



**Haringey** Council

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

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# **Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee**

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TUESDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER, 2009 at 19:30 HRS - CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, N22 8LE.

**MEMBERS:** Councillor Emma Jones (Chair), Councillor Matt Davies, Councillor Harry Lister, Councillor Antonia Mallett, and Councillor Susan Oatway.

### **AGENDA**

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

#### **2. URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair will consider the admission of late items of urgent business. Late items will be considered under the agenda item they appear. New items will be dealt with at Item 11 below.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

A member with a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is being considered must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of the consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

A member with a personal interest in a matter also has a prejudicial interest in that matter if the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgement of the public interest.

#### **4. MINUTES (PAGES 1 - 4)**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2009 as a correct record.

**5. FORWARD PLAN**

A verbal update will be provided with respect to agenda items for the November meeting and proposals for changing the date of the meeting.

**6. ETHNICITY ANALYSIS FOR CHILDREN COMING INTO SOCIAL CARE (PAGES 5 - 10)**

To receive a breakdown of ethnicity data in relation to contacts, referrals, initial assessments and child protection plans based on a monthly sample.

**7. TRAINING SESSION**

To receive training as necessary from the Independent Panel member relevant to items for consideration on the agenda, including an overview of initial assessments.

**8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Items 9-10 as they contain exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985); paras 1 & 2; namely information relating to any individual, and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

**9. CASE FILE QUALITY AUDITING (PAGES 11 - 14)**

To consider the advice relating to Member's access to case records.

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

A verbal update will be given on any recommendations to be made to Cabinet on referrals and initial assessments.

**11. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any items admitted at 2 above.

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

To raise any items of AOB and confirm dates of future meetings.

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27 August 2009.

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**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE PANEL  
MONDAY, 27 JULY 2009**

Councillors Davies, Jones (Chair), Mallett and Oatway

Also Present: Sylvia Chew, Hilary Corrick, Mark Gurrey.

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>	<b>ACTON BY</b>
CSPPP21	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>	
CSPPP22	<p><b>URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There were no items of urgent business.</p>	
CSPPP23	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
CSPPP24	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2009 were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
CSPPP25	<p><b>TRAINING SESSION</b></p> <p>The Chair advised the Panel that in relation to progress with obtaining Criminal Records Bureau checks for Panel members, efforts to fast track the process had not been possible. The Assistant Chief Executive (People &amp; Organisational Development) had provided interim authorisation for the Panel to undertake audits of case files in lieu of receiving their CRB checks.</p> <p>The independent member of the Panel and the Interim Head of Service (Referral &amp; Assessment) provided members with an overview of Referral and Assessment (R&amp;A) systems and procedures and the operation of the service at Haringey.</p> <p>The Framework-I computer system is used at Haringey to manage the range of contacts received daily by the service and to facilitate the filtering process determining the appropriate outcome for each contact. Service standards require that decisions are made by a manager in regards to contacts within 24 hours of receipt, with performance against this target currently being achieved.</p> <p>Threshold judgements are used to determine whether contacts are designated as requiring no further action or progress to become social service referrals or referred to other agencies to action as appropriate</p>	

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	<p>such as health visitors, schools etc. A new threshold document was currently being developed based on pan-London adopted thresholds centred around 4 levels of intervention, with the draft to be endorsed by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in September. The document would then be disseminated to relevant agencies and form the basis of future training.</p> <p>Contacts determined as requiring further action are designated as referrals, with those of an urgent basis relating to child protection concerns referred immediately to the Police Child Abuse and Investigation Team and a strategy meeting held. For referrals of a less urgent nature but where further information gathering was required, an initial assessment considering issues such as the needs of the child, home environment etc should be carried out by a manager within 7 working days. The Panel were advised that currently this target is not being achieved at Haringey, with cases currently subject to a waiting system due to the ongoing impact of a historical backlog of referrals on service performance. Recruitment and retention issues in the R&amp;A service have also impacted on performance although six newly qualified social workers have been assigned to help reduce the backlog. Confirmation was provided that the cases on the waiting list were subject to review and re-audit by the Interim Head of Service on a fortnightly basis.</p> <p>The Panel were advised that current contact levels have seen a 90% increase since April 2009 from 2007/08 levels to around 291-376 a week and that a relatively low level of contacts received become referrals. The Panel requested that further information be received to a future meeting summarising the source of contacts notified to the service to assess any potential areas of over or under-referring. The Panel were advised that work was being undertaken with the Police to encourage a more integrated approach between the Public Protection desk and the council in relation to contacts, as Police notifications constituted the majority of daily contacts received by the council, with all cases with reference to children forwarded to the R&amp;A service without initial screening.</p> <p>In response to concerns regarding the low level of contacts on the designated day originating from health services, confirmation was provided that typically greater level of daily contacts were received from hospitals, GPs and health visitors. Work was being undertaken to improve engagement of GPs with child protection including the reformatting of assessment forms and considering approaches with the Lead GP for Haringey. The Panel requested information on GP attendance at child protection training and conferences and agreed to raise as a matter of concern the issue of mandatory child protection training for GPs with the Cabinet.</p> <p>The Panel considered the ethnic breakdown of contacts received on the designated day and the predominance from the black British group. The Panel requested that the September meeting receive further information analysing the impact of ethnicity on contacts, referrals, initial assessments and child protection plans to the service based around a</p>	<p>AD S/guar ding</p> <p>AD S/guar ding/ Chair</p> <p>Head Service (R &amp; A)</p>
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	<p>monthly sampling exercise. The Panel also requested a further breakdown of figures under the black British category and comparative borough ethnicity data so any cultural and language barriers potentially impacting on safeguarding could be identified.</p> <p>The Panel were advised that domestic violence remained the single most significant issue impacting on the wellbeing of children and that work was being undertaken examining responses to domestic violence and exploring opportunities for intervention at an earlier stage. Domestic violence was suggested as a future agenda item for the Panel.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Panel receive a copy of the new safeguarding threshold document following endorsement by the LSCB.</li> <li>• That the September meeting of the Panel receive a breakdown of ethnicity in relation to contacts, referrals, initial assessments and child protection plans based on a monthly sample.</li> </ul>	<p>Head Service (R &amp; A)</p> <p>AD S/guarding</p> <p>Head Service (R &amp; A)</p>
<p><b>CSPPP26</b></p>	<p><b>REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT SERVICE CONTACTS</b></p> <p>The Panel considered audit summaries of contacts received to the R&amp;A service on a designated day.</p>	
<p><b>CSPPP27</b></p>	<p><b>CASE FILE QUALITY AUDITING</b></p> <p>The Panel considered eight referrals selected by the Chair and independent member from the contacts received to the R&amp;A service on the designated day. The selection process had particularly focused on referrals relating to children under five and concerns related to neglect.</p> <p>Each referral was considered on an individual basis, with five selected to be tracked onwards by the Panel to monitor progress. It was suggested that chronologies and/or summaries and key documents such as initial assessments be produced for the more complex cases to keep the level of detail to a manageable level for the Panel.</p> <p>Officers also suggested that the Panel underwent a demonstration session on the Framework-I system and proposed that the next meeting of the Panel be held in a suitable location to allow members to follow progress of the selected cases on screen using Framework-I.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That five referrals selected from those contacts received on the designated day be tracked by the Panel on an on-going basis.</li> <li>• That the agenda for the September meeting of the Panel include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Short training session on initial assessments delivered by Hilary Corrick</li> <li>○ Progress updates against the five referrals through consideration of summaries, chronologies and/or key</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Head Service (R &amp; A)/ AD S/guarding</p> <p>Head Service (R &amp; A)/ AD S/guarding Hilary Corrick</p> <p>Head</p>

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	documents circulated in advance of the meeting and via an onscreen demonstration of the Framework-I system at the meeting.	Service (R & A)/ AD S/guard
<b>CSPPP28</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>  There were no items of further business.	

Cllr Emma Jones

Chair



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<b>Briefing for:</b>	Children's Safeguarding Policy and Performance Panel
<b>Title:</b>	Ethnicity Analysis for Children Coming into Social Care
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Mark Gurrey, Interim Assistant Director, Safeguarding
<b>Date:</b>	8 September 2009

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The attached report is presented in response to a request from members of the Safeguarding Panel for more detail on the ethnic breakdown of children coming into and passing through the social care systems.
- 1.2 The report is self-explanatory and contains both detailed statistical breakdown and some analysis of the data.
- 1.3 The body of the report follows.

## Children and Young People's Service

### The ethnicity of children we are working with

#### Key Findings

1. White British and Irish children and children of Asian origins are significantly under-represented in the population of children referred to children and families. All other ethnic groups are over-represented. This may well reflect differences in economic circumstances.
2. There is no significant difference between the population of referred children, and the population of children undergoing initial assessment.
3. When compared with the referred population, Black and Black British children, Asian and Asian British children, and children of Other Ethnic



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groups are less likely to become subject to child protection plans. Children of Mixed ethnic origins are significantly more likely to become subject to child protection plans.

4. Children of Mixed ethnic origin are also more likely to enter care than other groups. Children of Other White origins are less likely to enter care.
5. If one group is over-represented then statistically another group must be under-represented. It is not possible to say whether the over-representation causes the under-representation or vice versa.
6. These over- and under- representations to a large extent reflect patterns observed across the UK, though it appears that in Haringey the disparities are lower than elsewhere. National research has identified a number of possible causes, but no one simple answer for the existence of disparity, but differential application of thresholds is not thought to be a cause.

**Background**

This report has been prepared in response to a request from Members, who were interested in knowing more about how our services responded to children of differing ethnic backgrounds.

The methods used are described, and the results presented. There has been extensive national research, particularly in respect of the care population, which has revealed some common findings across England, but yielded little by way of explanation. This research informs the conclusion.

**Data sources**

Information about the ethnic origin of referred children is collected and retained on Frameworki. The information is held in 88 different categories, which “map” onto both the five “broad” and 16 “narrow” census categories. In any analysis there is a balance to be struck between choosing categories that adequately reflect children’s origins, and generating data that is meaningful. This report uses the broad census categories, but in recognition of the unusually high number of white children from backgrounds other than the UK found in Haringey, “other white” has been included as a category in its own right<sup>1</sup>. Information was obtained about all children referred in the two years to 31 March 2009, all children undergoing Initial Assessment, and all children becoming subject to child protection plans in the same period. Information was also obtained about the care population at 31 March 2009.

The information about referrals and initial assessments showed that in over 13% of cases the ethnic origins of the child was not stated, and in further 10% of cases the data was simply not there. For the purposes of analysis it has been

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<sup>1</sup> It would be possible to analyse the data by narrow census category, but for some of the populations (eg the care population) some of the numbers would be too low for conclusions to be drawn.



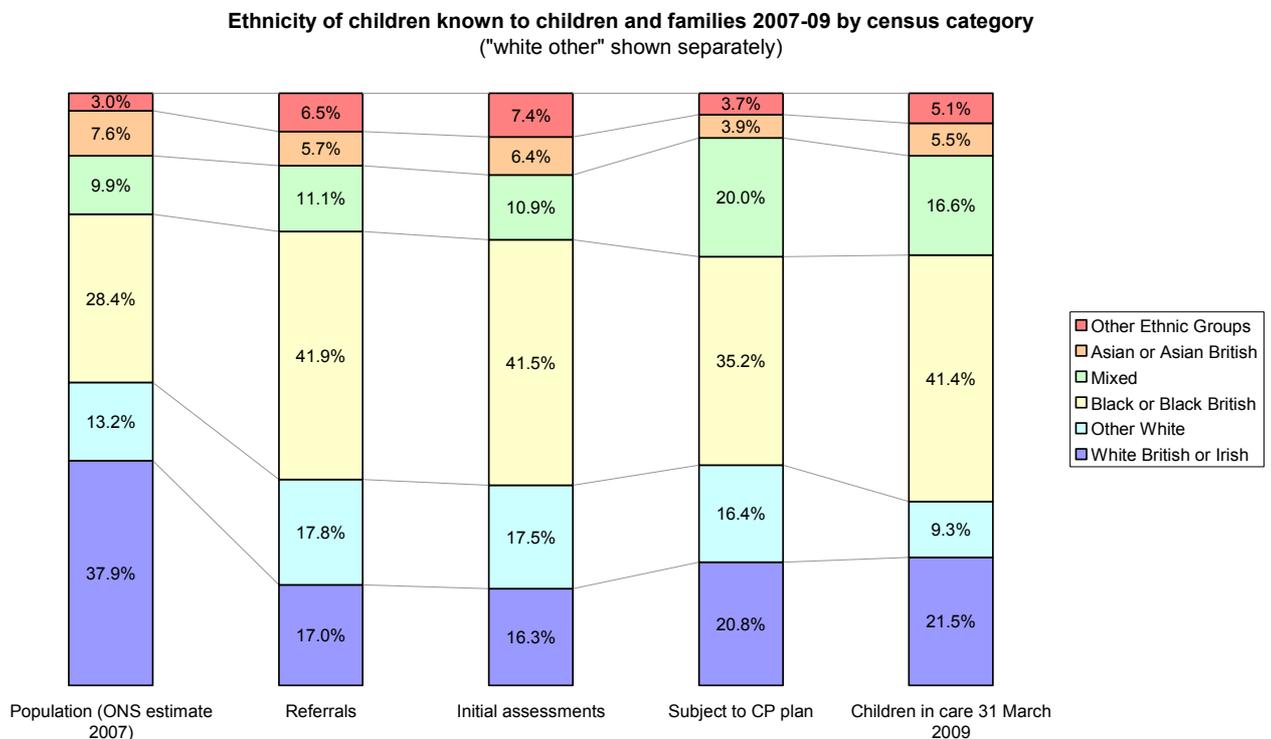
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assumed that the ethnicity of these children has the same distribution as that of children where there is data available. This may not be a valid assumption (if, for example, information about one particular ethnic group is consistently omitted), but it is the only basis on which to proceed.

There have been significant changes in Haringey’s population since the last census. Office of National Statistics projections of the numbers of children aged under 15 living in Haringey in 2007 have therefore been used for comparison.

**Findings**

The following chart depicts what has been found:



The most immediately obvious feature is the difference between the proportion of White British and Irish in the population (nearly 38%) and the proportion of this group in the referred population (17%). Asian and Asian British children are also under-represented, though not to the same extent. All other groups are over-represented in the referral population. There is ample national evidence that children from more deprived backgrounds are more likely to be referred to social care services, and that children from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are significantly more likely to be living in deprived circumstances, so this finding may simply reflect economics.

Reassuringly, there is no significant difference between the referred population and that of children becoming subject to initial assessment.

Children of mixed ethnic origins are significantly more likely to become subject to child protection plans, and also more likely to enter care. The finding that children of mixed ethnic origins are over-represented in the care population is



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well known nationally, and considerable energy has been expended in attempting to identify an explanation, with very limited success. Perhaps the best that can be said locally is that in this respect Haringey reflects the national picture.

### The national picture and conclusions

The following table summarises recent national findings<sup>2</sup>:

#### **Over- and under-representation of ethnic groups in child welfare compared to the population**

	White	Mixed	Asian	Black
Children in Need	As expected	Over	Under	A lot over
Child Protection	As expected	Over	A lot under	As expected
Children in Care	As expected	A lot over	Under	A lot over

The findings of this research differ from those described here in that the effects of deprivation have been compensated for. Nevertheless it can be seen that there are some strong similarities between the national findings and what happens in Haringey. The chief difference appears to be that in Haringey children of Mixed ethnic origins are more likely to feature in the child protection population than they are in the population of children in care, whereas nationally the reverse is the case. Additionally the disparities in Haringey appear to be of a lesser degree than is found nationally (as an example on average a black child was three-and-a-half times as likely to be looked after as a white child, whereas in Haringey the ratio, which is unadjusted for the effects of deprivation, is two-and-a-half).

The recent report *Disproportionality in Child Welfare*, as well as describing the national picture, attempts to seek explanations for these disparities, but finds that:

“The literature reviewed suggested possible mechanisms for under- or over-representation of black and minority ethnic children in child welfare statistics, such as lack of access to appropriate support services; greater unwillingness in some cultures to report concerns about a child’s safety; and greater uncertainty among child welfare professionals about how to respond appropriately to the needs of minority ethnic families. There was little evidence to support the view that social workers and other child welfare professionals operate different thresholds for different ethnic groups in relation to offering services, or removing children from their parents’ care. Overall, the

<sup>2</sup> Charlie Owen and June Statham (2009). *Disproportionality in Child Welfare*. DCSF Research Report RR124



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research reviewed provided no simple answer to the question of why disproportionality and disparity exist.”

The report also notes wide variation between authorities. While there can be no grounds for complacency, the evidence in Haringey is that there is no difference in the threshold operated for initiating an initial assessment. It may well be that the disparities that exist reflect some of the other factors mentioned in the research.

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