

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 12 July 2021

7.00 pm

Until further notice, all Council meetings will be held remotely

Contact:

Martin Bradford

☎ 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 Anna Lynch, Troughton, Sizer, Young and Cllr Caroline Selman

Co-optees: Richard Brown, Shabnum Hassan, Salmah Kansara, Steven Olalere, Jo
Macleod, Ernell Watson and Michael Lobenstein

Agenda

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- | | | |
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| 1 | Agenda & Papers | (Pages 5 - 80) |
| 2 | Minutes of 12th July 2021 | (Pages 81 - 96) |

Access and Information

Getting to the Town Hall

For a map of how to find the Town Hall, please visit the council's website <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/contact-us.htm> or contact the Overview and Scrutiny Officer using the details provided on the front cover of this agenda.

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Further Information about the Commission

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



Public Involvement and Recording

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Rights of Press and Public to Report on Meetings

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Overview & Scrutiny

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission London Borough of Hackney

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

Date: Monday 12th July 2021 at 7.00pm

**Venue: Council Chamber, Hackney Town Hall,
Mare Street, London. E8 1EA**

The press and public are welcome to join this meeting remotely via the live link below:

<https://youtu.be/ubaly8vHPrU>

If you would like to attend in person you will need to give notice (to the clerk) and note the Covid-19 guidance provided below.

Clerk: Martin Bradford, Overview & Scrutiny Officer
0208 356 3315/0775 9090040
martin.bradford@hackney.gov.uk

Ian Williams
Acting Chief Executive, London Borough of Hackney

Council Members:	Cllr Sophie Conway	Cllr Margaret Gordon
	(Chair)	(Vice Chair)
	Cllr Humaira Garasia	Cllr Katie Hanson
	Cllr Anna Lynch	Cllr James Peters
	Cllr Caroline Selman	Cllr Anya Sizer
	Cllr Lynne Troughton	Cllr Sara Young

VACANT 1 Labour
 1 Opposition

Co-opted Members: **Richard Brown, Justine McDonald, Shabnum Hassan, Steven Olalere, Jo Macleod, Salmah Kansara, Ernell Watson and Michael Lobenstein.**

Publication Date **2nd July 2021**

Agenda

	Welcome and Introduction (19.00)
1.	Apologies for Absence
2.	Urgent Items / Order of Business
3.	Declarations of Interest
4.	<p>Commissioning Independent SEND Provision (19.10) At its meeting on May 11th 2021, the Commission received a report on SEND performance and financial recovery plan. In response to local concerns about independent SEND provision, it was agreed that a further follow-up report would be provided to allow the Commission to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The nature of independent SEND provision and how such services are commissioned; - The type of contracts issued to independent provision and how these are monitored and reviewed; - The cost of independent SEND provision. <p>Joe Wilson, Head of SEND Fran Cox, Head of High Needs and School Places Annie Gammon, Director of Education</p>
5.	<p>Children & Families Budget Monitoring (19.55) Budget monitoring is a key element of the scrutiny function and the Commission monitors in-year spending on services for children and young people across respective Directorates.</p> <p>The Children and Families Service budget outturn for the year to March 2021 is presented for review.</p> <p>Naeem Ahmed, Director of Finance Children, Education, Adults, Health & Integration Diane Benjamin, Director of Children's Social Care</p>
6.	<p>Action Plan in response to Ofsted Inspection (20.25) Ofsted inspected the Children and Families Services in Hackney in November of 2019 where children's social care was adjudged to 'require improvement'.</p> <p>Six areas were identified by Ofsted to need improvement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The quality of information-sharing by partners and the quality of decision-making within strategy discussions.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The assessment of the impact for children of living in neglectful environments to inform authoritative and child-centred practice. 3. The quality of assessment and planning for children subject to private fostering arrangements. 4. The timeliness and effectiveness of pre-proceedings work, including the quality of contingency planning. 5. The welfare of children who are missing education or who are home educated is safeguarded. 6. The effectiveness of management oversight by leaders and managers at all levels, including the effectiveness of oversight from child protection conference chairs. <p>In response to the inspection, the Children & Families Service drew up a Childrens Social Care Action plan which was submitted to Ofsted for approval in March 2020. The Commission scrutinised progress against this action plan in November 2020.</p> <p>Two reports are submitted as part of the ongoing scrutiny of the improvements required by the Ofsted inspection:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An update on the Children’s Social Care Action Plan 2. Proposals to review the Unit Model of Social Work in Hackney <p>Diane Benjamin, Director of Children Social Care Lisa Aldridge, Head of Safeguarding & Learning Huw Bevan, Head of Family Intervention & Support Service</p>
7.	<p>CYP Work Programme 2021/22 (21.10) To receive and update on the Commission's work programme.</p>
8.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting (21.20) To note and agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 14th June 2021.</p>
9.	<p>Any other business (21.20)</p>
	<p>Meeting Close 21.20</p>

Access and Information

Covid 19 - Public Guidance for attendance

This guidance is intended to support members of the public who wish to attend meetings of the Council do so in a Covid-safe way.

Introduction

All of the Council's buildings have been adapted to ensure that, so far as possible, they are a Covid-safe environment. However it is also important that individuals are taking appropriate action based on their personal circumstances and needs.

Attending a meeting can also increase the risk to yourself and others. You must think whether it is essential for you to attend. You should consider:

- Whether you can watch the meeting online - all Council meetings are being live-streamed.
- Whether you have specific health-related concerns that would put you at risk.

You can use the guidance below to assist you. You can also contact governanceservices@hackney.gov.uk if there are any specific questions you have after reading it.

Public Attendance

The Town Hall is not presently open to the general public, and there is limited capacity within the meeting rooms. However, the High Court has ruled that where meetings are required to be 'open to the public' or 'held in public' then members of the public are entitled to have access by way of physical attendance at the meeting.

The Council will ensure that access by the public is in line with any Covid-19 restrictions that may be in force from time to time and also in line with public health advice.

Those members of the public who wish to observe a meeting are still encouraged to make use of the live-stream facility in the first instance. You can find the link on the agenda front sheet.

Members of the public who would ordinarily attend a meeting to ask a question, make a deputation or present a petition will be able to attend if they wish. They may also let the relevant committee support officer know that they would like the Chair of the meeting to ask the question, make the deputation or present the petition on their behalf (in line with current Constitutional arrangements).

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In the case of the Planning Sub-Committee, those wishing to make representations at the meeting should attend in person where possible.

Regardless of why you want to attend a meeting, you will need to advise the relevant committee support officer of your intention in advance of the meeting date in order to support track and trace. You can find contact details for the committee support officer on the agenda front page.

The committee support officer will be able to confirm whether the proposed attendance can be accommodated with the room capacities that exist to ensure that the meeting is covid-secure.

As there will be a maximum capacity in each meeting room, priority will be given to those who are attending to participate in a meeting rather than observe.

Members of the public who are attending a meeting for a specific purpose, rather than general observation, are encouraged to leave the meeting at the end of the item for which they are present. This is particularly important in the case of the Planning Sub-Committee, as it may have a number of items on the agenda involving public representation.

Before attending the meeting

Please review the information below as this is important in minimising the risk for everyone.

If you are experiencing covid symptoms, you should follow government guidance. Under no circumstances should you attend a meeting if you are experiencing covid symptoms.

Anyone experiencing symptoms of Coronavirus is eligible to book a swab test to find out if they have the virus. You can register for a test after checking your symptoms [through the NHS website](#). If you do not have access to the internet, or have difficulty with the digital portals, you are able to call the 119 service to book a test.

If you are an essential worker and you are experiencing Coronavirus symptoms, you can apply for priority testing through GOV.UK by following the [guidance for essential workers](#). You can also get tested through this route if you have symptoms of coronavirus and live with an essential worker.

Availability of home testing in the case of people with symptoms is limited, so please use testing centres where you can.

Even if you are not experiencing covid symptoms, you are requested to take an asymptomatic test (lateral flow test) in the 24 hours before attending the meeting.

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You can take a test by visiting a lateral flow test centre; [ordering a lateral flow kit to be sent to your home](#); or picking up a kit from designated collection points. You can find details of the rapid testing sites in Hackney [here](#). You can find your nearest collection point [here](#).

You must not attend a lateral flow test site if you have Coronavirus symptoms; rather you must book a test appointment at your nearest walk-through or drive-through centre.

Lateral flow tests take around 30 minutes to deliver a result, so please factor the time it will take to administer the test and then wait for the result when deciding when to take the test.

If your lateral flow test returns a positive result then you must follow Government guidance; self-isolate and make arrangements for a PCR test. Under no circumstances should you attend the meeting.

Attending the Town Hall for meetings

To make our buildings Covid-safe, it is very important that you observe the rules and guidance on social distancing, one-way systems, hand washing, and the wearing of masks (unless you are exempt from doing so). You must follow all the signage and measures that have been put in place. They are there to keep you and others safe.

To minimise risk, we ask that you arrive at the Town Hall no more than ten minutes before the meeting is scheduled to commence. You will be invited into the meeting room five minutes before the meeting starts.

You should enter the Town Hall via the front entrance. You will be required to sign in and have your temperature checked as you enter the building. Security will direct you to the Council Chamber or Committee Room as appropriate.

Seats will be allocated, and you must remain in the seat that has been allocated to you.

It is recommended that you bring a bottle of water with you.

If you are attending the meeting for a specific item on the agenda then we ask that you leave the meeting and the building once that item has been concluded.

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Report Title:	SEND Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools
Meeting for:	Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission
Date:	12 July 2021
Produced by:	Joe Wilson, Head of SEND
Authorised by:	Fran Cox, Head of High Needs and School Places

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. Hackney Education is ambitious about improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and is taking a whole system approach to achieve the step change needed. This requires key stakeholders and partner agencies working together with children, young people and their families or carers, to meet needs and ensure that they are educated closer to home with the right support which would enable them to live, learn and grow up locally where they benefit from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them to succeed in life. Hackney Council and its partners work within the statutory requirements of Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and have regard to the guidance within the SEND Code of Practice 2015.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report is to provide information and assurance to the CYP Scrutiny Commission on the current position and future plans for the commissioning of Independent and Non-Maintained Special School (INMSS) provision for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) as part of Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND) provision in Hackney.
- 1.3. To date, INMSS placements have not been contracted or purchased through a planned commissioned process, but have developed over time with statutory requirements being met through spot purchasing arrangements. This means that overarching formal contracts, with clear and consistent monitoring arrangements are not currently in place, and Hackney Council has not been able to make the most of economic controls. This has led to the urgent need to put in place an interim improvement plan around issuance of robust National Schools and Colleges Contracts with all Independent, Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) and ensuring that rigorous due diligence accreditation checks are completed on all incumbent providers.
- 1.4. The future commissioning plan would be to establish a compliant route to market through a procurement exercise as a single authority procurement (Hackney Council only). This approach was endorsed by Hackney Education Senior Leadership Team (SLT) following an Options Appraisal. The procurement exercise would be done through a Pseudo Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) that allows providers to join on an ongoing basis. A Pseudo DPS is an electronic purchasing mechanism that is used in Procurement for the selection of suppliers that allows service user choice to be incorporated. Therefore, this formalised approach to the market will increase choice, responsiveness and quality of service for children and young people with an EHCP placed in INMSS. The introduction of a commissioning approach will bring the ability to manage financial pressures through robust contract monitoring.

- 1.5 In addition to this, Hackney Council has expanded its Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group (CCRAG) membership from including residential placements to including SEND INMSS placements. This would expand market reach when sourcing INMSS placements and Hackney would benefit from collective influence, improved market intelligence and greater leverage around fee negotiations and shared quality assurance. More information on CCRAG can be found in the supporting links provided.

2. Background

- 2.1 Children and young people have special educational needs if they find it significantly more difficult to learn, or if they have a disability where the educational facilities used by others of their age are not equally accessible to them. They often face multiple barriers which make it more difficult for them to reach their full potential. Early identification and support is crucial in improving outcomes and reducing inequalities.
- 2.2 If it is felt that a child may have special educational needs and may need extra support, they are assessed to find out what their needs are. The school then arranges appropriate support for the child, known as SEN Support. Often the school or setting will be able to meet these needs and offer them a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum throughout their education, including additional support or learning in different ways to other children of their age.
- 2.3 The majority of Hackney children and young people with SEND are placed within the council's mainstream schools with SEN support (4,873 according to the January 2021 School Census).
- 2.4 If a child has special educational needs that are not being met by SEN Support, or their needs are so substantial that a mainstream setting can't meet them, then they will be assessed to see if they need an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP). This is a legal document that identifies the Educational, Health and Social Care needs of the child and sets out the additional support to meet those needs. EHCPs follow a child throughout their time in education, potentially up to the age of 25.
- 2.5 According to January 2021 School Census data there are 1543 Hackney learners with EHCPs placed in Hackney mainstream schools. There are 373 learners with EHCPs placed at Hackney special schools. However, there is a percentage of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) whose individual specialist needs cannot be met within Hackney mainstream or funded special schools, primarily due to complexity or lack of local specialist placements. In these circumstances, places are purchased from SEND Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools in or out of the borough or Out of Borough maintained special school provision.
- 2.6 All children and young people requiring SEND specialist INMSS placements have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The EHCP describes the child or young person's specific education, health and care needs and the support they require to achieve and fully meet their needs. SEN2 Data Returns reported that there were 2,249 Hackney children and young people with an EHCP as of January 2020 and 2,645 as of January 2021. This increase is in part due to the increased age threshold for children and young people with SEND from 18 years old to 25 years old.
- 2.7 Children and young people with SEND who are over 16 continue their education in a range of settings. The number of post 16 children and young people with EHCPs is

266 as at March 2021. Post 16s attend a range of settings including mainstream school sixth form courses, college courses, supported internships and traineeships.

2.8 Cordis Bright provides research on SEN trends nationally and how these trends vary between local areas focusing on numbers and rates of children with SEN, types of need, profile of provision used to respond to these needs and spending on Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools. According to Cordis Bright in their 2019 report, when comparing the percentage of children and young people with an EHCP placed in Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS), Hackney was an outlier with the highest increase at 14.9% compared to an England average of 6%. Hackney Council currently has 474 (as at the end of May 2021) children and young people with EHCPs attending 100 Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools, both within and outside Hackney borders. The majority of these children and young people have their specialist needs appropriately met in day provision within Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools. There are only five children and young people with EHCPs who require a residential school setting to effectively meet their specialist needs.

3. An Outline of Current SEND Commissioning strategy/ approach of independent provision e.g. what criteria and other quality standards inform commissioning of independent provision.

3.1 Hackney Council aims to commission suitable high quality INMSS placements through effective commissioning and quality assurance processes and partnership working with key stakeholders such as service users, practitioners, other local authorities and the provider market.

3.2 This will be achieved through due diligence, accreditation checks and implementation of the National Schools and Colleges Contract as an interim improvement measure. Officers have developed a rigorous accreditation process that all current providers are in the process of completing prior to signing up to the National Schools and Colleges Contract. The criteria on the accreditation process includes the requirement for schools to confirm whether they recognise trade unions and if they are adhering to the Statutory School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) to determine their teachers' pay and conditions, in addition to insurance checks, financial viability checks among other criteria.

3.3 Officers are already working on priorities around improving outcomes, delivery of value for money and robust contract monitoring of INMSS placements. Officers will continue to check Ofsted ratings as well as outcomes of the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspections.

3.4 The Independent Schools Standards also provide clear criteria to be considered in line with the Education (Independent Schools) Regulation 2014. The standards cover:

- Quality of education provided
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- Suitability of Staff, Supply Staff and Proprietors
- Premises of and Accommodation at schools
- Provision of information
- Manner in which complaints are handled
- Quality of leadership in and management of schools

4. Outline of future SEND Commissioning strategy/ approach of independent provision

- 4.1 The future SEND Commissioning approach for INMSS placements is to develop and undertake a Hackney Council-only procurement exercise via a Pseudo Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). Through a Pseudo DPS, providers will agree to deliver the services based on a common specification and terms at the prices agreed, but it does not guarantee any level of business to providers. This gives us a contract within which we can engage places for children and young people as needed. This will also allow the continued use of the National Schools and Colleges Contract. Providers of INMSS services who are not part of the Pseudo DPS, including those that may have previously applied and failed, will be given a further opportunity to obtain a place. This would increase competition in the market and allow new entries to the market to offer a range of INMSS that meets the wide range of pupil needs, and delivers transparency, flexibility and responsiveness necessary to ensure that Hackney Council continues to meet its statutory requirements in full.
- 4.2 In addition to the Pseudo DPS, Hackney Council has expanded its membership with the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group (CCRAG) which is a partnership consisting of 34 Local Authorities from the East, South East and South West Regions of England hosted by Hertfordshire Council, who are committed to working together to support the sourcing, contracting, monitoring and annual fee negotiations for children's placements in Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools as well as children's residential care homes. The CCRAG database offers up to date placement vacancies in the market and this information is useful when sourcing placements. CCRAG offers all its partner local authorities shared quality assurance and fee negotiations as well as provision of up-to-date information on service providers. It also offers a reduction in duplication of tasks and sharing of information securely in one place where all its partner local authorities can easily access it. Hackney Council already used CCRAG services for its children's residential placements and this has now been expanded to cover Hackney's INMSS placements at the cost of £4,000 per annum.
- 4.3 By working collaboratively with other local authorities, Hackney Council would gain improved market intelligence regarding capacity in the market to undertake collective strategic market management and shaping as well as achieve greater collective leverage and influence over fee negotiations and pricing, variation of contracts and outcomes expected to be delivered.

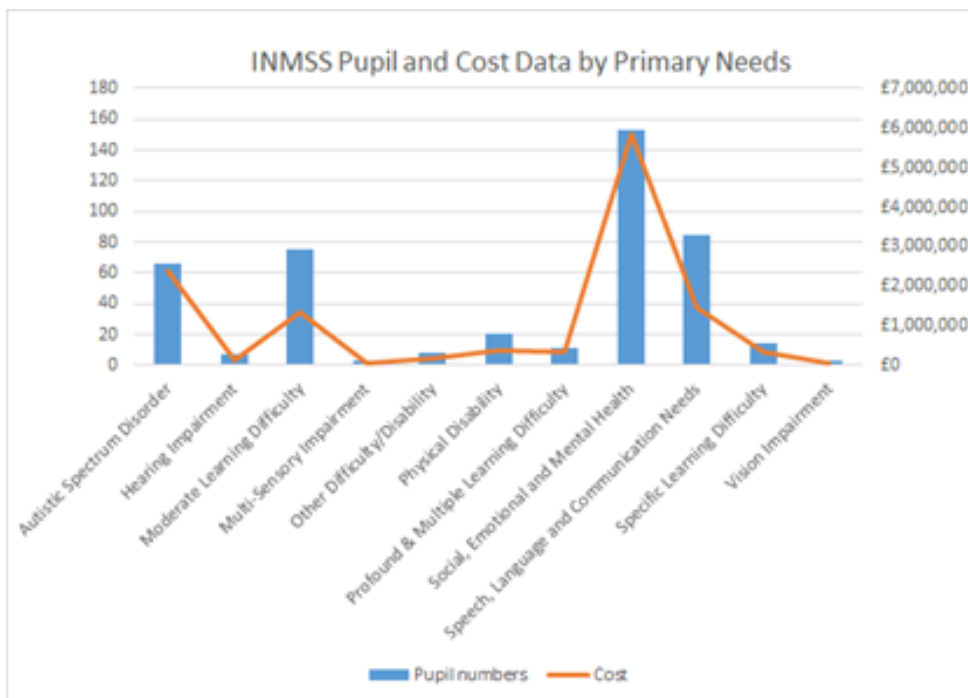
5. Overview/analysis of the nature of services commissioned by independent providers i.e. what areas of SEND provision is being commissioned and are we commissioning more of one type of provision etc

- 5.1 Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the most common primary type of need of children and young people with an EHCP in Hackney and these numbers are projected to increase for primary school aged children and 0 to 5 year olds. Hackney Council has a published All Age Autism Strategy 2019 to 2024 which sets out that the council and its partners will ensure equal access to specialist and mainstream services for people with autism, their families and carers. Further primary need growth in secondary and post 16 education phases is Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH), Speech Language & Communication Needs (SLCN) and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD).
- 5.2 A significant proportion of the SEND Budget is spent on Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools placements for Social, Emotional and Mental Health

(SEMH) placements in secondary and post 16 education phases. Analysis indicates that Hackney has an overreliance on Independent, Non-Maintained Special School placements (INMSS) when compared to other local authorities, due in part to historic under-capacity in Hackney’s local maintained specialist provision particularly for SEMH. Evidence suggests that Hackney Council utilises independent provision as a last resort for secondary phase SEMH places due to a gap in local provision.

5.3 The graph 2 below is taken from a recent analysis of primary needs and shows the numbers of learners and total cost for each primary need group placed within Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools in 2020/21.

Graph 2 - INMSS Pupil Numbers vs Cost Data by Primary Needs



6. Data on the number of value contracts (with for comparison, data on maintained provision)

6.1 2020/21 total annual expenditure on placements in independent schools was £13.8m. Independent Special Schools and Non-Maintained Special Schools (specialist settings only) had an average unit cost of £43,672 (not including average travel cost of around £7,800) for 166 learners in 2020/21. However, the remaining 308 learners were placed in Independent Schools (that are not specifically specialist such as residential homes with onsite education including Section 41 schools of the Children and Families Act 2014) and this includes 256 learners placed within 23 Orthodox Jewish independent schools.

Hackney’s 3 Maintained Specialist schools’ total spend for 2020/21 was £12.2m with an average cost of £32,700 for 373 learners. This is still considerably lower than an Independent Special School or Non-Maintained Special School.

INMSS placement costs are significantly more expensive compared to an average placement in a Hackney Maintained mainstream provision of approximately £9,100 with a total spend of £8m on 873 learners. This includes 7 Maintained mainstream

schools that have ARP/SEND units attached to them, offering 77 specialist primary places. An additional 84 maintained specialist places (50 places in secondary and 34 places in primary) in Hackney will commence in September 2021.

6.2 Table 1 below shows the actual budget spent on the total number of learners and the average unit cost of placing within Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools each financial year over a period of 5 years.

Table 1 - Financial Data 2016 to 2021

Financial Year	Total Actuals	Pupil Numbers	Average Unit Cost
2016/17	£8,178,710	272	£30,069
2017/18	£8,671,229	282	£30,749
2018/19	£9,895,271	328	£30,169
2019/20	£11,094,920	376	£29,508
2020/21	£13,800,000**	474**	£29,100**

***2020/21 based on budget forecasts as at end of May 2021 (Source: Hackney Education SEND Finance Data 2020/21)*

6.3 Based on the above Table 1, the past 4 years' trends data shows a total of 202 new placements ranging from 10 to 98 placements per year and presenting roughly 11% of the 2020/21 INMSS cohort. This is in line with the national picture showing that 10 to 14% of the INMSS cohort represents new placements each academic year. Therefore, the estimated average new placements made each year is 51 placements at an average unit cost of £29,100. Giving an estimated total annual value of the contract for the Pseudo DPS to be approximately £1.5m per annum. The year on year review of increase in actual spend for the past 4 years confirms an average increase of £1.5m per annum. Further financial analysis would be done through the development of the Pseudo DPS business case.

7. Overview of the nature of contracts - are these long term or spot contracts?

7.1 Currently, all Independent and Non-Maintained Special School placements are spot contracts. There are contracts with four providers with a total annual spend of over £1m each that are non-compliant with Hackney Council's standing orders.

7.2 Placements are currently purchased on an at-need basis. There has been a historical gap in significant engagement with external providers about overall contracts, which

has led to a disjunction in placement costs, quality and outcomes offered by the market and as a result, the market is not sufficiently calibrated to meet Hackney's placement needs.

- 7.3 The National Schools and Colleges Contract is a rolling contract with break clauses and a Schedule 2 Individual Placement Agreement for each Hackney learner. The nature of this contract will enable rigorous dual contract management of the school performance as an organisation focusing on value for money and quality and at an individual learner level focusing on monitoring individual outcomes.
- 7.4 Individual Placement Agreements (Schedule 2) are issued for each Hackney learner placed in INMSS placements detailing fees and services provided. This is aligned to Annual Reviews of each individual learner's EHCP outcomes.

8. Details of how contracts with the independent sector are monitored and reviewed

- 8.1 Contracts will be monitored and reviewed through CCRAAG quality assurance shared arrangements and under the auspices of the contract schedules set out in the National Schools and Colleges Contract. This would include quality assurance site visits to inspect the quality of teaching, learning, safeguarding, insurances, policies and procedures as well as seeking feedback on experiences of children and young people and their parents/carers among other key areas.
- 8.2 In addition, a best value ranking list would be developed, ranking all providers on the Pseudo DPS on contract performance, quality, outcomes and price. The best value ranking list would not be used for call-off decision-making, rather it would be used to drive continuous improvements in terms of quality, outcomes and value for money.
- 8.3 Hackney Council has a dedicated Senior Contracts Officer who would provide oversight on the fee uplift process and ensure that providers submit business cases for review and decision-making by senior managers. In order to future proof this, the due diligence accreditation checks and fee uplift process and contract monitoring templates would be made available to providers on a Hackney webpage.
- 8.4 Through rigorous contract monitoring, Hackney Council would seek to:
- ensure there is capacity in the local market to provide appropriate placements to meet the needs of its children and young people with an EHCP who require an INMSS placement.
 - deliver better terms and consistent prices from high cost and volume providers, through improved relationships, strong negotiation and the enforcement of identified ceiling rates.

List of Supporting Documents

- The full accreditation form can be viewed here: [Hackney INMSS & SPIs Accreditation Form](#)
- The Due Diligence Process for INMSS can be viewed here: [Hackney Due Diligence Process](#)
- The National Schools and Colleges Contract documents can be viewed here: [National Schools and Colleges Contract](#)

- The Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group information can be viewed here: [CCRAG](#) and further information can be found on here [CCRAG Information](#)
- The Independent Schools Standards can be viewed here: [Independent Schools Standards](#)
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 can be viewed here: [Education ISS Regs](#)
- Cordis Bright 2019 report slide 27 which shows that Hackney was an outlier for percentage of children and young people with an EHCP in INMSS can be viewed here: Cordis [Bright 2019 report](#) and [Cordis Bright 2020 report](#) slide 32 shows that Hackney has dropped to second position.

GLOSSARY

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

CCRAG - Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group

Cordis Bright - Cordis Bright provides research on SEN trends nationally and how these trends vary between local areas focusing on numbers and rates of children with SEN, types of need, profile of provision used to respond to these needs and spending on Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools (i.e. specialist provision that is used when children's needs cannot be met locally)

EHCP - Education, Health and Care Plan

Independent School - An Independent School is any school which provides full time education for 5 or more pupils of compulsory school age and is not controlled or financed by a Local Authority, which is usually run for profit. These are often private schools owned by an individual, group of shareholders, private or public (Plc) or possibly owned by an organisation (e.g. Venture Capitalists)

INMSS - Independent, Non-Maintained Special Schools

ISI - Independent Schools Inspectorate

ISS - Independent Schools Standards

Maintained Schools - Maintained schools are schools that are publicly funded and are overseen or 'maintained' by the local authority. These schools must follow the national curriculum and national teacher pay and conditions.

MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulties

NMSS - Non-Maintained Special Schools are run on a not for profit basis usually by charitable trusts, not for profit organisations but may own a limited company as well and are generally faith-based or charities. There is no official profit motive but requires surpluses for investment and to support other charitable activities

Pseudo DPS - A Pseudo Dynamic Purchasing System is an electronic purchasing mechanism that is used in Procurement for the selection of suppliers that allows service user choice to be incorporated.

SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs

SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SLCN - Speech Language & Communication Needs

SLT - Hackney Education Senior Leadership Team

STPCD - Statutory School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document



Hackney's Due Diligence Process for Independent, Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) and Specialist Post-16 Institutions (SPIs)

1.0 Purpose of this document

This due diligence process sets out requirements for Independent, Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) and Special Post-16 Institutions (SPIs) to be considered by Hackney Council as providers of educational placements for learners with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

2.0 Registrations / Inspections

All providers are required to be registered with the Department for Education (DfE) prior to being considered for placements. If a provider is undergoing the Ofsted registration process, Hackney Council may place with providers once the following two conditions have been met:

1. Ofsted registration has been completed and the report has been provided to Hackney Council;
2. A quality assurance visit has been undertaken by Hackney Council or its Quality Assurance CCRAG partner.

Both documents must be uploaded on the provider page on the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group ([CCRAG](#)) portal.

Hackney Council must have access to the most recent inspection reports by all relevant bodies including Ofsted, the Independent Schools Inspectorate and the Care Quality Commission. Providers inspected by Ofsted must be rated as Good or Outstanding to be considered for placements by Hackney Council. Providers inspected by the Independent School Standards must meet the minimum standards required to be considered for placements by Hackney Council. Providers inspected by the Care Quality Commission must be rated as Good or Outstanding to be considered for placements by Hackney Council.

Hackney Council is a member of the Children's Cross Council Regional Arrangements Group ([CCRAG](#)). The most recent CCRAG quality assurance visit report may also be considered during the due diligence process.

3.0 Contractual Arrangements

All providers are required to be compliant with all clauses of the National Schools Contract and Hackney Council's Schedule 6 variation. This also includes the requirement to sign up to the Pseudo DPS. Hackney Council's Schedule 6 variation is reviewed on an annual basis and clauses may be changed or added in future years. A National Schools Contract's Schedule 2 Individual Placement Agreement must also be agreed for each individual placement.

The Pseudo DPS is for School/College placements within INMSS and SPIs. The contract monitoring arrangements would ensure that the placement process is managed effectively by the local authority in terms of ensuring pupil outcomes, service quality, suitability and a fair and equitable service that is accessible to all young people. For the above reasons, we intend to use the Pseudo DPS for placements moving forward.

A further mechanism for quality assurance of placements is via the [CCRAG](#) portal. This CCRAG database forms an important part of Hackney Council's placement allocation process; therefore all providers are required to register on the CCRAG portal. CCRAG allows providers to upload all necessary documentation, such as safeguarding policy, behaviour management policy and quality assurance documents to their own provider page.

4.0 Finance Appraisals and Insurance

Hackney Council requires assurance that providers' financial health is satisfactory. Financial appraisals will be conducted via Dun & Bradstreet financial viability checks. Hackney Council will communicate the outcome of financial appraisals to settings by letter or e-mail.

Insurance must be in place as appropriate for the provision, including employers' and public liability, professional indemnity and motor vehicle insurance for any vehicle transporting pupils. Hackney Council expects the following in relation to insurance cover:

- Public Liability: Minimum £10 Million
- Employer Liability: Minimum £5 Million
- Professional Indemnity: Minimum: £2 Million
- Motor Insurance: Fully Comprehensive Cover with the relevant cover for their class of business
- Buildings and Contents Insurance

In addition to the finance appraisals and insurance checks, providers will also be asked to provide the following:

- School and Subcontractor Details
- Staffing Capacity and DBS Checks
- Certification of compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015
- Policies and Procedures

The full accreditation form can be viewed in Appendix 1 below.

5.0 Establishment/vendor/proprietor details

Providers must make available registered company and VAT details or registered charity details as applicable.

6.0 Governance & Structure

Providers must be able to provide evidence of the skills, experience and abilities of the Leadership Team and Governance. This should also extend to assurance that all members of staff within the settings hold the required qualifications for their role that they have successfully completed vetting through the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and that satisfactory references were obtained. Providers must also ensure that appropriate checks are in place for volunteers, visitors and external instructors visiting the site. A complete and accurate single central record must be maintained, which may be requested during quality assurance visits. Evidence of ongoing analysis of trends and effectiveness of school improvement strategies should also be made available.

Providers must meet all statutory requirements and legislation relevant to the setting including, but not limited to, [The Non-Maintained Special Schools \(England\) Regulations 2015](#); [The Independent Schools Standards 2019](#); [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#); [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#); [School Premises Regulations 2012](#); [Part 5 of The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#); [Equality Act 2010](#); [Teachers' Standards](#); [Fire safety in new and existing school buildings](#); [Disqualification under the childcare Act 2006](#); [SEND code of practice 0-25](#); [National minimum standards for residential special schools](#); [Children's homes regulations \(DfE guidance\)](#); [Prevent duty guidance](#); Children Act 1089; [Children Act 2004](#); [Education Act 1996](#); [Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#).

7.0 Policies and Procedures

Providers must ensure that statutory policies and procedures are in place and reviewed regularly, as set out in DfE guidance [Statutory Policies for Schools](#). These policies will need to be submitted to Hackney Council during the due diligence process and uploaded to the CCRAAG portal where appropriate.

In particular, providers must have regard to the statutory guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education” and “Working Together to Safeguard Children” when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

8.0 Premises / Health & Safety

Providers must ensure that the premises meet the Standards outlined in the [School Premises Regulations 2012](#) (see DfE [Advice on standards for school premises](#)) and [Part 5 of The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#). The DfE [Independent School Standards Guidance](#) sets out the obligations covering toilet and washing facilities, health, safety and welfare, acoustics, lighting, water supply and the provision of outdoor space.

Providers must adhere to all health and safety requirements, ensure that relevant checks are carried out regularly and that identified risks are addressed in a timely manner. Hackney Council requires a list of location assessments, evacuation plans, fire risk assessments and an overview of when regular Health & Safety checks including fire evacuations and fire checks were last carried out and are next due.

9.0 CCRAAG

CCRAAG is a partnership consisting of Local Authorities from the East, South East and South West Regions of England who are committed to working together to support the sourcing, contracting, monitoring and annual fee negotiations for children's placements in Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools and children's residential care homes.

Hackney Council expects all providers to be members of CCRAAG via the [CCRAAG Provider Portal](#). Providers can create a free provider page, where details about provision, vacancies, location, fees and all policy and quality assurance documentation can be uploaded. It is

important that providers regularly update their page, as the portal is used to make placements.

Appendix 1 - Hackney INMSS & SPIs Accreditation Form

Please return the completed form to:

education.procurement@hackney.gov.uk



Independent, Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) and Specialist Post-16 Institutions (SPIs) Accreditation 2021			
1. School Details			
1.1 School Name			
1.2 School Address			
1.3 Contact Name		1.4 Role	
1.5 Tel No		1.6 E-mail	
1.7 School URN			
1.8 DfE Registration Number			
1.9 Ofsted Registration Number			
1.10 CQC Registration Number			
1.11 Name of group/ parent company if applicable			
1.12 Registered Address (if different to above)			
1.13 Type of School			
1.14 Proprietor			
1.15 Headteacher			
1.16 Chair/ Trustee			
1.17 Is the provision included in the published Section 41 list of approved independent special schools and special post-16 institutions?			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			
No <input type="checkbox"/>			
1.18 Does the provision include residential care?			

Yes
No

1.19 School specialisms incl. special educational needs that the school is able to meet:

1.20 Is your organisation considered to be a Small, Medium or Micro Enterprise ([SME](#))?

Yes
No

1.21 Do you use any sub-contractors in the delivery of the provision?

Yes If yes, please provide details for each subcontractor in the table below
No

Name				
Registered address				
Company registration number				
Type of organisation				
SME (Yes/No)				
Their role in providing the provision				
The approximate % of contractual obligations assigned				

1.23 Details of historic changes to the school's name, governance and parent company or charity (if relevant) and changes to the type of provision offered and including dates:

2. Staffing/ Capacity

2.1 No of learners currently on roll		2.2 No of learners on roll in previous academic year	
2.3 Forecast of learners on roll next acad. year		2.4 Max capacity	
2.5 Qualified Teaching staff FTE	Permanent: Temporary:	2.6 Other staff FTE	Permanent: Temporary:
2.7 Do you recognise Trade Unions? If Yes please list the recognised Trade Unions.			
2.8 Do you use the Statutory School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) to determine your teachers' pay?			
2.9 Have all staff been subject to the appropriate criminal record check carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service?			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			
No <input type="checkbox"/>			
3. Compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015			
3.1 Please indicate if, within the past five years you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation been convicted anywhere in the world of any of the offences listed under Mandatory Exclusion Grounds on this webpage .	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please provide details below.		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
3.2 Please indicate if, within the past three years, anywhere in the world any of the situations listed under Discretionary Exclusions on this webpage have applied to you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please provide details below.		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
4. Finance / Insurance Details			

4.1 Where appropriate, the Authority uses an external credit agency to verify the contracting organisation's financial stability. When an external credit agency is not appropriate (i.e. organisations which are not limited companies, or when the credit agency does not recommend a sufficient contract limit, or provide confirmation of financial stability), the Authority may undertake a financial assessment of your organisation. This assessment involves reviewing a set of independently certified / audited financial accounts of your organisation, considering your organisation's level of reported turnover in relation to the contract value, a liquidity test and a general review of the statements. If requested, are you able to provide this information?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>																		
4.2 If you have existing Hackney learners, please confirm the current total annual spend:	£																			
4.3 Please confirm the baseline cost for each learner per annum:	£																			
4.4 Please provide VAT details / registered charity details as appropriate:																				
4.5 Please provide details of any previous or current investigations regarding fraud or financial irregularity and complaints:																				
4.6 Please provide details of your insurance levels in the table below and attach copies of the certificates with your response:																				
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Insurance Details</th> <th>Value of Cover</th> <th>Copy Enclosed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Employer's Liability</td> <td>£</td> <td>Yes / No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>General Public Liability</td> <td>£</td> <td>Yes / No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Professional Indemnity</td> <td>£</td> <td>Yes / No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medical Malpractice Public Liability cover</td> <td>£</td> <td>Yes / No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sexual Abuse and Molestation Public Liability cover</td> <td>£</td> <td>Yes / No</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Insurance Details	Value of Cover	Copy Enclosed	Employer's Liability	£	Yes / No	General Public Liability	£	Yes / No	Professional Indemnity	£	Yes / No	Medical Malpractice Public Liability cover	£	Yes / No	Sexual Abuse and Molestation Public Liability cover	£	Yes / No
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General Public Liability	£	Yes / No																		
Professional Indemnity	£	Yes / No																		
Medical Malpractice Public Liability cover	£	Yes / No																		
Sexual Abuse and Molestation Public Liability cover	£	Yes / No																		
5. Policy & Procedure																				

5.1 Do you have in place the human and technical resources to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) and to ensure the protection of the rights of data subjects?

Yes

No

5.2 Please attach a copy of/ link to your Safeguarding Policy with your response:

Yes

No

5.3 Please attach a copy of/ link to your Attendance Policy with your response:

Yes

No

5.4 Please attach a copy of/ link to your Provision Map with your response:

Yes

No

5.5 Please attach a copy of/ link to your Statement of Purpose with your response:

Yes

No

5.6 Please attach a copy of your Health & Safety checklist with your response:

Yes

No

5.7 Please attach a copy of your Premises documents with your response:

Yes

No

5.8 Please list any additional school policies in place below and insert links/ attach copies with your response:

5.9 Additional Comments:

Completed by:			
Name:		Signature:	
Position:		Date:	

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Report Title:	Children's Services Finance 2020-21 Outturn
Meeting for:	Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission
Date:	12 July 2021
Produced by:	Children's Finance Team
Authorised by:	Naeem Ahmed

Summary

- This report highlights the 2020-21 provisional outturn financial position of Children's Services. The report includes the financial impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the service.
- The report highlights the main budget variances across the service as well as the management actions that have been developed to reduce the overspend across the service.



Children's Services Finance Update

Financial Year 2020-21



Children's Services 2020-21 Financial Position

Summary

Children's Services (CS) provisional outturn for the 2020/21 financial year is an £3.3m overspend (5.4%) after the application of reserves totalling £7.0m. Covid-19 related expenditure accounts for £2.0m of the reported budget overspend. The draw down from reserves includes:

- £3.869m from the Commissioning Reserve, set up to meet the cost of placements where these exceed the current budget.
- £1.6m for additional staffing required to address a combination of increased demand across the service and management response to the Ofsted inspection.

The forecast also incorporated £4.650m of Social Care Grant funding (that is an additional £3.450m in 2020/21 when compared to 2019-20). Set against this, there was a significant increase in spend driven by looked-after children (LAC) and leaving care (LC) placements costs within Corporate Parenting. There was also an increase in spend on staffing across the service of £2.9m when compared to 2019-20 (£0.6m has been identified as relating to Covid-19). £1.6m is linked to increased staffing levels agreed in response to increased demand and additional posts agreed to assist in responding to the Ofsted recommendations arising from the inspection in November 2019 in which the Council received a 'requires improvement' judgement.

Table 1 breaks down the provisional outturn across different service areas and includes how much is attributed to Covid-19 expenditure. Table 2 sets out use of one-off funds and reserves which have been used to reach the net position.

Table 1A: Directorate Forecast (£k)

Original Budget	Virements	Revised Budgets	Service Unit	Change from Budget after Reserves	Amount of variance owed to Covid
£k	£k	£k		£k	£k
4,526	420	4,946	Children in Need	804	25
25,605	659	26,264	Corporate Parenting (including Adoption Team, LAC & LCS services)	3,859	1,358
3,860	34	3,894	Disabled Children Service	777	276
284	13	297	City & Hackney Safeguarding Children's Partnership	-	-
2,936	118	3,054	Safeguarding & Learning Services	(182)	18
-	-	-	Contextual Safeguarding	-	-
4,575	284	4,859	Access & Assessment Team	(25)	4
1,984	16	2,000	No Recourse to Public Funds Team	(96)	28
1,736	131	1,867	Clinical Services	(217)	-
1,696	(279)	1,417	Parenting Support Services	(426)	1
703	29	732	Family Learning Intervention Programme	12	37
47,905	1,425	49,330	Children's Social Care subtotal	4,506	1,747
892	41	933	Children's Commissioning & Business Support Team	55	-
1,701	(359)	1,343	Directorate Management Team	(944)	24
7,602	232	7,834	Young Hackney	(238)	133
-	-	-	Supporting Families	47	47
1,430	70	1,500	Youth Justice	(99)	-
531	36	567	Domestic Abuse Intervention Service	-	64

Children's Services 2020-21 Financial Position

60,061	1,445	61,507	Children's Services Total	3,327	2,015
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Table 2: Reserve and Grant Usage (£k)

Reserve Name	2020-21 Provisional Outturn	Comment
CS Commissioning Activity Reserve	(3,269)	Reserve applied to offset pressures across Corporate Parenting placement budgets.
Delayed Budget growth for CP placements	(600)	
Children's Restructuring Reserve	(1,600)	Additional Ofsted work - post visit
CIN - Section 17	(300)	F0050 - Section 17 and LAC incidental
Disabled Children Services	(476)	Applied to homecare and other commissioning costs
National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS)	(7)	Enhance practitioner knowledge and skills to create a national benchmark in relation to post-qualifying standards
Contextual Safeguarding Grant	(77)	
Teaching Partnership Grant	(103)	Social Work Teaching Partnership
MHCLG - Supporting Families grant	(33)	
HO - Trusted Relationship grant	(97)	
Safe and Together	(17)	
Housing, Legal and Immigration Officer Costs [NRPF]	(44)	
Corporate reserves	(381)	Redundancy costs and insurance adjustment
Children's Services Total	(7,004)	

Main variances against budget

Corporate Parenting provisional outturn in an overspend of £3.9m (includes £1.4m of Covid-19 expenditure) after the use of £3.9m of commissioning reserves. This position included the use of £2.9m of social care funding that was announced in the October 2019 Budget - £0.6m is in relation to staffing costs and the remaining £2.3m is for placements.

One of the main drivers for the cost pressure in Corporate Parenting continues to be the rise in the number of children in costly residential placements which has continued to grow year-on-year and the number of under 18s in high-cost semi-independent placements. Where children in their late teens are deemed to be vulnerable, and in many cases are transitioning from residential to semi-independent placements, they may still require a high-level of support and in extreme circumstances bespoke crisis packages. We are also seeing an increase in the number of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements and a stagnation in the number of in-house fostering placements. The annual cost of an IFA placement (£50k) is twice as much as an In-house fostering placements (£25k).

Children In Need provisional outturn was an overspend of £804k after the use of reserves. There was significant levels of non-recurrent funding in the service including £687k of Social Care Grant funding in recognition of staffing pressure at the start of the financial year. Recruitment to permanent Social Worker posts is in progress which should address the high numbers of agency staff currently in this service.

Disabled Children's Service provisional outturn was an overspend of £777k after the use of £476k of reserves. Staffing had an overspend of £140k due to additional staff brought in to address increased demand in the service. This was offset by £215k of additional Social Care Grant funding. Commissioning had an £840k overspend after the use of £476k of reserves. This was attributed to care packages (£440k Home Care, £360k Direct Payments, Short Breaks and other

Children's Services 2020-21 Financial Position

commissioning £40k). The cyber attack has meant that the monitoring of homecare and short breaks commissioning budgets has been more challenging this year and this was noticeable at year with providers sending backdated invoices that we had not anticipated, meaning the outturn worsened by a further £160k.

The **Directorate Management Team** provisional outturn was an underspend of £944k after a drawdown of £712k reserves for post Ofsted staffing pressure and £166k Social Care Grant funding for the creation of two Service Manager posts. The improvement in the forecast relates to a favourable insurance adjustment and legal fees and court cost activity being lower than anticipated.

Parenting Support Services provisional outturn was an underspend of £426k which was largely from an increased public health contribution towards eligible expenditure in the service and various underspends in non-staffing costs.

Young Hackney provisional outturn was an underspend of £238k. £91k related to the delay of opening a new Multi Use Games Area service due to the pandemic, with late recruitment of staffing in the Sports and Adventure Playground teams DPR restructure and across the wider service increasing the underspend.

The **Clinical Services** provisional outturn was an underspend of £217k due to late recruitment of Specialist Clinical Practitioner posts and receiving unplanned income from the CCG.

Safeguarding and Learning Service provisional outturn was an underspend of £182k, which was largely due to staffing vacancies in the team linked to delays in recruitment and underspends due to room hire activity being reduced linked to the Covid-19 pandemic

The **Youth Justice** team provisional outturn was an underspend of £99k due to late recruitment of various posts during the financial year.

The **No Recourse to Public Funds team** provisional outturn was an underspend of £96k as a result of declining client numbers in Section 17 during the year.

Management actions to reduce costs

The interim Director of Children's Services has been working closely with Finance to refresh and assess the financial impact of measures to reduce costs and therefore the overspend and reliance on one-off reserve funding going forward. Plans for 2021/22 have been developed, and will be reported through the monthly Overall Financial Report (OFP). Below is the list of actions for the 2020/21 financial year.

Table 3: Management actions

Service unit	Description	Commentary on action
Corporate Parenting	Joint funding on health and children's social care packages	The Transition Steering Group has agreed a process and individual placement are in the process of being reviewed. Placement contributions from the CCG towards eligible healthcare needs will be backdated to 1 April 2020.
Corporate Parenting	Review and reduction in high cost placements as part of budget review meetings.	Reviewing high cost residential, semi-independent and IFA placements on a rolling monthly basis to see if any packages can be stepped down. Residential and semi-independent placements are expensive so a reduction in placements can have a significant impact on the forecast.
Corporate Parenting	Mockingbird Project and Supported Lodgings	The extended family model for delivering foster care with an emphasis on respite care and peer support, and new arrangements for implementing Supported Lodgings will also be reviewed going forwards.
Corporate Parenting	FLIP & Edge of Care	Work undertaken by FLIP and Edge of Care workers aimed at preventing children and young people coming into care

Children's Services 2020-21 Financial Position

		and supporting young people back to their families.
Service wide	Improved flexible use of staffing and recruitment controls	The Director of Children's Services is developing an improved system for monitoring staffing levels, enhancing flexible use of staff across the service and increasing controls over recruitment.

Conclusion

Despite significant further funds made available to Children's Services this year, primarily through the Social Care Grant and significant drawdown from one-off reserves and grants, the service has overspent by £3.3m, of which £2.0m is attributable to Covid-19. Finance are working closely with colleagues within the service to understand any longer term cost implications arising from both the Covid-19 pandemic and the response to the cyber attack.

The service has worked with finance to develop a suite of actions for 2021/22 to reduce the overspend position and the reliance on one-off reserve funding. Key to making real inroads into expenditure are actions to reduce the numbers of children and young people looked after, particularly those in a residential care setting where the net cost of one placement for a year is approximately £200k and managing demand so staff numbers in post can be maintained at budgeted levels.

Report Title:	Children and Families Service: April 2020-March 2021
Meeting for:	Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission
Date:	12th July 2021
Produced by:	Lisa Aldridge, Head of Safeguarding and Learning
Authorised by:	Annie Coyle, Director of Children's Services

Report Summary

This report is an update to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission for the 12th July 2021 meeting. The contents of this report should be reviewed by the Commission.

This report is 12 pages long and provides an update on the current progress of the Children's Action Plan following the Ofsted ILACS (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) inspection of the Children and Families Service in November 2019. Ofsted's inspection report can be viewed on their website¹.

Ofsted found that Hackney Children and Families Service require improvement to be good, and made 6 recommendations for improvement as part of their inspection report:

- The quality of information-sharing by partners and the quality of decision-making within strategy discussions.
- The assessment of the impact for children of living in neglectful environments to inform authoritative and child-centred practice.
- The quality of assessment and planning for children subject to private fostering arrangements.
- The timeliness and effectiveness of pre-proceedings work, including the quality of contingency planning.
- The welfare of children who are missing education or who are home educated is safeguarded
- The effectiveness of management oversight by leaders and managers at all levels, including the effectiveness of oversight from child protection conference chairs.

¹ Ofsted inspection of children's social care services in the London Borough of Hackney, November 2019: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50135828>

Our children's action plan² was produced following the Ofsted visit of our Children and Families Service in November 2019 and sets out the actions the Council intends to take to address the findings detailed in Ofsted's subsequent inspection report. This plan was sent to Ofsted and published in March 2020, just before the Covid-19 pandemic first lockdown in England.

The action plan addresses both the specific recommendations made by Ofsted and wider improvements that could be made in particular areas of our practice.

Each of the timescales attached to the actions in the plan were reviewed in June 2020 in light of Covid-19 and given a rating indicating the level of impact of Covid-19 on the original intended timeframes for completion.

The action plan has associated performance indicators to measure our progress on delivering the improvements specified.

This report to CYP Scrutiny Commission contains the latest progress against the delivery of the improvement plan:

- Each page of the report takes the recommendations from Ofsted in turn, and provides an update on the critical activity that has taken place over recent months to improve practice in this area. The report also covers the measures ('metrics') by which we are measuring our progress.
- The report also takes wider improvements that have been agreed by the Children and Families Service as needed, updates against recent activity and measures of progress.

² Hackney Children's Action Plan (June 2020):
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_TaluGvZHrrsHor3nsHRLX0bAKnToz9N/view

Children's Leadership Development Board

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Children's Action Plan Update

May 2021



This presentation provides a summary of the key developments and upcoming work in relation to the areas for improvement as outlined by Ofsted, and in additional areas for development identified by the service.

Where accessible, metrics are provided to chart progress against the measurables set at the time of the Action Plan being finalised in March 2020.

The quality of information sharing and decision making within Strategy Discussions

- **Draft practice protocol on Strategy Discussions** Completed in November 2020, shared and agreed by all partner agencies. **Multi-Agency Strategy Meetings Audit to be completed in May 2021.** Training and Video guidance for practitioners in development first draft due w/e 21/05/21.
- **Working agreements with the police to set out pathways for engaging officers in Strategy Discussion from different service areas.** MPS have proposed to streamline pathways across London through a review of the role of MASH and introduction of a single front door for Police through the referrals desk (time-frame TBC); **MPS to hold Strategy Discussion/ Missing Child Meeting within 24** hours rather than within 72 hours for our children at highest risk of harm when missing.
- **Scope opportunities for co-location of key partner agencies in the Hackney Service Centre HSC, alongside First Access Screening Team (FAST) agree Hackney Education representation in FAST.** Moving towards an effective MASH - recruiting Early Help SRM - development of Early Help Hub (2 staff). Hackney Education MASH Rep has been advertised, deadline for applicants 02/05/21

Metrics Update

June 2020 (25 Audits): Overall practice score: 2.6 (requires improvement)

- 7% inadequate
- 37% requires improvement
- 44% good
- 11% outstanding

July/August 2020 (22 Audits): Overall practice score: 3 (good)

- 27% requires improvement
- 41% good
- 32% outstanding

December 2020 (40 Audits): Overall practice score: 2.7 (requires improvement)

- 40% were rated as requires improvement
- 52.5% were rated as good
- 7.5% were rated as outstanding

- Police Attendance 100%
- Health attendance 75% (July/Aug 2020) 70% (December 2020)

A Strategy Discussion Audit is currently underway (May 2021) with the CHSCP.

- Section 47s resulting in an ICPC
18/19 **28%** / 19/20 **47%** / 20/21 **31%**
- External commissioning of audits will be undertaken with CHSCP to ensure we have a multi-agency focus to the auditing. Proposed timeframe Q2 2021-2022.

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

- **Continue to develop and embed a goal focused, outcome orientated approach to planning for children** Professional Supervision workshops took place in February/ March 2021 c.100 attendees. Quality of plans continue to be audited as part of audit programme; All line managers expected to review the quality of plans as part of new Supervision Framework. Planned audit of quality of supervision records in June 2021
- **Deliver (and evaluate) a training and development programme for all staff on neglect** CHSCP is commissioning a license for **NSPCC Graded Care Profile II** and train the trainer across the partnership including CFS from May 2021
- **Enhance children's participation in creating their plans and expressing their views in decision-making forums for Children in Need (CIN) and Child Protection cases** Guidance has been shared re children's participation in plans; Workshop time pushed back due to priority given to Supervision workshops- plan for workshops now for June to August 2021. Plan is to pilot writing to parents and children in assessments and case notes. Service is exploring approach of other LA's

Metrics

- Due to the cyberattack we are unable to report on the timeliness of updated assessments for Children in Need. These are checked as part of our audit programme and will be closely monitored as part of performance within the new Supervision framework.
- The most recent specific goal-focused plan audit was in November 2020 Child Protection Plans.
 - 42% requires improvement
 - 54% were rated good
 - 4% were rated as outstandingOverall average practice score: 2.8 (requires improvement)
- A generic audit tool for the Children in Need service to undertake routine auditing was developed in April 2021- the tool includes questions around whether plans are goal-focused.
- Length of Assessments <45 days
Dec 20 **81%**, Jan 21 **86%**, Feb 21, **94%**, Mar 21 **96%**
- **Repeat Child Protection Plans at or below statistical neighbour (SN) average** - July 20 **10%**, Aug 20 **10%**, Sept 20 **3%** Statistical Neighbour Average **19%**. Unable to report post September 2020
- Child Protection Plans over 2 years at or below statistical neighbour average
2020/21 to (20/03/21) **11 (4.5%)** children SN Average **5%**
- Child Protection Plans under 3 months at or below statistical neighbour average
2020/21 to (20/03/21) **53 (21%)** Children SN Average **29%**

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

- **Review of all current open Private Fostering (PF) cases** All cases reviewed every 6 months. Most recent audit Jan/Feb 2021. Continued evidence of practice improvement, although some areas of ongoing development to achieve consistently good to outstanding outcomes.
- **Update Private Fostering Policy and roll out new case management responsibilities for private fostering arrangements** All but one child now held in the NRPF and Private Fostering Service, concrete steps towards permanency being made with several children - oversight by FISS Assistant Head of Service
- **Develop information letters for parents and carers on the new Private Fostering processes.** all new PF assessments and reviews, supported by new documents explaining the PF processes, info for parents/carers and the approach to PF work is much more consistent.
- **Develop Private Fostering dashboard in QlikSense** Manual dashboard is being maintained in google sheets, in absence of previously developed QlikSense dashboard, which is down due to cyber attack.
- **Awareness Raising.** The **Private Fostering App** is in operation. NRPF & PF team in discussions with Hackney Education about raising awareness of PF regulations through the school admissions process, and opportunities to raise awareness in the Orthodox Jewish community. A [poster](#) designed for public spaces has been distributed via CHSCP (TUSK Briefings).

Metrics

- Bi annual audits of all Private Fostering cases have taken place. Most recent audit February 2021. As of 24th March 2021 there were 12 children in a Private Fostering arrangement and a further 4 in the process of a private fostering assessment.
- PF Dashboard metrics to be provided by Service Area [number of new and total Private Fostering cases, average length of Private Fostering assessment, timeliness of Private Fostering reviews [% within x days etc.]
- February 2021 audit (12 cases) found 10 or 83% of cases were rated as 'good' or 'outstanding', and 2 or 16% were rated as requires improvement. No cases were rated as 'inadequate'. **Average score 3** (good)
- June 2020 audit (9 cases) found 5 or 55% of cases were rated as 'good' or 'outstanding', and 4 or 45% were rated as requires improvement. No cases were rated as 'inadequate'. **Average Score 2.8** (requires improvement)
- Peer Review Day organised by the North London Fostering and Adoption Consortium (NLFAC) in September 2020.
- Update report on PF included as part of the [CFS annual report](#) in September 2020.

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

- **Permanency Planning reporting embedded into our Qlik Sense data dashboards and reporting systems**, enabling tracking of decision-making processes and that long-term care plans are progressed without delay.
- **Embed new Joint Protocol with the Legal Department to ensure consistency in our legal contribution to Public Law Outline (PLO) and proceedings work, to support high quality decision-making for children.** Protocol in place outlining roles, obligations and escalation policies. Also provides information on timescales and the annual training provided available. Currently under review to incorporate Family Justice Board (FJB) best practice guidance to be disseminated to staff. New Court Tracker in place from 01/05/21. Regular meetings with Legal Service.
- CAFCASS have provided key data to help track the progress and outcomes of proceedings effectively as well as access key Court Orders made with regard to children's permanence.
- **Produce Public Law Outline (PLO) practice guidance for staff to improve consistency and effectiveness** currently being revised in line with FJB Guidance.

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Metrics

- **Permanency Planning reporting embedded into our Qlik Sense data dashboards and reporting systems**, enabling tracking of decision-making processes and that long-term care plans are progressed without delay. **Dashboard unavailable since the cyber attack. Revised Manual Court Tracker Spreadsheet in operation**
- **PLO Case Review Day** took place in February 2020. A Repeat PLO audit took place in June 2020 (12 cases). A follow up PLO audit had been planned for November but was postponed. An audit on PLO took place in March 2021.
- **A reduction in the % of children subject to pre-proceedings for longer than 3 months** **Appropriate data metric to be agreed with MISA/CFS - i.e. 3 months vs. 18 weeks**

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

All actions completed between June 2020 and November 2020

- Develop the **structure for a bi-annual teaching and learning forum to support parents** in securing positive outcomes for children and young people.
- **Develop protocol to set out our approach to foster improved relationships with the Orthodox Jewish community** to establish whether or not children and young people are electively home educated.
- **Launch of updated Elective Home Education (EHE) policy with schools in July.** Public campaign (November) - includes settings within the Orthodox Jewish community.
- Redesign of **Elective Home Education assessment framework** in accordance with statutory guidance.
- A cross service / multi agency protocol to unregistered settings, has been live since the start of September 2020.

Metrics

- 136 EHE Assessments were carried out from April 20-March 21. The new assessment framework started in July. 87% were assessed as suitable, 9% were assessed as requiring improvement and 4% were deemed unsuitable.
- Following an EHE Assessment satisfaction survey since the refreshed offer in July 2020. **58%** of parents responded to the survey. **87%** of returns found the service to be good or excellent, remaining **13%** rating the service as satisfactory. No parent rated the support, advice and guidance received unsatisfactory or poor.
- Hackney Education's EHE Assessment Framework in place since July 2020 and fully embedded within the service. A recent internal audit of the service had no recommendations
- A significant reduction in the number of families awaiting suitability assessments. Currently, **89.4% of assessments are completed within a 12 week period** - impacted by a significant growth in new EHE families since September 2020 as a result of the pandemic. **98% of assessments involved sight of and a conversation** with the child. Where unable or prevented from seeing a child, the outcome of the assessment is that education was deemed unsuitable.
- **54%** of those with an EHCP have had an annual review, however, we are working with colleagues in SEND to ensure a more streamlined and efficient response that will speed up the Annual Review Process.

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

- Review and strengthen the support and development offer available for **Consultant Social Workers (CSW) and Practice Development Managers (PDMs) including induction**. Realignment of roles and responsibilities key plank of Hackney Model Review Induction process refreshed and updated, **highlighting Systemic training**. The **New Managers' Handbook** is in place providing relevant management guidance and information (to be reviewed in June 2021).
- New **Monthly Managers Meetings** in FISS since September 2020 - to be adapted into an **Action Learning Set** for new managers across the service.
- **Constructing a professional development programme on professional challenge for all staff**, including challenge to partners. Supervision workshops run attended by over 100 managers. Training offered on Curiosity and Constructive Challenge Training available April to June 2021;.
- Introduction of **Quarterly Children and Young People Case Summary Form** increasing management oversight of individual cases.
- **Multi-agency audits of quality of partnership information** to CP Conferences in process; active dialogue with partner agencies about roles and responsibilities through Front Door, Early Help Reviews, Development of MASH and through CHSCP; Audit of Supervision Records planned for June 2021.
- Introduction of **DQIP (Driving Quality Improvement and Performance)** framework, increasing management oversight to go live in June 2021

Metrics

- Work underway to **assess that average caseloads** are in line with our agreed levels and will consider best practice from statistical neighbours and other 'Outstanding' local authorities.
- Direct observations of the quality of practice by leadership team - **Learning Visits Pilots** to be revisited/launched later in the year TBC
- Audits to review consistency in quality of overall practice quarterly by service area to include **case supervision audits** and **case summary data** and outcomes for children - included in 2021/22 audits forward plan.

The effectiveness of the Quality Assurance Framework in driving practice improvement

- **Quality Assurance (QA) Strategy to be revised Driving Quality Improvement and Performance (DQIP) Framework** will be going live in June 2021; **Workforce Development Strategy** and **Action Plan** is being updated May to June 2021; **Quality Assurance Strategy** also to be updated May to June 2021.
- Revise Terms of reference for the **Performance and Practice Oversight Group (PAPOG)** to ensure that this forum is effectively overseeing quality. PAPOG will be transforming into the monthly Driving Quality and Improvement in Performance Meeting in June 2021 to enable a systematic sharing up through the system best practice and practice challenges including in respect of performance data, audit findings, workforce, quality of practice and analysis
- **Further development of Practice Guidance** including Working with Fathers and male carers, Child Sexual Abuse, Safeguarding Disabled Children and Neglect. Refreshed **CPS Practice Standards** will be relaunched in June 2021.
- **Further develop and embed refreshed Practice Standards** existing knowledge was tested through recent Supervision Workshops. The emphasis is now placed upon line manager responsibility to ensure practitioners know and are practising in accordance with agreed Practice Standards; **Anti-Racist Practice Standards** are in development as part of Working Group 2 for the Anti-racist action plan.
- **Develop programme of commissioned 'external expert' audits** Timeframe for commissioning external audits is to be agreed with Director and Professional Advisor to CHSCP

Metrics

- Commission external review of implementation of revised Quality Assurance Strategy and Framework **DQIP** - Autumn 2021
- Thematic audits of children in specific circumstances to confirm if practice is consistently in accordance with Practice Standards. Detailed in 2021/22 Audit Forward Plan.
- Dip Sampling of Professional Supervision taking place in May/June 2021
- Performance metrics to be agreed and monitored on a monthly basis.

Planning for vulnerable adolescents (1)

- **Safety planning workshops for practitioners** Audit in respect of safety planning for children at risk of extra-familial harm to be timetabled.
- **Safety planning workshops for practitioners to be delivered led by Children's Rights Officers (CRO) to support staff in co-producing and reviewing safety plans with young people.** Safety planning workshops have been recorded for online delivery. CRO's offer 1:1 case consultations on safety planning with young people. Discussions continue with CIU to ensure services and advice is consistent. Workshops to be further promoted as part of Action Plan from SCR Child C as mandatory for all units to attend.
- **Recording of Missing Episodes/ Return Home Interviews.** A Google spreadsheet developed in December 2020 is updated by Service Managers with support from Children's Rights to ensure there awareness of which children are missing at any time and whether a Missing Child Record, discussions with Police, and Return Home Interviews are being completed.

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Metrics

- In 2019/20 in 66% of missing episodes it was evidenced that children were offered a Independent Return Home Interview (IRHI) **28%** accepted this offer. **47%** of interviews were undertaken within 72 hours of the young person returning from being missing. This increased to **55%** of IRHI's being completed within 72 hours of receiving consent from a young person to take part in a return home interview. This data does not capture those RHI's being undertaken by other workers where they may be recorded in casenotes or visits. **April to Oct 2020 data in the process of being collated - no data post 11/10/21 due to Cyber Attack.**
- An Extra Familial Risk Audit in Autumn 2020 found that the threshold decision for a Child in Need Plan appropriate in the vast majority of cases; Further work required to upskill practitioners in assessing peer group context and developing intervention plan responding to risk in the peer context.

Planning for vulnerable adolescents (2)

- **Integrated Gangs Unit (IGU) have been effectively engaged.** The Context Intervention Unit (CIU) liaises closely with the IGU regarding individual cases and contexts of concern and IGU participation in the EFRP (Extra Familial Risk Panel) process is largely positive. CIU has provided input for use in the IGU protocol being developed.
- **Leadership plan for embedding Contextual Safeguarding by each service area with support from Context Intervention Unit (CIU) Team.** This is to be refreshed using a Systems Review event for CFS and partner agencies, facilitated by University of Bedfordshire, on 12/05/2021.
- **Audit of cases where we have concerns around extra-familial harm and where we need to use contextual safeguarding approaches.** Following six months of CIU being operational, an audit exercise of children supported on Child in Need and Child Protection Plans where extra-familial risk is a factor by the Service Manager Practice Development Group is scheduled to take place in July 2021 and findings to be shared with CFMG August 2021. These findings will inform the evaluation of Contextual Safeguarding embedding.

Engagement of children and young people in their individual care planning (1)

- **Ensuring assessments/care plans are updated in response to significant change of circumstances.** A separate Care Plan Document has been created to enable updates following any significant changes in circumstances which was created on Mosaic. A Google form equivalent was created for the Interim Social Care Database in February 2021
- **Consistent Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) escalation in response to concerns when plans do not progress in line with children's wishes.** Standard escalation templates created to clarify what issue is being escalated and that a solution is required. Implementation of Mid-point oversight from April 2021 provides a more consistent approach from all Chairs in all cases, to be monitored through the new Case Supervision template.
- **Develop protocol to increase children's participation in foster carers' and connected persons annual reviews.** Fostering SM developed a protocol for ensuring children's views are included in Foster Carer Annual Reviews- progress against this will be monitored by the Fostering IRO
- **Pathway Plans are co-created with young people** The Pathway Plan Google Form was updated in April 2021 with an additional comment box for young people's views. Practitioners have been directed to comment explicitly on the efforts they have made to engage young people where they are struggling to do so. An audit of Pathway Plans completed in last 6 weeks will be undertaken in May 2021.

Metrics

- **Audit of Pathway Plans May 2021 to compare to June 2020**
- **Monitoring of children's views in annual reviews for foster carers and connected person carers and feedback from Fostering Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) to Corporate Parenting Management meeting in April 2020**
- **Monitoring number of young people attending the Junior Hackney of Tomorrow**
- **Monitoring our engagement of Hackney of Tomorrow in discussions and meetings with senior leaders and Members**

Working for every child



Engagement of children and young people in their individual care planning (2)

- **Increase awareness of children in care about their rights and access to support, throughout their involvement with our services.** Physical copies of all leaflets relating to coming into, and being in care will be dispatched in mid May 2021 to all children in care. The Senior Group (17-21) of Hackney of Tomorrow are developing a booklet for care leavers on the Housing Pathway, mapping out Hackney's offer for Care Leavers post 18. To be uploaded to the app and a copy posted out to all care leavers.
- **Increase participation of younger children in Hackney of Tomorrow (Hackney's Children in Care Council).** A Junior Group (for those aged 10 - 16) was established in May 2020. Seven young people attend regularly - not as well attended as the Senior or UASC group (average attendance 13 young people). Recruitment has been affected by Covid. The Participation Officer is to attend a Virtual School trip in June 2021 with the aim of increasing recruitment. Further activities are planned as lockdown restrictions ease.
- **Increase opportunities for Hackney of Tomorrow (Hackney's Children in Care Council) to speak directly to senior leaders and Members on a range of issues** Hackney of Tomorrow deliver a presentation at the beginning of every Corporate Parenting Board. Elected Councillors regularly attend their meetings, Councillor Bramble and Members of Corporate Parenting also engage with HoT on particular pieces of work e.g. around commissioning of care providers, fostering or placement stability work.

Report Title:	Children and Families Service: April 2020-March 2021
Meeting for:	Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission
Date:	12th July 2021
Produced by:	Lisa Aldridge, Head of Safeguarding and Learning
Authorised by:	Annie Coyle, Director of Children and Families

Report Summary

This report is an update to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission for the 12th July 2021 meeting. The contents of this report should be reviewed by the Commission.

This report is 15 pages long and provides an update on the Children and Families Service over the past year. Key information included in the report:

- The response of the Children and Families Service to Covid-19 and the cyber attack in Hackney.
- The leadership changes that have taken place over the past year.
- Key data about the Children and Families Service.
- An update on the increased pace of change in relation to improvement activity following the 2019 Ofsted inspection of the Children and Families Service.

This primarily relates to the Hackney Model Review, which has seven initial workstreams:

- Assurance of high quality practice
- Developing a robust edge of care offer
- CFS practice review
- Workforce development and retention
- Effective partnerships
- Tools and theoretical frameworks
- Clinical Service

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Children and Families Service: April 2020-March 2021 Update to Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission

Introduction

The past year has seen some of the most significant challenges to the Children and Families Service (CFS) in recent years, and indeed to Hackney Council and the wider world. These challenges included the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and a cyber attack that Hackney Council was subject to in October 2020. For Hackney CFS, this followed the Ofsted inspection in November 2019, which resulted in a judgement of '*requires improvement*' and the submission of the Children's Action Plan in response to this in March 2020. The Action Plan was subsequently published in June 2020. An Anti-Racist Practice action plan was developed in the summer of 2020 in the context of the murder of George Floyd in the USA, protests and the ongoing Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement across the world. This action plan sets out how we will combat racism both within Hackney CFS and in work with families, children and partner agencies.

Covid-19

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has meant wide-ranging changes have taken place to systems and processes that affect children, for example with schools closing and reopening, changes to visits and attendance of partners at key meetings. Much of the service had to become 'virtual' overnight in March 2020, with staff, multi-agency colleagues and children and families adapting to a new 'way of working' under national lockdown. Business continuity planning was activated, and staff and leaders responded as Government guidance changed frequently. Support was put into place to ensure that domestic abuse victims were able to access services they needed, that children could continue to access free school meals and those without internet access or devices were able to get these to be able to continue their education remotely. Families were supported through Covid-19 and we reached out to our children and families to make sure they were safe, continuing to visit children face to face where required, in line with statutory guidance and using PPE to keep children, families and staff safe. Education support for looked after children and their foster carers was provided by the Virtual School, and virtual activities for all children were provided by Young Hackney. When we were able, Young Hackney safely introduced in-person activities. The progression of the vaccination programme meant that key workers in Hackney were able to resume all face to face visits in March 2021, and lockdown restrictions introduced in response to the second wave in December 2020 continue to be lifted (as at the end of April 2021).

Cyber attack

Hackney Council was subject to a cyber attack on 12 October 2020, which had a significant impact across all services for residents, and for the Children and Families Service, the attack meant that CFS lost access to Mosaic, the social care database which holds all records about children and families and eDocs, the related document storage system that linked documents to Mosaic and ChildView (our Youth Justice case recording system). All of CFS partner agencies, including statutory regulators and voluntary organisations, were contacted to inform them about the problems and how services might be affected. A range of Google Forms and guidance on how to use them was developed for staff to be able to record data, with key forms issued initially on 13th October 2020 and more developed in the first few weeks after the

attack. An interim alternative recording system which contains all of the information on these forms was created; this was piloted over the December closedown period, and was rolled out across CFS on 26th January 2021. An interim live reporting system was created alongside the interim social care system, and rolled out in early February 2021 that allows managers to track performance in their service areas. All information recorded on this interim system will be transferred to a new case recording system when this is ready. This recording system also allows CFS to track major performance indicators, though not all are available such as those dependent on historical information. On 26th March 2021, historic case notes (from the period pre-cyber attack in October 2020) recovered from our Mosaic system became visible on the Interim Social Care Database. This development marks a major step in the CFS systems recovery journey. The case notes recovered from Mosaic do not represent the entirety of someone's case history; for example, the recovery of eDocs is still a work in progress. These notes do however represent the bulk of the core information found on the Mosaic system. Work continues on the recovery of information stored on eDocs and on plans for a new case recording system.

Leadership changes

There have been a number of changes at leadership level impacting on the Children and Families Service. The Chief Executive and the Group Director of Children and Education leave the Council at the end of May 2021. Interim arrangements to cover both posts are in hand; the new permanent Group Director is due to start in August 2021 and the recruitment for the new Chief Executive has begun. The Director of Children and Families left at the end of October 2020 and an interim Director of Children and Families has been in post since November 2020 with a new permanent Director of Children's Social Care starting in early July 2021. The Head of Corporate Parenting resigned in April 2021 and interim plans are in place to cover this post.

Key data about the children we support

The cyber attack has meant that some key indicators cannot be reported against due to the changes in the recording methodology throughout the year. The following key data is available:

Contacts:

- 11,473 contacts were received in 2020-21, a decline compared to 16,044 in 2019-20
- 26% of contacts progressed to a referral in 2020-21, similar to 27% in 2019-20

Referrals:

- There were 2,930 referrals received in 2020-21, a decline compared to 5,031 in 2019-20

Assessments:

- 3,664 assessments were completed in 2020-21, compared to 4,923 assessments completed in 2019-20
- 77% of assessments were completed within 45 days in 2020-21, an increase compared to 64% in 2019-20

Child Protection Plans:

- 252 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan at the end of March 2021, a slight increase compared to 245 children in March 2020

Looked after children:

- 437 children were looked after at the end of March 2021, a slight increase compared to 432 children in March 2020
- 5 looked after children were adopted in 2020-21, a decrease compared to 11 children in 2019-20

Review of the Hackney Model

Work has been underway in the Children and Families Service (CFS) over the past six months to explore and review the Unit Model approach and its application. The current practice model review will improve case management and clarification of roles and responsibilities in the service, with the aim of achieving more equitable and manageable workloads resulting in improved outcomes for children and families.

Over the last two months work in relation to the review of the Hackney Model has gained significant pace led by the Interim Director and the Children and Families Service (CFS) Leadership Team. This work also links directly to our continued commitment to deliver on our service improvement priorities and our [Children's Action Plan](#) developed in response to the [2019 Ofsted inspection](#). The specific areas of service improvement activity that underpins our service realignment activities include:

- Management oversight
- Promoting the voice of the child
- Timely decision making
- Information sharing with and by partners
- The timeliness and effectiveness of our pre-proceedings and Public Law Outline (PLO) activity
- The welfare of children missing education (CME)

One of the key challenges to emerge for Hackney's Children's Services in its application of the 'traditional' Unit Model over the last few years has been the inability of the model to respond effectively to considerably higher caseloads than was originally intended for the approach. One of the core intended benefits of the unit model was to allow professionals to get to know families well and reclaim the value of relationship based social work to manage risk and reduce risk and manage harm through the lens of need. What has transpired over the last few years however, due to the high intensity of work, reduced bureaucracy and the absence of a modern performance framework, coupled with the additional dispensation afforded by the Government, has been the unintended consequence of work falling behind in terms of pace and timescales.

This steady increase over time in the volume of work has been camouflaged historically by the allocation of cases to a Unit / Consultant Social Worker (CSW). With units (which often varied in terms of size and workloads) typically holding caseloads in the region of c.80 and 100 children per unit, for a model that was originally designed based upon between 25-35 children per unit. This had led to further unintended consequences, such as the failure to develop a responsive performance framework appropriate for a landscape that has changed significantly.

Over the last decade there have been new societal, economic and environmental factors that have contributed to a significant increase in Children's Social Care referrals including: the direct impact of increased poverty and deprivation on children and families; the increased prevalence and awareness of Extra Familial Risk (CSE, County-lines and Child Criminal Exploitation); and the successful awareness raising of domestic abuse and its impact on children and significant harm caused.

Furthermore, the role of the local partnership has not been utilised effectively to meet the needs of children and families at an early stage, relying on children's social care to be the first point of access, further exacerbated by an '*Open Front Door*'. One of the remedies in this area for us has been the commencement of our Early Help Review.

Given the above, it has become evident that the existing application of the Hackney Model was not sustainable for Children's Social Care to continue to operate as is.

The review also includes a focus on realigning the role of lead practitioners with the aim of improving the overall quality of practice through the consistent application of practice standards across the service. In addition, the roll out of professional case supervision bolsters this approach, increasing accountability and transparency across all Social Work Units (SWUs) including in our Early Help teams.

The overall approach to the [Hackney Model Review](#) (image below) comprises seven domains / workstreams:

1. Assurance of high quality practice
2. Developing a robust edge of care offer
3. CFS practice review
4. Workforce development and retention
5. Effective partnerships
6. Tools and theoretical frameworks
7. Clinical Service

Additional domains/ workstreams are to be added to incorporate Finance and Legal related activities and ambitions.

Hackney Model Review

v1.2 | April 27, 2021



Priority 1: Assurance of high quality practice		
Why is this a priority for CFS?	What have we done about it so far?	What are we going to do next?
<p>The quality assurance framework for CFS was evaluated in January 2020 by the Safeguarding and Learning Service, working closely with the management teams of each service area in CFS. The evaluation was modelled on an evidence-based approach to quality assurance in Children's Services developed by Research in Practice¹.</p> <p>While the revised CFS framework has given shape to our approach to quality assurance, it has not yet consistently driven improvement to our frontline practice.</p> <p>A number of changes have taken place or are planned to rectify this at pace - this work sits alongside other changes to the Hackney Model, which will give greater focus on accountability for decision making throughout the child's journey.</p> <p>The CFS Quality Assurance Framework will be updated in the coming months to reflect the breadth of the changes being made in the Service and to emphasise how this will ensure improvements at the frontline of practice. The Safeguarding and Learning Service is currently being restructured into a new Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service to better support this quality assurance approach.</p>	<p>We have developed an approach to live practice observations through 'Learning Visits' that will provide practitioners with the opportunity to receive coaching on their practice including their use of professional authority and will enable line managers and senior managers to keep in touch with frontline practice experience. Learning visits, where leaders attend a meeting or visit alongside frontline staff, were trialled in late 2020, and are planned for roll out in late spring/early summer 2021 across CFS.</p> <p>Audit work continued despite the cyber attack in October 2020. The lack of access to historical case information until March 2021 meant that different approaches were taken by service areas to quality assure work, including the creation of a 'Live Learning' audit tool which focused on the most recent practice and discussions about cases in more depth with practitioners, rather than analysing historical case decision making - this means that practice leads have a greater opportunity to influence and shape active practice.</p> <p>The Children's Social Care Practice Standards are in the process of being revised to ensure language is child-focused and that they provide clarity where standards have been revised,</p>	<p>CFS will begin rolling out a Quality Performance Review Meeting (QPRM) methodology during the late spring/early summer 2021 across CFS. This will involve all line managers completing a monthly review of their teams, from first line managers to Heads of Service, supported by the feedback and learning gathered by the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service (formerly Safeguarding and Learning). This process culminates in a monthly meeting with the Heads of Service and Director that reflects on the strengths and areas for improvement, and focuses on action planning to address any issues.</p> <p>Responsibility for the investigation of Stage 1 complaints will be moving to first line managers from April 2021; these were previously investigated within the Complaints Team. This is part of the Hackney Model Refresh to bring this critical quality assurance process to frontline practice to ensure that we more effectively embed learning from complaints into practice quickly.</p> <p>In the coming months there will be an increased focus on reviewing and developing the metrics associated with monitoring and measuring the impacts of the Children's Action Plan and associated communications - these will be closely</p>

¹ Building a Quality Culture in Child and Families Services:

<https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/children/publications/2018/april/building-a-quality-culture-in-child-and-family-services-strategic-briefing-2018/>

	including around unit meetings and casework supervision. The Practice Standards will be reviewed every quarter.	linked to the review and implementation of the 'Hackney Model' and finalised visioning work.
Priority 2: Developing a robust edge of care offer		
Why is this a priority for CFS?	What have we done about it so far?	What are we going to do next?
<p>The number of looked after children has consistently increased over recent years, and the profile of looked after children has also changed significantly over the past five years with more adolescents entering the care system and subsequently receiving support as care leavers. The change in profile of looked after children increases the need for more specialised placements and also makes placement stability more difficult to achieve. Young people aged 16+ will have additional needs that correspond to the associated risks for their age group, including exploitation. It is rare for young people of this age to be placed in foster care at the point of crisis, although we always seek to find foster carers in the first instance, so in order to keep them safe, we will place them in semi-independent accommodation. Due to the risk for these young people, we are careful about the quality of care they receive, meaning that the semi-independent placements we use are often more expensive than standard and have higher staffing levels.</p> <p>As work on Edge of Care has progressed over the last year, it has become evident there was a need to broaden our approach to ensure we have</p>	<p>The Edge of Care Working Group was formed in November 2020, chaired by the Head of Corporate Parenting, to oversee the research project, development of an Edge of Care Strategy, and edge of care activity more generally. This group reports to the Edge of Care Board, chaired by the Group Director - Children and Education.</p> <p>The Children's Resource Panel terms of reference have been updated to make it clearer that the panel makes the decision as to whether or not a child is going to come into the care of the local authority. All children who are on the edge of care should be presented to the panel rather than retrospective agreement being given for children who have already come into our care. The panel has now been split into two sections, the first half of panel will focus on children on the edge of care and the second half will focus on PLO (Public Law Outline) and care proceedings i.e. as a legal gateway panel. The Children's Resource Panel continues to meet weekly and is chaired by the Director of Children and Families to ensure senior oversight of decisions for children to come into care.</p>	<p>The Edge of Care Board is chaired by the Group Director, Children's and Education, and oversees all edge of care activity, monitors strategic planning and the implementation of an Edge of Care Strategy. The group meets on a monthly basis and began work in mid-November 2020. An Edge of Care Strategy will focus on expanding the Edge of Care service and 16/17 year old housing options alongside Housing colleagues.</p> <p>From 1st May 2021, all requests for legal advice will take place via the Children's Resource Panel (CRP). Parents/carers and young people will be encouraged to seek legal advice at Child Protection stage; all attempts will be made to undertake robust Child Protection Plans and avoid care proceedings where necessary. A revised Legal Tracker will be in place, enabling the service to track timely decision making for children.</p> <p>April 2021 will see the start of PAMS (Parental Assessment Manual) assessments² being undertaken in-house. Previously CFS has sought to find a solution to the provision of PAMS assessments externally, which has been costly to</p>

² PAMS is a guide used by social services to work with and assess parents and families when there are child protection concerns. A social worker might undertake the assessment or they may ask another child care professional who is qualified to carry out the assessment.

<p>a comprehensive understanding of all the reasons for the increase in children both coming into care and staying in care. We are conducting a detailed research project that will allow for an informed and evidence-based approach to developing an Edge of Care Strategy.</p>	<p>A Council-wide Early Help Review continues to progress - this will review the pathways to early help support for families such as Multi-Agency Team support, the Family Support Service and Young Hackney targeted intervention. This review will consider how families are best supported to access services that meet their needs early on, and prevent the need for statutory intervention at a later date.</p>	<p>the Council, being reliant on externally commissioned assessments within the court process which have varied in quality..</p>
<p>Priority 3: CFS practice review</p>		
<p>Why is this a priority for CFS?</p>	<p>What have we done about it so far?</p>	<p>What are we going to do next?</p>
<p>The changes to the current Unit Model approach are intended to improve outcomes for children by strengthening the existing model to provide increased focus upon the progress of the plan and outcomes for children. This is through a combination of direct case allocation, the implementation of professional case work supervision as well as the continuation of group supervision sessions, supported by the Clinical Team focussed specifically on the more complex and high-risk children. The Hackney Model Refresh is focused on supporting the right children at the right level by the right team, leading to appropriate caseload levels across the service that means practitioners can focus on effective direct work with children.</p> <p>Internal Communications support in relation to the messaging around the review of the Hackney Model has been a critical area of focus and has included leadership sessions, workshops and the</p>	<p>From February 2021 we have changed the way that cases are allocated within the service, with cases now allocated to individual social workers as opposed to a Social Work Unit - this change will engender increased accountability and transparency in terms of case management.</p> <p>Casework Supervision - we have redefined our approach to supervision within Children's Services. CFS is in the process of rolling out professional case work supervision that is aligned to the child's plan and where practice is both reflective and accountable, this is all in line with the statutory requirements of good social work practice. This means that we will remodel the way that unit meetings have traditionally worked and insert group supervision for specific complex case work and thematic learning. A new case supervision template has been developed and was introduced in April 2021 to support this process as part of the full roll out of the approach.</p>	<p>Our main focus for Spring and into Summer 2021 is embedding the new approach to casework supervision, following the supervision workshops held with over 100 CFS staff with management responsibility in February and March 2021, and the introduction of new case supervision templates in April 2021. This will include carrying out supervision audits to monitor the quality of supervision recording.</p>

<p>development of additional advice and guidance to accompany the revised approach to Case Summary documentation as well as the rollout of the Casework Supervision Workshops. The process has identified line manager communications as an area that could be improved upon, with line managers playing an increasingly critical role in communicating messages with the service and council-wide.</p> <p>A new Director's Coffee Morning (Drop-in) has been established open to practice managers in the service. The sessions have been a useful way to bring leadership closer to practice and solicit live feedback on the current service improvement work. Improved visibility of leadership is an area specifically identified by Ofsted as requiring improvement.</p>	<p>The introduction of a Quarterly Children and Young People Case Summary Form at the end of April 2021 will increase the focus on children's lived experience and help to demonstrate the difference we are making in a child's life at regular intervals, identifying the key changes and developments for that child over the preceding three months.</p> <p>A Need to Know Forum has been established to ensure a clear line of sight on practice where there are matters of high risk that relate directly to a child, young person and/or family or where there are other serious high risk matters that impact significantly on the local authority. The forum reviews the quality, content and service response to high risk detailed in the Need to Know briefing submissions. The aim being to provide high support and constructive challenge to the service's management of high risk. Importantly the forum offers the opportunity to seek support for the response to high-risk management and escalation with partner agencies if necessary. The overall aim is for the statutory Director for Children's Services (the Group Director - Children and Education), and Senior Management Team, to be assured that the management of high risk is safe and outcome focused in relation to children and young people. Need to Know briefings are sent to the senior management team on the same day as the escalation of risk or incident. The forum meets at 6 weekly intervals.</p>	
<p>Priority 4: Workforce development and retention</p>		

Why is this a priority for CFS?	What have we done about it so far?	What are we going to do next?
<p>A skilled, well supported and well trained workforce is essential to deliver services to our most vulnerable children and their families. The supervision of our staff is critical to delivering good, outcome-focused planning and to avoid delay for children.</p> <p>We are making changes to refocus management oversight and drive improvements in practice. This includes changing our approach to supervision and refocusing the work of Consultant Social Workers (CSWs) and Practice Development Managers (PDMs).</p> <p>A series of professional supervision workshops have been rolled out in February and March 2021 to all practice managers in CFS so that they are clear about supervision standards and are able to identify training needs for their staff. This will ensure that plans are progressing for children in timescales that meet their needs. To date 10 Professional Supervision Workshop sessions have taken place (with one more planned) attended by over 100 CFS staff in a management position.</p> <p>A workforce and practice development hub is being established in the Safeguarding and Learning service (which will become the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service from May 2021) through the service restructure to ensure that staff training needs are met and prioritised in terms of service need.</p>	<p>The job titles of Qualified Children's Practitioners (QCPs) have changed to 'Social Worker (ASYE)' to reflect their status as fully qualified Social Workers - providing these staff with recognition of their qualification and status.</p> <p>A refocusing of lead practitioner roles and responsibilities specifically in relation to Consultant Social Workers (CSWs) and Practice Development Managers (PDMs) has taken place over recent months. Work has taken place to reduce caseloads held at these levels realigning the focus of the role on supervisory activities particularly in relation to CSWs' supervision of our Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) social workers (newly qualified social workers) in line with the current responsibilities of the CSW job role. We are also recognising and refocusing the role of PDMs as a management position with an increased emphasis on leadership and management - developing, rather than delivering practice in line with the PDM job role.</p> <p>Diversity of workforce - Inclusive Recruitment and Aspirational Support for Staff is one of the three key areas of the CFS Anti-Racist Practice Action Plan. The action plan outlines steps to move towards a staff workforce that is representative of child and family population in Hackney at all levels including at senior leadership levels Quarterly reporting takes place for social work and non-social work staff, including demographic breakdowns so that disproportionality in our</p>	<p>We are reviewing and redeveloping our ASYE (Assisted and Supported Year in Employment) programme for newly qualified social workers to provide an effective support and development programme for this cohort. We are continuing to encourage students on social work placements in Hackney and those involved in the Step up to Social Work programme here to apply for the newly renamed 'Social Worker (ASYE)' posts.</p> <p>The Children and Families Service will not be running the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship programme for September 2021 in order to review processes and procedures around the programme and hope to explore this for September 2022.</p> <p>The Workforce Development Strategy has been summarised on one page so that key priorities are clear to staff and the Workforce Development Board are clearly sighted on the path to achieving these. This shows the links between the Recruitment and Retention Strategy, the ASYE (Assisted and Supported Year in Employment) programme for newly qualified social workers, the Management Development Programme and the Clinical Offer, overlaid by our training offer, casework supervision changes, IT systems and tools, development of our organisational structure and quality assurance of practice.</p> <p>Work will begin over the coming months to clearly outline the journey staff can take from student social worker to senior leader, so that they are</p>

	workforce is tracked and addressed, as part of our Anti-Racist Practice Action Plan.	clear about their continued career within Hackney and supported by their manager to achieve their career goals.
Priority 5: Effective partnerships		
Why is this a priority for CFS?	What have we done about it so far?	What are we going to do next?
<p>The November 2019 Ofsted inspection found that <i>"joint work across the partnership has not... consistently translated into operational improvement"</i>. Better partnership working arrangements particularly in relation to our front door are critical to improving outcomes for children. The First Access and Screening Team (FAST) review, which began in February 2020, has shown that we will strengthen decision-making through the development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) approach in Hackney.</p> <p>In addition to this, in June 2020, the CHSCP shared an updated version of the Strategy Discussion protocol clearly outlining mutually agreed expectations with partners including appropriate levels of participation and information sharing in strategy discussions. This is to ensure that all decisions are attuned to the child's individual needs and are informed by key information about the child and the circumstances of their family and significant others. The protocol was embedded via virtual training across the partnership by the CHSCP.</p>	<p>In February 2021 we implemented a new Professional Consultation Line for professional advice and guidance to partner agencies. The Consultation Line is intended to better support multi-agency partners to work with families before the need for statutory intervention, and this will reduce the number of families who undergo a statutory social work assessment that results in no further action. The Consultation Line does not detract from immediate referrals and a response to a child at risk of or likely to experience significant harm. Calls are responded to by experienced social work qualified members of staff from the First Access and Screening Team (FAST), who will listen to the caller's concerns and offer advice and guidance about the most appropriate next steps.</p> <p>A Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) approach for Hackney was endorsed at the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CHSCP) Senior Leadership Team on 14th April 2021 - it is hoped that this model of operation will improve the timeliness and quality of multi-agency response for contacts that require safeguarding screening. This will go live in June 2021.</p>	<p>Strategic discussions have taken place across the Children and Families Service and Hackney Education to secure permanent Hackney Education representation in FAST and the MASH. The post will be directly managed by Hackney Education with a strong 'dotted line' for day to day management and support to FAST and reviewed after a year once the MASH is up and running and the partnership work with schools is further developed.</p> <p>We are working to adopt a whole systems approach to social work assessments using an Open Dialogue model. Initial conversations have been held about this possibility with our early help partners, alongside our clinical colleagues. This links closely to the work of the Early Help Review. The Open Dialogue model promotes openness and transparency with parents/carers by all members of the network (<i>nothing about you, without you</i>) and creates a shared responsibility across the network (including the family) for decision-making. It is hoped this will ensure that families get the right level of support at the right time, supported appropriately by the professional network around them.</p> <p>Work is underway to explore Domestic Abuse</p>

	<p>We continue to develop the Early Help Hub in FAST, to respond to requests for support at an early help level, with a Family Support Worker joining the hub at the start of March 2021.</p> <p>The Hackney Child Wellbeing Framework is being updated by and will be relaunched by the City and Hackney Children's Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP). This update will reflect the 'Continuum of Need' outlined in the London Child Protection Procedures and is in use in many local authorities in London. As such this should be familiar to partners, many of which work across local authority boundaries. The update will include an updated referral process and pathways to, as well as contact details for, Early Help provision such as Children's Centres, Young Hackney Schools link practitioners, and the Early Help Hub in the MASH, as well as for Children in Need and Children in Need of Protection and the police.</p>	<p>Intervention Service involvement in front door screening, either through systems integration or staffing resource. Work is also underway to explore how to further embed contextual safeguarding approaches in the MASH following the creation of the Context Intervention Unit in the Children and Families Service in October 2020.</p>
Priority 6: Tools and theoretical frameworks		
Why is this a priority for CFS?	What have we done about it so far?	What are we going to do next?
<p>Work has been underway in the Children and Families Service (CFS) over the past six months to explore and review the Unit Model approach and its application. The CFS Leadership Team is committed to maintaining and refreshing the service's identity as a 'Systemic Organisation', whilst acknowledging the 'Unit Model' is only one of many elements of a 'Systemic Organisation'.</p> <p>The service's Systemic Principles sit within the</p>	<p>An easy to understand set of Systemic Principles was developed in 2020, overseen and implemented by the Systemic Strategy Group. This group is focused on driving forward systemic practice across CFS, with oversight for this process being provided by the Head of Clinical Practice. The systemic leadership programme is one of our primary vehicles for ensuring that middle and senior managers develop and role model a consistent approach to the use of</p>	<p>In order to continually try and improve families' experiences of Child Protection Conferences, we are working alongside colleagues who are leading the 'Childhood Adversity, Trauma and Resilience Programme' (ChATR). We are piloting trauma informed approaches to Child Protection Conferences to enable professionals to understand how parents' past trauma might impact their current behaviour, and how best to support them to break the cycle of trauma by</p>

<p>context of statutory children’s social care and underpin the service’s practice model, taking account of professional judgement about risk, harm, need and support.</p> <p>In July 2019 we held a Practice Week on Neglect and shared a range of tools and approaches to support assessment and intervention with neglect. Following the Ofsted inspection in November 2019, it became clear that a more evidence-based approach to neglect, in the form of a manualised tool such as the Graded Care Profile, would be beneficial for staff practice and also to provide evidence to courts during care proceedings.</p>	<p>professional authority for first line managers and frontline practitioners and to develop a culture that embraces constructive challenge - this programme was paused in autumn 2020 due to other developments and changes in the service and plans are currently being put in place to restart the systemic leadership programme in summer 2021.</p> <p>CFS will promote and further embed the use of evidence-based tools that are already rolled out across CFS, to ensure that staff are using them appropriately and to the maximum benefit of our children and families. This includes the Safe and Together approach for families where there is domestic abuse and Family Group Conferencing to enable families to create their own plan for support.</p>	<p>supporting their children to build resilience. We aim to make the experience of Child Protection Conferences more engaging for families and for everyone involved, so that we can create the best possible plan for children in collaboration with parents and professionals. This is in addition to an absolute expectation that Child Protection Conference reports are shared with parents in advance of the conference in accordance with minimum statutory timeframes (3 days prior to an Initial Child Protection Conference, 5 days prior to a Review Child Protection Conference).</p> <p>The Children and Families Service and the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership is purchasing a license to access the Graded Care Profile tool for practitioners to use to evidence neglect and will be setting up train the trainer sessions across the partnership in Spring/Summer 2021 to promote the use of this tool across all partner agencies in relation to neglect.</p> <p>Core training in systemic practice will be made available to all staff, embedding relationship-based practice as the heart of our practice model. With a focus on evidencing practice through the use of direct work and assessment tools.</p>
<p>Priority 7: Clinical Service</p>		

Why is this a priority for CFS?	What have we done about it so far?	What are we going to do next?
<p>The service is currently in the process of resetting our Clinical Service in line with the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted, specifically to: remove avoidable drift and delay; improve the timeliness and effectiveness of pre-proceedings work; inform the assessment of children living in neglectful environments; and support the safeguarding of children who are missing education or who are home educated.</p>	<p>We are resetting our clinical resource to offer targeted, evidence-based relational mental health support to our most vulnerable children and young people in a safeguarding context, at the right time. Focusing directly on children and young people open to the Children and Families Service who are in receipt of a Child in Need Plan, a Child Protection Plan or who are Children in Care. This will include specialist psychological assessments for court as part of the Public Law Outline. The service will continue to support Care Leavers and young people accessing Youth Offending Services as well as supporting them to access local services if preferred.</p> <p>Young people and families not meeting the statutory criteria will now have increased and improved access to the wider CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) offer in Hackney (which have to date been a reduced option for them) and mainstream CAMHS interventions.</p>	<p>The reset CFS Clinical Service will offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clinical consultations to all professionals in Hackney CFS. ● Evidence based, culturally appropriate interventions for children and families in a statutory context. ● Delivery of evidence based group work designed and tailored to meet the presenting needs of families. ● Early Intervention parent/family/network consultation sessions to support formulation driven plans for young people and early identification and signposting in respect of specific clinical needs. ● Support/Clinical Supervision to scaffold the delivery of individual and family interventions by Tier 1 practitioners working in universal services, utilising the existing trusted relationships. ● Strengthening the universal workforce, so there is less reliance on clinical support. This will include approximately 880 children and families where the lead CFS practitioner would have access to consultation based clinical support from the Clinical Service. ● This approach will strengthen the early help offer within community settings, minimising escalation of referrals to other services and building bridges to access other services, reducing current silos. ● Targeted case specific reflective group supervision for staff and managers across the Children and Families Service.

Appendix:

- Link to previous [CFS 2019-20 Full Year Report](#) - this contains descriptions of our services for children and families and terminology about the services / data described in more detail

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DRAFT - OUTLINE

June 2021	July 2021
School Admissions	Ofsted Action Plan
Pupil Attainment	CFS Budget Monitoring
Childcare Sufficiency	Commissioning Independent SEND
Work Programme Discussion	
October 2021	Nov 2021
Address inequalities HFS/HES	CFS Annual Report
Adolescents Entering Care - Ev	
December 2021	January 2022
Cllr Woodley Q & A	CHSCP - Safeguarding
Budget Monitoring HES	Contextual Safeguarding
	Unregistered Educational Settings
February 2021	March 2021
Cllr Bramble Q & A	CFS Annual Report

Standing Items

- City Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership Board
- School Admissions (June/July)
- Pupil Attainment (April)
- Childcare Sufficiency (June/July)
- Children & Families Bi-Annual Report x2 (April/October)
- Pupil Movement (April)

Cabine Question Time

- Cllr Woodley (Cabinet member Early Years, Families, Parks & Play)
- Cllr Bramble (Cabinet member for Children, Education & Social Care)

Budget Monitoring

- Hackney Education Service
- Children & Families Service

Reviews

- Outcome from school exclusions (Report and 1 follow up)
- Adolescents Entering Care (double item)
- Unregistered settings

Agreed Items from 2021

- Ofsted Inspection Action Plan
- Addressing inequalities & unconscious bias
- Helping children catch up/ closing the attainment gap

Other Substantive items (carry/over)

Youth Offending - Inspection Outcome

Youth Services

SEND (Commissioning July)

Mental health

Contextual Safeguarding

Young Futures

Hackney Schools Group Board

Suggestions from local stakeholders

No.	Source	Detail
1.	Member of the Commission	Housing support for vulnerable young people which could include broader assessment of young people's housing needs and allocations including support for those leaving care, availability of temporary housing. The Housing Strategy is being updated so any work could potentially contribute to that process (possibly jointly with the Living in Hackney Commission).
2.	Member of the Commission	The impact of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods on children and young people. With the possibility of looking at broader issues such as how cycling is promoted among children and young people. (This could be a joint item undertaken with the Scrutiny Panel/ Skills or Economy Growth Commission)
3.	Member(s) of the Commission	To assess the impact of parental substance abuse on children and young people and the support available to affected families, particularly in light of covid restrictions and lockdown. The lockdown may have exacerbated the impact on children whose parents are alcoholics or who have other addictions, or who have been exposed to domestic violence. It would be useful to understand what impact this may be having in terms of children coming into contact with children's social care and what support is available for these families.
4.	Non- Executive Member	Tackling Loneliness in the community - particularly in relation to the experience of pandemic and its impact on mental wellbeing, community functioning (outreach to those on their own), working from home, adult social care etc. This is likely to span a number of Commissions, including CYP.
5.	Group Director for Children & Education	Impact of the covid restrictions (lockdown, school closures, reduced socialising opportunities) on young people's mental health.
6.	City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership	To assess the context of safeguarding young people in Hackney with a particular focus on the impact of bias, unconscious bias and disproportionality (as relating to the published review of Child C). This was supported by members at the meeting on 14th June 2021 where such a piece of work could also encompass the role of 'adultification' and racial stereotyping of children in these assessment processes.

7.	HackneyQuest	It is likely that poverty and inequalities are likely to be worsened in the wake of the pandemic. How can all of Hackney's services work together to best minimise the impact of this on children and young people?
8.	HackneyQuest	What has been the impact of the pandemic on work-related opportunities for young people? How well are new programmes such as Kickstart being implemented in Hackney? Are they providing young people with the high quality opportunities that they deserve?
9.	Off Centre / Family Action	<p>We work with a particular cohort (up to 25 years old) many of our ideas for scrutiny focus on the younger adult population and provision of services for them. I understand that this may not strictly be in the remit of the programme but maybe as a result one of the areas of scrutiny could and should be what happens to provision of several services post 18 years e.g. young carers over the age of 18, young people accessing mental health support over 18 (and under), the particular experience of our young people of African, Caribbean or mixed heritage being able to access mental health support. As you will appreciate, our suggested topics are in response to what we often see on the ground.</p> <p>Young people may not be ready or in a position to address some of their difficulties at a younger age (or need family or appropriate adult support to be able to do so which they may not have) and when they reach young adulthood can be more motivated to seek out support but then have a challenging experience given thresholds and need for adult services – I am thinking particularly about young adults with disordered eating or displaying symptoms of OCD or demonstrating behaviours that could be associated with a personality disorder. There is a particular kind of approach and support from which this population would benefit. I think as a borough we would do well to consider those up to 25 years old as part of the population of children and young people and tailor services appropriate to their needs.</p> <p>We see challenges connected to the impact of parental mental health and / or historic abuse (be that sexual, physical, emotional) on young people that it is only in relative adulthood that they have enough distance to begin to explore the effect on their lives. The available support for young people (under 18) with parents who have mental health difficulties is also an area for consideration as many of the young people we see have been living with a parent with undiagnosed mental health conditions and therefore have not been seen as it were in the system. We also witness young people's struggles with the transition into independent living as a separate issue and more</p>

		recently given Covid the impact not only on schooling (as you looked at this year) but also on employment opportunities and that many young people were employed on zero hours contracts or on a casual basis. This isn't to be critical of any of the services in place to support young people with these issues (us included!) but often there isn't enough to go around – be that funding, availability of meaningful relationship / keyworker, longevity of therapy sessions, waiting times to access support.
10.	Hackney Independent Parent Forum	<p>Post 16 - Pathways and Preparation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are Pupils exposed to different and ambitious options from an early stage so that they become engaged in the process and have confidence in their future potential? • What are the options for post 16/post 19 pupils? Are they able to attend the most appropriate settings which give pupils the structure, routine, life skills lessons and support with their social and emotional health in the right environment? • Is HE taking into account the academic potential of SEND pupils - creating pathways which reflect their need for adapted teaching and social and emotional support?
11.	Hackney Independent Parent Forum	<p>SEND Support/Initial help and pathways to diagnosis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is HE doing to ensure that the SEND identification and pathways to diagnosis are of a consistent high standard and thoroughness across the borough? • How are HE monitoring the quality and effectiveness of the interventions and additional input being offered to SEND support pupils? • How are families being engaged by both health and educational professionals through this process? • How are families being encouraged and given the skills to participate effectively in their child's development at home? • What emotional and mental health support is being given to families to help them understand and accept their child's needs?
12.	Hackney Independent Parent Forum	<p>Social and Emotional Mental Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are HE planning to develop the growing presence of mental health support in schools to identify pupil's needs earlier? • Will HE be developing an early intervention scheme which will respond to the early identification of SEMH concerns and provide support at a very early stage? To prevent the development of anxiety, stress, resilience and confidence issues which result in conditions such as anorexia, self

		<p>harming and school refusal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could HE develop systems to enable the monitoring of children and young people's SEMH development? To effectively track and identify both need and the effectiveness of strategies and interventions?
13.	Hackney Independent Parent Forum	<p>Family/school/HE communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will HE be auditing the standard of communication between families, schools, other professionals and themselves? Ensuring that information is presented to families in appropriate and accessible formats, taking into account the needs of the family? • How will HE ensure that voluntary codes of practice on communications are effectively implemented so that there is a consistent high quality approach across the borough? • How will HE audit the statutory communication between families and schools etc? Are the protocols and regulations for EHCPs being followed consistently across the borough and is that communication meaningful and effective? • What practical and appropriate steps are HE taking to ensure that SEND families are engaged in effective co-production to ensure that services reflect the needs of Hackney children and their families? How will co-production be monitored and improved?
14.	Hackney Independent Parent Forum	<p>SEND Representation and Voice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What steps are the commission taking to ensure that the voice of CYP with SEND are actually heard when issues pertaining to them are examined and representatives of HE are being asked to account for decisions and strategies? • How is the commission going to ensure that they have the opportunity to hear from those most affected by HE's actions - SEND families and use this information to inform their discussions? • How will the commission ensure that the SEND community are consistently represented on the commission? Currently, some members are providing very effective questioning, however, how will the commission guarantee that there will be a consistent SEND voice on the panel long term?
15.	Hackney Independent Parent Forum	<p>Provision mapping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does HE audit the cost, cost effectiveness and availability of provision? Parents report their child has not received provision as stated on their EHCP's and would like to be provided with all information pertaining to their child, especially at reviews.
16.	Member of the Commission	<p>Review outcomes, actions and progress since the 2018 report on unregistered schools, taking into account the impact of the pandemic period.</p>

17.	Cabinet Member Children, Education and Children's Social / Director of CFS	The effectiveness of Child Protection Plans for children aged under 3 years - the commission could take a closer look at the impact of the pandemic on the protection of children through the lens of multi agency child protection planning in the light of the restrictions enforced by the pandemic (face to face and virtual visiting) . Mindful that children's social work service continued to be one of the few agencies to undertake face to face visiting throughout the pandemic for children at risk. Child protection being everyone's business!
18.	Cabinet Member Children, Education and Children's Social / Director of CFS	The commission could seek assurance about the impact of the active anti-racist strategy across children's services(council wide) in preventing the accommodation of teenage boys in particular, given the disproportionate representation of young black teenagers in care and leaving care. The commission could focus on the contributing factors that result in these young people having to be looked after, for example the interface between school exclusion, youth violence and care.
19.	Cabinet Member Children, Education and Children's Social / Director of CFS	The commission could seek assurance about the provision of good pathway planning for care leaving young people, and the council's ability to make the right provision for these young people to stay close and be supported within the communities. This would involve the review of housing provision, and other care arrangements, alongside the challenging of employment, education and training from a position of corporate parenting responsibility
20.	Director of Education	SEND provision for young people post 16 provision/Preparing for adulthood. This is a cross council and partnership service item and a priority to develop further (possibly early 2022).
21.	Member of the Commission	That the Commission's review into unregistered educational settings be followed up in 2021/22.
22.	Member of the Commission	Given that national reports have documented wide variations in identification and level of support for children with SEND in mainstream school, it would be helpful to know more details about the local population of SEND children in mainstream schools. How are local children with SEND identified and supported both internally and externally? How are parents and families involved in supporting provision?
23.	Member of the Commission	How are children in temporary accommodation supported, particularly for those families that may be placed outside of the borough. Is there any impact on the consistency and coordination of care/ support/ education for this cohort of young people? How do any disproportionalities in this cohort of young people impact on service provision/ delivery?

24.	Member of the Commission	Recent national reports have highlighted high levels of sexual harassment of young people in schools. The Commission could seek reassurance that assessed in Hackney and to seek reassurance that appropriate work is being undertaken to address this;
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Overview & Scrutiny

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission Minutes of 12th July 2021

Attendees

Sophie Conway (Councillor) (Chair)
Margaret Gordon (Councillor) (Vice Chair)
Lynne Troughton (Councillor)
Katie Hansen (Councillor)
Anya Sizer (Councillor)
Jo Macleod (Co-opted member)
Steven Olalere (PG Representative)
Salmah Kansara, North London Muslim Community Centre

In attendance:

- Cllr Sarah Young
- Cllr James Peters
- Cllr Caroline Selman
- Shabnum Hassan
- Cllr Anntionette Bramble, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care
- Cllr Caroline Woodley, Cabinet Member for Families, Early Years, Parks & Play
- Diane Benjamin, Director of Children's Social Care
- Annie Gammon, Head of Hackney Learning Trust and Director of Education
- Annie Coyle, Independent Consultant (Inspection readiness project)
- Wendy Edwards, SEND Contract Consultant
- Joe Wilson, Head of SEND
- Fran Cox, Head of High Needs and School Places
- Naeem Ahmed, Director of Finance, Children, Education, Adults, Health and Integration
- Lisa Aldridge, Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance
- Huw Bevan, Head of Family Intervention & Support Service

Cllr Conway in the Chair

Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting and those members of the public who were viewing the livestream. It was noted that this was a hybrid meeting with members of the Commission in attendance and with officers connecting virtually.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Diane Benjamin, the new Director of Children's Social Care.

1. Apologies for absence

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

- Cllr Anna Lynch
- Cllr James Peters (connected virtually)
- Cllr Humaira Garasia
- Cllr Caroline Selman (connected virtually)
- Cllr Sarah Young (connected virtually)

- Richard Brown
- Shabnum Hassan (connected virtually)
- Ernell Watson

2. Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 There were no urgent items and the agenda was as had been published.

3. Declarations of interest

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

- Cllr Gordon noted that she was a member of the Member Oversight Board for Children's Social Care and would not participate in Item 6 - the Ofsted Action Plan Update.
- Cllr Peters was a governor at a school in Hackney;
- Shabnum Hassan, was a governor at a school in Hackney;
- Cllr Sizer was a parent with a child with additional needs (in relation to item 4);
- Jo McLeod was a governor at a school in Hackney.

4. Commissioning of Independent SEND Provision

4.1 At its meeting on May 11th 2021, the Commission received a report on SEND performance and financial recovery plan. In response to local concerns about independent SEND provision, it was agreed that a further follow-up report would be provided to allow the Commission to explore:

- The nature of independent SEND provision and how such services are commissioned;
- The type of contracts issued to independent provision and how these are monitored and reviewed;
- The cost of independent SEND provision.

4.2 The Cabinet Member for Families, Early Years, Parks & Play and Director of Education introduced the report to the Commission highlighting that an internal review of Independent SEND Commissioning had been in progress and that the report highlighted the work undertaken to date. It was acknowledged that a large number of young people with SEND are supported within Independent provision, many of which were located in settings outside the borough and that this report would give reassurance to members about how these services are commissioned.

4.3 In supporting children with SEND, Hackney Education Service was aiming to deliver on a number of key objectives:

- Ensure that every child has access to a place of learning and support;
- Respecting the rights of parents to choose their child's placements;
- Ensuring that there is a good range of quality placements for parents to choose from;
- Making sure that placements offer good value for money to the Council.

4.4 As of January 2021 there were 2,645 children and young people with an EHCP in Hackney, 1,543 of which were supported in mainstream schools and further 373 placed in local Special Schools. A further 474 children were placed in Independent and Non Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) both within and external to the borough.

- 4.5 There has been a significant increase in the number of children placed in INMSS: 474 children with an EHCP were placed in independent SEND provision in 2020/21 compared to just 272 in 2016/17. This has resulted in a significant increase to the spend on iINMSS from £8 million to £13.8 million over the same period. The significant rise in the number of children with an EHCP being supported within INMSS settings has necessitated a review to ensure that local commissioning is robust in face of increased service demand and contract monitoring requirements.
- 4.6 A significant number (256) of the young people in the cohort of children placed in INMSS were from within the Orthodox Jewish Community. Most parents choose to have their child educated within Orthodox Jewish settings, and the SEND team currently commissions 23 different schools to meet the needs of this community.
- 4.7 Hackney Education is also developing a School Organisation Strategy which is considering how the school estate can provide more in-borough maintained options for children with SEND in light of falling rolls within the mainstream sector. In this context, it should be understood that the INMSS report is part of a wider transformation strategy for SEND services which is responding to increased demand for services against a backdrop of ongoing financial pressures.
- 4.8 It was understood that as part of the review of INMSS, HES had undertaken a benchmarking exercise with a number of other local authorities which provided assurance that Hackney was facing similar pressures in relation to increased demand and rising costs of SEND provision. The SEND service was working with Health and Social Care partners as part of the transformation and improvement programme to ensure that quality services were being commissioned which were delivering good outcomes and value for money.
- 4.9 More rigour was being introduced to contracting with INMSS providers moving onto National Schools and Colleges Contracts (NSCC). To date, 42% of INMSS were on the new NSCC. The SEND team had also undertaken a number of INMSS market engagement exercises with all schools and colleges in the sector to develop shared intelligence and to develop working partnerships which can better plan for the needs of young people with SEND in the future. The SEND service reassured the Commission that each child had been individually assessed and were appropriately placed within an INMSS provision that met the needs of the child as were set out in individual EHCP.
- 4.10 The review had identified a lack of specialised provision for children with SEND in the borough which was illustrated by the fact that currently 56% of young people with an EHCP attending an INMSS setting did so outside of Hackney borders.
- 4.11 The SEND team has also developed a Market Provision Map in which all providers are now required to complete an application form as part of the accreditation checks process. This form seeks assurance about the robustness of individual settings delivery model, and will form part of a new system of permanence management and contract monitoring for the service. In addition, Hackney is a member of Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group which will inform outcomes monitoring and value for money for schools commissioned within the INMSS sector. These

developments will further help to ensure that the team is placing children in provisions which meet their needs at the best available cost option.

Questions from the Commission

- 4.12 What are the strategic ambitions of the INMSS review and how does this link with the School Organisation Strategy? In increasing Hackney provision, what sort of SEND provision is the service seeking to develop?
- The School Place Planning Strategy sits within the Education Estate Strategy. The latter has four priorities: moving additional SEND provision in Borough; managing falling rolls in primary settings; preparing secondary schools for falling rolls within 2-5 years, and: developing a sustainable and effective education estate for the next 10 years.
 - In respect of creating additional capacity for SEND provision within Hackney, the council is seeking to increase capacity by developing satellite provision attached to existing local Special Schools. Secondly, more Additional Resource Provisions (ARP) will be developed in mainstream settings to enable them to support young people with ASD, Moderate Learning Difficulties and Speech and Language and Communication Difficulties. Finally, the SEND team will be working with schools to develop a 'graduated response' to enable more children with SEND to be supported in mainstream settings.
- 4.13 Currently is there any spare capacity among local Special Schools?
- There are 3 Special Schools in Hackney (Ickburgh, Stormont House and The Garden) and all three schools are at capacity and operate a waiting list for when places become available in-year.
- 4.14 In relation to the Education Estates Strategy, how will this address the needs of the local Orthodox Jewish Community (OJC), who appear to be reliant upon the INMSS sector for SEND needs of their children?
- A key aim of the strategy is to provide equity of service for all communities across the borough, and there is a definite need to improve access to good quality provision within the OJC. There is an example of good dedicated OJC provision within the borough called Side By Side Special School and the SEND team was working with this service to formalise commissioning and to understand how provision might be extended. The service was also working with Interlink and the communities that they represent are reflected in the Estates Strategy particularly Side by Side .
 - The service was also working with those schools which support boys aged 13+ from the OJC with an EHCP as the service currently had little oversight or an assessment of informed practice. There is an opportunity to reset this relationship and address any inequalities within the system. The intention of the review is to address OJC reliance on INMSS settings for SEND provision. Parental preference plays an important role in selection of SEND provision, and the SEND service aims to develop good quality service options for the OJC.
 - Side by Side is an Independent School adjudged 'good' by Ofsted for pupils with complex needs including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD)

- HES was also seeking to develop more professional development input into the INMSS sector to ensure that these are within the 'good' or 'outstanding' category. There were also concerns around the curriculum offered within these settings and HES was seeking to develop support for key subjects offered.

4.15 How is the service responding to young people whose SEND needs may have varied as a result of the pandemic?

- The SEND team is instigating a system of annual reviews for every child with an EHCP to ensure there is an updated assessment of children's needs. This will also ensure that collectively, the SEND team is aware of emerging local needs (e.g. girls with autism). In this way the service is continually reviewing local SEND needs. This is a significant challenge for the service however, given that there are over 2,600 children with an EHCP in Hackney.

4.16 Whilst the SEND team has ambitions to increase Hackney based SEND provision and reduce reliance on INMSS settings, a large number of children are still supported in these settings and are likely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. What assurance can the service provide about the quality of INMSS settings or highlight if there are concerns around any specific types of settings. It is noted that 58% of INMSS had not moved to the new NSCC contact monitoring, so how satisfied is the service of the efficacy of contract monitoring and quality assurance for these settings?

- Monitoring is undertaken at two levels: organisational and the individual child.
- In terms of the individual monitoring of the child, annual reviews are undertaken which assess the child's needs and how well these are being addressed by the INMSS. The review tracks the outcomes and progress and is undertaken as a joint assessment with contributions from parents and the EHCP Coordinator.
- At the organisation level, although 42% of INMSS providers had signed over to the NSCC, this was expected to rise as this transfer programme had only been in operation for 6 weeks. Sign over to the new contract will help to monitor individual organisation performance. Before a child is placed in any INMSS, the SEND Team will check the Ofsted report of the setting and ensure that the setting is Section 41 registered.¹
- The SEND service will also assess if other Hackney learners have attended this setting and how good their learning outcomes had been. A panel is in operation which approves every placement within the INMSS sector to ensure that the needs of the young person are met at the commissioned setting.
- A Senior Contracts Monitoring Officer was appointed in January who will be prioritising those settings which are rated as Inadequate or Require Improvement by Ofsted. Improved contract monitoring will also help to acquire a breakdown of how the fees for these services are calculated. A renegotiation of fees has also been commenced with some providers which had helped to cap costs.

¹ Section 41 schools – These are independent special schools which have been approved by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Children and Families Act ("CAFA") 2014 as schools which a parent or young person can request to be named in an EHC plan. This means parents or young people have a right to request that this type of school is named in an EHC plan in the same way they can request a maintained school.

- 4.17 What outcome monitoring is undertaken of current contracts with Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools and importantly, how does this inform future commissioning? Is there any historical outcome data for these settings?
- This data is recorded and tracked in the pupils annual review process over time.
- 4.18 How is the service involving local parents with SEND in these decisions about INMSS and future strategy involving this provision? Is the service reaching a broad range of parents?
- The SEND team works with the Parent Carer Forum not only to share information, but also to help co-produce that strategy. There is also a SEND Partnership Board which has a number of working groups which all have parent representatives. Whilst the service works closely with HiP, the needs of young people with SEND were wide-ranging however, and it was recognised that there were other parent groups with whom the service wished to develop a working relationship. The team were working with an organisation called Contact which is undertaking a best practice review of parental engagement which will not only provide a picture of what is currently being provided but also help to identify if there are any gaps in local provision and how best to take this forward locally.
 - It was also noted that there was also work taking place to develop Youth Voice within the service. The service will be looking to further develop opportunities for young people with SEND to contribute and feedback on service development and improvement. This is still a work in progress, but the service has high ambitions and is a priority for the team.
- 4.19 What impact has the cyber attack on the Council had on this work?
- The SEND team were not directly affected by the cyber attack, though social care partners were. The social work service had been in contact with education partners to help rebuild case information.
- 4.20 Section 4.1 sets out the new Pseudo Dynamic Purchasing System (PDPS) which is to be introduced to support commissioning INMSS. How will the views and feedback of children and their parents interface with this tool?
- The PDPS allows commissioners to develop pre-qualification or accreditation checks data on all providers. The PDPS in effect builds a list of INMSS providers which have been checked and for which due diligence has been undertaken for every provision named on an EHCP. This is then a resource for the SEND service.
- 4.21 The Chair thanked officers for attending and summed up the information provided by officers. It was felt that the information provided had been very frank and open and highlighted the challenges faced in commissioning INMSS SEND settings. It was expected that the Commission would continue to look at how independent children's services are commissioned and the quality assurance processes that underpin that commissioning process. It was also noted that this remains a very significant area of spend and risk for the Council and would therefore remain in sight in terms of budget monitoring.

5. Budget Monitoring Children and Families Service

5.1 Budget monitoring is a key element of the scrutiny function and the Commission monitors in-year spending on services for children and young people across respective Directorates. The Children and Families Service budget outturn for the year to end of March 2021 was presented for review.

5.2 The Director of Finance introduced the report noting that all figures contained within it were provisional at this time (although no material change was expected). Key data highlighted from the report were as follows:

- After the application of reserves (£3.86m commissioning reserve and a £1.6m Ofsted Improvement reserve) a £3.3million overspend was anticipated for Children & Families Service;
- Additional expenditure arising from Covid accounted for £2m of the overspend;
- The main areas of overspend were in the corporate parenting budget which, after the application of the commissioning reserve, recorded an overspend of £4m. Residential Care is the most significant area of overspend where services have 40 children placed at an average cost of £200k per placement per annum;
- Independent fostering placements are twice as expensive as using the in-house fostering team and this was also an area of significant overspend;
- A Social Care Grant of £9.3m was received to support adult and children's social care which was distributed evenly between these services;
- There were underspends in Clinical Services (£217k), Management (£944k) and Safeguarding and Learning Team (£182k) which contributed to an improved overall financial position;
- In terms of management actions taken to help reduce costs the Post 16 Commissioning panel has been set up to help address costs across the wider health, education and social care partnership. Further still, all high cost placements are reviewed weekly to ensure that children are stepped down where this is appropriate. The Workforce Development Board was also undertaking a strategic assessment of future staffing needs for the Directorate.

Questions from the Commission

5.3 Understanding that £2m of the overspend was related to Covid 19, what proportion of the additional costs attributed to Covid are anticipated to continue into the 2021/22 budget?

- The bulk of the Covid 19 overspend related to increased staffing costs and delays in social care placements for children, and as such these costs are not expected to continue into 2021/22. It was acknowledged that this scenario could change however if there was a 3rd wave in the year ahead. The Finance Team was beginning to undertake preliminary financial modeling that possible future waves of Covid 19 would have on the Children and Families Service budget.

5.4 It was noted that there has been a reduction in the number of No Recourse to Public Funds Applications, can further details be provided as to what factors might be underpinning this?

- Although numbers had been falling, there had been a small recent increase in the number of families presenting for No Recourse for Public Funds (NRPF) assessment. The CFS was working with the University of Wolverhampton 'What Works' which is an early intervention project for families likely to seek NRPF. The decline in number of applications was attributed to the impact of Covid and increased border restrictions.

5.5 What factors are underlying the increase in demand and budget pressures for both Under 18 and post 18 semi-independent placements? What options does the Council have to help contain costs for semi-independent placements?

- CFS had undertaken a forensic review of the use of 40+ children in residential care and 46 semi-independent care. There are a number of key lessons from this piece of work:
 - 1) The service was confident that children are placed in high quality semi-independent care and well supported;
 - 2) Many young people presenting are around 16/17 years of age who are often troubled with acute housing needs. Placement options for these young people are relatively limited as few can be placed in foster care. In response the service has further developed and improved the joint assessments process when these young people first access the service, where the service has tried to support the young people and address needs through a social care framework rather than solely housing.
 - 3) A number of these children would be better cared for by a foster carer, but there needs to be additional work to improve the recruitment of local foster carers. These foster carers need additional support to help care for 16/17 year olds who have very specific needs.
 - It was noted that whilst there has been an increase in the number of children being placed in semi-independent care over the past 18 months, the most recent data would suggest that this has levelled off over the past 3 months. This has been the result of tighter assessments at the 'front door' and more engagement with families, and holding families to account more in supporting the needs of this cohort of adolescents.

5.6 Could further clarification be provided on the areas of underspend in the CFS budget and whether these were due to Covid? Has this contributed to a better financial position?

- It was acknowledged that there had been areas of underspend but these were marginal compared to additional costs for Covid. The Finance Team were reviewing how Covid had impact on services with a particular view about how this may generate future efficiencies.

5.7 In terms of residential care homes in which children are placed, can further details be provided as to where these are located? What impact does an out of borough placement have on young people? Is there any intention in developing a more localised response where additional capacity is created closer to home?

- No data was available on the number and location of children in residential care placed out of the borough, though this could be provided to the Commission. CFS agreed that it was important to keep children safe and

protected and where possible close to their family and social networks. For some young people with highly complex needs, a residential home was the best option, though the placement options were very limited. A placements manager oversees this process and ensures that placements do meet the needs of young people. For all these placements there is an emphasis on therapeutic input to ensure that children are developing and their needs are being addressed with a view to bringing them back into other less intensive care options such as foster care. Out of the 40 children that were assessed in the forensic review, the majority were deemed to be in the correct setting and that just 4 could have been placed in foster care. These children had very high needs which were being met well by the residential home. There would be a residential placement review across the service every 6 months,

- Hackney is part of a consortium of other Children's Services across NE London which does support 3 children's homes, which CFS does have access to. It is really important to match needs of young people to these settings, and whilst there had been a number of vacancies in the past few months children from Hackney could not have been placed there as their needs would have disrupted the home and other children there.

Agreed: CFS to provide data /mapping on the residential homes in which children are placed.

Agreed: Forensic analysis of the review of residential - semi-independent care to be sent to the Commission.

5.8 The report has indicated a dependency on reserves to offset overspends in the CFS. How sustainable is this approach?

- At present CFS was having to contend with a significant surge in demand for children's social care services. The Finance team were looking to look at demand planning and income stream over the next 3 years to understand further what the service pressures are likely to be. This exercise has commenced and will complete over the summer and will hopefully result in a cost reduction plan to bring the budget back in line.
- It was expected that the Social Care Grant would continue and increase in the future, but it was accepted this was not sustainable and that a more comprehensive settlement would be needed.

5.9 The Commission had earlier heard about new developments in commissioning INMSS for SEND provision which will improve contract monitoring and value for money assessments. Is there any potential learning from these new developments in the SEND team which can be applied to commissioning children social care provision?

- As part of the cost reduction plan for 2021/22 CFS had been meeting with high cost residential homes to build a better understanding of how fees were calculated. In this process it was noted that some residential settings had been charging for 24 hour care when young people were actually in education during the day. Whilst there was a much more forensic look at the fees being charged, in general there was very little leeway given the nature of the residential children's home market.

- 5.10 The number of children being placed in independent foster care appears to be rising at the expense of in-house foster care placements. What is the service doing to increase recruitment for in-house foster carers?
- The service is aware of this issue and wishes to recruit more foster carers. 15 households were currently being assessed for eligibility for the in-house foster care team. There has been a realignment of the fostering team over the past 6 months where the recruitment team and foster care team are now working more closely. Now foster care social workers also undertake assessments that would have previously been made by the recruitment team, this is beneficial as the foster carer can provide professional support to new foster carers who they know through the assessment process. This has been important to help retain foster carers.
 - As a result of Covid, people were re-evaluating their lives and there had been an upsurge in the number of people seeking to become foster carers. A key issue remains however is that there is a mismatch between the expectations of new foster carers (who are looking to foster young children) and the reality that the main demographic of children entering care are children aged 14+. A permanent recruitment manager was also now in place.
- 5.11 The commission noted that housing was a significant barrier to foster carer recruitment. Are there any ways which the council can address this issue more corporately?
- CFS had been working with finance to assess how prospective foster carers could be supported to extend their homes when they had insufficient bedroom capacity. If a loft conversion or extension could be built this would enable new foster carers to be recruited, and given the relative high costs of residential care, this would have a short payback period. There were contractual issues to consider however, such as whether the foster carer would be required to continue fostering. There were concerns around the enforceability of such arrangements.
- 5.12 What does the data reveal about foster carer retention in Hackney?
- There was a comprehensive training programme to support in-house foster carers. There is an issue around retention of foster carer retention as the skills expected of foster carers is evolving in response to the evolving needs of children entering care. There were real contextual safeguarding risks for many children which foster carers often found difficult to manage and address, and the service was working with foster carers to help improve their skills and confidence to be able to retain these placements. Foster carers have to hold children through some very turbulent times in their lives and the skills, patience and expertise they demonstrate in doing so should not be underestimated.
 - The Mockingbird Hub was also being used to support foster carers on the ground as was increased levels of peer support. Officers were also developing a non-academic pathway for accreditation at Level 3 so that this can be used for further career development.
- 5.13 The Chair thanked officers for attending and responding to questions from members of the Commission. The Chair noted that there had been financial pressures within the corporate parenting budget for a number of years and it was right that the

Commission retain oversight of this to ensure that adequate measures are in place to contain these without compromising services to young people. It is hoped that the work of the Commission in respect of adolescents entering care will contribute to this issue.

6. Action Plan Arising from Ofsted Inspection

[Following an earlier declaration of interest, Cllr Gordon excused herself from this item.]

6.1 Ofsted inspected the Children and Families Services in Hackney in November of 2019 where children's social care was adjudged to 'require improvement'. Six areas were identified as requiring improvement:

1. The quality of information-sharing by partners and the quality of decision-making within strategy discussions.
2. The assessment of the impact for children of living in neglectful environments to inform authoritative and child-centred practice.
3. The quality of assessment and planning for children subject to private fostering arrangements.
4. The timeliness and effectiveness of pre-proceedings work, including the quality of contingency planning.
5. The welfare of children who are missing education or who are home educated is safeguarded.
6. The effectiveness of management oversight by leaders and managers at all levels, including the effectiveness of oversight from child protection conference chairs.

6.2 In response to the inspection, the Children & Families Service drew up a Childrens Social Care Action plan which was submitted to Ofsted for approval in March 2020. The Commission scrutinised progress against this action plan in November 2020. Two reports were submitted as part of the ongoing scrutiny of the improvements required by the Ofsted inspection:

1. An update on the Children's Social Care Action Plan
2. Proposals to review the Unit Model of Social Work in Hackney

6.3 The Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care introduced the Action Plan Update. The Cabinet member thanked officers in preparing the update and for the ongoing work to improve children's social care in light of the Ofsted report. It was noted that the Council was trying to be as open and transparent as possible about the work to improve, and all updates were published on the website as it was important that the local community hold the council to account.

6.4 Officers highlighted a number of key issues from the report:

- Audits were showing a positive trajectory on information sharing across the safeguarding partnership;
- A training and development programme for all staff in dealing with child neglect had been commissioned for all staff;
- Over 90% of assessments are completed within statutory time frame of 45 days;

- 12 children are in private fostering arrangements, a small but very vulnerable cohort of young people - case audits had found that practice for 10 out of 12 was rated as 'good' or 'outstanding';
- The CFS has also strengthened its supervision offer by front line managers to improve effective oversight of cases.
- Children's summaries have been introduced on the front of case files which is important in the context of the interim information management systems which have been introduced;
- A new monthly meeting with staff has been developed to provide an additional perspective to improve quality assurance, this is very much a 'bottom-up' process in which front line managers can raise issues with senior management.

Questions from the Commission

6.5 Metrics detailed within the report would suggest that whilst progress is being made in some areas, there are a number of metrics which show that further improvement is still required (e.g. information sharing, children living in neglectful environments). How confident is the service that sufficient and timely progress is being made in readiness for a future inspection?

- The improvement journey is still progressing for CFS and the acting Director of CFS had taken on a supporting role for the new Director, to ensure that the service was ready for the next Ofsted inspection. The key areas for improvement that were highlighted by Ofsted (lack of management oversight, drift and delay in decision making, children staging too long in neglectful circumstances) have all undergone significant improvement though it will take some time to embed all these new systems. Every authority has to be ready for an inspection as this can come at any time, and the service was confident that it can evidence improvement for the service areas required for an expected Ofsted focused visit between July and December. It was acknowledged however that the CFS was still on a journey to obtain a good rating from Ofsted in an inspection of children's social care.

6.6 Well supported, positive and engaged staff are central to service improvement yet it is clear that front line staff have faced acute pressures over the past 18 months as they have had to deliver practice improvements required for Ofsted alongside dealing with the impact of Covid and the cyber attack. What assurance can be provided to the Commission about the morale of children's social care staff? Have any audits or surveys taken place? Has there been any increase in staff turnover in the past 12 months? What additional resources and support mechanisms have been put in place to help staff?

- The CFS is acutely aware of the pressures that staff have been under over the past 18 months and is at the forefront of concerns. Although staff morale was assessed to be good at the last inspection, it cannot be complacent on this and has a number of programmes and plans in place to support this. New communication systems with staff were developed over the pandemic and the service is now at a point of transition in which it is trying to retain the positive elements of how the service adapted (virtual meetings). 'Schwartz Rounds' have been piloted in CFS which is a themed support approach for staff, giving them space to discuss the emotional impact of their work.

- No data was available on staff turnover at the meeting, but in general it was reported that compared favourably to other neighbouring authorities. It was noted however that the pandemic had prompted staff to re-evaluate their lives and careers and it was clear that some staff had left (e.g. to return to their home country).
- Early this year, a new cohort of social workers had been recruited from the pool of agency workers which was a positive development, and CFS would be working to ensure that this group of staff are well supported and maintain their positions within the service. An additional 12 newly qualified social workers had also been recruited who would be joining CFS over the summer.
- It was important that the service not only created structures which listen to the views of front line staff, but help to embed suggestions for improvement into practice.
- It was also noted that caseloads across CFS were good where social workers were on average looking after between 12-17 children (slightly more within the assessment team). This has been a conscious decision of the CFS. The shift from the unit model to a more individually accountable model of professional practice has also enabled a higher level of management support for individual caseloads.

6.7 Is the CFS satisfied that children are not living in neglectful situations or situations of harm for too long before action is taken?

- The CFS had undertaken an enormous amount of work in responding to this issue identified by Ofsted and the service has directed additional support to the management and support of children's plans. There has been much work to improve the management sign-off of interventions and review of casenotes. It was suggested that the previous Hackney model in which a consultant social worker oversaw a caseload of 34 children and young people with a collaboration of social workers supporting these children was not effective in identifying the progress that children were making. It was also noted at the time of the last full inspection that consultant social workers had in the region of 80+ children within their caseloads limiting the oversight that could be provided. There is now improved individual accountability within the structure where individual social workers are accountable for their professional practice. There is now a three tiered layer in which social workers are supported by Consultant Social Workers who are in turn supported by a Practice Development Manager which will increase managerial oversight and reduce the risk of children being left in neglectful circumstances. The introduction of the Children's Resource Panel has brought a systematic approach to supporting children from prevention right through to permanence.

6.8 The Commission noted that just 54% of children being electively home educated (specifically those with an EHCP) had been provided with an annual review. Why were so few being undertaken and what was the service planning to do to increase the number of reviews?

- The EHCP review process is the responsibility of the SEND team who would be best able to respond to this question. It was noted that this service had worked hard to improve the quality and consistency of these assessments.

- 6.9 What steps is the CFS taking to ensure that the workforce reflects the community which it supports?
- Officers did not have data to hand, but reassured members of the Commission that workforce data was monitored quarterly for the whole of CFS. At practitioner level the service is broadly reflective of the community, though there is some room for improvement. In terms of permanent practice staff there is a higher proportion of white staff whereas among agency staff there is a higher proportion of practitioners who are Black. The service has written to individual agency staff encouraging them to become permanent and this has been successful. In terms of senior managers, there is a disproportionate number of white staff which CFS hopes to rectify through inclusive recruitment, the Anti-Racist Action Plan and succession planning. The service is also working to develop the cultural competency of staff for working with children and families who may not be of the same cultural background as them.

- 6.10 The Hackney model has been in operation for a number of years, what has changed to prompt the re-evaluation of the Hackney model? What are the strategic intentions for the review of the model?
- The Hackney model was innovative in 2008 which through the provision of additional administrative support helped social workers to spend more time with children and families with whom they worked. Changes in resources and increased demand has changed the context for social work, and staff had raised concerns that the model was not giving them enough time to do what was expected of them given the number of children being held within units. The Ofsted focused visit and inspection with its assessment of the need to improve managerial oversight was also a catalyst for change. In the end, the model was mismatched to the demands and expectations of the service and the level of support that children and families need.
 - The landscape of children's social care has evolved significantly since 2008 for example there is now much greater emphasis on contextual safeguarding in assessing risks to children and young people and there is now much greater awareness and understanding of the impact that domestic abuse has on families. The Clinical Service has been critical to the success of the Hackney model and still plays a significant role in supporting children, families and staff across CFS. The Clinical Service has adapted and modernised and is now central to the Hackney model. In essence the Hackney model hasn't been erased, it's been updated and refreshed.

- 6.11 The Chair thanked officers for attending and responding to questions from members of the Commission. In summing up, the Chair noted that it was important to maintain oversight of the key metrics which underpin the measurement of improvement of children's social care in readiness for a future Ofsted inspection.

7. Work Programme

- 7.1 The updated outline work programme was discussed by the Commission. Since the last meeting the Chair and Vice Chair had met with both Cabinet members to discuss the work programme going forward into 2021/21 and will also be meeting senior officers in the coming weeks. The Commission will be consulting and

updating the Commission as we go forward in agreeing the work programme over the summer.

- 7.2 The main additions to the work programme are as follows:
- Maternal mental health disparities will be taken at a joint meeting of the health in Hackney and Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission on October 11th 2021.
 - A briefing paper had been received by the Commission on housing options for children leaving care. The Chair and Vice Chair together with members from Living in Hackney will meet officers to scope this item.
 - In respect to the impact of LTN on children and young people, the Chair and Vice Chair together with members from the Skills, Economy & Growth Commission to scope and plan for this as part of a broader item on decarbonising transport.

- 7.3 The Commission will be updated on new development over the summer with a finalised programme published in October 2021.

8. Minutes

- 8.1 Matters arising - at 5.5-5.6 the Commission discussed borough wide attainment data for children and young people sitting exams for 2020 and in the forthcoming year. The absence of this data is concerning as this is central to assessments on the attainment gap, an ongoing piece of work of the Commission. The Commission will meet with officers to see how best to take this work forward.

- 8.2 The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th June 2021 were agreed by the Commission.

9. Any other business

The date of the next meeting is at 7pm on 6th October 2021.

Meeting closed at 9.45pm

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