO investigates allegations of harm or a concern around the conduct or suitability of an adult to work or volunteer with Children. There were 309 referrals to the LADO in 2019/20, a 16% increase from 266 referrals in 2018/19. The annual increase is in line with the trajectory since the inception of the LADO database and record keeping, although there was a reduction in referrals during lockdown and the impact on referral rates after April 2020 is still to be analysed. There is a strong and effective working relationship between Hackney Education and the LADO service. This is particularly important as the majority of LADO referrals are from education settings. The LADO has worked extensively with the Head of Wellbeing and Education Safeguarding over the last year to address the ongoing difficulties posed by unregistered educational settings and the challenges around safeguarding in these settings.

Independent Chairs

Hackney's Independent Chairs provide independent oversight of work with looked after children as well as chairing Child Protection Conferences. They hold regular consultations on determining whether cases meet thresholds for Child Protection and Conferences. The Independent Chairs also attend and contribute to multi-agency public protection arrangement meetings (MAPPA), the Children's Resource Panel, the Care Planning Panel, provide their written views for all Care Plans presented to Court, as well as having formal links to the Youth Justice Service.

After consulting with young people and partner agencies Hackney made the decision to move away from the traditional LAC review meeting process. Independent Chairs now use a range of tools and activities to engage and work with young people during their LAC reviews. Independent Chairs take a creative approach to LAC reviews, consulting with professionals, families and children before the review to ensure the LAC review is meaningful for the young person. LAC review reports are written by Independent Chairs directly

to the child/young person and, alongside the carers' and social worker's reports, these form part of the young person's life story work.

Children's Rights Service

The Children's Rights Service offers children and young people access to confidential and impartial support on issues relating to the support they receive from the Hackney Children and Families Service. The Service also provides Independent Return Home Interviews to young people following a missing episode, and individual or group work for those experiencing or at risk of extra familial harm and exploitation. The Children's Rights Officers (CROs) aims to ensure that children and young people's voices are heard and their rights and entitlements upheld. While undertaking much of the work of a conventional advocate, the role has a specific focus on resolution and contributing to wider organisational learning. The number of Children Act complaints from looked after children in 2019/20 has remained the same as last year with zero complaints. The Service worked with 79 looked after children in 2019/20 with 48 children remaining open to the service at the end of the year. The service continues to be accessed by Care Leavers with 19 young people using the service last year. The service had referrals in 19 cases for young people who were at risk of or experiencing extra familial harm or exploitation, 17 of whom remained receiving support from the service at the end of the year.

The use of Independent Return Home Interviews continues to be effective in supporting young people to share information about push and pull factors, what happens when they go missing and what support they need to reduce further episodes. The implementation of a daily meeting with Missing Police has supported better working relationships, information sharing and development of robust risk assessments and timely plans to locate children and offer the appropriate support.

Independent Visitors

Independent visitors are volunteers who develop a long term friendship with a young person in care. They undertake trips out with them to give the young people an opportunity to access hobbies and interests, gain independence skills and generally have a fun day out. On 3 April 2020, we received the Business Continuity Plan from Action for Children who deliver our Independent Visitors Scheme. Ordinarily 30 Looked After Children are seen on a monthly basis and taken out to do an activity. Following lockdown the Independent Visitors have had to adapt very quickly to keep children engaged during the lockdown with no face to face visits taking place.

The referral co-ordinator has continued doing matching meetings via Skype with children. Any match that was due to have ended for a care leaver post 18 due to young people moving on from their placements was extended to the end of lockdown in line with placements also continuing so that the Independent Visitor can see them through their next transition.

The independent visitors have used lots of imaginative ways to keep in touch including:

- Drawing live portraits of each other over Skype.
- Virtual Pen pals – writing letters and sending it via email or Whatsapp.
- Choosing a recipe and cooking a simple meal together over Skype.
- Spotify app – creating a playlist and making it collaborative, sharing the playlist with the young person if they are also on Spotify. Adding upbeat songs to dance to and release positive energy.
- Listening to live streams of stories together.
- Virtual museum tours.

Extra Familial Risk Panel

The Extra-Familial Risk Panel continues to be held fortnightly to ensure consistent oversight and planning for cases where young people are at risk of experiencing, or are involved in, harmful behaviours outside the home. There is strong multi agency attendance from Police, Education, Health, Youth Offending Team, Young Hackney and the Integrated Gangs Unit. The Panel develops operational actions which looks to reduce harm and disrupt exploitation of children. Themes and strategic issues from the Extra-Familial Risk Panel are shared with the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) group for wider consideration and agency action. Both forums also report back any significant issues via the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) Safeguarding Adolescents Group.

In 2019/20, 108 young people went missing from home or care on 821 occasions. In 66 % of the occasions where a young person went missing it is recorded that they were offered an interview and in 42 % of cases, the interview was accepted. A daily discussion is held with Hackney Missing and Exploitation Police to review cases of missing children and consider their vulnerabilities and support required. A fortnightly 'High Risk Case Alert' is sent to the Director and Heads of Service to ensure senior managers are sighted on young people who are presenting with the highest risk and ensure plans are in place to reduce this risk and minimise harm.

Financial Performance

The outturn and the trend looks to continue through 2020/21 for the Children and Families Service on a net budget of £59.3m was an overspend of £2.1m after use of grants and reserves of £4.9m including a drawdown on the Commissioning Reserve of £2.3m. There has been a requirement to draw down from the Commissioning Reserve since 2012/13 due to the increased number of children in care and a shortage of in-house foster carers. The financial position for 2020/21 is a net budget of £60m for the Children and Families Service, and the service is forecasting to overspend by £3.3m (as at August 2020) after use of reserves and drawdown of grants totalling £5.9m (including full use of the commissioning activity reserve of £3.9m).

The Children and Families Service has continued to make significant contributions to the efficiency agenda of the Council. Over the previous eight years the service has delivered £11.5m savings with a further £60k being delivered in 2020/21. The increase in commissioning costs has been driven by an increase in the number of looked after children since 2011/12,

and this trend looks to continue through 2019/20. There is a continuation of a large proportion of children being placed with independent fostering agencies (IFAs) due to a lack of suitable in-house foster carers. The cost of an IFA placement is significantly greater than that of an in-house placement.

Hackney has also seen an increase in residential placements since 2015 adding considerable budget pressures with an average annual unit cost of £200k. We are also seeing a rise in the number of under 18s in high-cost semi-independent placements. Where young people in their late teens are deemed to be vulnerable, and in many cases are transitioning from residential to semi-independent placements, they may still require a high-level of support and in extreme circumstances bespoke crisis packages. These pressures have been recognised by the Group Director of Finance & Corporate Resources with a growth of £9.5m in total included in the budget.

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Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission Public & Community Engagement and Involvement

1. Introduction

Public and community involvement is a key component of an effective overview and scrutiny function. The inclusion and representation of the community in the scrutiny process helps ensure that:

- Issues which are scrutinised reflect the views of the community and are important to local people;
- Local decision makers are seen to be held to account in the provision of public services;
- Local people have the opportunity to participate in local decision making and scrutiny to help to improve local services.

In this context, the scrutiny function plays an important role in promoting democratic involvement and enhancing the democratic accountability of public services.

2. How are the public currently involved in scrutiny?

The views of the community are in part represented through the membership of the Commission which is made up of 21 members who include local councillors, parent governors, faith group representatives and young people themselves. The community is able to be directly involved in scrutiny through a number of ways:

Public Meetings All scrutiny meetings are held in public which allows members of the community to attend and to see how local decision takers are held accountable for services provided. At the discretion of the chair, members of the public may also ask questions.

Conusltees Scrutiny consults the community to inform specific aspects of its work for example, service users are consulted as part of service reviews (e.g. focus groups) and community groups are consulted annually in the development thel work programme.

These engagement processes work in a very specific way which can limit the potential for the wider community to be involved and for a broader range of views to be represented in the scrutiny function. To Commission recognises that a more enhanced community engagement role can lead to improved scrutiny intelligence, in particular:

- What issues and services are important to local people?
- What services are available to local people and how effective are they?
- How different communities use and experience local services.

3. What are the challenges for public engagement with scrutiny?

There are a number of challenges to extending the engagement and involvement function of the Commission:

Representation There are many hundreds of local community and voluntary groups, so how can the Commission represent the diverse and complex community that exists locally?

Overview & Scrutiny

Meaningful involvement

How can local communities be involved which is meaningful and not tokenistic? How will those involved feel that they have positively contributed to change?

Expectations

Scrutiny is only advisory to the Executive, and can therefore only influence and not make decisions. Scrutiny involves a wide range of stakeholders, of which the community is one.

Sustainability

Engagement mechanisms should be sustainable and commensurate to the nature and scope of the scrutiny function.

4. Proposed developments to community engagement and involvement

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission held a roundtable discussion with Hackney Community & Voluntary Sector and other other community group representatives to identify ways in which community engagement with the scrutiny function could be improved. Following this meeting it was agreed to develop community engagement with the Commission through the following initiatives:

Site Visits	An opportunity for the Commission to meet front-line services and talk to staff and service users. As such, these can be an important intelligence gathering tool to assess effectiveness of local service or service gaps. It is proposed that site visits would be twofold: (i) To those services / organisations which can assist in the scrutiny of items in the work programme (ii) To those of a general reconnaissance and
Newsletter	A mechanism for the Commission to engage with the community, to communicate upcoming meetings and how representatives can be involved. The initiative would need to be supported by closer liaison with HCVS and the development of a local contact database to support digital distribution.
Social Media	Details of scrutiny meetings are promoted on Twitter by the Council ahead of each meeting to allow local residents to view upcoming agenda and watch the meeting live. HCVS and members of the Commission should connect with this through their own on-line communities to extend awareness and reach.
Commissioned Services	Improved links to those third party organisations which are commissioned by the Council to provide services for the local community.

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29 September 2020

Dear Cllr Conway and Cllr Gordon

Off-rolling in schools in Hackney

Thank you for your [letter](#) of 5 August 2020. The thorough work undertaken by the Commission has highlighted a number of areas for Hackney Education to consider. I would like to thank you for the time, effort and commitment of both yourselves and those who worked with you as part of the Commission in considering this important issue and coming to your recommendations.

I have discussed the Commission recommendation with officers, and set out our response to each below.

Recommendation One	Response
That Hackney Education should continue to monitor school moves between years 9 and 11 and to provide challenge to those schools where the rate of removal from the school roll is high (currently 4%) ¹ . Where possible, Hackney Education should speak to a sample of selected parents and children to validate reasons for removal from school and to help build a rounded – case study – picture of the circumstances around removal. Any identified concerns, should be raised with both the Head teacher and school governing body and with Ofsted as necessary.	Schools are required to notify the Local Authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the admissions register. An admission officer updates the council's database following receipt of roll notifications and queries instances where there is missing information. If the removal is unexplained, school performance and standards are notified. Using school census data, Hackney's Management Information, Systems & Analysis (MISA) team will produce data on an annual basis showing year on year movement in the number of pupils on roll. This allows cohort figures to be tracked e.g. Year 10, November and, again, Year 11 March. Where the change in roll is significant or unusual this will, in the first instance, instigate a conversation with the school leaders, led by the linked School Improvement

¹ This rate should be reviewed annually.

	<p>Partner or adviser. Further conversations may be arranged with the school leaders if necessary.</p> <p>At times Hackney Education do carry out discussions with parents and pupils to better understand the circumstances and reasons for moving schools.</p> <p>Whenever concerns around the roll movement are formally raised with the headteacher and governing body then Hackney Education's risk assessment process will be automatically informed, given that this area would be a focus for Ofsted inspectors.</p>
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Recommendation Two	Response
<p>That Hackney Education should aim to improve the level of advice, guidance and support to parents and in Hackney and publicise provision to ensure that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Are aware of their rights and responsibilities in respect of the removal of their child from the school roll; b) Have access to informed and independent advice at critical educational junctures (e.g. transfer to Elective Home Education, managed move, or moving to an Alternative Provider etc.) to ensure that such a move is in the best interest of the child; c) Are aware of the full range of educational options / settings which are available when their child is moved off-roll; 	<p>Hackney Education will review and update the information available to parents/carers on its website to ensure there is specific information for parents/carers relating to removing pupils from school rolls. This will be completed by December 2020.</p> <p>The elective home education policy and associated assessment framework has recently been updated. This was developed in conjunction with elective home education families. The updated policy has been added to elective home education pages on the SEND Local Offer website and Hackney Education website . This provides parents/carers with information in respect of their responsibilities and that they are aware of their responsibilities.</p> <p>In respect of exclusion from school there is information for parents/carers on both the Hackney Education website and the SEND Local Offer website.</p> <p>The Pupils Out of School team are available to attend in-school meetings around managed moves for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. This enables us to provide advice to parents and schools around their rights and the process.</p> <p>Currently managed moves are organised at a school level and reported as part of the fair access arrangements. We will continue to review whether moving to a centralised process would be desirable, though this would have resource implications.</p> <p>Advice and guidance is also available from Hackney Education's Pupils Out of Schools team. Parents/carers can contact the service and obtain impartial information, advice and guidance</p>

Recommendation Three	Response
<p>That Hackney Education should further develop and promote the concept of the 'inclusive school' to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Schools continue to offer high levels of achievement and progress alongside b. Schools are aware of the protective influence of mainstream education in helping to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Maintain oversight and contact with statutory services; ii. Maintain children's social support networks; iii. Contribute to adult oversight that help children to be kept safe; c. Children with challenging or behavioural needs can where possible be maintained within the school community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Where the school and staff are provided with appropriate behaviour management training; ii. <i>With</i> the support of other statutory and other services (e.g. CAMHS); d. School governors are made aware of their duties and responsibilities in respect of children being removed from the school roll and are provided with sufficient training and to fulfil these functions. 	<p>At the heart of Hackney Education's vision is the promotion of an inclusive school. This is carried out through our strategic role as champion for children, parents and families, vulnerable pupils and educational excellence.</p> <p>Strong oversight of schools and the delivery of statutory duties is maintained through our 'Good to Great' policy.</p> <p>We will provide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robust accountability 2. Rigorous monitoring 3. A programme of contact sighted on outcomes, relationships and impact 4. High quality professional development and training for all leaders and governors 5. A strategic plan of action focused on our priorities concerning closing performance gaps); curriculum - breadth, relevance and inclusion of all; development of high quality SEND provision; reduce exclusions; develop strong links with Orthodox Jewish schools; and safeguarding. <p>Hackney Education has its '<u>No Need to Exclude</u>' policy. This advocates a well-being led approach to finding alternatives to exclusion, which schools are expected to have regard to.</p> <p>The points raised in (b) about the wider responsibility of school leaders for young people will be promoted at meetings with leaders during this year by the lead member and Hackney Education senior leaders.</p> <p>The Re-engagement Unit (REU) is a traded service that provides support to primary schools around pupils at risk of exclusion. From 20/21 the Re-engagement Unit is piloting the expansion of its successful primary offer to pilot a funded service to secondary schools to support them around pupils at risk of exclusion.</p> <p>There is also an increased focus on promoting awareness of mental health and wellbeing in schools both through the WAMHS project and training in trauma informed practice.</p> <p>As part of our governance training programme, a number of courses cover issues to do with off rolling. Each session will support attendees to be aware of the issues,</p>

as well as governor duties and responsibilities in respect of children being removed from the school roll.

Governors have also been reminded of their duties regarding off-rolling at Governors forums and through emailed leadership updates. Most recently the September edition of the monthly Chair of Governors Update referenced.

Recommendation Four

That Hackney Education should further invest (than the current resource 0.5 WTE) in to the EHE team to provide additional support to this cohort of children, this is in recognition of:

- a. The significant growth in the number of children in EHE in Hackney (currently at approximately 500);
- b. Additional responsibilities and expectations that may result from the new statutory requirement for the LA to establish an EHE register and for parents to register their child if they are home educated;
- c. That vulnerable children are disproportionately represented in the cohort of EHE children and that current safeguarding oversight for some of this children is limited;
- d. Supporting a more proactive approach of the EHE team in its interaction with parents to enable further promote awareness and uptake of local educational support services.

Response

Hackney Education has increased the resourcing in this area from 0.5 WTE to 1.0 WTE. A new officer has been appointed to this role. In addition, funding has been agreed for an additional Elective Home Education (EHE) officer for six months to support our work around elective home education.

A new EHE policy and assessment framework has been agreed and is being implemented. This allows for a risk based approach for oversight and engagement with EHE families. Some families will receive a greater level of contact than others depending on the vulnerability of the children and/or the capacity of the parents.

The information meetings for EHE families, which were previously held annually will be increased to twice a year. These meetings will provide parents/carers with relevant information (e.g. post-16 options) and the opportunity to engage with lead officers. The next meeting, Covid-19 permitting, is scheduled for November 2020.

Recommendation Five

To maintain oversight of those children who are moved off the school roll, it is recommended that as part of its annual reporting on school achievement to the Children and Young People YP Commission, that Hackney Education also report on:

- a. The number of children who are in receipt of fixed-term and permanent exclusions;

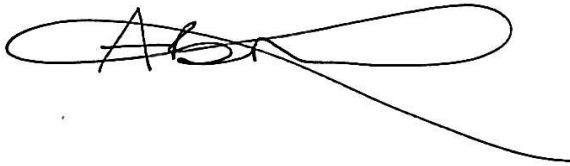
Response

The relevant information that is held by Hackney Education can be reported to the commission on an annual basis.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">b. The number of children moving from mainstream education to Elective Home Education:c. The number of children moving from mainstream education to Alternative Provisiond. The number of children going through a managed moves process. | |
|---|--|

I hope that this response is helpful, but should you have any further questions on this matter, please do come back to me.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ABR', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cllr Anntoinette Bramble

Deputy Mayor and Cabinet member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care

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Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission Work Programme June 2020 – May 2021

Meeting 1	Item title and scrutiny objective	Directorate – Division – Officer Responsibility	Preparatory work to support item
<p><u>Meeting Date: Monday 15th June</u></p> <p>Deadline for reports: 1st June 2020</p> <p>Publication Date: 5th June 2020</p>	School Admissions – September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marian Lavelle, Head of Admissions and Pupil Benefits, HLT ● Annie Gammon, Director of Education and Head of HLT 	
	<p>Impact of Covid 19 and recovery plan.</p> <p>(i) Service update from Children and Families Service and Hackney Education Service</p> <p>(ii) The impact of Covid 19 on the emotional health and mental wellbeing of children and young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anne Canning, Group Director Children, Adults & Community Health ● Sarah Wright, Director of Children and Families Service ● Annie Gammon, Director of Education ● Amy Wilkinson, Integrated Commissioning Programme Director for CYP & Maternity Services 	
	New CYP Work Programme for 2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commission/ Scrutiny officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To consult local stakeholders ● Meet with service Directors ● Collate topic suggestions

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission Work Programme June 2020 – May 2021

Meeting 2	Item title and scrutiny objective	Directorate – Division – Officer Responsibility	Preparatory work to support item
<p><u>Meeting Date:</u> <u>Monday 13th July</u></p> <p>Papers deadline: 1st July 2020</p> <p>Agenda dispatch: Friday 3rd July 2020</p>	Childcare Sufficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Donna Thomas, Head of Early Years and Childcare ● Tim Wooldridge, Early Years Strategy Manager ● Annie Gammon, Director of Education 	
	Impact of Covid 19 - education, attainment gap and educational inequalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dr Rebecaa Montacute, Sutton Trust ● Chris Brown, Principal, Bridge Academy ● Richard Brown, Executive Head, Urswick School ● Jane Heffernan, Executive Head, Cardinal Pole School ● Annie Gammon, Director of Education 	
	Outcome of school exclusions – update emerging conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Martin Bradford, Scrutiny Officer / Commission 	
	CYP Work Programme 2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Martin Bradford, Scrutiny Officer / Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Details of all topic suggestions circulated to members and published in the agenda. ● Arrange meetings with senior officers to scope out work items.

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission Work Programme June 2020 – May 2021

Meeting 3	Item title and scrutiny objective	Directorate – Division – Officer Responsibility	Preparatory work to support item
<p><u>Meeting Date: Tuesday 8th September</u></p> <p>Agenda dispatch Friday 28th August 2020</p> <p>Papers deadline: Tuesday 24th August 2020</p>	Update: Impact of Covid 19 and recovery plan for Children & Families Service and Hackney Education Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annie Gammon, Director of Education ● Sarah Wright, Director of Children and Families 	
	Addressing racial inequality and unconscious bias in children and young people's services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sarah Wright, Director of Children and Families ● Lisa Aldridge, Head of Safeguarding and Learning ● Annie Gammon, Director of Education ● Orlene Badu, System Leader-Young Black Men Project 	
	School Examinations 2020 Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annie Gammon, Director of Education ● Anton Francic, Principal Secondary School Adviser 	
	Agreement of CYP Work Programme 2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Martin Bradford, Scrutiny Officer ● Commission 	<p>-Feedback from stakeholder consultation</p> <p>-Presentation of draft programme</p>

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission Work Programme June 2020 – May 2021

Joint meeting with HiH scrutiny commission – integrated commissioning

Meeting 3a	Item title and scrutiny objective	Directorate – Division – Officer Responsibility	Preparatory work to support item
14th October 2020	Update on integrated Commissioning - Children, Young People and Maternity Work-stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anne Canning, Group Director, Children, Adults and Community Health• Amy Wilkinson, Work-stream Director	With Health in Hackney

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission Work Programme June 2020 – May 2021

Meeting 4	Item title and scrutiny objective	Directorate – Division – Officer Responsibility	Preparatory work to support item
<p><u>Meeting Date: Monday 2nd November 2020</u></p> <p>Agenda dispatch: Friday 23rd October 2020</p> <p>Papers deadline: Tuesday 20th October 2020</p>	Children and Families Service Bi-Annual Report to Members Full year to April 2020 - To include financial monitoring for Children and Families Service. - To include short update on Recruitment & Retention of Foster carers (40m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anne Canning, Group Director, CACH ● Sarah Wright, Director of Children & Family Services 	
	Ofsted Inspection Outcomes - Action Plan (40m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anne Canning, Group Director, CACH ● Sarah Wright, Director of Children & Family Services 	
	Hackney Schools Group Board (25m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eleanor Schooling, Independent Chair 	
	Budget Monitoring Hackney Education Service (25m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annie Gammon, Director of Education ● Tracey Caldwell, Director of Operations 	Meeting with Annie Gammon / Director of finance to confirm scope.
	CYP Work Programme 2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Martin Bradford, Scrutiny Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To review and monitor progress.

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Meeting 5	Item title and scrutiny objective	Directorate – Division – Officer Responsibility	Preparatory work to support item
<p><u>Meeting Date: Monday 7th December 2020</u></p> <p>Agenda dispatch: Friday 27th November 2020</p> <p>Papers deadline: Tuesday 24th November 2020</p>	Annual Question Time with Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Families, Early Years and Play (45m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cllr Caroline Woodley, Cabinet Member for Early Years, SEND and Play 	3 items to be selected 6 weeks ahead of the meeting (26th October 2020)
	Childcare Sufficiency (Update)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Donna Thomas, Head of Early Years, Hackney Education Service 	To be taken as part of Cabinet Q & A with Cabinet Member for Families, Early Years and Play
	Young Futures Commission (45m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Polly Cziok, Director of Communications ● Pauline Adams, Head of Young Hackney ● Jernaine Jackman / Shekeila Scarlett YF Co-Chair ● Rohney Saggar-Malik, Project Head, YF Commission 	How will the outcomes of Young Futures be embedded across the Council and with partner agencies? What governance structures are there to support young people's involvement through Young Futures, Hackney Youth Parliament and CYP Scrutiny.
	Child Friendly Borough Supplementary Planning Document (30m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Natalie Broughton, Head of Planning ● Gabrielle Abadi, Planning Officer ● Karol Jakubczyk, Senior Planning Officer ● Lizzie Bird, Planning & Implementation officer 	
	CYP Work Programme 2020/21	- Scrutiny Officer	- To review and monitor progress.

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Meeting 6	Item title and scrutiny objective	Directorate – Division – Officer Responsibility	Preparatory work to support item
<p><u>Meeting Date:</u> <u>Tuesday 12th January 2021</u></p> <p>Agenda dispatch: Monday 4th January 2021</p> <p>Papers deadline: Wednesday 23rd December 2020</p>	Annual Report City and Hackney Safeguarding Partnership (45m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jim Gamble, Chair of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership ● Rory McCallum, Senior Professional Adviser 	
	Unregistered Educational Settings -Update 2 (30m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anne Canning, Group Director, Children, Adults and Community Health ● Annie Gammon, Director of Education ● Rory McCallum, Senior Professional Adviser, CHSCB 	
	Annual Question Time with Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care. (45m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cllr Anntoinette Bramble 	3 items to be selected 6 weeks ahead of the meeting (1st December 2020)
	CYP Work Programme 2020/21	Scrutiny Officer	To review and monitor progress

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Meeting 7	Item title and scrutiny objective	Directorate – Division – Officer Responsibility	Preparatory work to support item
<p><u>Meeting Date:</u> <u>Monday 8th February 2021</u></p> <p>Agenda dispatch: Friday 29th January 2021</p> <p>Papers deadline: Tuesday 26th January 2021</p>	The Attainment Gap: local priorities to reduce inequalities in educational attainment among (75m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annie Gammon, Director of Education ● Include representation from neighbouring boroughs 	To be scoped with Director of Education
	Children and Young People's Mental Health in Hackney (45m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amy Wilkinson, Managing Director CYP and Midwifery of Integrated Commissioning ● Greg Condon, Commissioning Manager City & Hackney CCG 	To be scoped with Managing Director of CYP & M Integrated Commissioning Strategic oversight: needs, funding, priorities and performance Conduct focus groups with young people ahead of the meeting to inform discussion,
	CYP Work Programme 2020/21	Scrutiny Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To review and monitor progress.

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Meeting 8	Item title and scrutiny objective	Directorate – Division – Officer Responsibility	Preparatory work to support item
<p><u>Meeting Date:</u> <u>Tuesday 11th May 2021</u></p> <p>Papers deadline: Tuesday 27th April 2021</p> <p>Agenda dispatch: Friday 30th April April 2021</p>	Children and Families Service Bi-Annual Report to Members April 2020-September 2020 - to include financial monitoring data (45m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anne Canning, Group Director, CACH ● Sarah Wright, Director of Children & Family Services 	
	Special Educational Needs and Disability (i) Performance (ii) Recovery Plan (60m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nicholas Wilson, Head of High Needs and School Places ● Annie Gammon, Director of Education 	To be scoped with Head of High Needs/ Director of Education
	School Moves: Annual Review of children being excluded from school, subject to a managed move, or move to Elective Home Education /Alternative Provision. (TBC) (20m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annie Gammon, Director of Education 	To be scoped with Director of Education
	CYP Work Programme 2020/21	Scrutiny Officer	To review and monitor progress

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission Work Programme June 2020 – May 2021

Review 2020/21

Service Area	Officers	Date
Adolescents entering care: analysis of pathways into care to help identify early help / prevention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Wright, Director of Children and Families Service 	To be scoped

Informal reconnaissance meetings with Director and Service leads and to report back to Commission.

Service Area	Officers	Date
Youth Offending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Wright, Director of Children and Families Service • Pauline Adams, Head of Young Hackney • Brendan Finegan, Head of Youth Offending Team 	
Young Hackney - Youth Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Wright, Director of Children and Families Service • Pauline Adams, Head of Young Hackney 	

Short brief required

Service Area	Officers	Date
Prevention of NEET - employment, education and training opportunities available for young people post Covid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annie Gammon, Director of Education • Andrew Munk, Head of Employment & Skills 	

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Impact of complex parental (family) mental health on children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amy Wilkinson, Managing Director CYP and Midwifery of Integrated Commissioning 	To scope.
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Planned Site visits		

One off Items agreed from 2020/2021		
Update on exams 2020 and provisions for 2021	Annie Gammon, Director of Education	

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission Work Programme June 2020 – May 2021

Update on childcare provision across Hackney	Donna Thomas, Head of Early Years	

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission Minutes of 8th September 2020

Attendees

Sophie Conway (Councillor) (Chair)
Margaret Gordon (Councillor) (Vice Chair)
Ajay Chauhan (Councillor)
Humaira Garasia (Councillor)
James Peters (Councillor)
Clare Potter (Councillor)
Sharon Patrick (Councillor)
Katie Hansen (Councillor)
Sade Etti (Councillor)
Justine McDonald (Statutory Co-optee)
Luisa Dornelas (Statutory Co-optee)
Shabnum Hassan (Statutory Co-optee)
Ernell Watson (Co-opted member)
Michael Lobenstein (Co-opted member)
Jo Macleod (Co-opted member)
Shuja Shaikh (Co-opted member)

In attendance:

- Cllr Anntionette Bramble, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care
- Cllr Caroline Woodley, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Families and Play
- Anne Canning, Group Director, Children, Adults and Community Health
- Sarah Wright, Director, Children and Families Service
- Annie Gammon, Head of Hackney Learning Trust and Director of Education
- Lisa Aldridge, Head of Safeguarding & Learning
- Anton Francic, Senior Secondary Adviser
- Orlene Badu, System Leader, Young Black Men Project

Cllr Conway in the Chair

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from the following:

- Cllr Clare Joseph

1.2 Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Hansen.

2. Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 There were no urgent items and the agenda was as scheduled.

3. Declarations of interest

3.1 The following declarations were received by members of the Commission:

- Cllr Peters was a governor at a special school in Hackney;
- Cllr Chauhan was a member of NEU and a teacher at a school outside of Hackney;
- Justine McDonald was a Headteacher at a school in Hackney;

- Jo Macleod was a governor at a school in Hackney;
- Shabnum Hassan was a governor at a school in Hackney.

4. Examinations Update

4.1 Given the controversy over the process for awarding exam results in the summer of 2020 and the subsequent confusion and anxiety that this gave to young people, the Commission requested an update on A Level and GCSE exam results. In particular, the Commission sought assurance on the following:

- How local children in years 11 and 13 have been affected with particular reference to disadvantaged groups;
- The range of advice and support made available to help children navigate post 16 and post 18 options;
- Whether there was sufficient local capacity 16/18 options to meet local needs.

4.2 The Cabinet member for Education, Children and Children's Social Care introduced the response to this item. When it became apparent that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds would be disproportionately affected by the use of an algorithm to determine grades, the Mayor and Cabinet member petitioned the government to reconsider, and were pleased that the decision was taken to return to teacher assessed grades as had originally been planned. There was concern however, that this process had caused considerable anxiety and stress to local young people which could have been avoided.

4.3 The Cabinet member reassured the Commission that whilst school league tables would not be published this year, local schools had performed well and that the number of children staying on into local 6th forms had increased. In general, these results had allowed children to progress along pathways in further and higher education, vocational training or the world of work. The Cabinet member thanked local schools for their support in helping young people to achieve such good results and helping them navigate post 16 and post 18 options.

4.4 The Director of Education and Principal Secondary School adviser presented to the Commission (attached). The key points from this presentation were as follows:

- The number local passes at A level achieving a grade A*- C was 87%, 13 percentage points higher than last year (74%). The increase recorded in Hackney was higher than the national average;
- At GCSE level, 1 in 4 young people achieved a high pass (grade 7-9) compared to 1 in 5 last year;
- At GCSE, 54% achieved a strong pass in Basics, English and maths combined (grade 5+) compared with 48% last year (71% achieved a strong pass in English and 58% achieved a strong pass in maths).
- At GCSE, 73% achieved a standard pass in Basics, English and maths (grade 4+) compared to 69% last year. These results were higher than the national average;

- Strong performances were recorded across local schools, including those where there is a high proportion of disadvantaged children (e.g. entitled to free school meals).
- As yet, it was not clear whether DfE would release any nationally aggregated data or analysis of the performance of different student cohorts (e.g. gender, ethnicity, FSM entitlement). An update was expected in October 2020.
- With the number of appeals likely to be low, there was a perception that the school assessed grades would seem to have generated fairer results for disadvantaged students than the use of the algorithm.

4.5 In relation to advice and support available to children at this time, all schools were noted to have strong systems to help advise and support children through their post 16 and post 18 options. Specialist advice was provided through Prospects for on-the-day results and advisers in-situ in schools and via a helpline. My Big Career had been commissioned to help students with university offers. Young Hackney, Hackney Education and Prospects held a careers festival on 21st August to help young people navigate future education and training options.

4.6 The Commission was reassured that there was additional local capacity for post 16 options in that not every local 6th form or local college was full. There was further work to be done however, to ensure that there was greater breadth in the local offer to young people, particularly in terms of Level 2 qualifications, vocational qualifications and suitable courses for children with SEND.

Questions from the Commission

4.7 In terms of broadening the scope of the local 6th form offer, was this just in response to the exams process of the summer of 2020, or was this an ongoing area of work?

- The authority had been working to widen the offer at both local 6th forms and colleges for a number of years, but the events of this summer and the inequalities that resulted from Covid 19 had increased local resolve to make further progress on this issue.

4.8 Would it be possible to provide further detail about local capacity for post 16 and post 18 options, in particular, was there capacity in the right places and at the right levels? Are any local 6th forms struggling to meet local demand?

- It was acknowledged that capacity was also about responding to individual needs as well as places and courses. These issues were being discussed strategically at the Secondary Headteachers Forum and in the Post 16 Network meetings. The landscape of post 16 provision was evolving in response to the changing nature of qualifications in which more vocational courses were being given more prominence. Local 6th forms were also looking to extend their vocational offer which would appeal to a wider range of students.
- Whilst some 6th forms were oversubscribed, there was sufficient capacity in the sector overall in Hackney and in neighbouring boroughs. It was

noted that a number of children seeking further post 16 education do choose to travel to other schools and colleges.

- Borough wide support is provided through Prospects who follow up all post 16 students and provide advice and guidance where necessary.

4.9 What involvement did the LA have in lobbying for change at the national level?

- In relation to the national picture, it was only apparent that the government had considered 3 options for exam grading in 2020 once the results had actually been published. None of the options were completely satisfactory, but the government's preferred option (the use of the algorithm) was probably not as well tested as it should have been. There was much anger in the profession that for the most part, teacher assessments were overridden by an algorithm based on prior attainment level of the school. The Mayor and Cabinet member wrote to the government setting out these concerns and the impact that it would have on local young people. The subsequent reversal of policy helped address many of these issues, though young people were caused unnecessary anxiety in this process.
- Hackney Education Service had shared a paper with schools on unconscious bias ahead of the move to teacher assessment. This included the use of checklists to test for cultural responsiveness. The paper was well received in all settings. There had also been meetings with Secondary Heads and other post 16 providers to further help interpret the most recent government guidance and to develop consistency in how guidelines were applied across the sector.

4.10 Were students in Hackney in any way prejudiced by the final examination assessment ? Did any students lose out on a university place and what support was offered to them? How are children who were not happy with their grades and want to retake exams being supported?

- It was clear that a number of students had been affected and had not been given places at their first choice university, as places had been allocated on the algorithm assessed results. Whilst some may now be at other universities, others may be taking an unplanned gap-year. Hackney Education Service was working with schools and colleges to make sure young people were getting appropriate advice and support.
- Guidelines for the appeal process had just been published and were still being clarified. The uptake of appeals was likely to be low given the number of young people being given their expected grades. If students were not happy with their grades they could appeal, but could only do this if they felt they were prejudiced in any way (and could not appeal against the school).

4.12 What plans are there to support children taking exams next year who have missed a substantial part of their learning this year as a result of school closures?

- Schools were just beginning to identify areas of lost learning and starting to plan how this could be re-captured in the months going forward. The

government announced the National Tutoring Programme (which uses individual tutoring) to support students to catch up. It is likely that blended learning will be ongoing, with teachers using a range of face-to-face and on-line teaching to support student learning.

- The feedback from the Lost Learning Project in Hackney was that the delivery and take up of on-line learning varied across schools with it being strong and established rapidly in some areas. The issues about different levels of access to ICT were noted. National and local interventions with schools were ongoing to further develop and improve on-line learning.

4.13 How many children were predicted to get a pass but did not get any grade?

- A number of cases were reported where a student's algorithm result was substantially below their teacher assessed grade. It was noted in terms of A levels, all local students passed (up from 98% in 2019).

4.14 Although demographic analysis was not currently available for exam results, would this be available in the future? Could this data be determined at a local level via the data that schools provide to Hackney Education Service?

- Although no school league tables would be published for this year, it was still not clear what additional demographic data the DfE intended to release at this stage. It has been clear there will be no league tables.

4.15 Given the ongoing uncertainties around school exams and how young people had been impacted, the Chair suggested that it would be helpful to have a further update when the situation was clearer.

Agreed: A further update on school exams to be provided at a later date in the Commission's work programme.

4.16 The Chair thanked officers for attending and updating the COMmission.

5. Covid 19 Service Updates

5.1 The Commission continues to receive updates from both Children and Families Services (CFS) and Hackney Learning Trust (Hackney Education Service) on how services were responding to Covid 19 and subsequent recovery plans. The Directors of the respective services highlighted key issues from their respective reports as set out below.

5.2 The Cabinet member for Education, Children and Children's Social Care introduced the response to this item and highlighted a number of issues:

- The council had been working extensively on supporting schools to reopen safely for children, including engagement with local parents;
- The health and wellbeing of children and young people continued to be priority, particularly the identification of children who may experience delayed trauma;
- An increase in social care referrals was expected as children returned to school and the service was in discussion with the Finance Department for additional capacity to support this;

- Youth hubs were open and were engaging children in outside spaces and virtually to ensure that young people remained supported;
- Children's Centres have remained open throughout and adventure playgrounds have been reopened over the summer to help children reintegrate with their peers.

Children & Families Service (CFS)

5.3 The Director of the Children and Families Service highlighted a number of key issues from the report:

- Referral levels continue to be lower than expected, and were down by 38% overall on comparable figures from last year. Numbers were expected to increase as schools returned but no discernible difference had been recorded as yet.
- Notable increases in the system were recorded for the number of Children on a Child Protection Plan (CPP) with a 10% increase being recorded (to 288 cases). This increase was the result of more children remaining on a CPP rather than new cases coming into the system, as there continued to be difficulty in undertaking appropriate interventions to help children and families improve and move off a CPP.
- Similarly, there were also increasing numbers of children in the court and pre-court systems also due to the problems of getting appropriate interventions to support children (or to make appropriate assessments).
- There were currently 456 looked after children in Hackney with the majority of new cases being unaccompanied asylum seeking children and adolescents whose relationships with their families had broken down.
- Domestic abuse referrals have fluctuated over recent weeks though levels appear to have plateaued.
- There was more face-to-face communication with children and young people, though this continues to be risk-assessed.
- Courts have reopened in July and as a consequence, more local cases in the Youth Offending Team were being dealt with in the court system which had helped to clear the backlog of cases.
- Summer activities offered through Young Hackney had gone well and more young people were accessing Youth Hubs. 680 children and young people had accessed Youth Hubs (3,146 total attendances).
- Digital devices arrived very late (late July) and CFS and Hackney Education Service had worked together to distribute these to priority groups of children.

Questions from the Commission

5.4 In terms of staffing at CFS, how have caseloads been affected from the impact of Covid 19? Are preparations being made for the expected increase in demand as children return to school?

- Some parts of the child care system were now very busy as referrals were increasing. Other parts had been less busy, such as the Access and Assessment services and these staff had been helping out in other areas of CFS. CFS was mapping out expected demands and how this may impact on overall patterns of staff activity. CFS had met with the Finance

Team to discuss additional resourcing for the service to meet expected increase in referrals.

5.5 The impact of the pandemic has been far reaching which may necessitate families who have not needed social care support in the past to seek help. What early help interventions were being put in place to help engage and support these families?

- CFS had been working with both Hackney Education Service and Young Hackney to provide early help to new families by signposting young people to front facing services. Such support would hopefully maintain children and families in the community and prevent more intensive interventions at a later date.

5.6 With increasing numbers of looked after children in its care, has the council been able to provide sufficient foster care placements?

- The numbers of looked after children were rising and there were pressures in finding suitable placements for them. There were particular difficulties in finding appropriate foster carers and as a result, more children were being placed in residential care. There were now over 40 children in residential care, the highest it has been in Hackney for over 10 years. It was noted that residential care was a significantly more expensive placement option for children than foster care.
- Capacity in the in-house foster carer team has been reduced since the start of the pandemic as many carers were elderly or from BAME communities and may have needed to shield themselves. It was hoped that as restrictions eased, capacity would increase within the in-house team of foster carers.
- Foster carer panels continued to operate as usual.

5.7 Given the increasing numbers of children in the care system and the likelihood of an increase in referrals for social care as schools return, what financial modelling has taken place to ensure that there are sufficient resources in place to meet these needs? What is the expected financial outturn for 2020/21?

- CFS were logging all additional expenditure due to Covid and were working with Finance colleagues to address this. The situation was complex and evolving which made it difficult to predict the financial impact of Covid on CFS as an end of year figure.
- A wider piece of work is being carried out across the Council on additional costs resulting from Covid 19 and what could be reclaimed from central government grants. The Council was keeping very close tabs on all Children and Families Service expenditure.

5.8 It was concerning to note the number of young people being held in remand situations. What was the council doing to help reduce this number?

- To clarify, there were more young people going on remand who had been waiting for their court cases to be heard. There were, however, many

young people still waiting for their cases to be heard, and the lack of outcome was very unsettling for both them and their families.

Hackney Education

5.9 The Director of Education highlighted a number of issues from the submitted report:

- Hackney Education Service worked together with Young Hackney to support over 700 children to attend schools over the summer, many of whom were vulnerable children or children in need;
- Hackney Education Service was starting to receive attendance data which suggested that some schools were reaching 95% levels of attendance, which reflected normally expected levels. Attendance was below this figure in some schools, though this could be due to staggered start of year groups;
- The SEND team were working on new bus routes to help more children with SEND to access their respective educational settings;
- Schools have been provided with guidance from both the LA and nationally on how to manage a Covid 19 outbreak. There have been a small number of positive cases identified across London which has required 'bubbles' of children and staff to be sent home. It is likely that this will also occur in Hackney school at some point, so guidance is available to make sure schools are prepared and know how to respond in this situation. If a child is diagnosed with Covid and is sent home, Hackney Education Service has issued guidance to schools establishing a minimum standard of what a child can expect when they are quarantined and need to be homeschooled. In the event of a positive test, it was unlikely that a whole school would close, which will reduce pressures on schools digital devices:
- There may be some vulnerable groups of children who may have difficulty in returning to school and schools may need to set up IT support for such children to enable them to continue to work remotely;
- Hackney Education Service continues to enhance local provision of digital devices and has set up a laptop donation scheme where old laptops can be reconditioned and given to schools. Wifi access continues to be problematic and as yet there is no borough wide solution. Hackney Education Service could report more fully in time on this issue;
- Children with an existing or emerging mental health condition were also a priority and the Wellbeing and Mental Health Service was operating in a large number of schools to help support these children;
- Many childcare settings have remained open during the pandemic, but independent providers and those settings which rely predominantly on fees income have faced considerable financial pressures. Whilst practical and financial support has been provided by the Early Years Network and Business Grants respectively, there is concern around the shape and size of the childcare landscape.

Questions from the Commission

5.10 Will schools relax behaviour policies to help children with SEND, mental health or other behaviour issues to adapt to being back in the school environment?

- Hackney Education Service has provided guidance to schools to ensure that they recognise the difficulties that children have faced over the past 6 months and that some children will need targeted support to help them adjust back into school life.
- The WAMHS Project and CAMHS workers were available to schools to help support children with specific mental and emotional well being needs.
- Schools have been provided with guidance to ensure that children are provided with reasonable adjustments to help them adapt to local school policies and practices.

5.11 Given the increased prevalence of Covid 19 in the north of the borough, will any additional support be provided to out of school settings such as Yeshiva to help them prevent infection?

- Letters have been sent to all schools in the wards most affected. It was noted that there had been a stronger response from schools where Hackney Education Service had a connection and across most early years settings.
- The Commission noted that the DPH does have the power to close schools if necessary, though this power would be used as a last resort. Although Yeshiva are out of school settings rather than schools, the Director of Public Health (DPH) and Group Director for Children, Adults and Community Health had written to one such setting to highlight concerns.

5.12 Given the prospect of a second wave of infection, what action is the council taking to help improve resilience of local education and children and young people services?

- Hackney Education Service was maintaining communication with all schools to help promote key public health messages and to ensure that school staff remain vigilant and aware of infection control measures.

5.13 What role can libraries and other community spaces in combating the digital divide, for example by providing wifi access and places for children to study.

- Many children would use libraries not only to gain access to free wifi, but also to have a quiet space to study. It would be beneficial if libraries could reopen, though it was recognised that this may be more problematic for particular libraries given the need to maintain social distancing requirements.

5.14 Whilst school closures may not have been beneficial for most children, a small number have seen some benefits in their mental health as they have not been exposed to the social and other pressures from their peers. Is there anything that the Education Service can learn from this small cohort of young people about some of the possible negative effects of schooling?

- A number of benefits of school closures have been reported among children and parents. Children have experienced less pressures in relation to exams and some parents have reported that their children have benefited from a less intense curriculum and timetable during lockdown. Whilst it is critical that children are back in school, there are clearly wider lessons to be learnt from the school closures.

5.15 Does the power of the DPH to close schools extend to unregistered settings given that these are not schools?

- The powers do extend to unregistered settings, but these are very rarely used. These settings have been notified that this power exists should it be needed.

5.16 The Cabinet member for Families, Early Years and Play noted the work that was taking place to support children with SEND and the Disabled Children Service in particular. It was acknowledged that many families living with children with SEND would have struggled over recent months, but the Short Break Team had connected with all service users to help identify additional needs from the pandemic and had relaxed conditions for payments to help improve the home environment.

5.17 The Cabinet member had also visited adventure playgrounds including those supported by the Disabled Children Service. It was reported that children with SEND had greatly benefited from this facility being reopened.

5.18 The Chair noted that the situation with schools remained fluid and that a more definitive picture would emerge as the term progressed and the Commission would retain oversight over this in the coming months. The Chair reinforced the need for financial monitoring data for both Hackney Education Service and CFS for the next meeting as per the work programme.

5.19 The Chair thanked officers for attending and responding to questions from the Commission.

6. Racial inequalities and unconscious bias

6.1 The death of George Floyd and subsequent Black Lives Matter protests have highlighted racial inequalities that exist across public services. The Commission invited the Directors of the Children and Families Service (CFS) and Hackney Learning Trust (Hackney Education Service) to set out the work to help identify and address racial inequalities and unconscious bias in the policies and practices of their respective departments.

6.2 The purpose of this item was three fold:

- To ensure that the Commission had oversight of work to combat racial inequalities across children and young people's services;
- To provide challenge to local strategies, plans or work that seek address racial inequalities; and

- To assess whether further more detailed scrutiny is necessary for any identified service areas.

6.3 The Cabinet member for Education, Children and Children's Social Care introduced responses from both CFS and Hackney Education Service. The Cabinet member made the following points:

- Hackney has supported the Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men strategy for a number of years and this work has helped to bring change to local services.
- In response to the death of George Floyd, Hackney has embarked on further work across the Council in both CFS and Hackney Education Service.
- Subsequent to a meeting with Headteachers, a Black-only space has been set up for local teachers for them to explore racial inequality issues in education.

6.4 The Group Director for Children, Adults and Community Health provided an overview of the strategic work taking place across CYP services to address racial inequalities.

- It was acknowledged that progress to tackle inequalities had been slow and that greater urgency was required;
- There were three themes in the work to address racial inequalities across services:
 - That there was a focus on practice to make sure that this has necessary impact to address inequalities (e.g service delivery);
 - To improve the inclusivity of the workforce at pace;
 - To improve education and awareness of racial inequalities and the urgency required to identify meaningful and impactful solutions.

6.5 The Director of CFS presented to the Commission (attached). Key points from this presentation are summarised below.

- An action plan was already in place in CFS in relation to the Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men strategy, though this has been developed further into an Anti-Racist Action Plan. This was developed by the leadership team within CFS alongside the CFS Black Leadership Group. The action plan has been developed to focus on those areas which would have the greatest impact, these included:
 - Inclusive recruitment and aspirational support to staff;
 - Anti-racist leadership and practice with the Children and Families Service;
 - Promoting anti-racist practice to influence broader care support systems.
- There was an acknowledgement that diversity in the workforce varied and that the senior leadership team was one area where improved diversity was required. A number of developments had taken place to improve diversity across CFS which included anonymous recruitment paperwork and improved diversity on interview panels. Additional data monitoring now takes place to track disproportionality in the workforce.

- Planned work to improve recruitment included the establishment of a CFS Black Leadership Group and a review of training to ensure that black staff have equal access to development opportunities, particularly those leading to leadership roles.
- A Black Practitioners Group was also planned.
- Anti-racism in practice training was being provided to the whole service in the autumn and anti-racist practice standards and development tools would be developed by spring 2021;
- A key objective within the Anti-Racist Action Plan being developed by CFS was the need to influence the broader care system that affects the lives of children and families e.g. through the multi-agency bodies of which it is a part, the services it commissions from other agencies and its engagement with young people.

Questions from the Commission

6.6 The presentation noted that CFS was working with the courts to ensure proportionality in decision making. In practice, what steps had been taken?

- Issues of racial disproportionality toward Black young people within the youth courts is a national issue. CFS had started conversations with the local youth court and is part of a user group for that court to provide feedback on its operation. It is hoped that CFS are able to engage the court in developing trauma-informed practice training sessions. CFS were hoping to be able to introduce statements into the court about young people's experience of racism, discrimination and disadvantage to help inform decision making by the courts. It was understood that the courts were open to, and wanted to engage with, work to reduce racial disproportionality.

6.7 What baseline data was being used to assess the performance and impact of anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice? When could this be made available for the Commission?

- In terms of workforce data, CFS has actively collected and collated data on social workers but has now extended this to the wider workforce.
- CFS also analysed data on young people entering and going through the social care system in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. Poverty indicators had also been recently included. Whilst the data was very rich, analysis was complex. CFS was aware that children from Black and other minority ethnic backgrounds were over-represented within the local social care system. Conversely, some sections of the white community were underrepresented. This is similar to national trends. CFS continues to analyse data to help develop a baseline through which to measure success.

6.8 In relation to the CFS Black Leadership Group that had recently been established, what percentage of the senior leadership group in CFS are from Black or other minority ethnic groups?

- Whilst officers were not able to give precise data at the meeting, it was acknowledged that the majority of staff in senior leadership roles in CFS were White. Further data would be provided to the Commission.

6.9 In summary, the Commission agreed that whilst there had been progress to address racial inequalities across services, it had been acknowledged that progress had been slow and that this would benefit from additional, regular scrutiny.

Agreed:

- (1) That CFS would provide intervention rate data for children's social care by ethnicity to help understand any disparities in interventions and to establish baseline data.
- (2) That CFS would provide data to the Commission on the ethnic background of staff in senior roles.
- (3) That progress against the Anti-Racist Action Plan is reported in the Children's Social Care Bi-Annual Report.
- (4) That a further follow up report on the progress to tackle racial inequalities is provided to the Commission within 6 months.

Hackney Education Service

6.10 The Director of Education and officers presented to the Commission the work of Hackney Education Service to address racial inequalities and improve equality in local educational settings (presentation attached).

6.11 Since the death of George Floyd, Hackney Education Service has taken a number of actions including contacting and providing reassurance to all schools and pupils.

- Hackney Education Service also held two meetings with staff to help identify priority actions that should be taken to address inequalities.
- A curriculum group had also been established which included representatives from local schools and would focus its work on how racial inequalities in the curriculum should be addressed.
- Hackney Schools Group Board has worked with 6 schools to engage and involve parents in talking about race which has been very positive (results to be published late September).

6.12 Work to promote the Black Curriculum and promote diversity and inclusion within teaching had commenced and a dedicated officer lead had been appointed. The purpose of the Black Curriculum Group was to encompass not only how Black history was being taught, but also the degree to which Black and other cultures were represented in other areas of the curriculum. The ethos of this approach is that all children benefit from a diverse and inclusive approach to teaching and learning. It was important that Black culture was represented in the curriculum to provide positive reinforcement and empowerment to young Black students but also to provide a diverse and inclusive approach to learning.

6.13 To provide long term change it was important to develop the racial literacy of school staff, school governors and other stakeholders. Hackney Education Service is working with local schools to ensure that their staff are racially literate and that they understand how race and culture may impact on the educational experience and outcomes of their children. The aim of this programme was ambitious but there had been good engagement by local schools and work had already commenced which had included the development of lesson plans and other resources to support teaching.

6.14 Having a diverse and inclusive workforce was also essential to promoting equality and Hackney Education Service had:

- Developed a recruitment tool kit for headteachers to help recruit, develop and maintain Black staff;
- Improvement plans for local schools would now encompass equality and inclusion aims;
- Dedicated spaces would be provided to Black and other minority ethnic staff to enable them to discuss issues that affected them in teaching;
- Training on unconscious bias, diversity and inclusion would be available to staff on an ongoing basis.

6.15 It was also important to ensure that the voice of young Black and other minority ethnic children was sufficiently represented in this programme of work and Hackney Education Service would engage both Young Futures and Hackney Youth Parliament to this effect. Hackney Education Service had also issued guidance to schools in developing the 'youth voice' which would be assessed by School Improvement Partners. Hackney Schools Group Board had engaged with Black parents and the learning from this would be rolled out to other schools. A Hackney Parents Conference on race was being planned for the coming year.

6.16 Hackney Education Service was also supporting work to develop culturally competent policies and practices, which included:

- Unconscious bias training and support to schools;
- Improved tracking of pupil outcomes;
- Development of model school policies (e.g. behaviour, uniform, hair).

Questions from the Commission

6.17 In relation to child performance, is there evidence to suggest that Black and other minority ethnic groups perform better where there is Black representation in the school leadership?

- The most important factors for children's achievement were good school leadership, robust policies and practices and engaged and well trained staff. In terms of a child's sense of belonging and inclusion which is central to educational engagement, representation was important.
- It was important that young Black people (young Black males in particular) have better experiences of education as this inevitably affects the numbers of such students who return to education as teachers (and future role models). It was important to ensure that Black and other minority ethnic children see a positive pathway to education and teaching.

- A closer look at the data would be necessary to assess how outcomes are impacted by Black and other minority representation in the school leadership.

6.18 What work is taking place to support the school governor's role in addressing racial inequalities in schools and to ensure that these bodies are representative of the school community?

- Governors do play an important role in school leadership and a range of training and development courses are available throughout the borough. There is clearly more to be done by Hackney Education Service and schools themselves to encourage a wider range of parents to become governors.

6.19 In relation to developing the Black Curriculum, will this be a matter of influence and persuasion with local schools or are there other means available?

- Given the impact of Covid 19 and the death of George Floyd, most local schools have engaged with the black curriculum and other equalities work. This would suggest that there is a recognition in schools that their curriculums need to be adapted. School Improvement Partners would be heading into schools in September with the curriculum on the agenda. Schools appear to be willing but some may need guidance and support to enable that to happen.
- Whilst Hackney Education Service cannot force schools to take on initiatives such as this, it can encourage and influence head teachers and school governors to recognise the importance of such work.
- It was reported that there was an appetite for curriculum development across all school settings in both maintained schools and academies.

6.20 Given the competing agendas in schools (e.g. return to school, catch up in studies) is there any further action that the Council can take to ensure that racial inequality remains a local priority and work continues?

- The role of public scrutiny plays an important role in holding decision takers to account and this does filter back through to schools. Therefore bodies such as the CYP Scrutiny Commission can help to ensure that the issue of racial inequality remains high on the local education and schools agenda.
- Given their response to the death of George Floyd, it was also clear that the voice of young people was also important in driving change and improvements in local schools. Therefore it was important for schools and other bodies to ensure that the voice of young people can be heard and their views are accounted for in decision making.

6.21 The Chair thanked all officers for attending and responding to questions from members of the Commission. It was agreed that it would be helpful if CFS could update the Commission on progress on the Anti-Racist Action Plan in the future (6 months) and if possible, to be included within the Children's Social Care Bi-Annual Report process.

Agreed: (1) That further data on the ethnicity of the Hackney Education Service workforce and local teaching workforce is provided to the Commission.
(2) That a further follow up report on the progress to tackle racial inequalities is provided to the Commission within 6 months.

7.0 Work Programme

7.1 Suggestions from local stakeholders together with additional topics suggested in last year's work programme, have been used to develop the plan of work 2020/21. Key areas of work planned for the remainder of the year included:

- Strategies to help close the attainment gap;
- The performance and recovery plan of the SEND team;
- Strategic oversight of mental health services for young people.

7.2 It was not possible to include all those areas of interest to the Commission within the scrutiny work programme for 2020/21. It was therefore decided to hold a number reconnaissance meeting in a number of service areas where members of the Commission would meet with service heads for an update. A short briefing would be reported back to the Commission on the outcome of the meeting and whether any further scrutiny action would be taken. Planned visits would take place for the following:

- Youth Offending;
- Youth Services.

7.3 Members were requested to report back any comments on the work programme to the Chair, and in particular, specific interests in planned scrutiny topics in which they would like to be actively involved.

7.4 Members noted and agreed the work programme.

8.0 Letters to Cabinet members

8.1 The Commission undertook two pieces of work in the 2019/20 from which it developed recommendations for Cabinet: Off-rolling in Schools and proposals for a Child Friendly borough. Letters to relevant Cabinet members detailing the recommendations of the Commission were noted.

8.2 Cabinet will consider and respond to the recommendations set out in these letters in due course.

9.0 Minutes

9.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 13th July 2020 were noted and agreed by the Commission.

10.0 Any other Business

9.1 There were no additional items. The Commission noted that the date of the next meeting was 2nd November 2020.

The meeting closed at 21.35.

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Overview & Scrutiny

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission Minutes of 2nd November

Attendees

Sophie Conway (Councillor) (Chair)
 Margaret Gordon (Councillor) (Vice Chair)
 Ajay Chauhan (Councillor)
 Humaira Garasia (Councillor)
 James Peters (Councillor)
 Clare Potter (Councillor)
 Sharon Patrick (Councillor)
 Katie Hansen (Councillor)
 Sade Etti (Councillor)
 Luisa Dornelas (Statutory Co-optee)
 Shabnum Hassan (Statutory Co-optee)
 Ernell Watson (Co-opted member)
 Jo Macleod (Co-opted member)

In attendance:

- Cllr Anntionette Bramble, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care
- Cllr Caroline Woodley, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Families and Play
- Anne Canning, Group Director, Children and Education
- Annie Gammon, Head of Hackney Learning Trust and Director of Education
- Eleanor Schooling, Independent Chair, Hackney Schools Group Board
- Lisa Aldridge, Head of Safeguarding & Learning Service
- Huw Bevan, Head of Family Intervention & Support Service
- Harriet Okot, Communications Officer
- Yusuf Erol, Head of Finance, Education Service

Cllr Conway in the Chair

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from:

- Cllr Clare Joseph
- Justine McDonald (Statutory Co-optee)
- Michael Lobenstein (Co-opted member)
- Shuja Shaikh (Co-opted member)

2. Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 An urgent update on the impact of Covid 19 on local schools was requested for the meeting. The update and discussion is reported at item 13.

2.2 The Chair noted that Rev Graham Hunter has resigned as a member and wished to formally thank him for his support and for his work for the Commission over the past 3 years.

2.3 Similarly, the Chair expressed thanks to Sarah Wright who had left the Council after 14 years, most recently in her role of the Director of Children and

Families Service. On behalf of the Commission, the Chair thanked Sarah for all her work in children's services in Hackney and her support for the work of this Commission.

3. Declarations of interest

3.1 Cllr Conway (Chair), Cllr Gordon (Vice Chair) and Cllr Patrick declared that they would excuse themselves from the meeting for item 7 given their role on the Children's Member Oversight Board which was overseeing improvements in children's social care arising from recent Ofsted inspections. In this context, a new Chair would be elected for Item 7 - the Ofsted Inspection Action Plan.

3.2 In addition to the above, the following declarations were received by members of the Commission:

- Cllr Peters was a governor at a special school in Hackney;
- Cllr Chauhan was a member of NEU and a teacher at a school outside of Hackney;
- Jo Macleod was a governor at a school in Hackney;
- Luisa Dornelas was a governor at a school in Hackney;
- Shabnum Hassan was a governor at a school in Hackney.

4. Hackney Schools Group Board

4.1 The Independent Chair of Hackney Schools Group Board (HSGB) introduced this item, highlighting the following:

- The HSGB was established in 2019 as an independent advisory body to champion education excellence and to promote inclusion and belonging among local children.
- A workshop among local leaders had established three initial priorities for the HSGB which were; Belonging for All, Leading for the Curriculum and Reading for All.
- The HSGB produced two research studies led by Professor Katherine Riley during 2020, the first supporting school leadership during the pandemic and the second to facilitate parental discussions and engagement on race in local schools. The former of these studies supported sessions for 6 local head teachers to explore aspects of their leadership in their response to lockdown and the implications of school closures.
- In relation to race, the HSGB organised focus groups with parents at 6 local schools. Analysis revealed broad support for these schools in their approach to race and their exploration of cross-cultural issues. Concerns remained however in respect of black leadership in schools and the need to decolonise the curriculum. The research also suggested that schools helped to create a 'level playing field' in which children and parents of different races and cultures could engage and interact more equally than in other settings. It was also apparent that schools were beginning to reflect on the impact of their policies and procedures and whether these impacted on all children equally. The HSGB would follow up this research with additional work on policy implementation in schools.

4.2 The Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care noted that there is a strong family of schools in Hackney which would be preserved through the HSGB. The engagement and involvement of local schools would help to bring this initiative to life, and the HSGB had already begun to demonstrate the positive impact of its work within local schools.

Questions from the Commission

4.3 What proportion of local schools are actively engaged and involved in the work of the HSGB? Are Academies, Free Schools and Independent Schools actively engaged?

- The parental engagement project involved a wide range of schools including Academies and Free Schools and spanned both primary and secondary sectors. This would be the model that the HSGB would like to replicate throughout its work as it was really valuable to have such a wide cross-section of school involvement.
- It was also noted that there was diversity on the HSGB itself where there were Independent members who were from both local Academies and local school federations.

4.4 How does the HSGB intend to share new learning and improvements across the schools in Hackney? How many schools will be engaging with the research and development projects of the HSGB and making improvements?

- There were 6 schools working on leadership in the pandemic, 6 schools working on the parental engagement and race project and a further two groups of 6 schools were working with HSGB in other areas (e.g. policy development). Therefore 24 local schools were currently working with the work of the HSGB. The findings from the projects will be disseminated to all local schools, and a session will be held for all head teachers in 2021 to help share learning from these projects. The Independent Chair also engaged regularly with local head teachers through local school forums to promote the project outcomes identified by the HSGB

4.5 How does the HSGB capture the voice of teachers for their perspectives of race and the curriculum?

- Each school that participated in the project which engaged parents to talk about race had been asked to set out the practical improvements that they intend to make as a result of their participation. Each school will then share this learning and the positive developments that they had made in their school with other schools across Hackney. The most important aspect of this work would be the degree to which its outcomes inform local school policies and the impact on day to day teaching in the classroom.

4.6 How were the three priorities of the HSGB determined?

- The HSGB held an away day with the Board members which looked at the results of all local schools to identify what issues would be of real value. Reading was identified to be a key issue in the most recent set of results and naturally this formed one local priority. The changes to the Ofsted inspection framework had necessitated schools to re-examine their

curriculum, so it was felt that the HSGB could add value to local schools work in this respect.

4.7 In relation to the HSGB priority to design an effective curriculum, what attention was being given to the needs of children with SEND and their limited access to cultural capital?

- The HSGB felt that further work is needed to help develop cultural capital for all children, including those children with SEND. The HSGB does have a focus on belonging for all, though it was early days to assess the impact and more focused work was expected around SEND policies early in 2021.

4.8 Are Alternative Providers engaged with and being supported by HSGB?

- While the HSGB was there to engage with all education providers, as yet it had had very little involvement from Alternative Providers (AP). The HSGB had however spoken to a number of parents whose children attended AP. This was an area for further development.

4.9 There are concerns around the accountability of local schools to parents and to the local community. What work can the HSGB do to tackle this issue?

- The HSGB regularly reviews the results of all local schools which help to determine local priorities and where the work of the Board can add the most value.

4.10 The Cabinet Member for Early Years, Families and Play noted that the report was timely as the country headed towards a second lockdown as this reiterated the need for a community of learning among schools to adjust and plan for the significant changes that lay ahead.

4.11 The Chair felt that it would be useful to hear from HSGB again in the new Municipal year when work had developed further. The Chair thanked the Independent Chair for attending and updating the Commission on its work.

Agreed: That HSGB update be added to the work programme for 2021/22.

5. Budget Monitoring - Hackney Education Service

5.1 As part of its responsibility for budget monitoring, the Commission requested an in-year financial report from the Education Service. The purpose of the budget monitoring report was to highlight those service areas experiencing financial challenge and those actions being taken to manage financial risks.

5.2 The Director of Education introduced the report and provided the following financial overview.

- The majority of the income that comes into the Education Service is passported on to locally maintained schools (£133m) and to early years providers (£41m).

- The Education Service also received £47m to support high needs students the majority of which is spent on children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) in mainstream or independent educational settings.

5.3 The Head of Education Finance also highlighted a number of issues from the submitted report.

- There were a number of exclusions from the report which should be noted.
 - Firstly, the budget information in the report only related to service for which the Education Director is responsible and accountable for therefore does not include capital expenditure in education (e.g. maintaining school buildings).
 - Secondly, the financial position of maintained schools was not included in the report or any financial risks in particular schools.
- The net budget for the Education Service was £25.7m which was covered by four service areas: High Needs, Education Operations, Early Years and School Standards and Performance.
- The cost of SEND provision continues to represent a significant financial challenge to the Education Service. While the budget for high needs was significant (£47.6m), an £8.9m overspend was projected at year end. Data from London Councils would suggest that this financial position is similar across many other London boroughs.
- The authority participates regularly across borough lobbying for increased funding and the Cabinet Member for Early Years, Families and Play was in touch with ministers to keep them informed of the service situation in Hackney. The SEND team was also looking for ways to reduce costs, in particular, increasing the availability of in-borough provision which would be more cost effective than out of borough provision.

Questions from the Commission

5.4 Can further details be provided on the identified savings within the SEND budget, and how in-borough provision is intended to be increased? How is the service planning to balance the need to reduce costs for SEND provision when needs and demand for services were increasing?

- It was suggested that there were three main areas where savings may be made over the longer term:
 - A graduated response to EHCP in schools;
 - The development of more in-borough service options to reduce the need for expensive out of borough provision;
 - Promoting more independent travel (where appropriate) to help reduce transport costs.
- Any planned reductions or service changes would involve local stakeholders to ensure that their views are taken into account.
- Given the current levels of funding for SEND services, it was unlikely that Hackney (and other boroughs) would be able to balance this against local needs and costs. An increase in SEND funding from central government would be the only practical solution to meeting the rising levels of demand for SEND services in Hackney and beyond.
- The Cabinet Member for Early Years, Families and Play also noted that:

- The local SEND strategy was being updated as this expires this year and it would be informed by local data analysis and needs;
- Demand pressures within SEND continued to grow in response to widening of statutory duties to provide services for children with SEND up to 25 years of age and with improved and better diagnoses of needs;
- An additional £4.8m of funding was being allocated by central government next year which, whilst welcome this would not offset the projected cumulative deficit of £13m. The borough was also concerned that that additional funding would come with additional requirements or expectations.
- SEND funding was widely regarded as a national issue with many active parliamentary groups supporting local authorities to lobby for change.
- There were opportunities to develop a multi-borough response to help extend and improve local provision in a more cost effective way.
- Powers were in place to increase provision attached to schools which could be seen in Queensbridge School and was planned for Gainsborough. A new site was planned for The Garden School. It was noted that under current legislation, any new school would have to be a free school or an Academy.

5.5 Given that local schools may need to be compensated by the Education Service for the loss of child care income in the operation of children's centres and one school based children centre has closed, has there been any modelling on the future viability of school based children's centres?

- Budgets for school based children's centres are set by the Education Service . A review is planned of these budgets as it is apparent that these budgets have been tight for a number of years and a balanced solution is required. These schools have also lost income derived from childcare fees during the Covid response which is affecting their financial position. The Council is still in negotiations with central government as to whether this loss of income can be reclaimed as part of the wider local government compensation package for loss of income. The Council is awaiting this decision.
- The Education Service was currently reviewing the Early Years Strategy, though it was clear that Children's Centres would remain a central feature of this strategy.

5.6 The budget deficit for SEND appears to be growing, at which point will this deficit impact on other education services and the overall financial position of the council? What is the worst case scenario?

- Hackney has always been very aware of the cost pressures arising from SEND and very transparent about the nature and level of these pressures this creates for the Council. It was clear that this issue would not be solved until a new funding model with additional funding was developed by central government.

5.7 The Chair noted that it would be helpful to have further information as to whether local SEND provision can be expanded further. The Chair thanked officers for attending and responding to questions from the Commission.

6. Election of Chair (for Item 7)

6.1 In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair (see 3.1) nominations were taken for the position of Chair for item 7.

6.2 Cllr Peters nominated Cllr Etti who was seconded by Cllr Hansen. As there were no other nominations Cllr Etti was elected as Chair for item 7.

Cllr Sade Etti in the Chair

7.0 Ofsted Inspection Action Plan

7.1 Ofsted inspected the Children and Families Services in Hackney in November of 2019. The outcome of this inspection was that the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers was good, but that the service required improvement in 3 areas:

- 1- Impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families
- 2- Experiences and progress of children who need help and protection
- 3- Overall effectiveness.

7.2 In response, the Children & Families Service drew up an action plan which was submitted to Ofsted in March 2020 and published on Hackney.gov.uk. The Commission therefore sought to assess progress against this action plan.

7.3 The Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care introduced the report.

- The Cabinet member thanked all staff for their response to the Ofsted inspection and the improvements which were being made within the Service.
- A Children's Member Oversight Board was set up to oversee improvements in the Children and Families Service required by Ofsted. The Board meets monthly and is co-chaired by the Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care. The aim of the Board is to interrogate the action plan and provide a robust challenge to ensure that the service is improving. The Board also assisted in how the Children and Families Service adjusted to other issues such as Covid19 and the racial inequalities highlighted by the Black Lives Matter protests.
- The Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care thanked members for their participation and support for Children's Member Oversight Board.

7.4 The Group Director of Children and Education outlined a summary of the progress made to date:

Overview & Scrutiny

- The map of different bodies overseeing improvements in the Children and Families Service contained in the Children and Families 2019-20 Annual Report to Members is a governance map and does not refer to a formal decision making process.
- The Children's Action Plan was published in March 2020 and updates on the progress against these objectives will also be published. Two key pieces of work were in progress (1) obtaining further clarity on the service vision (2) developing a wider partnership plan for children's services across Hackney.
- Information sharing among partner agencies was noted to require improvement by Ofsted and work has progressed well to rectify this. This work has been accelerated by Covid-19 where there has been improved partnership-working and communication with the Education Service and other partners.
- Another area requiring improvement was the support provided to children living in neglectful circumstances. Here a new risk assessment process had been developed which highlighted the cumulative risk to children experiencing or at risk of neglect.
- All Private Fostering arrangements had been reviewed since the inspection and a new management information system had been developed.
- There has been much work to improve the timeliness of pre-proceedings work with additional guidance provided to parents, and the Children and Families Service has worked with the Legal Team to develop and improve practice.
- A new protocol had also been developed to support improvement for children not in education (Elective Home Education) and a more robust process had been developed to ensure that children were receiving an appropriate education.
- The service was working to improve management oversight of casework. A 'side by side' initiative had been developed in which managers sit alongside front line case workers to support practice development. A Staff Reference Group had also been established to understand how practice developments were impacting on staff and their practice.

Questions from the Commission

7.5 Noting that many of the actions have been completed, how long will it take for improvements to take effect with practice and when can the service next be expected to be inspected by Ofsted? Is the Children and Families Service on track to meet the ambitions to be good within 2 years and outstanding at the next inspection?

- The impact of the changes will need to be reviewed, but these improvements will take time. It is clear that the Service and Council-wide response to Covid had impacted on delivery and being able to make such assessments. For example, planned improvements to pre-proceedings work have been difficult to achieve and assess given that courts systems have been significantly affected by lockdown.

- It is difficult to assess when Ofsted will return to re-inspect Hackney as the timelines for inspections have also been impacted by Covid-19. Ofsted were continuing to inspect local authority provision but were not giving an adjudged report in from their visits. A 'conversation' had taken place with Ofsted in the summer to update on progress against the action plan and a further update would take place in December 2020.

7.6 Peer and external reviews are important in developing assurance of satisfactory progress against the action plan. Have these been able to take place given the restrictions posed by Covid? Can more information be provided on what had taken place or what was planned?

- This work was continuing. An external provider had been appointed who had brought external challenge to the service improvement process.
- A programme of external peer review had been developed to complement internal quality assurance programmes. The Children and Families Service was working with both Camden and Islington and both had been invited to quality assure local audit processes. In early 2021, peer auditing would take place where each authority would visit and review casework in each other's children and families services.
- The Children and Families Service were also looking to commission an external review of its quality assurance and audit processes in 2021. In addition, the service would also be working with the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership to review multi-agency working to support casework management.

7.7 What is the explanation for the higher caseloads in Hackney than in other areas. To what extent is the current figure a reflection on recruitment and retention problems? Does the service have an ideal caseload?

- The structure in Hackney, which uses the Unit Model to deliver support, is different from many other authorities and it is difficult to compare average caseloads. A commitment has been made to look at the Unit Model to understand how resources are used to support children's social care in other local authorities. This will help to benchmark local provision and bring greater confidence to the Children and Families Service around caseloads for staff.
- As a result of the Ofsted inspection additional resources have been put into the Children and Families Service and these would be directed to those services where they can best be used. It was acknowledged that caseloads were an issue and that this likely to be a priority for the service.

7.8 In relation to the external provider commissioned to provide assurance on the progress of the service, can you provide further details of how this will work?

- Alistair Gibbons had been appointed to the role of External Assessor and has been working with Children & Families Service for some time. The External Assessor had undertaken visits to various aspects of the service and assessed practice and reported back to management. The External Assessor had also reported back to the Children's Leadership Board on a number of issues and had attended Children's Member Oversight Board.

The authority and the Children & Families Service have appreciated this critical friend role adopted by the External Assessor.

7.9 What aspects of the Ofsted Action Plan have been most challenging to deliver improvements?

- Securing continual improvement for those children experiencing cumulative neglect had been very difficult for the service, as this required careful and balanced judgement as to when issues were escalated and what interventions should take place. Ensuring that timely decisions and actions are taken about children experiencing neglect was, however, a common concern across social work practice. In many cases, children are best cared for in their family environment. It was also noted that family situations were often fluid, sometimes coping and responding well to requirements of the Service but at other times they found this more difficult. Many families were hovering just over and above this threshold where further action may be required. This very issue had been a subject of a service-wide practice development week in the summer.
- Ensuring that partnerships were sharing information and operating effectively was a key challenge for the organisation, particularly when partner agencies have such very different ways of working.
- The Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care noted that it had been a significant challenge for the Children and Families to deliver on the action plan whilst also responding to the challenges presented by Covid-19.

7.10 Covid-19 has clearly impacted on the way that the Children and Families Service works to support local children in need. How have interventions changed to ensure that these remain effective and acceptable to children and families?

- For a number of families and children and young people, virtual contact with the service has been positive and has helped to improve engagement and involvement. Whilst this may not be the case for all families, the challenge for social work practice was to develop a blended approach (using virtual and face to face approaches) which was robust and safe. The challenge was to ensure that virtual interventions were as effective as face to face interventions.
- It should be noted that face to face contact was being maintained for children for whom there was greatest concern. It was clear however, that new opportunities to engage children and families had been presented and where possible these should be preserved.

7.11 In financial terms, what additional investment has been used to support the recommendations of the action plan, and if so, what have these additional resources been used to fund? Has Covid-19 affected these spending plans?

- The additional financial resource had been used for staffing, particularly to increase capacity of middle management support and the delivery of the Children's Action Plan. One of the most significant costs for the Children and Families Service arising through Covid-19 was the number of looked after children that required specialist placements in residential care

settings. These were very significant costs to the service. The Children and Families Service was closely monitoring the financial impact of Covid-19 and detailed records were being kept of additional expenses incurred.

Agreed: Children and Families Service to provide data on the level of additional investment used to support the Ofsted Inspection Action Plan and how these additional resources have been deployed.

7.12 The Chair thanked officers for attending and responding to questions from the Commission.

Cllr Sophie Conway in the Chair

8.0 Children and Families Service Annual Report (2019/20)

8.1 A report on the Children and Families Service is provided twice-yearly to the Commission. The full year activities of the Children and Families Service for the period April 2019 through to March 2020 was submitted to the Commission.

8.2 The Group Director for Children and Education introduced the report and highlighted the following key issues:

- Staff across the service have worked extremely hard over the past 12 months, not only in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, but also in making the necessary changes to improve services in response to the Ofsted inspection in 2019. The Group Director wished to place on record her thanks to all staff within the Children and Families Service.
- Despite both these challenges, the service has managed to provide strong and effective leadership in tackling systemic racism in response to Black Lives Matter movement which will continue to be a significant piece of work going forward.
- A further challenge was the number of children entering care, particularly those from older age groups (aged 14+). Many of these young people have complex and often need specialised support and placements.
- The Virtual School continued to provide good support to the borough's looked after children who had performed very well in this year's exams.
- The Contextual Intervention Unit, the practical application of the Contextual Safeguarding Project, was anticipated to launch shortly.
- Throughout the year, the service had worked with the Young Futures Commission to further develop the voice of young people in service planning and development. This was a very important piece of work which had brought additional challenge to services but had resulted in a positive impact on service delivery.

8.3 The Head of Safeguarding and Learning also noted a number of developments for the Children and Families Service. Most notably, the service had developed an Anti-Racist Action Plan which had three main objectives:

- Inclusive recruitment and aspirational support to Black and other minority ethnic staff;
- Embed anti-racist practice into its work with children and families;

- Promote an anti-racist approach among partner agencies and in the broader community.

8.4 The Head of Family Intervention & Support Service also highlighted a number of priorities which it had been working on over the past 12 months, these included:

- Developing demand management strategies to help deal with increased activity across the service, in particular, working with partners to secure early help and support for local families;
- Working with partners to support early intervention with children and families to help reduce the need for statutory interventions and, to develop consistent approaches to assessments of risk;
- Ensuring that managerial oversight is robust and consistent in supporting casework management, in particular, ensuring that new managers are familiar with service expectations and standards and are well supported.

8.5 The Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care noted the fundamental change of approach of staff in adopting systemic analysis and practice to their work which sought to embody the lived experience of children and family into their work. The Cabinet member also stressed that the data in the Annual Report was from 2019/20 which did not reflect the current new demands on the service generated by Covid-19. Whilst Covid had placed significant pressures on the service, there had been some positive developments, not least the improved coordination and partnership work between the Education Service and the Children and Families Service.

Questions from the Commission

8.6 What is the relationship between use of agency staff and the social worker turnover in the service. Would it not be expected that with a more stable workforce in Hackney there would be less demand for agency staff? How does the use of agency staff in Hackney compare to other boroughs and what is the social worker vacancy rate?

- Historically there has always been a higher level of agency staff which is a result of the demography of the social workers in the borough, which are on the whole younger and where there is a higher rate of maternity leave than in other boroughs. Regional analysis of the social worker workforce demonstrates that Hackney has one of the youngest age profiles in London.
- The service received grants for various services and projects which can only be appointed on a temporary basis. For example monies allocated to the Troubled Families Project and the Contextual Safeguarding Project were not permanent allocations, thus staff were only appointed on a temporary basis.
- The turnover of social workers was very low in Hackney which would appear to suggest that once the service is able to recruit on a permanent basis, staff remain committed to the service.

8.7 As a result of Covid 19, more children and families were spending more time at home. How has this influenced the service's approach to safeguarding children?

- Traditionally social work has always focused on the context of the family home, and the Contextual Safeguarding Project had sought to create an additional layer of safeguarding rather than shift this focus for child safeguarding itself.
- What the service found through lockdown was that the numbers of missing children that were coming to the attention of the service had slightly decreased. This was not to say that there was reduced risk to children in this time, as it was known that there were fewer adults in public spaces and therefore reduced oversight of young people in such spaces. A Detached Outreach team continued to operate throughout the pandemic offering advice and support to children and young people in those environments where they continued to congregate.

8.8 Data from 2019/20 demonstrated significant increases in activity for all measures (referrals, assessments, children on Child Protection Plans, looked after children) across children's social care. In hindsight, to what extent was this increase in activity attributable to changes in policy and practice arising from the outcomes of the Ofsted focused visit?

- The increase in activity which is recorded in the annual report commenced before and at the time of the Ofsted inspection. Despite numerous investigations, the service has not managed to single out any single causal factor or reasoning behind this increase in demand for services. There was no particular association with the Ofsted Inspection.

8.9 Following up on an earlier question in relation to use of agency staff, why can't staff be recruited to Fixed Term Contracts instead of using agency staff which would be much more expensive to employ? Would this not also be the case for maternity leave?

- The Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care noted that this issue had been discussed with service managers. It was noted that arranging maternity cover can take place in a planned way as more notice is available. It should also be noted that investment in training and development for new staff was considerable, irrespective of their working status and required significant resources. Ideally the Council would like to develop a bank of social workers who could be deployed across the Service as needs and resources demanded.
- It was noted that it was difficult to recruit to a Fixed Term Contract (FTC) as there were ample permanent vacancies for social workers across London. A recent advert for a FTC post yielded no applicants.
- It should be noted that the Service benefits from a range of excellent agency staff who make significant contributions to service delivery. Whilst the Service will always need some agency staff, it is hoped that a pool of social workers employed on a permanent basis who can cover recruitment and vacancies which come up on a regular basis.

8.10 It is noted that the Service is undertaking a review of the Unit Model of casework support in Hackney. Can you provide more details about the aim of this review?

- The Unit Model was set up as part of the Reclaiming Social Work approach a number of years ago. It had been asserted that higher caseloads were manageable under the Unit Model given the degree to which administrative support was provided within this model. The service has chosen 6 local authorities to undertake an in-depth analysis of their social work practice e.g. management and leadership, administrative support. This will enable the service to compare structures, workloads and costs. Although this work has started, it has been delayed by Covid-19. When completed, it is hoped that this will provide the service the data it needs to make an informed decision around appropriate caseload size. Ultimately, a higher caseload means that this detracts from the time that social workers can spend with children and families to provide the support that they need.
- The issue of social work caseloads was an issue for other boroughs and some work has commenced at the regional level to help understand what a reasonable caseload might be across London.

8.11 Page 39 of the report shows that the number of court proceedings for care applications increased significantly in 2019/20 to previous years and the rate in Hackney now far exceeds national levels. To what extent is this trend Hackney specific, or part of a London wide trend?

- It was acknowledged that the service's refocus on work around children and neglect and increased management oversight led to an increase in court proceedings. The rate at which care applications are being made now however, was much more in line with other local authorities and statistical neighbours. It should be noted that at the moment, it can be very challenging to conclude court proceedings in the current environment given the difficulty in securing interventions during Covid-19 and court timetables.

8.12 There have been significant demand pressures within this service for a number of years. Can you outline how demand will impact on overall cost pressures for Children and Families Service?

- There is a significant piece of work being undertaken in relation to demand for services, particularly analysing those new cases first entering the system. These cases are rigorously assessed to make sure that they are signposted to appropriate support so that children and families are not routed down any unnecessary social work support or interventions. The Early Help Review and the Edge of Care Review would contribute to a greater understanding of demand and how this can be supported across the local partnership. The aim is to reset the service so that families have the right level of support for their needs which will ultimately help reduce demand and cost pressures within the service, whilst ensuring that families get the help that they need. It should be noted that the outcomes from these projects would be long term.

Agreed: The Commission would like to be kept up to date with both the Early Help Review and the Edge of Care Review. An update to be agreed.

8.13 How does increased levels of poverty resulting from the impact of Covid-19 intersect with the Children and Families Service approach to neglect?

- There has been an increase in children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) which is often used as a proxy indicator of poverty.
- Identifying neglect early is very challenging particularly in the current Covid-19 context when there has been reduced line of sight of children by professionals and other adults. It will take time for children to again develop trusting relationships with teachers and other adults for them to be able to confide in them any situations which are worrying them at home or elsewhere. Much work has been undertaken to help social workers identify neglect, but clearly not as much face-to-face work with children due to restrictions posed by Covid-19. It is clearly more difficult to assess home environments when visits are not face-to-face. It should be noted however, where there are specific concerns, face-to-face visits have been retained. The Service remained alert to the risks and circumstances of where neglect may be developing.

8.14 On page 44 of the report, over half of those leaving care were to 'other' destinations. Can further clarification on the routes out of care?

- Officers did not have information to hand and would provide this at a later date.

Agreed: That the outcomes of young people exiting care would be provided by Children & Families Service.

8.15 There are significant pressures in the Corporate Parenting budget, where Children and Families are currently spending more than twice (£7m) than anticipated (£3.6m) on residential care and the average placement cost for residential care is now £3,600 per week (page 46). Can you explain what type of accommodation is being commissioned for residential care and the needs of young people involved? Is this due to unavailability of other placements types e.g. fostering? What is the service doing to help manage down costs?

- The Edge of Care project is looking at the pathways of children into care to ensure that all appropriate interventions have taken place before a decision is taken to move a child into care. It is clear however that across the country there are not enough suitable placements which means that there is strong demand for such places. This is not to say that the 'market' for this provision is out of the influence of the Children and Families Service, but there should be a more collaborative approach to ensuring that there is sufficient capacity to meet the needs of this group of children in a more settled way, and work was being undertaken at the regional level to this effect.

- It should be noted however, that many children within this cohort of children entering care have complex needs which require specialist help and support, which is naturally very expensive.

8.16 Although data is not in this report, reports to Scrutiny Panel demonstrated that complaints about the Children and Families Service increased significantly in 2019/20 from previous years. In the analysis of these complaints are there any emerging themes and what processes are in place to ensure that the service learns from these complaints?

- Children and Families Service had a clear process through which complaints are tracked, monitored and analysed. Without further reference to the data however, further insight as to the nature of these complaints could not be provided.
- What is clear in the current year is that Covid-19 has restricted the ability of the service to respond to complaints in a timely and efficient manner at present.

Agreed: Children and Families Service to provide further data on the volume and nature of complaints received by the service in 2019/20.

8.17 The Chair thanked officers for attending and responding to questions from the Commission,

9.0 Community Engagement & Involvement

9.1 The Chair and Vice Chair held a round table consultation event with Hackney Community and Voluntary Service in September 2020 to help identify how the Commission could better engage and involve local communities in the scrutiny process.

9.2 The main outcomes from the session were that: points from the round table discussion are:

- Community representatives would prefer site visits as an engagement tool as this offered first-hand account of issues affecting local children and young people;
- A regular newsletter from the Commission detailing forthcoming meetings and how local communities can be involved would be beneficial;
- Greater promotion of Commission meetings via social media;
- Community groups did not believe that a reference group or other formal meeting would add value and would require time and resource commitments which they did not have.

9.3 The Commission agreed the report and the recommendations for improved community engagement and involvement.

10.0 Off-rolling in Schools

10.1 The Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care response to the Commission recommendations on Off-rolling in schools was noted by the Commission.

11.0 Work Programme

11.1 The work programme for the remainder of the municipal year was presented. The Commission noted that one significant change to the work programme:

- Due to the planned London Mayoral Election, the meeting scheduled for 28th April 2021 will now take place on Tuesday 11th May 2021.

11.2 The work programme was noted and agreed.

12.0 Minutes

12.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 8th September were noted and agreed by the Commission.

12.2 The date of the next meeting was the 7th December 2020.

13.0 Any other Business - Update on Impact of Covid 19 on Schools in Hackney

13.1 At the request of the Chair an urgent update was provided to the Commission on the impact of Covid 19 on local schools by the Director of Education. The Director highlighted the following information:

- Schools had been open throughout the pandemic and had supported local vulnerable children and those children of key workers since March. A phased reopening took place from May onwards with schools with two year groups from both primary and secondary. All pupils returned in the autumn term in September though start dates were staggered to minimise risks.
- Whilst schools made efforts to reduce the risk of Covid transmission at school (social distancing, handwashing and formation of teaching bubbles) it was accepted that this environment would not be risk free. Protective bubbles were restricted to 30 pupils in primary schools and larger groups in secondary to reduce the risk of large numbers of children required to isolate should an infection be detected. Clinically vulnerable staff were protected throughout the year and were able to work from home or given non-contact roles within schools.
- Whilst there had been positive Covid cases among children in the autumn term, the number of children affected was still relatively small. In the week before half-term (mid October) there were over 30,000 children attending schools and early years settings and the attendance rate was 92%.
- During the week before half term, there were 25 positive cases (of a child or adult) which had impacted on ¼ of local schools and where approximately 500 children and adults were required to self-isolate. This equated to about 2% of the local school population.

- There was a growing recognition that not all children had equal access to resources at home to help them learn, thus there was a strong commitment from the government to keep schools open and ensure that children could continue to learn and develop. This commitment was reaffirmed in plans to reintroduce a national lockdown from 5th November 2020.
- All Hackney Schools are open and Council will continue to support them to do so.

Questions from the Commission

13.2 How much does the authority know about potential in-school transmission of Covid 19 cases? How effective are measures to help local school children and adults working in schools to self isolate?

- Whilst there have been cases where there has been localised transmission within school, these were generally the exception and most notifications revolve around a singular case. A larger cluster of cases would be determined as a localised outbreak at which point PH would be involved to help manage and contain the outbreak.

13.3 If parents assessed that local schools were not safe and decided not to send their children to school, what enforcement approach would the Council take to ensure that children attended?

- There had been an increase in the number of parents who were choosing to electively home educate their child. At this point in 2019, there were 35 children being electively home education and the current figure was in excess of 90. The majority of children being home educated were being done so to help protect family members who were vulnerable or where parents had enjoyed teaching their children at home during the spring and summer term of this year.
- A small number of children (c20) were not attending school due to anxiety not a pre-existing medical condition. In these circumstances, expert panels had been developed to support and reassure children and families and help them transition back to school.
- It was also emphasised that with current school attendance at 92%, this is not substantially different from attendance figures pre-Covid where 95% would be expected.
- Whilst it was acknowledged that there had been government rhetoric around the imposition of fines for children missing from school, this was not reflected in the approach of the authority which had sought to adopt an empathetic approach to parents who were anxious about sending their children to school.

13.4 Was there any relationship between attendance rates in schools and rising levels of local Covid infections?

- While school attendance was 88% when schools first returned in September, this figure had been increasing slowly through the autumn term as parental confidence in school safety measures appeared to improve. The Education Service would continue to monitor school attendances,

particularly in light of the new lockdown to be introduced on 5th November 2020.

13.5 The Chair thanked the Director of Education for this urgent update.

The meeting closed at 21.35

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