

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 7 December 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 James Peters,
Cllr Ajay Chauhan, Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Clare Joseph, Cllr Sharon Patrick
and Cllr Clare Potter

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

Agenda

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Agenda & Papers | (Pages 5 - 102) |
| 2 | Minutes of 7th December 2020 | (Pages 103 - 116) |

Access and Information

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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 7th December 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/SNOB68vdkGY>

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, 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.	Child Friendly Borough (Special Planning Document (19.05)) A Special Planning Document has been developed to ensure that new development coming forward recognises the needs of children and young people.

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The SPD will seek to achieve this objective by ‘maximising the opportunities for safe play and outdoor activities across our streets, estates, parks, adventure playgrounds, new developments and open spaces as children and their families explore and discover the world around them.’ The Child Friendly SPD was agreed by Cabinet in October 2020 and being consulted upon with local stakeholders until 12th January 2021.

Attached report
-Child Friendly SPD

Gabrielle Abadi, Planning Policy Officer
Lizzi Bird, Planning & Implementation Officer
Karol Jacobzyck, Strategic Planning Manager

Background
[Consultation Website](#)
[Child Friendly SPD - Summary](#)
[Child Friendly SPD - Full](#)

Action
The Commission is invited to review the SPD and the planned consultation process, question officers on the plans and to provide formal feedback to the consultation.

5.

Young Futures Commission (19.30)

The Young Futures Commission (YFC) was set up 2017/18 to ensure that there are robust consultation and engagement mechanisms in place through which children and young people could meaningfully contribute to decisions that shape and influence their lives.

The YFC provided an update on its work to this Commission in January 2020. Since this time the YFC has produced a final report of its work.

Attached reports
-Cover Report
- Valuing the future through young peoples’ voices Summary Report
-[Young Futures Video](#)

Jermain Jackman Co-Chair, Young Futures Commission
Shekeila Scarlett Co-Chair Young Futures Commission
Polly Cziok, Director of Communications, Culture and Engagement
Rohney Saggar-Malik, Project Head Young Futures

Action
The Commission is requested to review and comment on the attached reports.

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<p>6.</p>	<p>Childcare Update (20.15) The Commission has a responsibility to maintain oversight of childcare provision and an update on Childcare Sufficiency across Hackney is provided each year.</p> <p>A report on the state of childcare provision in Hackney was provided to the Commission in July 2020. The impact of Covid-19 on the childcare market was difficult to assess at this time and the Commission requested a brief update to be presented later in 2020.</p> <p><u>Attached reports</u> -Childcare Update</p> <p>Annie Gammon, Director of Education Donna Thomas, Head of Early Years, Early Help & Well-being Tim Wooldridge, Early Years Strategy Manager</p> <p><u>Background</u> Challenges of the Childcare Market: implications of Covid 19 for child care providers in England. Institute of Fiscal Studies 2020</p> <p>Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers and Covid 19: Research Report Department of Education, October 2020</p> <p><u>Action</u> The Commission is requested to review and comment on the attached report.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Questions (20.35)</p> <p>The Cabinet member for Families, Early Years and Play will attend to respond to questions within this portfolio. As per protocol, the Commission may focus questioning on up to three pre-agreed policy areas.</p> <p>The Commission has agreed to focus questioning on Childhood Poverty and to address the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How have local estimates of local childhood poverty been impacted by Covid 19? What do local data (such as free school meal entitlement) reveal about the nature of childhood poverty in Hackney?2. How is the Council (together with community partners) tackling local childhood poverty? What are the Council priorities and how are families most at risk of childhood poverty being supported (e.g. single parent households, families with children under 5, BAME households). How are local services working together to coordinate a package of support for local families in need?

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	<p>3. The Government has announced the £170m package (Covid Winter Grant Scheme) to support children and families over holiday periods. Can further detail be provided as to how much Hackney is likely to receive and how this money will be utilised to support local families?</p> <p>Cllr Caroline Woodley, Cabinet Member for Families, Early Years and Play</p> <p><u>Background</u> Poverty in the pandemic: the impact of coronavirus on children and families. Child Poverty Action Group</p> <p>Cash in a Crisis: best practice for local assistance schemes during Covid 19. Child Poverty Action Group</p> <p>Covid Winter Grant Scheme Department of Work & Pensions</p>
8.	<p>Work Programme (21.20) To note and agree to the work programme for the remainder of 2020/21.</p>
9.	<p>Minutes (21.25) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2020.</p>
10.	<p>Any other business</p>

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**Overview & Scrutiny
Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission**

Date of Meeting: 07/12/20

Title of Report: Child-Friendly Places Supplementary Planning Document

Report Author: Strategic Planning

Authorised by: Natalie Broughton (Head of Planning)

Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission are requested to:

- a) To note how the comments of the Commission have been addressed through the preparation of the Child-Friendly Places Supplementary Planning Document (SPD);
- b) The Commission are asked to provide comments on the following;
 - i) **The Principles:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the draft Principles? Is there anything that should be added or changed?
 - ii) **The Design guidelines:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the draft design guidelines proposed? Is there anything that should be added or changed?
 - iii) **Shaping my Borough guidelines:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the emerging Shaping my Borough guidelines? Is there anything that should be added or changed? Do you know of a project or organisation which you feel should be included here as a case study/ example of best practice?
 - iv) **Tools for implementation and delivery:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the emerging implementation and delivery tools and do you have any comments or further ideas for these tools?
- c) Note how the comments of the Commission have helped shape the consultation strategy taken in bringing forward the draft SPD.

Overview & Scrutiny: Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission
Child-Friendly Places Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
07/12/20

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Scrutiny Commission on the draft Child-Friendly Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), following presenting to the Commission in January 2020, as part of formal consultation. This report directly responds to the commitments agreed with the Commission under their Recommendation 3. These stated that:

“The Commission welcomes the development of Child Friendly Special Planning Document (SPD), and would recommend:

- 1. Further inclusion of the views of wider range of children and young people;*
- 2. Greater clarity on the expected outcomes of the Child Friendly Borough SPD and how this may influence local infrastructure;*
- 3. Further work to establish those criteria through to measure and monitor the success of this planning policy;*
- 4. Further detail on how young people themselves will understand this initiative, and the criteria through which they can assess local provision and success of this SPD (could there be a child friendly version of the SPD);*
- 5. That the final Child Friendly SPD is presented to Scrutiny.”*

1.2 The SPD was approved by the Cabinet for public consultation on 19th October 2020. Consultation on the draft SPD launched on the 27th October 2020 and will run until 12th January 2021.

1.3 The SPD contributes towards delivering the Mayor’s Manifesto commitment to ensure that Hackney becomes a fully ‘child-friendly borough’. It will achieve this through establishing child-friendly principles and design guidelines for Hackney’s built environment. These will ensure the Borough accommodates and actively plans for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

2.0 Child-Friendly Places SPD Overview

2.1 In this guidance document, a ‘child-friendly’ urban built environment is defined as one that supports children and young peoples’ right to outdoor opportunities and independent mobility. It seeks to secure opportunities to connect with nature, play and move around independently in safe, healthy and unpolluted urban spaces. The SPD recognises that meeting the needs of children and young people is an essential aspect of planning for the Borough’s future growth.

2.2 Child-friendly design and urban planning is an emerging and evolving field, which advocates an alternative approach to planning and designing places. This goes beyond

designing designated playground provision, towards shaping the physical features of neighbourhoods, as a whole to become multifunctional and inclusive.

2.3 The new borough-wide Local Plan (LP33) shapes future growth and regeneration during the 15 year period from 2018 to 2033. The purpose of the Child-Friendly guidance document is to help set the LP33 policies in a child-friendly context including for example: public realm (Policy PP1) , social and community infrastructure (Policy LP8) , health and wellbeing (Policy LP9), liveable neighbourhoods (Policy LP41) and play space (Policy LP50). Once adopted, it will become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and in plan-making. The SPD also seeks to provide guidance for projects outside of the planning process, including parks and streets initiatives, public realm and housing regeneration projects.

2.4 A cross-service officer working group for the project was established to bring together various teams within the Council including Planning, Regeneration, Street Scene, Family and Children's services, Public Health, Parks, Urban Design and Education to feed into the production of the SPD. The working group has continued to meet at key stages of the development to help develop the scope, objectives, case studies, key principles, design guidelines and later on the delivery of the Child-Friendly SPD. The working group will continue to meet as the document moves to adoption and continues to be evaluated post adoption.

2.5 The guidance document brings together a range of workstreams and Council initiatives in order to establish Principles for what 'child-friendly places' mean in a Hackney context. Over the past year these principles have been developed through workshops with Hackney Youth Parliament. The design guidelines set the framework for how this can be delivered and with the lessons to learn from best practice in and beyond the Borough. The draft SPD has been prepared with the help of Hackney Design Team to ensure that it is visually strong, supported by graphics and illustrations and is accessible to a range of audiences.

3.0 Child-Friendly Principles for Hackney's Built Environment

3.1 The proposed child-friendly Principles set out a vision for Hackney's built environment that together supports the happiness, health, wellbeing and prosperity of all children and young people in the Borough.

3.2 The Principles are specific to Hackney and are a direct outcome of a series of engagement workshops, held with members of the Hackney Youth Parliament and delivered by ZCD architects. The Principles were further developed following the recommendations from Hackney's Young Futures Commission's youth-led report (2020).

3.3 The 8 Child Friendly Principles for Hackney are:

- 1. Shaping My Borough:** to ensure children and young people in Hackney have the power to influence change in their Borough
- 2. Doorstep play:** to provide the opportunity for play and social interactions immediately outside the front door

3. **Play on the way:** to provide opportunities for informal play, things to do and see around the neighbourhood beyond designated parks and playgrounds.
4. **People before Cars:** to ensure that children, young people and their carers can move through Hackney safely by walking, cycling or public transport.
5. **Contact with nature:** to build in opportunities for everyday access to and connections with nature
6. **Places for all:** to design socially inclusive and culturally sensitive places that are accessible and safe for all children and young people to enjoy together
7. **Making destinations children and young people want to be:** to ensure open spaces are designed to be vibrant, active and safe environments where children and young people want to be
8. **Health & Well-Being:** to ensure design of outdoor environments contribute towards healthier foodscapes, reduced exposure to pollution and improved physical and mental wellbeing.

4. Child-Friendly Design Guidelines

4.1 The SPD identifies three neighbourhood 'place' scales, the Doorstep, Streets and Destinations, that reflect the three main types of 'places' that a child in Hackney will grow up and experience within their neighbourhood:

1. **Doorstep:** the shared space that connects an individual's front door to wider public spaces and streets
2. **Streets:** the network of routes that children, young people and their carers use to move between their home and key destinations within a neighbourhood.
3. **Destinations:** the public spaces that children, young people and their carers make frequent journeys to use in Hackney

4.2 The draft SPD identifies design guidelines for each scale. These are supported by related LP33 policies. The draft SPD includes case study examples in order to illustrate best practice and demonstrate creative ways of incorporating child friendly guidelines to achieve successful development proposals.

4.3 Case studies of best practice and lessons to learn from are provided throughout the draft SPD to help define principles of child-friendly places and to illustrate the design guidelines.

5.0 Shaping my Borough Guidelines

5.1 The draft SPD provides detailed guidance, resources and examples of best practice for engaging with children and young people when it comes to changes happening in their built environment. This part of the SPD will inform the planned update to the Planning's Statement of Community Involvement during 2021.

6.0 Delivery & Implementation Tools

6.1 The draft SPD sets out tools to support the implementation, delivery of the design guidance. The primary objective of the SPD is to guide the delivery of new growth, and associated supporting infrastructure, that is sustainable and inclusive. This specifically relates to how it supports the independent mobility, play experience and opportunities provided for children and young people in the Borough. These outcomes will be measured through the Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) process, which provides an assessment of quantitative and qualitative indicators. The AMR will not only monitoring performance but also identify where intervention is needed - whether they be related to policy or infrastructure investment

6.2 One of the tools included within the draft SPD is a 'Child-Friendly Design Standard'. This is a series of questions or checklists to ensure the principles and design guidelines are being considered. It is intended that the 'Child-Friendly Design Standard' be used by developers, designers, young people, community groups and the Council to ensure the design guidance is being met. The draft SPD suggests ways the 'Child-Friendly Design Standard' can be used including:

- At the planning application stage, by introducing a requirement for applicants to submit a 'Child-Friendly Design Statement' when applying for planning permission for a development of 10+ units.
- Incorporated into and referenced in plan-making through development of area-based plans.
- Used through Design Review Panels - including for the suggested establishment of the Young Peoples Design Review Panel.
- As assessment criteria for the 'Young People's Choice Award' at Hackney Design Awards.

7.0 Consultation and Next Steps

7.1 The key dates in the production of the Child-Friendly Places SPD are outlined below:

Plan Making Stage	Dates
Consultation on the Draft SPD (including wider engagement on draft principles and guidelines)	October 2020 - January 2021
Preparation of Final SPD	Early 2021
Final SPD to be approved by Cabinet for Adoption	Spring 2021

7.2 Planned consultation for the draft Child-Friendly Places SPD, between 27 October 2020 and 12 January 2021, will ensure a range of children, stakeholders and members of the community of all ages, abilities will be consulted in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

7.3 We are working closely with our communications and engagement team to try to mitigate the impacts that Covid-19, local and national lockdowns have had on the consultation and engagement strategy. We have raised awareness about the consultation by::

- Launching dedicated webpage on hackney website
- Launching the consultation on commonplace, online consultation/ feedback platform
- Using social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat
- A dedicated article in the November Edition of Hackney Life
- Banners on railings in London Fields, Springfield, Haggerston, Clissold parks with QR codes
- Cabinet Members have written directly to all schools and early years centers in the borough to raise awareness about the project and ask for schools to indicate if they would be willing to host workshops.

7.4 We have delivered and are planning a series of workshops with different stakeholders groups including:

- Primary Schools - workshop activity packs are currently being prepared for the primary schools which have expressed interest in hosting a workshop. The team will support schools on the project and provide opportunities for students to present their work and ideas.
- Hackney Youth Parliament - for feedback on the Principles and design guidelines that Youth Parliament directly contributed to.
- Hackney Matters Citizen's Panel - on the Principles of the SPD through a virtual workshop
- Built environment professionals - a virtual workshop on the Design Guidelines
- Protected characteristic groups including Xenia, Project Indigo, Age Concern and Connect Hackney, youth clubs and parent groups to create virtual workshops. It is important to reach these groups so that the design guidance ensures a built environment that works for everybody.

7.5 The key questions we are seeking feedback on from public consultation are:

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the draft Principles? Is there anything that should be added or changed? If yes, please tell us what.
2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the draft design guidelines proposed? Is there anything that should be added or changed? If yes, please tell us what.
3. Do the three scales (Doorstep, Streets and Destinations) capture the three main types of 'places' that a young person in Hackney will grow up and move through the Borough? If not, please tell us why?
4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the emerging Shaping my Borough guidelines? Please tell us why? Is there anything that should be added or changed? If yes, please tell us what.
5. Do you know of a project or organisation which you feel should be included here as a case study/ example of best practice?

8.0 Recommendations for the Scrutiny Commission

- a) To note how the comments of the Commission have been addressed through the preparation of the Child-Friendly Places Supplementary Planning Document (SPD);
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Attachments

- [Draft Child-Friendly Places Supplementary Planning Document](#)
- [Summary Document](#)
- [Dedicated Consultation Webpage](#)

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Overview & Scrutiny

Children & Young People Scrutiny

Commission

Date of Meeting: 7 December 2020

Title of Report: Hackney Young Futures Commission “Valuing The Future Through Young Voices”

Report Author: Rohney Saggarr-Malik, Project Lead, HYFC

Authorised by: Polly Cziok, Strategic Director - Engagement, Culture and Occupational Development on 26/11/20

Report Summary

This report provides an update to the “Valuing The Future Through Young Voices” report, approved in principle by Cabinet on 20 July 2020 (see Appendix 1 for Summary Report).

The recommendations contained within the report reflect the findings and the “Asks” made by the Commission.

This report also details how the Commission will feedback to young people in the borough on how Council and its Partners will respond to the report in a timely way and how they will continue to engage and involve young people in decision-making in the future, post-Commission.

Report Brief:

1. Background

1.2 “Valuing The Future Through Young Voices” focuses on the feedback from over 2,500 children and young people about their lived Hackney experience: their thoughts, concerns and ideas. The consultation was led by Hackney Young Futures Commission (referred to as the “Commission” for the purposes of this report), which is an independent, youth-led Commission, established in February 2019.

1.3 The key aim was to link young people with Councillors, Council officers and other stakeholders, so that together they can improve young people's lived experience in Hackney.

1.4 The ambition for the Commission was that it would reach out to young people across Hackney and give them a space in which their voices could be heard. The Commission did not want to hear from a sample of young people, or a few focus groups. They wanted to engage thousands of young people, right across the age spectrum, from every background, and this was achieved. The Commission has been the most comprehensive youth engagement exercise the borough has seen to date.

1.5 Young people were asked to share their ideas on how to make the changes that would improve their lives and if they had the power to influence, what they would prioritise.

1.6 From the outset, the Commission agreed to adopt co-production principles at the heart of how it would consult with young people; namely; doing things “with children” as opposed to doing things ‘to children” or ‘for children”.

1.7 The Council asked the Commission to make recommendations in order to improve the lives and life chances of young people in the borough and enable Members to listen to and learn from young people’s experiences of growing up in Hackney. The Commission asked the Council and its Partners to use the insights to inform current and joint future strategic planning and service delivery.

1.8 Based on the findings from the consultation, the Commission identified 72 proposed solutions called ‘Asks’, grouped into 6 main themes, namely; Secure Future, Healthy Future, Active Future, Inclusive Future, Safe Future and Bright Future.

1.9 The solutions were directly proposed by young people.

2. Oversight and Delivery Of Commission “Asks”

2.1 The insight gained through the Commission is a snapshot in time, a picture of young people’s lives in Hackney in 2019/20. Since most of the work was carried out, the world has changed irrevocably through the Covid-19 pandemic and we are now entering an unprecedented economic downturn, the murder of George Floyd in the USA had a profound impact on our communities, and young people face greater social, educational, and economic challenges than ever before.

2.2 As the Council, the Police, schools, our partners in the NHS and community take time to absorb what young people have said through this piece of work and

how to take forward the recommendations, the most important legacy for the Commission is to find ways to permanently put the voice of young people at the heart of decision making and policy making in Hackney.

2.3 In order to act on the findings and recommendations, recognising that a phased approach and more work may be necessary to support detailed action planning, the Commission has produced a draft a strategic delivery plan (Plan), which sets out how the Commission will deliver the Asks identified in the report and priorities over the coming year.

2.4 The Plan also sets out the Commission's values and principles and how they plan to respond to the challenges that lie ahead. Including creating new youth structures to enable effective youth voice and youth value.

2.5 There is already evidence of the value, impact and effectiveness of the work undertaken by the Commission to date, and which has informed various streams of work across the Council.

2.6 A final assessment and report back of achievements will be presented to young people and the Council two years on from the Commission in 2021.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Hackney Young Futures Commission "Valuing The Future Through Young Voices"

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Valuing The Future Through Young Voices



This is a heavily abridged version of our “Valuing The Future Through Young Voices” report and only includes our main findings and recommendations.

For a full copy of the “Valuing The Future Through Young Voices” report, please visit www.hackneyyoungfutures.co.uk. This webpage also contains information about the Commission, including how you can get involved.

Keep up to date with the work of the Young Futures Commission on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

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Messages From Hackney Young Futures Commission Chairs

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Jermain Jackman, Co-Chair

I think we can all agree that Hackney has a very special place in all our hearts, not just because we were born and brought up here, but because of its rich history, culture and diversity - just some of the many things we all celebrate about this iconic borough. We are proud to say that Hackney Young Futures Commission can join the list of things to celebrate.

You can imagine how humbled and honoured both the Co-Chairs and Vice Chairs felt when asked to lead this Commission and use the voices of children and young people to help shape the borough's future.

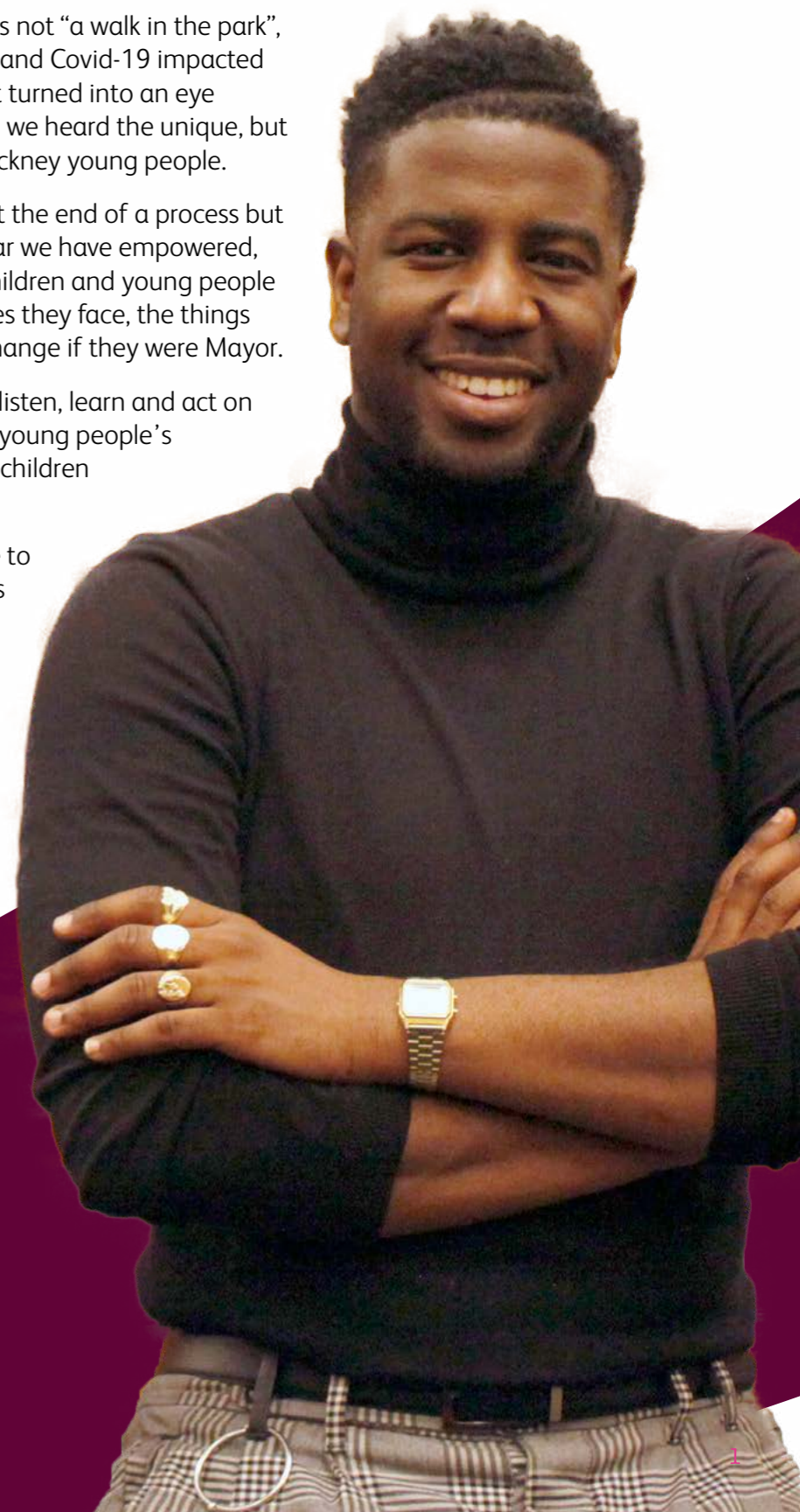
We have to admit that this process was not "a walk in the park", far from it. Multiple incidents, protests and Covid-19 impacted the work we carried out. Despite this, it turned into an eye opening and heartwarming journey as we heard the unique, but connected lived experiences of our Hackney young people.

The report you are about to read is not the end of a process but the beginning of one. Over the last year we have empowered, encouraged and enabled spaces for children and young people to speak up and speak out on the issues they face, the things they love and what they wish would change if they were Mayor.

Now we hand it over to the Council to listen, learn and act on this and work to improve children and young people's future and also to create a future that children and young people can feel a part of.

On behalf of the Co-Chairs I would like to give a special thanks to the Vice-Chairs Georgina Appeageyi and Mishaque Jarrett for their personal support and outstanding dedication and contributions in shaping and leading the Commission's work.

It has been a tremendous honour for us all to lead this opportunity of change for Hackney.



Shekeila Scarlett, Co-Chair

On applying to the Young Futures Commission, I said "I wanted the opportunity to be part of a project that will empower young people, like me, to make a difference in the decisions that shape our lives" this report proves we achieved just that.

From reaching those who were classed as 'hard to reach' to paying young people to be peer researchers, we are incredibly proud to have been chosen as Co-Chairs to be the lead on such an important piece of work. From the very beginning, we were absolute about our principles, ensuring that the governance structure of the Commission reflected a setting in which young people felt safe, confident to speak, but more importantly, to be heard.

Many of the issues echo those identified in past consultations undertaken over the years in the borough. The key difference and learning has been the amazing creativity in how the Commission engaged with children and young people and the openness with which they spoke. This is the Commission's most important achievement and legacy, as well as undertaking the largest consultation undertaken with children and young people in Hackney to date!

I would also like to give my deepest thanks to our Vice-Chairs, Georgina and Mishaque for their incredible support and contribution on this journey.

We are all undoubtedly very much aware of current events impacting our communities. I am a young black woman who grew up in Hackney and was always led to believe that the odds were against me. From my experience of co-leading this consultation I want to encourage every young person who reads this report to stand up and feel empowered to make a difference in their community. Do not ever doubt that your opinion counts and it can make a change.



Message from Mayor Phil Glanville, Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Deputy Mayor and Cllr Caroline Selman

Investing in and delivering the Hackney Young Futures Commission was a pledge in the Hackney Mayor's Manifesto in 2018, and two years later, it gives us all great pleasure to be able to launch this report.

Firstly, we would like to give our thanks to the Commission Chairs and Vice Chairs, Jermain Jackman, Shekeila Scarlett, Georgina Appeageyi and Mishaque Jarrett. Each of these young adults volunteered to lead the Commission, with their own inspirational story to tell, and each of them has inspired hundreds of young people across Hackney to tell theirs. They have put so much of their time and energy into ensuring that Hackney young people can be heard and that this Commission has been far reaching and meaningful. We would also like to thank every one of the 2,500 young people who have given their time to the Commission, whether through attending an event, filling in a survey, or taking part in a meeting.

Our ambition for the Commission was that it would reach out to young people across Hackney and give them a space in which their voices could be heard. We didn't want to just hear from a sample of young people, or a few focus groups. We wanted to engage thousands of young people, right across the age spectrum, and from every background, and in that we have succeeded. The Commission has been the most comprehensive youth engagement exercise the borough has ever seen.

However, our success will truly be judged, and rightly so, on the change that comes out of this process. It is vital that the thousands of young people who gave us their time can see the impact that they have made, and that they have not just been listened to, but heard. The Council must respond positively to what we have learned from the Commission, and we would urge our Partners in Hackney to engage with the findings and work alongside us to deliver the recommendations.

The insight gained through the Commission is, of course, just a snapshot in time, a picture of young people's lives in Hackney in 2019/20. Since most of this work was carried out, the world has changed irrevocably through the Covid-19 pandemic, we are entering an unprecedented economic downturn, the murder of George Floyd in the USA has had a profound impact on our communities, and our young people face greater social, educational, and economic challenges than ever before.

As the Council, the Police, our schools, our Partners in the NHS, and our community Partners, take time to absorb what young people have told us through this piece of work, and to consider their recommendations, we must all commit to the most important legacy the Commission can have is that, working together, we find ways to permanently put the voice of young people at the heart of decision making and policy making in Hackney.





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Summary of Our Asks To The Council

Background

This report focuses on the feedback from over 2,500 children and young people about their lived Hackney experience: their thoughts, concerns and ideas. The consultation was led by Hackney Young Futures Commission (referred to as “Commission”), which is an independent, youth-led Commission, established in February 2019.

Hackney Council asked the Commission to make recommendations in order to improve the lives and life chances of children and young people in the borough and enable Council Members to listen to and learn from young people’s experiences of growing up in Hackney. The Commission urges Hackney Council and its Partners to use the insights to inform current and joint future strategic planning and service delivery.

Our Asks to Hackney

Based on the findings from the consultation, the Commission identified 70 solutions (called ‘Asks’) co-produced and proposed by young people. These were grouped into 6 main themes; Secure Future, Healthy Future, Active Future, Inclusive Future, Safe Future and Bright Future.

Our Asks to the council, its partners and the community is for you all to listen, learn, act and improve the future of children and young people in Hackney. To create a future that they can feel a part of. To find ways to permanently put the voice of young people at the heart of decision making and policy making in Hackney.

The Commission’s recommendations set out the first steps that are needed. Its now time for you to play your part.



‘What We Know, What We Heard’

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How We Engaged Young People

The Commission’s aim was to gather evidence of the lived experiences of young people in Hackney aged between 10-25 years and to better understand how they view the borough, what challenges they face and how they feel about local services. Young people were asked to share their ideas on how to make the changes that would improve their lives and if they had the power to influence, what they would prioritise.

The consultation was conducted in two phases; “I’ve Been Heard” and “Have We You Heard You Right” led by trained, young peer researchers, supported by the Project Team. Peer Researchers directly engaged with students, young offenders, young carers, young people in care, and young people in specific community groups e.g. Charedi, LBGTQ, Turkish/Kurdish, Somali and Traveller communities. The original target was to consult 1,500 young people across the borough. However, the response was so positive that the Commission directly engaged with over 2,500 diverse young people.

Data insight was collected through a variety of methods e.g. focus groups, 1:1 interviews, online surveys, launch events, board meetings, filmed interviews, street-based outreach, teacher-led school classroom surveys and through discussions with local voluntary and charity organisations.



The first phase consultation involved asking the young people four key questions:

- What is your favourite thing or place in Hackney and why?
- What is the main issue affecting your life in Hackney today and how does this issue affect you?
- If you were the Mayor, what would be the main thing you would change for young people in Hackney? What would you do and how would you change it?

Any Other Comments?

5,000 quotes were collected through asking these questions. They were categorised into 23 initial themes, which in turn were further reduced to 6 key emergent themes, each focussing on a key topic or issue;

- A Bright Future (Education, Training and Employment)
- A Secure Future (Housing and Advice)
- An Active Future (Spaces, Places and Activities)
- An Inclusive Future (Inclusive economy and Regeneration)
- A safe Future (Crime and Safety)
- A Healthy Future (Health and Well-Being)

During the second phase representatives from local organisations, Council services and Cabinet Leads were invited to participate in workshops regarding these thematic groups, each led by young people. The findings from the six working groups were later formulated into six key areas of ‘Asks’ which formed the basis of detailed proposed solutions.

Theme One

A Secure Future

Young people shared various issues relating to housing, such as the lack of affordable housing, inadequate housing and overcrowding.

that they do not like seeing people sleeping rough on the streets and that they always feel helpless and powerless to do anything about it.

Young people expressed a desire to eradicate homelessness. Rough sleepers and homelessness also causes young people anxiety. Children and young people share

'I don't know where to look for a home that's affordable and nice for first time buyers'

'The main issue in my life is that i've tried to move houses, but I can't. The house I'm living in is a flat and I'm living a family of seven, it's too small and we all sleep in one room.'

'Housing. The council needs to make changes and simplify the process'

'Homelessness - council needs to help them, drinking and drugs causes of crimes'

'I've been living in Hackney my entire life and I can't afford to stay here.'

**A
Secure
Future**

Theme One

Our asks for a Secure Future

We Ask Hackney to Reduce the Number of Rough Sleepers in the Borough by:

- Actively promoting services to young people to enable them to support rough sleepers locally

We Ask Hackney to Increase Access to Housing and Advice Services by:

- Developing a Young People's Housing Offer to include delivery of specialist housing advice, delivered in trusted places
- Creating a supportive housing advice service, tailored to 18-24yrs

We Ask Hackney to Improve the Quality of Social Housing and the local area through:

- Reviewing current Resident Participation (RP) structures to ensure young people's voices are formally embedded in them
- Establishing a dedicated RP budget for young people's projects, managed by young people
- Establishing dedicated Young People's Housing roles, funded through Resident Led Improvement Budget
- Establishing a Young People's Street Team to Support Council



Theme Two

A Healthy Future

In line with London and National data, young people said that many aspects of their lives cause stress, anxiety and other mental health issues, these include exam stress at school, loneliness, bullying, drug abuse and the physical environment of Hackney being polluted, dirty and unclean. Young people spoke at length about their fears of air pollution and climate change which causes anxiety and in some cases, has a negative impact on their physical health and wellbeing. Some young people were suffering from their mental health issues alone and in silence and they expressed not knowing where or who to go to for help.

'Mental health issues that teenagers don't know how to deal with'

'Pollution affects me because of my breathing and it's bad for our health'

'Mental health awareness, places to go to talk about mental health. Man up, don't cry'

'No counselling, long waiting lists, left with mental health on our own'

A Healthy Future

'It's not good on how we have lots of rubbish in the streets. It can get you ill and sick and affect your health'

Theme Two

Our asks for a Healthy Future

We Ask the Council to Review Young People's Mental Health Services by:

- Improving young people's access to confidential mental health services
- Working with schools and colleges to review current mental health service delivery model
- Reviewing current school policies that impact young people's mental health
- Improving counselling services and referral pathways
- Increasing Young Hackney support services to those impacted by stress-related issues

We Ask Hackney to Review Foster Care Placements to:

- Develop initiatives to increase CSW's and Foster Carers awareness and competencies in anti-discriminatory and inclusive practice
- Review current effectiveness of the Children in Care Council and its impact on children in care
- Review effectiveness of compliance with Confidentiality Protocols and Practice



Theme Three

An Active Future

We know about the importance of youth friendly places, spaces and activities, because young people talked at length about their positive experiences of using a wide range of facilities and activities in Hackney. The number one 'place' young people liked were parks and youth clubs. The top park mentioned was Victoria Park in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Queen Elizabeth Park, Clissold Park, Finsbury Park and Springfield Park were the next highest ranked parks.

Young people specifically mentioned areas of Hackney they liked which housed key shops and restaurants including Dalston (Ridley Road Market), Boxpark in Shoreditch and Mcdonalds in Hackney Central. They also

mentioned they liked places such as their "own homes, their nan's house and their church" and these were the places they felt most safe. Young people really enjoy cultural activities and specific events such as carnival and festivals, cinema, theatre and museums.

In some areas, young people talked about their immediate physical environment being dirty or noisy, with dog mess and litter in parks and on their streets.

An Active Future

'Night clubs for SEND young people'

'Youth club makes me feel safe, we aren't automatically stereotyped. There are always kids around so if there are other kids it makes you feel safer'

'I would increase awareness of youth provisions by speaking more about them in schools'

'I like the lido and the parks'

'My favourite thing about Hackney is all the youth programs and all the people in Hackney'

'Youth clubs open later for older young people and more youth clubs generally'

Theme Three

Our asks for an Active Future

We Ask Hackney to Increase Access Opportunities to Places, Spaces and Activities through:

- Improving access to community halls and schools for community usage
- Undertaking a borough-wide wide audit of vacant premises and open spaces to assess their potential suitability as spaces for young people to develop interests, skills, and new businesses
- Developing a comprehensive 'Hackney Community Concessions Policy' for organisations delivering youth focused activities
- Establishing paid Young People's Ranger Service to support Parks Service
- Reviewing current Youth Offer to improve more locality-specific activities
- Reviewing the Council's grants eligibility criteria to allow funding for small ad-hoc community activities
- Increase Young Hackney Detached Outreach Programme to ensure young people have access to services and support
- Increase activities within Parks for young people aged 16 years and over



Theme Four

An Inclusive Future

Young people talked about the pride they had for the borough they lived in and mentioned the diversity of people, cultures and reported many positive things about their communities, which is in line with the Community Life Survey

Young people spoke positively about wanting to learn from and share their experiences with the older generation. In particular their experiences of living in social housing, their fear of crime and how they are so often misunderstood by older people. Young people suggested a number of projects to encourage intergenerational dialogue such as cross-mentoring projects e.g. to improve digital skills in older people and for older people to help develop life skills with and for young people.

In addition there is an opportunity for young people to explore personal and community resilience by exchanging views on historical perspectives and experiences of racism and exclusion. Gentrification was a recurring theme that young people spoke at length, feelings of no longer recognising parts of the borough they used to identify with. They believe in “regeneration rather than gentrification”, meaning a Hackney that develops with the community at the centre.

Inclusive Futures

‘Dalston has changed over the last 5 years - not good - the shop I used to go to has gone...’

‘Gentrification - I feel like I don’t recognise parts of Hackney anymore’

‘More communication with young people in the places they look - Snapchat, Instagram’

‘The price of coffee - hipsters - everything is so much more expensive now as a lot of people are moving in with money, it’s not very nice’

Theme Four

Our asks for an Inclusive Future

We Ask Hackney to Include Young People in the Regeneration of the Borough by:

- Establishing a Young People’s Planning and Design Board to enable young people to understand and influence discussions
- Recruiting Young Advisors in paid roles, training and supporting them to become “experts” in planning and design
- Involving young people in planning approaches to improve social integration and equity in neighbourhood regeneration

We Ask Hackney to Promote Intergenerational Dialogue by:

- Develop cross mentoring projects between young people and older residents
- Create funding opportunities for young people to explore personal and community resilience by exchanging views on historical perspectives and experiences of racism and exclusion

We Ask Hackney to Support Young People and the Night Time Economy by:

- Ensuring inclusive and fair access by developing local inclusion pilots to increase the visibility and participation of young people to access Night Time Economy (NTE)

We Ask Hackney to Improve Communications to Young People by:

- Establishing a Young People’s Communications and Consultation Strategy
- Creating an engaging, accessible single point of access and information for all services and events relevant to young people
- Promoting positive representation of young people in local media
- Reducing negative signage to create an inclusive environment



Theme Five

A Safe Future

Children and young people shared how unsafe they felt, describing their experiences of gun, knife and gang crime, acid attacks and fights they had witnessed, alongside anti-social behaviour of neighbours, robberies, burglaries and theft. Young people said they had either been a victim of or witnessed a crime.

Most experiences shared by young people about the effect that crime had on their lives centred around being scared either for themselves or the safety of their family members, especially their siblings, particularly

their brothers. Exposure to serious youth violence has created a culture of fear and anxiety that was reported by all age groups, all demographics and all areas of the borough.

Young people also shared that they were not happy with the way the Police dealt with them or their community, with some saying “they racially profile us, especially young black men”.

A Safe Future

‘People under the influence of alcohol affects our safety’

‘Violence - knife crime and gangs. I’ve had personal experience. I was walking with my friends and a guy pulled out something that looked exactly like a knife and we all had to run’

‘Safety, can’t go to certain areas at certain times’

‘Safety - walking at night’

‘Crime makes me worried to make my brothers stay home, this affects me because I could never imagine a world without my brothers’

Theme Five

Our asks for a Safe Future

We ask Hackney to Reduce Serious Youth Violence and other forms of crime by:

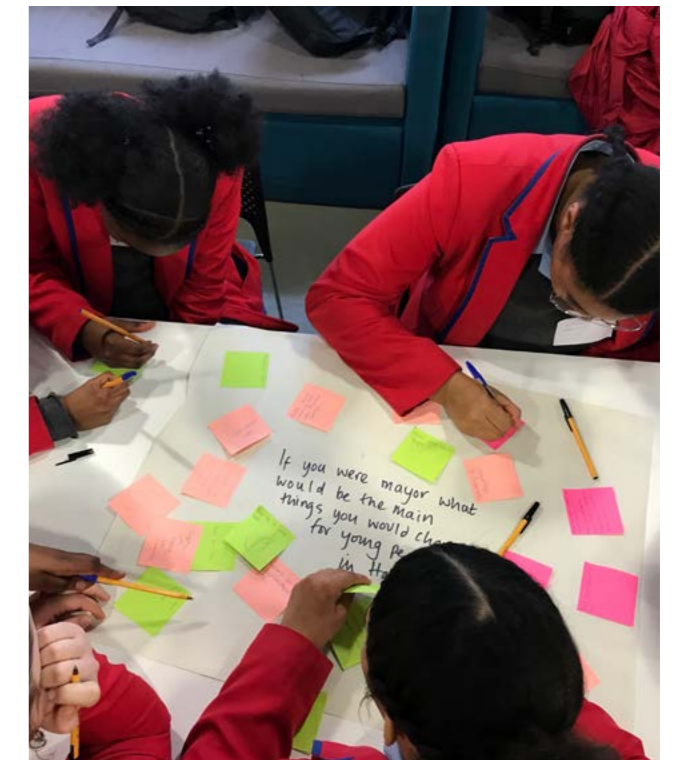
- Working with Partners and London’s VRU to implement a Public Health Approach to reduce serious youth violence and understanding gang culture
- Developing more preventative services to provide a longer term and more sustainable approach to crime reduction
- Increasing the range of activities available to young people around ‘lost hours 3pm-7pm’
- Working with Partners to increase transport safety, in particular bus safety
- Adopting a joint up approach with CVS and Partners to raise awareness around County Lines and its causes
- Develop a borough-wide campaign focused on educating and informing young people about hate crime and how we reduce it together

We Ask Hackney to Improve Relationships Between Young People and Police by:

- Ensuring and improving unconscious bias and cultural competence training for Police officers in Hackney
- Developing and supporting existing projects that bring young people and the Metropolitan Police together to increase trust
- Nominating young people onto Police Recruitment Strategy Board to support and advise on improving representation within the workforce
- Opening Police Community Assessor roles to young people under 18
- Reviewing Police Complaints Procedure is fit for purpose, allowing young people to have confidence to report

Reducing the impact of the Fear of Crime on Young People by:

- Delivering trauma informed training to the Council and their Partners
- Providing advice and support to young people when they feel unsafe
- Providing access to free community based therapy for young people affected by the impacts of crime and related trauma
- Increasing Domestic Violence Support for young people
- Increasing visibility of Community Policing



Theme Six

A Bright Future

The Commission found that young people's experiences are consistent with other research, which has highlighted that young people typically have high aspirations but may face a number of barriers in realising them. Young people said the lack of opportunities available to get jobs, apprenticeships, work experience, training and support. Some young people spoke about having to travel out of the borough in order to secure opportunities. Some young people also shared the issues within their schools such as quality of teaching staff, lack of life skills training, facilities, transitions and choice of school to attend and for young people at college, fees.

With the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the future of children and young people, there is a need to double the efforts to ensure that the future remains bright for all children and young people.

In the earlier section on Health and Wellbeing we reported anxiety and stress that was associated with school exams, it is worth noting here that this was a key theme under Education.

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'Schools teach you how to follow the system, but we also need life skills'

'That I can't become independent and make money for myself'

'Not enough support'

'Exclusion has many consequences on a young persons life'

'There is no meaningful work experience for most of us in school'

'I'm worried about getting a job right now'

A
Bright
Future

Theme Six

Our asks for Bright Future

We Ask Hackney to Increase Access to Employment Opportunities by:

- Establishing locally based Employment Forums, to identify local opportunities
- Developing meaningful work experience opportunities for school students
- Developing a range of employment projects, including for SEND young people, to improve access to jobs opportunities
- Reviewing Internships, apprenticeships and voluntary work opportunities, including for SEND young people,
- Establishing accredited learning opportunities for young people to support meaningful/non-academic qualifications
- Improving and expanding Careers Advice Service
- Reviewing support for entrepreneurial opportunities within the Borough
- Developing guidance and training for local businesses on the importance of diversifying their workforce with a specific focus on SEND young people

We Ask Hackney to Provide Educational Support by:

- Encouraging schools and alternative provisions to create an inclusive ethos where every child feels a sense of belonging
- Reinstating Young Hackney delivery within Primary schools to support the transition from Primary to Secondary schools
- Improving opportunities for SEND young people by better understanding their needs

We ask Hackney to Improve the Quality and Consistency of Alternative Provision for Excluded Young People by:

- Developing a School Exclusions training programme for School Governors, jointly facilitated by young people
- Increasing and prompting existing Advocacy

- Support Projects for parents whose young people are at risk or facing exclusion
- Extending the development of an anti-racism and unconscious bias training programme for School Governors and school leadership

We ask Hackney to Reduce the Inequality in Educational Attainment and Number of School Exclusions by:

- Working with schools to reduce the number of exclusions by improving how they are held accountable for managing and monitoring exclusions

We ask Hackney to Amplify and Include Student voices in Decision Making by:

- Encouraging and supporting schools to establish School Council structures that feed into the school leadership team
- Improving school culture and environment through increased student voice in decision-making processes
- Establishing Young School Governors on every Hackney School Governing Body
- Ensuring young people are actively involved in reviewing School Behavioural Policies

We ask Hackney to develop Young People's Skills for Adulthood and Life by:

- Developing and embedding Life Skills programmes within schools and youth clubs
- Promoting activities to develop skills and support SEND young people beyond qualifications
- Developing a "16-24 Skills for Independent Adulthood" programme for schools, colleges and youth clubs
- Developing a Support Care Leavers Transition Programme

What

We

Told

Hackney



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The Commission delivered its report to Hackney Council in July 2020 and urged them to listen to, learn about, and commit to act on, the real experiences and aspirations of children and young people growing up in Hackney.

The Commission also stressed that it was crucial for Hackney to consciously and determinedly keep the needs of young people in the forefront of all its post-Covid planning, engagement, responses and decision-making. Young people feel this is a timely and unique opportunity to review and revitalise the commitment to the young people of Hackney. Going forward, young people in Hackney are one of the most important stakeholders in the borough's future.

The consultation also identified how the Council's style of engagement and response to issues is generally perceived by young people - regardless of the sincerity of the Council's intentions. Feedback consistently highlighted that young people perceive that:

There is a disconnect between what the Council says its is doing and the lived experience of young people

There is culture of defensiveness from the Council when ideas or services are challenged or alternatives are presented

That despite a stated desire to change, there is an underlying unwillingness to commit to real change

The Council needs to better understand what is being done, and or not being done, which creates these perceptions. It needs to reflect on these issues further as part of planning any future response.

There is already evidence of the value, impact and effectiveness of the work undertaken by the Commission to date, and which has informed various streams of work across the Council.

The Commission urged the Council to build on the legacy of the Commission and challenged Hackney Council and its Partners to be brave and bold and to deliver on the trust placed in Hackney Council by over two thousand of its young residents by;

Widely sharing all that has been learnt from this extensive and impressive consultation with young people

More explicitly and honestly defining what future success for young people's services will look like – from the Hackney's Council's and young people's perspectives and experiences

Sharing the evidence of changes – whether successful or not

Creating new youth structures to enable effective youth voice and youth value.

Act on the findings and recommendations, recognising that a phased approach and more work may be necessary to support detailed action planning

Shifting from the language of "listening to hearing" and from 'consultation and engagement' to 'conversations and dialogue for solutions'. These shifts would demonstrate the Council's commitment to moving from youth voice to youth value.

The Next Steps for the Commission are:

Hackney Council and its Partners to reflect on the findings and accept the "Asks" made by the Commission

Hackney Council, together with the Commission, provide feedback to young people in the borough about how the Council and its Partners are going to respond to this report in a timely way

Hackney Council to identify how they will continue to engage and involve young people in decision-making in the future, post-Commission.

THANKS TO YOU

To...

The Commission would first like to thank all the young people that participated in the consultation and the trust you placed in the Commission. It is your voices we wanted to hear and to share with the Council and its Partners. Your honest feedback, enthusiastic engagement, and creativity have made this report possible. We hope we have fairly reflected your views.

We also thank and want to give recognition to the huge and diverse range of community and voluntary organisations, delivering services that support children and young people in Hackney. Your commitment to supporting the needs and aspirations of young people is a vital resource. We hope that our findings and the responses from the Council to them, will continue to build on the positive Partnerships with you all.

Thank you to Fiona Meeks, Doctoral Researcher, Loughborough University London for the excellent support in helping analyse the enormous amount of data, and for her commitment to the principle of co-creation, by helping young people develop skills to share ownership of the 'so what?' generated from the data.

A special thanks must go to the Mouth That Roars for their exceptional and creative engagement with young people, which was very much welcomed and valued by them.

Finally, special thanks to Members and Council Officers, in particular Cllr Antoniette Bramble, Cllr Caroline Selman, Rohney Saggarr-Malik, Project Lead and Emma Winch, Engagement Officer, for their valuable support in facilitating the work of the Commission.



Get Involved

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#ivebeenheard

I'VE
BEEN
HEARD

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Young
Futures
Commission

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Report Title:	Update on Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
Meeting for:	Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission
Date:	7th December 2020
Produced by:	Tim Wooldridge
Authorised by:	Annie Gammon

Summary

- This report provides the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission with an update on the the challenges involving the supply and demand for childcare places since the full reopening of settings after lockdown in the summer term 2020
- The report also provides a brief account of the challenges involved in business sustainability within the Early Years Childcare sector.

1. Number of Settings and Childminders operating

- 1.1. Contrary to the national picture, the supply of provision within the early years sector in Hackney has remained broadly stable since the full reopening of schools and settings in June 2020.
- 1.2. During this period, there has been a small increase in the total number of childcare providers registered with Ofsted. In March 2020 there were 130 registered settings and 31 October 2020 this has increased to 131. There are three settings (2%) though, whilst still registered with Ofsted, are not currently open, two of whom are unlikely to reopen. The reasons cited for the closure are not Covid related.
- 1.3. This compares favorably with the national picture. On 12 November, the most recent weekly operating status and attendance data available, showed 10% of childcare settings remained closed.
- 1.4. The number of registered childminders has remained constant. There are currently 176 in Hackney. During lockdown, when childcare providers could only look after vulnerable children and children of critical workers, 44 childminders were operating. The number of childminders looking after children has gradually increased since the restrictions were lifted on 4 June and now stands at 97.
- 1.5. Whilst it appears that up to 45% of childminders are not minding, this is not an unusual picture as many childminders retain Ofsted registration despite not working. The process of re-registering is a long and complex one thereby discouraging childminders from resigning their registration.
- 1.6. In addition to the 131 registered settings, there are 2 nursery schools who continue to receive DfE supplementary income to support sustainability, as they adjust to the national funding formula for 3 and 4 year olds. It is unclear how long nursery schools will continue to receive the supplementary income, or whether or not this will be replaced by another funding stream.

2. Number of Children attending Early Years Provision

- 2.1. Since the middle of September the number of children attending registered Early Years provision excluding maintained schools, has increased by approximately 1000 children to a total of 4620. Currently there are 841 children attending a Children's Centre, 1068 children attending an Independent school and 2459 children attending a private or voluntary sector nursery. In addition 252 children are being reported as accessing daycare with a childminder.
- 2.2. Whilst there is a clear picture of the number of children attending a Hackney setting, until the Autumn term census has been completed and analysed, it is not possible to give a definitive report on whether there has been a reduction in the number of hours children are attending, or indeed the ages of children attending. Feedback from a sample number of providers shows a mixed picture regarding demand. Some providers have reported that as many parents have moved to home working, or have lost jobs, there are fewer children attending hours in addition to the 15 / 30 hour free entitlement. This is making it hard for providers to predict future demand for places.
- 2.3. Children Centres, that have a fee structure linked to income bands, report that there has been a decline in parents from higher bands, and a number of higher band families are now moving to lower bands, thereby having an impact on income forecasts on which the Children's Centres budgets are built.
- 2.4. In addition, Children Centres that once had long admissions registers are finding that parents are opting for alternative or informal childcare options and are choosing school based provision for their 15/ 30 hour free entitlement.

- 2.5. The Family Information Service collects monthly vacancy information to, amongst other things, support the placement of two year olds. FIS reports that there has been an increase in the number of settings reporting vacancies. In November 2019, 30 settings had vacancies and this has increased to 49 in November this year, including in seven Children Centres. FIS do not ask for the number of vacancies in each setting.
- 2.6. Independent schools, that mainly serve the Charedi community, report that demand for places is just as high as ever and schools are operating at their maximum capacity.
- 2.7. Children aged 2 whose families receive certain benefits (including low income families in receipt of in-work benefits), or those who meet additional non-economic criteria, are entitled to 15 hours per week of free childcare. Parents are required to provide evidence of eligibility that is checked on a portal so Hackney Education has a detailed and accurate picture of take up. Currently 1,238 eligible two years olds are attending a Hackney setting. This compares favourably with the January census data over the previous three years; 2018, 1,363 children; 2019, 1,239 children and in 2020, 1,311 benefited from 15 hours of childcare. It is expected over the next two months before the census collection date, the brokering service will place additional children.
- 2.8. A survey of childminders indicates that 60% are as busy or busier than in previous years and that 40% are less busy. Hackney Education only collects headcount data about children in receipt of the free entitlement so year on year comparative data on the total number of children looked after by childminders is not available.

3. Business sustainability

- 3.1. The Childminder survey indicates that there is confidence in the long term financial sustainability of childminding. Of those that responded to the survey, 90% expressed confidence that they would be able to maintain their business going forward. 10% stated they were 'unsure', whilst no childminders reported that they were not confident about their future provision.
- 3.2. Independent schools, when asked about business sustainability, reported that although there were considerable additional costs incurred for establishing effective home learning during the lockdown, purchasing cleaning materials and protective equipment, the schools would be able to continue operating.
- 3.3. In the private and voluntary sector there is more of a mixed picture with some settings struggling financially. One manager states, 'Currently we have seen a great decline in funded children attending the nursery especially since COVID-19 crisis. This has severely impacted us since we rely solely on the large numbers of the funded children attending the nursery to sustain our business. Currently we have only 30 children on funding and we cannot continue to sustain the business without our numbers of funded children increasing, however based on the current economic crisis we cannot see that happening at all. Parents/Carers are losing their jobs and also some are too worried to bring their children to the nursery.'

4. Further challenges

- 4.1. Early Years settings and childminders have faced a number of additional challenges, alongside financial considerations since the full re-opening of provision.
- 4.2. Many providers have reported that children with SEND have missed the consistent routines and expectations that come with regular attendance at a nursery, that behaviour has been more difficult to manage and that COVID has had a negative impact on children's development and progress

- 4.3. Providers report that lockdown has impacted on children's learning and development particularly in the areas of communication and language, the development of physical skill and on children's emotional confidence.
- 4.4. Providers also report that supporting staff anxieties, managing the COVID secure regimes and supporting parents has presented further challenges.

5. Ongoing data collection

- 5.1. Hackney Education, through the Family Information Service, will continue to collect weekly attendance data from Early Years providers and childminders. This data is submitted to the Department for Education.
- 5.2. Headcount data for the Autumn term will be collected in the first week in December. This will provide Hackney Education with a clearer picture of the ages of children and total number of hours attended and thereby allow comparisons to be made with previous years.
- 5.3. Family Information Service will continue to request information about vacancies to support the two year old brokering service and enable signposting for parents requiring a childminder.

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>Meeting Date: Monday 13th July</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.

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

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) (25 min)	<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 Sagggar-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>Meeting Date: Tuesday 12th January 2021</p> <p>Agenda dispatch: Monday 4th January 2021</p> <p>Papers deadline: Wednesday 23rd December 2020</p>	Children & Families Service - Budget Monitoring (25m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annie Coyle, Director of Children’s Social Care Services ● Naeem Ahmed, Director of Finance CACH 	
	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 (20m)	<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 	Up tp 3 policy areas to be selected 6 weeks ahead of the meeting (1st December 2020)
	Hackney Youth Parliament - report back on new structure (0m)		Chair/ Vice Chair to meet with Young Hackney
	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.

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

Meeting 8	Item title and scrutiny objective	Directorate – Division – Officer Responsibility	Preparatory work to support item
<p>Meeting Date: Tuesday 11th May 2021</p> <p>Papers deadline: Tuesday 27th April 2021</p> <p>Agenda dispatch: Friday 30th 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 ● Annie Coyle, 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 	

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

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		
Childcare Providers to support item on 7th December 2020	Virtual meeting held with Children Centre, Independent Childcare Provider and Maintained Nursery.	4th December 2020

One off Items agreed from 2020/2021		
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Update on exams 2020 and provisions for 2021	Annie Gammon, Director of Education	
Update on childcare provision across Hackney	Donna Thomas, Head of Early Years	7th December 2020
Tacking racial inequalities	Annie Gammon, Director of Education Sarah Wright, Director of Children and Families	2021/22 work programme
Hackney Schools Group Board	Eleanor Schooling, Independent Chair	2021/22 work programme

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 a 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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Children's Social Care: equalities data update

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Quarter 4 2019/20 (June 2020)



Hackney

This report provides a quarterly update based on data insight into what we know about the children that our Social Care services support, in relation to key equalities indicators.

Areas explored in this slide deck



- This report provides an analysis of the children we support based on data from Quarter 4 2019/20. This data has been explored against the following equalities indicators:
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity
 - Children with/ without a disability
 - Age
- This analysis includes insight into our current cohorts, as well as exploring parity in the quality of work we do with children and the outcomes this leads to, based on some selected key performance indicators.

What caveats?



- There is a significant under-representation of Hackney's Charedi population in the cohort of children that the Children and Families Service work with (approximately 20% of Hackney's child population live in the Charedi community but this is not reflected in the cohort of children we work with). This contributes to a skew in data related to ethnicity (as is explored throughout this report); with an underrepresentation of children from a White background and a consequent overrepresentation of other ethnic groups.
- Proxy performance indicators, used in this report to explore parity in the support we provide, should be approached with caution. These seek to provide some insight into potential disparity in the effectiveness of the support we provide however **wider contextual factors can and do have an impact on performance against these indicators.**

Note

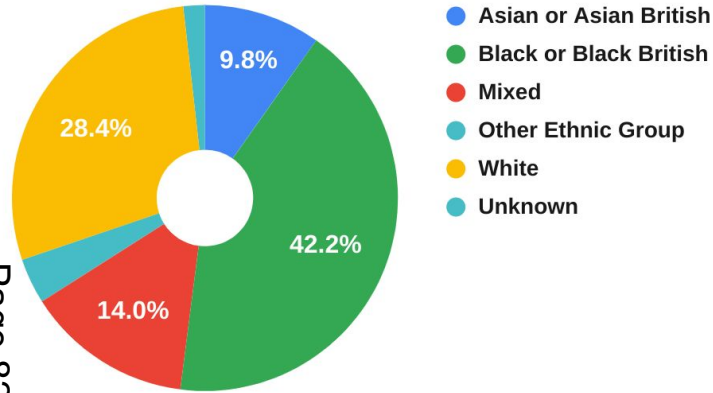
The 2019/20 provisional data included in these slides is currently subject to data clean up activity before it is submitted to the Department for Education by August 2020.

Who are the children that are supported by our services?

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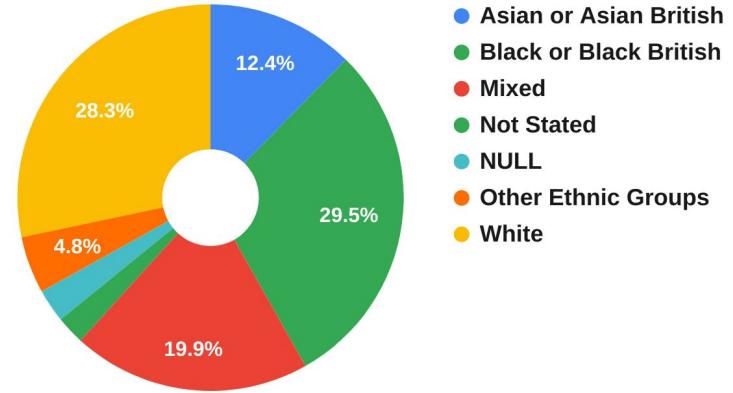
The following slides breakdown our Children's Social Care cohort as of March 2020.

Children subject to a Child in Need plan

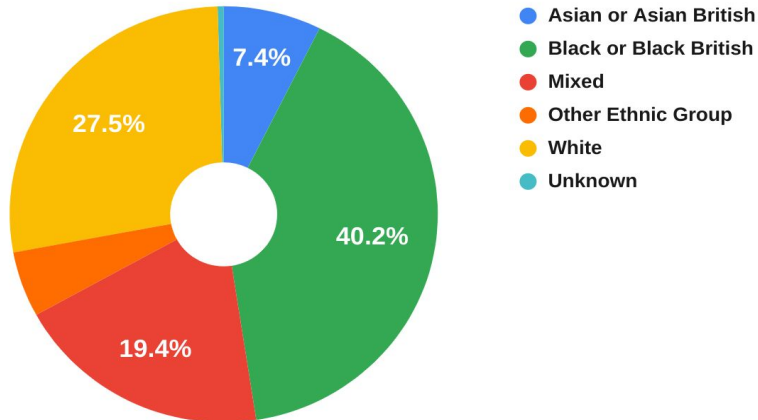


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Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

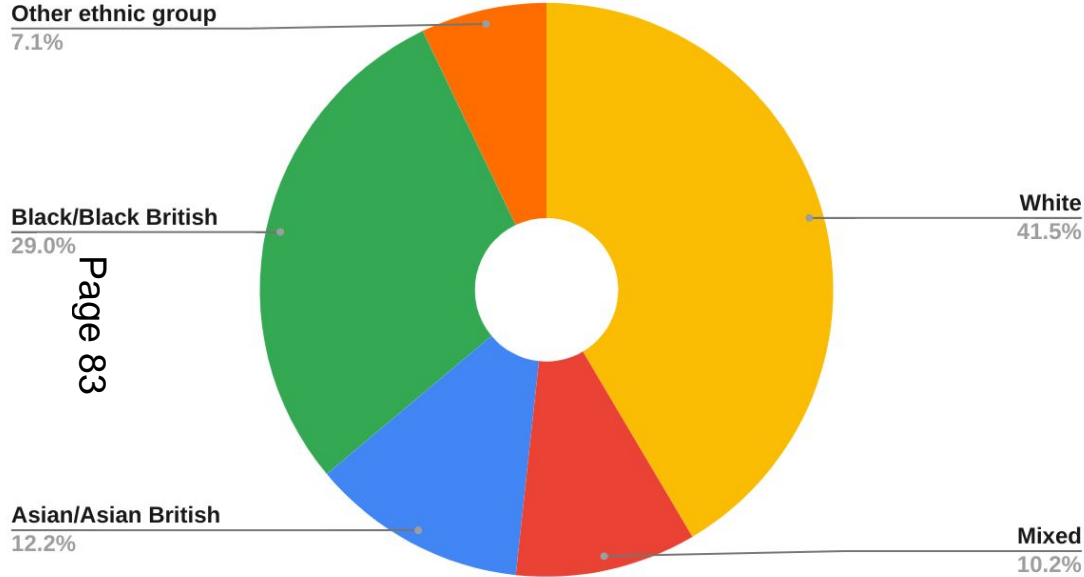


Looked after children



Ethnic Group: Disproportionality

0-17 Hackney Population by Ethnic Group (ONS)



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Based on a comparison with the 0-17 population count from the ONS 2011 Census, Black and Black British children are proportionally over-represented in both our Children in Need and looked after children cohorts, as well as receiving more support from our targeted Early Help services.

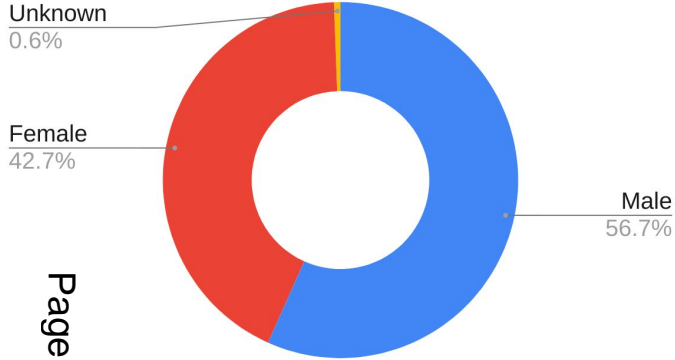
Children from a Mixed background are also proportionally over-represented in all our cohorts.

Children from a White background are proportionally underrepresented in all our cohorts.

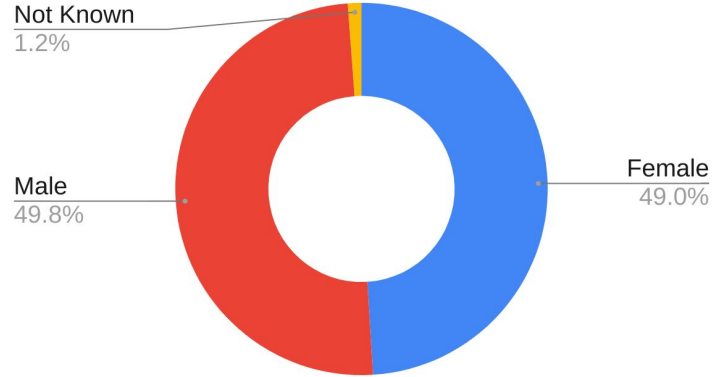
Gender Identity



Children subject to a Child in Need Plan

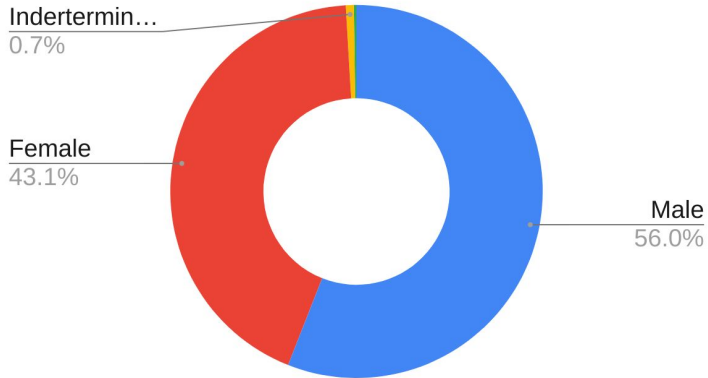


Children subject to Child Protection Plan



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Looked After Children

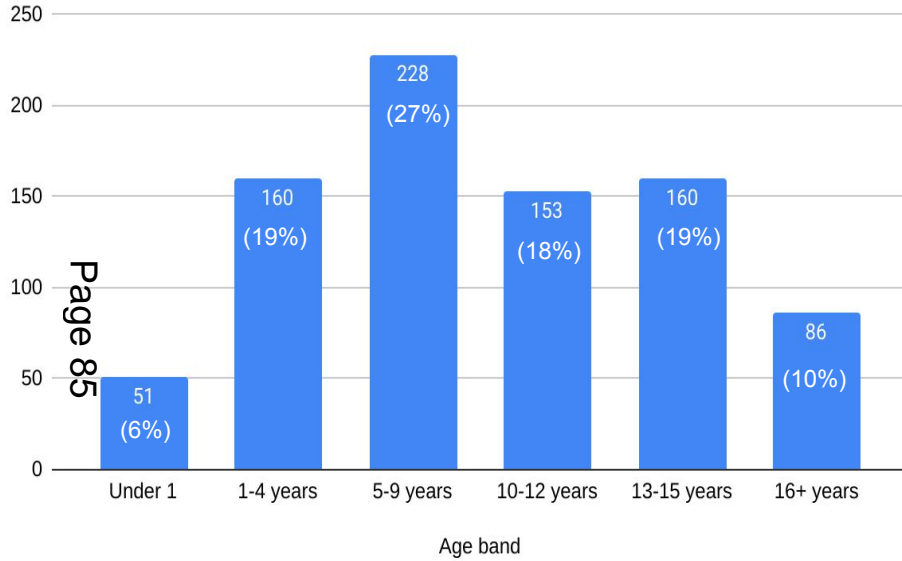


Children identifying as Male are proportionally over-represented in our Children in Need cohort (56.7%) and our Looked After Children cohort (56%).

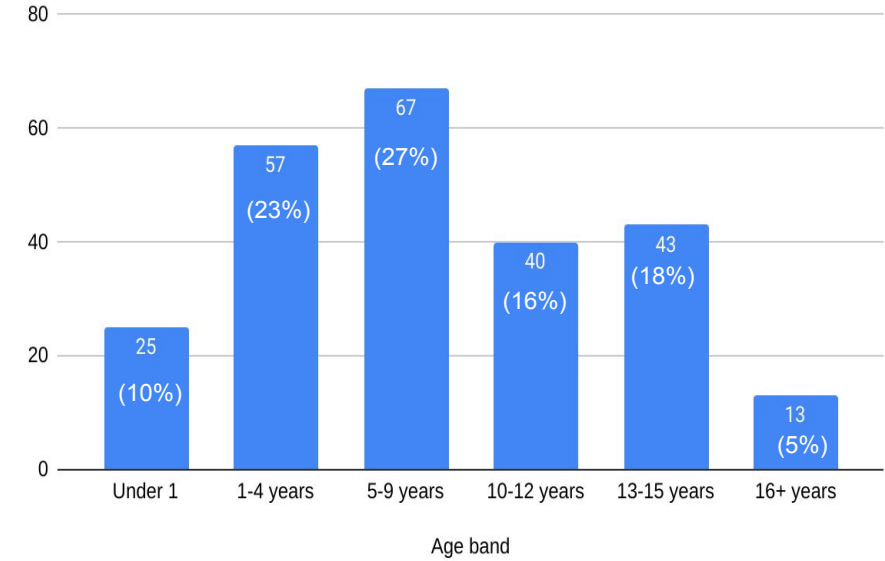
Children identifying as Male are only slightly over-represented in our Child Protection cohort, at 49.8%.



Age of children with a Child in Need Plan

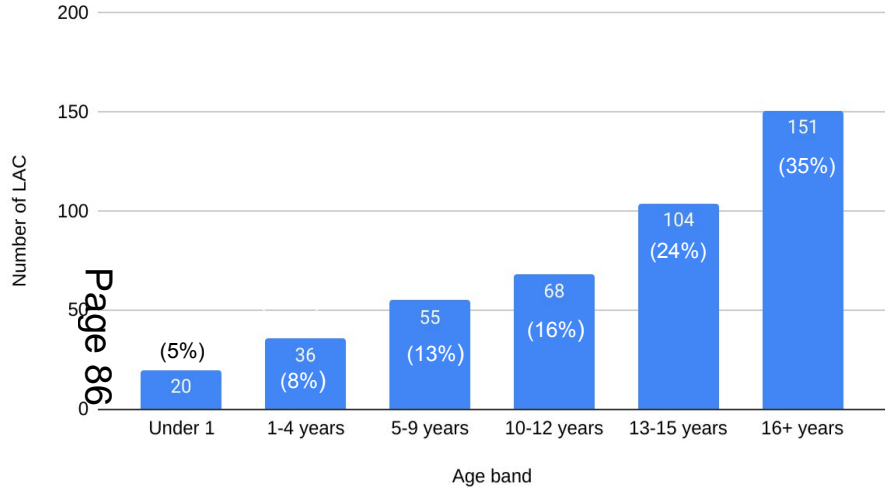


Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan

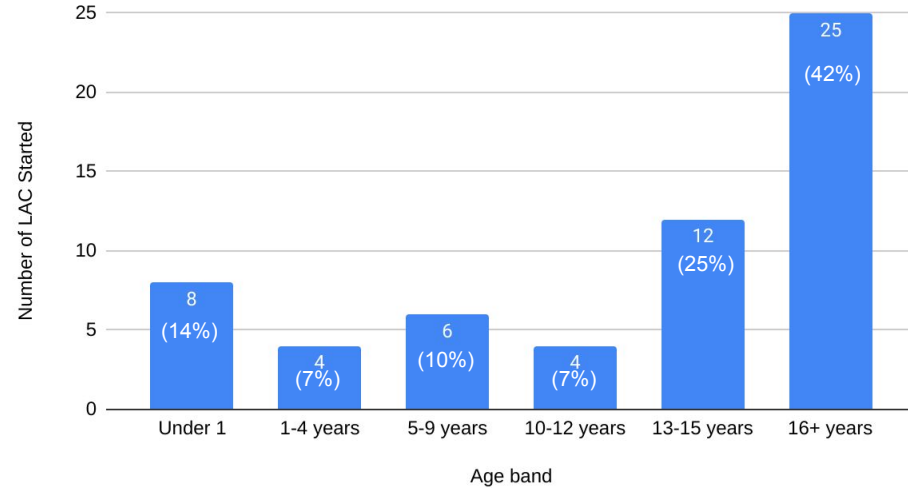




Age of Looked After Children



Age of children who became Looked After Children



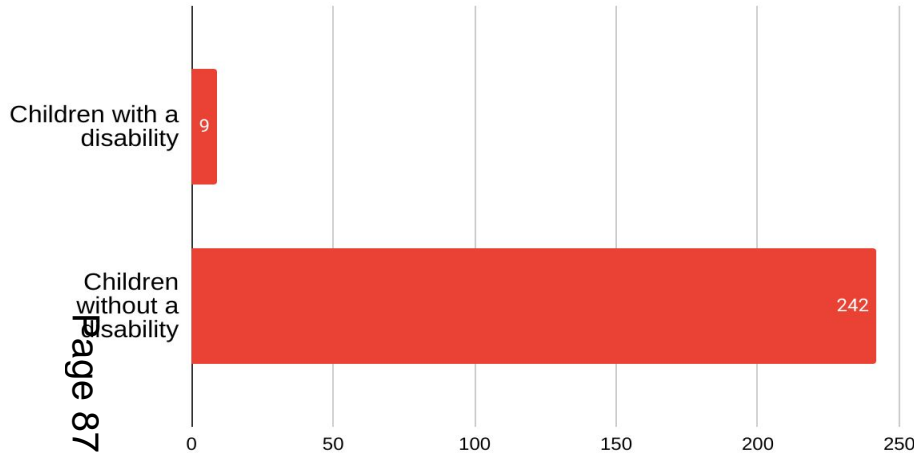
Children aged over 16 represent 35% of our current looked after children cohort, and 42% of the total number of children who became looked after in Quarter 4 2019/20.

Please note that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

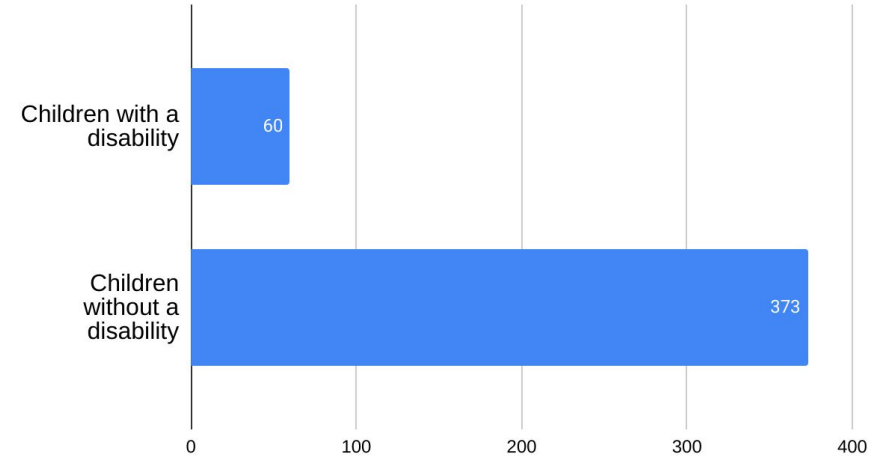
Children with a disability



Children subject to a Child Protection Plan



Looked After Children



3.6% of children subject to a Child Protection Plan have a disability.

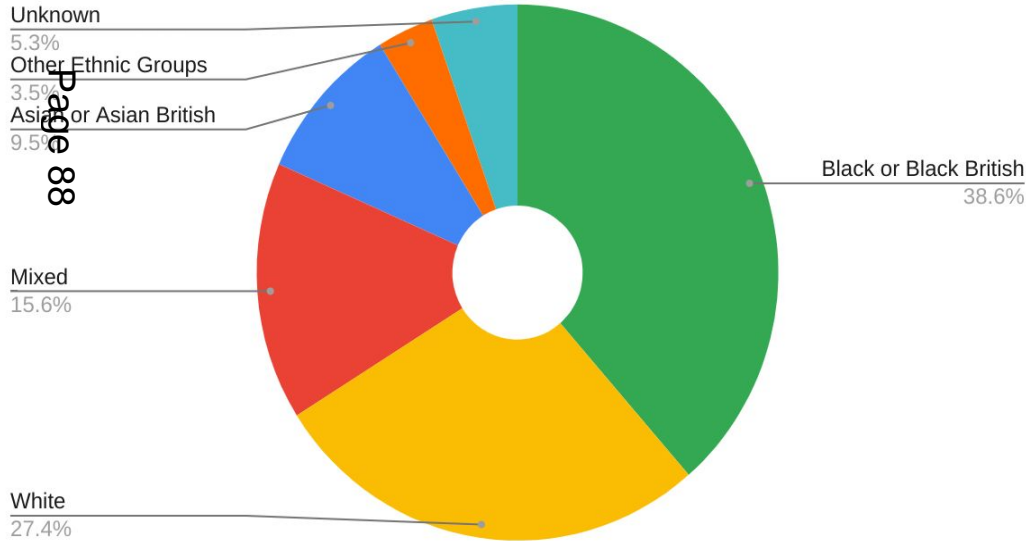
14% of our Looked After Children have a disability.

Breakdown data for children subject to a Child in Need plan includes children supported by our Disabled Children's Service. Our Disabled Children's Service supports **27%** of the total number of children subject to a Child in Need plans.

Poverty Indicators

Of *all* the children currently supported by the Children & Families Service, **35%** are *either* from a **low income household**, **reside in Temporary Accommodation** or **receive Free School Meals**.

Children supported by our services and meeting at least one of the poverty criteria



Of the children supported by our services who meet at least one of the above poverty indicators, 39% are from a Black British Background.

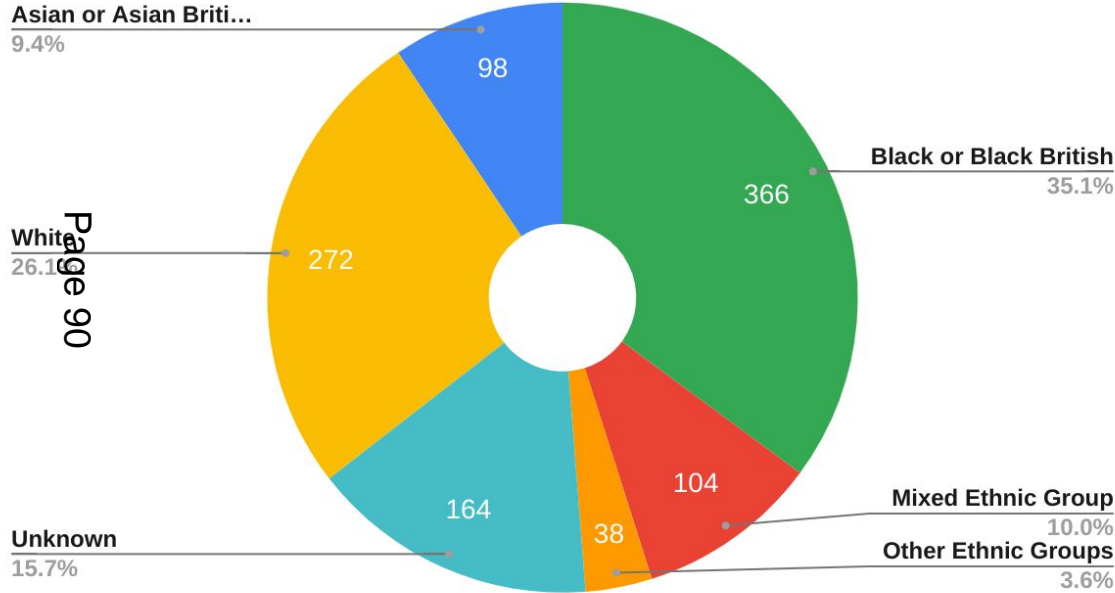
This is a slightly lower proportional representation than for children receiving support from our early help services, children subject to a Child in Need plan and looked after children. This is a slightly higher representation than children subject to a Child Protection plan.

Although similar, the representation of White children is slightly lower than in the Children's Social Care cohorts explored in this report.

**What do we know about the reasons
for children entering our services?**

Referrals

Breakdown of total referrals in Quarter 4, 2019/20

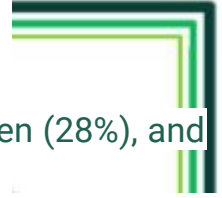


Children from a Black or Black British background are the most represented ethnic group, in relation to the total number of referrals we received in the Quarter, representing 35% of all referrals.

This reflects a lower representation than of Black or Black British children subject to Child in Need Plans and of Looked After Children, but a higher representation than children subject to Child Protection Plans.

Children from a Mixed Ethnic background represented a lower rate of referral, in comparison to their representation in our Children's Social Care cohorts.

Reasons for referral

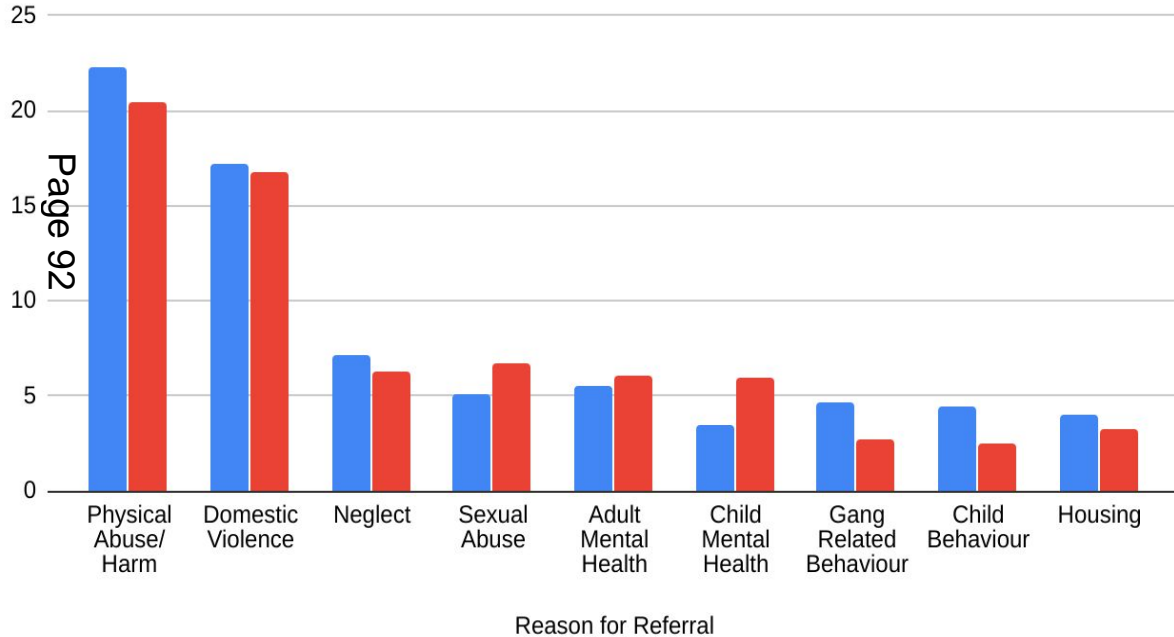


- 'Physical Abuse/ Harm' was the most frequent reason for referral for Black or Black British children (28%), and occurred at an 11% higher rate than in any other ethnic group.
- 'Gang Related Behaviour', 'Substance Misuse (adult)' and 'Housing', as reasons for referral, all occurred at a higher rate for Black or Black British children than in other ethnic groups.
- 'Domestic Violence' (17%) and 'Physical Abuse/ Harm' (16%) were the most frequent referral reasons for White children.
- 'Neglect' and 'Adult Mental Health' were more frequently given as a reason for referral for White children, than for children from a Black or Black British, and Asian or Asian British, background.
- Children from a Mixed Ethnic background had the highest rate of 'Neglect', 'Domestic Dispute' and 'Adult Mental Health' as reasons for referral, in comparison to other ethnic groups.
- Asian or Asian British children had the lowest rates of 'Physical Abuse/ Harm' as a reason for referral. This group, however, had the highest rates of 'Sexual Abuse' and 'Child Mental Health', in comparison to other ethnic groups.



Reason for Referrals as percentage of total referrals

Male Female



Although similar, children identifying as Male had a higher rate of reason for referral for 'Physical Abuse/Harm', 'Domestic Violence', 'Neglect' and 'Housing', than children identifying as Female.

Children identifying as Male also had a significantly higher rate of 'Gang Related Behaviour' and 'Child Behaviour' as reasons for referral.

Children identifying as Female had higher rates of 'Sexual Abuse', and both 'Mental Health' categories.

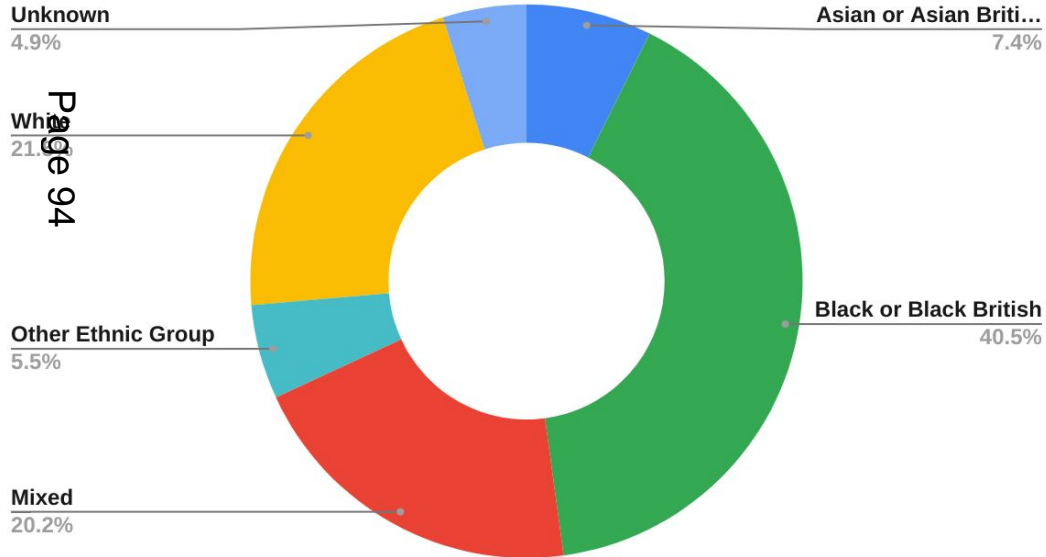
What do we know about equality in relation to the quality of support we provide?

Referral process

Repeat referrals can be used as a proxy measure of the effectiveness of the decision-making process during the referral process and the quality of work carried out following this referral. An increase in this figure could suggest children's needs aren't always effectively being recognised at the initial referral or addressed during the subsequent work with a family.



Repeat referrals in Quarter 4, 2019/20



Children from a Black or Black British background represent 40.5% of all repeat referrals in quarter 4 2019/20. **This is 8% higher than their proportional representation of all referrals in the same period.**

Children from a Mixed background represent 20.2% of all repeat referrals in the Quarter. **This is 10% higher than their proportional representation of all referrals.**

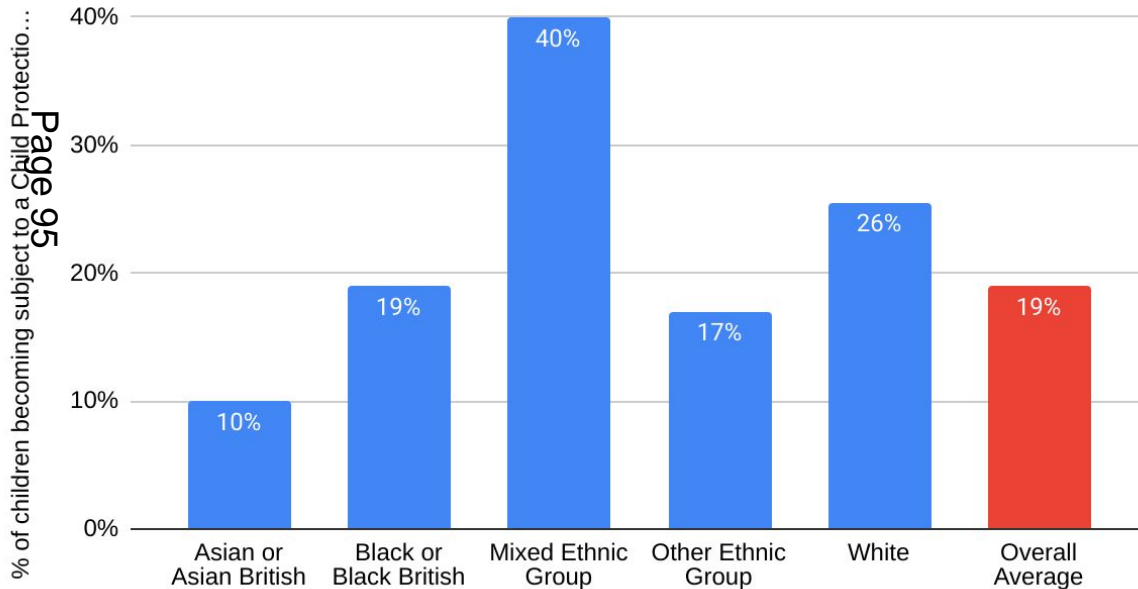
Children from a White background represent 21.5% of all repeat referrals in the Quarter. **This is 4% lower than their proportional representation of all referrals.**

Child Protection

Repeat Child Protection Plans can act as a proxy measure of the effectiveness of Child Protection Plans in reducing the risk of significant harm for a child. Higher numbers of repeat Child Protection Plans can indicate that the decision to end a plan was premature and/or services have been ineffective at addressing need, or step down services have been unable to maintain sustainable change within a family and a case has needed to escalate again, although there may be no correlation whatsoever to the issues resulting in the first Child Protection Plan.



% of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time



Children from a Mixed background had a significantly higher % of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time than the overall average for 2019/20.

It should be noted that plans started in the 2019/20 financial year have been used here, in order to give a larger sample size.

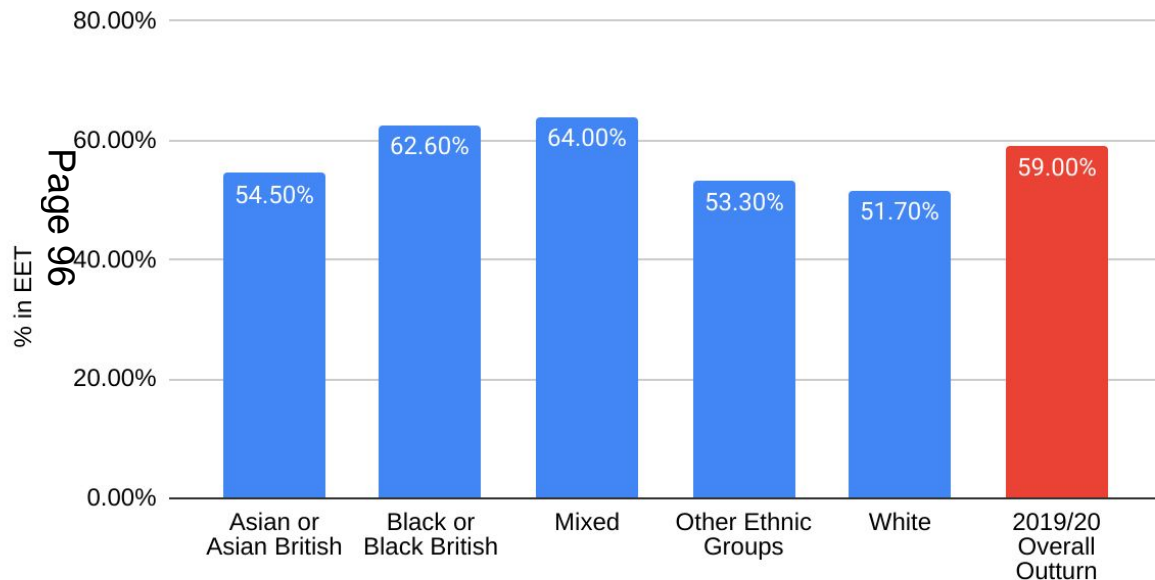
Even with this increased sample size, insight from this data may suffer from small sample bias.

Source: Internal Data. Logic: Number of children becoming subject to a repeat Child Protection Plan in 2019/20 by ethnic group/ Total number of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan by ethnic group.

Care Leavers



% of care leavers (19 - 21 years) in education, employment or training



Care leavers from a Mixed and Black or Black British background have a higher % in education, employment and training than our provisional 2019/20 overall outturn.

Care leavers from Asian or Asian British, White background, and from Other Ethnic Groups, have a comparably lower percentage against this indicator.

Please note our 2019/20 provisional outturn figures are currently subject to data cleaning work. This may affect figures shown here, although it is not expected that the effect will be disproportionate against certain groups.

This report seeks to give some top-level insight into the journey of children in our social care system, in relation to equality indicators.

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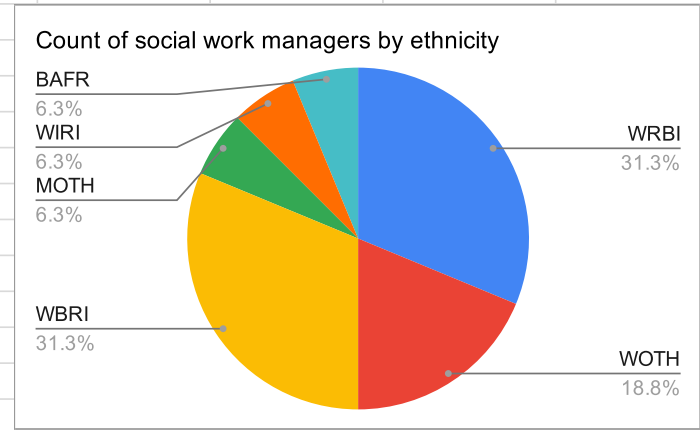
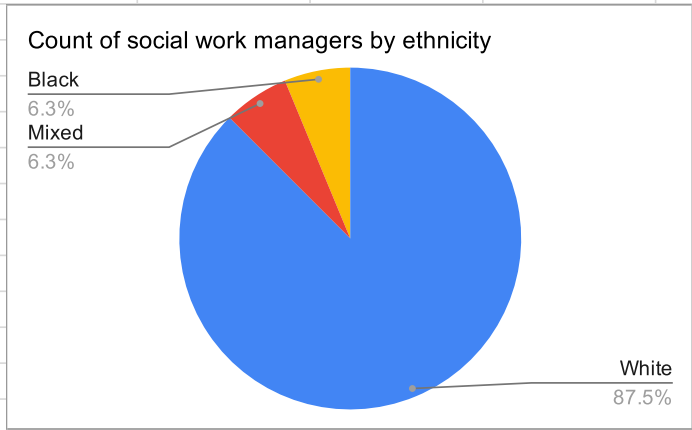
It recognises it's limitations in exploring the intersectionality of this data. Such an analysis would be an extensive and limitless exercise, and this report seeks to provide a starting point for, where necessary, further and more specific exploration into disproportionality of representation and outcomes in our services.

Further analysis would also recognise the impact of wider contextual factors, which are likely to be significantly impactful on outcomes for children, but which are difficult to quantify in this data analysis.

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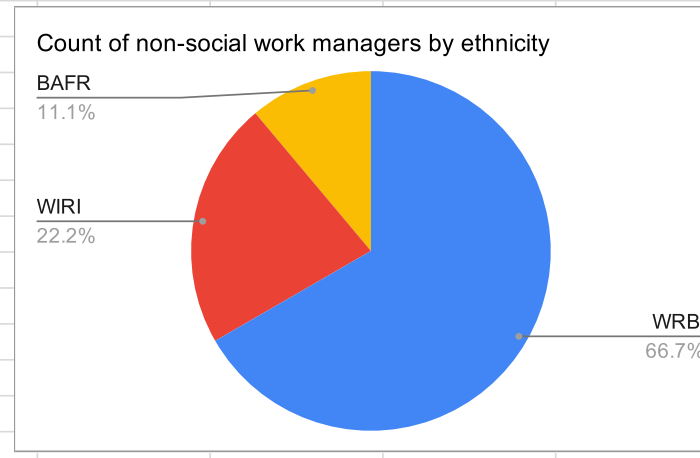
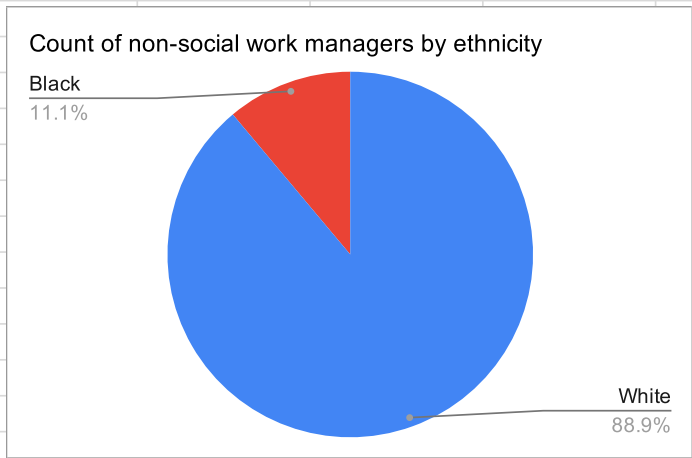
Senior Management Team by ethnicity (Social work managers)

Name	Ethnicity	
16 senior social work managers	WRBI	White
	WRBI	White
	WRBI	White
	WRBI	White
	WRBI	White
	WOTH	White
	WBRI	White
	WOTH	White
	MOTH	Mixed
	WIRI	White
	WOTH	White
	WBRI	White
	WBRI	White
	BAFR	Black
	WBRI	White
	WBRI	White



Senior Management Team by ethnicity (All other senior managers)

Name	Ethnicity	
9 senior managers	WRBI	White
	WRBI	White
	WRBI	White
	WRBI	White
	WIRI	White
	WRBI	White
	BAFR	Black
	WIRI	White
	WRBI	White



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CFS Complaints 2019-20 - summary

The number of Stage 1 Children's Social Care complaints has decreased since the previous year, however proportionately the number of complaints escalating to Stage 3 has increased.

Children's Social Care Complaints	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Stage 1 Local Resolution	41	37	49	32	32	25
Stage 2 Investigation	5	8	9	10	9	8
Stage 3 Review Panel	6	2	2	1	5	6

In terms of the nature of complaints, issues relating to communication and staff conduct were the most common reasons for complaints.

The majority of the complaints were in relation to the Family Intervention and Support Service (most in the Children in Need Service), which is the largest service area.

Further information will be provided within the CFS Complaints Annual Report 2019-20, due to be completed by the end of December 2020.

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Overview & Scrutiny

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission Minutes of 7th December 2020

Attendees

Sophie Conway (Councillor) (Chair)
Margaret Gordon (Councillor) (Vice Chair)
Ajay Chauhan (Councillor)
Clare Potter (Councillor)
Katie Hansen (Councillor)
Sade Etti (Councillor)
Justine McDonald (Statutory Co-optee)
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
- Gabrielle Abadi, Planning Policy Officer
- Lizzi Bird, Planning & Implementation Officer
- Karol Jacobzyck, Strategic Planning Manager
- Dan Beagle, Senior Consultation & Engagement Officer
- Donna Thomas, Head of Early Years, Early Help & Well-being
- Tim Wooldridge, Early Years Strategy Manager
- Jermain Jackman Co-Chair, Young Futures Commission
- Shekeila Scarlett Co-Chair Young Futures Commission
- Polly Cziok, Director of Communications, Culture and Engagement
- Rohney Saggarr-Malik, Project Head Young Futures
- Richard Brown, Head of Urswick Secondary School

Cllr Conway in the Chair

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from the following members of the Commission:

- Cllr James Peters;
- Cllr Sharon Patrick;
- Cllr Clare Joseph;
- Ernell Watson;
- Shabnum Hassan.

1.2 Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Clare Potter.

1.3 Apologies for absence were received for Jermain Jackman, Co-Chair of Young Futures Commission for Item 5.

2. Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 There were no late items and the agenda was as published.

3. Declarations of interest

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

- 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.

4. Child Friendly Places Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

4.1 A Strategic Planning Document has been developed to ensure that new development coming forward recognises the needs of children and young people. The SPD will seek to achieve this objective by 'maximising the opportunities for safe play and outdoor activities across our streets, estates, parks, adventure playgrounds, new developments and open spaces as children and their families explore and discover the world around them.'

4.2 The Child Friendly SPD was agreed by Cabinet in October 2020 and is being consulted upon with local stakeholders until 12th January 2021. The presentation of the SPD at the meeting allowed the Commission to formally review the SPD and contribute to the consultation process.

Hackney Planning Service

4.2 Officers from the Strategic Planning Service of Hackney Planning Service presented the Child Friendly SPD to the Commission (attached). The key points from the presentation are highlighted below:

- Planning Policy Framework - A borough wide Local Plan was agreed earlier in 2020 which will shape borough wide growth and development in Hackney. The Child Friendly SPD will complement this by ensuring that new development coming forward maximises opportunities for children and young people.
- Development and design of the SPD was informed through local youth engagement workshops and research with local stakeholders, most notably the Young Futures Commission report findings and other young people's forums.
- The Proposed child friendly Principles for Hackney's built environment collectively set out the vision for a built environment that supports the happiness, health, wellbeing and prosperity of all children and young people in the Borough. Identifying the different elements that all need to be present in order for the built environment to be considered child friendly. The more aspects a space / scheme/ project etc incorporates the more child friendly.
- Eight child friendly Principles have been developed to provide guidance to prospective developers which include recognition of the need to involve young people in decisions (shape my borough), accessible opportunities for children to meet and play (doorstep play) and developing access to greenspace (contact with nature).
- The design guidelines that follow the Principle section, set out the technical aspects of design that need to be considered with certain local plan policies to ensure the Principles are being met through planning policies and development schemes provide children and young people with opportunities

to connect with nature, play and move around independently in safe, healthy and unpolluted urban spaces.

- The draft guidelines are divided into a three- part neighbourhood place-scale that children and young people in Hackney grow up and move along: the Doorstep, Streets and Destinations.
- The CF SPD also sets out how young people should be consulted in the development process and the positive ways young people can be engaged and supported.
- The public consultation commenced in November 2020. Key elements of this consultation include the development of a dedicated webpage, targeted social media and other printed material. Covid-19 has meant that engagement will on the whole be virtual, though there has been some direct communication in local parks and via children's centres.

4.3 The Cabinet Member for Early Years, Families and Play welcomed the Child Friendly SPD and noted that the guidance was inclusive which would lead to development for a much wider demographic than than children and young people.

4.4 Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care noted that this was a good example of local place shaping. It was also emphasised that the development of the SPD would not only help shape new development, but the child friendly guidance could also be used retrospectively to improve existing sites and spaces. In this sense, the SPD would help all children in the borough and not just those living in new development.

Questions from the Commission

4.5 Although the Child Friendly SPD will help to shape development coming forward in the longer term, was there any potential for the principles to be applied on a quick win' basis to provide more immediate improvement for children and young people's environment?

- It is hoped that the SPD will have a real and practical purpose. The introduction of the Design Standard will help developers understand the key deliverables which will assist in child friendly development of all scales.
- The Service Wide Officers Group was established to support the development of the SPD and the draft design principles have already been used to inform other development within the Council, for example, the redevelopment of Shoreditch Park.

4.6 To what extent can the Child Friendly SPD influence the local transport decisions taken by Transport for London (TfL)?

- A collaborative approach had been used to develop the SPD which had involved a wide range of council services, including Streetscene, Parks and Housing services. This has helped to ensure that the SPD both complements and informs the priorities and plans of council services.

4.7 How will the Local Planning Service evaluate this policy and showcase best practice case studies to further influence and shape development?

- There has been a close working relationship with both Planning and Regeneration to make sure that the design principles are practical and effective, and which will ultimately result in these being used to inform development. The Design Evaluation Tool set out in the SPD will not only inform new development but will also assist in the evaluation of existing spaces.

4.8 In terms of the planned consultation, will (i) tenants and residents associations and (ii) parents be consulted?

- Whilst the consultation process for the SPD will focus on engaging children and young people, it is recognised that parents do play a vital role in shaping children's views and their use of physical spaces and as such they will be part of this consultation process. The consultation will primarily engage parents via schools, children's centres and youth centres. Elderly groups will also be approached through Age Concern for a more balanced view and to reflect that many spaces are multi-generational.
- Tenants and residents associations were also acknowledged to be a key plank within local engagement strategies and were specified in the 'how to engage' section of the SPD.

4.9 The planned consultation runs for a period of 11 weeks to January 12th 2021, part of which covers the Christmas holidays. Given the restrictions of Covid, will this be sufficient time to meaningfully consult stakeholders?

- Covid had impacted on the approach to the consultation but if further time was needed to reach specific groups this could extend the consultation period to later in January 2021.

4.10 How will the new Young People's Design Review Panel work? How will you recruit to this?

- Plans are at an early stage, but the Strategic planning and Conservation and Urban Design Team have met the project lead from the Young Futures Commission to support the onward development of this group. It is expected that plans will be finalised in early 2021.

4.11 The Commission thanked officers for attending and responding to questions from members. The Commission would write to the Cabinet member and Head of Planning service with a formal response to the public consultation on the Child Friendly SPD.

Agreed: The Commission would formally write to the Head of Planning as part of the public consultation on the Child Friendly SPD.

5. Young Futures Commission

5.1 The Young Futures Commission (YFC) was set up 2019 to ensure that there are robust consultation and engagement mechanisms in place through which children and young people could meaningfully contribute to decisions that shape and influence their lives. The YFC has now concluded its engagement work with

local children and young people and has produced a report on its findings, including its key asks of the Council.

5.2 The Project Lead introduced the item. The report of the Young Futures Commission was approved by Cabinet in July 2020 and the recommendations (or asks) are detailed in the appendix of the summary report. It is expected that the Young Futures Commission will report back to local young people on the progress of their recommendations and what improvements will be made to local consultation and engagement strategies involving young people.

5.3 The Co-Chair of the Young Futures Commission (YFC) introduced this item and made a presentation to the Commission (attached). The key points from the presentation are as listed below:

- The YFC consulted over 2,400 young people which was far greater than expected. The initial consultation was followed-up with a second engagement programme which sought to clarify and confirm the key themes emerging from the initial consultation.
- 'Key Asks' were developed for six policy areas: education, training and employment; housing; regeneration; crime and safety; health and wellbeing and; local spaces and activities.
- A Secure Future (housing) - to improve access housing advice and support and improve the supply of quality social housing for young people;
- A Healthy Future - to review the provision and accessibility of mental health service provision;
- An Active Future - to ensure that young people have access to local community settings, such as local community halls, for sports, recreation and other activities;
- An Inclusive Future - to ensure that young people are involved in planning and neighbourhood regeneration programmes and to promote intergenerational dialogue;
- A Safe Future - to reduce serious youth violence, reduce the fear of violence that young people experience and to improve relationships between the police and young people;
- A Bright Future - to increase access to employment opportunities, quality and provision of AP, reduce inequalities in educational attainment and school exclusion and developing young people's skills for adulthood and life.

5.4 The YFC is a 2-year project which is due to complete in 2021. In terms of the next steps the YFC will:

- In conjunction with strategic partners produce a delivery plan for the key asks set out in the report;
- Review the role of the Young People's Board and Reference Group;
- Produce a final report in 2021 on the Commission's achievements and its legacy intentions.

5.5 The Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care thanked the Co-Chair for all their work in supporting the YFC. The Cabinet member noted that young people have not only articulated local needs, but have

also actively contributed to finding solutions to the issues raised. This project demonstrated that young people can and do want to be involved in local decision making and want to improve the lived experience of young people across Hackney.

5.6 The Chair welcomed the report and congratulated the young people and officers involved. The findings detailed in the report will help the Commission to hold the Council to account and ensure that young people are able to meaningfully participate and contribute to consultations in the future. The Chair also noted that it was encouraging to note the positive developments that have already taken place and that representatives from the TFC had been active in helping to improve services

Questions from the Commission

5.7 The report from the Young Futures Commission has highlighted serious misgiving from young people about the Council's current approach to engagement and involvement in that it's not authentic, it's defensive and resistant to change. Can you provide some examples of this and explain how the Council plans to tackle and improve its approach to consultation and engagement?

- Young people noted that limited finance and resources were often put up as a barrier to further engagement and involvement of young people or a barrier to delivery of young people's requests. In many cases, it was not about additional funds, but perhaps ways of doing things differently to meet the needs of young people.
- There were common themes in how young people viewed the Council consultation and engagement processes including that it was 'not really listening to concerns' and was 'not acting on concerns raised' which undermined trust in consultation processes.
- Young people themselves also better understand those consultation and engagement strategies which are more likely to be acceptable to young people and that this should inform the Council's approach.
- It was also apparent that young people felt more at ease discussing issues with other young people, which ensured that the data collected through the consultation was a more authentic and accurate representation of their views than might otherwise be the case.
- It was also important to recognise and value the contributions of children and young people in consultations and ensure that they are compensated for their time.
- Young people also reported that the Council branding was intimidating especially when they were required to complete forms or submit personal information.
- As a consequence of this, it was important that the YFC was independent of the Council, with its own website, branding and approach.

5.8 The Director of Communications, Culture and Engagement noted that in terms of the impact across the council, the Council was embedding the principles of youth engagement gleaned from the YFC. The most important learning from the YFC to date has been the recognition of the need to engage with young

people in their natural settings and where they feel most comfortable to talk. In terms of the legacy of the YFC, this is still being worked out across the in the Council this is still to be worked out, but the YFC had already had an impact beyin Hackney in that local young people had helped to improve communication for public health messaging for Covid-19.

5.9 To what extent was the YFC able to consult and involve young people with SEND?

- It was important for the YFC to reach a wider range of young people as possible and the Co-Chair's visited a number of settings (Huddleston Centre, BSIX) to ensure that young people with SEND had a voice in the consultation.
- It was noted that many of those issues that young people with SEND were concerned with corresponded to those of other young people more broadly. There was however a heightened sensitivity of young people with SEND toward crime and how safe they felt on the street. There was also a higher level of need around advice and support services for this group of young people and the need to ensure that they had equal access to employment and training opportunities as their peers.
- The Engagement Officer had also facilitated work with Side by Side and the Laburnum Boat Club, two local support services for children with SEND.

5.10 Can you provide further details on the YFC engagement with the Borough Commander?

- The new Borough Commander approached the YFC willing to know more about its work and the views of young people. TFC and ACCOUNT were two different youth engagement structures with different purposes. It is understandable that these different structures may have different experiences and views of local police services because ACCOUNT is focused solely on police engagement with young people, whereas YFC is more generic. The YFC had however raised the issue of the need to improve the cultural competence of police officers.
- It was noted that the Borough Commander was supportive of the recommendations of the YFC to prioritise tackling serious youth violence and addressing the causes of the fear of crime.
- It was also noted that there were a number of youth engagement bodies (e.g. ACCOUNT, and Young Black Men Project) which were working with the police and it would be helpful to harmonise approaches to working.

5.11 In terms of governance for the Young Futures Commission, who is responsible for the implementation of 'key asks' detailed in the report and to which Council body will progress be monitored and reported to?

- The YFC was anticipated to be a two year project but this had been extended to account for the impact of Covid. It was clear that responsibility for the implementation of the 'asks' needed the support of a dedicated officer, and the Project Officer had been asked to stay on in post for this purpose.

5.12 The Young Futures Commission is due to complete in 2021. What are the plans for this project after this time? How does the Council aim to maintain the

momentum and level of engagement with young people that has been developed through the Young Futures Commission?

- In terms of longer term structure and governance these are yet to be decided. The YFC has been funded to the level of £250k for the two year period, which is not sustainable beyond 2021, so a new model will need to be agreed which seeks to embed key structures and processes into the mainstream business of the Council. It was clear that council departments were learning from the outcomes of the YFC and were adapting their consultation approach to children and young people.
- It should also be noted that the YFC consultation is time limited in that it captures the views of children and young people at a specific time. It is likely that a similar exercise undertaken now may reveal some very different outcomes and expectations of young people as a result of the impact of Covid. This exercise needs to be revisited and refreshed to ensure that this reflects young people's views and experiences. Similarly, it should be recognised that the borough is changing very quickly and people's lived experiences are continually changing and evolving alongside.
- The YFC were keen to ensure that Hackney Youth Parliament would be involved in discussions about the legacy of this project.
- It was important to use a wide range of different engagement tools in the YFC as this not only facilitated access to a wider range of young people, but it also improved accessibility of engagement both of which enriched the quality of data it ultimately obtained from young people.

5.13 The Chair thanked the Co-Chair and officers for attending and responding to questions from members of the Commission. The Chair requested that the representatives of the YFC could attend in the next municipal year when the project was nearing its completion and a review of the 'asks' could be undertaken.

Agreed: An update from the YFC to be taken in the next municipal year with a focus on the delivery of the key 'asks' and the legacy of the project.

6. Childcare Services Update

6.1 The Commission has a responsibility to maintain oversight of childcare provision and an update on Childcare Sufficiency across Hackney is provided each year. A report on the state of childcare provision in Hackney was provided to the Commission in July 2020. But due to the impact of Covid-19 it was difficult to fully assess how this was affecting childcare at this time. The Commission therefore requested a brief update for this meeting.

6.2 To support the discussion of this item, representatives of the Commission met with a number of Childcare providers ahead of this meeting to further understand how the pandemic had impacted on their respective services. The key headlines are attached to the minutes. The Chair formally thanked all those childcare providers who spoke to the Commission in advance of the meeting.

6.3 A short presentation was made to the Commission by the Head of Early Years and Early Help together with the Early Years Strategy Manager. This presentation highlighted the following key issues:

- National data had predicted the closure of up to $\frac{1}{3}$ of early years settings due to the impact of Covid. This had not been borne out on local data where just 3 closures had been reported to December 2020. As a consequence there was sufficient childcare capacity to meet local needs.
- There were 176 childminders, though just over $\frac{1}{2}$ were currently looking after children regularly. This was comparable to last year's figures.
- There were almost 5,000 children in early years settings which was again, comparable to last year.
- The take up of free two year old entitlement for vulnerable children was expected to be slightly lower than last year (decline of 100 places), but it was hoped that this would still keep Hackney among the highest performing authorities in London for this metric.
- Vacancy information from providers demonstrated that there were far more vacancies this year than last year and that many providers have indicated that they have less children in attendance than in previous years. It was a mixed picture however, for whilst some settings were operating at full or near capacity, others were struggling for numbers of children to attend to make the service viable. There is a concern that some of these settings may close in the spring or summer term if the numbers of children attending did not increase in the New Year.
- The DfE have not provided any detail as to whether any additional funding will be made available to the sector in the spring and summer term of next year, or if settings will be funded based on current attendance rates which for many, are lower than previous years. This uncertainty was creating some anxiety across the sector.
- It was also clear that the childcare market had changed where parents had reduced usage of childcare services, in many cases to just the 15 or 30 hour free entitlement and were not purchasing additional hours. It was not clear if this was a long-term trend.
- A number of settings have remained open throughout the pandemic but are now dealing with increased levels of Covid cases which means that children or staff are required to be sent home and self-isolate for 14 days. This was having an impact on income, costs and the operation of childcare settings.

Questions from the Commission

6.4 Early years settings noted that there had been an upsurge in demand for children with SEND and reported that there was now a backlog of cases for children to be assessed. Can you provide any explanation for the upsurge in demand for SEND services in this setting?

- An inclusion fund is available for SEND support for 3 and 4 year olds in early years settings. The Early Years Inclusion Fund is to support children with emerging SEND who have yet to receive a formal diagnosis. The autumn term has seen a huge increase in applications for the fund and these were currently being assessed.

- It was noted that SEND services were continuing to operate though restrictions due to Covid were impeding the progress at which assessments were being undertaken.
- Covid has impacted on childhood learning and development at all levels. Children who have English as an additional language have faced particular difficulties on their return to early years settings as they have not had the previous levels of exposure to spoken English. In general children have become less confident, less independent and more anxious. Some children have also regressed in terms of personal independence and now need more assistance (eating, toileting).

6.5 Can you provide any further information on the financial sustainability of Children's Centres? Will Stay and Play remain freely available?

- Stay and Play sessions remain an important tool in assessing and supporting local children and families. These sessions were taken on line during the early pandemic but returned in the summer. There is now a programme of sessions to help reintroduce children and parents to Children's Centres. Numbers are however limited due to Covid restrictions. These sessions remain free for families to use and there are no plans to introduce any charges.
- An operating loss of £1.1m was predicted for Children's Centres for the year to March 2021. It is hoped that central government will compensate local government for incomes lost due to Covid which will offset 75% of lost childcare fees. There will be further opportunities for reimbursement from central government as Centres continue to face losses as a result of Covid. Both the Early Years Strategy and the Early Help Review will assess how the early years sector is supported across health and care systems.

6.6 It is noted that take up of 2 year old free entitlement for vulnerable and low income families has reduced over the pandemic. How is the Council continuing to target this cohort of vulnerable children to make sure that they receive the help that they are entitled to?

- The proportion of children entitled to the 2 year old free entitlement which have taken up childcare places was about 64% in Hackney. Overall numbers have declined by approximately 100 children, whilst disappointing, this is a relatively small proportion of the overall number of children involved. It should be recognised that parents do have genuine concerns about taking their children to childcare and this is made more difficult as parents themselves cannot enter premises to help transition and settle children.
- The Early Years service was making contact with all eligible families to make sure they are aware of the free childcare available to them. Where it is possible to match information from the DWP with local contact data, families are being contacted directly by telephone to explain in further detail how they can access this important service. Children's Centres help to broker a place for such children in childcare settings if a place was not available in the local Children's Centre. It was acknowledged however, that this work is currently challenging.

6.7 Given that providers in the Private, Voluntary and Independent sector support a majority of early years places, it is concerning to note that there continues to be widespread financial uncertainty in this part of the childcare sector. What work is being undertaken to further understand the financial needs of this sector? How is the Council ensuring that PVI childcare settings are aware of and claiming necessary financial support?

- The Early Years service was familiar with the needs of the PVI sector as regular contact was maintained with most local settings. A Business Support function was available through the Early Years Service to ensure that settings access the grants that they are entitled to and support them in business planning. The most important issue however was the number of children attending because if there were insufficient numbers then the nursery would not be viable in the longer term. The only way to improve numbers was to advertise and promote their business locally.

6.8 The Chair thanked officers for attending and responding to questions from the Commission. This is a standing item within the Commission's work programme and it will revisit this in the next municipal year (2021/22).

7.0 Cabinet Member for Early Years, Families and Play - Q & A

7.1 The Cabinet member for Families, Early Years and Play attended to respond to questions within this portfolio. The Commission agreed to focus questioning on Childhood Poverty and for the Cabinet member to address the following questions:

1. How have local estimates of local childhood poverty been impacted by Covid 19? What do local data (such as free school meal entitlement) reveal about the nature of childhood poverty in Hackney?
2. How is the Council (together with community partners) tackling local childhood poverty? What are the Council priorities and how are families most at risk of childhood poverty being supported (e.g. single parent households, families with children under 5, BAME households). How are local services working together to coordinate a package of support for local families in need?
3. The Government has announced the £170m package (Covid Winter Grant Scheme) to support children and families over holiday periods. Can further detail be provided as to how much Hackney is likely to receive and how this money will be utilised to support local families?

7.2 The Cabinet member for Families, Early Years and Play responded to the Commission:

Data

- The Cabinet welcomed the opportunity to raise the issue of local childhood poverty and to explain how the Council and local partnerships were supporting local families in need.

Overview & Scrutiny

- Whilst there was no official data on the impact of Covid on childhood poverty, local data indicated that around 48% of children were after housing costs living in poverty (where household income did not exceed £14k). This is the 3rd highest rate of child poverty in London after Newham and Tower Hamlets.
- The proportion of children claiming free school meals has risen over the past 12 months from 32.2% to 35.2%. This is an increase of 777 children to 12,074 children.

Council Response

- All schools have been open to support vulnerable children throughout the pandemic, and most early years settings are now open providing childcare and early years support.
- School attendance has averaged around 90% since the start of the autumn term, which is not far from the average pre-covid (94%).
- The Council is working on three levels of support, Crisis, Medium term (longer term impact of poverty) and Preventative (early help).
- A Community Partnerships Network has been developed which will meet the immediate needs of those in poverty (food, power, water etc). Over 3000 meals a week and 2000 grocery top-ups were being delivered each week through the network.
- External funds had been levered in through DeFRA, Unicef and other charitable bodies. £280k of grants funding had been rerouted to support the community response.
- The Council had invested a further £500k in the Discretionary Crisis Support Scheme to bring immediate support to those in need.
- In terms of preventative measures these are focused on housing and employment measures and both of these are longer term challenges.
- Children's Centres have remained open throughout the pandemic and have continued to support children in need through Multi-Agency Teams.

Questions from the Commission

7.3 How does the Council know that it's reaching those most in need?

- The Council has undertaken a lot of work to understand local needs and those elements of the community which may be most in need. There have been many localised initiatives which, with their local knowledge of the community have been instrumental in reaching families who are in need which may not have come to the attention of the Council.

7.4 How is the Council working with HCVS in tackling childhood poverty?

- HCVS have become central to the local relief effort and helping to coordinate help to those communities most in need. HCVS has more effective reach into some local communities than the Council, so this helps to ensure that support is available to a much wider range of families and children. There were many scores of affiliated local organisations to HCVS.

7.5 The Urswick School has among the highest rates of social deprivation in London, yet a significant number of eligible families are not applying for free

school meals? What more can the Council do to target those families eligible for free school meals for their children and support them to make a claim?

- It was acknowledged that more could always be done to promote eligibility, and that the Covid Winter Grant would have a food focus which would enable support this. Whilst many council support programmes target vulnerable and in need families, it should be recognised that a stigma remains for receiving help and that some families do find it difficult to ask for help. Dignity and choice should be embedded in any local offer or assistance scheme to local families. It would be important to find new and creative ways to reach families in need in which they can accept help and obtain the support that they may need.

7.6 Is there a current welfare assistance scheme operated by the Council, and if so, what are the eligibility criteria and the level of funding available through it?

- The Discretionary Crisis Support Grant was available for families in need which has a budget of £500k. The Cabinet member agreed to supply further information about this scheme to the Commission.

Agreed: That further information to be provided to the Commission on the Discretionary Crisis Support Grant (budget, eligibility, promotion, take up etc).

Covid 19 Winter Grant

- A £170m national package of support has been made available to support families in need of the holiday period. Hackney has been allocated £1.1m from this fund to support local families with food and essential needs which must be spent by 31st March 2021.
- 80% of funding is ring fenced to support children and families of which 80% must be used to provide help with food or with utilities.
- It is intended to distribute £45 vouchers to 2,200 children under 5 identified by Children's Centres to be in need and to a further 11,500 children who are on the free school meal register. This will use approximately £600k of the total allocated grant.
- It was hoped that some monies could be used to raise awareness of free school meal entitlement and to enable families to apply.
- The remainder of the grant will be used to establish a fuel voucher scheme and further support for the Community Partnership Network. A fundraising drive will also be launched this week together with three community hubs where people can donate to support local families. There will also be an offer for children at Easter for children in need to be funded from the remainder of the grant.

Questions from the Commission

7.7 What criteria will Children's Centres be using to identify children in need and to target additional funds?

- For the children in schools the free school meal eligibility criteria will apply. This will mean that over 12,000 children will be supported through the scheme.

- Early Years will use the 2 year old free entitlement to determine eligibility for around 1200 children, but will also distribute children who are receiving support through a Child Protection Plan, Children in Need or who have a social worker.

7.8 The Chair thanked the Cabinet member for attending and responding to questions from the Commission.

8.0 Work Programme

8.1 The Commission noted and agreed the current work programme to the end of the municipal year is available for the Commission to review.

9.0 Minutes

9.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd November 2020 were reviewed by the Commission and noted the following actions:

- 1) The Children and Families Service provided further equalities data as requested by the Commission from 8th September 2020 meeting:
 - a) An equalities analysis of children's social care interventions at item 9a
 - b) A breakdown ethnicity of managers in Children and Families Service at item 9b
- 2) The Children and Families Service provided further data on the number of complaints received by Children and Families Service for 2019/20.

9.2. The Commission agreed the minutes.

10.0 Any Other Business

10.1 There was no other business and the meeting closed at 21.35. The date of the next meeting

The meeting closed at 21.35