

Ayshe Simsek

27 September 2013

To: All Members of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee

Dear Member,

Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee - Thursday, 3rd October, 2013

I attach a copy of the following reports for the above-mentioned meeting which were not available at the time of collation of the agenda:

**11. FOSTERING SERVICE REVIEW (PAGES 1 - 82)**

To consider the findings and recommendations arising from the review of the Fostering Service by iMPOWER.

**12. UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (PAGES 83 - 88)**

This report will provide an update on the development of the Children and Families Quality Assurance Framework, associated activities and documentation.

**13. FRIENDS AND FAMILY POLICY (PAGES 89 - 130)**

The Committee to comment on an initial first draft of the Friends and Family Policy.

Yours sincerely

Ayshe Simsek  
Principal Committee Co-ordinator

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**Haringey Council**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2013</b>	<b>Item Number:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Review of the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) Fostering Service</b>		
<b>Report Authorised by:</b>	<b>Marion Wheeler Assistant Director CYPS</b>		
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>Paul McCarthy – Interim Head of Service Resources and Commissioning</b>		
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>  <b>All</b>	<b>Report for Non Key Decision</b>		

**1. Describe the issue under consideration:**

1.1 The Fostering Service was rated 'adequate' in the last inspection by OFSTED in August 2011. Several measures have been undertaken to address the concerns raised including the development of an Improvement Plan against which progress was tracked. In summary, performance in this service has not been of a consistent high quality standard in terms of its outcomes for children and young people.

1.2 An Internal Audit Review carried out in January 2013 identified concerns regarding a lack of progress on the Plan as well as identifying areas where compliance against practice standards were not being met. These performance issues raised concerns regarding the quality of safeguarding provision and the ability of the Fostering Service to provide adequate supervision and support to its foster carers.



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1.3 In addition, the Service has been facing growing external pressure and increasing demand for in-house foster carers. The demand has exceeded supply, resulting in a disproportionate use of expensive Independent Fostering Agencies. As of March 2013, there were 411 Looked After Children (LAC) in foster care placements, 60% of which were with external agencies and spend in 2012/13 was just under £10.5 million.

1.3 The culmination of this is a Service that is costing too much money and not delivering on the required high quality service outcomes for Children and Young People.

## **2. Cabinet Member introduction:**

2.1 London Borough of Haringey's Children and Young People's Service (CYPS), engaged iMPower to support them in a review of the Fostering Service and specifically a review of the recruitment and assessment process of the carer's journey. There was also a wider review of the Service which included a review of the current commissioning arrangements and a wider analysis of capacity within the Service.

2.2 The project was carried out over a 12 week period and included the following activities:

- Baseline measurement of current performance relating to recruitment and retention of foster carers and a detailed analysis of the issues causing difficulty in this area.
- Research into the values and motivations of foster carers and their experience of Haringey Fostering Services. The research comprised of a telephone survey and focus groups that segmented carers by their Values Modes Profile.
- A capacity analysis of the Service.
- Opportunity analysis and options appraisal for future delivery models.
- Development of recommendations and implementation plan.

2.3 The full report is attached as Annex 1.



### **3. Recommendations:**

3.1 The Committee is asked to comment on the proposal to outsource the recruitment and assessment function to an External Recruitment Provider. This would have a number of benefits including:

- A faster recruitment and assessment process to attract, assess and train new prospective in-house foster carers. The contract would be based on a 'payment by results' arrangement;
- Improved recruitment of new foster carers through a targeted and joined up marketing strategy, but maintaining Council branding on all marketing communications;
- Reduced costs through improved performance management arrangements and implementing robust commissioning strategies; and
- The recruitment process would be informed by a comprehensive needs analysis for Haringey.

3.2 The timescale for implementation is estimated at five months. This would enable a contract to be in place for the new financial year and for savings to start to be realised. There are several activities that need to start as soon as possible to enable this ambitious timescale to be achieved.

These include:

- Project initiation activities, including confirming project timescales, completing the sufficiency and placements strategy informed by the needs analysis and liaising with key Haringey stakeholders including procurement and Human Resources;
- Mapping out in more detail the implications for service processes, implications for the service structure, staff and ICT;
- Engagement with staff and carers on the changes and co-producing the implementation plan;
- Designing a well informed marketing strategy to recruit new in-house foster carers that utilises the Value Modes insight to inform a new marketing strategy that is joined up across the carer journey; and
- Ensuring a robust governance structure is in place to monitor progress, performance and risk.



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#### **4. Other options considered:**

4.1 An options appraisal was carried out to assess whether some or all of the functions of the Service could be improved (and costs reduced) by finding alternative provision in the market place. The options assessed were as follows:

- a) Do nothing;
- b) Implement a new recruitment strategy informed by our Value Modes insight;
- c) Externalise the assessment and recruitment function, but retain the support team; and
- d) Outsource the Service in its entirety.

4.2 The options were appraised against a number of criteria which were agreed at the Fostering Review Group.

These were as follows:

- **Quality:** Likelihood to achieving the best outcomes possible for LAC in Haringey;
- **Cost:** Likelihood to achieve a balanced budget for placements from 2014/15 onwards and ability to demonstrate Value for Money;
- **Pace:** Likelihood to implement the changes and demonstrate improvements within the next 6 months;
- **Risk:** ensure that the delivery model has an acceptable level of risk associated with it; and.
- **Brand:** A view on what impact the 'brand' of the council may have on the delivery model.

4.3 A summary of the results from the options appraisal can be found in the final report attached as an Annex to this paper.

#### **5. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications**

Significant progress has been made in reducing both the numbers of looked after children and particularly looked after children placed in residential settings in order to deliver savings during 2012-13 and 2013-14. The placements budget will reduce by a further £2.25m in 2014-15 to meet corporate savings targets. In order to deliver against this challenging target, managers are increasingly focusing on unit costs. An independent foster placement currently costs £798 a week, compared to £357 a week where a child is placed with in-house foster carers. The strategy recommended in this report will support balancing the placements budget during 2014-15 and beyond and deliver better value for money.



## 6. Head of Legal Services and legal implications

- 6.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on this Report.
- 6.2 This Report broadly outlines the findings of the review of the Fostering Service and recommends outsourcing the recruitment and assessment function to an External Recruitment Provider. The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 as amended by The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 and The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Foster Services (as amended) provides the regulatory framework for the provision by the local authority of a fostering service of which include recruitment and assessment of prospective foster carers.
- 6.3 Subject to the public law principles of reasonableness, procedural impropriety and illegality, the Council has some discretion in the way it decides to discharge the recruitment and assessment function. The recommended service option (i.e. outsourcing) is within the Council's legal powers.
- 6.4. The Council should ensure that the recommended option enables it to effectively discharge its statutory obligations to looked after children, in particular, the obligation under Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 to take steps to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of looked after children in its local area ('sufficiency duty').
- 6.5 The recommended option is intended to deliver better value for money services for the Council. Under the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended), the Council is under a general duty of best value "to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". For the purpose of deciding how to fulfil this duty, the Council must consult service users, partners, voluntary sector, staff and other interested parties about the proposed changes and its implications. The Council should have regard to the Best Value Statutory Guidance 2011.
- 6.6 In making a decision on the recommendation, the Council must have due regard to the public sector equality duty set out Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 i.e. the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not. The duty covers the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. Having due regard to advancing equality involves considering the need to: remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics; meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; and encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low. The outcome of any



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consultation undertaken and Equality Impact Assessment should be considered before making a decision on the recommendation.

- 6.7 In order to comply with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and relevant legislation the procurement of an External Recruitment Provider will need to be undertaken by following a competitive tendering process. For the purposes of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (as amended), the recruitment and assessment of foster carers are Part B services and are not subject to the full European procurement regime. Where the contract value is at, or above, the relevant EU threshold, the Council must comply with the relevant, less comprehensive requirements of the Regulations. Legal Services should be consulted on the procurement process going forward.

**7. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments**

**8. Head of Procurement Comments**

**9. Policy Implication**

**10. Use of Appendices**

**11. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**





# London Borough of Haringey Fostering Service Review Final Report

Alix Cordell

Trudi Caldwell

Varun Sitaram

August 2013



2013 MCA Award Winner – Customer Engagement

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  - b) Summary of key findings





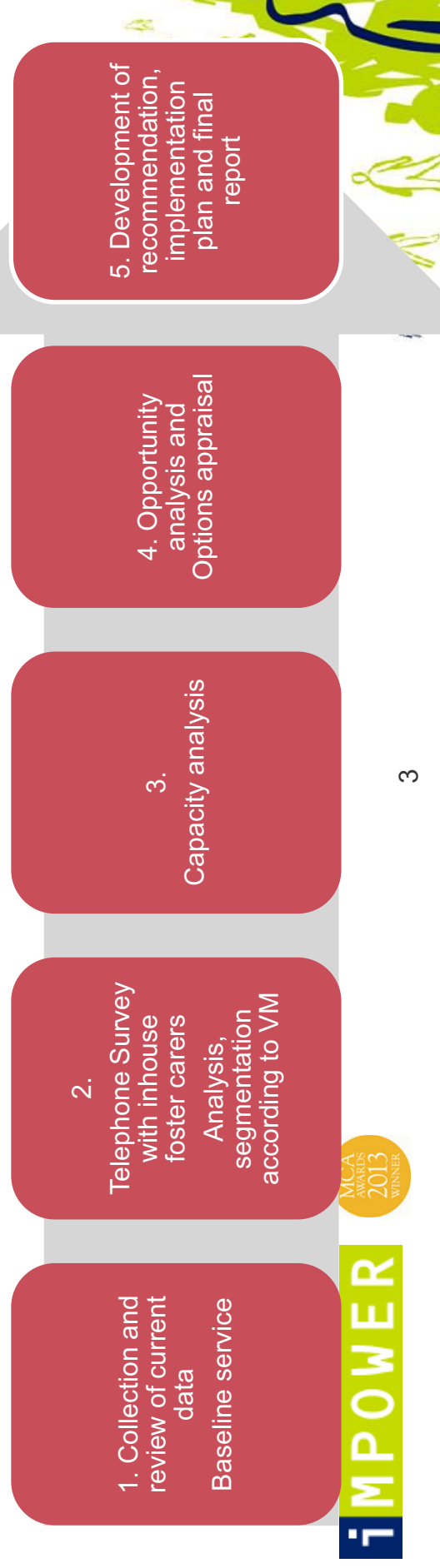
# Executive summary

## Our approach



Haringey Council

- ➔ LBoH engaged iMPOWER to support them in a review of their Fostering Service, and specifically a review of the recruitment and assessment process of the Carer journey. The Council wants to make a real difference through the use of the insight generated by understanding the views and motivations of foster carers to inform a strategy of how to increase the number of foster carers to meet a growing demand for certain types of permanency placements
- ➔ There was also a wider review of the service which included a review of the current commissioning arrangements and a wider analysis of capacity within the service.
- ➔ A key element of the project was the identification of the Values Modes of inhouse foster carers and link feedback directly to underlying motivations
- ➔ Values Modes explain emotions, attitudes and motivations that inform behaviour and can be used to inform a targeted strategy for the recruitment of foster carers. For LBoH, these were children over the age of four, siblings and children with disabilities
- ➔ The project followed a five stage approach as outlined below:





# Executive Summary

## Our findings



The review identified a number of key findings:

- ➔ There is an issue with the recruitment and retention of inhouse foster carers, with a net loss of 22 inhouse foster carers in 2011/12
- ➔ Return on investment of marketing spend is not monitored
- ➔ There is no commissioning strategy in place for the procurement of IFAs
- ➔ The spend on IFAs in 2012/13 was over £10 million and there is no monitoring of the contracts
- ➔ Spend on placements is high. There is significant scope to reduce the cost of placements
- ➔ Supervising Social Workers are sometimes resisting placements with inhouse foster carers
- ➔ There is an issue with the quality of information recorded on Frameworki

In addition:

- ➔ Performance management within the team is hampered by a lack of sufficiently robust management information.
- ➔ The distributed nature of the team restricts the effectiveness and consistency of communication between staff teams and between staff and carers.
- ➔ There is a lack of local information about the needs, motivations and behaviour of foster carers and prospective foster carers
- ➔ There is therefore limited understanding of what specifically is constraining the ability of the service to effectively place all children approved for foster care placements with an inhouse foster carer
- ➔ The current structure of the teams appears to be restricting the ability of the team to work effectively – prospective kinship foster carers are prioritised over task based



# Executive Summary

## Summary of Options



**Haringey Council**

**Key:**

○ Low

◐

◑

◒

◓ High

Option	Impact	Rank	Feasibility				
			Cost	Quality	Pace	Risk	Brand
1 Do Nothing	L	4	○	○	◓	○	◐
2a. Status Quo Plus	M	2	◐	◑	◐	◐	◓
2b. Status Quo Plus + outsource R&A	M	1	◐	◓	◐	◑	◓
3. Outsource	H	3	○	◐	◐	◐	○

**Based on the outcome from the Options Appraisal, the recommendation is Option 2b**



# Executive Summary

## Recommendation overview

The Council are still involved in marketing activity and all marketing collateral has the Council 'branding'. VM insight and the expertise from External Recruitment Provider used to inform the Marketing Strategy

The VM toolkit would inform the communication strategy with the foster carer throughout

### Recruitment → Outsource

### Retention → Fostering Team

Marketing

Enquiry

Initial info

Screening

Training

Assessment

Approval

Matching / placement

Reviews / visits / supervision

Leaving

Support

Development

Assessment turnaround is on average between 8-10 weeks and is carried out by ISWs

Pre-approval training provided, supplemented with support from the Council, typically a Social Worker and a Foster Carer

Handover to the Council. To deal with the additional workload, social workers from the Recruitment & Assessment team would be interviewed for the posts

Placement Officers would move to the Commissioning team and organise the inhouse placement

Awareness **Imagining** **Waiting** **Committing**

Inspiration **Information** **Reassurance**

On going support

Engagement must respond to the needs of the carer at different points along the journey



# Executive Summary

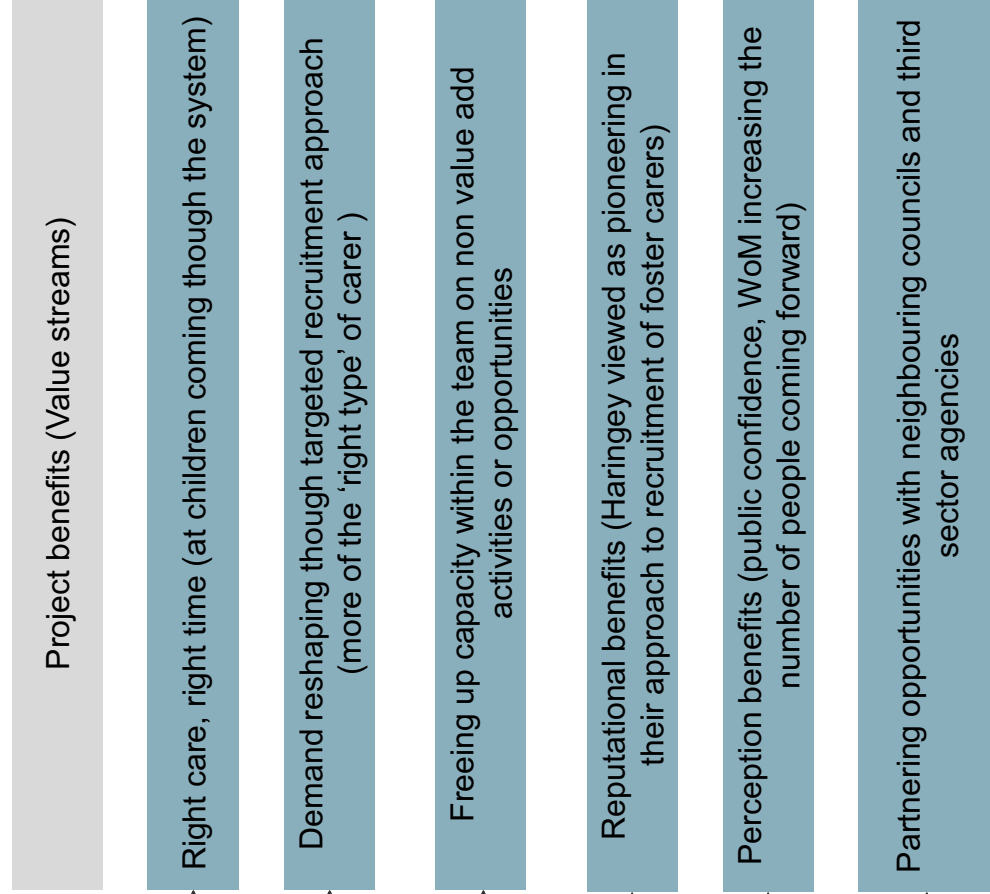
## Our recommendations



Recommendation	Activity
Completion of a needs analysis to inform a sufficiency and placement strategy	Most of the information required to inform a needs analysis has been gathered as part of this project. Work still needs to be done to confirm the number and target profile to inform a strategy to recruit more inhouse foster carers
Clarity on expectations of staff across the service	Creation of a staff and foster carer 'pledge'. Involvement of staff in the implementation phase including input to the new carer journey
Completion of baseline and implementation of KPI tracking	The baseline picture has been gathered as part of the project. Work needs to be done to confirm KPI tracking in line with sign off of the recommended option
Monitoring statistics and quality measures such as placement breakdown, conversion rate, market share (IFA and inhouse)	Regular gathering and monitoring of this information as part of the governance arrangements of the next stage of the project
Monitoring KPIs such as completion of visits on time as well as regular feedback from inhouse foster carers	An overarching strategy for wider placements that is revisited at regular intervals to ensure it is fit for purpose
Creation of a sufficiency and placement strategy	Head of Commissioning and Placements to keep the Consortia group actively up to date with progress with a view to progressing more joint working in the future
Provide an update to the Consortia group on the project recommendations and appetite for more joint working in the future Meet with External Recruitment Provider to explore further the opportunity to work with	Have in place the placement strategy to inform discussions



# There are a number of benefits that could be achieved from implementing the project's recommendations





**Key**

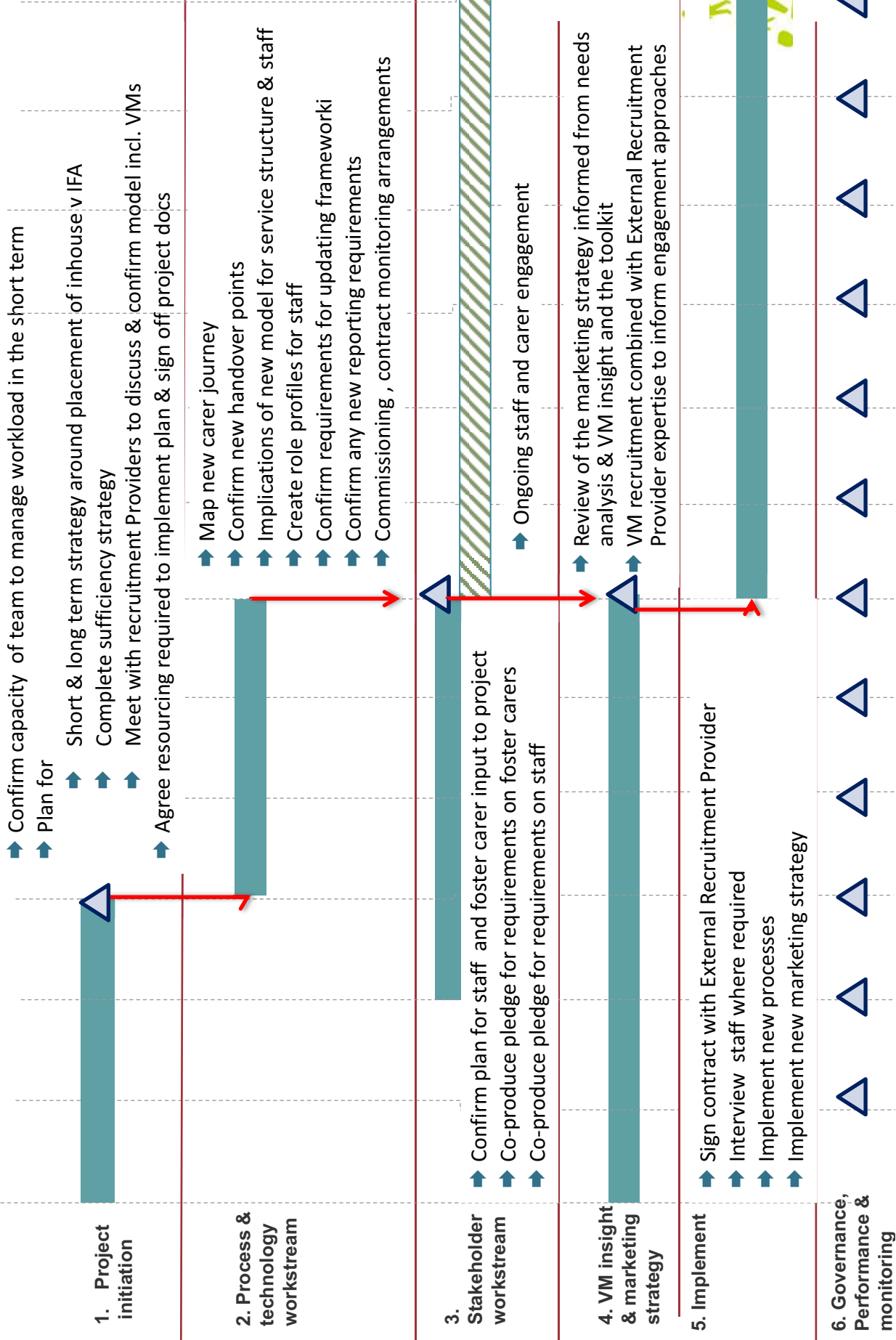
△ Sign off required

# High level plan



## Project duration

Week 1    Week 2    Week 3    Week 4    Week 5    Week 6    Week 7    Week 8    Week 9    Week 10    Week 11    Week 12





# 1. Introduction and context



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# Context



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The Fostering Service was rated *adequate* by OFSTED in August 2011. In response to this, a Service Improvement Plan was prepared with progress against the plan reported to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee. An internal audit review was carried out in January 2013 and identified a number of areas of concern around lack of progress on the improvement plan as well as highlighting areas where compliance against practice standards were not being met.

External pressure has led to more demand for in-house foster carers than supply, leading to disproportionate use of IFAs, with over £10 million being spent on external foster care placements in 2012/13.

Placements now represents one of the single biggest pressures on the Council.

There is no strategy on understanding the number and profile of foster carers required and no commissioning strategy that informs what should be bought from IFAs.

Comparator information from peer authorities points to a significant improvement opportunity to build in-house market share.

Beyond national research, there is a lack of local information about the needs, motivations and behaviour of carers and prospective carers.

There is therefore limited understanding of what specifically is constraining performance.





## Our findings



The review identified a number of key findings:

- ➔ There is an issue with the recruitment and retention of inhouse foster carers, with a net loss of 22 inhouse foster carers in 2011/12
- ➔ Return on investment of marketing spend is not monitored
- ➔ There is no commissioning strategy in place for the procurement of IFAs
- ➔ The spend on IFAs in 2012/13 was over £10 million and there is no monitoring of the contracts
- ➔ Spend on placements is high. There is significant scope to reduce the cost of placements
- ➔ Supervising Social Workers are sometimes resisting placements with inhouse foster carers
- ➔ There is an issue with the quality of information recorded on Frameworki

In addition:

- ➔ Performance management within the team is hampered by a lack of sufficiently robust management information.
- ➔ The distributed nature of the team restricts the effectiveness and consistency of communication between staff teams and between staff and carers.
- ➔ There is a lack of local information about the needs, motivations and behaviour of foster carers and prospective foster carers
- ➔ There is therefore limited understanding of what specifically is constraining the ability of the service to effectively place all children approved for foster care placements with an inhouse foster carer
- ➔ The current structure of the teams appears to be restricting the ability of the team to work effectively – prospective kinship foster carers are prioritised over task based



## 2. Our approach



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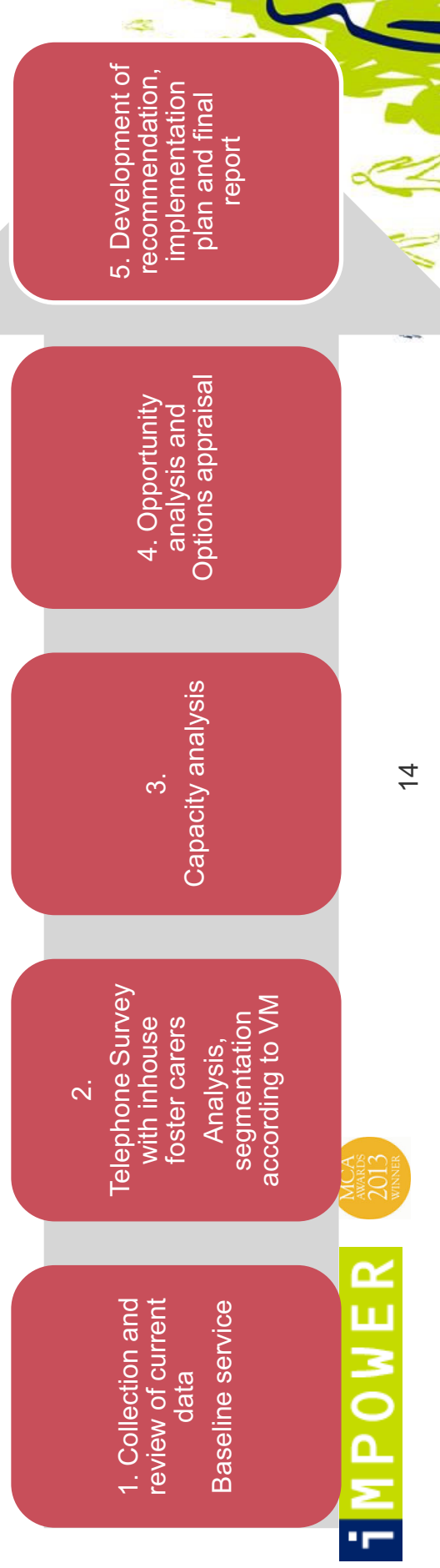


# Our approach



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- ➔ LBoH engaged iMPOWER to support them in a review of their Fostering Service, and specifically a review of the recruitment and assessment process of the Carer journey. The Council wants to make a real difference through the use of the insight generated by understanding the views and motivations of foster carers to inform a strategy of how to increase the number of foster carers to meet a growing demand for certain types of permanency placements
- ➔ There was also a wider review of the service which included a review of the current commissioning arrangements and a wider analysis of capacity within the service.
- ➔ A key element of the project was the identification of the Values Modes of inhouse foster carers and link feedback directly to underlying motivations
- ➔ Values Modes explain emotions, attitudes and motivations that inform behaviour and can be used to inform a targeted strategy for the recruitment of foster carers. For LBoH, these were children over the age of four, siblings and children with disabilities
- ➔ The project followed a five stage approach as outlined below:





## 3a. Findings: carer journey



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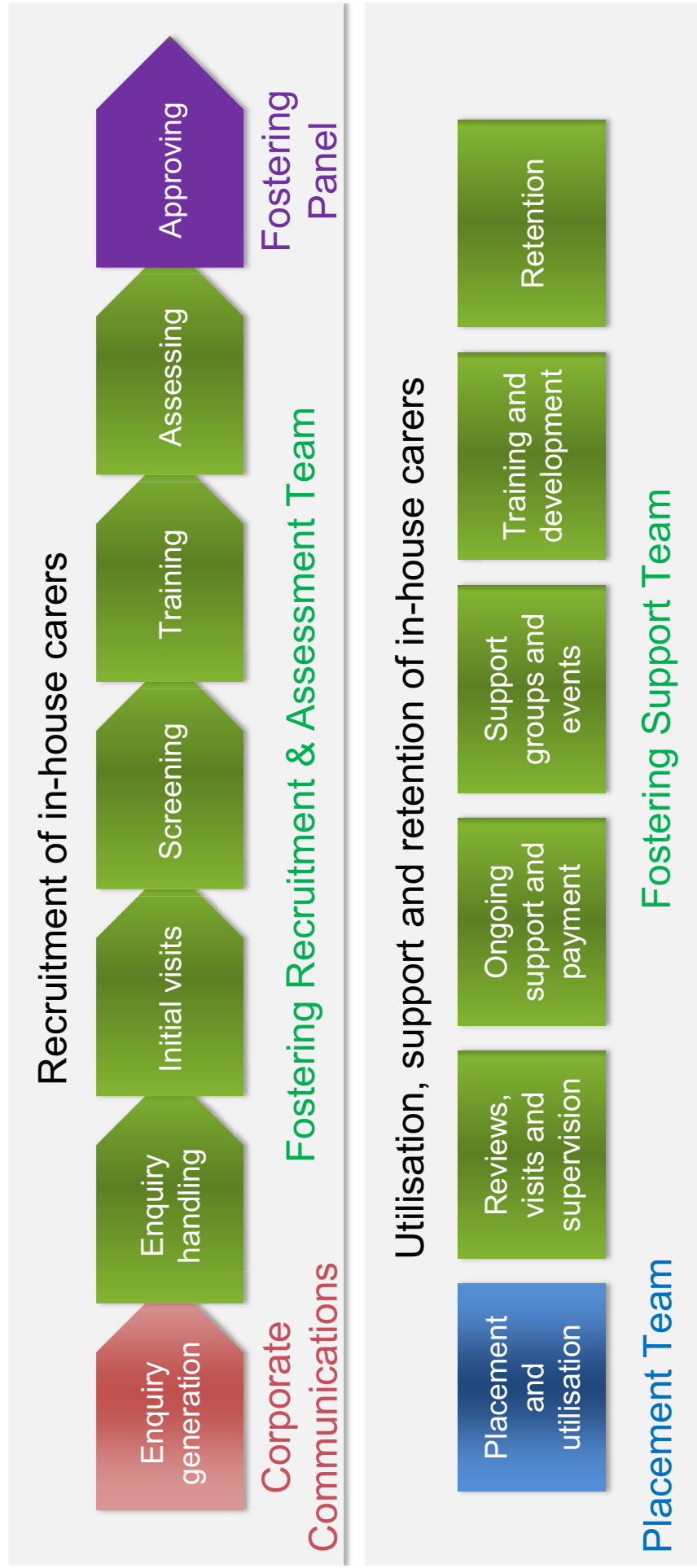


# Fostering – Carer Journey



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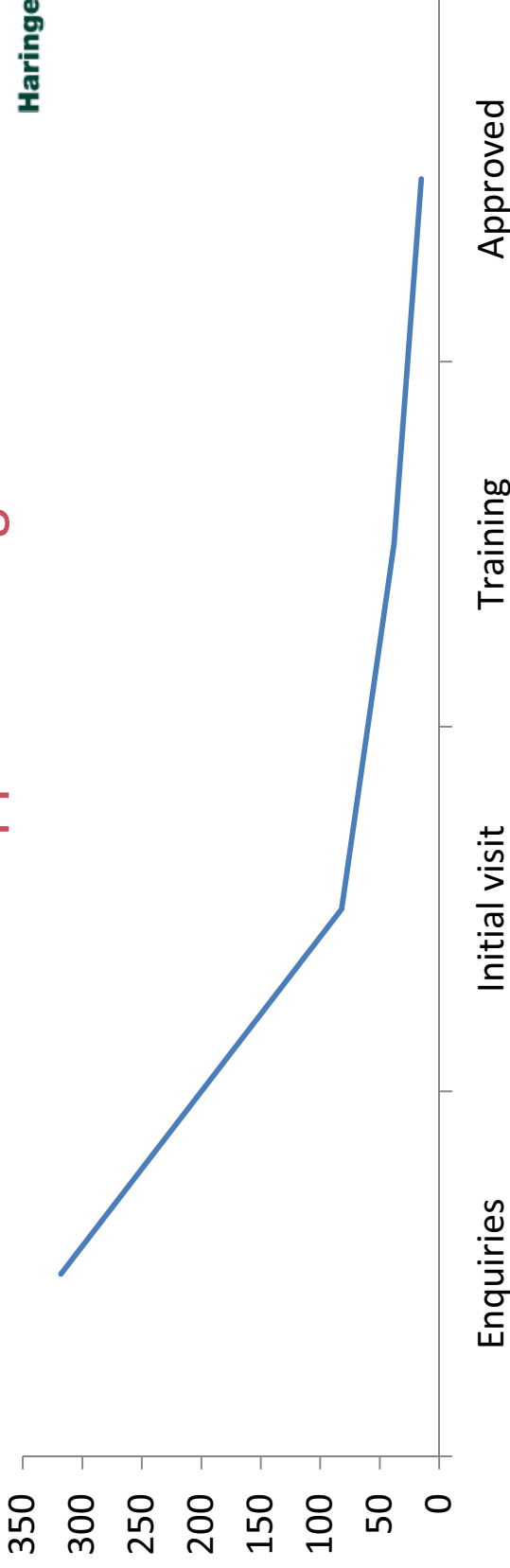
The fostering service comprises of two teams. One team handles the recruitment and assessment tasks of the carer journey and the second team provides the support to inhouse foster carers. A high level overview of the process is detailed below.







## Only a small proportion of initial enquiries reach the approval stage



	Enquiries	Initial visit	Training	Approved
Number	318	82	38	15
Conversion rate	100%	26%	12%	5%
Average Duration (stage)	54 days	134 days		197 days
Average Duration (total)	385 days			

Source: Fostering team records, 2011-12

**Fewer than 1 in 5 enquiries lead to approval, with the process sometimes taking longer than a year**



## The conversion rate is below average



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The conversion rate of approved inhouse foster carers continues to fall as illustrated below and is well below the national average.

Stage (April 2011 – March 2012)	Conversion (2011/12)		Conversion (2012/13)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Enquiries	318	100%	228	100%
Initial Visits	82	26%	60	26%
Training	38	12%	33	14%
Assessed	NO DATA RECEIVED		28	12%
Approved	15	5%	8	4%
<b>Net conversion rate</b>	<b>5%</b>		<b>4%</b>	
<b>Average (iMPOWER benchmarking)</b>	<b>7%</b>			

Source: 2011 & 2012 stats from Teresa Stratford

Source: 2012 & 2013 stats for CPAC from Teresa Stratford

**96% of prospective foster carers do not complete the process**

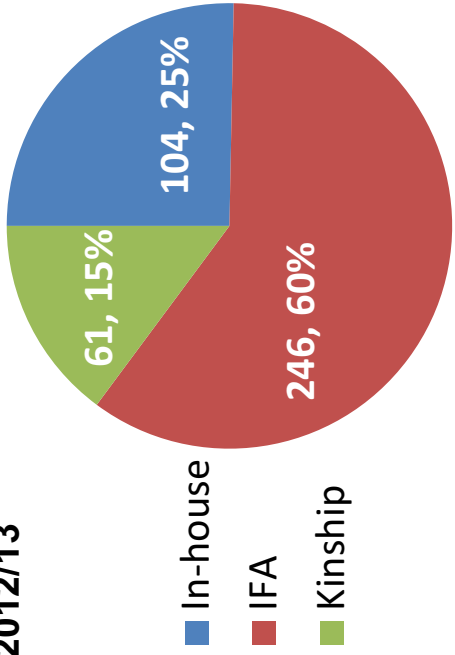


# IFAs have a significant proportion of placements



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2012/13



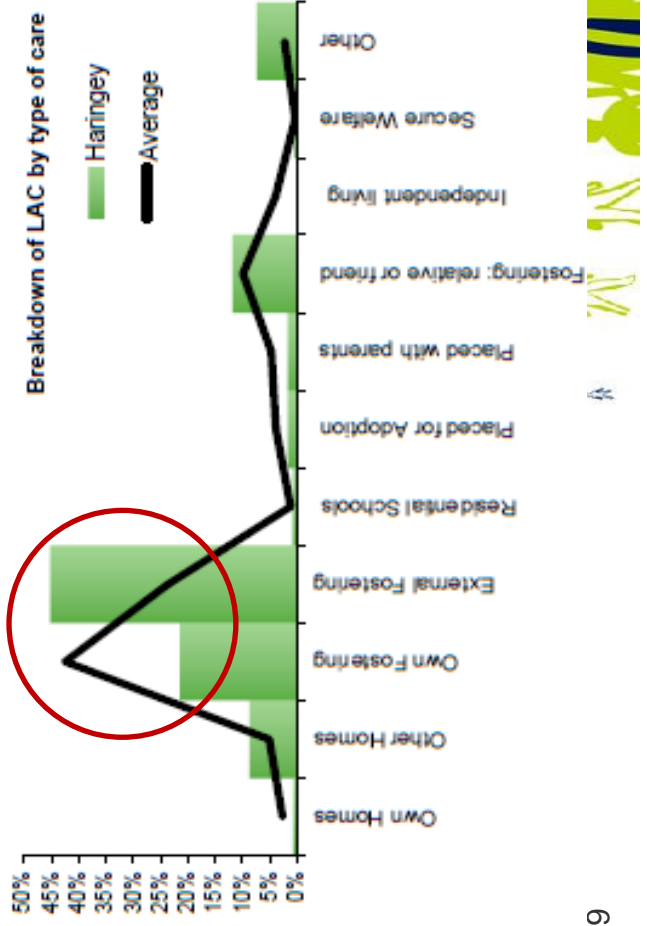
Source: Corporate performance

- ➔ According to the 2012 CIPFA, LBoH is well below the comparator average in terms of foster care market share as highlighted in the graph to the left
- ➔ This illustrates that there is significant scope for improvement

Source: CIPFA return 2012



- ➔ As of March 2013, there were 411 LAC in foster care placements
- ➔ A significant proportion (60%) of fostering placements are with IFA carers
- ➔ It also appears that places cannot always be found with agencies on the IFA framework contract. Currently only 2 IFAs out of the 6 have a LBoH child placed with them
- ➔ This results in spot purchasing and increased service costs





## There is a shortage of in-house supply across the placement age range



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- ➔ A comparison of placements across in-house and IFA carers shows that there is an opportunity to reclaim market share across the age spectrum.
- ➔ In particular there is significant scope to convert some younger child placements, which may represent a quicker win.

Age	Agency (no)	Agency (%)	inhouse (no)	inhouse (%)	Kinship (no)	Kinship (%)
Under 5	53	22%	31	30%	13	21%
5 - 9	79	32%	12	12%	17	28%
10 - 15	87	35%	40	38%	22	36%
16+	27	11%	21	20%	9	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data from Richard Hutton, March 2013



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## The service needs an informed strategy of which LAC cohort should be placed with an IFA



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Ethnicity	LAC placed with IFAs
Asian or Asian British	31%
Black or Black British	58%
Mixed	47%
Not Stated (Information not yet obtained)	50%
Other Ethnic Groups	67%
White (British)	72%
White (Other)	67%

Presenting need	LAC placed with IFAs
Absent parenting	40%
Abuse or Neglect	64%
Child's Disability/Illness	33%
Family dysfunction	56%
Family in acute stress	63%
Low income: Other financial difficulties	50%
Parental illness or disability	44%
Socially unacceptable behaviour	60%

- ➔ IFAs take a particularly high proportion of White British children – there is an opportunity for the service to accommodate more of these children by targeting more White British foster carers
- ➔ Placements involving disability (either child or parent) are mostly taken in-house – should the service look at specialising its in-house service and actively outsourcing particular types of placement?

**There are some quick wins for the service in reclaiming market share**



# Marketing activity is not linked to enquiry generation



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Activity	Details
Carers (households) recruited	24 (17)
Total spend	£22,495.69
Media channels used	Magazines
	Billboards
	Online
	Events
	Newspaper editorials (local & national)
Number	Marketing Unit cost
Enquiries 318	£70.74
Approvals 17	£1323.28

Source: Marketing Activity Results 2011/12

- ➔ Marketing for inhouse foster carers is carried out by the Corporate Communications Team
- ➔ A marketing strategy does exist, which outlines marketing objectives including the recruitment of 48 new carers over a 3 year period
- ➔ Multiple media sources are used to generate enquiries

### However:

- ➔ It is not clear how the figure of 48 was arrived at
- ➔ Monitoring of return on investment is needed to target efforts to greatest effect (ie. Monitoring which enquiries are generated from marketing activity)
- ➔ Values Modes insight will help to inform targeting activity



Resulting in limited understanding of the return on investment



## There is a recognition that the status quo is not sustainable



- ➔ **Recruitment**
  - ➔ Enquiry rates are decreasing
  - ➔ Conversion rates are also falling
  - ➔ The journey to placement appears to take on average a year to complete and the longest took over 400 days
- ➔ **Retention**
  - ➔ More carers left the service than were recruited in 2012/13 resulting in a net loss of 22 (7 approved but 29 left)
- ➔ **Market share**
  - ➔ As of March 2013, there were 411 LAC in foster care placements
  - ➔ A significant proportion of these (60%) are with IFA carers, costing the service in 2012/13 just under £10.5million
- ➔ **General**
  - ➔ Information limitations inhibit performance and business management
  - ➔ Recruitment progress is not tracked by individual case or against target
  - ➔ Marketing returns on investment (cost : enquiries) are not routinely monitored
  - ➔ There is no live or accessible IFA carers' (or placement) register / summary analysis to provide a snapshot of market 'leakage' (in-house shortage)
  - ➔ There is no forward look at in-house capacity / demand / utilisation
  - ➔ Key targets and metrics e.g. in-house market share and unit cost have a low profile in the business

**There needs to be a shift in culture – one which is centred around core business objectives**



## 3b. Project findings - capacity



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# Capacity review



It was recognised that an important part of the picture is capacity of the team to cope with the current workload and to gain insight to the root cause of the problem. This was especially important as if the team are currently not meeting minimum requirements with the current cohort of inhouse foster carers, then any increase as part of a recruitment drive would exacerbate the situation.

For each team, an analysis of activities and available time was carried out. A summary of each team is provided below.

**1 The recruitment & assessment team**

- ➔ 5.5 staff FTE
- The team must adhere to the following timescales:
- ➔ Task-centred assessments should be completed within **18 weeks**
- ➔ Kinship assessments should be completed within **10 weeks**
- ➔ If these two conditions are met, the service is currently moving at capacity

**2 The support team**

- ➔ 7.5 staff FTE
- ➔ Team carries out the following tasks:
  - ➔ Visits to foster carers
  - ➔ Feeding into LAC reviews and annual reviews
  - ➔ Internal duties including administration and team meetings





# Lack of capacity is lengthening assessments, which could be leading suitable carers to withdraw from the process



Haringey Council

Actions required to fulfil internal duties	Hours per task	Hours per week
Supervision	2	0.46
Team meeting	2	1.3
Admin (non-case-specific)	2	2.0
Total hours per week		3.8

Our assessment of the capacity of the recruitment & assessment team has shown that:

➔ There are 16 cases in total (12 task-centred cases and 4 kinship cases) where the carers have been to the prep group but have **not** been allocated a social worker

➔ This results in delays to the assessment process

➔ These delays **could** be leading to potential high quality carers dropping out of assessment and approval process

Hours per week required	Available casework time week <sup>-1</sup> (hours)
Kinship (11 cases)	147.7
Task-centred (14 cases)	-3.1
Private (6 cases)	
Total	16

➔ Those that are approved may not be allocated a Supervising Social Worker as the support team struggle to cope with their current workload

Task	Hours per task (Task-centred)	Hours per task (Kinship)
Visit	24	18
Referee visit	6	6
Chasing info & extra interviews	7	7
Form F/Assessment write up	29	29
Corrections & carer input	7	7
Supervision tasks & meetings		7
Panel attendance & preparation	3	3
Total hours per week	76	77

**Capacity constraints are lengthening assessment timescales**



# Initial analysis for the support team suggested there weren't enough Supervising Social workers



Haringey Council

## 2 The support team

Actions required to fulfil internal duties	Hours per month	Hours per day
Supervision	2.0	0.11
Team meeting	8.7	0.47
Training	7.0	0.38
Support group	3.0	0.16
Admin (non-case)	7.0	0.38
Short reports & referrals	8.7	0.47
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>1.97</b>

Action required for each visit	Hours per case
Visit	2
Write up	1
Follow up	3
Travel	1
<b>Hours per visit</b>	<b>7</b>

**Available casework hours per day** 5.23

The hours per visit appears high

### ➔ Stipulations:

1. All foster carers should receive a visit from their Supervising Social Worker once every 6 weeks
2. Supervising Social workers should be present at every LAC Review (twice a year for each child)
3. Annual reviews take place once every 12 months

Each 6-weekly period	
Hours per case	9.04
Available casework hours	137
<b>Maximum caseload</b>	<b>14</b>

Supervising social workers (FTE)	7.5
Maximum caseload capacity	105
Active cases	142
Difference (cases)	37
<b>Difference (FTE Supervising social workers)</b>	<b>-2.6</b>

**However, maximum caseloads of 14 proved to be smaller than comparable authorities**



# Scenarios were modelled to explore implications of increasing caseload capacity on the available length of time for each visit



	Figures presented on 24/7/2013	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Cases per SSW	14	24	18
Hours per visit	7	3.5	5.75
Cases per team (7.5 FTE)	105	180	135

Action required for each visit	Hours per case
Visit	2
Write up	1
Follow up	3
Travel	1
<b>Hours per visit</b>	<b>7</b>

There is potential for more efficient ways of working to reduce the number of hours per visit

- ➔ **Scenario 1** – If the time per visit is reduced to 3.5 hours, there would be a significant increase in capacity, enough to bring more placements in-house, which would reduce service costs
- ➔ **Scenario 2** – If each SSW had 18 cases, the time per visit would need to be reduced slightly, but the team’s capacity would be enough to accommodate almost all of the current in-house foster carers

**A caseload capacity of 18 with 5.75 hours per visit was the preferred scenario. This is now being monitored by the Team Leaders in the Support Team**



# Feedback from carers reinforces the current issues observed with capacity of the team



Haringey Council



*Prospective carers withdrawing*

*Carers often feel that they do not receive adequate support*

*Not able to find placements with in-house carers*

- ➔ From the carer's perspective, assessment take too long – sometimes more than a year and up to 18 months in some cases
- ➔ Feedback from the focus groups indicated that some carers were **dissatisfied with the level of communication** they received during the process
- ➔ The lengthy process creates a feeling of **disengagement** amongst carers and may lead some potentially high quality carers to withdraw
- ➔ The support team does not have enough capacity for carers to be visited on a 6-weekly basis, especially as unplanned issues also arise (based on each SSW having 14 cases)
- ➔ This creates problems for the placements team, who are often unable to find placements for children with in-house carers, leading to a high proportion of placements going to IFAs, which significantly increases service costs

**Lack of capacity in both recruitment and support is contributing to poor service performance**



# Benchmark: Caseload Capacity



Haringey Council

Comparator councils (other London boroughs)	IFAs	Haringey
10-20 cases per Supervising Social Worker	10-20 cases per Supervising Social Worker	8-24 cases per Supervising Social Worker

Source: *The Fostering Network*

- ➔ In Haringey, the number of cases per Supervising Social Worker is spread over a much larger range than in both the comparator authorities and IFAs
- ➔ This is further indication that caseloads are not being adequately monitored and managed to maximise service provision and efficiency
- ➔ This serves to illustrate the importance of clear targets, performance management guidelines, and culture in ensuring that the team lifts its performance
- ➔ It also indicates that there is scope to improve efficiency in the team, increasing caseloads whilst maintaining regular visits and write ups
- ➔ The lower average caseload in IFAs partly explains their higher fees

**Ensuring consistent and reasonable caseloads will increase capacity**





## 3c. Project findings - commissioning



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## What is commissioning?



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Commissioning is the entire process of assessing need based on sound social intelligence, prioritising areas for review based on this need, determining the most appropriate solution and then procuring the new commissioning option. It also includes the ongoing monitoring and review of outcomes derived from these commissioning decisions. When looking at the future of service delivery there are a range of options open to the Council which are:

### **Decommissioning**

One commissioning option that is often ignored is decommissioning a service altogether. Whilst this does highlight some difficult issues, it is an option that should be considered. When decommissioning, other options of delivering services could be explored such as migrating the service in to a new delivery model.

### **Service Redesign**

As part of the Council's transformation agenda there is an increasing need to ensure that front line services are integrated as far as possible, designed around the needs of customers whilst at the same time reducing the cost of service delivery. This will inevitably lead to redesigning the existing service structure and will therefore form a significant part of future commissioning activity.

### **Buying it Ourselves**

Significant benefits can be achieved if a more strategic approach to the way the council procures and commissions services.

**The Fostering Service needs to be smarter in the way they commission  
and use resources**





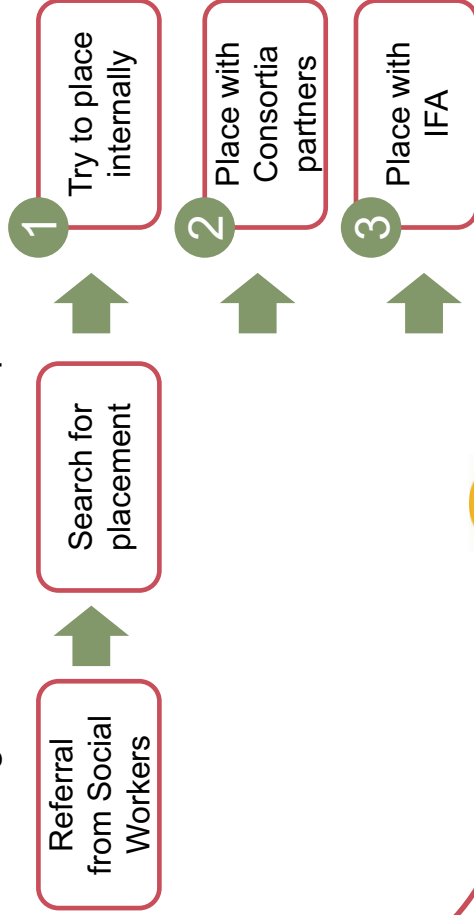
# Commissioning: Family Placement Team



Haringey Council

## Overview

- ➔ The Placements Team was set up 7 years ago and has 4 FTEs and one team manager post which is currently vacant
- ➔ Anecdotally we have heard that placement information on Frameworks is often not up to date and placement officers rely on speaking to team managers to find out which inhouse carers don't have a placement
- ➔ The Supervising Social Workers currently have influence over whether a child is placed with an inhouse carer. Placements should be made in line with good commissioning not individual influence
- ➔ The IFA framework contract is not currently monitored by the team. One of the placement officers commented that they had had no guidance from procurement on this and how this should be done
- ➔ Overall, there appears to be minimal liaison with Procurement and team also weren't involved in informing any needs assessment for the current framework contract
- ➔ A high level overview of the process is shown below:



IFAs on the framework get prioritised. Spot purchasing occurs when a child can't be placed with an IFA on the framework

In reality the default is the third option



# Commissioning, procurement and provision: key points of model



Ingey Council

## 1. Follows corporate and departmental commissioning models

- ➔ Follows commissioning model being adopted across the Council
- ➔ Fits with existing departmental approaches to adopting the commissioning model

## 2. Strengthens commissioning

- ➔ Provides a clear strategy or specification of the services required including the quality, safeguarding and eligibility criteria in line with the budget
- ➔ This strategy/specification makes use of intelligence, combining needs, wants and the existing provider market to inform this strategy
- ➔ The strategy/specification provides a basis for the commissioning, procurement and providers to work towards

## 3. Clear and transparent value from providers

- ➔ Clear procurement & provider split, so competition is encouraged and the Council can be seen to be delivering best value
- ➔ All providers will have access to the market and will have SLAs to focus their delivery on.

## 4. Consolidated procurement

- ➔ Procurement will be focused on delivering the commissioning strategy/specification through using the most effective procurement frameworks to deliver the requirements.
- ➔ The procurement function will work closely with commissioning, in delivering the commissioning strategy/specification

**iMPOWER recommends a clear definition of roles and responsibilities with the purchaser and provider roles separated to ensure value for money**



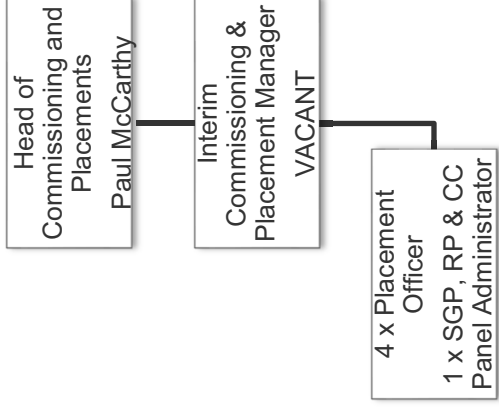
# So what does this mean for the Fostering Service?



Haringey Council

- ➔ Strategic commissioning: based on an informed understanding of:
  - ➔ Analysis of need and demand,
  - ➔ Trend information
  - ➔ Benchmarking of service provision
  - ➔ Mapping of the supplier market – in-house and external
- ➔ Market shaping to grow the market to meet demand
- ➔ Partnership working between purchasers and providers and monitoring of contracts
- ➔ Regular monitoring of contracts with a focus on improving outcomes
- ➔ Embed partnership working between LAs and providers

➔ The Placement Officer posts should sit within Children’s Commissioning



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### 3d. Value modes findings



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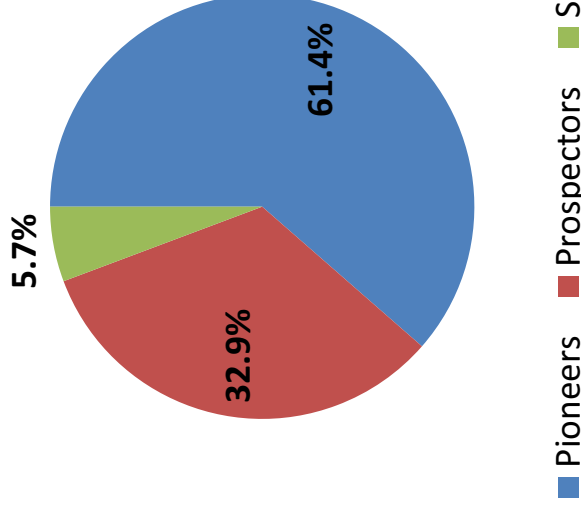


# Consultation with foster carers & the Values Modes approach



- ➔ 70 inhouse foster carers were surveyed by telephone over a 2 week period at the end of June 2013.
- ➔ The telephone sample represented 50% of the active in-house cohort
- ➔ A number of carers were then invited to attend a focus group

<b>Pioneers</b>	<b>61%</b> (national average 41%)
<b>Prospectors</b>	<b>33%</b> (national average 28%)
<b>Settlers</b>	<b>4%</b> (national average 30%)



- ➔ The majority of inhouse foster carers are Pioneers, however, the proportion is lower than we have typically seen elsewhere
- ➔ There are a higher proportion of Prospectors than we have typically found elsewhere
- ➔ Nationally, we are finding that most foster carers are Pioneers, so an active recruitment strategy to target this group is likely to help Haringey recruit more carers and importantly, more of the right type of carer
- ➔ This is a striking finding and in parallel with a number of projects iMPOWER have carried out (including in Staffordshire and Buckinghamshire CC) indicating this is not unique to LBoH
- ➔ This has strong implications for how the council communicates and engages with it's current foster carers but also in how to attract new prospective foster carers





## Foster carer focus groups: what we found – feedback highlights



Haringey Council

*“I don’t have  
anyone to speak  
to”*

*“never considered other  
agencies”*

*“Most people don’t  
have supervising  
social workers”*

*“I don’t feel valued at all”*

*“What sort of children to  
we want to raise? With a  
mum that doesn’t work  
on benefits”*

*“Feel bad [about  
having to make an  
issue about the  
money] because it’s  
all about the child”*

*“[I have] recommended foster  
care but people are not always  
Haringey-based”*

**Improving support could help recruit more high quality carers**



## Why is this of interest to the project?



Haringey Council

Our previous experience in fostering has shown that by developing a powerful values-based targeting strategy and framework with which to drive and co-ordinate recruitment and engagement is highly effective in increasing the quality and in turn the conversion rate of enquiries throughout the carer journey.

What does this mean for this project in terms of informing an approach to:

- Increase the recruitment and retention of foster carers
  - Improve the conversation rate of the process (ie. Enquiry through to approval)
1. There is a huge opportunity to refocus the service to consciously target pioneers
  2. It presents a much greater chance of success in achieving the above objectives by using the insight gathered through this project to inform a recruitment strategy centred around the foster carer
  3. Foster carers with the identified Pioneer / Prospector 'Attributes' will be both more likely to respond to calls to action and to deliver successful caring outcomes. This provides a powerful **targeting strategy** and framework with which to drive and co-ordinate recruitment and engagement.

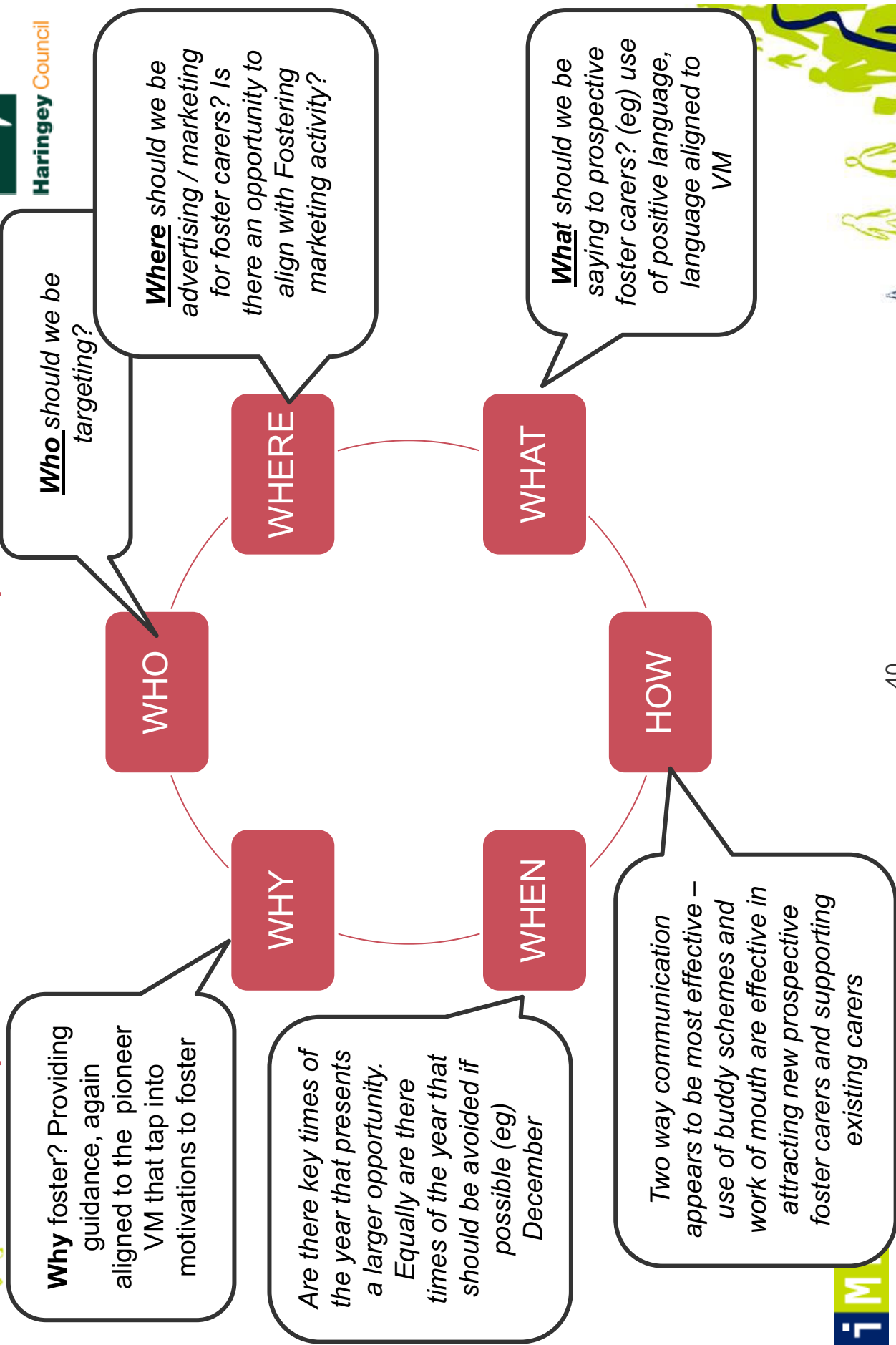
**This has strong implications for how we engage and influence foster carers and directly impacts on our strategy for increasing the recruitment of foster carers**

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# The recruitment strategy would need to incorporate answers to the questions below







## 4. Solution development



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## What good looks like for Haringey



Through the information gathered and meetings with senior stakeholders the following was agreed on what good would look like for Haringey's fostering service:

- We have a more informed view of what the demand for placements is likely to be
- We can demonstrate that we have recruited the "right" foster carers to meet the needs of looked after children
- We can reduce costs by having a strategy to the appropriate use of IFAs
- We can measure the effectiveness of our inhouse service
- We have reliable information that informs management decisions
- We make better use of the consortia arrangements
- We will have robust commissioning arrangements to ensure sufficiency as outlined in a Sufficiency Plan demonstrating what placements we require, will require in future and plans to ensure that the stated aims are met
- We will have a clear and well managed contract between the carer and the Local Authority
- We can have a more productive and efficient workforce by implementing a robust performance management framework
- There will be clarity in the roles and responsibilities between the Supervising Social Worker and the Child's Social Worker



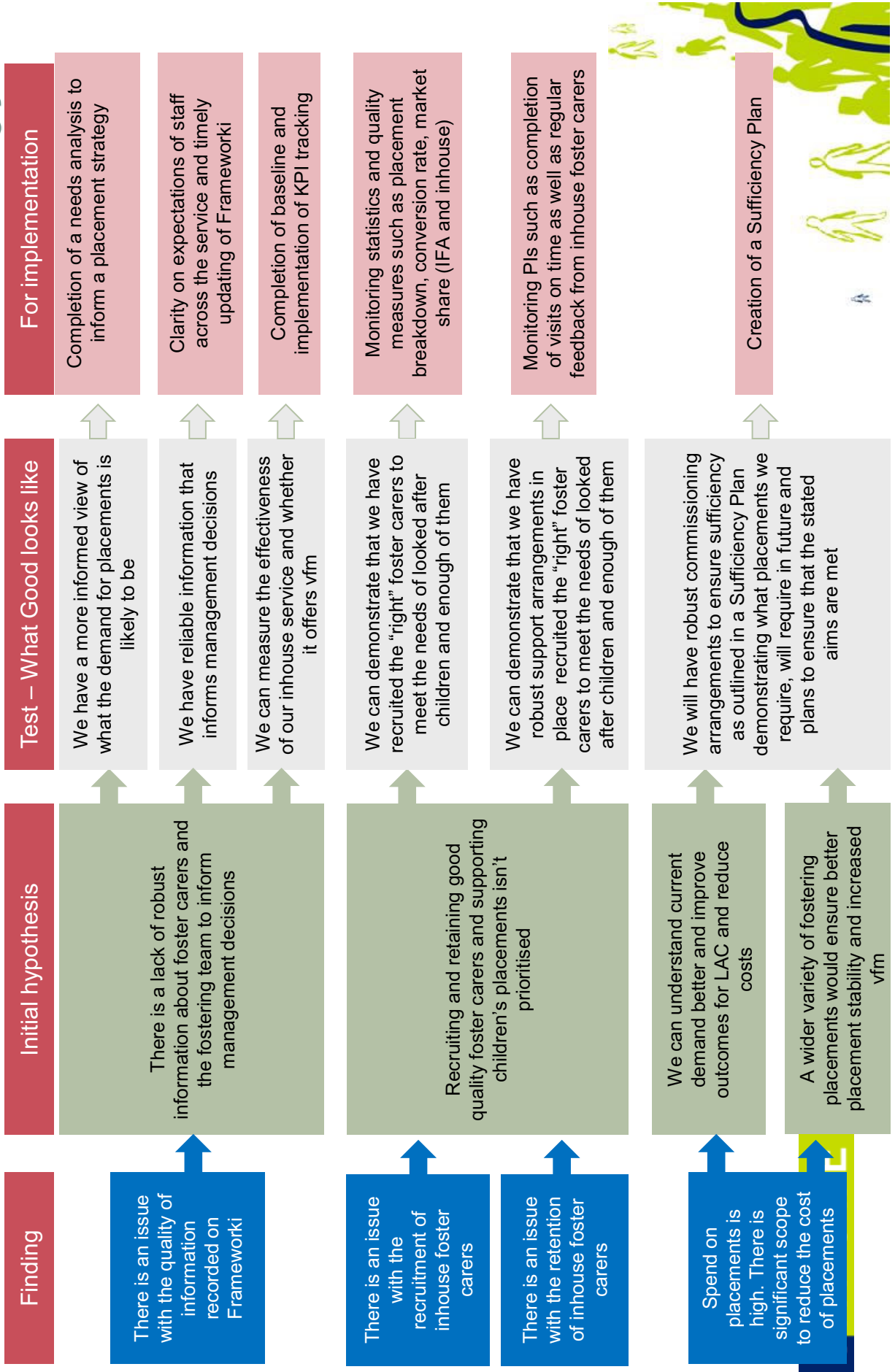


# Findings, hypotheses and solutions

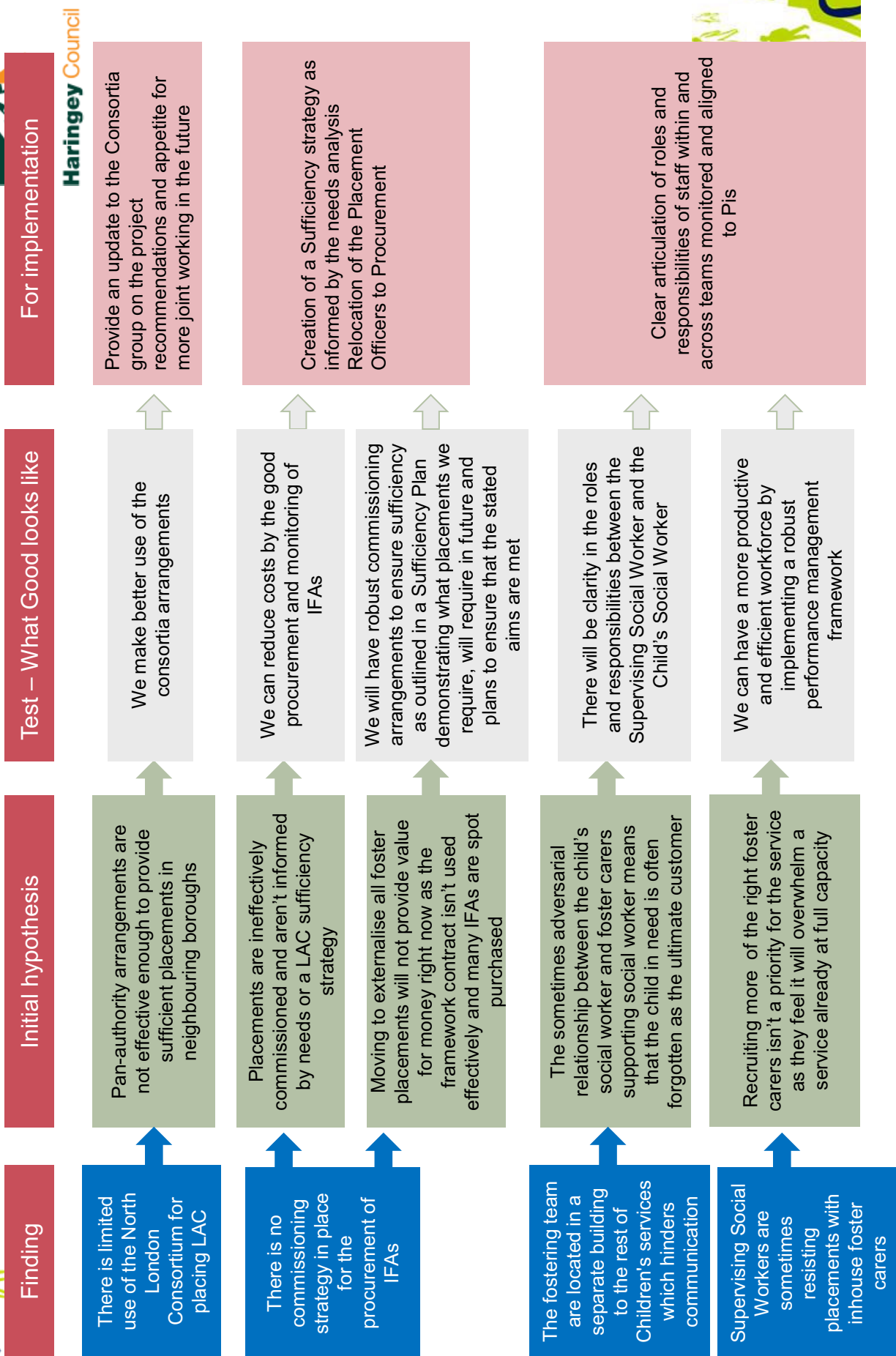


Haringey Council

The key findings were developed into hypotheses for testing and development into actual actions for the service to implement



# Ideas, hypotheses and solutions (2)





# Most of the original hypotheses proved to be true and informed our recommendations



Original hypothesis		✓
There is a lack of robust information about foster carers and the fostering team to inform management decisions		✓
Recruiting and retaining good quality foster carers and supporting children's placements isn't prioritised		✓
We can understand current demand better and improve outcomes for LAC and reduce costs		✓
A wider variety of fostering placements would ensure better placement stability and increased vfm		✓
Pan-authority arrangements are not effective enough to provide sufficient placements in neighbouring boroughs		✓
Placements are ineffectively commissioned and aren't informed by needs or a LAC sufficiency strategy		✓
Moving to externalise all foster placements will not provide value for money right now as the framework contract isn't used effectively and many IFAs are spot purchased		✓
The sometimes adversarial relationship between the child's social worker and foster carers supporting social worker means that the child in need is often forgotten as the ultimate customer		✓
Recruiting more of the right foster carers isn't a priority for the service as they feel it will overwhelm a service already at full capacity		✓

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# 5. Options appraisal



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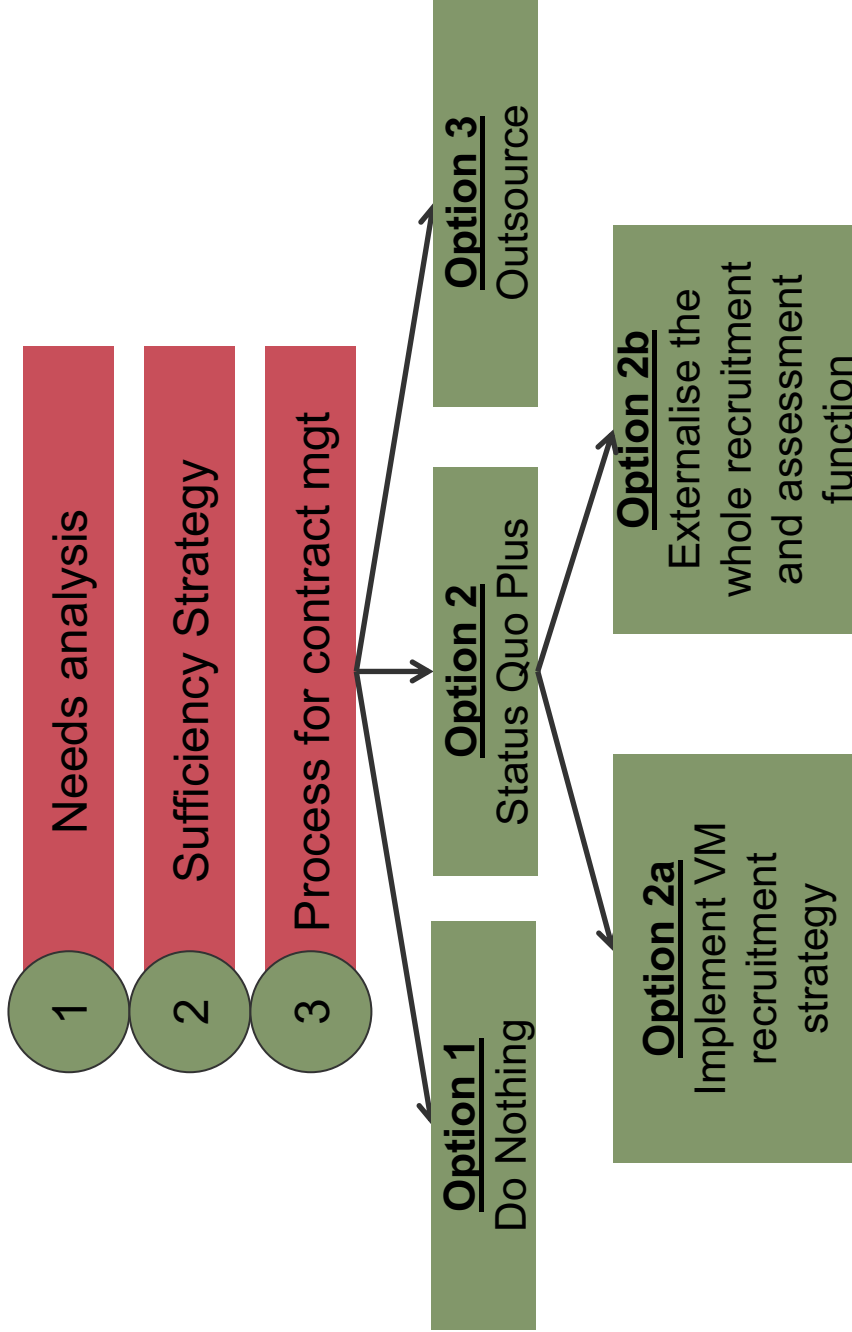


# Options appraisal approach



Haringey Council

An options appraisal was carried out to assess whether some or all of the functions of the service could be improved (and costs reduced) by finding alternative provision in the marketplace. There were 5 options that were assessed as outlined below:



## Objectives of the option appraisal

Haringey Council

The objectives of the options appraisal exercise was to test which of the options would:

- Enable the Council to best achieve the vision for their service and
- Test whether some or all of the fostering service could be improved (and costs reduced) by finding alternative provision in the marketplace

It was agreed with the Fostering Review Group that the criteria to be used to evaluate the models were as follows:

### Quality

- ➔ achieving best outcomes possible for the LAC of Haringey. This includes measurement against key metrics such as placement breakdown, recruitment & retention of foster carers, training and development statistics

### Cost

- ➔ achieve a balanced budget for placements from 2014/15 onwards and demonstrate Value for Money

### Pace

- ➔ be able to implement changes and demonstrate improvements within the next 6 months

### Risk

- ➔ ensure that the delivery model has an acceptable level of risk associated with it

### Brand

- ➔ a view on what impact the 'brand' of the council may have on the delivery model

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# The options appraisal has used the following descriptors to rate the different options



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Key:     

Descriptor	
	Does not contribute to the service objectives or position LBoH to meet the desired outcomes for LAC. The option is high-risk, or has no track record of being able to deliver the level of transformation / service required.
	Contributes slightly to the service objectives, and might be able to position LBoH to meet the desired outcomes for LAC. The option is relatively high-risk, or has a limited track record of being able to deliver the level of transformation / service required.
	Partly contributes to the service objectives, and with appropriate controls in place, could position LBoH to meet the desired outcomes for LAC. The option is neutral in terms of risk, or has a mixed record of being able to deliver the level of transformation / service required
	Significantly contributes to the service objectives and positions LBoH well to meet the desired outcomes for LAC. The option is relatively low-risk, or has a good track record of being able to deliver the level of transformation / service required.
	Fully contributes to the service objectives and positions LBoH to meet the desired outcomes for LAC. The option is low-risk, or has a strong / proven track record of being able to deliver the level of transformation / service required.

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# Summary of Options



**Key:**

○ Low

○ High



Option	Impact	Rank	Feasibility				
			Cost	Quality	Pace	Risk	Brand
1 Do Nothing	L	4	○	○	●	○	○
2a. Status Quo Plus	M	2	○	○	○	○	○
2b. Status Quo Plus + outsourcing R&A	M	1	○	○	○	○	○
3. Outsource	H	3	○	○	○	○	○

**Based on the outcome from the Options Appraisal, the recommendation is Option 2b**





# Option 1: Do nothing



Haringey Council

Model definition: Do nothing. Service continues as is.

Do Nothing	Now	Y1	Y2	Y3
In-house carers	142	125	108	91
In-house places	170	150	130	109
IFA places	241	261	281	302
Placement cost	£16,726,195	£17,087,928	£17,449,661	£17,811,394
Support cost	£555,027	£488,580	£422,133	£355,686
Recruitment cost	£164,848	£164,848	£164,848	£164,848
Total cost	£17,446,070	£17,741,356	£18,036,642	£18,331,928
<i>Continue with the service in its current state, with poor information and performance management processes and no clear strategy for commissioning placements to IFAs</i>				

### Assumptions:

- ➔ 24 foster carers are deregistered each year
- ➔ 7 new foster carers are recruited each year
- ➔ Each foster carer has an average of 1.2 placements
- ➔ Each Supervising Social Worker has 18 cases
- ➔ No clear commissioning strategy for IFA placements
- ➔ The Assessments team have 5 cases per Social Worker

<b>Total cost over 3 years</b>
£71,910,047

➔ NB: The above statistics may improve with assessment team's new arrangements



**The service will continue to under-perform, raising cost and safeguarding issues**



# Option 1: Do nothing



**Haringey Council**

Option 1: Do Nothing	Impact			
<p>Allow the service to continue in its current state with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor information management</li> <li>• Placements not matched effectively</li> <li>• poor performance management</li> <li>• no clear strategy for commissioning placements to IFAs</li> <li>• Insufficient recruitment of new foster carers</li> <li>• Concerns about quality of care provided by in-house foster carers</li> </ul>	<p>Low quality foster care poses significant risk of safeguarding and neglect issues arising</p> <p>Carers are not adequately matched to placements, which reduces placement stability;</p> <p>IFA placements are often spot-purchased, which makes them expensive</p> <p>There exists a substantial amount of uncertainty in many decisions because of lack of accurate information, which fuels risk-averse, blame culture</p>			
Evaluation criteria				
Cost	Quality	Pace	Risk	Brand
○	○	●	○	◐

**The current problems will persistently hamper performance and reduce quality**



## Option 2a: Status Quo Plus



Haringey Council

### Model definition: Status Quo Plus.

An internal approach to transformation. The service would need to invest staff time or use secondment arrangements or backfilling to allow key staff to be dedicated to the change programme.

Status Quo Plus (a)	Now	Y1	Y2	Y3
In-house carers	142	130	118	106
In-house places	170	172	156	140
IFA places	241	239	255	271
Placement cost	£16,726,195	£15,554,648	£15,759,415	£15,964,181
Support cost	£555,027	£508,123	£461,219	£414,316
Recruitment cost	£164,848	£104,930.59	£104,930.59	£104,930.59
Total cost	£17,446,070	£16,167,701	£16,325,564	£16,483,428

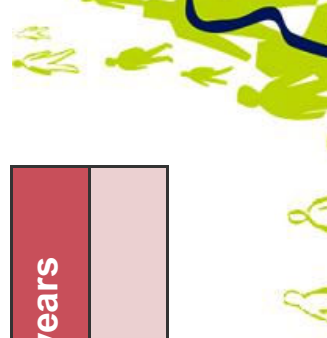
*The service implements a LAC Sufficiency Strategy, including robust commissioning and contract management processes and more efficient and effective management of in-house service*

### Assumptions

- ➔ 5 extra foster carers recruited each year through targeted strategy, informed by Values Modes insight
- ➔ 10% increase in in-house placements from improved performance management
- ➔ 10% reduction in IFA costs from improved commissioning and contract management

Total cost over 3 years

£66,422,763



Targeted recruitment and robust commissioning will improve placement



# Option 2a: Status Quo Plus



**Haringey Council**

Option 2a: Status Quo Plus	Impact
<p><b>- Recruitment in-house</b></p> <p>Take action to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing and implementing robust commissioning and contract management processes</li> <li>• Instilling a culture of performance management</li> <li>• Using Values Modes insight to recruit high quality carers and create of an action plan</li> </ul>	<p>Reduced costs through better outsourcing procedures</p> <p>More effective supervision of carers through performance management</p> <p>Better recruitment of new carers through targeted strategy informed through the Values Modes insight</p> <p>Recruitment of new foster carers might be difficult to implement internally</p>

Evaluation criteria			
Cost	Quality	Pace	Risk
			<p>Brand</p>

Improved processes and management improve performance and increase VfM



## Option 2b: Status Quo Plus



Haringey Council

### Model definition: Status Quo Plus.

External Recruitment Provider contracted to conduct recruitment & assessment. Marketing is carried out in conjunction with the council and uses Value Modes insight to target Pioneers. R&A staff move to the Support Team to manage additional caseloads associated with the increase in in-house foster carers

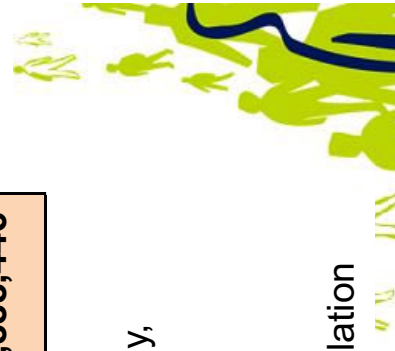
Status Quo Plus (b)	Now	Y1	Y2	Y3
In-house carers	142	150	183	216
In-house places	170	198	242	285
IFA places	241	213	169	126
Placement cost	£16,726,195	£15,213,370	£14,650,261	£14,087,152
Support cost	£555,027	£586,296	£715,281	£844,266
Recruitment cost	£164,848	£78,000	£78,000	£78,000
Total cost	£17,446,070	£15,877,665	£15,443,541	£15,009,418

Total cost over 3 years
£63,776,694

Reinvestment potential	Now	Y1	Y2	Y3	Total
Do nothing	£ 17,446,070	£17,741,356	£18,036,642	£18,331,928	£71,555,995
Status quo plus (b)	£ 17,446,070	£15,841,284	£15,407,160	£14,973,036	£63,667,549
Difference - reinvestment potential		£ 1,900,072	£ 2,629,482	£ 3,358,892	<b>£ 7,888,446</b>

### Assumptions

- ➔ 25 extra foster carers recruited in Y1 and 50 recruited in Y2 & Y3 through targeted strategy, informed by Values Modes insight
- ➔ 10% increase in in-house placements from improved performance management
- ➔ 10% reduction in IFA costs from improved commissioning and contract management
- ➔ External recruitment provider used to recruit new foster carers. Cost incorporated in calculation





# Option 2b: Status Quo Plus



Haringey Council

Option 2b: Status Quo Plus	Impact
<p><b>– External Recruitment Provider for recruitment</b></p> <p>Take action to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing and implementing robust commissioning and contract management processes</li> <li>• Instilling a culture of performance management</li> <li>• Using Values Modes insight to recruit high quality carers</li> <li>• Contracting External Recruitment Provider to recruit new in-house foster carers</li> </ul>	<p>Reduced costs through speedier and more efficient processes and procedures</p> <p>More effective supervision of carers through robust performance management</p> <p>Better recruitment of new carers through targeted strategy</p> <p>Faster turn around for new carers through using External Recruitment Provider to attract, assess and train new prospective in-house foster carers</p>

Evaluation criteria			
Cost	Quality	Pace	Risk

**Improved processes and management improve performance and increase VFM**





## Option 3: Outsource



Haringey Council

**Model definition:** All placements are commissioned to be provided by Independent Agencies, with the council acting as a last resort.

Outsource	Now	Y1	Y2	Y3
In-house carers	142	61	61	61
In-house places	170	73.2	73.2	73.2
IFA places	241	350	350	350
Placement cost	£16,726,195	£17,354,251	£17,354,251	£17,354,251
Support cost	£555,027	£238,427	£238,427	£238,427
Recruitment cost	£164,848	-	-	-
Total cost	£17,446,070	£17,592,678	£17,592,678	£17,592,678
<i>Disband the in-house service and outsource all placements to IFAs using robust commissioning and contract management processes</i>				

### Assumptions

- ➔ All non-Kinship placements provided through IFAs
- ➔ Improved commissioning arrangements and contract management result in 10% cost reduction compared to alternative
- ➔ In-house service still provides placements in instances where there is no other option

Total cost over 3 years

£70,224,104

**In-house service focuses on commissioning and emergency provision**



# Option 3: Outsource



Haringey Council

Option 3: Outsource	Impact		
<p>Remove the majority of in-house provision by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Producing and implementing robust commissioning and contract management processes and outsource provision of <u>all</u> fostering placements to IFAs</li> <li>Allowing 'placements of last resort' to remain in-house</li> <li>Continue to supervise Kinship foster care</li> </ul>	Higher costs resulting from increased outsourced placements	Potential for improved quality	Risk that distance from front-line leaves council without knowledge of problems arising
Evaluation criteria			
Cost	Quality	Pace	Risk
○	◐	◐	◐
Brand		Brand	
○		○	

In-house service focuses on commissioning and emergency provision



## 6. Recommendations



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# Recommendation overview

The Council are still involved in marketing activity and all marketing collateral has the Council 'branding'. VM insight and the expertise from External Recruitment Provider used to inform the Marketing Strategy

The VM toolkit would inform the communication strategy with the foster carer throughout

## Recruitment → Outsource

## Retention → Fostering Team

Marketing

Enquiry

Initial info

Screening

Training

Assessment

Approval

Matching / placement

Reviews / visits / supervision

Leaving

Support

Development

Assessment turnaround is on average between 8-10 weeks and is carried out by ISWs

Pre-approval training provided, supplemented with support from the Council, typically a Social Worker and a Foster Carer

Handover to the Council. To deal with the additional workload, social workers from the Recruitment & Assessment team would be interviewed for the posts

Placement Officers would move to the Commissioning team and organise the inhouse placement

Awareness **Imagining** **Waiting** **Committing**

Inspiration **Information** **Reassurance**

On going support

Engagement must respond to the needs of the carer at different points along the journey



# Recommendations



Recommendation	Activity
Completion of a needs analysis to inform a placement strategy	Most of the information required to inform a needs analysis has been gathered as part of this project. Work still needs to be done to confirm the number and target profile to inform a strategy to recruit more inhouse foster carers
Clarity on expectations of staff across the service	Creation of a staff and foster carer 'pledge'. Involvement of staff in the implementation phase including input to the new carer journey
Completion of baseline and implementation of KPI tracking	The baseline picture has been gathered as part of the project. Work needs to be done to confirm KPI tracking in line with sign off of the recommended option
Monitoring statistics and quality measures such as placement breakdown, conversion rate, market share (IFA and inhouse)	Regular gathering and monitoring of this information as part of the governance arrangements of the next stage of the project
Monitoring KPIs such as completion of visits on time as well as regular feedback from inhouse foster carers	An overarching strategy for wider placements that is revisited at regular intervals to ensure it is fit for purpose
Creation of a sufficiency and placement strategy as informed by the needs analysis	Head of Commissioning and Placements to keep the Consortia group actively up to date with progress with a view to progressing more joint working in the future
Provide an update to the Consortia group on the project recommendations and appetite for more joint working in the future	Have in place the placement strategy to inform discussions
Meet with External Recruitment Provider to explore further the opportunity to work with	

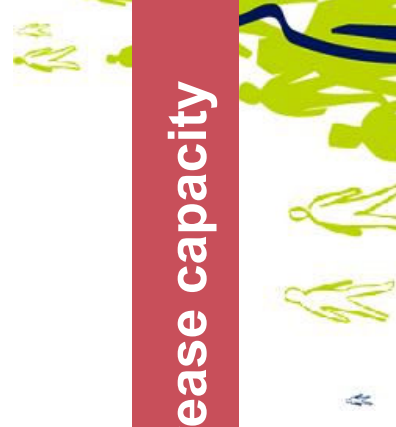


# Some aspects of policy & procedure could be improved



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- ➔ Through our work with the fostering teams and our investigation into internal policies and procedures, a number of interesting findings have been brought to our attention
- ➔ In addition to our recommendations about recruitment and retention activity and service model transformation, we have observed that there are grounds for these practices to be reviewed
  - ➔ **Blanket policy full-time employment is prohibited for foster carers for children Under 11 years**
    - whilst there is a need to ensure an appropriate level of care for the child, concerns have been raised that this policy results in poor role models for foster children by helping to attract out-of-work carers who see foster care as a job
  - ➔ **Pay differentials between task-centred carers and kinship carers** – As the care provided by both is often similar, differences in care packages are leading to a reputational risk for the council that might expose the service to a legal challenge
  - ➔ **Use of Framework-1 for case management and information management** – although issues were raised in the January 2013 Internal Audit Report, they persisted throughout our project and inhibited our ability to obtain reliable data; collecting and presenting accurate data consistently is a critical part of monitoring service improvement from implementing recommended changes



Ensuring consistent and reasonable caseloads will increase capacity

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## 7. Implementation Plan



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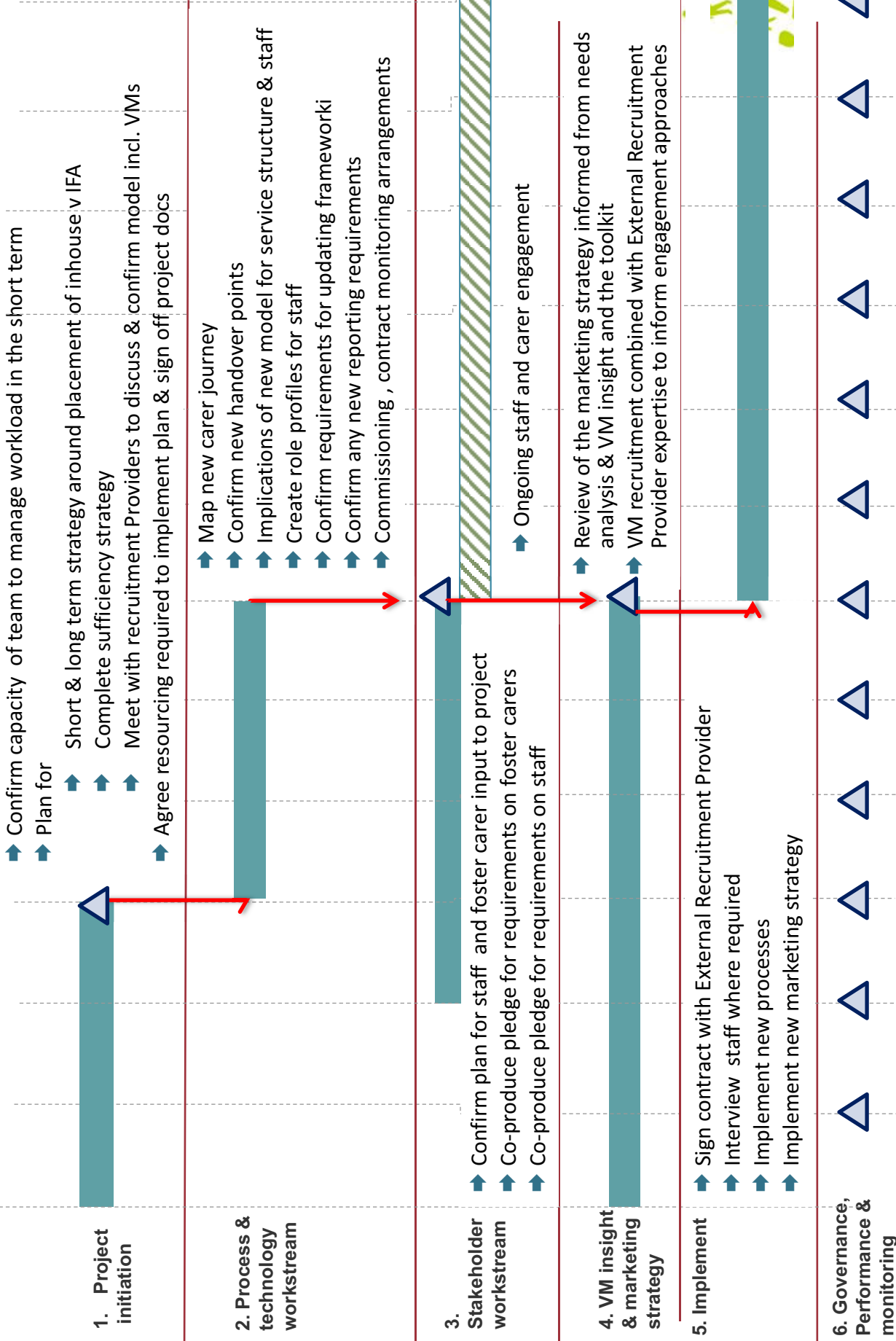
# High level plan

## Key

△ Sign off required

### Project Duration

Week 1    Week 2    Week 3    Week 4    Week 5    Week 6    Week 7    Week 8    Week 9    Week 10    Week 11    Week 12







# Detailed plan of activity (1)



## Fostering implementation

Team Days		Team Fees	
AD	M	AD	M

### Project initiation

Performance tracking of support team	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	1,600	
Short term strategy around placement of inhouse v IFA	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Long term strategy around placement of inhouse v IFA	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	2,400	
Meet with External Recruitment Provider to discuss model and data requirements	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Understand implications for staff - liaise with HR	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Confirm HR timescales	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Confirm procurement route options and timescales	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Create new role profiles where required	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Confirm resource required from the council	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Confirm outcomes to be monitored and process	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	-	
Confirm governance arrangements for reporting and monitoring of progress	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	-	
Confirm how staff will be involved in the project	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Sign off project documentation, including plan, governance, resources	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	-	
<b>STAGE TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>11,200</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>11,200</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>9,600</b>

### Process & technology workflow

Map new carer journey	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	1,600	
Confirm new handover points & info needed	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Understand implications of new model on current structure	2								3,200	£	3,200	£	1,600	
Create new job profiles where required	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Confirm requirements for updating framework	2								1,600	£	1,600	£	1,600	
Confirm any new report requirements	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Confirm financials and business case for contract with Networks	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	4,000	
Confirm measurement of KPIs and outcome tracking	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Confirm who will monitor the contract	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	-	
<b>STAGE TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>11,200</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>11,200</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>12,000</b>

### Stakeholder workflow

Confirm staff and carer input to project	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Identify 'champions'	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Input to new carer journey	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	-	
Co-produce new carer 'pledge'	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Co-produce new staff 'pledge'	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	800	
Ongoing staff and carer engagement throughout	1								1,600	£	1,600	£	-	
<b>STAGE TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>4,800</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>4,800</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>3,200</b>



# Detailed plan of activity (2)



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	Team Days			Team Fees		
	AD	M	C	AD	M	C
<b>Fostering implementation</b>						
<b>VM insight &amp; marketing strategy</b>						
Review of the marketing strategy incl spend		1	3	£	1,600	£ 2,400
Create new strategy informed by:	1	1	5	£ 1,600	£	£ 4,000
Needs analysis and trend information				£	£	£
VM insight and toolkit				£	£	£
Input from Networks				£	£	£
Embedding of the VM toolkit with staff including across the support functions	1	3	3	£ 1,600	£	£ 2,400
<b>STAGE TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>£ 3,200</b>	<b>£ 8,000</b>	<b>£ 8,800</b>
<b>Implement</b>						
Sign contract with External Recruitment Company				£	£	£
Interview staff where required				£	£	£
Mobilise new processes				£	£	£
Implement new marketing strategy	1	1	1	£ 1,600	£	£ 800
<b>STAGE TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>£ 1,600</b>	<b>£ 1,600</b>	<b>£ 800</b>
<b>Governance, performance and monitoring</b>						
Confirm governance arrangements (incl External Recruitment Company)	1	1		£ 1,600	£	£ 1,600
Confirm communications plan		1	1	£	£	£ 800
Confirm frequency of meetings				£	£	£
Set up monitoring arrangements to include:		1	3	£	£	£ 2,400
A review of the key metrics (number of carers, enquiries, recruitment pipeline)				£	£	£
A RAG rated assessment of the change levers (team communication improving, management information available and used)				£	£	£
A review of risks and issues				£	£	£
Attendance at Board meetings for project duration	2	2		£ 3,200	£	£
<b>STAGE TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>£ 4,800</b>	<b>£ 8,000</b>	<b>£ 3,200</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>£ 14,400</b>	<b>£ 44,800</b>	<b>£ 37,600</b>



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## Summary costed plan of activity



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As requested, an estimate of support required from iMPOWER for the implementation stage is shown below, broken down by project stage and also by role of Assistant Director (AD), Manager (M) and Consultant (C).

Fostering implementation Project stage	AD	M	C
Project initiation	1	7	7
Process & technology workstream	1	7	15
Stakeholder workstream	1	3	4
VM insight & marketing strategy	2	5	11
Implement	1	1	1
Governance, performance and monitoring	3	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>42</b>

The cost of each stage of the project and total cost is shown below:

Fostering implementation Project stage	AD	M	C	Total (fees)
Project initiation	1,600 £	11,200 £	9,600 £	£ 22,400
Process & technology workstream	1,600 £	11,200 £	12,000 £	£ 24,800
Stakeholder workstream	1,600 £	4,800 £	3,200 £	£ 9,600
VM insight & marketing strategy	3,200 £	8,000 £	8,800 £	£ 20,000
Implement	1,600 £	1,600 £	800 £	£ 4,000
Governance, performance and monitoring	4,800 £	8,000 £	3,200 £	£ 16,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,400 £</b>	<b>44,800 £</b>	<b>37,600 £</b>	<b>£ 96,800</b>

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MANAGES  
AWARDS  
2013  
WINNER



## 8. Appendices



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# Values Modes – improving communication

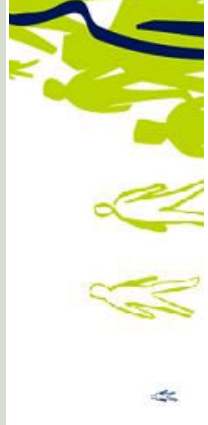


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Settlers: Knowledge	Prospectors: Trust	Pioneers: Care
<p><b>Facts:</b> when, where</p> <p><b>Back-up:</b> someone to speak to if it goes wrong</p> <p><b>Support:</b> who else will be there: others in the group</p> <p><b>Your role:</b> What we need from you – information</p> <p><b>Low key:</b> not scary and new, no fanfare, plain speaking, simple language</p> <p><b>Repetition:</b> reinforcement, same message in all forms of communication</p> <p><b>Normal:</b> show how others are already doing this, it's normal</p>	<p><b>Speed:</b> this will be faster, there is an immediate feedback loop</p> <p><b>Simplicity:</b> minimise their involvement (if can, show how it has been reduced)</p> <p><b>Benefits:</b> here are the personal benefits to you of the change</p> <p><b>Robust:</b> this works, here's the evidence, feedback loop</p> <p><b>Back-up:</b> here's how we fix it, if it goes wrong, feedback loop</p>	<p><b>Why we're doing this:</b> it's the right thing to do, it benefits you (your family) and the taxpayer</p> <p><b>What we need from you:</b> we need your help and support, this can vary according to your willingness to get involved</p> <p><b>We don't have all the answers:</b> we need your input, if you have the time to give it.</p> <p><b>Genuine effort to reach out:</b> different channels: phone, in person, flexibility, use of new media, responsiveness</p> <p><b>Relentless feedback:</b> regular information flow back and forth</p> <p><b>Personal touch:</b> use of photos, named individuals, so it feels real</p>



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# Who



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- ➔ Targeted recruitment of foster carers within the pioneer cohort
- ➔ However this set of values does not map to any particular demographic, therefore it is sensible to focus on those identified in national research who have the biggest life opportunity and propensity to become foster carers.
- ➔ We know for fostering these are:
  - ➔ College, school and nursery teachers and classroom assistants
  - ➔ Childminders
  - ➔ Nurses and health professionals
  - ➔ Youth workers
  - ➔ Charity volunteers
  - ➔ Parents
- ➔ Any others?





# Where?

- Where do we find the right people?

## Physical locations

- ⇨ Schools and colleges
- ⇨ Nurseries and other childcare facilities
- ⇨ Children’s centres
- ⇨ Playgroups
- ⇨ Leisure centres and swimming pools
- ⇨ Local societies and sports clubs
- ⇨ Youth clubs
- ⇨ Scouts and guides
- ⇨ Hospitals
- ⇨ Local charities
- ⇨ Faith groups
- ⇨ Women’s Institute
- ⇨ Job centres
- ⇨ Waiting rooms – GPs, hospitals (children’s wards), nurses, dentists



## Digital locations

- ⇨ Local school and nursery websites
- ⇨ Council websites
- ⇨ Local ‘What’s on’ websites
- ⇨ Facebook



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# What?



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## As contact moves along the journey it should be:

- ⇒ Inspiring
- ⇒ Positive - always avoid negative including child duress
- ⇒ Personal – use of names, faces, eyes, person must tell the story – films rather than text
- ⇒ Stimulating - avoid boring
- ⇒ Involving or interactive - 2-way as soon as possible
- ⇒ Intriguing - don't provide all the info / answers
- ⇒ In the form of advocacy – personally validated
- ⇒ Appealing to the 'right thing'
- ⇒ Clear
- ⇒ Consistent, joined up and reinforced
- ⇒ Quick / responsive
- ⇒ Inclusive

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# How?



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Channels should be 2 way. **WOM** can also be effective in similar campaigns and combines personal validation and inspiration

Where coverage has to be 1 way:

- ⇨ Local press and media
- ⇨ Newsletters of the above groups
- ⇨ Car parks, hoardings and other channels near above locations
- ⇨ Digital media – films and images

2-way – word of mouth:

- ⇨ Advocacy (foster carers, children)
- ⇨ Buddy (foster carer asap at point of enquiry and beyond)
- ⇨ Mentor (to guide through application process)
- ⇨ Local events - fetes, bazaars, fairs
- ⇨ Personal referral – public sector / community activation
- ⇨ Follow up any impersonal correspondence with personal contact

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## When?



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We need a constant drip-drip of triggers in order to maintain a steady throughput.

However the campaign diary must also be planned and organised to maximise exposure to the groups and organisations above:

- ⇒ School, college and university returns i.e. September
- ⇒ Late December / January (a time of personal reflection and planning)
- ⇒ School parents evenings
- ⇒ School drop offs / pick ups
- ⇒ Events organised by the groups and organisations noted above

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# Key findings (1)



## Findings

<p>There is an issue with the quality of information recorded on Framework-i</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ <b>Useful information is often not recorded in case files</b> – Team members collect useful information about prospective applicants and about individual cases that is not always captured on Framework-i. This could be resulting in prospective foster carers that continuing through the recruitment process for longer than necessary. This expends resources unnecessarily and reduces the rate at which suitable prospective carers can be approved. Concerns have been raised by team members about the accuracy and quality (completeness) of information they find on Framework-i</li> <li>➔ <b>Information recorded is not accurate</b> – we have heard from multiple sources that Framework-i is “not built for foster care”; staff use informal means to capture information, e.g. by setting up their own spreadsheets and folders on the internal network. This means that Framework-i does not hold up-to-date information on all cases, making it useless to staff who want to access case information</li> <li>➔ <b>Management Information is difficult to extract</b> – It is difficult to extract meaningful trend / aggregate case information from Framework-i. Some information cannot be extracted from Framework-i easily and therefore requires manual audits to be undertaken (eg) how many cases are getting to fostering panel within statutory timelines. Information is not recorded, held or presented in a consistent format, which constrains its use and restricting the ability of the service to make informed management decisions</li> </ul>
<p>Return on investment of marketing spend is not monitored</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ £22,495.69 was spent on marketing activity last year</li> <li>➔ Marketing activity does not appear to be linked to the quality of enquiries, resulting in a lack of clarity on the return on investment</li> <li>➔ It has been made clear to us that kinship assessments are often prioritised over task-centred carer assessments</li> <li>➔ There are circumstantial barriers to recruiting foster carers, for example, guidance currently states that foster carers cannot be in full time work</li> </ul>



## Key findings (2)



### Findings

**There is no commissioning strategy in place for the procurement of IFAs**

**Spend on placements is high. There is significant scope to reduce the cost of placements**

- ➔ The Fostering Service aims to place all LAC inhouse in the first instance with use of an IFA only in circumstances when an inhouse placement cannot be found
- ➔ In reality, many LAC are being placed with IFAs due to inhouse service failures. The reasons for this are not straight forward and are multi faceted
- ➔ Costs are driven up by the lack of a clear commissioning strategy for placements. In addition, the commissioning of internal and external placements is carried out by the same team that sits within the Fostering Service
- ➔ The Framework contract currently in place to purchase IFAs is not fit for purpose – there are only six IFAs on the framework and we have heard anecdotally that they often do not provide placements when requested to bid ; this leads to spot-purchasing, which further increases expenditure on placements
- ➔ Supervising Social Workers sometimes act as agents for their carers (rejecting difficult children)
- ➔ The current payment system for foster carers has not been reviewed in recent years
- ➔ Task centred foster carers get paid more than kinship foster carers

**Supervising Social Workers are sometimes resisting placements with inhouse foster carers**

- ➔ Supervising Social Workers are not being allocated every time a child is placed (service claims this is due to capacity constraints)
- ➔ 74% of foster carers are not receiving their 6 weekly visit from their Supervising Social Worker
- ➔ Kinship assessments and task centred assessments are in the same team so vie for priority in allocation or attention. Court dates result in kinship FC assessments taking priority over task centred.
- ➔ There is a requirement for panel approval for kinship FCs within 24 weeks or the placement is illegal. The council are not meeting this requirement in all cases



**Haringey Council**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Committee: October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013</b>	<b>Item Number:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Update on the development and implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework</b>		
<b>Report Authorised by:</b>	<b>Marion Wheeler - Assistant Director Children and Families</b>		
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>Rachel Oakley - Head of Service, Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Practice Development</b>		
<b>Ward(s) affected: All</b>	<b>Report for Non Key Decisions:</b>		

## 1. Introduction

This report will provide an update on the development of the Children and Families Quality Assurance Framework, associated activities and documentation.

1.1 In February 2013 the Quality Assurance Framework and a new audit tool was formally launched at a workshop attended by managers and practitioners from across the Children and Young Peoples Service.

1.2 A Quality Assurance Steering Group consisting of a senior representative from each service, plus a member of the Performance Team and the Learning & Development Consultant for Children and Families was constituted in conjunction with the launch of the framework. Members were responsible for disseminating information about the framework and learning captured through QA activities. Quality Assurance presentations were made at the Children and Families Departmental Management Group meeting in May and June 2013.

1.3 In August 2013 the Steering Group was reconstituted and given the status of a monthly Board, chaired by the Deputy Director for Children's Commissioning. The Board formally endorsed an overarching Quality Assurance Strategy, which documents the vision, context, aims and objectives of the quality assurance function across Children & Families.



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1.4 The Quality Assurance Framework was then revised in line with the Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013). The framework provides the details of what, where, when, why, who and how of the quality assurance activities that we undertake throughout the year and is regularly reviewed by the Quality Board.

### **2. Quality Assurance Framework**

2.1 The framework provides a clear simple structure for collating and sharing information about major areas of concern and good practice. The original framework consists of 11 key areas of quality assurance activity which combined are designed to support the organisation at all levels in understanding areas of concern and need for improvement as well as demonstrating the progress being made.

2.2 The range of activities cover a mixture of internal and external auditing activity, evaluations and escalations undertaken by Child Protection Advisors and Independent Reviewing Officers and reported in their respective annual reports, analysis of complaints; review of cases in proceedings; specific feedback from service users, review of Organisational Learning and Development initiatives; Supervision Audit and the findings of Internal Management Reviews. The framework will evolve as we learn from our experience. New elements will be included and wider groups of staff will undertake the activities associated with the framework.

2.3 Throughout 2012-13 this range of quality assurance activities consistently identified eleven of clear overarching and recurring issues for practice development these have been incorporated into the 2013-14 Quality Assurance Action Plan and are being monitored through the Board. See appendix 1

2.4 A key principle behind the approach is that Quality Assurance activity is something that is done with, not to, staff. There is a clear distinction to be made between quality assurance that supports staff in delivering good practice first time, and quality control that identifies and puts right poor practice that has already occurred. Our broad focus within the framework is upon the former, but specific poor practice when identified will be reported to the responsible manager for them to address.

### **3. Audits**

#### **3.1 Light touch/Process**

3.1.1 The introduction and development of a simple "light touch" audit of a random selection of cases from across Children and Families. The audit was designed so that a cumulative picture of strengths and areas for practice development would be gathered over time. The focus of the audit is on the last six months intervention, with a concentration on understanding social work practice and management oversight at team and service level. The emerging picture is fed back for attention and will be used to inform the commissioning of Learning and Development Activities.

3.1.2 The audit template is divided into domains which cover the journey of the child from referral and response through assessment, planning, review to adoption/pathway plan,



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plus a number of management and administrative areas including recording and supervision. To support the development of a consistent approach to what good social work practice looks like, a new set of “practice standards” have been developed and are currently the subject of consultation. This will be built on through the creation of exemplars covering key areas of work.

3.1.3 Fifty cases are allocated each month with the intention of auditing 450 to 500 cases each year. In addition to file scrutiny the auditor will bring the social worker into the quality assurance process and have a conversation with parents and in some cases children about the impact interventions have had on their lives. The involvement of social workers in the process is currently under development and will be the subject of the third phase of auditors training.

3.1.4 The audit programme has been co-ordinated by one of the Child Protection Advisors supported by a leader auditor from each service (First Response, Safeguarding & Support, Children in Care, Disabled Children, Fostering & Adoption and Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) who is responsible for a team of auditors drawn from the management group. A three phase training programme is in place to ensure that each auditor is familiar with the audit template and approach, has a consistent understanding of thresholds, a knowledge of service standards and the ability to feedback directly to social workers. In addition auditing workshops are scheduled each month to enable auditors to share experiences and develop consistency of approach.

3.1.5 Information from the monthly audits is collated and circulated across the service, in depth quarterly reports identify the key areas for practice development. The first report covering audits undertaken in May, June and July highlighted the need for greater attention to be given to the following areas: Children in Need, Direct Work, Supervision and Recording. This report was presented to the Quality Assurance Board in October and the emerging themes will be shared with practitioners at monthly practice development workshops led by the Principle Social Worker.

## **3.2 Themed or Event Audits**

3.2.1 To augment the light touch audits a series of “event audits” will be commissioned each year, these will measure how a department is functioning in respects to chosen criteria / themes. These themed audits are more in-depth audits that focus on specific issues or care groups where there is an indication that we need to have a better understanding of what is happening. The audit tool will be specifically designed for the audit in question.

3.2.2 Three themed audits are currently in progress – Domestic Violence (reporting October 13) Children in Residential Care (reporting November 13) and review of practice around Pre-birth referrals (reporting November 13) being undertaken jointly with Health.



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## Appendix 1

### Future planned work:

To address the areas of development outlined above, the following actions are being implemented. The ownership of these tasks has been agreed within DMG (Departmental Management Group) and progress will be reported via the quarterly update reports.

<i>Area of risk / concern</i>	<i>Proposed action</i>	<i>Expected outcomes</i>
Strategy meetings are frequently single agency, do not consistently plan investigations and are not recorded.	First Response – management intervention and monitoring of strategy meetings from December 12	Multi-agency strategy meetings which plan coherent investigations prior to decision to take to ICPC (Initial Child Protection Conference) – recorded on file
Lack of up to date chronologies on file	Individual service strategies and ongoing monitoring mechanisms	All cases to have a record of significant events to help understand family history, identify patterns and issues – routinely updated
Actions lack timeliness – resulting in drift and delay	Tri-borough court project – June 13 Charge in transfer point for Child protection cases – April 2013 Adoption improvement plan	Work is undertaken and completed to timescales that make sense for the child and family and make effective use of social workers and partners time
Responding to families in a timely manner	Actively engaging in the Back to Basics initiative 2013-14	Reduction in complaints about communication – family feedback that responses timely





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<i>Area of risk / concern</i>	<i>Proposed action</i>	<i>Expected outcomes</i>
Supervision is not always as regular and does not offer the opportunity to reflect and analysis. Direction from supervision and management oversight not acting to drive the case forward.	Supervision policy and documentation – update and launched - February 13 18 month Supervision Strategy agreed – Supervision Pilots involving social workers and managers in 5 teams across C&F(Children and Families)	Supervision supports a reflective and analytical approach to social work whilst and acts to help drive the work forward.
Case transfer points and changes of social worker are arranged to minimise the impact on families	Change in transfer point for CP cases FR(First Response to S&S(Safeguarding and Support) – April 13. Impact monitored	Impact of transfer on families is reduced and momentum of work sustained – length of time on plans reduced.
Social work practice lacks appropriate levels of challenge to other professionals and families	360 degree feedback against the professional capabilities framework for social work practitioners to lead to targeted L&D. Authoritative Practice embedded across L&D(Learning and Development) activities– increase skills, confidence and professional capabilities	A more confident workforce that appropriately challenges partners and families.
Thresholds are not always consistently applied	Multi-agency review of the implementation of thresholds across the partnership led by the LSCB	Thresholds for intervention are appropriate and proportionate.
The respective roles of the Child Protection Conference and the role of the Core Group in developing the outline child protection plans needs to be clarified	Initiative between S&S(Safeguarding and Support) and CPA's – led by Practice Development Partners Feb – July 13	Roles and responsibilities are undertaken in a consistent manner- which maximises the input of and empowers professionals


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<i>Area of risk / concern</i>	<i>Proposed action</i>	<i>Expected outcomes</i>
Father not routinely included in assessments and direct work	Training programme includes a focus on working with fathers.	Fathers included /engaged in work undertaken with families
Early help approach not embedded	Council and C&YPS service plan – Haringey 54,000	Improved pathways and access to early help so families receive the “right” help at the right time.



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<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Item Number:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Family and Friends Carers Policy</b>		
<b>Report Authorised by:</b>	<b>Marion Wheeler/ Libby Blake</b>		
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>Paul McCarthy</b>		
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b> <b>ALL</b>	<b>Report for Key/Non Key Decisions:</b>		

### **1. Describe the issue under consideration**

Haringey is required to have a 'Family and Friends Policy' according to Statutory Guidance published in March 2011, consideration has also been given to the court of Appeal Judgement in the Tower Hamlet case (X v LB of Tower Hamlets [2013] EWCA Civ 904).

### **2. Cabinet Member introduction**

This policy meets the legal requirements and describes the Local Authority's responsibility toward people who may be caring for children of friends and family members.

### **3. Recommendations**

CPAC to consider and ratify the policy

### **4. Other options considered**

### **5. Background information**



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The policy brings together the Local Authority's responsibilities according to a range of legislation and regulation. It is required to be a public document. The policy provides background to the rationale about fostering allowances for family and friends carers.

## **6. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications**

Expenditure on Family and Friends is contained within the base budget of the Commissioning and Placements service.

Carers need to be signposted so that they are aware of their entitlement to state benefits (such as child benefit and child tax credit) and how to apply for any discretionary financial support that may be available. When financial support is offered a written agreement should be drawn up detailing the level and duration of the support, and the mechanism for review. Carers should be aware of eligibility criteria and means testing (if applicable) when financial assistance is given on a one off or a regular basis.

Following the Tower Hamlets Appeal Court judgement the budget has been reviewed and if all current kinship foster carers were brought up to the equivalent of task centred fostering allowance this would add £500k a year to placement costs. However a higher allowance equivalent is paid only when the kinship foster carer has successfully completed Skills to Foster / Preparation for Fostering training and committed to participate in all subsequent mandatory training. Some carers may not wish to participate in this training and for those that do complete there will be a gradual movement of carers to the higher allowance. On this basis the service manager is highlighting a budget risk of a maximum of £100k in this financial year. The full financial implication for future years is not clear at this stage.

## **7. Head of Legal Services and legal implications**

- 7.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted about this Report.
- 7.2 The Committee is asked to consider and approve the draft Family and Friends Carers Policy which sets out the Council's policy in respect of looked after children who placed with Family and Friends foster carers. The statutory basis for this arrangement is contained in Part III of the Children Act 1989 (as amended) headed *Local Authority Support for Children and Families* and supporting statutory guidance. The following provisions are of particular relevance.
- 7.3 Section 17 of the 1989 Act imposes a general duty on the local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs ("family support services"). "Family" in relation to such a child, includes any person who has parental responsibility for the child and any other


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person with whom he has been living. The range and level of support services which may be provided is very wide.

- 7.4 Section 20 of the Act provides that the local authority shall provide accommodation for any child in need within their area who appears to them to require accommodation as a result of: (a) there being no person who has parental responsibility for him; (b) his being lost or having been abandoned; or (c) the person who has been caring for him being prevented (whether or not permanently, and for whatever reason) from providing him with suitable accommodation or care. The local authority may also provide accommodation for any child (even though a person who has parental responsibility for the child is able provide them with accommodation) if they consider that to do so would safeguard or promote the child's welfare.
- 7.5 Where a child is provided with accommodation by the local authority (under Section 20 above), or the child is subject to a care order, the child is a looked after child by the local authority. The Act sets out the ways looked after children are to be accommodated and maintained by the local authority.
- 7.6 Section 22C provides that the local authority must make arrangements for a child who is looked after to live with their parents, a person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child. This "rehabilitative" duty (as described in statutory guidance) is subject to the proviso that the arrangement must be consistent with the child's welfare or reasonable practicable. If not, the local authority must place the child in the most appropriate placement available. 'Placement' means and options include: (a) placement with an individual who is a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a local authority foster parent; (b) placement with a local authority foster parent who does not fall within (a) above; (c) placement in a registered children's home.
- 7.7 In determining the most appropriate placement for the child, the local authority must "give preference to" a placement with a person who is a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a local authority foster parent. If reasonable practicable depending on the circumstances of the child's case, the local authority must also ensure that the placement is such that: (a) it allows the child to live near the family home; (b) it does not disrupt the child's education or training; (c) if the child has a sibling for whom the local authority are also providing accommodation, it enables the child and the sibling to live together; (d) if the child is disabled, the accommodation provided is suitable to the child's particular needs. Also, if reasonably practicable, the placement must be such that the child is provided with accommodation within the local authority's area.
- 7.8 The local authority may determine the terms on which they place the child with a local authority foster parent (including terms as to payment) but subject to any order made by the Secretary of State.
- 7.9 Section 22G of the Act places the local authority under a duty to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for looked after children which is



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within the local authority area and meets the needs of children. This is often referred to as the sufficiency duty.

- 7.10 By section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, all Local Authorities are obliged, in the exercise of their social services functions, including the exercise of any discretion conferred by any relevant enactment, to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State. Section 7A of that Act further provides that, without prejudice to section 7, “every local authority shall exercise their social services functions in accordance with such directions as may be given to them under this section by the Secretary of State”. In this respect, the *Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards*; *The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations volume 4: Fostering Services*; and *Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities* are relevant.
- 7.11 The *Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards* Standard 13 with respect to achieving the sufficiency duty provides “The fostering service recruits, assesses and supports a range of foster carers to meet the needs of children they provide care for and is pro-active in assessing current and future needs of children.” Standard 13.1 then states: “The local authority fostering service implements an effective strategy to ensure sufficient foster carers to be responsive to current and predicted future demands on the service.”
- 7.12 Standard 28 is specifically concerned with payment to foster carers. Its intended outcome is that: “Payments to foster carers are fair and paid in a timely way.” Standard 28.1 then provides: “Each foster carer receives at least the national minimum allowance for the child, plus any necessary agreed expenses for the care, education and reasonable leisure interests of the child, including insurance, holidays, birthdays, school trips, religious festivals etc, which cover the full costs of caring for each child placed with her/him.” Standard 28.5 adds: “There is a clear and transparent written policy on payments to foster carers that sets out the criteria for calculating payments and distinguishes between the allowance paid and any fee paid. ...” Standard 28.7 states: “Criteria for calculating fees and allowances are applied equally to all foster carers, whether the foster carer is related to the child or unrelated, or the placement is short or long term.”
- 7.13 Standard 30 is concerned with family and friends as foster carers. The intended outcome is stated in these terms: “Family and friends foster carers receive the support they require to meet the needs of children placed with them.” Standard 30.10 provides: “Financial and other support is provided to all foster carers according to objective criteria that do not discriminate against foster carers that have a pre-existing relationship with the child. Family and friends foster carers may require some services to be delivered in a different way, but there should be equity of provision and entitlement.”
- 7.14 *The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations volume 4: Fostering Services* Chapter 5 is headed *Approving and Supporting Foster Carers*. Paragraph 5.71 states: “It is essential that all foster carers are given clear information about criteria for making financial payments to them, including allowances, fees and other



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expenses. Allowances must be sufficient to cover the full cost of caring for each child placed with them, and must be reviewed annually. The Government has put in place a National Minimum Fostering Allowance ... which is the very minimum which should be provided to a foster carer for each child placed. Criteria for calculating allowances must apply equally to all foster carers, whether or not they are related to the child or the placement is long or short term (Standard 28).”

- 7.15 Paragraph 5.73 provides: “Fees are in addition to allowances and may be paid by fostering services to reflect the expertise and the nature of the tasks undertaken by a range of foster carers. Where fees are paid by a fostering service these must be payable to those on their register of foster carers who meet the criteria set out for the scheme, including short and long term carers and family and friends carers.”
- 7.16 The *Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities* Paragraph 4.2 requires each local authority with responsibility for children services to publish a policy setting out its approach towards promoting and supporting the needs of children living with family and friends carers. Paragraph 4.3 states that, whilst the detail of the policy is a matter for local determination within the length and extent of legislation and statutory guidance, it must address the matters outlined in the rest of the document. Paragraph 4.48 refers to the National Minimum Standards for fostering services and continues: “Fostering services must deliver services in a way which ensures that family and friends foster carers are fully supported to care for children placed with them and are not disadvantaged as a result of their prior relationship with the child.” Paragraph 4.49 states “Fostering allowances to foster carers must be sufficient to meet the cost to the carer of caring for the child and should be at least the minimum set annually by the Department of Education. The allowances paid by a fostering service must be calculated for family and friends foster carers on the same basis as for all other foster carers, and any variations should relate to the child’s needs, the skills of the carer or some other relevant factor that is used as a criterion for all of the service’s foster carers. Paragraph 4.50 states: “A judicial review of Manchester City Council’s policy on payments of allowances to family and friends foster carers in 2001 ... came about because foster carers who were relatives of the children they were caring for were paid significantly less allowance than non-relative carers. The Court held it was unlawful to discriminate against family and friends carers by paying them a lower allowance than non-relative foster carers. There is no requirement to pay a fee to reward a carer’s time, skills, commitment, etc in addition to the allowance. Where a fee is paid, it must be payable to those foster carers who meet the criteria set out for the scheme, including foster carers who are family and friends.”
- 7.17 In *R (on the application of X) v Tower Hamlets London Borough Council* [2013] the High Court and Court of Appeal recently considered whether the authority’s policy on the payment of fees (and/or allowances) to foster carers were unlawful/irrational in so far as they provided for different payments to be made to family foster carers on the one hand and unrelated foster carers on the other. Consideration was given to the statutory provisions and guidance mentioned above.

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- 7.18 The Court found that the statutory scheme left it to local authorities to determine the terms, including the terms relating to payment of allowances and fees, on which they would provide fostering services. Nevertheless, their freedom to determine their own policies was not unconstrained. There were two relevant constraints. First, the legislation showed a clear intention by Parliament that children who could not continue to live with their parents should, if possible, be placed with family members who were able and willing to qualify as local authority foster carers in preference to unrelated carers. It followed that a local authority policy which would frustrate that intention was likely to be unlawful. The second constraint was the requirement to comply with the statutory guidance unless there were cogent reasons for not doing so.
- 7.19 The statutory guidance reflected two principles: (i) the welfare principle; and (ii) that there should be equality of treatment as between family and unrelated foster carers. The statutory guidance directed local authorities to comply with both of those principles. Moreover, the second principle of equal treatment applied notwithstanding recognition of the existence of differences between the two kinds of carers. The statutory guidance required that family foster carers were fully supported to care for children placed with them and not disadvantaged as a result of their prior relationship, further, it was not acceptable to discriminate against foster carers on the basis that they had a pre-existing connection with the child. The principle of equal treatment applied also to fees as well as to allowances. Fees need not be paid to foster carers, but if they were paid, they had to be payable to foster carers who met the applicable criteria regardless of whether they were related to the children. The payment of differential fees and/or allowances on the basis that the task of family foster carers and the expectations on them were different from those applicable to unrelated foster carers was contrary to the principle of equal treatment on which the statutory guidance insisted in full knowledge of the differences inherent in the respective roles of the two groups concerned and therefore, unlawful.
- 7.18 The draft Family and Friends Carers Policy in addition to setting out the Council's approach towards promoting and supporting the needs of children living with family and friends foster carers, is also intended to ensure that there is equal treatment in the payments (whether allowances, fees or otherwise) made to Family and Friends foster carers and Tasked Centred/Long Term foster carers.

**8. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments**

The policy described in this report will support the Council's corporate objective "Enabling all Haringey children and young people to thrive". By virtue of the characteristic of age, children and young people are protected by section 4 of the Equality Act and are therefore owed the public sector equality duty to have due regard to their welfare when making a decision. This policy will help the Council discharge this duty in respect of Haringey's children and young.





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**9. Head of Procurement Comments**

**10. Policy Implication**

**11. Use of Appendices**

Policy attached.

**12. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

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# Family and Friends Carers Policy

August 2013



“Enabling all Haringey children to thrive”

(Haringey Council Corporate Plan 2013/15)

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## **1. Summary of Haringey's Family and Friends Policy**

Haringey Council (Haringey) is committed to enabling all children and young people to thrive.

Families can experience all kinds of difficulties and challenges. These can sometimes lead to children being cared for by relatives or family friends for varying periods of time.

The Permanency Policy developed by Haringey Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) recognises that children are generally best cared for by their parents or, when this is not possible, within their extended family.

Research shows that children who are cared for by family or friends generally enjoy greater stability, better emotional health and better long term outcomes than do children who spend protracted periods of time in the public care system.

Haringey is therefore strongly committed to supporting relatives and family friends who step in to care for children when the child's parents are facing serious difficulties or challenges.

In this policy we describe the different situations within which family members and friends may be caring for children and we outline the support available from CYPS.

Family and Friends carers are now often referred to as "connected person" carers, meaning that they are people who already have a relationship or connection with the child prior to becoming the child's carer. They are not strangers to the child. They are people the child already knows, who he child feels safe and with whom the child enjoys a positive, affectionate relationship.

In this policy we mainly use the term "Family and Friends" because carers have told us this is how they would prefer to be described.

Many children are cared for by family and friends for varying periods of time in informal arrangements set up by their parents.

Haringey does not wish to intrude unnecessarily in these situations but would want to offer information, advice, practical help and emotional support to the carers of any child who is defined as a “child in need” (a term with a specific meaning defined in the Children Act 1989).

Some children who are looked after by Haringey are placed with Family and Friends carers. “Looked after” means children who are in care under an Interim or full Care Order made in the family courts, as well as those children who are looked after on a voluntary basis under s20 Children Act 1989.

Any person (other than the child’s parents) who cares for a looked after child must be approved as a foster carer. Haringey fully recognises the important part that Family and Friends foster carers play in caring for looked after children, sometimes for short periods of time and sometimes for much longer. People who put themselves forward to become Family and Friends foster carers often make great sacrifices and can incur substantial expense to care for children who would otherwise be placed outside their family network with unconnected foster carers, or be placed in residential care.

Haringey is committed to providing high quality support to Family and Friends foster carers in exactly the same way as we would with other foster carers. This means providing a supervising social worker, relevant training, peer support groups, short breaks, practical help and financial support.

Haringey will pay a fostering allowance to all Family and Friends foster carers from the day on which the child is placed with the foster carer. This will initially be at the level recommended by the Fostering Network. Upon satisfactory completion of Skills to Foster Training, and a commitment from the carer to carry out subsequent mandatory training, Haringey will pay a higher rate of allowance to the carer, equivalent to that paid to a Haringey task centred or long term foster carer. This allowance consists of an amount recommended by the Fostering Network, plus a “reward element” that recognises that the carer has undertaken training and has evidenced key knowledge and skills.

## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 Children may be cared for by members of their extended families, friends or other people who are connected with them for many reasons and in a variety of different arrangements. The precise numbers of family and friends who care for children in Haringey are not known as many are informal arrangements and do not come to the attention of Children and Young Peoples Services, but as at April 2013, this authority had 41 approved family and friends foster carers, and was supporting 133 children subject to Special Guardianship Orders and 32 children subject to Residence Orders.
- 2.2 This policy sets out Haringey's approach to promoting and supporting the needs of such children and describes the assessments which will be carried out to determine the services required and how such services will then be provided.
- 2.3 This policy has been informed by research. In addition consultation has taken place with children and young people, family and friends carers and parents. Haringey has a well established Child in Care Council, known as Aspire, through which children in care are consulted on a range of issues, including their views on the quality of their care. Young People from Aspire regularly meet with the Lead Member who chairs the Corporate Parenting Committee. There is a Participation Strategy and Action Plan, both of which are updated yearly. The views of children and young people in care, carers and parents are obtained through statutory reviews. Additionally, the views of special guardians and carers with Residence Orders are obtained during the annual review process. This authority has therefore sought to obtain and consider the views of those concerned when formulating this policy.
- 2.4 The manager with overall responsibility for this policy is the Head of Service (Placements and Commissioning)

## **3. Values, principles & objectives**

3.1 The main principle this policy seeks to promote is that children should be enabled to live with their families unless that is not consistent with their safety and wellbeing. Children who cannot live with their parents should, where appropriate, remain with members of their extended family or with family friends. Research indicates that children are likely to enjoy better long term outcomes if they remain within their extended family or kinship network rather than being cared for within the public care system.

3.2 This policy is based on Haringey's Permanency Policy ([http://haringeychildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_H\\_G\\_placement\\_for\\_adoption.html](http://haringeychildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_H_G_placement_for_adoption.html)). Permanency, in respect of planning for looked after children and young people, is defined as:

"a framework of emotional, physical and legal conditions that give a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity."

Haringey's Permanency Policy stresses the need for children to have stability and to receive consistent loving care throughout their childhood.

For those children who become looked after children by Haringey, permanency is most usually achieved through a successful return to their birth family, where it has been possible to successfully address the adverse factors which led to the child becoming looked after.

Where this is not possible, family and friends care will often provide an important alternative route to permanency for the child, particularly where this can be supported by a Residence Order or a Special Guardianship Order or through adoption.

3.3 The support provided by the local authority and by other agencies to family and friends carers will be based on an assessment of the needs of the child rather than merely the child's legal status. Support may involve practical help, provision of information / advice, social work support and financial support. The local authority will provide support to



ensure the child's needs are met and also, wherever possible, to enable the child to cease to be looked after.

- 3.4 Children should be active participants and their wishes and feelings should be taken into account in all relevant processes when decisions are being made to resolve problems concerning their care.

#### **4. Legal Framework**

- 4.1 There are different legal arrangements which can apply when family and friends carers look after children in need and looked after children. It is necessary for carers to be clear about what the options are before they commit to it, and they may wish to obtain their own legal advice. The following gives a brief summary of the options and Haringey's policy concerning each one. See also Annex A for a detailed table of the options.

##### **Private fostering**

- 4.2 This is a private arrangement made by the parents whereby the child is looked after for a period of 28 days or more by anyone who does not have parental responsibility, and who is not a close relative. "Close relative" is defined in the legislation as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (by full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership), or a step-parent. The child is not in the care of the local authority, and the parents retain parental responsibility.
- 4.3 The local authority must assess and monitor the arrangement, but the carer is not a local authority foster carer. The arrangement may be prohibited if assessed as unsuitable. A social worker will visit the child a minimum of 6 weekly in the first year, and then 12 weekly. There may be formal reviews in addition to the ongoing assessment visits. If the child is assessed as being in need of advice and support, such discretionary support and services may be provided to the child or family by the local authority under section 17 Children Act 1989.

- 4.4 The carer can claim child benefit and child tax credit if these are not paid to the parents. Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with those who have parental responsibility.

### **Informal Family arrangements**

- 4.5 This is where a close relative (see definition above under Private Fostering) has taken on the care of the child but does not have parental responsibility, and the family has made their own arrangements regarding the care for the child, without any involvement from the local authority. The arrangement was not made by the local authority and the child is therefore not looked after by the local authority. The parents retain parental responsibility, whilst allowing the relative to do what is reasonable to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. The relative may perceive the parents to be unable to care for the child; the parents may be deceased or otherwise not available (e.g. in prison or abroad); or there may be an agreement between relatives due to strained family circumstances such as poor health. No approval, monitoring or review by the local authority is necessary in these circumstances, although the local authority will provide appropriate advice and support upon request if the child is deemed to be a "child in need" as defined in the Children Act 1989.
- 4.6 There is no entitlement to support or services from the local authority. However, if the child is assessed as being a child in need, the local authority has discretion to assist under section 17 Children Act 1989.
- 4.7 The carer can claim child benefit and child tax credit if these are not paid to the parents. Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with those who have parental responsibility.

### **Family and friends foster care – also known as "connected person" foster care**

- 4.8 This section of the policy deals with those situations where a child is looked after by the local authority (under either a Care Order or under s20 Children Act 1989) and has been placed with the relative or friend by the local authority following an assessment of the family member's or friend's capacity to care for the child. The child is looked by the local authority, so the local authority must approve the relative or friend as a local authority foster carer, even if the arrangement is intended to be temporary. The placement may be intended to be very short term, medium term or until the child reaches adulthood.
- 4.9 Temporary approval of the family and friends carer as a foster carer can be made for up to 16 weeks, with one extension of 8 weeks in exceptional circumstances (Children's Planning, Review and Placement Regulations 2010). Temporary approval, following an initial viability assessment by a social worker, will be considered in those situations where the authority believes it would be in the best interests of the child to be cared for by the prospective carer, but there is not sufficient time to enable the carer to be fully assessed following consideration by the Fostering Panel.
- 4.10 The temporary approval of a family and friends foster carer, pending a full assessment being presented to Haringey's Fostering Panel, has to be agreed by the Agency Decision Maker (Fostering) or the Assistant Director. Under the relevant regulations, if the child remains with the Family and Friends foster carer for more than 16 weeks (or 24 weeks in exceptional circumstances) without the carer being formally approved by the Agency Decision Maker following recommendations from the Fostering Panel, the authority must remove the child from the carer and seek an alternative placement (unless a review of the decision is pending).
- 4.11 The child may be accommodated voluntarily under section 20 Children Act 1989, with the agreement of the parents, in which case the parents retain full parental responsibility. If, however, the local authority holds a Care Order then it shares parental responsibility with the parents and can determine the extent to which it can be exercised by others. If a child is already looked after under section 20, the child

will remain looked after following the placement with a family and friends foster carer, and will remain so until the local authority and anyone holding parental responsibility decide that the child no longer needs to be looked after under s20. Any change in the child's status will always be confirmed in writing to the carer, the child where appropriate (subject to child's level of understanding), and the parents.

- 4.12 Critical decisions concerning the child's placement, such as a decision to separate siblings, the placement of the child out of the authority's area, or a placement which will disrupt the child's Key Stage 4 education will be approved by the Head of Service for Children in Care.
- 4.13 The child will have a care plan (with integral health plan and personal education plan) and a placement plan, which will be reviewed regularly by the child's social worker and an Independent Reviewing Officer.
- 4.14 A social worker will make regular (minimum 4 weekly) statutory supervising visits to both the child and the carer; there will be statutory reviews of the child's care plan (minimum 6 monthly) and annual reviews of the carer's approval.
- 4.15 The Family and Friends foster carer will have a supervising social worker from the Fostering Service who will visit at least once every six weeks and maintain regular telephone contact between visits. The supervising social worker will also make at least one unannounced visit each year.
- 4.16 Support may be provided to meet the child's needs, including health and education. Training and practical support may be provided to the foster care. The young person may be entitled to leaving care support services when they become 16 or older.
- 4.17 Child benefit and child tax credit are not payable to the carer of a child who is looked after by a local authority. Haringey will pay a weekly allowance to meet the costs of caring for the child (see later under Financial Support).

- 4.18 Details of the assessment and approval process for foster carers can be found in the Fostering Service's Statement of Purpose. An information pack will be given to prospective Family and Friends foster carers about the process, and they will be given the name and contact details of the social worker who will be allocated to carry out the assessment.
- 4.19 Family and friends foster carers seeking long term approval to care for a particular child will be assessed in the same way as 'stranger' foster carers, and approval will be given by the Agency Decision Maker following recommendations from the Fostering Panel.
- 4.20 If an approved Family and Friends foster carer should decide that they would like to foster children to whom they are not connected, they should discuss this in the first instance with their supervising social worker who will provide advice and information. A further assessment would be required, which would be presented to the Fostering Panel for recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker (Fostering).
- 4.21 Haringey recognises the valuable service provided by Family and Friends foster carers and understands that these carers often have a great deal to offer to children in terms of their skills, knowledge and life experience. Haringey therefore welcomes inquiries from Family and Friends foster carers who feel they might be able to provide foster care to other children.

### **Residence Orders and Special Guardianship Orders**

- 4.22 There are situations where a child may be at risk of becoming looked after by the local authority, or may already be looked after, and their foster carer or other relative or friend applies to care permanently for the child under a Special Guardianship Order or Residence Order. Application to court can be made without the support of parents or the local authority. Relatives may apply for an order without first seeking the court's permission if the child has lived with them

for one year; if less than a year, or the child is not living with them yet, the court's permission is required before the application can be lodged.

- 4.23 Parental responsibility is shared with the parents, but a special guardian may exercise it to the exclusion of all others with parental responsibility.
- 4.24 The court will always require an assessment report from the local authority before making a Special Guardianship Order, and sometimes requires a report from the local authority before making a Residence Order.
- 4.25 Child benefit and child tax credit are payable to people who hold a Special Guardianship or Residence Order, if not being paid to the parent. Financial support from the local authority is discretionary (see Financial Support). Special Guardians are entitled to receive an assessment from the local authority for support services and financial support if the child was looked after by the authority prior to the order being made.
- 4.26 Where a child is not looked after by the local authority immediately before the order being made, an assessment for support services will be made on request. There is no automatic right to this if the child was not looked after, but if the assessment is refused, written reasons will be given and representations can be made as to why it should be made. Support services which may be offered, and which will depend on assessed need, include counselling and advice; assistance regarding contact; therapeutic input for the child; and training for the carer. This list is not exhaustive, and services may be time-limited, for instance, to help the child settle in with a new carer.

### **Adoption**

- 4.27 If the local authority decides that a child they are looking after should be placed for adoption they can do so either with the parents' consent or under a Placement Order. Foster carers can apply for an adoption order after the child has lived with them for one year. Other people who have cared for the child can apply for an Adoption Order if the child has lived with them for three years.

- 4.28 Parental responsibility transfers to the adopters and is no longer held by the birth parents. The child remains legally a part of the adoptive family for the rest of his/her life.
- 4.29 If the child is looked after by a local authority, the adoption agency, which may be the local authority, assesses and approves the prospective adopters. The court will make the adoption order. If the child is not looked after by the local authority, notice of intention to adopt must be given to the authority who then carry out an assessment and report to the court.
- 4.30 Child benefit and child tax credit are payable in respect of children who are subject to Adoption Orders. There is an entitlement to assessment for financial support if the child was looked after by the local authority prior to the order. Support services may also be offered if a need is assessed and it is felt necessary, such as assistance with contact, and counselling. Further details are available from the Adoption Service.

## **5. Information about Services and Support**

- 5.1 Guidance and information about local services and support is available from CYPS on request. This will include information concerning day care providers, children's centres, schools, health services, leisure facilities, youth support services, and counselling services, to name but a few.
- 5.2 Haringey seeks to provide comprehensive information for parents and carers about the full range of services for children, young people and families in the area, and to highlight the availability of advice from independent organisations. Annex B provides a list of useful national organisations, and information regarding a wide range of local resources is available on the Southwark Council website's Family Information Service.

## **6. Financial Support**

### **Family arrangements**

- 6.1 The local authority has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section 17 Children Act 1989 to safeguard or promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need, and to promote the upbringing of such children by their families.
- 6.2 This authority's eligibility criteria for such financial support are as follows:
- i) Where the child comes to live with the carer as a result of a child protection investigation (known as a 'section 47 investigation');
  - ii) Where the child comes to live with the carer as part of his/her Child Protection Plan; or
  - iii) Where the child comes to live with the carer to avoid the child being looked after by the local authority, and there is professional evidence (e.g. social work, health or educational) of the impairment of the parents' ability to care for the child.
- 6.3 A request for an assessment should be made to the First Response Service or to the relevant social work team if the child already has a social worker. Details of the child and carer's finances will need to be provided, as consideration will be given to the carer's ability to financially support the child's needs, which should be without local authority support where possible. Carers will be expected to apply for child benefit for the child or to obtain this from the parent, who remains financially responsible for their child. Carers must also ensure that they are claiming all other welfare benefits to which they and/or the child are entitled. This authority can refer the carer to the appropriate organisation to assist with this.
- 6.4 There are 3 categories of payment by this authority which may be considered, and one or more may be applicable in any case:



i) Subsistence crisis (one-off) payments

These are to be used to overcome a crisis, following assessment by the authority.

ii) Setting-up

These are to cover the initial costs of having a child come to live with the family and friends carer, such as for clothing, furniture or bedding. Payment may be subject to conditions, such as repayment in certain circumstances.

iii) Weekly living contribution

Where financial support is to be provided regularly, a written agreement will be drawn up detailing the level and duration of the support, how payments will be made, and the mechanism for review.

6.5 The decision to offer financial support will be made by the relevant Head of Service.

**Fostering allowances (Family and Friends foster Carers)**

6.6 With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, Family and Friends foster carers who have been temporarily approved following an initial viability assessment, and who have also successfully completed the Skills to Foster Training, are paid the same fostering allowance as Haringey's task centred and long term foster carers. This aspect of the policy takes account of the case of X v London Borough of tower Hamlets (2013) EWCA Civ 904 – Court of Appeal Decision. The judgement in the Court of Appeal was that it is unlawful and discriminatory for a local authority to provide approved family and friends foster carers with a lower level of financial support and recognition than the local authority ordinarily pays to other approved foster carers.

6.7 Fostering allowances are related to the age of the child and are calculated to take account of the actual cost of caring for a child of that age as well as the tasks and responsibilities that a foster carer takes on in caring for a looked after child. These responsibilities and tasks may include taking a child to and from school, attending meetings with professionals, attending Child Care Review meetings, taking the child to health appointments, supervising the child's contact with parents, promoting contact with siblings etc. The local

authority may pay an enhanced fostering allowance in the case of a child with a significant level of special or additional needs.

- 6.8 Family and Friends foster carers who have had a positive viability assessment, but who have not completed the Skills to Foster training, are paid a level of fostering allowance at a rate recommended by the Fostering Network. On successful completion of Skills to Foster Training the foster carer's fostering allowance will be lifted to the higher Haringey fostering allowance level. Family and Friends foster carers are required to continue to engage in learning and training and to participate in a regular peer support group. Compliance with this requirement is a condition of continued approval as a foster carer. Being a foster carer involves taking on responsibility for someone else's child, often in difficult circumstances. It can be a challenging and stressful role. Therefore, Haringey takes the view that appropriate training and support is essential for all foster carers.

#### Residence order or Special Guardianship allowances

- 6.9 The local authority has discretion to pay financial support to a family and friends carer who has been granted a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order, unless they are a spouse or civil partner of the child's parent. Haringey will respond promptly to any such requests. The decision as to whether to pay an allowance will depend on a social work assessment of the child's needs.
- 6.10 Where a child was looked after immediately prior to the Special Guardianship order being made, on request the local authority must assess the financial support needs of the child and special guardians, and make payments where it is considered necessary to ensure that the carer is able to care for the child. These payments may be one-off to assist with the purchase of essential items such as furniture and bedding, or may be weekly on-going support.
- 6.11 The eligibility criteria for such financial support are as follows:

- i) Where the residence or special guardianship order arises out of care proceedings; or
- ii) Where the residence or special guardianship order follows the child being accommodated under section 20; or
- iii) Where the child has come to live with the carer as a result of a child protection investigation (known as a 'section 47 investigation'); or
- iv) Where the child has come to live with the carer as part of his/her Child Protection Plan; or
- v) Where the child has come to live with the carer to avoid the child being looked after by the local authority, and there is professional evidence (e.g. social work, health or educational) of the impairment of the parents' ability to care for the child.

6.12 The rates for allowances for residence orders or special guardianship orders are the same. Both are means-tested and the carer can apply for child benefit and child tax credit. Haringey uses the government recommended Standard Means Test Model for calculating the allowance to be paid. The 'maximum rate' used in the Means Test Model is the current National Fostering Network rate, less child benefit and child tax credit.

6.13 The expectation is that the financial support will cover all the child's requirements, including an amount for birthdays and holidays, and it will be for the carer to manage that appropriately.

6.14 As stated above, the payment of support is discretionary. Following consideration of the eligibility criteria, and then where appropriate the means-testing calculation, the decision as to whether financial support will be offered is made by the relevant Head of Service. Where it is to be paid, a written agreement must be entered into, and this will be reviewed annually. Financial support may be paid in advance of the order being made where the authority considers it is necessary to facilitate the arrangements for the carer to become the legal carer of the child.

- 6.15 The authority may agree to assist with the legal costs of the family and friend's carer obtaining advice and possibly representation to enable them to apply for a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order, where it considers it appropriate to do so. This will generally only be where the carer cannot obtain public funding. The decision to pay will be made by the Head of Service responsible for the child's case, but will never exceed the current rates for public funding, and will only be payable if prior written agreement has been given.

#### Adoption financial support

- 6.16 The local authority has discretion to pay financial support to a family and friends carer who adopts the child they are caring for. Such support is only payable where it is necessary to ensure that the adoptive parent can look after the child. Where the child was placed with the carer for adoption by this authority, there is an entitlement to be assessed.
- 6.17 It is a requirement that there must be some particular condition relating to the child's health or development, or circumstances making it hard to place the child for adoption. Where the child needs special care, the condition must be serious and long-term. Further details are available from the Adoption Service. Payments may be one-off to assist with particular items, or may be weekly on-going support.
- 6.18 An assessment for financial support will include a means test of the financial circumstances of the adoptive parent, although there are some circumstances where means are disregarded. The adoptive parent can claim child benefit and child tax credit. The 'maximum payment' to be applied in the means test is the National Fostering Rate prevailing rate applicable to the age of the child, less child benefit and child tax credit, plus any enhancement assessed for the child. This is then applied to the means test to determine the level of allowance that should be paid.

- 6.19 The expectation is that the financial support will cover all the child's requirements, including for birthdays and holidays, and it will be for the carer to manage that appropriately.
- 6.20 As stated above, the payment of support is discretionary. Following consideration of the child's needs, and then where appropriate the means-testing calculation, the decision as to whether financial support will be offered is made by the Head of Service for the Adoption Service. Where it is to be paid, a written agreement must be entered into, and this will be reviewed annually. Financial support may be paid in advance of the order being made where the authority considers it is necessary to facilitate the arrangements for the carer to become the child's adopter.
- 6.21 The authority may agree to assist with the legal costs of the family and friends carer obtaining advice and possibly representation to enable them to apply for an adoption order, where it considers it appropriate to do so. This will generally only be where the child has been placed with the carer for adoption by the authority, where the carer cannot obtain public funding, and where the proceedings are contested. The decision to pay will be made by the Head of Service for the Adoption Service, but will never exceed the current rates for public funding, and will only be payable if prior written agreement has been given.

## **7. Accommodation**

- 7.1 This authority will work with landlords to ensure that whenever possible family and friends carers living in social housing are given appropriate priority to move to more suitable accommodation if this will prevent the need for a child to become looked after.

## **8. Supporting Contact for children with their birth families**

- 8.1 Haringey recognises it has a duty to promote positive contact for all children in need, although there are differences in the

way that duty is expressed depending on whether or not the child is looked after.

- 8.2 Where a child is not looked after by this authority, we will promote contact between the child and his/her family where it is necessary to do so in order to safeguard and promote his/her welfare. Specific assistance may be identified by this authority as required to ensure that any such contact can be managed safely. Information is also available to family and friends carers about local contact centres and family mediation services, and how to make use of their services. Details are available on the Haringey Council website.
- 8.3 Where a child is looked after, Haringey will endeavour to promote contact between the child and his/her family unless it is not practicable or consistent with the child's welfare. The overall objective of the contact arrangements will be included in the child's care plan and the specific arrangements will be set out in the child's placement plan.

## **9. Family Group Conferences**

- 9.1 Family Group Conferences (FGCs) are decision making and planning meetings in which the wider family group makes plans and decisions for children in need to safeguard and promote their welfare. The child should be involved in the process, although may not be present at the meeting, and the family plan should take account of any stipulations raised by this authority.
- 9.2 This authority will offer and facilitate FGCs or other forms of family meeting at an early stage when there are concerns about a child who may not be able to live with his/her parents. These meetings are to promote the involvement of the wider family to achieve a resolution of difficulties, and offer a means of ensuring that all resources within the family's wider social networks have been engaged for the benefit of the child. The child's social worker will provide information as to the process for arranging an FGC.

## **10. Support Groups**

- 10.1 Haringey recognises that family and friends carers may sometimes find that getting together with others in a similar position can be a valuable source of support. Groups can help to combat the isolation which many carers feel when they take on the role, particularly when they are dealing with the complex needs of vulnerable children for which they had not planned. Support groups can be particularly important for carers and others who are not in receipt of services from the local authority.
- 10.2 Haringey works with other statutory agencies and voluntary organisations to find ways to encourage peer support and access to support groups. There are various national and local support groups: they may be specifically for grandparents, or just informal family and friends carers, or mixed groups. Haringey provides support groups for certain groups. Information about existing groups is available on request from either the supervising social worker or the family and friends social worker. Advice about how to set up a new group is available from organisations such as Family Rights Group and The Grandparents Association. See Annex B for contact details.

## **11. Complaints**

- 11.1 If a family and friends carer, foster carer or child feels dissatisfied with the service they have received from this authority, they may make a complaint via the authority's CYPS complaints process. Haringey aims to resolve complaints as quickly as possible without the need for a formal investigation, but where this is not possible, a formal investigation will be arranged. Details of the complaints procedure are available on request.

*HARINGEY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES*

*AUGUST 2013*

**Annex A – Caring for Somebody Else’s Child - Options**



ANNEX A: CARING FOR SOMEBODY ELSE'S CHILD – OPTIONS

Approval basis	Parental Responsibility (PR)	Route into the caring arrangement	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
<p>The arrangement is assessed by LA, but the carer is not approved as a local authority foster carer is. The arrangement may be prohibited if assessed by the local authority as unsuitable.</p>	<p>Remains with birth parents</p>	<p>The child is not a looked after child.</p> <p>Relative means grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (by full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or a step parent.</p>	<p>This is a private arrangement whereby the child is being cared for for 28 days or more (or the intention is that the arrangement will last for 28 days or more) by anyone who does not have parental responsibility, and who is not a close relative.</p>	<p>The relative has chosen to take on the care of the child but does not have parental responsibility, and the arrangement was not made by the local authority.</p> <p>The child is not a looked after child.</p> <p>Relative may perceive the parents to be unable to care for the child.</p> <p>or the parents may be dead or otherwise not available (e.g. in prison);</p> <p>or there may be an agreement between relatives due to difficult family circumstances.</p>	<p>The child has been placed with the relative or friend by the local authority, because the person who had been caring for the child was deemed not to be providing suitable care.</p> <p>The child is a looked after child and so the local authority must approve the relative or friend as a local authority foster carer.</p>	<p>The child is a looked after child being accommodated by the local authority under section 20 Children Act 1989 or because the child is subject to a care order, but has been placed with a foster carer by the local authority.</p> <p>(Alternatively, the local authority may choose to place a child into residential care where this is considered to best meet the child's needs).</p>	<p>The child may be at risk of becoming 'looked after' and a friend or relative applies for an order, or</p> <p>The child may have been 'looked after' and their foster carer or other relative/friend applies for an order.</p> <p>In either circumstance, application can be made without the support of the parents or the local authority. Relatives may apply for an order after the child has lived with them for one year.</p> <p>Or, there can be benign reasons, e.g. after parents' death and in line with a prior agreement between the birth parents and the carer.</p>	<p>PR shared with parents and any one else with parental responsibility for the child. The special guardian may exercise parental responsibility to the exclusion of all others with FR, apart from another special guardian.</p>	<p>Looked after children: the LA may decide that the child should be placed for adoption. They can only do so with the consent of the birth parent or under a placement order made by a court.</p> <p>An approved foster carer can apply for an adoption order after a year of caring for the child.</p> <p>Other: informal carers could apply for an adoption order if the child has lived with them for a period of 3 years.</p>
<p>None</p>	<p>Remains with birth parents but the person who cares for the child may do what is reasonable to safeguard or promote the child's welfare</p>	<p>Remains with birth parents if child accommodated under section 20 CA, or if the child is subject to a care order or emergency protection order the local authority will have parental responsibility and determines the extent to which it may be exercised by others.</p>	<p>Approved as local authority foster carers in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations. (If child is looked after, carers must be approved as foster carers even if close relative.)</p>	<p>Shared by parents and holder of residence order.</p>	<p>Appointed by court following application.</p>	<p>Appointed by court, following application from the applicant. LA must investigate the matter and prepare a report for the court dealing with the suitability of the applicant to be a special guardian.</p>	<p>Adoption agency assesses and approves prospective adopters, court makes order regarding specific child. If the child is not looked after then notice of intention to adopt must be given to the LA who then carry out an assessment / report for the court.</p>	<p>Transfers to adopters and relationship with birth parents is severed.</p>	

	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
<b>Duration</b>	Subject to discretion of person with PR and readiness of private foster carer.	Subject to discretion of person with PR	So long as placement remains in line with child's care plan, as determined by LA	Age 18.	Age 18 unless varied or discharged by the court before the child reaches 18 years.	Permanent lifelong relationship	
<b>Placement supervision</b>	It is not a placement, but there are statutory visits to child by social worker (minimum 6 weekly in first year, then 12 weekly)	None	Statutory: visits to child by social worker and supervision of foster carers by supervising social worker	None	None	When child is placed for adoption by the LA, the placement is supervised and there are statutory reviews. Once the adoption order is made, none.	
<b>Review of placement</b>	It is not a placement, but the LA may do formal reviews in addition to ongoing assessment during visits.	None	Statutory reviews of child's care plan (minimum 6 monthly) and annual reviews of local authority foster carers approval	None	None	See above	
<b>Support services</b>	Provision of advice and support as determined necessary by the LA, which may assess the child as a child in need, with a child in need plan, and provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the Children Act 1989	No entitlement, but the LA may assess the child as a child in need, with a child in need plan and provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the Children Act 1989	Support to meet child's needs including health plan and personal education plan. Training and practical support to foster carers in accordance with the Fostering services Regulations, MMS and CWDC standards. Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services	No entitlement  (But LA has discretion to provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the CA)	If child was looked after prior to making the SGO, LA must assess for need for special guardianship support services. LA has discretion whether to provide support.  Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services if was a looked after child prior to making of the SGO.	Entitlement to assessment for adoption support services, which may be provided at discretion of LA in accordance with Regulations and MMS.	

	Private fostering	Family care (Informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
<b>Financial support – entitlement</b>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p> <p>Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR.</p>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p> <p>Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR.</p> <p>Guardians Allowance payable if both parents have died or the only surviving parent cannot be found or serving 2 years or more prison sentence.</p>	<p>Child benefit and child tax credit not payable.</p> <p>Weekly allowance to meet the costs of caring for the child. This should meet at least the national minimum rate set by DCSF.</p> <p>The Manchester City Council judgment ruled that allowances must be the same for all foster carers, whether or not family &amp; friends.</p>		<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p> <p>Entitlement to assessment for financial support (part of adoption support) if child looked after prior to order.</p>
<b>Financial support – discretionary</b>	<p>LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section 17 Children Act</p>	<p>LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section 17 Children Act</p>	<p>Some fostering providers pay their foster carers a fee to recognise the carer's skill, experience and commitment.</p> <p>The Manchester City Council judgement (which requires allowances to be paid on the same basis regardless of the relationship of the carer to the child) did not consider fees. However, Statutory Guidance for Fostering Services requires that any policy in relation to the payment of fees must be applied to all foster carers who meet the criteria in the same way and must not discriminate on the grounds of a pre-existing relationship with the child.</p>		<p>LA has discretion to pay residence order allowance – usually if child was previously fostered by the carers, or exceptionally if making residence order prevents child becoming looked after. Any allowance reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Entitled to an assessment for financial support under the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 if child looked after prior to order and meets the criteria in the regulations.</p> <p>Subject to assessment as above and for former foster carers can include an element of remuneration.</p> <p>Regular or one off payments.</p> <p>Any allowances reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Subject to assessment, one off payments or regular adoption allowance may be paid.</p>

## **Annex B: Useful Organisations and Information for Family and Friends Carers**

### **Action for Prisoners' Families**

Works to reduce the negative impact of imprisonment on prisoners' families. Produces publications and resources, and provides advice, information and training as well as networking opportunities.

[www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk](http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk)

Address: Unit 21, Carlston Court  
116 Putney Bridge Road  
London SW15 2NQ

Tel: 0208 812 3600

Email: [info@actionpf.org.uk](mailto:info@actionpf.org.uk)

Advice Line: 0808 808 2003

[Info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.org.uk](mailto:Info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.org.uk)

### **Addaction**

Offers a range of support developed for families and carers affected by substance misuse.

[www.addaction.org.uk](http://www.addaction.org.uk)

Address: 67-69 Cowcross Street  
London EC1M 6PU

Tel: 0207 251 5860

Email: [info@addaction.org.uk](mailto:info@addaction.org.uk)

### **Adfam**

Works with families affected by drugs and alcohol, and supports carers of children whose parents have drug and alcohol problems.

[www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)

Address: 25 Corsham Street

London N1 6DR  
Tel: 0207 553 7640  
Email: [admin@adfam.org.uk](mailto:admin@adfam.org.uk)

**Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)**

Offers free independent advice and information for parents and carers on a range of state education and schooling issues, including admissions, exclusion, attendance, special educational needs and bullying.

[www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)

Address: 1c Aberdeen Studios  
22 Highbury Grove  
London N5 2DQ

General advice line: 0808 800 5793  
Exclusion advice line: 0808 800 0327  
Exclusion information line: 0207 704 9822 (24hr answer phone)

**BeGrand.net**

Website offering information and advice to grandparents, plus online and telephone advice.

[www.begrand.net](http://www.begrand.net)

Helpline: 0845 434 6835

**British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF)**

Provides information and advice about adoption and fostering and publishes resources.

[www.baaf.org.uk](http://www.baaf.org.uk)

Address: Saffron House  
6-10 Kirby Street  
London EC1N 8TS

Tel: 0207 421 2600  
Email: [mail@baaf.org.uk](mailto:mail@baaf.org.uk)  
**Children's Legal Centre**

Provides free independent legal advice and factsheets to children, parents, carers and professionals.

[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

Address: University of Essex  
Wivenhoe Park  
Colchester  
Essex CO4 3SQ

Tel: 01206 877 910

Email: [clc@essex.ac.uk](mailto:clc@essex.ac.uk)

Child Law Advice Line: 0808 802 0008

Community Legal Advice – Education: 0845 345 4345

### **Citizens Advice Bureaux**

Helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free independent and confidential advice through local bureaux and website.

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

### **Department for Education**

Lists details of telephone help lines and online services to provide information, advice and support on a range of issues that parents and families may face in bringing up children and young people.

[www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families)

### **Family Fund Trust**

Helps families with severely disabled or seriously ill children to have choices and the opportunity to enjoy ordinary life. Gives grants for things that make life easier and more enjoyable for the disabled child and their family.

Address 4 Alpha Court  
Monks Cross Drive  
York YO32 9WN

[www.familyfund.org.uk](http://www.familyfund.org.uk)

Tel:0845 130 4542

Email: [info@familyfund.org.uk](mailto:info@familyfund.org.uk)

### **Family Rights Group (FGR)**

Provides advice to parents and other family members whose children are involved with or require children's social care services because of welfare needs or concerns. Publishes resources, help to develop support groups for family and friends carers, and runs a discussion board.

[www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)

Address: Second Floor  
The Print House  
18 Ashwin Street  
London E8 3DL

Tel: 0207 923 2628  
Advice Line: 0800 801 0366  
Email: [advice@frg.org.uk](mailto:advice@frg.org.uk)

### **The Fostering Network**

Supports foster carers and anyone with an interest in fostering to improve their lives of children in care. Publishes resources and runs Fosterline, a confidential advice line for foster carers including concerns about a child's future, allegations and complaints, legislation and financial matters.

[www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

Address: 87 Blackfriars Road  
London SE1 8HA

Email: [info@fostering.net](mailto:info@fostering.net)  
Tel: 020 7 620 6400  
Fosterline: 0800 040 7675  
Email: [fosterline@fostering.net](mailto:fosterline@fostering.net)

### **The Grandparents' Association**

Supports grandparents and their families, especially those who have lost or are losing contact with their grandchildren because of

divorce, separation or other family problems, those caring for their grandchildren on a full time basis and those with childcare responsibilities for their grandchildren.

[www.grandparents-association.org.uk](http://www.grandparents-association.org.uk)

Address: Moot House  
The Stow  
Harlow  
Essex CM20 3AG

Tel: - 01279 428040

Helpline: 0845 434 9585

Welfare benefits advice and information: 0844 357 1033

Email: [info@grandparents-association.org.uk](mailto:info@grandparents-association.org.uk)

### **Mentor UK**

Promotes the health and wellbeing of children and young people to reduce the damage that drugs can do to lives.

[www.mentor.org.uk](http://www.mentor.org.uk)

Address: Fourth Road  
74 Great Eastern Street  
London EC2A 3JG

Tel: 0207 739 8494

Email: [admin@mentoruk.org](mailto:admin@mentoruk.org)

### **Family Mediation Helpline**

Provides information and advice about family mediation services and eligibility for public funding.

08456 026627

[www.familymediationhelpline.co.uk](http://www.familymediationhelpline.co.uk)

### **National Family Mediation (NFM)**

Provides mediation services to support couples who are separated, and their children and others affected by this.



[www.nfm.org.uk](http://www.nfm.org.uk)

4 Barnfield Hill  
Exeter  
EX1 1SR  
[general@nfm.org.uk](mailto:general@nfm.org.uk)

**Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group**

Operates helpline and provides a variety of services to support anyone who has a link with someone in prison, prisoners and other agencies.

[www.partnersofprisoners.co.uk](http://www.partnersofprisoners.co.uk)

Address: Valentine House  
1079 Richdale Road  
Blakeley  
Manchester M9 8AJ

Tel: 01061 702 1000  
Offenders' Families Helpline Tel: 0808 808 2003  
Email: [info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.co.uk](mailto:info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.co.uk)

**Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)**

Provides practical and emotional support to prisoners and to their children and families. The kinship care Support Service provides support and advice to family members and friends who care for children whose parents are in HMP Holloway.

[www.prisonadvice.org.uk](http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk)

Address; Park Place  
12 Lawn Lane  
Vauxhall  
SW8 1UD  
Tel: 0207 735 953

**Parents Against Drug Abuse (PADA)**

Delivers support and services to families of substance users, including a national helpline.

[www.pada.org.uk](http://www.pada.org.uk)

Address: The Foundry  
Marcus Street  
Birkenhead CH41 1EU

Phone: 0151 649 1580  
National Families Helpline: 08457 023867

### **Parentline Plus**

Provides help and support in all aspects of family life, including information, an online chat facility and a 24 hour helpline.

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

Address: CAN Mezzanine  
49-51 East Road  
London N1 6AH

Tel: 0207 553 3080  
24hr Advice line: 0808 800 2222  
Email: [parentsupport@familylives.org.uk](mailto:parentsupport@familylives.org.uk)

### **TalktoFrank**

The government's national drugs helpline which offers free confidential drugs information and advice 24 hours a day. Information and advice is also available via the website.

[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

24 hour advice line: 0800 77 66 00  
Text 82111  
Email: [frank@talktofrank.com](mailto:frank@talktofrank.com)

### **Voice**

Advocacy organisation for children living away from home or in need.

[www.voiceyp.org](http://www.voiceyp.org)

Address: 320 City Road  
London EC1V 2NZ  
Tel: 0207 833 5792  
Young person's advice line: 0808 800 5792  
Email: [info@voiceyp.org](mailto:info@voiceyp.org)

### **Young Minds**

Works to improve the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people and empowering their parents and carers.

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Address: 48-50 St John Street  
London EC1M 4DG

Tel: 0207 336 8445  
Parents helpline: 0808 802 5544

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