

# Children's Social Care

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Bi-Annual Report to Members

October 2016

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## Executive Summary

The Bi-Annual Report is produced to update elected councillors on developments and key performance trends within Children's Social Care in Hackney during 2015-16.

This report demonstrates continued improvement in services for children and young people. Bringing Children's Social Care, the Youth Offending Team and Young Hackney closer together is impacting on the quality and consistency of services, as recognised by inspectors.

Developments and areas of note in the period April 2015 to March 2016 include:

- As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, Hackney was responsible for looking after 327 children and young people. Despite gradually rising numbers of looked after children over the past 5 years nationally, Hackney continues to have a lower number of children in care per 10,000 of the population under 18 than comparable local authorities.
- Hackney's GCSE results (Key Stage 4) for looked after children are exceptional. Hackney achieved the best results in the country for 5 GCSEs with English and maths at 34.6% compared to a national average of 12%, and was second in the country for performance for 5 GCSEs at 38.5% compared to a national average of 16.3%.
- 13% of Hackney's care leavers are in higher education, compared to 6% nationally, ranking Hackney 4th in the country in 2015.
- The number of statutory social work assessments increased in 2015/16 to 3,434. The increase is likely to have been influenced by the integration of services across CYPS and the increased information sharing opportunities this has brought, for example between the Youth Offending Team and integrated gang services. The percentage of re-referrals has stayed consistent with last year and remains significantly lower than the national average which is indicative of consistently high quality assessments and timely access to appropriate support.
- The number of children on Child Protection Plans increased in the first half of 2015/16 from 216 children in March 2015 to 226 children as at the end of March 2016. The rate of Child Protection Plans in Hackney in March 2016 was 37.6 children per 10,000. This is lower than statistical neighbours (2015 figure of 44.36 per 10,000 children) and the national average (2015 figure of 42.90 per 10,000 children).
- Recruitment of foster carers continues to be a priority for Children's Social Care and the foster carer recruitment and retention strategy is steering an ongoing drive to increase the number of in-house foster carers available to provide care for our looked after children. A priority within this is ensuring rigorous assessment of foster carers and an improved training offer for foster carers

including the Head Heart Hands social pedagogy programme. This remains an extremely challenging area for the service.

- There has been an increase in the number of children placed for adoption over the year, with 16 children placed in 2015/16 compared to 9 in 2014/15. Over the last year children have been placed quickly with adopters, with children waiting on average 6 months from the time the Placement Order has been granted to the date they moved in with their adoptive families.
- Children and young people, through our Children in Care Council (Hackney Gets Heard), led work in 2015 to develop and re-design the previous Hackney Pledge. This was re-launched in a comic book format as the 'Hackney Promise to Children and Young People in Care' in summer 2015. Children and young people have also been involved in developing a series of leaflets and booklets designed for, and approved by, children and young people to explain areas of the service in a child-friendly way.
- In 2015/16, 8,459 activities were delivered by Young Hackney with approximately 144,000 attendances from young people throughout the year.
- Hackney has continued to develop and invest in its workforce. Following the restructure of CYPS during the year, there has been extensive successful recruitment and the vacancy rate for Consultant Social Workers was at 15% as at 1st June 2016, with recruitment and staff progression still ongoing to fill vacant posts. Hackney's turnover rate for social workers is relatively low at 11% in comparison to 19% for our statistical neighbours, and lower than 16% nationally – Hackney is one of the top 30 local authorities in the country in regards to performance against this measure.
- In 2015-16, CYPS introduced Practice Development Days and held two during the year. The Practice Development Days brings together all practitioners across the service to focus on a specific subject and featured expert speakers, with one held in July 2015 on the theme of the "Dynamics and Impact of Sexual Abuse" and the second held in February 2016 on "Contextual Safeguarding"; safeguarding young people outside the home, at school and in their peer groups. Both events were very well attended and received extremely positive feedback.

## Introduction

This report highlights activity in Hackney Children's Social Care and Young Hackney in 2015/16 and outlines priorities moving forward. The current reporting structure to Members includes bi-annual reports in September and February. This report incorporates updates on all service areas and includes our six monthly adoption report, annual looked after children report, and annual private fostering report.

Elected councillors have a crucial role to play in setting the strategic direction of Council services and in determining policy and priorities for the local community. All elected councillors share a responsibility to safeguard children and young people within the borough. This includes a corporate parenting responsibility towards the children the Council looks after. Councillors champion the cause of looked after children and care leavers when carrying out their duties, keeping themselves appraised of important national issues and developments in policy and practice. Recent reports, including the Casey report and the Jay report on the situation in Rotherham, highlighted the need for effective challenge of Children's Services by elected councillors. The Casey report stated that *"Challenge means setting aspirational targets, knowing how far to stretch the organisation, asking searching questions, drilling down into information and data, ensuring targets are kept to and agreed actions implemented."*

This report is produced to support councillors in discharging their responsibilities towards children and families. The report will be tabled for discussion at the Corporate Parenting Board, Cabinet, Full Council, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission, and City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board.

The priorities for Children and Young People's Services in 2016/17 are outlined below:

- Continue to invest in the workforce across Children and Young People's Services, recruiting people of the highest calibre, supporting their development and progression, and promoting leadership at all levels
- Focus on safeguarding adolescents in different contexts outside the home, including in their peer group relationships, school environments and the community
- Ensure that we have the right placements to ensure stability for our more complex adolescents
- Ensure that our care leavers are well supported in all aspects of their lives, that there are clear plans in place to support each young person's progression and independence, and that we have an appropriate range of creative, dynamic and high quality resources in place to support our care leavers
- Continue to deliver a comprehensive range of integrated targeted early help interventions through our Family Support services and Young Hackney to ensure that young people can access the support they need when they need it
- Continue our drive to recruit and retain more in-house foster carers

These priorities are covered in more detail in this report.

*A number of case studies and direct quotes from children and young people are included within this report. All names and identifying details are anonymised.*

*Details of, and links to, published reports referenced in the report are included in Appendix 2.*

## **Hackney Corporate Parenting Board**

Corporate parenting requires ownership and leadership at the most senior levels. In Hackney the Corporate Parenting Board, chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Bramble, plays a key strategic role in ensuring that the Council and its partners meet their corporate parenting responsibilities. Throughout 2015/16, the Corporate Parenting Board focussed on a number of important topics: foster carer recruitment; the development of the revised Corporate Parenting Strategy; the Adoption Service; the safeguarding, health and educational attainment of looked after children; the progress of care leavers; the progress of looked after children placed outside of Hackney; the Independent Reviewing Officer annual report; the Head Heart Hands project and role of social pedagogy in the Virtual School; hearing from the Hackney Foster Carers Council; hearing from Hackney Gets Heard and updating the process for holding looked after children's review meetings.

## **National Context**

Key topics that continue to receive attention nationally include child sexual exploitation, missing children, and female genital mutilation and these topics are covered in more detail in this report.

### *Adoption*

There has been an explicit Government drive over the last few years to widen adoption recruitment, improve support for adopters and to place more children with adoptive families quicker. This is driven by the Adoption Leadership Board, a new national board with a remit to drive significant improvements in the English adoption system. In May 2016, the Government set out plans to reform children's social care through the Children and Social Work Bill, and as part of this it will include changes to the considerations that courts must take into account in adoption decisions, tipping the balance in favour of permanent adoption where that is the right thing for the child. These changes include ensuring courts and local authorities take better account of a child's need for stability up to the age of 18 when making decisions about their future; speeding up of adoption procedures; and a duty on local authorities and schools to promote educational achievement for adopted children and those in the long-term care of family members or guardians.

'Regionalising Adoption', published by the Department for Education in June 2015, set out the Government's rationale for the creation of regional adoption agencies which

cited the main factors as: speeding up matching and markedly improve outcomes for children; improving adopter recruitment and adoption support; and reducing costs.

London was the first area to establish a regional adoption board – the London Adoption Board (LAB) – in April 2014. The Department for Education allocated the London Adoption Board funding to explore a regionalised operating model although achieving consensus across London is proving to be a challenge. The group is chaired by a Director of Children’s Services and membership consists of senior managers from local authorities and voluntary adoption agencies across London.

Information about adoption in Hackney is included on page 50.

### *The Children and Social Work Bill*

In May 2016, the Government set out plans to reform children’s social care through the Children and Social Work Bill. This bill is currently moving through the required parliamentary processes and scrutiny. These plans include:

- *Care Leavers*: a new ‘Care Leavers Covenant’, underpinned by statutory duties. These duties would include an extension to the right to a Personal Adviser for all care leavers up to the age of 25, (currently this is provided until age 21, or 25 in the case of care leavers in education or training). These duties would also include standards for how local authorities should act as a ‘corporate parent’ to support children in care and as they move into adult life and a requirement on local authorities to consult on and publish a ‘local offer’ to care leavers including housing, jobs and healthcare. Information about care leavers in Hackney is included on page 55.
- *Social Workers*: The Children and Social Work Bill announces proposals for a new system of regulating social workers by setting up a specialist regulator for the profession with a clear focus on driving improvement and introducing more demanding professional standards and effective training and development.
- *Social Workers*: The bill also proposes an ambitious programme to assess and accredit all social workers directly working with children.
- *Innovation*: The bill proposes that support for innovation in children’s social care will be provided by allowing local authorities to pilot new, innovative approaches to service delivery and the potential to apply for dispensation from some current regulations and statutory requirements.
- *Adoption*: Proposed changes aim to speed up the adoption process (covered in more detail on page 7).
- *National Citizen Service*: The bill proposes the expansion of the Government’s National Citizen Service. It outlines a new statutory framework to deliver the programme, funded by an additional £1.2 billion cash injection and a new duty on schools and local authorities to promote the scheme to all young people and their parents.

### *Review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards*

The Prime Minister announced in December 2015 that ministers had asked Alan Wood CBE, the former Hackney Director of Children’s Services, to undertake a fundamental review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) within



the context of local strategic multi-agency working. This included consideration of the child death review process, and how the intended centralisation of serious case reviews (SCRs) would work effectively at a local level. This review and the Government's response to the review's recommendations were published in May 2016 and intended developments include:

- A new requirement on the three key partners, namely local authorities, the police and the health service, to make arrangements for working together in a local area. Schools and other relevant agencies involved in the protection of children will be expected to co-operate with the new multi-agency arrangements.
- The three key partners will have much greater flexibility in developing arrangements that respond to local need. That flexibility to arrange coordination will enable joint identification of and response to existing and emerging needs and priorities and improve outcomes for children.
- Legislation will underpin the new arrangements, supported by statutory guidance and establishment of suitable review arrangements. The three key agencies will be required to establish governance arrangements and decide a range of issues to address.
- The Secretary of State will have the power to intervene in situations where the three key agencies cannot reach an agreement on how they will work together, or where arrangements are otherwise seriously inadequate.
- The current system of Serious Case Reviews and miscellaneous local reviews will be replaced with a system of national and local reviews.
- The national oversight of Child Death Overview Panels will be transferred from the Department for Education to the Department of Health, while distilling and embedding learning is maintained within the necessary child protection agencies.

### *Ofsted Practice Leadership Visit*

Ofsted undertook a good practice visit looking at Practice Leadership and chose Hackney as one of the areas they visited. This visit took place in March 2016, following the positive pilot Joint Targeted Area Inspection in Hackney at the end of 2015. Inspectors made 5 good practice visits in total to Kensington and Chelsea, Leeds, Trafford and Hackney as well as Cafcass (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service). Eleanor Schooling (Ofsted National Director, Social Care) reported on this in June 2016 as part of Sir Michael Wilshaw's (Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills) monthly commentary published on the Government's website.

Ofsted's commentary on practice leadership found that there was no one model or structure to deliver strong effective children's services' leadership. However, it also found that in all of these high performing areas, including Hackney, the same 5 key elements and approaches stood out. These included:

- Understanding good social work: leaders know what good social work practice looks like, both in principle and on the front line. They seek out innovative and best practice, so that they can harness this in their own services and share with others.

- Passionate and courageous: children's services' leaders must be passionate, with a relentless focus on the needs of children, listening to and acting on their views. In the best authorities, leaders inspire the same enthusiasm and dedication throughout their staff at every level.
- Workforce development: the challenges facing authorities in recruiting and retaining a skilled and competent workforce are well-documented, practice leaders find ways of overcoming this, leaders focused on developing their workforce, with clearly defined, effective, talent management, and opportunities for career progression.
- Culture: a strong culture of leadership that extends throughout the whole organisation, reflected in effective management teams and clear evidence of 'grip' at every level. Frontline social workers know where the organisation is going, with clear direction and values, a constant desire to improve and relentless pursuit of excellence. Staff are both challenged and supported to take appropriate risks, while leaders take responsibility for what happens on their watch.
- Structure: Distributed leadership was also a feature of the areas looked at, which means that high expectations are embedded across the organisation, rather than in one individual, with visibility and accessibility of practice leaders important.

#### *Ofsted Annual Social Care Report 2015-16*

Ofsted published their Annual Social Care Report for 2015-16 in June 2016. Key issues highlighted by the report include:

- As at March 2016, 87 local authorities have been inspected under the Single Inspection Framework. 21 in total, are currently rated 'inadequate', 43 are rated as 'require improvement', 21 have been rated 'good' and 2 have been rated as 'outstanding'.
- Ofsted explain that causes for the poor performance of local authorities include weaknesses in leadership and management oversight, along with high caseloads, so that children do not receive the right support at the right time. Inspectors found that an 'inadequate' judgement is not related to size, levels of deprivation, or funding - the quality of leadership in an area is the single most important factor in the standard of help, care and protection given to children.
- Reasons for good performance of local authorities include strong leadership, with leaders that create the systems and culture that enable high quality social work to flourish, and understand the skills and qualities the workforce need to do their jobs well.
- Inspectors found that once children are in the care system, they are often well cared for, and that the majority of local authorities deliver good or outstanding adoption services, reflecting a pattern that has been established for many years.

Hackney was mentioned on three occasions as part of the report: in praise of the consistently high educational achievements of looked after children at GCSE, particularly in 2015; the flexible and creative approach towards working with children and young people at risk of exploitation as part of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection pilot findings and as part of the practice leadership good practice visit.

## *Consultation on new inspection framework for children's services*

Ofsted opened a consultation on proposed changes across Ofsted's inspections of children's social care in June 2016, with responses due in September 2016. This consultation requests views on four key areas:

- Principles for children's social care inspections: focus on the things that matter most to children's lives; be consistent in our expectations of providers; focus on services that are less than good.
- A new approach to inspections of local authority children's services from 2018, including proportionate inspections that take into consideration previous inspection findings and an annual self-evaluation from all local authorities to be submitted to Ofsted.
- A new common inspection framework for social care establishments, agencies, boarding schools and residential special schools from April 2017
- Changes to inspections of independent fostering agencies.

## **Children's Social Care in Hackney**

Children's Social Care works with families to support safe and effective parenting where, without that support, the welfare and safety of a child would be compromised. The core focus of the service is child protection, supporting families where children are on the edge of care, securing positive long-term life chances for children permanently looked after by the Council and supporting care leavers.

Hackney's model of social work continues to demonstrate how social work intervention, when built on evidence-based methodologies and delivered by small units of high calibre practitioners keeping the child at the centre of planning, can improve the lives of children and families cost effectively. Hackney's Consultant Social Workers or Practice Development Managers are pro-active leaders. They are specifically recruited for their ability to manage a complex balance of risk management, empathy, accountability and performance management.

Whilst we continue to develop our ways of working, there are some key principles and beliefs that continue to underpin our approach. These include:

- That children are best cared for within their families wherever this can be safely achieved
- That investing in providing services that are able to promote change within families is frequently more effective and efficient than removing children and placing them in alternative care
- That collaborative approaches to working with families ('doing with' rather than 'doing to') are more likely to be effective in sustaining long term change than more directive interventions
- That in most cases decisions about interventions should be made by those who understand the child and their family/carers best, which will normally be the practitioners who are working with them. However, responsibility for decisions that have life-long implications for the child (for example, the decision

to remove a child from the care of their family) should be carried by senior managers

- That social work is a skilled and highly responsible task and that to perform well, practitioners need to feel well supported within their work setting and to have opportunities to reflect on their interventions with others
- That having more than one person's perspective on a situation enhances assessments and helps to mitigate risk by ensuring that alternative viewpoints are explored

For further information on Children's Social Care, please see the Case Flow Chart (Appendix 1) which demonstrates how cases move through the service.

### **The City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board**

The City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (CHSCB) is the key statutory body overseeing arrangements for safeguarding children and young people across the City of London and Hackney.

Hackney Children and Young People's Services are represented on the Board by the Interim Assistant Director - Children and Young People's Services and the Head of Safeguarding, Corporate Parenting and Learning as well as on several sub-committees, ensuring joined up working across various Board priorities. The Head of Safeguarding, Corporate Parenting and Learning chairs the Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children Working Group and is a member of the Hackney Executive Group and Serious Case Review Sub-Committees. The Training and Development Sub-Committee and Quality Assurance Sub-Committee are each attended by Service Managers from the Safeguarding and Learning Service. The Lead Member for Children's Services is an observer on the Board.

### **Financial performance**

The Children's Social Care net budget including recharges totals £46m for 2016/17 and forms part of the overall budget of the Children and Young People's Service of £56.3m. The forecast outturn for 2016/17 as at the end of July 2016 for Children and Young People's Services is a nil variance after the planned use of reserves. There has been a requirement to draw down from the Commissioning Reserve since 2012/13 due to the increased number of children in care and the lack of suitable shortage of in-house foster carers. The forecast drawdown for 2016/17 is £2.4m.

The increase in commissioning costs has been driven by an increase in the number of looked after children since 2011/12, and this trend looks to continue through 2016/17. There is a continuation with a greater proportion of children being placed with independent foster agencies (IFAs) due to a lack of suitable in-house foster carers. The marginal cost of an IFA placement is significantly greater than that of an in-house placement. There has been a significant increase in residential placements since 2015 adding considerable budget pressures with an average annual unit cost of £195k. There is also pressure from an increase in the number of young people placed in semi-independent accommodation in both the 16-18 and the 18+ age categories. These pressures have been recognised by the Group Director - Finance & Corporate

Resources with a total growth of £3.1m included in the base budget between 2012/13 to 2016/17.

The Children in Need Service and Youth Justice Service is forecasting an overspend arising from a significant number of vacant posts being covered by agency staff. The Disabled Children Service is forecasting a £9k overspend after the use of reserves of £250k, mainly driven by an increase in home care commissioning costs and expenditure on direct payments to carers, offset by underspends in the short breaks budgets.

Children's Social Care has continued to make significant contributions to the efficiency agenda of the Council. Over the previous six years the services have delivered £7.8m savings with further £2.3m being delivered in 2016/17 across Children's Social Care and involves re-configuring the 'front door' of the service whilst innovatively aligning resources to where they will have maximum impact across other areas such as Young Hackney, Youth Justice Services and Family Support Services, preventing the escalation to statutory need.

## **Service Area Trends**

### **Access, Assessment and Family Support Services**

The Access, Assessment and Family Support Service joins together referral and screening activity with statutory assessments for children in need and at risk at the 'front door' of Children's Social Care Services. Operating alongside is a broad range of resource in the Family Support and Clinical Services which supports assessments and interventions across Children and Young People's Services. This configuration of services facilitates rapid information sharing and decision making whilst enabling specialist and targeted resources to be provided to children and families at the earliest point of need and contact.

#### First Access and Screening Team (FAST)

FAST acts as a single point of contact for contacts and referrals to Children and Young People's Services for children in need of support or protection. The multi-agency and co-located team of police, probation, health, social work and research staff work together to share intelligence and jointly assess risk. FAST is a highly responsive screening service that promotes swift access to services, the service works to a 'right service first time' principle and will undertake a 'go look' visit when necessary to better understand a child's situation. The recent Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) found the joint 'go look' visits with health visitors an area of good practice and recommended this was extended to school age children. Plans are underway to appoint a school nurse funded by Public Health.

All contacts with FAST are immediately progressed as a referral to Children's Social Care if the threshold for a statutory assessment is met, otherwise FAST supports children and young people to access universal and targeted provision including provision of support via the allocation mechanisms of the Children's Centre Multi-Agency Team (MAT) meetings and the Children and Young People's Partnership

Panel (CYPPP). Signposting activity requires staff in FAST to have a continually updated knowledge of local services at their fingertips coupled with a sound understanding of the Hackney Child Wellbeing Framework.

The partnership arrangements and service developments in FAST are overseen by a multi-agency steering group of senior representatives from across police, probation, housing providers, adult mental health and children and young people’s services.

Last year, FAST received 11,430 contacts from sources including schools, health, housing, local authority services, the police, individuals and other legal agencies of which 3,453 were accepted as a referral and 3,434 led to an assessment.

	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Contacts</b>	9,875	11,430
<b>Requests for services</b>	6,537	6,337
<b>Contacts accepted as a referral</b>	3,534	3,453
<b>Requests for services leading to an assessment</b>	3,510	3,434

The increased number of contacts compared to 2014/15 was expected as FAST incorporates early help and child in need/at risk referral data. The level of assessments remain similar to last year.

Contacts that are not progressed to a statutory social work but require early help or targeted support continue to be diverted to the Family Support Service, Young Hackney, Children’s Centres or are referred to the CYPPP and MAT panels.

*A referral was sent to the First Access and Screening Team (FAST) by a GP which outlined a concern shared by an adult patient, Maheera. The GP reported that Maheera, had shared during a clinic appointment that her husband, Rashid, had recently travelled to Pakistan and had returned with a 40 year old woman, Amina, and her 3 children who are staying in the same property. Maheera stated that Amina is unhappy and shouts at her children a lot; Amina is not registered with the GP.*

*A home visit was undertaken by a FAST social worker as part of the referral screening to explore the circumstances in the household and to determine whether any support was needed. During the visit the social worker met with Amina and her three children aged 16, 18 and 22 years, they confirmed that they had recently arrived in the UK from Pakistan and showed their identification and current UK residency permits. Rashid stated that he had known the family for four years and when the children’s father died, he decided to help them. Rashid reported that he had adopted the children in Pakistan and the paperwork was with his solicitor; he stated that this process had taken three years.*

*The referral was discussed with Maheera and Rashid and they both advised that they were not concerned about Amina’s wellbeing, they were clear that Amina loves her children and would not harm them in any way. Amina confirmed that she and her children are registered at a different GP.*

*The FAST social worker spoke with the 16-year old alone who confirmed that he was happy residing with Maheera and Rashid and had enrolled at a college for an ESOL course.*

*The screening visit enabled the FAST social worker to clarify the details of who was living in the home, how they came to be living with Maheera and Rashid, view the relevant paperwork for the family and ascertain the current and future living arrangements of all members of the household. The information gathering enabled FAST to make the decision that there was no need for a social work assessment or early help services, as such the referral was closed and the GP advised of the outcome.*

### The Assessment Service

The Assessment Service undertakes statutory Children Act 1989 child protection investigations and child in need assessments for new referrals to Children's Social Care where Social Work in Schools or the Family Support Service is not involved. The service has benefited from a strong and consistent leadership team and a stable workforce for the past five years. Audit and inspection have consistently evidenced high quality output and the service continues to receive good feedback from partner agencies.

3,533 statutory social work assessments were completed in 2015/16 which is higher than the number completed in the two previous years: 3,140 in 2014/15 and 2,246 in 2013/14. However, as noted in the table below, the percentage of re-referrals has stayed consistent with last year and remains significantly lower than the national average. Hackney's lower than average repeat referral ratio is indicative of consistently high quality assessments and timely access to appropriate support.

"The social worker listened to my concerns"

**Parent, about their experience of assessment**

The higher volume of children requiring statutory assessments can be partly attributed to improved information sharing at the front door achieved with the development of FAST. The increase in assessment numbers will remain subject to monitoring and analysis.

#### Percentage of re-referrals within 12 months of a previous referral

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>13.3%</b>
<b>Statistical neighbour average</b>	14.8%	13.0%	Not published yet
<b>England</b>	23.4%	24%	Not published yet

Hackney continues to exercise dispensation agreed by the Department for Education for statutory assessment timescales which has enabled the Assessment Service to adopt a proportionate and flexible approach with families during assessment.

The average length of assessment in 2015/16 was 49 days, a decrease from 2014/15 at 50 days.

“Services have made a big change to my and my children’s lives in working with us through things that had not been good for a long time”

**Parent, about their experience of Children and Young People’s Services**

#### *Domestic violence*

To enhance the identification of risk factors associated with domestic violence, the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) was commissioned to work alongside Hackney Children & Young People’s Services over a four year period ending in March 2016. The service used a co-located approach to provide perpetrator and women’s support services, together with consultation and training for practitioners.

From April 2016, following a procurement exercise, RISE-CiC was commissioned using Troubled Families Programme funding to work with families attached to the Troubled Families Programme under ‘family violence’ criteria. RISE-CiC sits alongside the Family Units offer and contributes to domestic violence/perpetrator interventions and Troubled Families outcomes. Data for the service will be available in the second half of the year.

#### *16 and 17 year olds*

In 2015/16 the Assessment Service undertook 27 homeless assessments of 16/17 year olds, following which 8 young people were provided with accommodation by the Council. The remaining 19 young people either returned home or were supported to live with wider family members. This has been achieved through a strong focus on reparation of familial relationships when teenagers are facing exclusion from the family home and family life and by facilitating access to parenting support at the point of referral, as well as local provision of rapid response Family Network Meetings (further information on Family Network Meetings is included on page 19).



It remains our strong belief that children and young people achieve better outcomes when they remain living within their families. The service maintains a strong track record in achieving stability in families and in successfully rehabilitating children and young people back to their families when it is safe to do so, thereby reducing the risk of young people entering care unnecessarily.

### Family Support Services

Family Support Services (FSS) is an umbrella term for a range of services that includes eight Family Units delivering targeted family support and statutory social work interventions.

The service also leads on commissioning for child contact services, family network meetings and culturally specific family support services.

### *Family Units and the Troubled Families programme*

On 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015 the remodelled Family Support Service became operational. The Units are primarily social work led delivering targeted support to families in need of additional and/or intensive support, including those identified as 'Troubled Families'.

The social work led Family Units have been designed to minimise disruptive transitions for families, particularly in times of crisis, when families may need a statutory assessment or intervention. The model promotes continuity with one professional team holding the family over the life of the intervention.

In September 2015 Hackney joined the Expanded Troubled Families Programme which requires Hackney to identify, work with and turnaround 3,720 (reduced to 3,510 in May 2015) families meeting a minimum of two of six headline criteria:

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

Hackney agreed to work with 1,896 families between September 2015 and March 2017 which is just over half of the total cohort. Approximately 1450 families have been identified as qualifying for the Programme to date.

The multi-agency Troubled Families Steering Group meets quarterly and has overseen a number of service developments including the Troubled Families Outcomes Plan which sets out the measurement of significant and sustained progress against met criteria, service transformation and data sharing. Further the partnership have worked together to advertise and recruit to specialist partnership posts for probation, adult mental health, substance misuse and health as key 'headline problem

areas'. The health and probation posts will be starting in June 2016 with the adult mental health post and substance misuse posts following in July/August.

*Hania, is a 15 year old girl who lives with her mother who has complex health needs. The family were referred to Family Support Services and attached to the TF Programme for support in managing Hania's behaviour and school attendance. Hania's mother is a single parent and was struggling to manage her physical health needs and Hania's behaviour. Hania was finding it distressing to cope with her mother's health needs which impacted on her behaviour and attendance at school, as she wanted to stay home to ensure her mother was not left alone. Hania was referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for therapeutic support.*

*The Family support service met with Hania and her mother to devise a family support plan with them; this involved individual sessions with Hania to link her into positive activities and support for mother to address her health needs. Hania was introduced to her local youth hub and a dance group at Hackney Empire. Practical support was provided to Hania's mother to help her book and attend GP appointments, identify support groups for her illness and apply for a Personal Independence Payment. The family practitioner helped Hania and her mother research her mother's illness to gain a better understanding of her health needs and the support available, the family practitioner engaged with Hania's father and worked alongside the CAMHS worker to strengthen their relationships with one another. This reduced the reliance on Hania to meet her mother's needs and opened up opportunities to engage in community based activities and services.*

*As Hania had received a number of exclusions and refused to go to school her mother made a decision to provide home schooling. The family practitioner supported the family to register for home schooling and attend meetings with the Hackney Learning Trust to ensure the education offered was appropriate.*

*As a result of the intervention Hania's mother developed more confidence and coping strategies. She was empowered to access health services and to re-engage Hania in education provision. Hania has developed her self-esteem which has enabled her to access community resources and develop her relationship with her father.*

### *Family COACH Programme*

The Family COACH Programme was a one year early intervention pilot funded by the Justice Reinvestment Fund and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). The Programme was developed in response to emerging evidence of the strong correlation between later life gang involvement and bereavement or being a victim of a crime. The Family COACH Programme provided intensive 1:1, family and group interventions for 15 families with children aged 7-12 years and at a high risk of later life gang involvement between May 2015 and April 2016.

The programme was located and delivered as a specialist multi-professional unit within the Family Support Service, combining social work expertise with clinical psychology and social pedagogy/youth work. The programme aimed to promote pro-social behaviour at home, in school and in the community, reduce risk of exclusion and family breakdown and increase access to community based provision; early indicators demonstrate a positive impact. The evaluation of the programme showed positive feedback from children and families, as were outcomes in terms of reduced

school exclusions, improved child behaviour, improved child-parent/carer relationships and improved wellbeing.

The Family COACH programme is now embedded into CYPS as a distinct care pathway for children and families which will be delivered as a partnership between Young Hackney, the Family Support Service and the CYPS Clinical Service.

The COACH pathway will remain a targeted prevention programme designed to support children at risk of gang involvement and their families, involving group work with parents and children, family work and community engagement.

New cohorts of 10 children aged 7-10 and their families are being offered COACH programme interventions over the next 18 months, with the second cohort beginning in October 2016.

*Bradley, an 11 year old boy, was identified as a child at risk of later life gang involvement, and his family were approached to take part in a one year programme of support under the Family COACH Programme. His attendance and behaviour in school was poor and he had been excluded. Bradley was being cared for by his maternal grandmother Celia, as both his parents were serving custodial sentences. Bradley and his older siblings were all living with Celia who was struggling to manage their emotional needs and her own physical and mental health.*

*Bradley's mother, Charlotte, was due to be released from prison and so the COACH practitioners met with her and the children's father in custody and with Celia and the children at home to devise a whole family support plan. The COACH intervention was delivered by a social worker, a clinician and a social pedagogue and included: individual sessions with the adults and children; involving Bradley in group work and holiday activities; practical parenting support; liaison with schools; and help accessing the right benefits and legal advice.*

*The plan included individual and joint sessions with Charlotte and Celia to prepare them for Charlotte's return to the home. This was necessary as their parenting styles were different which placed a strain on their relationship. The COACH practitioners visited the children's father John in prison and supported the children to express their emotions about the family situation in a safe way.*

*The COACH intervention resulted in Charlotte, Celia and John having an increased understanding of the children's emotional needs and a set of agreed, clear and consistent boundaries in place for the changes in the family system ahead. Bradley's increased participation in positive activities, better communication between the family and school and better peer relationships led to a successful reintegration to school, no further exclusions and an improvement in the whole family's mental health and wellbeing.*

### *Family network meetings (FNM)*

Family Network Meetings are based on the Family Group Conference model that was developed in New Zealand to allow social work practice to work with Maori values and culture regarding the extended family network.

The FNM Service aims to rapidly mobilise existing support networks in families to prevent family breakdown and enable children to remain living within their family networks by offering a flexible and swift response.

“A solid plan has been put in place to ensure the children’s safety and development”

**Service user, about their Family Network Meeting**

Between April 2015 and March 2016 the service received 150 referrals, a slight decrease from the 157 referrals in the previous year although the number of Family Network Meetings (FNMs) held has risen to 103, compared to 93 held in 2014/15. The FNM Service has also held 35 Pre-FNMs and additional meetings with key family members, in order to assist families to develop an appropriate family care plan.

**Family Network Meeting outcomes 2015-16**

As the table below indicates, 82 of the 103 FNM’s held in 2015/16 resulted in children remaining within their immediate or extended family network.

<b>Outcomes for 103 FNM’s held:</b>	
<b>April 2015 – March 2016</b>	
Children remain in family home	58
Reunification with family from foster care	2
Kinship placement	12
Kinship placement maintained	10
Foster care placement	12
Adoption placement	0
Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- semi-independent (with family support)</li> <li>- supported accommodation</li> <li>- mental health unit</li> </ul>	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>

*Paul is a 10 year old boy who has been cared for by his older sister, Judy, for 5 years due to his mother suffering from a severe mental health condition. Judy obtained a Special Guardianship Order for Paul but self-referred to Children Social Care reporting that the relationship between her and Paul had broken down due to him coming home late and not adhering to boundaries. Judy said she thought Paul was smoking cannabis and no longer wished to care for him.*

*As an interim measure Paul went to stay with his mother, Kate, as her mental health was stable. There were no immediate risks identified to Paul in Kate’s care but this was not*

*considered viable longer term. The social work unit started an assessment of Paul's needs to consider his longer term living arrangements.*

*The social work unit liaised with the family system to engage them in thinking about Paul's long term care arrangements. A Family Network Meeting was held to provide them with a space to agree what was best for Paul. Judy and the extended family would not agree to care for Paul long term and the arrangement with Kate was deteriorating. Kate was not taking Paul to school and was refusing to engage in mental health assessments; the social work unit received reports that Paul was seen out late at night with no adult supervision. A Legal Planning Meeting was held where the risks to Paul were considered and it was agreed the threshold had been met to issue Care Proceedings in order to safeguard Paul.*

*A further Family Network Meeting was held to explore any support the family could offer Paul in the context of Care Proceedings. During the meeting, Judy agreed for him to return to her care and the extended family agreed to provide her with support; the family did not want Paul to enter into care. A clear plan was agreed by the family members to offer respite to Judy and emotional support to ensure Paul's living arrangement with Judy stabilised. Children's Social Care offered clinical support work to develop and improve family relationships, Paul's understanding of his care arrangements and his mother's ill mental health.*

*Throughout the assessment and planning process strong liaison with Paul's school was maintained which helped strengthen plans to support Paul and his family to manage his behaviour. Paul returned to the care of his sister with a Child in Need Plan and legal proceedings were not initiated. Paul has since transferred to the Children in Need service for longer term family support.*

### *Contact Services*

The Ferncliff Contact Service is a purpose-built environment for children to have supervised contact with their family members. The centre provides a safe and welcoming environment where contact sessions can take place. Children's Social Care have commissioned Family Solutions to deliver contact services since 2012 which has resulted in savings for the Council without compromising on quality.

In 2015/16 the centre provided 187 children in 105 families with supervised contact and facilitates, on average, 421 contact sessions between children and their families each month which equates to 1,262 hours of contact time.

### *Clinical Services*

Hackney Children & Young People's Clinical Service is an integrated and specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for children accessing Children's Social Care Services, the CYPS Family Support Service, Young Hackney and Youth Offending Services. It works in partnership with the City and Hackney CAMHS Alliance and is accountable through the CYPS Emotional Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board. Outcomes for the Clinical Service are also monitored via the national CAMHS Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC).

The Clinical Service operates on an outreach basis in order to promote accessibility for families, and does not have a waiting list.

“Emotional support is more important than the physical things”

Care leaver, about the support they have received

The Clinical Service provided over 6,124 hours of clinical consultation in 2015/16 to social work staff. This is an increase of 30% from 2014/2015. In addition, the Clinical Service delivered training to foster carers around child mental health issues. Clinical supervision has also been provided to social work staff, including group supervision for Independent Reviewing Officers. The Clinical Service has well-developed links with local NHS CAMHS and in 2014/15 co-developed joint specialist care pathways for the assessment and treatment of young people with autism, problem-sexualised behaviours and self-harm. There is also an active partnership with the Anna Freud Centre to develop the New Beginnings Parent-Infant Mental Health programme for at-risk babies and their families. Further information about the service can be found on page 47.

#### *Out of Hours Social Work Service*

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

Demand for the service can vary considerably from day to day. On average, between 500 – 700 calls are logged each month. Referrals usually require extensive liaison with children and their relatives in addition to a range of other individuals and organisations including friends and neighbours, foster carers, residential establishments, police, hospitals, other local authorities, housing providers, solicitors, courts and voluntary sector providers. The service provides advice in both simple and complex situations and also initiates child protection investigations and/or protective services including admission into care.

*Janet contacted Hackney Children’s Social Care Out of Hours Social Work Service stating that she and her daughter Tara were being made homeless and she was in need of support. The self-referral information was passed onto the First Access and Screening Team (FAST) who made contact with Janet the following morning.*

*Janet told the FAST social worker that she had been suffering financial and emotional abuse by her husband for a number of years and he had isolated her from her family and friends. Janet stated that she had attempted to seek housing independent of her husband, but had been advised that she was not eligible for emergency accommodation. The social worker contacted the Housing Department to clarify Janet’s rights and options.*

*The social worker explored with Janet her family relationships, as Janet had said she did not feel able to approach her family for help and support. The social worker spoke with Janet about the impact of domestic abuse and how this can lead to isolation from family and friends. Janet was encouraged to make contact with her mother who immediately offered her and Tara support and accommodation.*

*Janet was reassured that she had taken the first steps in leaving an abusive relationship and was protecting Tara from any future emotional upset caused by exposure to domestic abuse. Janet told the social worker that she felt understood and not judged, she said she was now ready to engage with support services.*

*Following the FAST intervention, Janet was able to rekindle her relationship with her family and now feels safer and stronger to protect Tara from harm. Hackney Children's Social Care have made a referral to the local authority she is now living in to facilitate prompt access to further support.*

## The Children in Need Service

The Children in Need Service is responsible for the safeguarding of children and young people assessed as being 'at risk' including child protection work, court proceedings and statutory family support to help children remain at home safely. Over the past year, the service has focussed on strengthening plans for children, targeted domestic violence interventions and improving timescales for achieving permanency.

### Child Protection Plans

Children deemed to potentially be at risk of significant harm are considered at an Initial Child Protection Conference to determine the need for a Child Protection Plan.

A Child Protection Plan is made following a multi-agency Child Protection Conference and assessment that a child is at continuing risk of significant harm or impairment of health and development.

#### Number of Child Protection Plans (at 31<sup>st</sup> March)

2014	2015	2016
221	216	226

#### Rate of Child Protection Plans per 10,000 (at 31<sup>st</sup> March)

	2014	2015	2016
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>37.90</b>	<b>36.00</b>	<b>37.60</b>
<b>Statistical neighbour average</b>	40.99	44.36	Not yet published

As at March 2016, there were 226 children subject to a Child Protection Plan, an increase from 216 in March 2015. The rate of Child Protection Plans in Hackney in March 2016 was 37.6 children per 10,000. This is lower than statistical neighbours (2015 figure of 44.36 per 10,000 children) and the national average (2015 figure of 42.90 per 10,000 children).

### *Duration of Child Protection Plans*

Monitoring of Child Protection Plans lasting two years or more is used to indicate the effectiveness of the Child Protection Plan in eliminating or significantly reducing the risk of significant harm. The percentage of children subject to Plans for more than 2 years has decreased over the last year to 3% at 31 March 2016, from 8% during 2014/15. This reduction in the percentage of children subject to Child Protection Plans over two years is due to a robust monitoring process, which has been developed to quality assure planning in all cases and this is resulting in a gradual decrease in longer Child Protection Plans.

#### **Duration of Child Protection Plans, as at 31 March 2016**

Duration of Child Protection Plans	2014			2015			2016		
	H	SN	Eng	H	SN	Eng	H	SN	Eng
Under 3 months	<b>27%</b>	33%	32%	<b>34%</b>	27%	<b>30%</b>	<b>28%</b>	Not published yet	
3 - 6 months	<b>15%</b>	20%	25%	<b>19%</b>	25%	<b>25%</b>	<b>20%</b>		
6 - 12 months	<b>25%</b>	26%	26%	<b>25%</b>	29%	<b>27%</b>	<b>35%</b>		
1 - 2 years	<b>31%</b>	20%	14%	<b>13%</b>	17%	<b>15%</b>	<b>14%</b>		
Over 2 years	<b>2%</b>	4%	3%	<b>8%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>		

**Note** H: Hackney SN: statistical neighbour average Eng: national average

It is evident that in 2015/16 many children and families were moving through child protection interventions in a timely manner with 48% of cases remaining on Child Protection Plans for less than six months, however this is a decrease from 53% at the end of 2014/15. This indicator will continue to be monitored closely.

For those children who have been on Child Protection Plans for more than 15 months, their cases are closely overseen by a Service Manager for the Children in Need Service and the Service Manager for the Safeguarding and Reviewing Team to ensure that measures are in place to exit from the Plan is in place, or the reasons for remaining on a Child Protection Plan are clear and robust.

#### *Children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time*

This measure is seen as a potential indicator of whether a Child Protection Plan was successful in effectively reducing risks over time in comparison to the necessity for a further Child Protection Plan. In practice, this is determined by work undertaken with parents and children through the plan, the quality of assessment of risks of significant harm, and the provision and accessibility of any support services subsequent to the child protection plan. For this performance indicator, a low score is generally seen as indicative of good performance, although there are complex factors that effect this.

The decision for a child to become subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time is subject to a robust oversight process, with a decision only taken on consultation with the Head of Service



The percentage of children subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time increased from 11.4% in 2014/15 to 18.6% in 2015/16. Detailed analysis of these cases has been undertaken and shows that a significant proportion of these children were previously on plans that ended over two years ago. Due to the increase in the number of repeat Child Protection Plans, all children subject to a second period of Child Protection Planning are now robustly monitored, to ensure that risk is reducing for these children as appropriate and robust and timely decisions to move to Care Proceedings take place when necessary.

**Percentage of children who became the subject of a child protection plan during the year ending 31 March who became the subject of a plan for a second or subsequent time**

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>
<b>Statistical neighbour average</b>	13.23%	14.17%	Not yet published
<b>England</b>	15.8%	16.60%	Not yet published

“Very impressed.”

“Good chairing. All professionals asked to put views across and client able to give views.”

“Chair engaged well with family: took time to discuss the concerns being raised in a clear and strategic forward way.”

**Comments from child protection conference attendees**

The Family Courts

The Government implemented the Family Justice Review (FJR) in 2011 in an attempt to significantly reduce delay within the family courts and in care proceedings. In June 2013, the national average length for the completion of care proceedings was 46 weeks. As a result of the FJR, the expectation is that all care proceedings should be completed within 26 weeks. It is accepted that in exceptional circumstances, cases may need to be extended for a further 8 weeks.

The overall average length of proceedings in Hackney during 2015-16 was 34 weeks. This is 8 weeks over the target 26 weeks, but 3 weeks shorter than the overall average for 2014/2015 which was 37 weeks. The average length of care proceedings in Hackney is affected by a relatively small number of very complex long-running cases which impact on overall performance, for example, in the second quarter of 2015/16, one case out of 13 concluded after 81 weeks.

The public law outline (PLO) is a process that all local authorities have to follow in their conduct of care proceedings. In most cases the Public Law Outline requires the CSC to arrange a meeting with the parent(s) to see if it is possible to reach agreement about what needs to happen to protect the child from harm, so that court proceedings can be avoided. The revised PLO accommodates the changes brought in following the Family Justice Review. It puts a much greater emphasis on pre-proceedings work.

For care proceedings to run smoothly and efficiently, it is essential that as much work as possible is done in the preliminary stages before care proceedings are issued. The family courts expect that a Family Network Meeting (FNM) must have been held prior to issuing care proceedings (further information on Family Network Meetings is available on page 19). The role of the FNM is becoming increasingly important in care proceedings. Prospective family members who may be considered as an alternative long-term carer for a child must be identified at the earliest possible stage to ensure assessments commence in a timely manner.

The London Family Justice Board agreed to implement the new care proceedings timescales from 5<sup>th</sup> August 2013. Every local authority has responsibility for tracking its own performance in relation to pre-proceedings decisions, assessments and planning, care proceedings duration and permanency planning for each child.

During the pre-proceedings process parents are made aware of the concerns and local authority's intention to issue proceedings if specified improvements are not made.

Data shows that from April 2015 to March 2016, pre-proceedings agreements and assessments were initiated in Hackney for 34 children from 22 families. 10 of the 22 family cases did not go to court as a result of intervention and improvements made by parents and the pre-proceedings process ended. Care proceedings were issued for the children from the remaining 12 families.

“The guardian, the mother and the court said that the local authority had conducted outstanding social work”

**Barrister, about the support work provided by Hackney**

### Social Work in Schools Project (SWiS)

The Children in Need Service launched the Social Work in Schools Project (SWiS) in eight Hackney schools in November 2014 in order to provide effective family intervention to children and families at the earliest signs of difficulties to prevent children from becoming subject to child protection processes or becoming looked after. In September 2015, the project expanded into a further 4 schools in Hackney.

SWiS works to strengthen family functioning and protect children where necessary, as part of the school community with a greater understanding of the child's whole context. Experienced frontline social workers are co-located in schools and work with teaching

staff to reduce risks to children in need and respond without delay to children who need to be protected through child protection processes or become looked after.

The project is currently working with 12 schools in Hackney: 3 secondary schools (City Academy, Bridge Academy and Cardinal Pole Catholic Secondary School) and 9 primary schools (Morningside Primary School, Berger Primary School, St Dominic's Catholic Primary School, Hoxton Garden Primary School, Whitmore Primary School, De Beauvoir Primary School, Mandeville Primary School, Daubeney Primary School and Gainsborough Primary School).

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, the SWiS project worked with 354 children.

The interim evaluation report for the SWiS project in February 2016 found that, between November 2014 and November 2015, SWiS had reduced risk for children and families, had been able to better integrate families into community services and demonstrated a significant strength in engaging with families.

“Good communication, contact and relationships with the family.”

**Service user, about their social worker**

## **The Corporate Parenting Service**

The Corporate Parenting Service is responsible for all areas related to the safeguarding and welfare of children who are in the care of the local authority. This includes planning for their future placements via fostering and adoption, supporting rehabilitation home whenever possible, and supporting young people who have previously been in care up to the age of 21, or 25 for those remaining in higher education. Adoption and post-permanency services are currently managed within the Children in Need service but are covered in this section of the report.

The Service works very closely with Hackney Gets Heard, the Children in Care Council, to develop and improve the services and support that looked after children and care leavers receive. More detail about Hackney Gets Heard's work over the past year is provided on page 67.

Following work with Hackney Gets Heard in March 2016 to ratify priorities, Hackney's current Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2016-19 was approved by the Corporate Parenting Board. This strategy is based on the Hackney Promise to Children and Young People in Care (page 82) developed by young people, and puts outcomes for children at the heart of work to improve services.

## Overview of care population

One of our key principles is that children are best cared for within their families wherever this can be safely achieved. We are always striving to improve practice in respect of care planning to ensure that we can say confidently which children need to come into care and identify which children's outcomes will be improved by entering the care system. We continue to have lower numbers of children in care per 10,000 population under age 18 than our statistical neighbours (other local authorities with similar profiles). This rate remained consistent between 2013/14 and 2014/15 at 58, and has decreased slightly to 55 per 10,000 children in 2015/16.

### **Children looked after per 10,000 population aged under 18**

	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>55</b>
Statistical neighbour average	69	66	Not published yet
England	60	60	Not published yet

### **Number of looked after children at 31<sup>st</sup> March**

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>327</b>
Statistical neighbour average	406	394	Not published yet

**Note** *Historical data has been rounded to the nearest 5 (as published by DfE).*

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 Hackney was responsible for looking after 327 children and young people. Numbers of looked after children continue to be low compared to our statistical neighbours. There has been a gradual rise in the number of looked after children over the last few years, from 320 in 2013 to 345 in 2015, and this has been followed by a decrease in the total number of looked after children to 327 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. However, this snapshot figure for 2016 is misleading in terms of representing the trend in the number of looked after children during 2015/16 – the monthly figure for the total number of looked after children throughout the year ranged from 336 to 345 children. The low number of young people that were looked after due to their remand status as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 (only 3 young people compared to 10 young people at the same point in 2015) was one of the factors in the lower total number of looked after children at year end. As at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Hackney was responsible for 338 looked after children, which is more in line with the figures for 2014/15.

**Age breakdown of children entering care during the year ending 31 March, by age on starting**

Age	2014	2015	2016
Under 1	15 (10%)	25 (15%)	16 (9%)
1 - 4	15 (9%)	20 (11%)	18 (10%)
5 - 9	30 (19%)	15 (10%)	27 (15%)
10 - 15	60 (36%)	60 (36%)	60 (33%)
16 and over	40 (26%)	45 (27%)	63 (34%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>Total statistical neighbour average</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>Not published yet</b>

**Note** The table above includes data published by DfE. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5 (excluding 2016 figures) and percentages rounded to the nearest whole figure.

The number of adolescents within the total number of children entering care has increased consistently since 2014 and accounts for a large proportion of the new admissions to care each year. For example, 98 young people aged 14 or over entered care this year. These young people often present with more complex needs. The significant increase from 5 young people aged 16 and over entering care in 2010/11, 5% of the total number entering care, to the current position is in part attributable to the acceptance of young people with housing needs as looked after and the correlation with an increase in the use of Section 20 (Children Act 1989) accommodation. There has also been a recent trend in unaccompanied asylum seeking males aged over 17 years presenting for services and this is discussed in more detail on page 73. The increase in the number of young people over 16 will have an impact on the numbers of care leavers when this cohort turn 18. Since December 2012 all young people remanded to custody automatically become looked after children, and this has also had an impact on the number of young people entering care.

The table below includes an age breakdown of the total number of looked after children at year end which also illustrates the impact of the increase in the over 16 age group on the total number of looked after children between 2014 and 2016.

**Age breakdown of total number of looked after children, at year ending 31 March**

Age	2014	2015	2016
Under 1	10 (4%)	15 (5%)	10 (3%)
1 - 4	35 (11%)	40 (11%)	28 (9%)
5 - 9	60 (18%)	50 (15%)	46 (14%)
10 - 15	125 (38%)	140 (41%)	142 (43%)
16 and over	95 (29%)	95 (28%)	101 (31%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>327</b>
<b>Total statistical neighbour average</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>Not published yet</b>

**Note** The table above includes data published by the Department for Education. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5 (excluding 2016 figures) and percentages rounded to the nearest whole figure.

The number of children leaving care during 2015/16 was 209. Of these, 88 (42%) returned home to live with parents, relatives or another person with parental responsibility. A further 57 (27%) left care due to turning 18, 15 (7%) left care due to Special Guardianship Orders or Child Arrangements Orders (previously known as Residence Orders) being granted, and 16 (8%) were adopted.

#### *Returning home/to family network*

During 2015/16, 85 children and young people returned home or to live with a relative or wider member of their family support network, compared to 50 last year. This is an increase of 30 children and young people, and correlates to the increase in adolescents aged 16+ entering care who subsequently return home or to a relative or member of their family support network, often as a result of family support work or family network meetings. A child will usually return home as a result of changes that the family have made, either as a result of intervention by Children's Social Care, or by the family making alternative support arrangements for example as a result of the plan created at a Family Network Meeting that will mean their child's needs are being met. These plans and changes may not always be sustained by families despite the support put in place, so if children are referred back again to Children's Social Care, any previous looked after child episodes are considered as part of the assessment (as are prior Child Protection Plans) and a Service Manager will approve any decisions or plans made in relation to these children to ensure children are not left in neglectful or abusive environments.

#### Educational attainment of looked after children and young people

The Virtual School for looked after children works with children and young people from early years to the age of twenty five. It prioritises the individual learning or training needs of a child or young people in care, identifies the skills necessary for participation in an education, training or work environment and supports young people to acquire and adapt these skills for learning and for life. The Virtual School began working with young people on youth justice orders in 2014/15 to support their engagement in education and assist them to make more positive choices.

The results for looked after children in Hackney rely on established integrated partnership working between the Virtual School, social workers, schools and carers. This is supported by robust education and training plans and the provision of additional targeted support together with the understanding of how the day to day realities of being in care can affect a young person's capacity to learn and participate.

The Virtual School management committee has been strengthened by the addition of a foster carer on its board to contribute to the strategic function of its work.

#### *Early years*

Children in reception class are assessed in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Schools report this data to the Department for Education but they are not part of the national

indicator set for looked after children. In order to track the educational progress and attainment of our youngest children the Virtual School collects data in a number of areas. Children are judged against the criteria of emerging expectations, meeting expectations and exceeding expectations. This year data collected will be in the following areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development
- Communication and language
- Maths
- Literacy

As at May 2016, there are 21 pupils (age 2-5) in early years settings including 11 children in the reception year, which is a similar profile to previous years. This year the early years learning mentor has continued to develop the home school support strategy to ensure foster carers are well equipped to support early years educational attainment. Sensory books are available for foster carers to develop speaking and listening skills and visits to the cinema and activities in the park are encouraged to support children who are not yet school age.

The early years learning mentor has been active in ensuring that when appropriate, children are accessing the 15 hours of free nursery support that they are entitled to. This is a valuable additional resource that supports the holistic education of the child. An occupational therapist continues to provide support to early years settings and carers, and develops intervention packages that can be delivered in the child's nursery and school, or in the home.

### *Educational attainment*

The Department for Education educational attainment data for looked after children does not record results for cohorts that are below 10 children. This is reflected in the information below.

### *Key Stage 2*

Pupils in year 6 receive support from the Virtual School according to need. Pupils are identified for additional teaching support according to their academic level and the Virtual School intervention teacher delivers one to one sessions in Maths and English. Feedback from young people and schools is very positive and the accelerated progress of each child is evident.

All pupils are offered support for the transition to secondary school and wherever possible additional visits are arranged. Links with designated teachers are made before the children transition to their new school and wherever possible a member of the Virtual School staff will attend their first Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting.

In 2015 in Hackney there were 10 pupils in the Key Stage 2 (KS2) cohort who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months. 6 (60%) achieved at least level 4 in Maths, 5 (50%) received at least level 4 in Reading and Writing.

**KS2 Pupils achieving level 4 or above in maths, reading and writing (performance of children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months)\***

	2013				2014				2015			
	No.	Maths	Re.	Wr.	No.	Maths	Re.	Wr.	No.	Maths	Re.	Wr.
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Statistical neighbour average		66%	70%	67%		58%	69%	63%		72%	75%	68%
England		59%	63%	55%		61%	68%	59%		64%	71%	61%

\*These results were not published

**N.B. Local Authority figures are rounded to the nearest 5.**

**x = number less than or equal to 5 or the percentage where the numerator is less than or equal to 5 or the denominator is less than or equal to 10.**

Reading and Writing results have been below the national average at Key Stage 2 for the last year. This is in part due to the high percentage of children with special educational needs in this cohort representing 50% of the total number of pupils. Over the next year the Virtual School will develop more creative approaches to supporting these young people, delivered by the Virtual School intervention teacher.

#### *Key Stage 4*

Pupils in Key Stage 4 are offered additional sessions of one to one tutoring in maths and English in both years 10 and year 11. Their progress is monitored throughout by a dedicated Key Stage 4 mentor who provides individual targeted support for the young people, often performing the role of critical friend and advocate as well as ensuring clear and effective communication between schools, carers and the relevant local authority.

All pupils receive a laptop to support them with their studies and the Virtual School carefully monitors progress towards a young person's GCSE targets. This year there are a number of high achieving students in the cohort and the Virtual School is hopeful for a positive set of results in summer 2016.

All year 11 pupils receive support to identify appropriate pathways once statutory schooling has ended, and when necessary, are accompanied to college open days and interviews by a member of the Virtual School staff.

In 2015 in Hackney there were 27 pupils in the Key Stage 4 (KS4) cohort who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months. 38.5% achieved 5 GCSEs graded A\* – C, while 34.6% gained 5+ GCSEs graded A\* – C including English and maths.



**KS4 Pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs A\*-C with English and maths (performance of children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months)**

	2013			2014			2015		
	No.	5 GCSEs	5 GCSEs with Eng & Maths	No.	5 GCSEs	5 GCSEs with Eng & Maths	No.	5 GCSEs	5 GCSEs with Eng & Maths
<b>Hackney</b>	25	34.8%	x	25	37.5%	25%	27	38.5%	34.6%
<b>Statistical neighbour average</b>		45.6%	24.8%		22%	17%		24.9%	19.5%
<b>England</b>		36.6%	15.3%		16.3%	12.0%		18.3%	13.8%

**N.B. Local Authority figures are rounded to the nearest 5.**

**x = number less than or equal to 5 or the percentage where the numerator is less than or equal to 5 or the denominator is less than or equal to 10.**

Outcomes for this group of pupils are exceptional. Hackney's looked after children achieved the best results in the country for 5 GCSEs with English and Maths, and was second in the country for performance for 5 GCSEs. This is the result of a cohort of young people who were dedicated to their studies and received good support from their schools, foster carers, social workers and the Virtual School. 4 of the young people from the 2015 cohort achieved at least 5 GCSEs at grade A.

*Attendance and exclusions*

The results published for the last academic year have shown an improvement on the previous year in the numbers of looked after children classed as persistent absentees to 4.5%. This figure is now better than the national average at 4.9% and statistical neighbour average at 5.4% and ranks Hackney 45th in the country for this measure.

**Percentage of looked after children classed as persistent absentees at 31<sup>st</sup> March\***

	2013	2014	2015
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
Inner London	4.8%	5.3%	5.4%
National	4.4%	4.7%	4.9%

\*A low percentage represents better attendance

This improvement is due in part to the greater emphasis that the Virtual School has placed on tracking pupil's attendance. Fortnightly discussions take place to identify any young person where attendance might be a concern and a plan is put in place to address these concerns. A reward system has been put in place to celebrate those

young people who have excellent attendance and there is now a specific award at the annual EPIC (Exceptional People in Care) awards ceremony.

The number of young people who have had fixed term exclusions has increased this year to 34 from 29 the year before. Of these 34, 12 pupils received a one-off exclusion due to a single incident.

17 of the pupils who received an exclusion attend either special schools or alternative provision selected specifically because these types of provisions should be able to manage more complex behaviour. Social pedagogues and learning mentors within the Virtual School have supported the majority of these young people and the school settings to minimise the disruption to their education.

The percentage of children with at least 1 fixed term exclusion shows that Hackney achieved better results than the national and statistical neighbour average and were ranked 61<sup>st</sup> in the country.

	% of children with at least 1 fixed term exclusion
England	10.25%
Inner London	12.00%
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>9.85%</b>

There were no permanent exclusions during 2015/16.

### *Pupil Premium*

Each looked after child is entitled to pupil premium funding worth £1,900 annually to provide them with additional educational support. Young people are eligible to receive this additional funding from their first day in care and the Virtual School Headteacher is responsible for distributing and monitoring the funding.

For the financial year 2015/16 the Virtual School spent £506,000 through pupil premium funding. The majority of the money was put into schools with the remainder being used to provide additional support centrally, such as tutoring.

Each school provided a spending plan for how this additional support was to be offered and a range of interventions including maths and literacy catch-up programmes, tutoring, additional equipment, and counselling were identified.

### *EPIC (Exceptional People in Care) Awards*

In February 2016, the EPIC Awards took place at Hackney Empire to celebrate the achievements of Hackney's looked after children and care leavers. Children and young people were nominated for a range of reasons including improved performance at school, achievements in sport and music, and having a positive attitude in spite of difficulties such as changing school or placement. A new award was introduced this year for attendance.

Care leavers engaged in education, employment and training activities also received an award as it is recognised that for some of our young people engagement in education and positive activities remains challenging.

A total of 211 young people were nominated for an award in recognition of their hard work and commitment to their education.

### *Education, employment and training*

The Virtual School supports young people, who have left statutory care at the age of 18, into education, employment and training opportunities.

The consistent support offered by the team has again this year resulted in a low number of young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training).

### **Numbers and % of looked after children and care leavers not in education, employment or training (NEET)**

	March 2014			March 2015			March 2016		
	Total	No. NEET	% NEET	Total	No. NEET	% NEET	Total	No. NEET	% NEET
Year 12	48	9	19%	48	9	19%	60	12	20%
Year 13	52	15	29%	52	15	29%	65	17	26%
Rest up to age 21	147	39	27%	143	40	28%	152	44	28%
Over 21	27	3	11%	28	0	0%	44	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>24%</b>

*The table above is based on Virtual School data. Not all young people will have been in care for 12 months.*

9 young people are undertaking apprenticeships in a range of areas such as building surveying, business administration and app design (IT).

6 young people are interested in taking part in the KPMG apprenticeship programme and are being supported through the application process.

A MyBank budgeting workshop has been arranged for June 2016 in partnership with the Leaving Care Service. The sessions support young people in managing their budgets and young people need to attend these sessions in order to be nominated for permanent accommodation.

“I am so grateful to you for your guidance and for the funding that paid for my education”

**Care leaver, to his social worker about his higher education**

*Chanelle has been supported by the 16+ Virtual School team for the last 6 years. She struggled to complete any formal education and has been involved in gang activities from a young age.*

*Many attempts were made to engage Chanelle into education, employment or training but she struggled to complete any of the offered opportunities. Continuous support was provided to explore which career path would motivate her to sustain some form of activity. She expressed her desire to find employment and work in the corporate industry and was therefore supported to apply for a Business Administration Apprenticeship offered by KPMG.*

*Chanelle received intensive support on a 1:1 basis to develop her employability skills and was helped to apply for this opportunity. She successfully passed the interview and was offered a 13-month apprenticeship.*

*Whilst on the apprenticeship programme she became aware that she struggled with undertaking a number of tasks that were assigned to her. Through the support provided by the Virtual School and KPMG, Chanelle undertook a number of assessments for learning difficulties and was subsequently diagnosed with dyslexia. The appropriate support was put in place and tuition was provided by the Virtual School in English, Maths and Business Administration to support her through the apprenticeship programme.*

*Chanelle flourished in her position and when her apprenticeship came to an end she was offered a contract with KPMG with whom she is still currently employed.*

At March 2016, 76% of young people were successfully engaged in education, employment or training, the same percentage as at March 2015. The figure for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in March 2016 was 24%, again, the same as at March 2015.

These results show that there has been no variation in the overall NEET figure for this group of students over the last three years. When compared to the national figures Hackney performs very favourably.

The 2015 results based on children aged 19 to 21 show that Hackney ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the country with an overall education, employment or training figure of 70% for care leavers

### *Higher education*

The national average for care leavers attending university is 6%. Hackney performs very strongly with 13% of care leavers in higher education, ranking Hackney 4<sup>th</sup> in the country in 2015.

35 young people were attending university in May 2016 which remains statistically high. There are potentially 20 young people due to start university in September 2016 and support will be provided by the 16+ team in the Virtual School to ensure they are fully prepared.

10 young people are due to graduate from university in June 2016 in a range of subjects including veterinary physiotherapy, psychology and criminology, and aeronautical engineering.

“I will never take for granted Hackney’s help in getting me my degree, nor the opportunities that my degree has given me and will give me in the future.”

Care leaver, about his higher education

### Health of looked after children

The Hackney looked after children health service was re-commissioned during 2014 and from September 2014, the service has been provided by Whittington Health. The service was previously provided by Homerton University Hospital Foundation Trust (HUHFT); the Designated Doctor and paediatric support for looked after children’s health continues to be provided by HUHFT.

The service is delivered by a dedicated team closely aligned with Hackney’s new universal school-based health service and is co-located with the Virtual School to promote the delivery of a more holistic and integrated service to our looked after children and young people. A Specialist Occupational Therapist works with the Health and Virtual School team to provide additional support to looked after children.

Looked after children and young people have the same health risks and concerns as their peers. However, they are known to have a higher level of vulnerability as they often enter into care with unidentified health issues as a result of receiving poorer parenting, histories of abuse or neglect, having an unknown health history and higher levels of mobility. Therefore, they have poorer long term health outcomes than their peers. The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) reported in 2013 that about 60% of children and young people who are looked after in England are reported to have emotional and mental health problems and a high proportion experience poor health, educational and social outcomes after leaving care.

Initial Health Assessments for looked after children in Hackney are completed by members of the Community Paediatric Team from the HUFT under the supervision of a Senior Paediatrician in a weekly, dedicated clinic.

Over the past year Children’s Social Care and the looked after children health service have worked to ensure that referral pathways and information sharing processes between CSC and LAC health providers are robust so that children and young people receive their initial health assessment within statutory timeframes.

It is a statutory requirement for children and young people coming into care to have an initial health assessment within 28 days of entering care and subsequent review health assessments every 6 months up to the age of 5 then annually thereafter.

**% looked after children whose health checks were in time during a 12 month period**

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>84%</b>
Statistical neighbour average	93%	92%	Not published yet
England	88%	89%	Not published yet

84% of children and young people had their review health assessment completed on time in 2015/16, a decrease from 89% last year and significantly lower than the national average. This reflects the challenge faced by the team as a result of unprecedented sickness in the year. As a small team, any sickness has an immediate impact on performance. An agency nurse was recruited to support the team to mitigate against this. Whittington Health team continues to make concerted efforts to improve performance on this indicator and an improvement group has been put in place with representation from CSC, Virtual School, Public Health, and Clinical Commissioning Group to support the health team to enhance their performance. There will always be a small number of young people who do not attend or refuse a health assessment. The looked after children nursing team follow up all non-attendance and attempt to arrange further appointments at venues convenient for young people, as well as offering vouchers to encourage them to attend their health assessments.

The looked after children health team have signed up to the Hackney Promise for Looked after Children and will be working with Hackney Gets Heard over the coming year to understand the views of children and young people about the current service.

**% looked after children whose immunisations are up to date**

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>87%</b>
Statistical neighbour average	84%	81%	Not published yet
England	87%	89%	Not published yet

87% of children and young people had received the appropriate immunisations for their age in 2015/16, the same rate as last year and work is ongoing to improve the immunisation uptake particularly with older children. The looked after children health team are reliant on obtaining children and young people's immunisation status from a variety of health partners which can be challenging as they may have experienced multiple changes in address before coming into care. In addition to this, children and young people do not always see this as a priority.

The looked after children health team co-ordinates the health needs of looked after children, ensuring that they have access to the Healthy Child Programme (Department

of Health 2012), which provides a framework of universal and targeted services for children and young people to promote optimal health and wellbeing. Comprehensive initial health assessments and developmental reviews provide opportunities to identify and address any developmental delays.

Where particular health needs are identified the child or young person may be supported by the looked after children health team or where necessary referred on to specialist services. Children with emotional needs are referred to the Children’s Social Care clinical service (further information about this service is available on page 47).

In addition to completing statutory health assessments, the LAC health team offer a range of health-based interventions, health promotion, advice, signposting and referrals. Information is offered to looked after children and their carers to improve their health and well-being. These include dental health, referral and accompaniment of young people to sexual health clinics, support and training to foster carers, smoking cessation and monitoring of weight, growth and development.

The looked after children health team also provides drop-in sessions to social workers on a fortnightly basis, attends panels within Children’s Social Care to advise on children’s health status and needs and ensure every child has a health plan which clearly sets out how any identified health needs will be addressed.

Advice about dental health and hygiene is also considered and promoted at each assessment. In addition, the date of the last dental check is sought from the carer and young person.

**% looked after children who had an up to date dental check**

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>83%</b>
Statistical neighbour average	87%	90%	Not yet published
England	84%	86%	Not yet published

Placement activity

The indicators in this section are important measures of the stability of care that a child has experienced. On the whole, stability is associated with better outcomes for children. Proper assessment of a child’s needs and a sufficient choice of placements to meet the varied and specific needs of different children are essential if appropriate stable placements are to be achieved. Inappropriate placements tend to break down and lead to frequent moves.

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

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>13%</b>
Statistical neighbours	14%	10%	Not published yet
England	11%	10%	Not published yet

The percentage of looked after children with three or more placements in one year has increased to 13% in comparison with last year's performance at 9% and on further analysis, the children who experienced these multiple placement moves were generally aged over 13 years; their placement changes were associated with issues linked to higher levels of need and complexity related to adolescence. Young people in this age group, increasing numbers of whom are entering care for the first time, may often come into care at a point of crisis, frequently at night or on the weekend and be placed in an emergency. Resulting placement changes often happen as a result of carers being unable to meet the needs of young people in this age group. This is a national issue and one which the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium, of which Hackney is a member, is working to address by training specialised carers and putting in place better support for those carers.

**Percentage of looked after children aged under 16 looked after continuously for at least 2½ years who have been living in the same placement for at least 2 years** (or placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with previous placement lasting for at least 2 years) as at 31<sup>st</sup> March

	2014	2015	2016
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>61%</b>
Statistical neighbours	68%	66.5%	Not published yet
England	67%	68%	Not published yet

*Please note that due to changes to the definition in 2014/15 by the Department for Education, data for 2015 onwards is not comparable with previous years.*

The purpose of this indicator is to demonstrate the long-term stability for children. For this performance indicator a higher score is indicative of good performance. Instability for children is associated with poor outcomes, often disrupting children's education, their access to services and threatening friendships established in a previous placement or school. It is important that placements are sufficiently matched to children's needs, are of sufficient quality, and are well supported, if placement breakdown is to be prevented.

Hackney's performance for this indicator was reported in the July 2015 Bi-Annual Report as 70% for 2015. However, the figure published by the Department for



Education in early 2016 showed Hackney's performance for this indicator at 61%. A new methodology was introduced for this indicator in 2014/15. This was not consistently applied across all local authorities, including in Hackney. There were also major swings in this indicator in our statistical neighbour authorities between 2013/14 and 2014/15. We are working to apply the new methodology and associated placement codes in Hackney. The changes in this indicator mean that performance from 2015 onwards cannot be compared to performance from previous years.

Analysis of Hackney's performance during 2014/15 shows that 20% of the children reported to have experienced a placement move actually remained with their current carer but were counted as moves due to the change in reporting methodology – these cases either converted from short-term to formal long term placements or moved house. 80% of the children who experienced placement moves have been with their current carer for at least a year.

Hackney's performance for this indicator in 2016 at 60% has remained at a similar level since 2015, when it was 61%. Most placement moves are carefully planned, with the majority of children continuing to reside in their new placement more than 12 months after the move.

Hackney is now performing below the level of its statistical neighbours and as a result of the decline in reported performance against these two indicators, a placement stability working group has been established to conduct further data analysis and develop and implement a strategy to better support young people who may be at risk of experiencing multiple placement moves.

#### *Placement location and type*

There are many reasons why some looked after children are placed away from Hackney. Whilst availability of placements is a factor, some young people need to live out of area to help keep them safe from harm or from dangerous influences closer to home. Others may need specialist care that is not available in all local authority areas, or long-term foster placements that may be in short supply. Some looked after children move out of area so that they can live with brothers and sisters, or to be cared for by relatives who are approved as foster carers.

Of the 327 children looked after by Hackney at March 2016, 82 (25%) were placed in Hackney. 260 (80%) of the total looked after children were placed in London local authorities (including Hackney, and neighbouring and non-neighbouring boroughs). 57 children (17%) were placed in neighbouring local authorities (Waltham Forest, Newham, Haringey, Islington, Tower Hamlets or City), and 188 (57%) were placed in non-neighbouring local authorities, classified as being 'at a distance'. The majority of looked after children in placements classified as being 'at a distance' are placed in other London local authorities or local authorities adjoining London, such as Essex, Kent and Hertfordshire. These figures are consistent with other London boroughs.

**Placement location of looked after children, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**

<b>Placement location</b>	<b>Number of looked after children</b>
Hackney	82 (25%)
Neighbouring London local authority	57 (17%)
Other London local authority	121 (37%)
Local authority adjoining London	19 (6%)
Other 'at a distance' local authority	48 (15%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>

It is recognised that children placed away from their home area may need additional support and the quality and impact of care and support they receive is carefully planned and closely monitored.

**Number of looked after children by placement type, as at 31 March 2016**

<b>Placement type</b>	<b>Number of looked after children</b>
Foster placements	<b>244</b> (75%)
Placed for adoption	<b>16</b> (5%)
Placement with parents	<b>8</b> (2%)
Residential (children's homes)	<b>13</b> (4%)
Secure unit	<b>1</b> (0%)
Semi-independent	<b>42</b> (13%)
Youth Offender Institution*	<b>1</b> (0%)
Family Centre or Mother & Baby Unit	<b>1</b> (0%)
Residential school	<b>0</b> (0%)
Other	<b>1</b> (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>

*\* Since December 2012 all young people remanded to custody automatically become looked after children (under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012).*

The vast majority of looked after children are in foster placements (75%). Hackney has a low number of children in residential placements (children's homes), with approximately 15 children living in residential placements at any one time in 2015/16 (13 children were in residential placements at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016). This is in line with the use of this type of placement in recent years. The use of residential placements is linked to the number of older young people coming into care, some with very concerning behaviour who struggle to adapt to living in an alternative family environment and for whom it is very difficult to find the right accommodation. Hackney has fewer young people in residential care than the national average due to a conscious decision to only use residential care where we cannot offer a placement in a family setting. There are no children's homes in Hackney therefore any residential

placements used will be outside of the borough and carefully matched to a young person's needs. Where a residential placement is considered the 'best fit' for a young person, the service aims to move them on as soon as possible through careful care planning with a long term ambition for family life (at home or within a foster placement). The use of residential placements is continually monitored, which includes regular visiting, and scrutinised by senior managers within the service.

One young person was placed in secure accommodation on welfare grounds during 2015/16. The young person had very complex needs and was placed in secure accommodation for their own safety and to reduce the risk of them absconding. During this time the Service was carefully planning the young person's next placement to match their complex needs. The Service continues to evaluate the effectiveness of using secure accommodation.

### *Placement costs*

**Average weekly marginal cost of selected placement types as at 31 March 2016**

<b>Placement type</b>	<b>Average weekly cost as at 31 March 2016</b>
In-house foster placements	£376
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements	£819
Residential & Secure placements	£3,571

The table above shows the difference in the average weekly costs in payments for in-house foster placements, Independent Fostering Agency placements and residential placements.

There was a reduction in the volume and total cost of in-house foster care in 2015/16 compared to 2014/15 and this has corresponded with an increase in spend on Independent Fostering Agency placements.

There has also been a reduction in the number and cost of semi-independent under 18 and over 18 placements between 2014-15 and 2015-16. The impact of these and other changes are indicated in the tables below.

Comparative analysis of actual spend in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years

Looked After Children	2014/15		2015/16 Outturn		Difference	
Placement activity	Final Volume	Final Outturn (£)	Final Volume	Final Outturn (£)	Volume	Outturn (£)
In-house Foster Care	76.9	1,818,091	71.9	1,639,553	-5.0	-178,538
Independent Foster Carers	153.1	6,459,836	156.1	6,966,295	3.0	506,459
Family & Friends	26.9	467,609	26.7	512,224	-0.2	44,615
Residential Care Placements	15.1	2,305,912	10.1	2,178,980	-5.0	-126,932
Semi Independent (<18)	30.9	1,099,288	24.3	956,714	-9.1	-142,574

Permanency	2014/15		2015/16 Outturn		Difference	
Placement activity	Final Volume	Final Outturn (£)	Final Volume	Final Outturn (£)	Volume	Outturn (£)
Adoption Allowances	146.75	1,262,417	132.16	1,139,760	-14.59	-122,657
Residence Order Allowances	82.93	298,686	73.95	274,250	-8.98	-24,436
Special Guardianship Allowance	163.21	1,440,367	170.73	1,489,635	7.52	49,268

Leaving Care	2014/15		2015/16 Outturn		Difference	
Placement activity	Final Volume	Final Outturn (£)	Final Volume	Final Outturn (£)	Volume	Outturn (£)
Semi Independent (18+)	87.8	1,455,161	78.0	1,187,405	-9.8	-267,756
Staying Put	14	181,298	16.2	249,388	2.2	68,090
Overstayers	20.4	316,708	15.6	290,491	-4.8	-26,217

## Foster carer recruitment

In common with other London boroughs, Hackney is currently reliant on Independent Fostering Agencies to provide services for many of its looked after children. Financial constraints mean there is growing pressure to recruit more in-house foster carers which, as well as having a significant financial benefit also facilitates better coordination of support to children.

11 mainstream foster carers and 6 connected person carers were approved by Hackney in 2015/16.

We have worked closely with the housing service in the Council to agree plans to secure larger properties for a number of foster carers to provide additional bedrooms and increase their capacity to care for more children.

In order to meet the challenge of recruiting foster carers, a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy has been developed. This has a number of strands of activity to increase foster carer numbers. Hackney's fostering fees and allowances structure was reviewed and a new tiered fees structure based on levels of training was introduced in August 2014. The scheme aims to reward those carers who have developed the most valuable skills and fostering experience, encouraging our foster carers to further develop their expertise.

The marketing strategy to recruit foster carers continues to progress, with improved usage of social media, targeted recruitment campaigns and 'drop-in' sessions supported by existing foster carers and members of the Fostering Service held in the community. Current campaigns include a marketing campaign titled 'Little Things' launched with posters displayed around Hackney in January and April 2016; flyer distribution in March 2016 across services and venues in the borough; an approach to bring carers from Independent Fostering Agencies in-house; and a Council-wide initiative to encourage staff to recruit their families and friends to become foster carers for Hackney. A moderate financial incentive forms part of this initiative, which will be very quickly recouped in the savings made from mitigating the use of Independent Fostering Agencies.

The Corporate Parenting Board monitors fostering recruitment closely. Detailed information is regularly reported to the Board.

Hackney joined the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium in 2013 which includes six London boroughs (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington). Work is underway within the consortium to strengthen recruitment, including a joint initiative to recruit, train and support foster carers of teenagers with the ambition of developing a pool of specialist carers that can be used across the consortium.

Hackney's extensive foster carer training programme is highly valued by in-house foster carers, as is the range of support from the Virtual School, therapeutic clinicians, social pedagogues, consortium resources and regular fostering support groups. Foster carers are provided with a carefully structured programme of professional development opportunities, and the service has introduced an advanced study

programme to allow foster carers to enhance their qualifications further. Training provided to foster carers in 2015/16 has included: safeguarding and understanding risk; understanding attachment; social pedagogy; record keeping and writing; first aid training; diversity awareness; specialist child sexual exploitation training; preparing young people for independence; parenting a child who has been sexually abused; safer caring and allegations and missing children. The service will continue to share training knowledge and expertise with our consortium partners.

### Social pedagogue project - Head, Heart and Hands

Social pedagogy is an academic discipline that draws on core theories from education, sociology, psychology and philosophy. It is concerned with wellbeing, learning and growth. The 'Head, Heart, Hands' project was a three year project to evaluate the impact of a social pedagogic approach to foster care and was run in conjunction with the Fostering Network and five other sites across the country. The project ended in December 2015, but much work has taken place to ensure social pedagogic developments in Hackney are sustained beyond this date.

Four social pedagogues have been recruited and their roles are now well embedded within Hackney Children and Young People's Service. 47 foster carers have been trained through the programme and this has been followed up by a number of action learning sets to support foster carers to embed their learning from the programme.

In order to build sustainability for the Head Heart Hands programme, social pedagogy has been reflected in the revised workforce development strategy and further Open Space events are planned on a six monthly basis for social work staff, foster carers and senior managers. Open Space events aim to enable collaboration to develop practical ideas to improve outcomes for Hackney's looked after children and also assist foster carers in acquiring skills to promote children's emotional health and wellbeing.

The evaluation of the Head, Heart, Hands programme by Loughborough University and The Colebrooke Centre will be completed by November 2016 and the findings will be presented at a celebration event at the Houses of Parliament with foster carers.

### Additional support for looked after children

#### *Independent visitors*

An independent visitors service is available to Hackney looked after children, whether they are placed in Hackney or outside of the borough. The service is provided by Action for Children and there are 25 places available for Hackney looked after children at a time. The waiting list has significantly reduced over the last year and as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, there were only 2 children currently waiting for a match due to some matches coming to a natural end.

The independent visitor service recruits volunteers who befriend, support and advise looked after children and young people. A careful matching process takes place to understand the interests of the young people and the independent visitor and independent visitors and the young person with whom they are matched may share a

hobby, sport or interest. The project provides induction, training, support groups and supervision for the volunteers. A monthly drop-in session is held at the Hackney Service Centre for staff to discuss referrals or share information with the Referral Coordinator from Action for Children.

Social workers refer young people to the service when they think a young person would benefit from developing a supportive relationship with an independent person. The service is explained to young people and the young person makes the final decision about whether they would like to be matched with an independent visitor.

Independent visitors have contact with a young person at least once a month including telephone calls, text message conversations and taking part in fun activities. Activities that Hackney young people took part in with their independent visitors in the last quarter of 2015/16 included trips to the London Dungeon, the V&A Museum of Childhood, HMS Belfast, roller disco, wall climbing, bowling, football, golf and for an aspiring mechanic a visit to a local garage and a motorcycle café.

Many of the young people currently matched with an independent visitor are teenagers. Most matches last a few years and usually come to a natural end point as young people get older and lead more independent lives themselves. Some of the relationships with independent visitors that the current group of young people have developed will continue after these young people have turned 18 by agreement. The longest match currently is for a 17 year old who has had an Independent Visitor for the last 5 years, he has been supported to travel more independently (e.g. from Chingford to the London Dungeon) and the independent visitor has supported the young person in exploring his options on leaving care.

### *Clinical services*

Hackney's in-house Clinical Service provides specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) support to looked after children and care leavers.

The Clinical Service undertakes specialist assessments of parenting, child mental health, attachment relationships, autistic spectrum conditions, ADHD, self-harm, problem sexualised behaviour, learning and neuro-developmental difficulties, and trauma. A significant number of these assessments were completed as expert psychological assessments for the Family Courts. These assessments support social work assessments of need and risk and interventions.

A number of short and long-term evidence-based therapeutic interventions are provided to children and families to address a range of presenting mental health concerns, learning difficulties, parenting issues and family relationship difficulties. In 2015/16 these interventions included family therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR), dyadic developmental psychotherapy (DDP), video interaction guidance (VIG) and specialist group interventions including New Beginnings and multi-family group therapy (MFGT).

**Clinical Services activity data: April 2015-March 2016**

<b>Number of new cases</b>	385
<b>Number of all seen cases</b>	825
<b>Number of appointments in hours</b>	2731
<b>Number of consultations in hours</b>	6124
<b>Total number of clinical contact in hours</b>	10,945
<b>% of positive CHI-ESQ feedback</b>	94%

Approximately 25% of cases were held in Access and Assessment, 54% in the Children in Need service area, 19% in Looked After Children and 2% in Leaving Care.

The level of need over the course of the past year seems to be evenly split between genders, with 49% of cases seen by the Clinical Service being for boys and young men.

**Ages of children and young people supported by the Clinical Service between April 2015 and March 2016**

<b>% unborns</b>	1%
<b>% of 0-4 year olds</b>	21%
<b>% of 5-11 year olds</b>	35%
<b>% of 12-17 year olds</b>	39%
<b>% of 18+ year olds</b>	4%

Outcome measures are routinely collected by the Clinical Service. Child and parent outcomes for 2015 calendar year show that approximately two thirds (81%) of families supported by the service achieved clinically significant change in relation to their presenting difficulties (as rated on the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire), which is in line with CAMHS outcomes nationally (CORC, 2014). This is also an increase from 2014/2015 of 5%.



SDQ carer feedback from 2015 calendar year showed improvement in 67% of the children and young people whose carers completed this outcome measure and said that things are now 'a bit better' or 'much better'. A further 14% indicated that the difficulties are 'about the same' which means that the therapeutic support potentially prevented further deterioration in these difficulties.

Family feedback collected in 2015/2016 indicated 94% satisfaction with the Clinical Service. The value of outreach work and being listened to was consistently highlighted. A number of quotes from the respondents are included below:

"She listened and did not patronise, she went through everything thoroughly and was nice"

"She was really good, she tried to understand me. She was interested in my thinking and asked many useful questions"

"She went into a lot of work to complete the assessment and listened to everyone's views"

"I found her really helpful. I was able to express my emotions"

**Service users, about the Clinical Service**

Since April 2008 all local authorities in England have been required to provide information on the emotional and behavioural health of children and young people in their care. Data is collected through a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The SDQ is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire about 3-16 year olds. A summary figure for each child (the total difficulties score) is submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) annually.

The average SDQ score for Hackney's looked after children in 2015/16 was 14.0. This is slightly above the national average score for looked after children of 13.9 for 2014/15. The scoring range is between 0-40. On an individual basis a score of 13 or below is normal and 17 and above is a cause of concern (14 -16 is borderline). Every child whose SDQ score was of concern has received additional support from the Clinical Service.

*Alicia is a 10 year old girl who was placed in foster care due to concerns about neglect in the context of her parents' drug use and domestic violence. The Clinical Service undertook direct work with Alicia and her foster family with a family therapist, within the framework of attachment-focused family therapy and Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP). DDP is a therapeutic intervention based on working on the child's relationships while focusing on attachment and trauma-related difficulties. Subsequent clinical involvement included a psychological assessment of Alicia's cognitive, emotional and social functioning in the context of future placement planning and educational support.*

*In order to measure the impact of the work undertaken with Alicia and her foster family, a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was given to the foster carer. Alicia's foster*

carer had an initial SDQ score of 32. The follow-up SDQ indicated a decrease to 7 which is a positive improvement. This means that according to the SDQ clinical cut off points, Alicia's risk of clinically significant problems decreased from 'high' to 'average'.

	<i>Initial</i>	<i>Follow-up</i>
<i>Emotional</i>	9	1
<i>Conduct</i>	7	2
<i>Hyperactivity</i>	7	3
<i>Peer problem</i>	9	1

Alicia continues to engage with her social worker and wider support network. Clinical consultations are available where needed.

## Adoption

### *Children placed for adoption*

In 2015/16 a total of 16 Hackney children were adopted; an increase from the 9 children adopted in 2014/15. The difference is largely attributable to a number of anticipated Adoption Orders in 2014/15 being carried over to April 2015 due to court adjournments.

**Number (and percentage) of looked after children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted**

	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>15 (10%)</b>	<b>9 (6%)</b>	<b>16 (8%)</b>
Statistical neighbour average	25 (11%)	20 (9%)	Not yet published

**Note** The table above includes data published by the Department for Education. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5 (excluding 2016 figures).

Of the 16 children adopted in Hackney last year, 10 were boys and 6 were girls. An age breakdown is included below of the children's age at the time of the adoption order being granted (this will be different from the age when the children were placed with their adopters).

**Age breakdown of children's age at the time of the adoption order being granted (2015/16)**

<b>Age (in years)</b>	<b>Number of children</b>
1	4
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1
6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, 16 children were placed with their adoptive family but an adoption order had not yet been granted. A further 20 children had a formal plan for adoption but had not yet been placed with an adoptive family.

Over the last year a number of children have been placed quickly with adopters, with children waiting on average 6 months from the time the placement order has been granted to the date they moved in with their adoptive families. Only 1 child has been waiting for more than 12 months and his care plan is being reviewed following the disruption of an adoptive placement.

### *Adoption Scorecard*

The Adoption Scorecard aims to show how swiftly children are placed for adoption in each local authority area. The local authority's performance is measured against key indicators which are applied to the number of children who have been adopted over a period of three years. As the numbers of children adopted each year in Hackney is relatively small, one child's journey through the system can have a large impact on the average figures for a number of years.

The average time between a child entering care and moving in with an adoptive family has continued to decrease in Hackney from an average of 655 days (2011-14 average) to 564 (2012-2015 average) in the latest scorecard. This compares impressively with the 2008-11 average of 1017 days and shows the scale of improvement over the past few years in Hackney. The 2012-2015 average is below the national average of 593 days and shows a continuous downward trend.

While we will continue to work to reduce the average time between a child entering care and moving in with an adoptive family, our approach in Hackney will always be to take the necessary time needed to find the right families for our children.

#### **Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (3 year average)**

	<b>Adoption Scorecard Outturn 2012 – 2015</b>
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>564 days</b>
Hackney rank	66 of 149
England average	593 days
Statistical neighbour average	684 days

Hackney continues to do significantly better than the national average in the time taken to match a child to an adoptive family once a court decision is received with an average of 126 days against a national average of 223 days. This is a slight increase from the 2011-14 average of 118 days, and mirrors an increase in the national average from 217 days (2011-14 average) to 223 days (2012-2015 average).

**Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (3 year average)**

	<b>Adoption Scorecard Outturn 2012 – 2015</b>
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>126 days</b>
Hackney rank	9 of 149
England average	223 days
Statistical neighbour average	259 days

*Recruiting adopters*

14 adopters were approved in 2015/16. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, two families were approved but not yet matched or linked with children. These families are actively 'family finding'. All other families currently being supported by the Adoption Unit have either had children placed with them or are linked to children and are waiting for the placement to be approved.

Since November 2013 Hackney has been a member of the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington). The consortium benefits from joint recruitment of adopters with increased capacity for targeted recruitment for specific children, centralised training for staff, adopters and foster carers and joint commissioning of services which is effective and provides financial savings for all boroughs.

Recruiting the right adopters for children remains a challenge for all local authorities and the situation in Hackney is no different. Considerable efforts have been made to attract prospective adopters to Hackney through advertising/marketing, increased activity through the consortium, and building partnerships with private organisations. Our profiles of children are well-designed, up to date and use good quality DVDs. Responses to requests for information about children are made in a timely way, and the matching process is reviewed to be the most effective for each individual child.

Support for adoption is commissioned by the consortium and is easily accessible to adopters, diverse in what is on offer, and provides comprehensive services to families whenever they may need it.

*Adoption support*

The post-permanency service provides support to adoptive parents, their children and birth family members to enable them to remain in touch after an adoption order is granted. The letterbox system administers a regular indirect exchange of information between birth families and adopters. The team also provides support to help to maintain direct contact arrangements for adopted children and their birth relatives where this is in the child's interests and ongoing therapeutic support is provided for adoptive families before and after an Adoption Order has been granted.

Financial reviews are undertaken with families in regard to adoption allowances provided by the service, and adoptive families' needs are assessed when there is a

change in circumstances (post three years). The post-permanency service will also intervene whenever necessary to prevent the disruption of an adoption for the duration of three years post-order period, after which the duty to provide support will fall to the local authority where the child resides. A support phone line is provided to adopters and the service undertakes Adoption Support Reviews three years after an Adoption Order has been granted. The service works with children to undertake life story work, offers support to adopted adults to access their records and works as part of intermediary services with birth families and adopted adults. More recently, and in line with the changes for descendants of adopted people, the service also now offers an intermediary service for this client group.

The adoption support commissioned with our Consortium partners is easily accessible to families, diverse in what is on offer and provides therapeutic services to families. The post-permanency service works with Consortium partners to provide support groups for adopters, including specific groups for the parents of adopted teenagers, groups for adopted adults and training for adoptive families. Training is available to newly approved adopters and specialist training is available for adopters of children with behavioral needs. A comprehensive education support service is also provided to adopters and special guardians through the Consortium which includes an advice line, consultation sessions, a monthly support group and an annual training course all focusing on education. The education support service is intended to complement the support already organised for adopted children via the Pupil Premium grant, which is a grant given to the school at which the child attends to support their education.

Support is also provided to adoptive families through the Post Adoption Centre. This support includes helplines, counselling, independent support groups, training and outreach centres.

#### *Special Guardianship Order support*

The post permanency service works with families who are caring for children under Special Guardianship Orders. During 2015/16, 15 children and young people became subject to Special Guardianship Orders compared to 24 the previous year. A Special Guardianship Order (SGO) means that while parental responsibility remains with the parents, a carer (including foster carers) or relative can apply for the child to live with them, and make day to day decisions on behalf of the child. The service works with all SGO cases for three years following an order being granted and undertakes financial reviews for SGO cases (until the child is 18), they also undertake contact support (again until the child reaches adulthood). The post permanency service have established a preparation group for SGO carers and training for staff on Special Guardianship Orders and support plans. Permanency planning meetings have been established for all cases where the plan is an SGO.

An SGO support group has been established by the post permanency unit for Hackney families with an SGO or who have an SGO for a Hackney child. The post permanency unit is developing a training programme in collaboration with Special Guardians and seeking feedback on services provided to families with an SGO. A 'fun day' for families with an SGO took place in July 2015 and December 2015. In May 2016, Hackney worked closely with the North London Adoption Consortium to deliver a joint SGO

event which was well attended. There are further plans for another event to take place in December of this year.

The post permanency service is working with Consortium partners to provide training for families with an SGO. Social work units across Children's Social Care distribute leaflets and information to families with an SGO to make families aware of the support available to them. The Adoption Support Fund has recently been widened to include SGO applications, and the post permanency service will continue to promote the fund through SGO support groups and give guidance as to what services can be accessed. More recently the post permanency service and The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust have developed an intervention programme named Video Intervention, Positive Parenting, which will support SGO and adoptive parents in the early stages of placement.

### *The Therapeutic Life Story Project*

Life story work is important for adopted children and those who will become adopted, to help them and their families understand their history, including how they came to be in care. It can be used as a therapeutic tool for those families with a high level of need.

A Therapeutic Life Story Project in Hackney has been funded through £150,000 from the Adoption Support Fund. This was granted in order to provide training to adopters; produce life story books for adopted children whose book needed updating or creating; and in cases with a high level of need, offering direct therapeutic intervention for adoptive families.

Adoption Plus, a specialist adoption support organisation, has been identified and commissioned to run the project with Hackney Post Permanency and Adoption Services. The project will focus on training parents, providing a new life story book completed by a social worker from Hackney with regular consultation provided by Adoption Plus and direct therapeutic work led by one of two specialist life story practitioners from Adoption Plus.

To support this work, training for Hackney social workers has been provided alongside consultation on individual cases. Adoption Plus will create and provide a detailed set of resources for use by social workers including ideas around how to structure life story books; how to address difficult issues such as parental mental health or domestic violence; and tackling the difficult topic of how to approach a book based on the needs and age of the child at the time.

The second year of the project will be used to embed good practice into Hackney and plans will be made to maintain and further develop the good practice in life story work achieved over the past two years.

## Leaving Care Service

The Leaving Care Service ensures that young people are supported to develop independent living skills, offered career advice and training and educational opportunities, and supported to reach their full potential in all aspects of their life. This can make the difference between achieving independence and requiring long-term help. The local authority keeps in touch with care leavers until they are aged 21, or to the age of 25 and beyond if they are engaged in a full-time course of education, for the duration of the course.

The Leaving Care Service currently supports 238 young people, which is an increase from 210 young people at the same time last year. The social work units provide support to care leavers working closely with colleagues in other service areas to ensure a good transition at the age of 18, when a child's 'looked after' care status ends. Whilst in most local authorities, leaving care support is provided by personal advisors who are not required to have a professional qualification, the Leaving Care provision in Hackney is led and delivered by social work qualified staff, ensuring that young people receive a high quality professional service.

A leaving care working group was established during 2015/16 to ensure Hackney continues to provide excellent support for young people as they transition to independence. This group includes membership from other services across the Council as well as partner agencies such as the Housing Service, Job Centre Plus, health, Hackney Learning Trust, Probation and Young Hackney. The working group has agreed to deliver a number of initiatives to benefit young people across a range of issues they need most support with. These activities includes MyBank budgeting sessions, benefit drop-in sessions, training for staff on the changes brought with the introduction of Universal Credit and the production of the annual care leaver events calendar. Further work is planned for the coming year to develop stronger support in relation to probation, substance misuse and other health issues.

Housing is a significant issue for care leavers and the Leaving Care Service has been active in a number of areas to ensure young people are accommodated in suitable provision. The Setting-Up Home Allowance of £2,000 helps young people purchase required items for their permanent home, including white goods and furniture.

### *Staying Put arrangements (formally known as Supported Lodgings)*

When a young person reaches the age of 18, they are no longer considered to be "looked after". Foster carers play an important part in ensuring that young people are prepared for the move to independent living if this is what they choose, or by continuing to support them after the age of 18 through schemes such as Staying Put, where a young person's foster care placement can be extended beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The transition to adulthood is complex for all young people, and Staying Put arrangements enable young people to experience a transition from care to independence and adulthood that is more similar to that which most young people experience, and is based on need and not on age alone. The Staying Put policy has been updated this year to ensure that young people who stay at their foster home while attending university are appropriately supported.

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a new duty on local authorities in England to facilitate, monitor and support staying put arrangements for fostered young people until they reach the age of 21, where this is what they and their foster carers want, unless the local authority considers that the staying put arrangement is not consistent with the welfare of the young person. Hackney has offered the option of staying put arrangements to young people up to age 21 for a number of years.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, 27 young people were living in Staying Put arrangements, compared to 14 young people at the end of March 2015. An age breakdown of these young people is included below.

<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>Number of young people in Staying Put arrangements (as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016)</b>
18	17
19	4
20	4
21	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>

### *Permanent social housing*

Each year the Leaving Care Service is provided with a quota of permanent housing stock which young people are able to bid for (currently 18 places). Care leavers are nominated for a tenancy as they become ready, being offered a probationary tenancy for 1 year. Care leavers are offered support sessions in Young Hackney hubs to manage the transition to independent living, with Housing Service representatives on hand to guide them through housing processes. It is possible that the quota for Council housing tenancies for care leavers may reduce in future years due to the lack of available social housing stock in Hackney. Children and Young People’s Services are currently working with the Council’s Housing Service to ensure that housing for care leavers is prioritised within any future changes.

“I have my own space”

Care leaver, about their accommodation

### **Young Hackney**

Young Hackney is the Council’s early help, prevention and diversion service for children and young people aged 6-19 years old and up to 25 years if the young person has a special education need or disability. The service works with young people to support their development and transition to adulthood by intervening early to address adolescent risk, develop pro-social behaviours and build resilience.



While the service is open and universal in terms of youth hub activities and participation, there are priority groups that the service places an emphasis on engaging, including:

- Those displaying persistent disruptive behaviour
- Those at risk of disengaging from learning or who are at risk of exclusion from school
- Young people not in education, training or employment (NEET)
- Young people who offend, are at risk of offending or who are victims or perpetrators of violence
- Those who display harmful sexual behaviour or who are at risk of sexual exploitation
- Those whose physical or emotional health and wellbeing are at risk
- Those missing from home or education
- Looked after children and care leavers
- Young people with additional needs
- Young carers
- Culturally-specific groups (targeted groups addressing any identified themes. Young Hackney also commissions culturally specific work, for example from Interlink, North London Muslim Community Centre and London Gypsy and Traveller Unit)

Young Hackney's approach to early help is based on a systemic understanding of the key relationships in a child or young person's life and, in particular, the critical influence of peers and family members. The service offers outcome-focused, time-limited interventions through universal plus and targeted services designed to reduce or prevent problems from escalating or becoming entrenched and then requiring intervention by Children's Social Care. Children and young people are also encouraged to engage with universal opportunities through Young Hackney's network of youth hubs and commissioned projects. This allows them to join a range of positive peer groups and allows staff to monitor progress and sustain support. Young Hackney's approach of early help in the context of youth work has been commended by Ofsted and Partnership for Young London, with current plans to create a working relationship with the two organisations to develop this methodology further in a national context. Young Hackney is also contributing to the Council-wide work on improving outcomes for young black men, focusing on how to raise aspirations through youth work and work-related learning.

### *Universal services*

Universal provision is delivered through Young Hackney's youth hubs where a range of activities take place such as group work, cooking classes, boxing, wheelchair basketball and sessions specific to juniors and seniors. Staff at the youth hubs offer structured activities to aid children and young people's social and emotional development and help develop their decision-making and critical-thinking skills. Two of the youth hubs are managed by Young Hackney (Forest Road and The Edge) and three are commissioned to the community and voluntary sector (Hoxton Hall, Stoke Newington and Concorde). Positive activities are also delivered through adventure playgrounds and community sector youth clubs. All children and young people are able to access Young Hackney's universal services regardless of their additional

needs. In 2015/16, 8,459 activities were delivered by the service with approximately 144,000 attendances from young people throughout the year.

### *Adventure playgrounds and play streets*

Adventure playgrounds are spaces dedicated solely to children's play with activities that explore the physical environment such as digging, making fires, building and demolishing dens; activities not usually provided in other settings where children play. There are a total of 7 adventure playgrounds in Hackney which are open all year and attended by young people aged 6 to 15. The provision is award winning, having previously won 'Adventure Playground of the Year' (Shakespeare Walk) in 2013, 'Most Open Adventure Play Setting' (Hackney Marsh) in 2013 and most recently 'London 2015 Adventure Playground of the Year' (Hackney Marsh) from the London Play Awards.

In 2015/16, there were 16,329 attendances from children and young people at Hackney Marsh and Shoreditch adventure playgrounds, both playgrounds are managed directly by Young Hackney.

"I love Hackney Marsh Adventure Playground because the play workers are fun, friendly and also the kindest and sometimes crazy in a good way! I come here to have fun and make new friends as the day goes along and I come here to be myself and PLAY!!"

**Girl, aged 13 about Hackney Marsh Adventure Playground**

### *Youth and school sports*

Government statistics report that almost 15% of children in Hackney are obese compared to the national average of 9%, demonstrating the need for sport based activities in the borough. The Youth and School Sports Unit was set up in 2013 to serve as a legacy of the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games and provides sport participation opportunities that would be rare for young people to participate in otherwise. There are a number of different curriculum based programmes for 6-19 year olds including primary school sports and holiday programmes, after school sports participation and leadership and ambassador programmes. There is a focus on inclusive, and non-traditional Olympic and Paralympic sports and the unit delivers and manages sports sessions all over the borough based on the needs of young people.

The impact of the Youth and School Sports Unit has been significant in engaging over 10,000 children and young people in the borough since its inception and providing them with activities, competitions and volunteering and leadership opportunities. In 2015/16, 9,340 attendances by children and young people were recorded. The Council's Public Health service has also commissioned the Unit to deliver all health and sport related work with children and young people, such as the Health Heroes and Personal Best programmes which focus on healthy eating and encouraging the least active students to exercise. The Unit was shortlisted for a 'Public Sector Children's Team' award at the Children and Young People Now Awards in late 2015.

## *Individual Support - Universal Plus and Targeted Support*

Where young people are experiencing some emerging challenges and are at risk of not reaching their full potential, a Universal Plus service is provided. This is a time limited one-to-one, school based or targeted group based intervention that involves working with the young person and their low level additional needs. Targeted support is offered to children and young people who are demonstrating significant needs which may be persistent, serious and/or complex in nature. These needs may affect their ability to achieve and reach their full potential. At any one time, Young Hackney work with approximately 300-350 young people through the Early Help team providing tailored individual support. The most common presenting issues include:

- Risk of sexual exploitation
- Behaviour, attendance and truanting
- Risk of offending
- Risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Different cultural expectations within the family

*Karim's mother had taken him to their local GP to seek support around managing his anger due to concerns about his behaviour in school which had led to permanent exclusion. The GP made a referral to Child and Adult Mental Health Services who recommended that Young Hackney could provide a more appropriate offer of support for Karim.*

*Young Hackney allocated a support worker to engage with Karim and his mother to develop a targeted plan, consisting of one to one work during school time. Karim responded well during his sessions. The Young Hackney worker tailored resources from an anger management toolkit to support Karim to reflect on his behaviour and responses to his teachers and this helped Karim realise that he wished to change his behaviour. The Young Hackney worker supported Karim to understand when, where and to who it is appropriate to voice his opinion or grievances.*

*As well as direct one to one work with Karim, the Young Hackney worker worked with the Hackney Learning Trust Exclusions Officer to seek a new school place for Karim following his positive progress as it was felt he was ready to return to school. Young Hackney drafted a letter of recommendation to his potential new school in support of his application and helped Karim to prepare for his interview and Karim was successful in gaining a place.*

*The Young Hackney worker has continued to meet Karim in school to reinforce and review the strategies they had developed to support Karim manage his behaviour and responses and together they are now identifying a positive final goal or project to work on before closing Karim's case to the service.*

## *Prevention and diversion*

Prevention and diversion takes place at the point when a young person enters police custody following arrest for a low level crime for the first time. It seeks to use police custody areas as a 'gateway' whereby young people can be rapidly assessed to ensure that they are dealt with swiftly and effectively and the police can agree to deal with the matter outside of court. Prevention and diversion interventions are delivered

as a 6-week intensive one-to-one programme focusing on restorative justice, knives and weapons awareness, substance misuse awareness and crime prevention. The team also manage orders such as Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions. As at 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016, there were 53 young people being worked with through the Prevention and Diversion Team.

### *Reparation*

Reparation is an important component of Young Hackney delivery for the prevention and diversion of youth crime, combining elements of payback to the community and to the individual victims of crime, with opportunities for young people to develop new skills that will help them understand the consequences of their actions, develop their moral reasoning and desist from criminal behaviour. Where victims do not wish to be involved in the process, Young Hackney facilitates young people to carry out activities that are beneficial to the local community.

### *Substance Misuse Team*

The specialist substance misuse team supports young people up to the age of 25 and works directly with young people who are misusing, or at risk of misusing substances, by raising awareness about the dangers of substance misuse and drug dealing and supporting them with clinical plans. The service also works alongside colleagues in Youth Justice Services to undertake interventions with young people.

Interventions take a tailored and holistic approach that builds young people's resilience and addresses issues of family and relationships, finances, education and housing, while liaising with other services and partners as necessary. Over 2015/16, the Substance Misuse Team worked with 118 young people.

### *Participation*

Co-production is valued strongly in Young Hackney as a means to achieve a child-centred and focussed provision. Opportunities are sought to support young people to become directly involved in service review and delivery as inspectors, peer educators, peer mentors, recruitment panellists, volunteering or through establishment of their own social enterprises. Engagement of young people at a local level is driven through the Hackney Youth Parliament, Hackney Gets Heard (Hackney's Children in Care Council), Youth Forums, Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) Panels and youth-led inspections and can be facilitated at any level (universal, universal plus, targeted support). These opportunities are the platform for young people to be involved in decision making and social action locally, regionally and nationally, for example through the UK Youth Parliament and National Citizen Service.

### *Work related learning and accreditation*

Work related learning broadens young people's perception of the options open to them after they leave school or college. Staff provide workshops, events and individual support to enable young people to explore potential routes to employment and develop additional skills that will help them in the job market. Many programmes link to accreditation, leadership or volunteering opportunities, which help young people

develop a greater sense of purpose, belonging and self-worth. Young Hackney participated in the Hackney 100 scheme, offering work experience and apprenticeships to young people in the field of communications, youth work and business operations. Currently, Young Hackney continue to offer apprenticeships to young people as a means to advance their skills and support entry to working life.

Through Young Hackney, young people also gain qualifications through Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses, National Governing Bodies (NGB) sports awards or the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. In 2015/16, 1,006 accredited outcomes were awarded to or worked towards by young people. The Duke of Edinburgh scheme took place in 18 locations in Hackney in 2015/16 and 264 young people have been registered to complete the awards through Young Hackney. Accreditations have also been awarded through the Big Music Project where delivery is now in its third year in Young Hackney. The project focuses on providing young people with work related skills and opportunities in the music industry. In 2015, 20 young people successfully organised Hackney Live, a local music event celebrating young people's artistic talents. The event attracted a 300 strong audience and 54,000 views through live streaming on the night and led to the young people gaining record contracts and internships.

### *School support*

Young Hackney works closely with schools to support the delivery of the core Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme as well as to support behaviour management interventions. A curriculum has been developed that is delivered in schools and focuses on topics such as healthy relationships, substance misuse, e-safety and youth participation and citizenship. The majority of secondary schools in Hackney have an allocated Young Hackney team who will work with them to identify students who require additional support to participate and achieve. If schools identify students who would benefit from individual support, Young Hackney will create an appropriate intervention with the school.

### **The Disabled Children Service**

The Disabled Children Service is part of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) service within Hackney Learning Trust. It operates a social model of disability in offering a universal plus/targeted service for all children with disabilities who require additional support.

The service comprises of 2 units: the Care Reviewing Team (CRT) and the Family Focus Intervention Unit (FFIU). The service also includes the management of the disability register and the short breaks service.

At the end of March 2016 the service was working with 233 children and young people. This is an increase compared to March 2015 when the service was working with 194 children and young people.

The following tables show breakdowns by age group and type of disability for the 233 children that were open to the service at the end of 2015/16. Of the 233 children, 163 are male and 70 are female.

**Age and disability breakdown for cases open to the Disabled Children Service, as at 31 March 2016**

Age	Number of children
5 or under	30
6 - 8	41
9-11	41
12-14	51
15+	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>

Type of disability	Number of children
Physical disability	40
Learning disability	138
Both learning and physical disability	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>

*Personalised budgets*

Personalisation remains a cornerstone in providing service users with choice and control over their lives, particularly in how their needs are met within the Disabled Children Service, as many families want more control over their lives and the opportunity to choose their own provision to meet family circumstances when it best suits them.

The Children and Family Act 2014 advocates the use of personal budgets, which means that rather than receiving services such as accommodation and personal care, disabled people and their families are supported to be able to plan and spend their budget as they choose. The service is piloting using a Resource Allocation System (RAS) for first time entrants to the Disabled Children Service to support with transparency in personal budgets and support planning.

***Number of families choosing to use Direct Payments as personalised budgets to receive care through the Disabled Children Service***

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Number of families</b>	130	70	64

Although the table above appears to show a further reduction in the number of families choosing to use Direct Payments last year, this was due to families previously accessing Short Breaks through Direct Payments. The Short Breaks provision is no longer linked to Direct Payments, so the number of families using Direct Payments in

2015/16 is a more accurate figure, and is not indicative of a decline in the number of families using this option.

### *Short breaks*

Short breaks are defined as any service or activity outside of school hours which gives the family of a disabled child or young person a break from their caring responsibilities, and gives the disabled child or young person an enjoyable experience. Eligible provision therefore includes both targeted and specialist provision and mainstream activities outside school hours, for example holiday play schemes, after school clubs or one to one outreach support. There are currently seven commissioned short break providers in Hackney, including providers offering support specifically within the Orthodox Jewish community.

There has been a year on year increase in the uptake of Short Breaks in Hackney as shown in the table below, with 1,081 children and young people accessing Short Breaks provision in 2015/16.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Number of young people accessing Short Breaks provision</b>	721	840	1,081

In addition, there has been increased demand for Individual Budgets (IB), as families opt to receive a personalised budget direct from the Council to purchase provision to suit their family situation. More than half of the families currently receive funding through the Individual Budgets programme in Hackney. This is a cash value amount for families to buy their own provision which they record in a receipt book for audit purposes. Families use the Short Breaks website and a list of providers that other families have used to help get ideas and decide how to spend their budgets. Families have used Individual Budgets to tailor activities to their child including: driving lessons, swimming sessions, music lessons, visiting Legoland, drama clubs, dancing lessons as well as paying for a carer.

### *Transition*

During 2015-16 22 young people transitioned from children's to adult's services as they reached the age of 18. The Disabled Children Service ensures that referrals are made to Adult Services as early as possible and joint meetings take place to ensure the transition period is as smooth as possible for families and the young person involved. The Disabled Children's Service liaises with Adult Social Care on a weekly basis to ensure pathways are clear.

If a young person is not likely to be eligible for support from Adult Services then the Disabled Children Service will link the family with transition health services to provide other support.

“The communication with the social worker was very good.”

**Service user, regarding their overall experience of Children and Young People’s Services**

## Private Fostering update

A child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) who is cared for, or proposed to be cared for, and provided with accommodation by someone other than a parent, person with parental responsibility or close relative for 28 days or more is described as being privately fostered. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child or someone previously unknown to the child’s family who is willing to privately foster a child. They may also be from extended family such as a cousin or great-aunt.

Local authorities do not approve private foster carers, but are required to assess and say whether or not they agree and accept a private fostering arrangement to ensure that the welfare of privately fostered children is being safeguarded and promoted. To fulfil this duty local authorities must take a pro-active approach in partnership with other agencies and other key professionals in raising public awareness of requirements regarding notifications of private fostering arrangements. The City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (CHSCB) also has a key role to play in awareness raising in relation to private fostering.

### **Overview of activity 2015/16**

As at the end of March 2016 there were 29 children in private fostering arrangements in Hackney. This is an increase from the figure of 21 private fostering arrangements in March 2015.

Of the 29 children in private fostering arrangements, 11 were new arrangements which began in 2015/16. The majority of these children (7 of 11) were born in the U.K.

**Total number of children whose private fostering arrangement began between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016, by age**

<b>Age (at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016)</b>	<b>Number of children</b>
Under 1	0
1 – 4	0
5 - 9	1
10 - 15	8
16 and over	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>



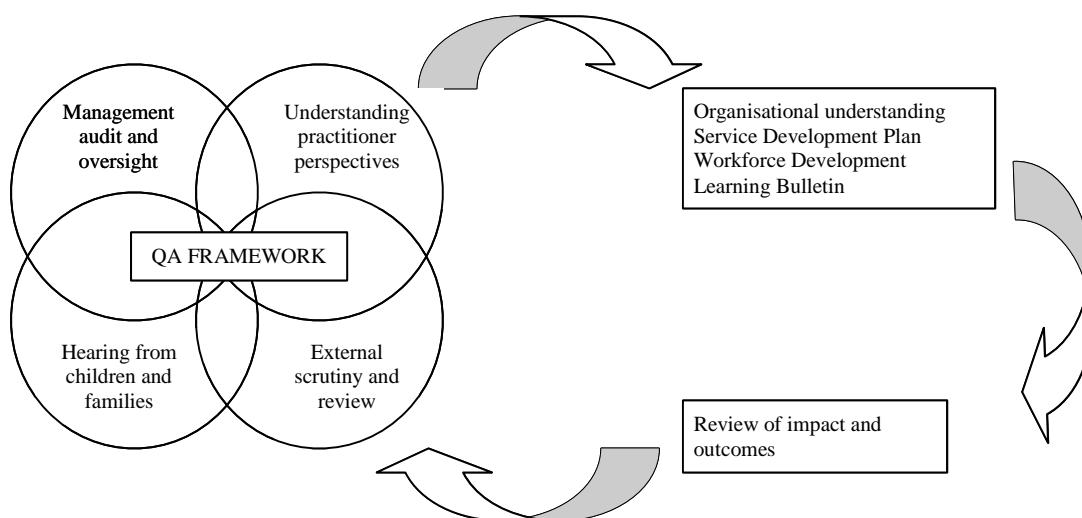
**Total number of children whose private fostering arrangement began between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016, by place of birth**

Place of birth	Number of children
UK	7
Europe (other)	2
Africa	1
Asia	0
Middle East	0
Oceania	0
Canada and USA	0
Caribbean, Central and South America	1
Other	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

Hackney’s leaflets on private fostering for professionals, parents and carers and young people have been updated and are distributed on a regular basis to relevant groups including schools, GPs, children’s centres, faith groups, housing offices and libraries. Lunchtime seminars for Children’s Social Care staff on private fostering continue to take place on a quarterly basis, and multi-agency private fostering training events are organised through City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board.

**Quality assurance framework**

Children’s Social Care is a complex system and we use many tools to understand learning opportunities, themes and trends within the service to enable the service to continue to adapt and change to new demands. This ensures that we are a responsive and learning service.



The Safeguarding and Reviewing Team plays an important role in the quality assurance and improvement of all services within Children's Social Care. Further information on the activity of this team in 2015/16 is included in the separate Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) annual report.

## **Management and audit oversight**

### *2015/16 audit programme*

The audit programme for 2015/16 has continued with a monthly programme of audits being completed by Service Managers and Heads of Service across Children's Social Care. There has also been an increased focus on themed audits completed within each service area. Trends identified are used to inform themes for future case review days and specific actions arising from audits are incorporated into the Children's Social Care Service Development Plan to drive forward service improvement.

As part of our commitment to organisational learning in Hackney, regular case review days are held within Children's Social Care, during which the senior management group reviews practice across a specific area of the service or in relation to a particular issue. The day also involves dialogue with practitioners about how we can transform learning into improvements to practice.

A case review day in October 2015 focused on identity and diversity. Reviewers found there were several good examples of practitioners considering young people's identity as part of assessments and ongoing work – exploring their religious beliefs, supporting young people to try out a range of activities and interests and signposting them to community groups. Recommendations for improvement in this area included recording ethnicity accurately and fully, using cultural genograms where appropriate, considering the impact of identity throughout the assessment and any ongoing work, and exploring parents' history and experiences of parenting to be included as part of the assessment.

The January 2016 case review day focused on children with disabilities. The majority of cases had detailed assessments and there were examples of strong multi-agency working, information sharing and planning between Children's Social Care, schools and health services. It was evident that practitioners used a variety of methods to communicate with children including those who were non-verbal and social workers were highly responsive to children and young people's changing circumstances. This case review day identified a need for greater joint working between Children's Social Care and the Disabled Children Service, better understanding of thresholds and a review of the transfer process to ensure smoother transitions for children and young people between services. It was also identified that some assessments would benefit from being clearer about the impact of a child's disability on their life and family functioning.

In March 2016, a case review day focused on children returning home from care; there was evidence of clear, timely, carefully considered plans based on sound reasoning and children's wishes and feelings were listened to and parents were meaningfully involved in planning. Key areas for development arising from this case review day included involving the professional network more closely in the planning, monitoring

and reviewing of the plan, contingency plans being clearly recorded on file and the recording policy being updated to clarify recording practice where a case is jointly allocated across CSC and family support.

The peer audit programme continues to be developed and embedded in the service. A new audit methodology has been agreed with service areas and will be driven by the Safeguarding and Learning service. This will be rolled out in 2016/17 to increase participation in the peer audit process.

The audit programme for 2016/17 will continue with monthly audits and targeted themed audits as well as quarterly case review days and continued evaluation to ensure audits are effective for all staff across the service.

## **Hearing from children and families**

The views of children and families using our services are collected in a variety of ways and there are a number of mechanisms in place to ensure that children are supported to represent their views. In Spring 2016, Hackney's in-house advocacy support for children was strengthened through the development of new Children's Rights Service which offers advocacy, support to young people regarding complaints and independent return home interviews when a young person has gone missing. The Children's Rights Service focusses on ensuring children and young people get the support they need in having their voice heard and participating in the development and direction of Children and Young People's Services.

### *Hackney Gets Heard – Hackney's Children in Care Council*

Hackney's Children in Care Council gives looked after children the opportunity to shape and influence the corporate parenting that they receive at every level. It gives young people the opportunity to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives, helping to shape the overall strategy for looked after children and young people in Hackney.

The young people involved in Hackney Gets Heard have a year-long work programme that includes a mixture of fun and interesting activities and opportunities to influence matters related to the care they receive. Over the past year, events have included go-karting, a trip to Thorpe Park theme park and a barbecue for care leavers. A programme of events took place over the summer holidays.

Hackney Gets Heard engaged with 132 young people aged between 8 and 19 years during 2015/16. Activities are coordinated between Young Hackney and social work units via the Safeguarding and Learning service in advance so that social workers can attend events with young people where possible. Hackney Gets Heard continue to look at ways to better include looked after children living outside of the borough in Hackney Gets Heard activities.

Young people continue to support planning for changes to looked after children (LAC) reviews to make them more child friendly and help the service use creative tools to engage and involve young people in their reviews. Hackney Gets Heard have been

taking part in mock LAC reviews and road-testing the new ‘toolbox’ of creative methods that will be used as part of the new process. Some young people have been identified as mentors for the looked after children reviews and mentor work will take place once the new ways of working have been embedded in social work practice.

Hackney Gets Heard are currently working to improve child participation at Child Protection Conferences, creating an independent living charter for housing providers and developing a health passport for all young people in long term care with the LAC Health Service.

Hackney Gets Heard were involved in designing the artwork of the Hackney Promise to Children and Young People in Care (page 82) and endorsed the document by giving it the Hackney Gets Heard stamp of approval. Members of Hackney Gets Heard have been consulted on the priorities of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-19 which have been based on meeting the Hackney Promise to ensure it continues to reflect the views of children and young people. The next youth-led inspection will review Hackney’s performance against the Corporate Parenting Strategy priorities and will take place once the new strategy has been fully implemented.

#### *Family feedback programme*

The family feedback programme continued in 2015/16 with the aim of providing a regular and embedded approach to seeking feedback from children, young people and families on their experiences of receiving Children’s Social Care services. In 2015/16 feedback was received through surveys and interviews from 299 children, young people, parents and carers and professionals. Quotes collected across the family feedback programme are included throughout this report.

The number of looked after children aged 5-10 years old who provided feedback about their experience of being in care has remained low at 4 children, despite low responses, all children surveyed commented encouragingly on their social worker. When asked to comment on how they had found having a social worker work with their family, 100% (4) of 5-10 year old respondents answered that it had *been helpful, made me happy, made me feel calm and made things easier*. Further work will be undertaken in 2016/17 to collect more feedback from this age group, especially as part of the launch of the redeveloped LAC Review process in August 2016 and the rollout of mobile working to support interactive feedback tools

“She’s awesome and great.”

“She is kind.”

“My social worker is the best...and I don’t want to change him. I want to keep him forever.”

**Comments from 5-10 year olds about their social worker**

Surveys were completed by 7 young people aged 11 – 18, with responses to the headline question of the impact of social work involvement encouraging. 3 (43%) described involvement as *completely positive* and 3 (43%) as *quite positive*, with only 1 (14%) deeming it *quite negative*. This picture is reinforced by 4 (57%) young people *strongly agreeing* with statements that their practitioner was ‘easy to talk to’, ‘knowledgeable’ and ‘took note of my wishes and feelings’. Similarly, 5 (71%) respondents *strongly agreed* that their practitioner was ‘respectful’, ‘reliable’ and ‘asked me what I thought’.

22 care leavers completed surveys in 2015/16. 19 care leavers responded to the question of their accommodation’s quality. 6 (32%) rated it *great*, 10 (27%) *good* and 1 (5%) *ok*, with 2 (10%) saying it was *bad* and none describing it as *really bad*. In line with these statistics, comments provided by care leavers point to general satisfaction with their accommodation. 19 (86%) care leavers felt that the best person was providing them with support, including their social worker, key worker or family. Of 17 responses on the matter of whether they had left care at the right time, 10 (59%) said *yes*, 3 (18%) felt it too soon, none said it was not soon enough and 4 (24%) were unsure. The majority of care leavers (9, 27%) described their overall experience as *great or good*.

The family feedback programme was expanded in 2014/15 to provide opportunities for professionals and family members attending Child Protection Conferences to feedback on their experiences. Feedback was received from 208 people during 2015/16 including 25 family members, and positive feedback was provided by the majority of respondents. When asked to rate their experience of the Child Protection Conference, 90% of those that responded said that they were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their experience. When asked to rate their overall experience of recent contact with Hackney Children’s Social Care, 82% of those that responded said that they were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their experience.

Areas for service improvement identified from feedback received will be taken forward and monitored as part of the Children’s Social Care Development Plan. The family feedback programme will be refreshed over 2016/17.

## **Workforce development**

The provision of high quality services for families and the delivery of improved outcomes for children and young people can only be maintained and improved upon through the continued efforts of a committed and skilled workforce. Children’s Social Care is proud of our carefully recruited staff and the culture of learning, negotiation and openness in which they work, but aware of the need to further cultivate and refine our personnel and working practices, especially given the fast moving and ever changing social, statutory and financial environments in which we operate.

Hackney’s model of social work intervention continues to develop and the role of Practice Development Manager (PDM) which was introduced in 2013/14 has now embedded well into the service. The PDM role provides a progression to a higher grade for high performing Consultant Social Workers who are keen to develop their leadership and management skills further. Within Children’s Social Care we aim to, as far as possible, to ‘grow our own’ social care workforce, providing a clear progression

route from Qualified Children’s Practitioner, to Social Worker, to Consultant Social Worker and then on to Practice Development Manager if staff wish to progress within the organisation.

“The social worker was really good and experienced”

**Parent feedback about social worker following assessment**

In February 2016, the Department for Education published data on the children’s social work workforce as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015, and linked this with the Child In Need census data return as at March 2015 to provide an estimation of caseload per social worker.

**Department for Education published information on children’s social work workforce**

	<b>Number of children in need per children’s social worker (2013)</b>	<b>Number of children in need per children’s social worker (2014)</b>	<b>Number of children in need per children’s social worker (2015)</b>
<b>Hackney</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
Statistical neighbour average	18	17	16
London average	15	16	16
England average	17	16	15

The data published by the Department for Education estimates that Hackney has 19 children in need per children’s social worker. This is higher than the statistical neighbour average of 16 and the national average of 15, both a decrease of 1 from last year’s figures in contrast to Hackney which has seen an increase of 1 since 2014.

All cases are allocated to the Consultant Social Worker (CSW), or the Practice Development Manager (PDM) in Practice Development Units (PDUs). A traditional unit comprises of a CSW, Social Worker (SW), Qualified Children’s Practitioner (QCP) and a Unit Coordinator (UC) however the unit sizes differ and change as our practitioners’ skills develop or new challenges arise. Units also have access to experienced clinicians who provide additional perspectives.

Within Hackney, children’s social workers have access to a wide range of in-house services to support them by undertaking direct work with children and families, these include: the Virtual School, Parenting Support, Clinicians and the Family Learning and Intervention Programme (FLIP). This should be taken into consideration when comparing the number of cases per social worker with statistical neighbours and nationally, as where caseloads appear higher, the social worker is undertaking direct work with children and families in conjunction with these other services.

Hackney's vacancy rate at the point of submission of this data to the Department for Education was 24.3%, an increase of 7.8% from last year which is likely to have impacted on this increase in the estimated number of children in need per children's social worker. This is largely attributable to the timing of the submission. Hackney CYPS had undergone a large restructure deleting posts for unqualified practitioners in social work units and replacing them with qualified workers. The date of implementation was 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 therefore there were a large number of Consultant Social Worker posts vacant at the snapshot date for the submission of this data. There has been extensive successful recruitment since then and the current vacancy rate is 15% as at 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016, a decrease of 9% with recruitment and staff progression still ongoing to fill vacant posts.

Hackney's turnover rate for social workers is relatively low at 11% in comparison to 19% for our statistical neighbours, and lower than 16% nationally – Hackney is one of the top 30 local authorities in the country in regards to performance against this measure. Hackney has worked hard to retain staff and provide development opportunities encouraging staff to pursue career progression internally. There has been a concerted effort to recruit high quality social work practitioners and to reduce the number of agency workers across the service. The number of agency workers (at 53) remains higher than the statistical neighbour average (44) and is an increase from last year's figure of 26.8. Again, this is largely attributable to the timing of the submission.

During 2015/16 Children's Social Care provided an extensive training and learning programme based on our workforce development strategy and in response to feedback from staff and managers about learning needs and areas identified through organisational learning activities including case audits, family feedback and inspections. The training programme seeks to address knowledge and development needs in relation to emerging local and national themes relating to safeguarding children. In 2015/16 this included training or lunchtime seminars on autism, special guardianship orders, adoption and permanency, child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, spirit possession and witchcraft, trafficking, systemic thinking, forced marriage and honour-based violence. In 2015-16, CYPS introduced Practice Development Days and held two during the year. The Practice Development Days focused on a specific subject and featured expert speakers, with one held in July 2015 on the theme of the "Dynamics and Impact of Sexual Abuse" and the second held in February 2016 on safeguarding young people outside the home, at school and in their peer groups. Both events were very well attended and received positive feedback.

"Great opportunities to learn about new and effective practice developments and opportunity for collective reflection and learning on current practice."

"Really value the high level presentations and opportunity to engage with theoretical perspectives."

**Practitioner feedback about Practice Development Days**

The workforce development strategy 2016 -19 has been developed to cover all service areas in Children and Young People's Services and has five key priorities: to integrate Young Hackney and Children's Social Care workforce development frameworks and practices; continued development of the Professional Development Programme; embedding leadership across all levels within CYPS; continuous improvement of recruitment and retention of CYPS staff; and development of Hackney as a centre of excellence in practice.

## **Compliments and complaints**

Children's Social Care monitors compliments received from children and families, external bodies and internally. 34 compliments were received in 2015/16, in comparison to 46 in 2014/15. These compliments are utilised to identify excellence in social work practice, promote achievements and share learning from good practice across Children and Young People's Service.

Children's Social Care has a statutory duty to respond to complaints regarding services offered to children and families under the Children's Act 1989. Children Act complaints are an opportunity to learn about what is not working as well as it could within the service and to implement change and shift to improve practice. Over the year we have received 115 new representations, 55 of which (48%) were not formalised as complaints under the Children Act, Corporate or Child Protection Conference procedures. This total represents a decrease both in the number of complaint-related representations received and the percentage that did not progress to become formal complaints. Reasons for representations not being pursued as formal complaints include issues being resolved through early intervention, the issue falling outside of statutory remits or the complainant no longer wishes to pursue the matter. 145 complaint-related representations were received in 2014/15 of which 92 (63%) were not formalised as complaints.

In line with last year, the majority of complaints came from parents and guardians (23, or 62%). There has been an increase in the number of complaints made through advocates on behalf of children and young people, from 6 (15%) in 2014/15 to 10 (27%) in 2015/16. This may be as a result of Hackney's advocacy provision for children and young people moving in-house from an external provider in Spring 2015. The Children's Rights Service is designed to make the provision of advocacy support to children and young people simpler and more streamlined.

A total of 47 new Children's Act complaints, 5 new corporate complaints and 3 new Child Protection Conference complaints were received in 2015/16. The total number of new complaints (55) is fairly consistent with the number of complaints received in 2014/15 (53) and is in line with the previous five years.

In 2015/16, the service continued to focus on mediation to resolve complaints early and prevent them from escalating. Of 37 completed Stage 1 complaints, 8 (22%) progressed to Stage 2, with 2 (4%) of these progressing to Stage 3.

Learning from complaints is included in the Workforce Development Plan and Service Development Plan and compliments are used in case studies and themes shared with practitioners through the CYPS Learning Bulletin.



## **Other priorities for Children's Social Care**

### **Immigration - families**

Hackney, like many London local authorities, has a number of individuals living within its boundaries who are subject to immigration controls as defined by the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999. Such individuals are excluded from access to welfare benefits, public housing and asylum support and are collectively known as having No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). This group includes individuals who have overstayed their visa entitlement in the UK. Children's Social Care has a duty to assess children's needs under s17 of the Children Act 1989 if they are at risk of homelessness or destitution, even if their parent has no legal entitlement for services in the UK.

In 2012 the Overstaying Families Intervention Team (OFIT) was established in the Assessment Service to manage the increasing demand for services from adults who have caring responsibilities for children. In October 2013 the service merged with the Housing Needs Overstayers Team to create a single front door and service for NRPF families (single vulnerable adults with NRPF remain in Adult Social Care Services).

In 2015/16 OFIT assessed 109 families with 209 dependent children. Of these, 81 families were provided with accommodation and/or subsistence during the course of the assessment. The team spend £129,067 per month supporting families provided with accommodation and subsistence; there are currently 182 children living in 92 families open to the team.

There continues to be a high volume of individuals subject to immigration controls approaching the Council for help; increasingly, these are families seeking to resolve immigration issues through contact with the department. The Council continues to meet its duty to assess the needs of children who are facing destitution, whilst also ensuring that only individuals who are in genuine need receive support. The service works closely with anti-fraud, legal services and the Home Office to ensure a robust assessment process and deter false claimants; this approach expedites the settlement of immigration matters for families in genuine need which impacts on reduced costs to the Council over time. Hackney's innovative investigative and coordinated assessment approach is now being replicated by other London boroughs as despite the considerable pressure on costs on the section 17 budget Hackney Council's costs compare favourably with other London boroughs.

### **Immigration – young people**

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, 18 young people claiming to be unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) were in placements provided by Hackney. These young people either presented to Hackney Children's Social Care or were dispersed for assessment by the Home Office rota held by the London Borough of Croydon. 15 of these were young men and most of these young people claimed to be aged between 16-18 years.

Social workers undertaking assessments are vigilant to the risk of misrepresentation and ensure a robust and investigative approach is used during assessment including

searches via digital media; this has proven to be an effective means of accessing family and historical information.

Hackney is currently receiving a proportional number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children referrals via the Croydon dispersal rota.

### **Child sexual exploitation**

Understanding the nature and prevalence of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) and ensuring that Children's Social Care and partner agencies provide appropriate safeguarding responses and interventions remains a priority. In the last six months developments in relation to CSE and HSB have been considered within the wider context of 'vulnerable adolescents' in recognition that the complex vulnerabilities of young people frequently intersect and overlap and that approaching these separately is often unhelpful.

Multi-agency planning (MAP) meetings continue to be convened for all young people at risk of CSE or demonstrating HSB. Multi-agency plans are formulated in relation to each young person and identify targeted interventions with the aim of reducing future risk. The monthly multi-agency sexual exploitation (MASE) meeting provides strategic oversight of all young people subject to MAP meetings and plays a pivotal role in Children Social Care's response to CSE.

Analytical research has been undertaken to interrogate data relating to CSE and HSB and to identify emerging themes and trends which inform service development. Research has drawn on referral data from FAST, Police data and on data gathered at CSE and HSB MAP meetings. This research has explored the overlap with the missing children cohort and started to quantify emerging themes such as domestic violence and parental drug misuse and to identify any reoccurring locations and patterns around dates and times of incidents. The research has highlighted three broad CSE profiles in Hackney:

1. CSE risk resulting from peer-on-peer abuse (sexual offences/exploitation against one or more victims and usually perpetrated in a group setting)
2. CSE risk from an adult perpetrator (typically a young person believing themselves to be in a 'relationship' with an adult after being introduced to them by a normally vulnerable friend, or through online contact)
3. Exploitation via social media (inciting or encouraging a victim to take and send explicit images of his/herself)

At present the majority of children and young people known to be at risk of CSE are female and around 50% have experienced CSE through peer abuse (profile 1). While there are no specific locations or 'hot spots' being identified in Hackney, a theme has emerged around CSE and HSB taking place at private residential dwellings, frequently that of a friend of the perpetrator.

In relation to HSB, two broad profiles have emerged: group-based offending (linked to CSE profile 1 above), and individual offending, with evidence that the relationship between the victim and perpetrator is established either through links at school or through social media. Learning from HSB MAP meetings conducted to date shows

two thirds of meetings have dealt with HSB in a group context and one third with HSB demonstrated by an individual. Emerging themes in relation to young people demonstrating HSB in a group context include the prevalence of parental alcohol and drug concerns, exposure to domestic violence and parents who have separated. In relation to individual offending, emerging themes show an increased likelihood of the young person having experienced familial childhood sexual abuse.

In September 2015 the CHSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group and the Missing Children Strategic Group merged to form the CSE and Missing Children Working Group in recognition of the strong link between these two issues. It is anticipated that the remit of this group will now be extended further to address the needs of 'vulnerable adolescents' more broadly; this will include CSE, missing children, harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), radicalisation and gang and youth violence. Work is currently being undertaken to develop a vulnerable adolescents strategy and action plan which will replace the current CSE and Missing Children Strategy and Action Plan. The HSB action plan, developed through the HSB Task and Finish Group, will be incorporated into the vulnerable adolescents strategy and action plan.

Operation Makesafe, launched in Hackney in March 2015, continues to raise awareness of CSE within the business community including hotels, taxi companies and licensed premises. The second phase of Operation Makesafe is focused on raising awareness across residential and semi-independent placement providers. City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board continue to engage with young people to plan awareness raising across the community as part of the 'Say Something if you See Something' campaign. Following consultations with young people the awareness raising campaign is focusing on encouraging young people to identify friends who may be at risk of or experiencing CSE.

### **Children missing from home and care**

Over the last 6 months much has been done to strengthen our understanding of and response to children and young people who go missing from home and care. Missing episodes are being considered as part of a broader spectrum of vulnerabilities effecting adolescents which include CSE, harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), radicalisation and gang and youth violence.

A short life Children's Social Care missing children working group has been established, following the pilot Joint Targeted Area Inspection in December 2015 and as part of the post-inspection action plan. The working group will drive greater consistency in practice in respect of children who go missing from home and care. The Missing Children Working Group will review recording practices, senior manager oversight of children and young people who go missing, notifications to and involvement of partner agencies and our analysis and understanding of the missing children cohort.

The Missing Children Lead Professional (the Safeguarding and Reviewing Service Manager in Children's Social Care) continues to ensure robust senior management oversight of children who go missing from care and home and scrutinises plans in place for these children on a fortnightly basis. Fortnightly updates are provided to the

Interim Assistant Director of Children and Young People's Services on all children missing from home and care.

Over the last 6 months the Independent Return Interview Service has worked in closer collaboration with social workers to increase the support offered to children who are known to Children's Social Care and who go missing from home or care. The Independent Return Interview Service has also strengthened links with the Children's Rights Officer to ensure a consistent approach to children who go missing and may also require advocacy support.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

A new mandatory duty to report female genital mutilation (FGM) came into force on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015 under the Serious Crime Act (2015). Regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales, including those working in private education and healthcare, are now required to report known cases of FGM in under 18-year-olds to the police.

This is a personal duty (i.e. the responsibility is that of the individual not the organisation) and requires social workers to report a disclosure of FGM from a girl or young woman to the police, with failure to report meaning the professional is subject to disciplinary measures. Training has been provided for CYPS staff by the Community Partnership Advisor. A Service Manager for Children and Young People's Services sits on the multi-agency FGM Steering Group. Between April 2015 and March 2016, 85 children were the subject of FGM related referrals, the majority of which were identified by health professionals, commonly in maternity care.

### **Looked after children from other local authorities placed in Hackney**

A multi-agency task group chaired by the Head of Safeguarding, Corporate Parenting and Learning was established in Autumn 2013 to consider the support that services can provide to Hackney's looked after children placed out of borough as well as looked after children from other local authorities placed in Hackney and the notification processes for this group of young people. This work has been supported by the Corporate Parenting Board.

There are more looked after children from other local authorities placed in Hackney, than Hackney looked after children living in the borough. This number includes children from other areas placed for adoption with Hackney families, children from other areas placed with foster carers that work for other local authorities, including friends and family carers, children placed with Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) carers, and young people in semi-independent accommodation in Hackney.

**Number of looked after children from other local authorities placed in Hackney, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March (DfE published data)**

<b>Looked after children placed in Hackney</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Hackney looked after children	85	80	65
Looked after children from other local authorities	90	95	110
<b>Total looked after children placed in Hackney</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>180</b>

There is a statutory duty on local authorities to notify the host local authority area that a looked after child has been placed in their area. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, the Service was aware of 105 looked after children and young people placed in Hackney. 36% of this cohort were aged 16 and 17 years and were mainly placed in semi-independent accommodation.

Reporting systems related to information on children from other local authorities placed in Hackney are currently being improved to enable more useful reports to be run that will allow the Service to understand and monitor this cohort of children more closely. This will help us better understand the types of placement for this cohort of children and young people, for example if there are carers or placements within the borough that the Service is unaware of or not using.

The Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) has recently led on developing a national resource with information about services for looked after children in every local authority in the country. Hackney’s letter that was circulated to Directors of Children’s Services and Lead Members informing them of Hackney’s offer to looked after children from other areas placed in our borough was used as an example of good practice and replicated by many local authorities around the country as part of this resource. As well as this information which is provided to social workers and foster carers when children from other areas are placed in Hackney, the service has also worked with Hackney Gets Heard, Hackney’s Children in Care Council, to develop a child-friendly *Living in Hackney* brochure with information about resources they can access including details of the youth hubs and leisure activities available in Hackney. The *Living in Hackney* brochure is sent to looked after children from other areas when they are placed in Hackney to make them feel welcome and so they know more about the local area and the exciting youth offer in Hackney.

In line with revised statutory guidance that was published regarding out of authority placements in July 2014, there are processes in place for sharing relevant information with other local authorities when contacted about the appropriateness of potential placements in Hackney.

### **Young carers**

Young carers are children and young people under 18 who provide regular or ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances.

A young carer may do some or all of the following:

- Undertake practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping;
- Provide physical care, such as lifting, helping a parent on stairs or with physiotherapy;
- Provide personal care, such as dressing, washing, helping with toileting needs;
- Manage the family budget, collecting benefits and prescriptions;
- Administer medication;
- Look after or “parenting” younger siblings;
- Provide emotional support; and/or
- Interpret, due to a hearing or speech impairment or because English is not the family’s first language.

A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of care giving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child, impacting on his or her emotional or physical well-being or educational achievement and life chances.

The multi-agency Hackney Young Carers Steering Group continues to monitor and support the Hackney Young Carers Project.

From April 2015 to March 2016, Hackney Young Carers Project, funded by Children and Young People’s Services, worked with an average of 154 young carers (between 147 and 174 over the course of the year) and provides a variety of support services which include group work, and one to one work with children in more complex situations. Regular term time clubs take place such as cooking and homework clubs which take place every week, and one additional term time group that varies by term consisting of drama, sewing or cinema club. Positive activities and fun holiday sessions are well attended by the young people, there are support groups in three secondary schools in Hackney.

During the year a dedicated worker was recruited with a focus on support for families with alcohol/substance misuse issues. Two preventive programmes were run during the year aimed at reducing risk, building resilience in children and young people, improving parenting capacity and improving the overall health and wellbeing of children and families long-term. Following the end of the programme, Young Carers Project staff have continued to work with those young carers, offering a range of support, including mentoring and counselling.

### **Family Learning Intervention Programme**

In 2014, Hackney successfully applied to the Department for Education’s Children’s Social Care Innovation Programme for funding for the Family Learning Intervention Programme (FLIP). The ambition behind FLIP is to improve outcomes for young people on the edge of care, through supporting them to remain with their families or within a stable foster placement.

FLIP is a model for a radically different residential care facility which will be developed into a centre of excellence for preventative and responsive interventions for young people on the edge of care and their families. FLIP is staffed flexibly by our own expert practitioners who have the skills and existing relationships to best support our edge of

care cohort. It is anticipated that over time costs will be avoided as a result of reduced residential placements either because young people are able to return home or are placed in appropriate foster care supported by FLIP.

A property was purchased in February 2016 located in Oxfordshire and is currently being refitted. The programme has worked with 13 families since August 2015 to date, using alternative provision such as Centre Parcs to provide the facilities and space families need outside of Hackney.

*Patrick is 15 and lives with his mother. He has moderate learning difficulties and has been excluded from mainstream school and now attends a special needs school in a neighbouring borough to Hackney. Patrick is on the edge of care due to the breakdown in his relationship with his mother, with a history of violent incidents that have involved the Police being called to their home. Patrick's mother has difficulty in managing his challenging behaviours which have been escalating.*

*This family was selected to participate in the Family Learning Intervention Programme on the basis that structured time away in an environment free from distraction could offer the family the opportunity to strengthen their relationships and reduce the risk of Patrick coming into care.*

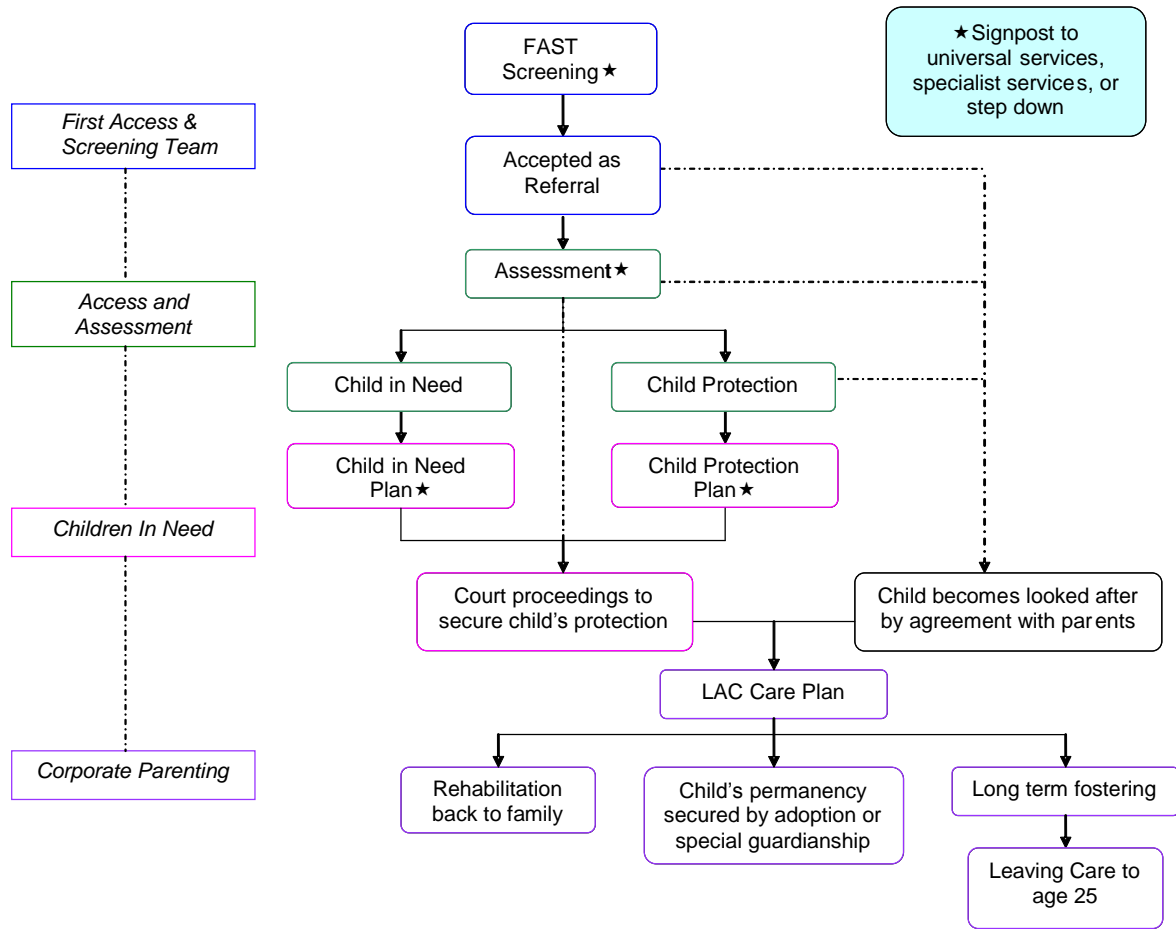
*The Family Learning Intervention Programme (FLIP) tailored a number of interventions to meet the family's needs during their week away together and the family were joined by their social worker and Patrick's school key worker for the week, alongside the FLIP staff. The professional network around Patrick and his mother worked together to plan and prepare for the week away.*

*The interventions selected included equipping Patrick with healthier strategies in self-regulation, increasing his mother's confidence and consistency in her parenting approach and increasing Patrick's independent living skills while supporting his mother to allow and encourage his independence. Patrick and his mother were able to identify what strengthens their family and find healthier ways of dealing with conflict. On the last day of the time away, a follow up plan was made with the family, school and social work unit to continue the progress that had been made.*

*Since their time away together, relationships between Patrick, his mother, his school and his social worker have strengthened considerably and the professional network has benefited from learning more about the family. The impact of FLIP for this family has been to reduce the risk of family breakdown thereby minimising the risk of Patrick coming into care.*

# Appendix 1

## Children's Social Care - Case Flow Chart





## Appendix 2: Useful Links

Cabinet Office, *Queens Speech* (May 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/queens-speech-2016>

Casey L., *Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council* (February 2015)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-of-inspection-of-rotherham-metropolitan-borough-council>

Department for Education, *Children's Social Work Workforce: Staff employed by children's social services in England as at 30 September 2015* (February 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childrens-social-work-workforce-2015>

Department for Education, *Regionalising Adoption*, (June 2015)  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/437128/Regionalising\\_adoption.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/437128/Regionalising_adoption.pdf)

Department for Education, *Review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards* (May 2016) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wood-review-of-lscbs-government-response>

Department for Education, *The government's response to Alan Wood CBE Review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards* (May 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wood-review-of-local-safeguarding-children-boards>

Jay A., *Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, 1997 – 2013* (August 2014)  
[http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1407/independent\\_inquiry\\_cse\\_in\\_rotherham](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham)

Ofsted, *Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (single inspection framework) and reviews of Local Safeguarding Children Boards* (October 2015)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-framework>

Ofsted, *Commentary on social care* (June 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/commentary-on-social-care-june-2016>

Ofsted, *Consultation Document: Future of Social Care Inspection* (June 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-social-care-inspection>

Ofsted, *Social Care Annual Report 2015/16* (June 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-social-care-annual-report-2016>

## Appendix 3: The Hackney Promise to Children and Young People in Care

### **THE HACKNEY PROMISE TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE**

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

#### **COMING INTO CARE**

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

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

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

#### **BEING IN CARE**

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

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

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

#### **EDUCATION**

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

#### **GETTING WELL AND STAYING WELL**

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

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

#### **MEETINGS**

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

#### **YOUR RIGHTS**

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

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

#### **BECOMING AN ADULT**

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

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