

October 2019

Children and Families Service

Full Year Report to Members 2018/19



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Legend

 Progress on service priorities	 Feedback	 Strengths	 For information
 Service description	 Case studies	 Areas for development	

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.

Foreword



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

It gives me pleasure to introduce the Children and Families Service 2018-19 Report to Members. Over the past year, our skilled and committed workforce has continued to strive for excellent outcomes for our children and families and maintained their commitment to continuous learning and development in response to changing needs. Feedback from Ofsted following a short focused visit in February 2019 identified some areas where we needed to take immediate action. I have received regular updates from the Children and Families Service management team about how we are addressing these actions and I am pleased to see how far we have progressed in the last few months. I want to thank our strong and skilled workforce for making changes quickly and working in a committed way towards embedding these.

2018/19 has been another very busy and productive year for the Children and Families Service. Demand for services continues to increase, against a background of financial challenges across the country for social care services. The Children and Families Service continues to explore innovative approaches to addressing need within Hackney.

The Children and Families Service has worked to review and align the Children and Families Service values with the relaunched Council values. These core values for the Children and Families Service form ethical standards that inform everything that we do. Our aim at all times is to be:

- Collaborative and respectful
- Innovative and creative
- Child and family focused and responsive to wider context
- Strength-based and reflective
- High aspirations for children
- Purposeful, timely and solution focused

Please see the appendix to read about these values in more detail.

The Hackney Child Wellbeing Framework has also been further developed and re-launched - the wellbeing framework is the Hackney partnership's thresholds document and now includes additional information related to extra-familial risk, as well as a Context Wellbeing Framework to support the local partnership to assess risk in extra-familial contexts such as peer groups, schools and neighbourhoods.

In the last year the Hackney Young Futures Commission has been set up to involve young people in decisions that affect them. It is led by young people and aims to find out how young people view Hackney as a place to live, the changes they would like to see, and how they want to be involved in the decisions that affect their lives. This was a key manifesto commitment in 2018. I look forward to the findings from this commission and working with partners across the Council in responding to these.

I look forward to building on our successes and learning from our challenges into the coming year.

Overview of Performance



4,190 referrals were received in 2018/19 – a 6% decrease compared to the previous year when 4,433 were received.



16.5% re-referrals were made within 12 months of a referral during 2018/19 – an increase compared to 15.6% in 2017/18.



4,290 assessments were completed in 2018/19 – a 3% decrease compared to 4,438 in 2017/18.



194 children were on Child Protection Plans as at 31st March 2019 – a slight decrease compared to 200 as at 31st March 2018.



23% of children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan, were subject for a second or subsequent time during 2018/19 – an increase compared to 14% in 2017/18.



177,299 attendances at Young Hackney provision, including commissioned services, by children and young people during 2018/19 – a 7% increase compared to 165,283 in 2017/18.



405 children were looked after as at 31st March 2019 – a 6% increase compared to 381 children in care as at 31st March 2018.



212 children entered care in 2018/19 – a slight decrease compared to 217 entering care during 2017/18.



119 young people aged 14-17 entered care in 2018/19 – a 12% increase compared to 106 young people aged 14-17 entering care in 2017/18. The 14-17 year old cohort represented 56% of the total number of children that entered care in 2018/19, compared to 49% in 2017/18.



13% of looked after children had three or more placements in 2018/19 – an increase compared to 11% in 2017/18.



65% of looked after children under 16 looked after for at least 2.5 years who have been living in the same placement for at least 2 years in 2018/19 – an increase compared to 62% in 2017/18.



308 care leavers aged 17-21 were being supported at the end of March 2019 – an increase compared to the end of March 2018, when 301 care leavers were being supported.

Priorities for the Children and Families Service in 2019/20

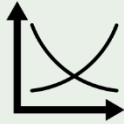
Our identified priorities for the year ahead include to:



Review and reiterate the centrality of the child's lived experience to how we work in Hackney and ensure that the child's lived experience is embedded in all of our processes



Ensure the timeliness and effectiveness of social work practice and interventions to safeguard children from harm



Ensure the quality and effectiveness of managerial oversight and supervision to ensure that children's circumstances improve within their timeframe



Carry out an extensive review of Early Help services to ensure that a comprehensive, consistent and responsive early help offer, based on current best evidence, is in place for all children and young people in Hackney



Continue to invest in the workforce across the Children and Families Service, with a particular focus on improving the diversity of our workforce, especially at a management level



Move to a 'business as usual' model for delivering Contextual Safeguarding and continue to develop our response to adolescent vulnerability and extra-familial risk, including in the context of their peer group relationships, school environments and the community, linking this work with our Trusted Relationships project



Continue our drive to recruit and retain more in-house foster carers, including through the introduction of the Mockingbird model and the launch of our first hub homes in 2019



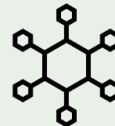
Ensure that we have the right placements to provide stability for our more complex adolescents who are looked after, including through our involvement in the East London residential project and exploring joint commissioning opportunities with other local authorities



Work more closely with schools regarding support for children in need and young people at risk of school exclusion



Refresh our Corporate Parenting Strategy to reflect greater corporate responsibility for looked after children and care leavers, and reflect the current views of a wider group of children and young people through the broadened membership of our Children in Care Council



Further develop our communications to ensure care leavers can access dynamic and interactive information about our Care Leaver Offer.



Introduce the internationally recognised Safe and Together model to strengthen our response to domestic abuse across the partnership



Respond to the findings of the Hackney Young Futures Commission



Ensure that issues relating to identity, diversity, inequality and discrimination are considered and addressed in all aspects of our work, and that we progress improvements identified through the corporate Young Black Men programme



Strengthen our safeguarding reach into out of school settings and hard to reach communities

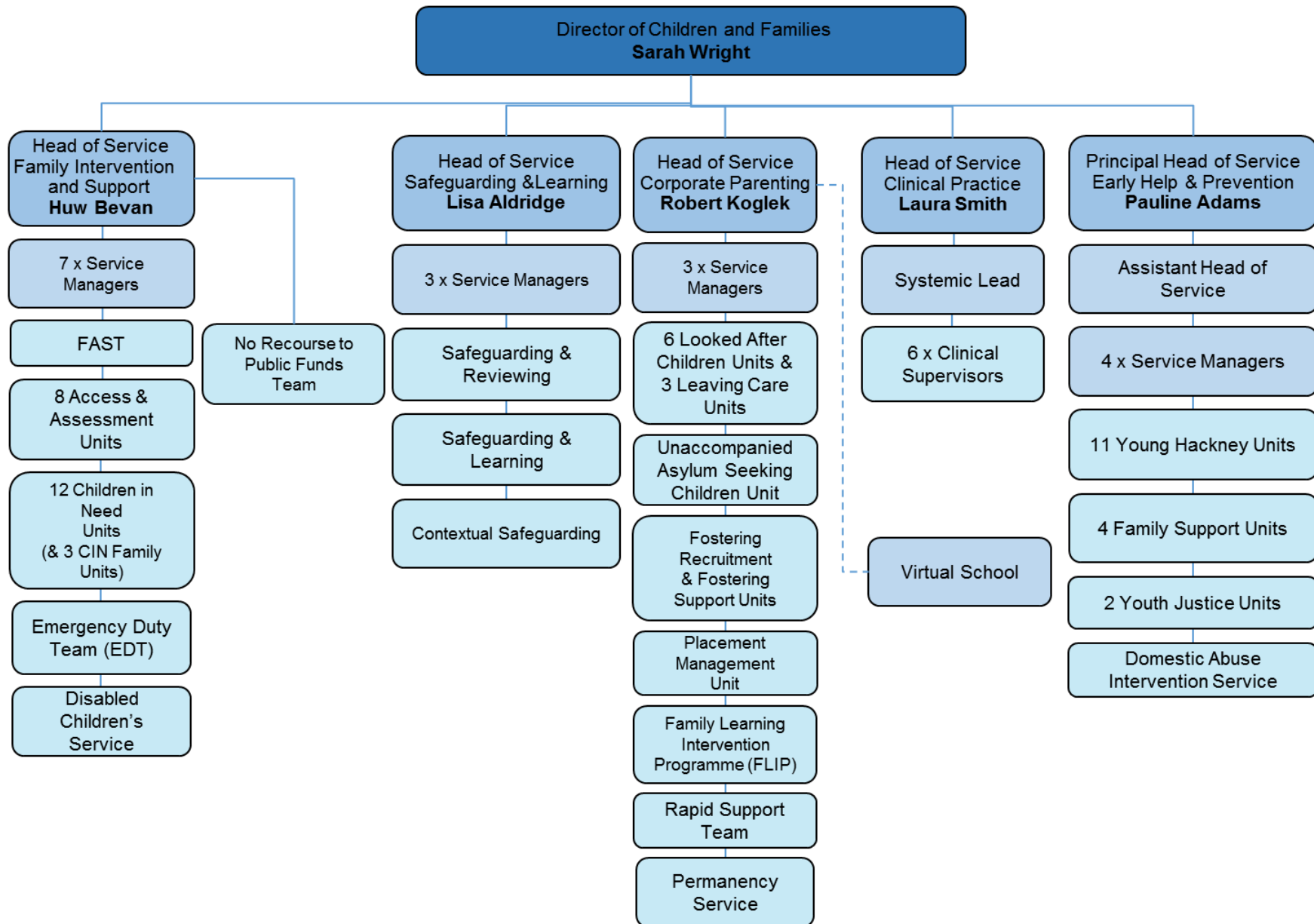


Our service priorities shape and drive our improvement work. These are deeply embedded in all aspects of our everyday practice and have been highlighted throughout the report with the stars symbol.



Children and Families Service Structure Chart

Children and Families Service Management Structure



Ofsted focused visit – *Update following February 2019 visit*

Ofsted visited Hackney in February 2019 to undertake a 2-day review of the arrangements for children in need and those made subject to a Child Protection Plan. Following the visit, Hackney was required to submit a draft action plan to Ofsted addressing two areas identified for priority action and the other areas for development included in the focused visit outcomes letter. The action plan was submitted to Ofsted on 29th March 2019.

Priority action 1. The timeliness and effectiveness of social work practice and interventions to safeguard children from harm

A monthly Progress and Tracking Meeting, chaired by the Head of Family Intervention and Support, has been established to routinely review all Children in Need and Child Protection Plan cases at key checkpoints of 9, 12 and 15 months. An audit of plans in August 2019 showed that in 75% of cases, auditors found that goals were relevant to the child's needs and in line with their timescales, with a further 25% partially meeting the standard. No cases did not meet the standard.

Assessment checkpoints (at 15 days) have been established to ensure more timely decision making is taking place around escalation and de-escalation during assessment and more proportional assessment overall. There has been an improvement in the completion of assessments within 45 working days - this was at 80.1% at the end of August 2019 compared to 62.6% at the end of April 2019.

'Critical questions' have been developed and distributed to staff, included in goal-oriented practice development sessions, the new guidance for plans and review, and Practice Standards. Positive feedback about the practice standards has been received from practitioners about the support and clarity they give to case work.

Priority Action 2. The quality and effectiveness of managerial oversight and supervision to ensure that children's circumstances improve within their timeframe.

Service manager capacity has been increased across the service on a temporary basis to improve targeted oversight activity, including audit, dip-sampling and case tracking. Service Manager capacity in the longer term is being reviewed over the coming months. The Progress and Tracking Meeting, chaired by the Head of Family Intervention and Support, has been established to routinely review all Children in Need (CIN) and Child Protection Plan cases at key checkpoints and an audit in August 2019 found that:

- In 75.6% of CIN cases over 9 months old, there was evidence of service manager review.
- In 85% of audited cases, the service manager review was rated as either 'Yes' or 'Partially' in relation to providing clear case direction or supporting proactive change in the case formulation, plan or risk assessment.

The ability of the service to robustly performance manage children's cases has been improved by the accelerated implementation of the new data performance system - 'Qlikview.' Services are using the data system to monitor and challenge performance at their management team meetings and the fortnightly Performance and Practice Oversight Group, chaired by the Director of Children and Families, is providing strategic level challenge.

3. Children's daily lived experiences to be central to all work

Guidance and management direction has been shared with all staff to ensure that all case discussions and meetings include a review and reflection on the child's lived experience and how this is explicitly informing risk analysis and the actions within the continuing intervention, and that this discussion is clearly recorded and evident on all case files.

Development sessions have taken place with all frontline managers across the service targeting improvements in goal focused practice that re-emphasises the child at the centre of all assessment and planning. Planning and review documents have been revised to be structured around the child's daily lived experience. Additional development sessions on the use and approach expected from the new planning and review documents are being delivered to staff. Casework audit tools have also been revised to place a greater emphasis and priority on evidencing the child's lived experience.

Audits in August 2019 found:

- In 84% of cases, auditors found the child's lived experience was fully or partially captured in case discussions.
- In 83% of cases auditors found that plans and reviews were written in child and family friendly language.

4. The application of thresholds to protect children on child in need plans when risks escalate or children's circumstances do not improve within children's timeframes

In addition to the developmental focus on better planning through improved goal setting, time limited actions and understanding the impact on children's development, the service is publicising and directing case holding staff and managers to focus on 'Critical Questions' to form the basis of ongoing case discussion and individual and peer challenge:

- How does the child feel, what do they want, and what is day-to-day life like for them?
- Is the immediate safety of the child assured?
- What needs to change for us to be less worried, and are changes happening quickly enough?
- What would life be like for the child in the long-term if things do not change?
- Are we putting the right interventions in place to support the change we need to see?
- What needs to happen if things do not change?

Over 100 partnership frontline staff and managers have attended development sessions on understanding the revised Hackney Child Wellbeing Framework over the summer 2019.

The percentage of re-referrals within 12 months of a previous referral from April-August 2019 was 16.7%, significantly below the national average of 21.9% at the end of March 2018.

5. Performance data regarding the timeliness and impact of social work practice to improve children's circumstances

The ability of the service to robustly performance manage children's cases has been improved by the accelerated implementation of the new data performance system - 'QlikSense.' Access to consistently high quality performance information had already been identified as a significant challenge for the Service, and the new system was already in development at the time of the focused visit. Additional ICT capacity has been put in place to bring forward the full implementation of the system. The system is being used to provide live performance data to managers across the service on timescales for case review, and critical indicators such as visits to young people, and the recording of management oversight. Following the implementation of 'QlikSense', staff and managers have provided positive feedback about the real time support provided by improved data in performance managing key areas of practice. This is resulting in increasing timeliness of individual case discussions through unit meetings, and an improvement in the timeliness of visits, as well as an improvement in the completion of assessments within 45 working days - this was at 80.1% at the end of August 2019 compared to 62.6% at the end of April 2019.

6. Plans to be more specific and detailed about what needs to change and by when

The developmental sessions and revisions to recording templates are predicated on delivering more specific and focused planning, in particular about what needs to change for us to be less worried about a child's situation and by when.

In addition new guidance has been shared with all staff on understanding and assessing 'parental capacity to change.' Managers are driving the use of the new guidance in unit meetings and individual supervision, and feedback is being routinely gathered.

Audits about the quality of plans in August 2019 found that:

- In 75% of cases, auditors found that goals were relevant to the child's needs and in line with their timescales, with a further 25% partially meeting the standard. No cases did not meet the standard.
- In 92% of audited cases the standard of clarity on what needs to change and by when, was either fully or partially met.

7. The greater consideration of men, including abusive partners, in risk assessments

The Domestic Abuse and Intervention Service (DAIS) has link workers for the Children in Need Teams and for FAST (the front door service) to ensure more robust early intervention and engagement with families where domestic abuse is an identified issue, and that planning and assessment is better informed by the support of specialist staff. A new contact setting and reviewing tool based on evidence from research has been piloted in a number of cases and was promoted across the service from August 2019.

In addition a new safeguarding agreement template and safety plan templates for work with perpetrators and victims of domestic violence and abuse have been developed and shared with all staff in August 2019, together with associated practice guidance.

The roll-out of Safe and Together (an evidence-based practice model with a strong focus on perpetrators) begins in September 2019.

Developments and Innovation

Trusted Relationships Project

Hackney was successful in its bid to the Home Office Trusted Relationships Fund and our Trusted Relationships project, which became operational in January 2019, is now working to create an innovative and effective outreach and detached youth work programme with embedded clinical support. This involves working to build relationships with our most vulnerable young people in the locations they frequent, at times convenient to them, encouraging them to access support and engage with mental health services. The first shared learning event was held in November 2018 offering an opportunity to hear what other local authorities are doing across other successful outreach and detached youth work sites.

Hackney Council Staff Survey 2018

81% of CFS staff who completed the survey said they would speak highly of Hackney Council as an employer to people outside the organisation – compared to 67% overall for Hackney staff. 73% of CFS staff who completed the staff survey said Hackney Council was one of the best /above average when compared to other organisations they had worked for – compared to 60% overall for Hackney staff. 77% of CFS staff, who completed the survey, said they were satisfied with their job – compared to 71% overall for Hackney staff.

North London Social Work Teaching Partnership (NLSWTP)

In April 2018, the NLSWTP received a second tranche of funding from the Department for Education to continue activities in 2018/19. The Partnership has now expanded and comprises of: Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington Councils, the charity Norwood and Middlesex University. Colleagues from across partnership organisations have embarked upon the Leadership & Management programme delivered by the Business School at Middlesex University, including the first ever MBA in Social Work. Initial feedback is positive. A much lower funding amount has been received for 2019/20 to support sustainability planning – further funding is not anticipated. Many courses are being translated into a webinar format to support future access to learning.

City and Hackney Safeguarding Children's Partnership

In 2015, the government commissioned Sir Alan Wood to review the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). The Wood Report recommendations were subsequently embedded in statute with the granting of Royal Assent to the Children and Social Work Act 2017. As a consequence, local safeguarding children's boards, set up by local authorities, are being replaced. Three safeguarding partners (local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and chief officers of police in a local area) must now make new safeguarding arrangements to work together with relevant agencies (as they consider appropriate) to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area. From September 2019, the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children's Partnership has been established, replacing the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children's Board. This Partnership includes Hackney Council, the City of London Corporation, the City & Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and The City of London Police.

Developments and Innovation

Contextual Safeguarding



Hackney Children and Families Service, in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire, received funding from the Department for Education (DfE) Children's Social Care Innovation Programme in March 2017. The Contextual Safeguarding Project is focused on reducing the risks that young people face in extra-familial contexts including risks associated with peer abuse and sexual or criminal exploitation. The project is developing new approaches and systems to support practitioners to appropriately assess risk of harm that comes from beyond a young person's family to develop and implement contextual intervention plans to actively change contexts of concern. A range of training on Contextual Safeguarding has been developed and is being delivered. Contextual Safeguarding processes to support practitioners to think about and respond to contextual risks faced by young people have been developed, and these are being piloted within the Children and Families Service (CFS). Funding for the project is due to end in March 2020, and work is focused on embedding learning and processes across CFS and moving to a 'business as usual' approach.



The Contextual Safeguarding team, in collaboration with colleagues from the University of Bedfordshire, has produced a toolkit for carrying out neighbourhood assessment to support practitioners consider how to assess and develop responses to risk. In addition an interventions website has been made available to practitioners and includes many examples of work developed in Hackney.



Hackney's Contextual Safeguarding project held a national learning event in December 2018. This was attended by over 300 delegates from agencies and local authorities across the country and was an opportunity for the project to share learning and provide updates on the projects innovative approaches to address contextual risk and implement systems change. The event included a presentation from 'Hackney Elite', Hackney's Youth Panel. Young people explained how they developed the youth panel, why they joined, what they have achieved so far, (including the development of Snapchat training) and next steps. The event was extremely well-received and has resulted in a number of requests by local authorities from across the country for more advice and support in developing their own local contextual safeguarding approaches. Feedback from participants included:

'Fabulous conference which has provided inspiration, research, strategic reflections and practical operational examples'.

'Great to hear from young people. We can often ignore their perspective in the planning process so great to see they are an integral part of the contextual approach'.

The Contextual Safeguarding team are now trained to deliver the Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme, a bystander intervention for adolescents and professionals to prevent violence and bullying in schools. School students deliver sessions to younger peers to challenge unhealthy behaviours and teach them how to support victims of abuse and safely challenge perpetrators.

The team have launched revised intervention, planning and assessment guidance, following a review of the Child and Family Assessment Framework, to better identify and respond to extra-familial risks (such as considering location observations and the use of a safety mapping tool). The updated guidance has been piloted by Access and Assessment practitioners and links to the revised Hackney Child Wellbeing Framework.

An initial framework for Contextual Safeguarding Conferences has been piloted to address risks in the context of peers, schools and neighbourhoods. This approach moves beyond current Child Protection Plans which focus on risks to individual children in the context of their families. The aim of the 'context conference' is to provide a coordinated multi-agency response that addresses the risks to vulnerable adolescents in a specific location, thereby reducing the risks to a wider cohort of young people and the wider community. Two well attended strategic multi-agency 'context conferences' were held during October 2018 to review assessments of particular locations of concern and implement a targeted partnership response to address the identified activators of harm.



Extra-Familial Risk Panel Feedback from practitioners and learning from case reviews has shown that, to ensure we have a comprehensive and streamlined response to young people facing extra-familial risks, a systems approach is needed to address the contexts in which harm occurs. A multi-agency Extra-Familial Risk Panel (EFRP) has been created to ensure consistent oversight and planning for cases where young people are at risk of experiencing or being involved in harmful behaviours outside the home. The Panel will take action to reduce extra familial harm (e.g. Child Sexual Exploitation, Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Children Going Missing, Criminal Exploitation / Gangs, Modern Slavery) both for the individuals concerned and for the contexts in which the harm occurs (e.g. peers, schools, neighbourhoods, locations). The EFRP has replaced Multi-Agency Planning (MAP) meetings for Child Sexual Exploitation and Harmful Sexual Behaviour as well as Hackney's Pre-MASE meeting and High Risk Case Forum. The fortnightly EFRP has been running since 14th November 2018. Feedback from multi-agency partners has been positive.

Contextual safeguarding approaches have been developed and implemented at the front door

FAST are able to accept and process referrals in relation to peer groups or locations of concern. This is supporting our understanding of extra familial and peer related risk for young people and enabling the service to provide appropriate support in response.

Amalee was 14 years old and pregnant and her case was discussed at EFRP due to concerns about her vulnerability to exploitation. Multi-agency leads shared their knowledge and concerns about the case and it was discovered that the father of her unborn child was in his 30's and had possibly groomed Amalee from a young age. The Police were very proactive in their pursuit of the perpetrator and through a proactive investigation, proved that he was the father and therefore enabled his prosecution for having a sexual relationship with a minor. Amalee has been offered a high level of support from the Children's Rights Service and Empower (Safer London's Project) to help her understand the nature of coercion and control that she experienced and to support her to develop more positive models of relationships. Through this work, Amalee is safely living with her child and is no longer considered by professionals to be at risk of exploitation by professionals. Amalee is now being supported in her education and she recently proactively approached her advocate for some ongoing support around her current living situation, which highlights the positive nature of their relationship and how she has felt empowered to reach out for support when needed. Through EFRP, the risk to Amalee's peer group through association with this male has been considered and others in her peer group have been offered services to minimise their risk of exploitation.



Workforce Development

Average number of cases per children and family social worker (based on FTE counts)

	2016	2017	2018
Hackney	21	19	17
Statistical neighbour average	14	16	15
Inner London average	13	16	16
England average	16	18	17

While Hackney's published caseload numbers are higher than our statistical neighbours', our unit model provides a high level of administrative support and access to a range of support services, including the in-house Clinical Service, so practitioners can spend more time with the families they are working with. We recognise that increased demand over recent years and the greater complexities of responding to adolescent risk has placed additional pressures on frontline staff. Caseloads across CFS are monitored closely by senior managers, including via the fortnightly Practice and Performance Oversight Group, chaired by the Director of Children and Families and additional resource has been sought and agreed in areas experiencing particular pressures, including the Leaving Care Service which has seen a significant rise in the number of young people being supported through the Service over recent years.



The Children and Families Service is committed to 'growing our own' staff and there is a comprehensive workforce development strategy in place to further develop our workforce to meet the need for accountable, flexible and highly skilled practitioners and support staff. This strategy covers recruitment and training and is managed via the fortnightly Workforce Development Board, chaired by the Director of Children and Families. There is an extensive training and learning programme which includes a comprehensive ASYE (Assisted and Supported Year in Employment) programme for newly qualified social workers with 15 social workers in placement at September 2019, a staff training programme, and service-wide Practice Development Days that all practitioners attend. Practitioners can access multi-agency training through City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board. Additional development opportunities are also available through the North London Social Work Teaching Partnership. Hackney will be part of the sixth cohort of the Step-Up to Social Work Programme, with 7 student social workers joining the service in January 2020.

Percentage rate of social worker turnover

Hackney's excellent social worker turnover rate of 12.4% in 2018 is significantly lower than the inner London average of 19.1% and national average of 15.2%, showing the service's ability to retain high performing practitioners, in a highly competitive field. Our Consultant Social Worker and Practice Development Manager level (frontline managers) is now almost fully covered by permanent staff.

	2016	2017	2018
Hackney	11.2	12.7	12.4
Statistical neighbour average	24.5	16.4	18.3
Inner London average	22.5	15.9	19.1
England average	15.1	13.6	15.2

Agency Staff

Hackney's agency social worker rate in 2018 is higher than the national and inner London average rate. Hackney has a younger than average age of social worker in the Children and Families Service compared to most local authorities, with a higher number of staff on maternity leave and some of these posts are covered by agency workers. The Service is exploring possible options to recruit its own pool of peripatetic social workers to cover maternity leave across all service areas.

	2016	2017	2018
Hackney	24.3	26.7	27.6
Statistical neighbour average	24.2	23.0	23.3
Inner London average	23.3	27.7	25.5
England average	16.1	15.8	15.4

Workforce Development



Practice Development Day

A Practice Development Day was held in February 2019 focusing on direct practice tools. External speakers in the morning included Dr Karen Treisman, Prof. Pat Petrie and Susan Ridpath. The afternoon session took a 'marketplace' format with staff from across the service sharing direct work tools and practice techniques with their colleagues. These included speech and language therapy tools, life story work approaches, and Looked after Child Review tools amongst many others. Feedback from the day was generally positive - with 78% of those who completed a survey saying that they think the day covered relevant content which can be immediately applied to improve practice.

National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS)



The Department for Education (DfE) expect that the introduction of the National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS) will ensure a consistent way of providing assurance that child and family social workers, supervisors and leaders have the knowledge and skills required for effective practice.

Hackney is part of Phase 2 of the implementation of NAAS. This is an opportunity for Hackney practitioners to be involved with and to influence the implementation of NAAS nationwide, and to feed back to the Government about their experiences.

We are very pleased to confirm that a 12 practitioners within Hackney have achieved accreditation.

Accredited in-house systemic training

Hackney Council is the first local authority in the country to receive accreditation for its postgraduate training in Systemic Theory and Practice within Children's Social Care (Year 1). The Council's in-house postgraduate course has been accredited by the Association of Family Therapy and Systemic Practice (AFT), in a major milestone for the Council's innovative work in embedding systemic practice across its Children and Families Service. Since 2016, 31 staff have received the in-house Year 1 systemic training, and 28 staff have received the in-house Year 2 systemic training. The Service is currently in the process of gaining accreditation for Year 2 of the in-house systemic training programme.

Early Help and Prevention



Strengths/Progress

Effective Troubled Families programme - Hackney has identified and surpassed the programme target figure of 3,510 families to be worked with by March 2020. We have worked with over 5,000 families under the Troubled Families programme remit. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) undertook an annual 'spot check' in April 2019 and commented that they found many examples of good work in Hackney.

Early Help & Out of Court Disposals - Of those young people that the Prevention and Diversion team worked with in 2017/18, effective interventions led to 92% of this cohort being successfully diverted from further offending, with only 8% becoming first time entrants into the youth justice system within a 12 month period.

Trusted Relationships detached outreach project - The project is working to create an innovative and effective detached outreach project that supports some of our most vulnerable young people to access support and engage with mental health services. The detached outreach team became operational in January 2019 and includes youth workers and a clinical psychologist. The team also aims to generate further insight into young people's lived experiences, through the removal of perceived barriers to access services.

Extensive and effective participatory activity with young people - This included two key pieces of research into young people's lived experience (*Critical Conversations* and *I'm Cool*). The elections for the current members of the Hackney Youth Parliament were delivered in October 2018 across schools and youth provisions, with over 12,000 young people casting their votes.



Areas for further development and actions to address

An extensive review of Early Help services was initiated in June 2019 to ensure that a comprehensive, consistent and responsive offer is in place for all children in Hackney. This review will consider options for delivering services following the cessation of Troubled Families funding, and will respond to the work being undertaken within Integrated Commissioning workstreams in relation to Neighbourhood approaches and emotional health and wellbeing and the development of CAMHS provision in schools.

Management information in relation to early help - Work is taking place to develop and improve current management information and reporting systems for early help to support management oversight and understanding of the impact and effectiveness of early help interventions as well as monitoring levels of demand.

Addressing serious youth violence - Serious youth violence, in particular knife crime, remains a significant challenge. Adopting a public-health approach, Hackney has developed a multi-agency Knife Crime Strategy aimed at reducing children's exposure to criminal, violent, and anti-social behaviour. This approach treats violence as a preventable public health issue, using data and analysis to identify causes and focusing on prevention through multi-agency systemic approaches. Whilst the work to develop the strategy is positive, and multi-agency engagement is a strength, this is a new development and the activity to deliver positive outcomes requires continued focus and drive across the partnership.

Early Help and Prevention

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. The service offers outcome-focused, time-limited interventions through universal plus and targeted services designed to reduce or prevent problems from escalating or becoming entrenched and then requiring intervention by Children's Social Care. Young Hackney's approach to early help is based on a systemic understanding of the key relationships in a child or young person's life and, in particular, the critical influence of peers and family members.

Work with local schools



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.



Jakob, aged 14, was referred to Young Hackney following his parents and school expressing concerns regarding his safety. Jakob was spending a lot of time outside of the family home without his parent's knowing who he was with and was caught 'lift surfing' which involves dangerously riding on the top of building elevators. Jakob received a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder when he was 12. Jakob's Young Hackney worker took time to build their relationship as Jakob found it difficult to explain how he was feeling and seemed resistant to thinking about how he might be exposing himself to risks. The Young Hackney worker also supported Jakob to share what he was doing when he is out of the family home and to invite his family to join him to explore his interests and hobbies.

The Young Hackney worker has been looking at ways of reducing anxiety around Jakob within the professional network – whilst having a clear understanding and plan around risks. This has involved supporting Jakob to take a lead in developing a safety plan with the network of professionals around him, especially his school. Jakob's worker has introduced him to an architecture company to help him develop his communication skills and to think about possible career paths. The Young Hackney worker has also been a point of contact for Jakob's mother which has helped reduce her anxiety around how safe Jakob is when he is out of the house; this seems to have had a positive impact on their relationship. Since his involvement with Young Hackney, Jakob's school have reported that they feel he is happier and they no longer have concerns about his safety. Jakob and his family have reported that their relationships have improved. Jakob is now opening up to conversations about risk and is more willing to share with his family what he is doing in the community.



Universal Provision delivered through Youth Hubs

The number of named individuals accessing Young Hackney universal provision increased by 31% in 2018/19 compared to the previous year. 24,024 named individuals accessed Young Hackney provision in 2018/19, compared to 18,342 named individuals in 2017/18. There were 177,299 attendances by named children and young people aged 6-19 years during 2018/19 at the wider youth provision delivered through Young Hackney and commissioned services for young people. This is a 7% increase compared to 2017/18 when there were 165,283 attendances by named children and young people.

Individual Support - Universal Plus and Targeted Support



At any one time, Young Hackney are working with approximately 600 young people through the Early Help teams, providing tailored individual support. The most common presenting issues include: risk of sexual exploitation, behaviour, attendance and truanting, risk of offending, risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET), and different cultural expectations within the family. Young Hackney targeted interventions were delivered to 947 individual young people requiring bespoke early help support in 2018/2019, including the Substance Misuse and Prevention and Diversion teams. This was a 7% increase from 887 young people in 2017/18.

Substance Misuse Team

The Substance Misuse Team supports children and young people aged 6-25 years who are directly affected by substance misuse, or affected through their parent's misuse. Interventions take a tailored and holistic approach that builds young people's resilience and addresses issues of family and relationships, finances, education and housing, while liaising with other services/partners as necessary. Over 2018/19, the team worked with 202 young people on a targeted basis – the same as in 2017/18. The service also delivered outreach sessions to young people in schools and youth hubs.



The Early Help and Prevention Service also includes:

- Youth and School Sports
- Adventure Playgrounds and play streets
- Prevention and Diversion
- The Health and Wellbeing team

"Just a massive thank you from us all for delivering a fantastic PSHE programme to our year 11s over the last two days. It all went well, was very interesting and very educational".

School about Young Hackney staff



13 year-old Priti was referred for Young Hackney support following increasing concerns for her growing social isolation and safety in the community. The referral requested support to help Priti explore her identity beyond her disability and overcome barriers to access community activities. The Young Hackney worker was able to build a mutually respectful relationship with Priti and her family and adopted a flexible and creative approach centred on Priti's strengths and enjoyment of drama and music. In the sessions that followed, she attended a local play which featured a cast full of young actors of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. The play encouraged Priti to explore her heritage, culture, and identity, complemented by her one to one sessions with the Young Hackney worker. In other sessions, Priti had been encouraged to share songs and lyrics that resonated with how she was feeling and, over time, she began writing her own lyrics and recording these songs at the youth hub studio. Using these creative mediums, inspiring spaces and sensory aids, Priti identified her own acting ambitions, independence, and social relatability. This summer, Priti has taken part in musical performances in school and the community including at Hoxton Hall's youth arts programme, where she created her own music video and premiered it to an audience including her family. Such active participation and engagement in the wider community has raised Priti's aspirations, encouraged her active citizenship and leadership, as well as continually supporting her transition to adulthood.



Early Help and Prevention

Family Support Service



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

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

A referral was received in FAST about Nicky, a 12 year old girl who had experienced long absences from school. Nicky experienced acute anxiety when she was separated from her mother and was sleeping during the day and over-eating. There were concerns regarding Nicky's mother's ongoing physical and mental health that were possibly impacting directly on Nicky's wellbeing. These concerns led to a statutory social work assessment which ascertained that there were no safeguarding issues but that the family needed ongoing help and met several 'Troubled Families' criteria and the family were transferred to the Family Support Service. The Service worked in partnership with the family to: obtain a CAMHS assessment for Nicky which resulted in a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and anxiety; to attend workshops for families in similar circumstances; to access Short Breaks; to help Nicky back into education and to support Nicky's mother to learn how to better respond to Nicky. Nicky is now accessing education and can better manage her feelings and behaviour; she is also growing in confidence and trying new experiences outside the family home.



Domestic Abuse Intervention Service



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

DAIS received 1,322 referrals in 2018/19 – an increase of 13.5% from the 1,165 referrals received in 2017/18. There has been a year on year increase in the number of referrals the service receives with a 61% increase between 2015/16 and 2018/19.



For those victims of domestic abuse who have been identified and assessed as high risk, Hackney holds a fortnightly Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), chaired by the police, and scrutinised by the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) lead. 450 cases were heard at MARAC in 2018/19, a decrease of 6% from 2017/18 when 477 cases were heard. 113 (25%) of the total number of cases heard at MARAC were 'repeat' referrals. In 257 of the 450 cases (57%) there were children in the household.



The **Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy** 2019-22 was launched in May 2019; this takes a proven public health approach over the next three years to tackle and reduce causes of violence.

Early Help and Prevention

Youth Justice



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

Young people are supported by a multi-agency team including a Forensic Psychologist, the Virtual School, Speech and Language Therapists, the Police, a Nurse, Probation Services, a Substance Misuse Worker and a Dealing Officer.

Education, Employment and/or Training

Education can be a strong protective factor for young people at risk of offending. The Youth Justice Service has a strong focus on securing access to education, training and employment and is supported by the Virtual School. At the end of March 2019, 71% of young people on youth justice orders were attending and engaging in full time education, training or employment (ETE), a decrease compared to 78% at the end of March 2018. This is due to a change in the reporting rules for this data – we now include the ETE attendance of young people on post court orders, which includes older children with more previous offences and poorer educational engagement histories.



"The report was very helpful, provided a very good and detailed background and analysis."

Judge about the work of a Youth Justice Practitioner

Overall, Hackney has a relatively low proportion of 10-18 year olds involved in the youth justice system. The number of young people re-offending in Hackney within a 12 month period has remained relatively stable over the last year, from 70 at the end of March 2018 to 71 at the end of March 2019.

First time entrants (FTE)

The number of young people entering the Youth Justice System for the first time in Hackney decreased from 111 in 2017/18 to 81 in 2018/19. Hackney's first time entrant rate per 100,000 has decreased from 465 in 2017 to 285 in 2018, this is significantly lower than the 2018 statistical neighbour average (358).

Lewis was 16 years old when he was sentenced to a 12 month Referral Order for Possession of an Offensive Weapon in a Public Place and was referred to the Hackney Youth Offending Team (YOT). At the start of his Order, Lewis was on the verge of being permanently excluded from school due to his behaviour. His YOT worker identified that Lewis may have additional needs. With support from the Virtual School, Lewis's YOT worker ensured he was assessed for an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Lewis's parents and his school were supported by his YOT worker to put measures in place to adjust his behaviour. Lewis's YOT worker worked with him to develop his thinking skills and reduce his triggers for impulsive behaviours. Lewis also received an assessment carried out with the YOT's Speech and Language Therapists. Once Lewis's EHCP was in place, funding meant he could attend a specialist college to meet his learning needs. On completion of Lewis's Referral Order, the behavioural and educational support provided to him saw his risk to others reduce from medium to low. Lewis experienced no further arrests or convictions over the 12 month period since he started his order. Lewis's mother was thankful for the support of the YOT team, writing a letter to Lewis's YOT worker stating "I think out of a dire situation of Lewis being arrested, a lot of good has come out of it. He has had a great support network in the Hackney YOT and we are truly thankful and grateful to all those involved who were passionate and caring... It wasn't just a service carried out; you have showed love and compassion for my son".



Family Intervention and Support Service (FISS)

Access and Assessment

Strengths/Progress

Timely and effective response at the front door - In 2018/19, 99.6% of referrals progressed to assessment within 24 hours, an increase from 97.7% in 2017/18.

Quality of assessments - Audits in 2018/19 continued to show that assessments are comprehensive, analytical and reflective. Practitioners are confident in their understanding and management of risk. The quality of assessments had an average score of 3.7 in audits completed in 2018/19 (where 1 is ineffective and 5 is highly effective).

Persistence in seeking the engagement of parents in assessments - Multi-agency audits, coordinated through City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board, found that cases generally evidenced persistence in attempts to achieve the engagement of parents, and the audited cases also evidenced professionals specifically trying to engage fathers, including persistent attempts to engage and include fathers in assessments and interventions, and social work units thinking creatively about how to engage fathers in future work.

Improved consistency for families - the service implemented a revised process in July 2018 to ensure that families that are re-referred to statutory services within 6 months are allocated to the unit that previously worked with the family. This means that families that are referred to Hackney CFS on multiple occasions benefit from swift allocation back to units that know them rather than 'starting again' at each referral and assessment. The impact of this process change is currently being reviewed. The co-location of A&A and CIN 'buddy' units means that units share their knowledge of families and ensure seamless transitions following assessment.

Effective and child-focused assessment work in child sexual abuse cases - Multi-agency audits on the theme of child sexual abuse within the family, coordinated through City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board, found that children and their families feel that their views have been heard and this leads to improvements in the help and support that they receive. The audits found evidence of age appropriate and creative methods being used by social workers to engage children and young people.



Areas for further development and actions to address

Assessment timescales - The Dispensation in relation to assessment timescales was in place in Hackney until March 2019; historically, average timescales were longer than elsewhere in the country. This dispensation has now been removed and the service is realigning practice to ensure improved performance against the national standard of 45 working days. New systems and checkpoints for senior management oversight of the timely progress of assessments have been introduced and performance is being monitored closely.

Information for parents/carers on assessments - A number of complaints received during 2017-18 showed that parents were not always clear about what a Child and Family Assessment entails. Informed by this feedback, the previous information leaflet for families was replaced with a new booklet in 2019 explaining the process as well as parents'/carers' right to comment on the assessment. It is hoped that this leaflet will ensure that parents are clearer about what to expect during the assessment process

Consistency in the engagement of fathers and significant males in assessments - Although strengths have been identified through audits in our persistence in engaging parents in assessments, work is also taking place to improve the consistency of the engagement of fathers, particularly absent fathers, and other significant males within assessments. Dip sampling of assessments in January 2018, August 2018 and May 2019 focused on the inclusion of fathers found that there has been an improvement in the involvement of fathers in assessments. In cases sampled in May 2019, 80% of assessments involved fathers or there had been clear attempts made to involve them in the assessment that had been unsuccessful. Work is taking place to support practitioners to more consistently record where positive efforts have been made to engage fathers.

Health involvement in strategy discussions - Whilst progress has been made on this over the last two years, following recent audits, further work is being undertaken to ensure that health colleagues are involved in all Child Protection strategy discussions. A contingency plan has been agreed for the Health representative in FAST to contribute to strategy discussions where the allocated Health Professional is not available. Performance is being closely monitored.

Access and Assessment

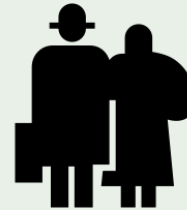


The Access and Assessment Service is part of the Family Intervention and Support Service and undertakes statutory assessments of children in need and child protection investigations for all new referrals to Children's Social Care.



First Access and Screening Team (FAST)

The First Access and Screening Team (FAST) acts as a single point for contacts and referrals to the Children and Families Service for children in need of support or protection. The multi-agency and co-located team of police, probation, health, social work and research staff work together to share intelligence and jointly assess risk. All contacts with FAST are 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 early help provision such as the Family Support Service, Young Hackney, or Children's Centres.



The **No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Team** supports families with No Recourse to Public Funds with advice and practical support through the provision of accommodation and subsistence payments. During 2018/19 the NRPF team worked with 88 families and 169 children.

Working relationships with local voluntary organisations have strengthened considerably with positive feedback received about the experience of working with the service. There has been a reduction in the number of families this team has worked with during 2018/19 due to the team's effective work to help families achieve settled status.



"The social worker was brilliant with my son. She spent time just being with him, he really liked this and started to trust her. We found her really helpful as well".

Mother about assessing social worker completing an assessment



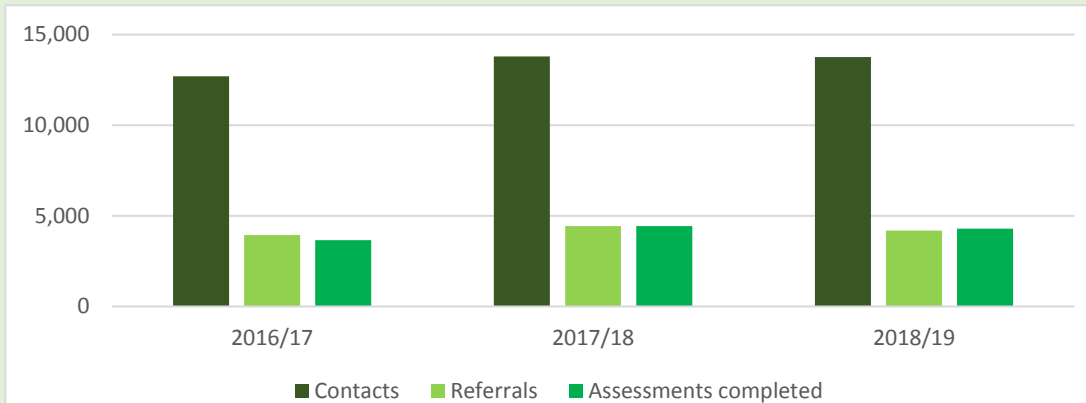
"You are a really good social worker, you are very thorough in your work as well as being calm and respectful towards the family."

Partner agency about an assessing social worker

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 experienced and senior social work staff from across CFS working on a voluntary rota basis. The service meets the local authority's out of hours statutory social care responsibilities in safeguarding the welfare of children.

Contacts, Referrals and Assessments



	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Contacts	12,699	13,802	13,767
Referrals	3,940	4,430	4,190
Assessments completed	3,667	4,438	4,290

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

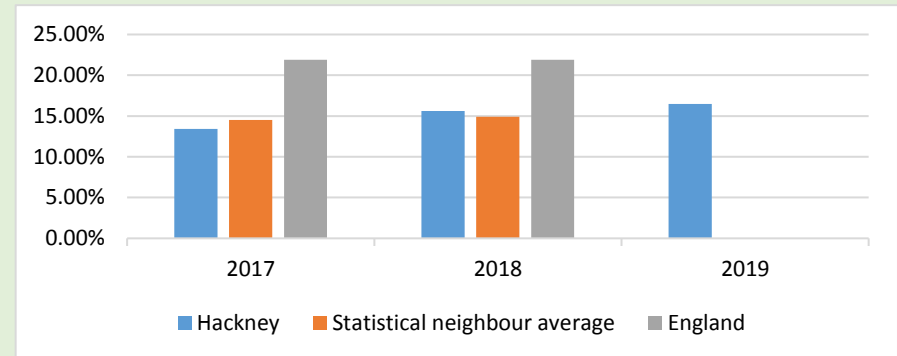
Referral: when a contact is about a specific child and this requires further investigation, the FAST team may progress the contact to a referral into the Access and Assessment Service for an assessment to be completed.

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

↓ 6% decrease in the number of contacts accepted as referrals compared to last year

↓ 3% decrease in the number of completed assessments compared to last year

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



	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019
Hackney	13.4%	15.6%	16.5%
Statistical neighbour average	14.5%	14.9%	Not yet published
England	21.9%	21.9%	Not yet published



There has been an increase in the number of re-referrals since last year, however this is still significantly below the national average.

Length of assessments

Between April 2018 – March 2019, 63% of assessments were completed within 45 days. This is lower than the most recently published statistical neighbour data – 85% of assessments were completed within 45 days over a 12 month period, as at 31st March 2018. During this time however, Hackney had dispensation from the Department for Education around assessment timescales. Considerable progress has been made in improving the timeliness of assessments in 2019/20 with 69% of assessments between April – August 2019 completed within 45 days.

Family Intervention and Support Service (FISS)

The Children in Need Service



Strengths/Progress

Creating greater continuity for children and families - co-location of 'buddy units' – Access and Assessment and Children in Need units are now co-located and have been paired to create 'buddy units' - where an assessment unit and an intervention unit work together to share what they know about families. The strengthening of the buddy unit working arrangements aims to make transitions as seamless as possible for families, facilitate greater collaboration and joint working across the services, and promote skills sharing and sharing of practice expertise. A six month review of the impact of the change is planned in the coming months, and will include consultation and feedback from staff.

Court tracking processes and effective use of pre-proceedings -

Permanency planning and court tracking processes have been enhanced, resulting in a decrease in the overall average length of court proceedings in Hackney in 2018/19 to 28 weeks (from 30 weeks during 2017/18). Of the 85 cases where court proceedings concluded in 2018/19, 59% (50 cases) did not proceed to court. The use of robust pre-proceedings processes is resulting in positive outcomes for children, with final orders being received that more often match the final care plan presented at court.

Positive feedback has been received from Counsel and Children's Guardians about the quality of reports produced for court, and the hard work undertaken by social workers to support families and keep children safe being clearly evidenced in court.

Immediate response to missing from home and care incidents is strong and timely - this includes engagement with police colleagues and where necessary multi-agency strategy discussions. In order to ensure young people who frequently go missing are supported and that the Director of Children and Families and senior managers are kept informed, fortnightly missing children meetings are convened whereby practitioners provide an overview of the risk in relation to the child, the circumstances around the current missing episode in respect of high risk cases and the safety plan for the child. These meetings are now also attended by the Police.



Areas for further development and actions to address

Percentage of repeat Child Protection Plans has increased - The percentage of children in Hackney subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time in 2018/19 was 23%. This represents 60 children, from 34 families, being subject to a second or subsequent Child Protection Plan in 2018/19. This is an increase from 30 children from 19 families (13.6%) in 2017-18. Senior managers have reviewed each case and are satisfied that the decision to initiate the repeat Child Protection Plan was appropriate. Focused audits looking at repeat Child Protection Plans were conducted in December 2018. The audits found that for some families, staff changes affected their ability to engage with practitioners and make meaningful change. In other cases auditors felt there was some over-optimism about the sustainability of changes that had been achieved. New guidance has been shared with all staff on understanding and assessing 'parental capacity to change.' Managers are driving the use of the new guidance in unit meetings and individual supervision, and feedback is being routinely gathered.

Monitoring use of Child Protection Plans - there has been significant fluctuation in the number of children on Child Protections Plans over recent years. Numbers at the end of 2018/19 remain lower than the statistical neighbour average but this has increased significantly in 2019/20. Careful monitoring is in place to ensure that the right children are subject to Child Protection Planning processes.

Consistency of practice in the Disabled Children's Service - A review of governance arrangements for the Disabled Children's Service led to this moving back under the management of the Children and Families Service. Line management responsibility transferred to the Family Intervention and Support Service in April 2019. Audits identified a need to strengthen some of the safeguarding practices within the team and to ensure that all policies and procedures are up to date and implemented consistently within the service.

The Children in Need Service



The Children in Need Service is part of the Family Intervention and Support Service and is responsible for the safeguarding of children and young people assessed as being 'at risk'. Work undertaken in the service includes child protection interventions, court proceedings and statutory family support to help children remain at home safely.



Child Protection Plans

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



"You've been with us for more than a year and you've helped me so much and my family. We will always be so grateful. You're the most selfless person I know and I just wanna tell you how grateful I am for everything".

Young person about their social worker

"...just gave some of the best social work evidence I have ever seen. Really excellent."

Barrister about a social worker following a court case



"I just wanted to thank you for all the support you have shown us since we have met you. I know it is your job but it has made a real difference in my life and I'm deeply grateful."

Mother about her child's social worker

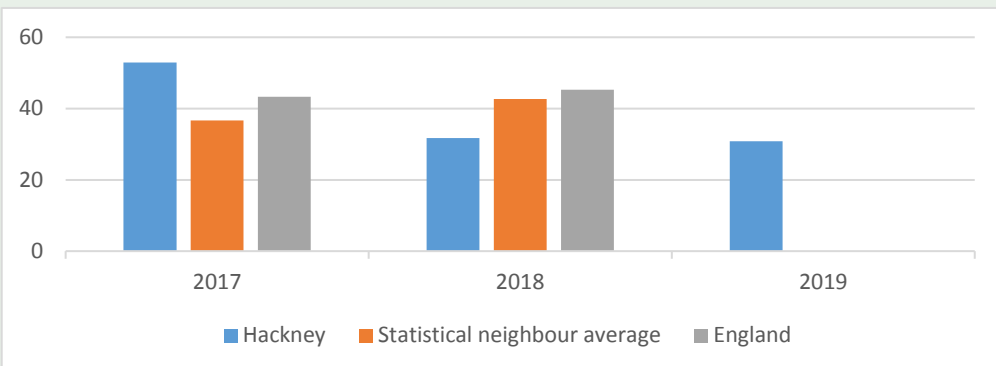
Amber was 5 months old when a health visitor made a referral to the FAST service with concerns about the mental health of her mother, who was struggling with Post-Natal Depression and whether she was able to safely care for Amber. The assessment found that there was sufficient risk to Amber and an Initial Child Protection Conference was held. A Child Protection Plan was agreed by the multi-agency partnership and Amber's case was opened to the Child in Need Service. It became clear to Amber's social worker that her mother needed additional mental health support and she was referred to the in-house Clinical Service. Amber and her mother were invited to attend the weekly New Beginnings Group Intervention with other mothers of young babies. At the start of the group, Amber would lie on her back, not really engaging or interacting with the other adults, but staying close to her mother. As the group progressed, Amber's mother grew in confidence and spoke about how she had applied learning from the group throughout the previous week and what she had learned. In parallel, Amber grew more sociable and confident and less withdrawn in the group. When the group finished the 12-week intervention, there were measurable improvements in Amber's mother's mental health and a marked improvement in the relationship and interactions between Amber and her mother. The risk to Amber continued to reduce and Amber was stepped down to a Child in Need Plan.



Number of Child Protection Plans at 31st March

Mar 2017	Mar 2018	Mar 2019
330	200	194

Rate of Child Protection Plans per 10,000 population aged under 18 (at 31st Mar)



	Mar 2017	Mar 2018	Mar 2019
Hackney	52.9	31.7	30.8
Statistical neighbour average	36.7	42.7	Not yet published
England	43.3	45.3	Not yet published



3% decrease in the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans compared to the same point last year

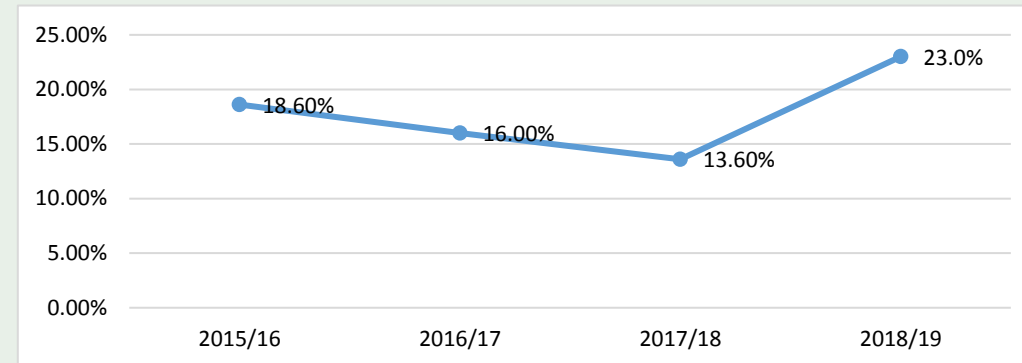


The rate of Child Protection Plans in Hackney at 31st March 2019 was 30.8 children per 10,000. This is a slight decrease from the previous year (31.7 per 10,000 at March 2018)

Court Proceedings

The overall average length of proceedings in Hackney during 2018/19 was 28 weeks. This an improvement compared to the overall average for 2017/18 of 30 weeks, and 2 weeks longer than the national target of 26 weeks.

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



	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Hackney	16.0%	13.6%	23.0%
Statistical neighbour average	15.1%	15.8%	Not yet published
England	18.7%	20.2%	Not yet published



The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time increased to 23.0% in 2018/19, which is higher than the most recently published statistical neighbour average (15.8%) and the most recently published national average (20.2%). Senior managers have reviewed each case and are satisfied that the decision to initiate the repeat Child Protection Plan was appropriate.

Percentage of children subject of a Child Protection Plan, by length of time as the subject of a plan

Duration of Child Protection Plan	Mar 2017	Mar 2018	Mar 2019
Under 3 months	36%	33%	27%
3 – 6 months	22%	12%	30%
6 – 12 months	27%	22%	24%
1 – 2 years	12%	34%	13%
Over 2 years	3%	3%	6%

Hackney had more children on Child Protection Plans for over 2 years (6%) during 2018-19 compared to the national average (2%). This related to 11 children from 6 families; senior managers reviewed each case and agreed with the decision to keep these children on Child Protection Plans while work was underway to step families down when risk reduced or begin court proceedings.

Private Fostering



A child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) who is cared for, or proposed to be cared for, and provided with accommodation by someone other than a parent, person with parental responsibility or close relative for 28 days or more is described as being privately fostered.

Local authorities do not approve private foster carers, but are required to assess 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.

Age breakdown of total number of children in a private fostering arrangement at March 2019

As at the end of March 2019 there were 13 children in private fostering arrangements in Hackney. This is a decrease from the figure of 21 private fostering arrangements in March 2018.

Age (at Mar 19)	Number of children
Under 1	0
1 - 4	0
5 - 9	7
10 - 15	6
16 and over	0
Total	13

Total number of children in a private fostering arrangement at March 2019 by place of birth

Place of birth	Number of children
UK	5
Africa	4
Europe (other)	2
Asia	2
Middle East	0
Oceania	0
Canada and USA	0
Caribbean, Central and South America	0
Other	0
Total	13

Young Carers



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

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

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

At the end of March 2019, there were 290 identified young carers in Hackney, compared to 248 in 2017/18.

Hackney Young Carers Project, funded by the Children and Families Service and delivered by Action for Children, provides a variety of support services which include group work, and one to one work with children in more complex situations. 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, and there are support groups in four secondary schools in Hackney. The Young Carers Project will be moving in-house from the end of October 2019.

Disabled Children Service



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

At the end of March 2019, the service was working with **336** children and young people. Of the 336 children, **239 were male and 96 were female** (1 child was not yet born). This is an increase compared to 2017/18, when the service was working with 241 children and young people.

Age breakdown for cases open to the Disabled Children Service (as at Mar 2019)

Age	Number of children
5 or under	48
6 - 8	70
9-11	74
12-14	78
15+	66
Total	336

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. There are currently seven commissioned short breaks providers in Hackney, including providers offering support specifically within the Orthodox Jewish community. In 2018/19, 1,400 children and young people were known to Short Breaks.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Number of young people accessing Short Breaks provision	1,193	1,257	1,400

Clinical Service



The Hackney Children and Families Clinical Service is an integrated and specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for children accessing Children's Social Care Services, the Family Support Service, Young Hackney and the Youth Justice Service. It works in partnership with the City and Hackney CAMHS Alliance and is accountable through integrated CAMHS commissioning arrangements. The Clinical Service operates on an outreach basis in order to promote accessibility for families, and does not have a waiting list.

Clinical Service Activity Data April 2018-March 2019

Number of new cases	435
Total number of cases	991
% of positive CHI-ESQ* feedback	86%
% of positive SDQ** improvement	76%

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

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

The Clinical Service delivers training to social workers, foster carers and other frontline practitioners. This includes topics such as managing self-harm risk, and recognising and responding to the attachment needs of looked after children.

Systemic approaches

Family Therapy, Multi-Family Group Therapy and Couples Therapy are available to families where there are relationship difficulties, including risks of abuse, neglect and extra-familial risk. Four Family Therapy clinics run each week, including an evening clinic for working parents. Systemic approaches also inform reflective practice groups for Children and Families Service practitioners.

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 average **SDQ score** for Hackney's looked after children in 2018/19 was 15. This is above the national average score for looked after children of 14 and an increase from last year's average SDQ score of 14.



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.



Diane was 15 years old and had been working with Young Hackney for around 6 months before she was referred to the Clinical Service due to low school attendance and concerns about her experiences of grief and panic. Early clinical sessions were attended by Diane's Young Hackney worker to support her engagement. Sessions were also held with Diane's parents at home. Diane presented with symptoms of low mood and anxiety, and infrequent panic attacks. Diane described loss in her past and appeared to experience anxiety related to future loss. Cognitive behavioural therapy formed the foundation of the intervention with Diane, with mindfulness techniques also used. Diane and her family were also given counselling to process their grief. Throughout this intervention and alongside Young Hackney involvement and efforts from school, Diane's school attendance improved. Her ratings on the Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale (RACDS) improved from a total anxiety and depression score of 44 to 18 over the course of the six-month intervention.

Clinical Service

Clinical Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Due to the increase in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) reporting Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and complex trauma symptoms, the Clinical Service has further developed its offer to include a therapeutic 'Moving On' group for UASC, run with interpreters to ensure accessibility for those in need of support. The group programme draws on both Cognitive-Behavioural and Narrative Therapy approaches, with a focus on stabilisation, psycho-education and support with symptoms such as nightmares, flashbacks and anxiety. A Clinical Psychologist also provides regular clinical consultation to social workers supporting young people who are UASC, in order to support trauma-informed practice and mental health screening.

Farid, an unaccompanied asylum seeking young man aged 16, was referred to the Clinical Service due to concerns related to him experiencing nightmares, flashbacks and anxiety. Farid was the victim of trafficking and forced labour during his journey to the UK. The Clinical Service undertook an assessment and then trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy on a weekly basis. Farid engaged positively in this work and developed a number of personal coping strategies (e.g. breathing techniques, using his senses to self-soothe, incorporating new activities) and also effectively challenged unhelpful beliefs and thoughts related to himself and his world. Farid received Leave to Remain for five years during this period and developed his social network. Farid's experiences of nightmares, flashbacks and general distress largely resolved over a 6 month period. He felt confident that he could manage his remaining symptoms and clinical input was ended by mutual agreement. Farid's responses on the Revised Children's Impact of Event Scale reduced substantially (from a total score of 41 to 9).



Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools (WAMHS) Project

Since May 2018, the Clinical Service has been a strategic and operational partner in the CAMHS Alliance Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools Programme. This pilot initiative has placed CAMHS Clinicians (including Children and Families Service Clinicians) in 40 Primary and Secondary schools - providing clinical consultation about individual pupils, delivering group-work and training for school staff and supporting schools with their wellbeing and behaviour management policies. The programme will be rolled out across all Hackney schools in 2020. The aims of the programme are to increase access to mental health services for all children and young people; promote joined-up working between schools and mental health services; and to increase capacity in schools to identify and respond to mental health needs as early as possible. To this end, from the launch in May 2018 - April 2019, CFS Clinicians have spent over 1000 hours in schools delivering whole-school approaches to meeting young people's mental health needs. ✨

Trusted Relationships Project

Funding was granted from the Home Office Trusted Relationships Fund over a four year period to create a detached youth work and mental health team to work with the borough's most vulnerable and hard to reach young people, who may not otherwise engage with formal support services.

The Clinical Service embedded Clinical Psychologist offers consultation, training and reflective space to the detached youth work team, wider workforce and local community partners to build capacity and develop stronger systemic, trauma-informed practice and community psychology approaches to youth work in order to help identify the risks of exploitation and serious youth crime and respond to the needs of hard to reach young people.

The Clinical Psychologist provides mental health screening and triage as well as supporting staff and local organisations with routine use of clinical screening, outcome measurement and mental health first aid. Delivery of interventions include linking in to universal provision, targeted or specialist mental health support and the development of peer led/ co-production of activities.

Corporate Parenting



Strengths/Progress

A steady increase in the number of looked after children in placements provided by in-house foster carers – there has been a 36% increase in the number of children placed with in-house foster carers from March 2018 to March 2019; and a 15% increase in the number of available in-house foster placements during this period.

Consistently strong educational achievement of Hackney's looked after children

Hackney performed well in the Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 and Progress 8 measures in 2018 achieving better results than the Inner London averages.

Child-centred Looked After Child Review process – There continues to be positive feedback from young people about their Looked After Child Reviews since the launch of these in September 2016 as the more child-friendly 'Our Reviews, Our Choice' process. Young people are being empowered to take a more directive role in their reviews and there has been an increase in young people chairing their review meetings and devising activities for the attendees to be part of.

Foster carer recruitment activity continues to progress - 12 mainstream foster carers were recruited in 2018/19, with no resignations or terminations in this period. This is higher than the statistical neighbour average of 9.5 in 2017/18.

The Children's Rights Service provides independent support and advocacy for children in care. The number of complaints from young people in care or care leavers is low, evidencing the effectiveness of the mediation and engagement work led by practitioners and the Children's Rights Officers. Positive feedback from young people has also been received through an annual survey of young people that received Independent Return Home Interviews in 2018/19

Access to CAMHS support for looked after children - New entrants into care receive robust and timely mental health assessments from our in-house clinicians and ongoing support from clinicians as needed. An in-house clinician is now present at every initial health assessment, strengthening joint working with the LAC Health team at an early stage.



Areas for further development and actions to address

Placement stability is a continuing challenge and this is linked to the older age profile and complexity of needs of those children becoming looked after (61% of the total cohort of children that entered care in 2018/19 were aged 13 years and over, an increase from 56% in 2017/18). The offer available to support placement stability includes innovative interventions such as the Family Learning Intervention Project. However, audits suggest practice needs to be timelier in identifying support needs and implementing appropriate support to sustain placements. Service Managers within Corporate Parenting have initiated in depth work to understand thematic issues affecting placement stability through learning from disruption meetings and extended moving on reviews in order to improve overall performance on placement stability. Management oversight is showing that the majority of placements are supported by effective 'settling in' meetings, however work is taking place to improve the consistency of these meetings at the start of placements to ensure these always take place.

Reducing school exclusions for looked after children - 14.5% of Hackney looked after children received at least 1 fixed term exclusion, compared to the statistical neighbour average of 12.6% and the national average of 11.8% (most recently published data from 2017). The Virtual School is active in delivering training and support to school leaders in developing strategies and activities to support looked after children in mainstream provision, both in Hackney and with schools that looked after children attend outside of Hackney.

Life story work - Recent audits have identified the consistency, quality and timeliness of life story work is an area for development. Practitioners are being supported to develop a deeper understanding of the significance of life story work, and maintaining child friendly records from the earliest engagement with statutory services in a way which supports later preparation of life story work.

Strengthening support for children on Special Guardianship Orders - The number of children leaving care through Special Guardianship Orders has previously been low - this has increased from 6% in 2017/18 to 11% in 2018/19 (putting us in line with the with the national average of 11% in 2017/18). The establishment of a targeted SGO and Connected Carers unit within the Corporate Parenting Service is in progress and this will focus practice on supporting children under SGO arrangements.

Corporate Parenting



Strengths/Progress

Care leavers receive extensive support around education, employment and training (EET) via the Virtual School - Hackney has strong care leaver EET performance - the overall EET figure for 19-21 old care leavers was 61% in 2018, placing Hackney 23rd in the country overall. This has improved further to 65% in 2019. Hackney has a higher proportion than the national average of care leavers in higher education – 10% in Hackney in 2018, compared to 6% nationally. This has increased to 11% in 2019. We consistently have approximately 44 care leavers at university (including those aged over 21), with approximately 14 young people starting university each year.

Clinical support for care leavers - The strong and consistent clinical intervention to looked after children continues for care leavers as they transition to adulthood. Care leavers also have access to community based mental health support through Family Action. This outreach service is available when care leavers first move to independent living accommodation and are at risk of mental health issues.

Skilled workforce in Leaving Care Service - The Leaving Care Service continues to be predominantly delivered by qualified social workers rather than personal advisers as in many local authorities. In response to the increase in the number of care leavers supported by the Service, plans are in place to supplement the current support offer with additional personal adviser capacity.

Strong transitions between the Looked After Children Service and Leaving Care Service - All Looked After Children units are linked to a Leaving Care unit to ensure effective transitions and attendance of the Leaving Care unit at the final Looked After Child Review. From June 2019, Leaving Care units are aiming to also attend the penultimate Looked After Child Review to further support with effective transitions.

Refresh of the Children in Care Council - The Virtual School took over responsibility for participation and managing the Children in Care Council in 2019. The Council was recently relaunched as HoT - Hackney of Tomorrow - and has quickly developed a committed and engaged group of young people, with plans to further increase wider participation within the looked after children and care leaver cohort



Areas for further development and actions to address

Timeliness of Review Pathway Plans - Pathway Plans are in most cases completed in timescale and to a sufficient quality, as part of the Looked After Child Review process until a young person's 18th birthday. The timeliness of Review Pathway Plans is a current area of focus for the Service and is tracked fortnightly by senior managers.

The number of young people 'staying put' is currently lower than expected (25 young people in 2018/19, a slight increase from 23 young people in 2017/18). Recent analysis has highlighted the level of financial support to continuing foster carers as having a key impact on performance in this area. Service Managers have reviewed this following feedback from carers and former carers to understand what offer would better support performance. The Service implemented new arrangements from July 2019 and expects this will increase the number of young people in 'staying put' placements.

Access to affordable accommodation for care leavers - wider housing issues within Hackney and the London area present an increasing challenge to the range of suitable and affordable accommodation available for care leavers. The Service is continuing to work in partnership with the Council's Housing Needs Service to support care leavers to find suitable accommodation, with involvement of Hackney of Tomorrow.

Access to work opportunities for care leavers within the Council and partner agencies - The Virtual School has developed partnerships with external organisations, but more work is needed to develop opportunities across the Council for care leavers to secure work experience and access to apprenticeships within the Council and partner agencies (there are currently 4 care leavers on apprenticeships within the Council), to continue to improve Hackney's already strong care leaver EET performance. This will be progressed through Hackney's refreshed Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2019-22 that is currently being finalised.

Improve our Care Leaver Offer to make it more accessible and interactive - We are in the early stages of working on developing our communications and current Care Leaver Offer website content to ensure care leavers can access dynamic and interactive information about the services and support available to them.

Corporate Parenting

Looked After Children



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

The Hackney Promise

WE PROMISE...

COMING INTO CARE

- ...THAT WHEN YOU BECOME A LOOKED AFTER CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON, WE WILL LOOK AFTER YOU THE BEST WE POSSIBLY CAN.
- ...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 WILL SHARE AS MUCH INFORMATION WITH YOU AS WE CAN ABOUT YOUR FUTURE CARERS.
- ...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

- ...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.
- ...THAT, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, YOU WILL KNOW ABOUT AND BE READY FOR ANY CHANGES THAT ARE COMING.
- ...THAT WE WILL TALK TO YOU AND DISCUSS IF AND HOW YOU CAN BE SUPPORTED TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS.



1



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

Hackney of Tomorrow (previously known as 'Hackney Gets Heard')

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

In 2018-19, young people have been involved in staff recruitment panels, delivering Skills To Foster training to potential foster carers, and providing feedback about services.



The Virtual School took over responsibility for participation and managing the Children in Care Council in 2019. A new full time dedicated Participation Officer started in March 2019, and has focused on relaunching Hackney's Children in Care Council and offering wider participation opportunities. The Council was recently relaunched as HoT - Hackney of Tomorrow - and has quickly developed a committed and engaged group of young people, with plans to further increase wider participation within the looked after children and care leaver cohort.

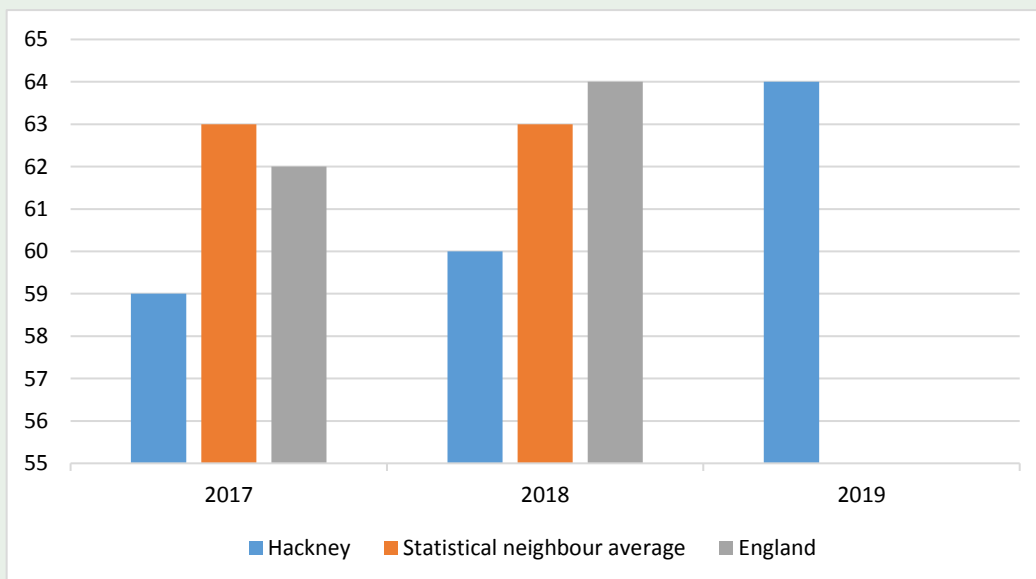
Number of looked after children

Mar 2017	Mar 2018	Mar 2019
371	381	405

There was a 6% increase in the total number of looked after children at March 2019 compared to the previous year.

There are some areas where the local authority has no influence on whether children become looked after. The increase in the number of looked after children in 2018/19 is influenced by the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), with 44 looked after children (11% of the total cohort) who were UASC as at 31st March 2019, compared to 27 young people at the same point last year.

Children Looked After per 10,000 population aged under 18 (at 31st Mar)

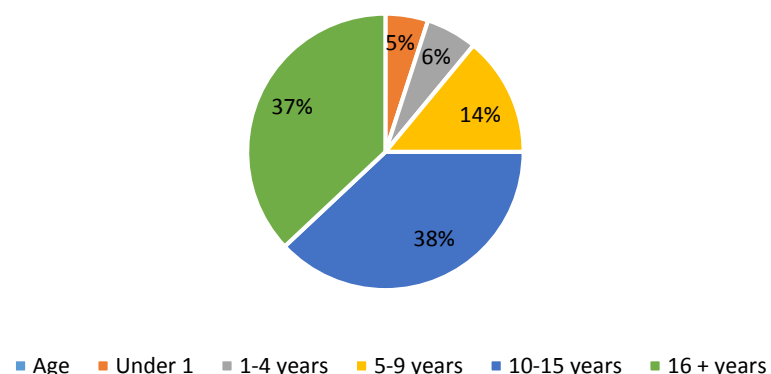


	Mar 2017	Mar 2018	Mar 2019
Hackney	59	60	64
Statistical neighbour average	63	63	Not yet published
England	62	64	Not yet published

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

Age	2017		2018		2019	
	Eng	Hackney	Eng	Hackney	Eng	Hackney
Under 1	5%	14 (4%)	6%	25 (7%)	Not yet published	19 (5%)
1 - 4	13%	27 (7%)	13%	28 (7%)		26 (6%)
5 - 9	19%	61 (16%)	19%	64 (17%)		58 (14%)
10 - 15	39%	153 (41%)	39%	143 (38%)		153 (38%)
16 +	23%	116 (31%)	23%	121 (32%)		149 (37%)
Total		371		381		405
Total statistical neighbour average		379		381		Not yet published

Age of total children looked after at 31st March 2019



A higher proportion of Hackney's looked after children cohort are older young people than the national average – 37% of the total cohort were aged 16 years or over in 2019, compared to 23% nationally.

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

Age	2017		2018		2019	
	England	Hackney	England	Hackney	England	Hackney
Under 1	18%	28 (11%)	19%	32 (15%)	Not yet published	24 (11%)
1 – 4	18%	27 (11%)	18%	22(10%)		22(10%)
5 – 9	18%	43 (17%)	18%	23 (11%)		19 (9%)
10 - 15	29%	73(30%)	28%	68 (31%)		58 (27%)
16 +	17%	75(30%)	18%	72 (33%)		89 (42%)
Total		246		217		



There was a 2% decrease in the number of children entering care during 2018/19 (212 children) compared to 2017/18 (214 children).

More young people come into care at an older age in Hackney. During 2018/19, 147 children and young people aged 10 and over entered care – 69% of the total number that entered care, compared to 46% nationally. More young people come into care in Hackney aged 16 years or over than the national average (42% of the total number entering care in Hackney, compared to 18% nationally).



The percentage of young people becoming looked after for the second or subsequent time within the last 12 months was 14.7% for 2018/19, an increase compared to 9.2% for 2017/18. This relates to a total of 31 children.

The number of children leaving care during 2018/19 was 195, compared to 208 in 2017/18. Of these, 73 (37%) returned home to live with parents, relatives or another person with parental responsibility. A further 25 (13%) left care due to Special Guardianship Orders or Child Arrangements Orders (previously known as Residence Orders) being granted, and 12 (6%) were adopted.



The Police responded to a call from a member of the public who witnessed a 16 year old girl, Nahal, being assaulted in the street by a man.

Nahal disclosed to the Police and ambulance staff that she was 16 years old and from Afghanistan. She reported that she was married aged 14 by arranged marriage to her husband, aged 36. The Police contacted Hackney Children and Families Service and Nahal was placed in Police Protection and an emergency foster carer was found for her.

Nahal reported that she came to the UK on a spousal visa, and that her husband obtained false documents for her travel. Nahal explained that since coming to the UK, she has experienced ongoing physical and emotional abuse from her husband. Nahal's social worker arranged for legal support around her status to remain in the UK, a health assessment and support from the Virtual School to ensure she can catch up with the education she has missed and get access to English language lessons.

After 6 months, Nahal went missing from her foster care placement and moved in with her sister and brother in law who reside in Manchester, stating she would not return to London. Nahal informed her social worker that she wanted to remain living in Newcastle near her sister and an appropriate foster placement in this area was sought for her. Hackney remain responsible for Nahal's care in order for her to be supported by a consistent social worker and while specialist work to reduce her risk from honour based violence is completed.

Nahal has been in her current placement in Newcastle for 8 months, which she and her foster carer report is going well. Nahal is receiving support to access her education and she hopes to start at college in the next year. Nahal is happy to be near her sister and is feeling optimistic about the future.

Looked After Children

Fostering Service



Recruitment of Foster Carers

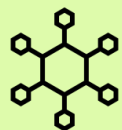
The Fostering Service has approved 12 mainstream foster carer households during 2018/19, this is higher than the statistical neighbour average of 9.5 in 2017/18. No mainstream foster carers resigned or had their approval terminated during 2018/19. The Fostering Service continues to develop their recruitment and retention strategy, using learning from recent years.



"Thank you, thank you for looking after my children over the years, providing for uniforms as well...for helping out with the rent and Housing Benefit".



Mother about their children's social worker

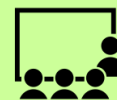


Mockingbird Project

The Fostering Network's Mockingbird programme is an innovative research-based method of delivering foster care using the Mockingbird Family Model, developed in the USA. The model uses an extended family model which provides respite care, peer support, regular joint planning, training, and social activities to other foster placements. The model centres on a constellation where one foster home acts as a hub, offering advice, training and support to 6-10 satellite foster or kinship families. The hub home builds strong relationships with all those in the constellation, empowering families to support each other and to overcome problems before they escalate or lead to breakdown.

Evaluations of the Mockingbird Family Model show improved outcomes for children, young people and carers, with improved placement stability, connection with siblings, and foster carer support and retention.

Hackney has committed to delivering the Mockingbird Family Model with the Fostering Network. The project launched Hackney's first hub home in August 2019.



Training of foster carers

As part of the Sufficiency Strategy 2016-19, an extensive training programme is offered to Hackney foster carers. Each foster carer develops their training programme with their supervising social worker, tailored to their needs and reviewed informally during supervision meetings and annually as part of the formal foster carer review. The training programme covers a wide range of training courses to provide support in specific areas such as 'Understanding Attachment' for different age groups; 'Considering the impact of educational pressure and the emergence of school refusal'; 'Safeguarding Young People (Child Sexual Exploitation; Harmful Sexual Behaviour)'; 'Supporting children with difficult behaviours'; 'Makaton Taster Session'; Social Pedagogy Action Learning Sets; and many more.

Looked After Children

Placement Activity

Placement Stability

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

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Hackney	18%	11%	13%
Statistical neighbour average	11%	12%	Not yet published
England	10%	10%	Not yet published



The number of looked after children with three or more placements in one year increased from 11% in 2017/18 to 13% in 2018/19. This reflects the higher proportion of adolescents coming into care who will have more complex needs and experience greater placement instability. In recognition that this will be an ongoing issue in Hackney due to older children entering care, the Looked after Children Service holds a regular multi-agency meeting to focus on improvement work around placement stability and has focused on this issue in the recently launched 3 year Sufficiency Strategy.



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 years¹ as at 31st March

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Hackney	69%	62%	65%
Statistical neighbour average	73%	69%	Not yet published
England	70%	70%	Not yet published



¹ (or placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with previous placement lasting for at least 2 years)

Long-term placement stability for children in care has increased from 62% in 2017/18 to 65% in 2018/19. This remains below statistical neighbour and national averages. This relates to 72 children out of a total cohort of 111 children.

Placement Types

Number of looked after children by placement type, as at 31 March 2019

Placement type	Number of LAC
Foster placements	288 (71%)
Placed for adoption	8 (2%)
Placement with parents	15 (4%)
Residential (children's homes)	25 (6%)
Secure unit	0
Semi-independent	56 (14%)
Youth Offender Institution	4 (1%)
Family Centre or Mother & Baby Unit	3 (1%)
NHS/medical care	2(0.5%)
Residential school	0
Other	4 (1%)
Total	405



The vast majority of Hackney's looked after children are placed with foster carers and the Service continues to increase the number of in-house carers available to support them. At 31st March 2019, 139 children were placed with in-house carers including connected persons carers and 144 children were placed with Independent Fostering Agency carers, and 1 child was placed with a carer provided by another local authority.

Placements for looked after children by location, as at 31 March 2019

Placement location	Number of LAC
Hackney	104 (26%)
Not in Hackney, under 20 miles	240 (59%)
Over 20 miles	61 (15%)
Total	405



The majority of Hackney's looked after children are placed within commuting distance of Hackney. There is a strong focus on ensuring that all children, regardless of where they are placed, receive the same level of support.

Looked After Children

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)



As at 31st March 2019, 44 unaccompanied asylum seeking children aged under 18 (UASC) were looked after by Hackney Children and Families Service, an increase compared to 27 at the end of March 2018. 11% of Hackney's looked after children cohort in March 2019 were unaccompanied asylum seeking children compared to a statistical neighbour average of 12% in 2018.

CFS is providing additional support for UASC/former UASC through a project funded by the Government's Controlling Migration Fund – This project is aiming to develop supported lodgings options for Vietnamese, Albanian and Eritrean UASC, and provide specialist support to develop the independence and integration of this cohort.

Our unaccompanied asylum seeking children also receive support in terms of their education, including learning English, through the Virtual School, and will receive clinical support for trauma by the in-house Clinical Service as required.

Independent Visitors Service

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 - they may share a hobby, sport or interest. There are currently (as at September 2019) 31 young people matched with an independent visitor.

Placement Costs

Average weekly cost of placement types at 31 March

Placement type	Average weekly cost 2017/18	Average weekly cost 2018/19	Movement %
In-house Fostering	£415	£430	3.6%
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	£910	£924	1.5%
Semi-Independent	£913	£964	5.3%
Residential	£3,640	£4,073	11.9%



The table above illustrates the difference in the average weekly costs for In-house Fostering placements (excluding Fostering Service staffing costs, foster carer training and other associated costs), Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements, Semi-Independent placements and Residential placements.

We have seen a steady increase in the number of residential placements which has added to the financial pressures, with placements on average costing in excess of £200k per year. As well as an increase in the number of placements we have also seen a considerable increase in the unit cost (12% compared to the previous year). Residential placements represented 27% of the total placements cost in 2018/19 however only 5% of the young people in care placements. There has been an increase in the number in-house fostering placements and a decrease in number of IFA placements between 2017/18 and 2018/19. This has resulted in overall reductions in costs due to better utilisation of in-house foster carers and a reduced reliance on IFA placements. IFA placements on average are twice as expensive as in-house fostering placements. IFA placements made up 60% of the total fostering placements in 2018/19. Residential and IFA placements collectively represent 60% of the total care placements costs.

Corporate Parenting

The Virtual School



The Virtual School team provides additional educational support for children looked after, from early years all the way through to post-16 education and training opportunities, which provides continuity for children and young people in care. The Virtual

School is well-resourced and includes a variety of roles including social pedagogues, learning mentors, an occupational therapist and speech and language therapists.

Key Stage 2

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

All pupils are offered support for the transition to secondary school, and links are made with designated teachers before children transition to their new school.

% of KS2 Pupils achieving the required standard or above in maths, reading and writing in 2018 (2019 data is not yet available)

	Reading	Writing	Maths
England	51%	49%	47%
Statistical neighbour average	61%	53%	57%
Hackney	X (fewer than 5 children)	46%	46%

Hackney achieved results slightly lower than the national average in reading, writing and maths. This data relates to a small cohort of children. 33% of looked after children in Hackney in 2018 had a SEN Statement or EHCP compared to an average of 27% nationally.

Key Stage 4

Pupils in Key Stage 4 are offered additional sessions of one to one tutoring in maths and English in both Year 10 and Year 11. Progress is monitored throughout and where necessary individual targeted support is offered.

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

Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 in 2018

	Attainment 8
England	18.9
Statistical neighbour average	19.1
Hackney	20.2

Attainment 8 averages the scores of the best 8 subjects for each young person, adds them together to get a cohort score. (The maximum score possible is 80, assuming 8 A results).*

Hackney performed well in this measure achieving better results than England and statistical neighbour averages.

EPIC (Exceptional People in Care) Awards - In February 2019, the annual EPIC Awards took place at Hackney Empire to celebrate the achievements of Hackney's looked after children and care leavers. A total of 267 young people were nominated for an award in recognition of their hard work and commitment to their education.

Corporate Parenting

The Virtual School

Attendance

Percentage of looked after children classed as persistent absentees at 31st March

	2016	2017	2018
Hackney	12.2%	9.6%	10.5%
Statistical neighbour average	11.1%	12.2%	13.8%
England	9.1%	10.0%	10.6%

*A low percentage represents better attendance**



The Virtual School has continued to send out attendance leaflets to all foster carers and monitor every young person's attendance every 2 weeks. This strategy has contributed to in attendance exceeding the statistical neighbour average.

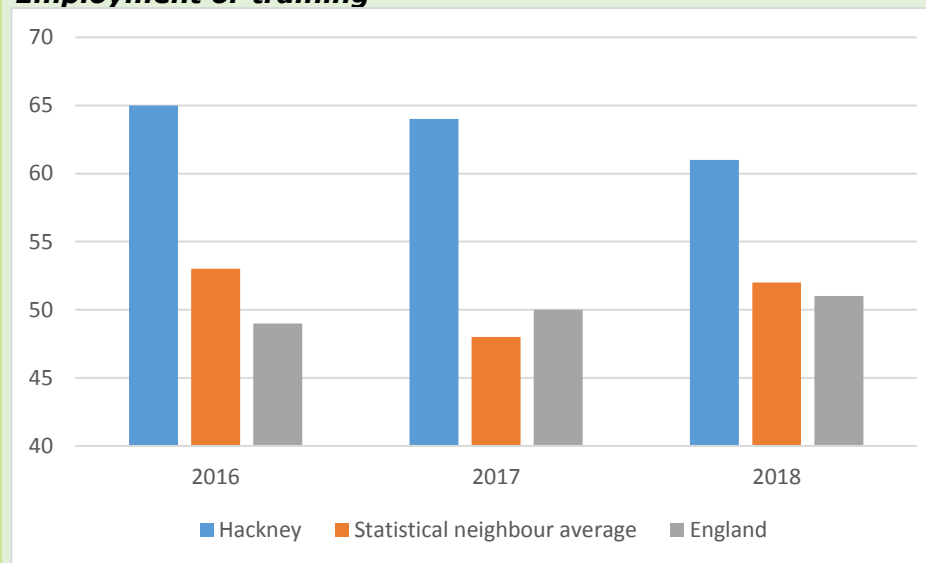
The Virtual School provides access to a broad range of cultural and educational activities for looked after children and care leavers. In the last year this has included residential trips to India, Kench Hill outdoor pursuits centre, and Jamie's Farm, an art trip to Barcelona, and residential trips to Romania, Slovakia and Rome.



Education, employment and training

The consistent support offered by the team during the last year has again resulted in a low number of care leavers aged 19-21 who are NEET (not in education, employment or training). Hackney compares very favourably to the national picture and far fewer Hackney care leavers are NEET (27%) when compared to London, statistical neighbour (38%) and national (39%) averages in 2018.

Percentage of Care Leavers who were in Education, Employment or training



10% of Hackney care leavers were in higher education in 2018 compared to 9% of statistical neighbour care leavers, and 6% of England care leavers overall.

Looked After Children

Health



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

The Health of Looked After Children (HLAC) Service in Hackney will be entirely delivered by Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust under a new integrated service model from 1st September 2019; previously it had been delivered by Whittington Health NHS Trust.

The HLAC Team remains the same and will continue to work with our looked after children and care leavers to improve their health and wellbeing outcomes.

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



	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Hackney	90%	97%	91%
England	89%	88%	Not yet published

91% of children and young people had their review health assessment completed on time in 2018/19, a decrease from 97% in the previous year and greater than the national average of 88% in 2017/18.

Percentage of looked after children whose immunisations are up to date



	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Hackney	79%	77%	70%
England	84%	85%	Not yet published

Performance on this at 70% in 2018/19 was lower than the national average in 2017/18. Performance in this area is affected by Hackney's higher proportion of older young people coming into care, as well as the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) in the cohort, for whom immunisation data may not be available.

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

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Hackney	74%	82%	71%
England	83%	84%	Not yet published



71% of looked after children had an up to date dental check in 2018/19, a decrease from 82% in 2017/18. This corresponds to the increase older cohort of looked after children entering care in Hackney who may decline to attend dental check appointments - 119 young people aged 14-17 entered care in 2018/19 (a 12% increase compared to 106 young people aged 14-17 entering care in 2017/18 and 56% of the total entrants to care). Work is underway with Health colleagues to address this and performance against this indicator is being closely monitored by the Corporate Parenting Service.

Corporate Parenting

Adoption and Post Permanency



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

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Hackney	19 (9%)	12 (6%)	12 (6%)
Statistical neighbour average	19 (9%)	12 (6%)	Not yet published



In 2018/19, 12 Hackney children were adopted; the same number as 2017/18 and in line with the statistical neighbour average in 2017/18.

As at 31st March 2019, 7 children were placed with their adoptive family but an Adoption Order had not yet been granted. A further 12 children had a formal plan for adoption but had not yet been placed with an adoptive family.

During 2018/19, the children who have been adopted have generally been placed quickly with adopters, with children waiting on average 4 months from the time the Placement Order has been granted to the date they moved in with their adoptive families.

Recruiting adopters

6 adoptive families were approved in Hackney in 2018/19.



Regionalisation of Adoption Services

All local authorities are required to become part of a Regional Adoption Agency by April 2020.

In London the majority of local authorities are participating in the development of Adopt London which has 4 Sub-Regional Adoption Agencies Hackney will be part of Adopt London North which will consist of 6 local authorities (Hackney, Camden, Islington, Enfield, Barnet and Haringey). The development of the Regional Adoption Agency is being led by Islington Council. Each local authority will need to formally delegate its statutory duty to provide an adoption service to the Regional Adoption Agency. The Regional Adoption Agency (Adopt London North) will commence on 1st October 2019.

Post Permanency

There continues to be a high demand for post permanency support services from the Permanency Service, both from adoptive and Special Guardianship families. The range of work is broad and includes support for adopted adults and access to records; social work involvement and support; practical support; life story work; requests for financial support; contact (direct and letterbox); and access to therapeutic support. As at September 2019, the Permanency Service was providing support to 51 families who have adopted children (post-Order support), 10 families who are in the process of adopting children (pre-Order support), and 43 families where Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) have been made. The Adoption Support Fund (ASF), established by the Department for Education in 2013, is being utilised to provide group work programmes within the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium and to enable adoptive and Special Guardianship families to access therapeutic parenting training externally. The majority of ASF applications made on behalf of families are to provide personalised therapeutic support to individual families. Work continues to increase awareness and uptake with Special Guardianship families, who traditionally have been less aware of the potential benefits of therapeutic support. As at September 2019, Hackney has 34 applications pending to the ASF for therapeutic adoption support and 11 applications for supported guardianship therapeutic support. From 1st October 2019, responsibilities for post permanency support for adoptive families will transfer to Adopt London North while support for Special Guardianship families will remain with Hackney.

Corporate Parenting

Leaving Care



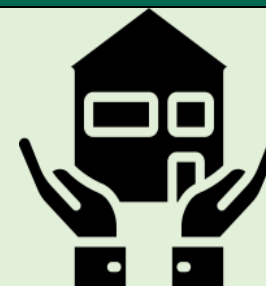
The Leaving Care Service ensures that young people are supported to develop independent living skills, offered career advice and training and educational opportunities, and supported to reach their full potential in all aspects of their life.

308 care leavers aged 17-21 were being supported by the Leaving Care Service, as at March 2019, a 2% increase compared to the 301 being supported at the same point in March 2018. 66 care leavers aged 22-24 were being supported at March 2019. This is a 120% increase compared to the 30 care leavers aged over 21 who were in higher education, as at March 2018. This increase was expected following legislative changes introduced in April 2018. It is anticipated that this number will continue to increase over the coming years.

As at 31st March 2019, 25 young people were living in Staying Put arrangements (continuing to live with their previous foster carer after they have turned 18), an increase compared to 23 young people as at the end of March 2018.



The percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 who were in suitable accommodation in 2018/19 was 80%, an increase from 78% last year. Most of the young people who were recorded as not in suitable accommodation were in custody (18 young people).



Housing continues to be an issue nationally, especially for care leavers in the London area, with the statistical neighbour average remaining at 81% in 2018 (also 81% in 2017).

The Service will continue efforts to improve the number of care leavers in suitable accommodation in partnership with the Council's Housing Needs Service.



Adjara arrived in Hackney 6 years ago from Africa to live with her father before concerns were raised about the care she was receiving. Adjara had very little parental supervision and was often out late at night in risky situations. The risk to Adjara was so high that she became looked after at age 13. Adjara experienced a difficult adolescence, becoming permanently excluded from school, being linked to gangs in Hackney and often experiencing missing episodes. Throughout this, Adjara had consistent support from her foster carer and social worker, and when she reached 18, her placement became a staying put placement. Through this consistent care, Adjara has finished college, received a Level 3 BTEC in sports, is volunteering in a school, and was also recently granted indefinite leave to remain. Adjara now hopes to be able to go to University or get an apprenticeship. Adjara has a promising future, supported by the stability and loving home her foster carer has provided her.

Safeguarding and Learning



Local Area Designated Officer (LADO)


The LADO investigates allegations of harm or a concern around the conduct or suitability of an adult to work or volunteer with children.

There were 266 referrals to the LADO in 2018/19, a 61% increase from 165 referrals in 2017/18.



There is a strong and effective working relationship between Hackney Learning Trust (HLT) and the LADO service. This is particularly important as the majority of LADO referrals are education setting based. The LADO has worked extensively with the Head of Wellbeing and Education Safeguarding over the last year to address the ongoing difficulties posed by unregistered educational settings and the challenges around safeguarding in these settings.

Children's Rights Service

The Children's Rights Service offers children and young people access to confidential and impartial support on issues concerning the Hackney Children and Families Service. The Service also provides Independent Return Home Interviews to young people following a missing episode. The Children's Rights Officer (CRO) aims to ensure that children and young people's voices are heard and their rights & entitlements upheld. While undertaking much of the work of a conventional advocate, the role has a specific focus on resolution and contributing to wider organisational learning. 



The number of Children Act complaints from looked after children in 2018/19 has remained the same as last year with zero complaints – with 37 looked after children being referred to the CRO in 2017/18 compared to 45 referred in 2018/19. This would seem to indicate that the CRO has been effective in resolving issues and difficulties on an informal basis. There has also been a significant increase in care leavers accessing the service from 10 in 2017/18 to 21 in 2018/19. 4 care leavers made complaints in 2018/19 compared to none in 2017/18.

The use of Independent Return Home Interviews continues to be effective in supporting young people to share information about push and pull factors, what happens when they going missing and what support they need to reduce further episodes. The clear focus on the young person's voice alongside timely and case specific safety planning promotes the safety of these young people. The close liaison with the professional network promotes more effective risk assessment by the social work unit.



Benjamin's Independent Chair has had oversight of his case since his Initial Child Protection Conference when his mother was pregnant with him due to concerns about whether she could care for him due to her own additional needs. Following good information-sharing across partner agencies concerned about Benjamin and his mother, an advocate was sought for Benjamin's mother and a placement was found for them in a parent/child (mother and baby) foster placement to ensure Benjamin received the care he needed and to understand whether Benjamin could be safely cared for by his mother. Unfortunately this placement broke down, with Benjamin's mother unable to care for him safely and it was agreed to initiate care proceedings. A foster to adopt placement was found which meant that Benjamin's prospective adoptive families, who were well matched to his needs, were supported to be approved as foster carers until the end of court proceedings. His foster carers then had the knowledge and commitment to Benjamin to apply for an adoption order without delay. Benjamin's contact with his parents was supported by the professional network and Benjamin's mother was also referred to the Pause Project for ongoing support.

Safeguarding and Learning

Independent Chairs

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



Looked after Children (LAC) reviews

After consulting with young people and partner agencies Hackney made the decision to move away from the traditional LAC review meeting process. Independent Chairs now use a range of tools and activities to engage and work with young people during their LAC reviews. Independent Chairs take a creative approach to LAC reviews, consulting with professionals, families and children before the review to ensure the LAC review is meaningful for the young person. Engagement techniques that are used include drawing and creative activities to enable children to talk about their lives and individual pieces of work to help young people identify the important people in their lives using football players and pop star references. LAC review reports are written by Independent Chairs directly to the child/young person and, alongside the carers' and social worker's reports, these form part of the young person's life story work.

Performance for LAC reviews completed within timescale has improved over the last year - 87% of LAC reviews were completed within timescale in 2018/19, compared to 85% in 2017/18. Plans are in place to further improve this performance in 2019/20.



"The Independent Chair for one of my young people ...at the last Looked After Child Review ... announced that she would be leaving Hackney. *I am really sad to see her go, that she was good and instrumental in moving my young person's care plan along positively*".

- Foster carer about their looked after child's Independent Reviewing Officer

Safeguarding and Learning

Missing Children and Children at Risk of Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

In 2018/19, we re-focused our case review and monitoring processes from specifically focussing on child sexual exploitation (CSE) and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) to incorporate a wider understanding of exploitation of young people and extra-familial harm including criminal exploitation, county lines and trafficking. The establishment of the multi-agency Extra-Familial Risk Panel in November 2018 to ensure consistent oversight and planning for cases where young people are at risk of experiencing, or are involved in, harmful behaviours outside the home has enabled a more joined up partnership response, with input from Police, Education, Health, Youth Offending Team, Young Hackney and the Integrated Gangs Unit. The Panel develops Partnership Plans to reduce extra-familial harm both for the individuals concerned and for the contexts in which the harm occurs (e.g. peers, schools, neighbourhoods, locations). From November 2018- June 2019 there have been 147 young people and their peers and associates discussed at the Extra-Familial Risk Panel. Of those 147 young people, 105 were discussed for the first time and 42 young people were subject of review discussions. The primary exploitation type in the cases discussed has been criminal exploitation, including county lines (64 cases), child sexual exploitation (25 cases) and sexually harmful behaviour (7 cases). There have been 3 location based discussions at the Extra-Familial Risk Panel in this period. Themes and strategic issues from the Extra-Familial Risk Panel are shared with the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) group for wider consideration and agency action. Specific issues discussed at MACE have included Xanax use, online image sharing, educational absenteeism, and understanding the needs of the Orthodox Jewish community.



In 2018/19, 84 young people went missing from care on 467 occasions and 60 young people went missing from home on 101 occasions. In 66% of the occasions where a young person went missing from care it is recorded that they were offered a Return Home Interview (an increase from 62% in 2017/18). In 72% of the occasions where a young person went missing from home it is recorded they were offered a Return Home Interview (an increase from 69% in 2017/18). In order to ensure young people who frequently go missing are supported and that the Director and senior managers are kept informed, fortnightly missing children meetings are convened whereby practitioners provide an overview of the risk and plans in relation to the child and the circumstances around the current missing episode in respect of high risk cases and the safety plan for the child.

Quality Assurance

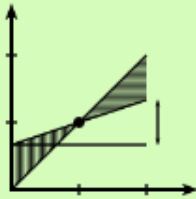
The Children and Families Service is a complex system and many tools are used to understand performance and identify learning opportunities, themes and trends to enable the service to continue to adapt and respond to new demands.



This includes management and audit oversight, with 426 audits taking place in 2018/19. Key strengths include thorough assessments, appropriate and timely responses to high levels of risk, inclusion of the child's voice in recording and strong multi-agency working and information sharing. Key areas for development identified through audits include improving exploration of identity and diversity with young people, and continuing to improve case recording, especially of unit meeting minutes. Multi-agency audits are also coordinated through City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board. Following the Ofsted focused visit, the casework audit tool has been revised to place greater emphasis on evidence of the child's lived experience and we worked with colleagues from neighbouring authorities on the development of our case audit moderation processes.

Learning from complaints is used to identify areas where our service to families can be improved; a total of 97 complaint-related representations were received during 2018/19 - this is an increase from 2017/18 when 78 representations were received. Learning from complaints this year has led to improvements in information leaflets provided to families, and reminders to practitioners about recording standards for unit meeting minutes and visits and the importance of timely sharing of information with families.

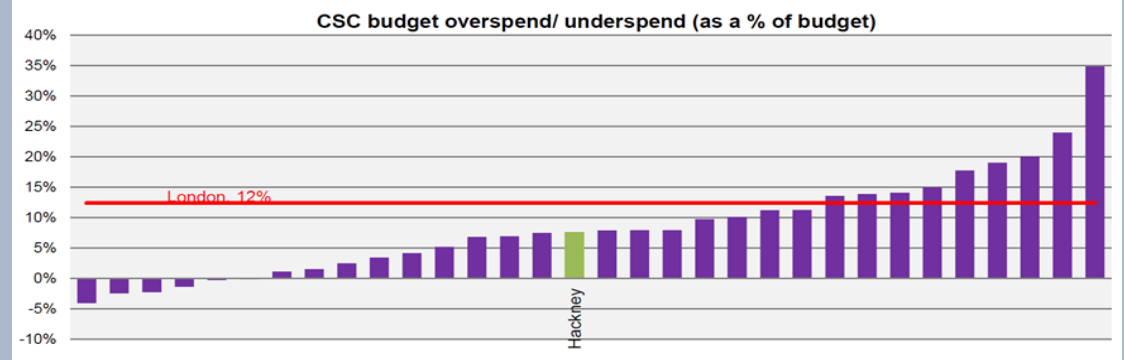
Financial Performance – Overview



The outturn for 2018/19 for the Children and Families Service on a net budget of £58m was an overspend of £362k after use of grants and reserves of £4.2m including a drawdown on the Commissioning Reserve of £3m. There has been a requirement to draw down

from the Commissioning Reserve since 2012/13 due to the increased number of children in care and a shortage of in-house foster carers.

The financial position for 2019/20 is a net budget of £58.4m for the Children and Families Service, and the service is forecasting to overspend by £1m (as at August 2019) after use of reserves and drawdown of grants totalling £5.8m (including full use of the commissioning activity reserve of £2.3m).



The sustained pressure on Children’s Services budgets is a position that is not unique to Hackney, as shown by the results of a recent survey on Children’s Social Care spend carried out jointly by the Society of London Treasurers (SLT) and the Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS). The graph above shows how Hackney’s spend compared to budget for Children’s Social Care compares to other boroughs.

The Children and Families Service has continued to make significant contributions to the efficiency agenda of the Council. Over the previous eight years the service has delivered £11.3m savings with a further £187k being delivered in 2019/20.



The increase in commissioning costs has been driven by an increase in the number of looked after children since 2011/12, and this trend looks to continue through 2019/20. There

is a continuation of a large proportion of children being placed with independent fostering agencies (IFAs) due to a lack of suitable in-house foster carers. The cost of an IFA placement is significantly greater than that of an in-house placement.



Hackney has also seen an increase in residential placements since 2015 adding considerable budget pressures with an average annual unit cost of £200k. We are also seeing a rise in the number of under 18s in high-cost semi-independent placements. Where young people in their late teens are deemed to be vulnerable, and in many cases are transitioning from residential to semi-

independent placements, they may still require a high-level of support and in extreme circumstances bespoke crisis packages. These pressures have been recognised by the Group Director - Finance & Corporate Resources with a total growth of £7.4m included in the base budget between 2012/13 to 2019/20.

Children & Families Service Our Values



OPEN, honest, and accountable, working with others, listening, showing trust in each other and in our residents



INCLUSIVE both as an employer and a service provider, celebrating diversity, and treating colleagues and residents with respect, and with care



AMBITIOUS for Hackney, and for ourselves, always seeking to be the best at what we do, and to get the best for the people of Hackney

Collaborative and respectful. We work openly and in partnership with families, communities, partners and each other. We value families' experiences, insights and wisdom - doing 'with' not 'to', and are mindful of the power we hold and the way this is experienced by children and their families in our relationships with them.

Innovative and creative. We seek opportunities to develop new approaches to better meet the needs of children and their families, being flexible and responsive in our practice, we are prepared to take managed risks and do things differently when this is in the best interests of the child.

Child and family focussed and responsive to wider context. By prioritising the child's voice and daily lived experience we develop a deep understanding of the diverse perspectives, identities and experiences of children and their families. We work to understand the impact of wider social and environmental factors on children's lives and address the impact of contextual risks, disadvantage, discrimination and trauma.

Strength-based and reflective. We are thoughtful in our work with children and their families. Delivering confident, evidence-based practice that has a strong theoretical orientation and is underpinned by systemic approaches. We value different perspectives and expertise, and celebrate the successes of children, young people and their families.

High aspirations for children. We work with families, their communities and other professionals to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children and young people that we serve, seeking and valuing feedback as a learning organisation that is committed to continually improving the services we deliver.

Purposeful, timely and solution focussed. We are clear about the outcomes we are trying to achieve, supporting children, young people, families, and communities to develop their own potential and reducing dependency wherever possible, whilst acting decisively when necessary, to keep children and young people safe.



PIONEERING and innovative, always seeking new solutions and making space to be creative, to learn and to share ideas.



PROUD of what we do, of the Council, of each other, and of Hackney



PROACTIVE and positive in the way we approach problems and challenges, and take up the opportunities that come our way

