

NOTICE OF MEETING

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 4th November, 2025, 7.00 pm - Woodside Room - George Meehan House, 294 High Road, N22 8JZ (watch the live meeting [here](#))

Councillors: Felicia Opoku, Zena Brabazon, Elin Weston, Lotte Collett, Cressida Johnson, Marsha Isilar-Gosling and Ibrahim Ali

Quorum: 3

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

Please note this meeting may be filmed or recorded by the Council for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site or by anyone attending the meeting using any communication method. Although we ask members of the public recording, filming or reporting on the meeting not to include the public seating areas, members of the public attending the meeting should be aware that we cannot guarantee that they will not be filmed or recorded by others attending the meeting. Members of the public participating in the meeting (e.g. making deputations, asking questions, making oral protests) should be aware that they are likely to be filmed, recorded or reported on. By entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings.

The Chair of the meeting has the discretion to terminate or suspend filming or recording, if in his or her opinion continuation of the filming, recording or reporting would disrupt or prejudice the proceedings, infringe the rights of any individual, or may lead to the breach of a legal obligation by the Council.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

3. URGENT BUSINESS

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

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A member with a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered must disclose to that meeting the

existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the consideration becomes apparent.

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

5. MINUTES (PAGES 1 - 8)

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd September 2025.

6. IRO ANNUAL 2024-25 (PAGES 9 - 34)

7. FOSTERING ANNUAL 2024-25 (PAGES 35 - 86)

8. PERFORMANCE Q1 & 2 (PAGES 87 - 102)

9. CARE LEAVERS EMPLOYMENT - VERBAL UPDATE

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Chris Liasi - Principal Committee Coordinator

Tel – 0208 489 4323

Email: chris.liasi@haringey.gov.uk

Fiona Alderman

Director of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)

George Meehan House, 294 High Road, Wood Green, N22 8JZ

Monday, 27 October 2025

MINUTES OF THE MEETING Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee HELD ON Tuesday, 2nd September, 2025, 7:00pm – 8:20pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Felicia Opoku, Zena Brabazon, Lotte Collett and Cressida Johnson

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred to the filming of meetings and this information was noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

Apologies of absence were received by Councillors Ali, Weston, Johnson and Gosling.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 7 April 2025 be agreed were agreed as a correct record.

6. SOCIAL CARE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE 2024/25

The 2024/25 report outlined the performance of Haringey's Children's Social Care Services, benchmarking progress against a revised group of statistical neighbours with similar demographic profiles, as determined by the Department for Education. These included Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Enfield, Hounslow, Lambeth, Lewisham, Redbridge, Southwark, and Waltham Forest.

Children's Social Care supported children and young people who were in need, at risk, in care, or care experienced. These individuals often presented complex or acute needs requiring statutory intervention under the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004, the Children and Families Act 2014, and associated guidance such as "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2023).

Governance and oversight were maintained through several forums:

- Safeguarding Accountability Meetings, chaired quarterly by the Council Leader, scrutinised performance and safety concerns.
- Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee focused on children in care and care leavers.
- Haringey's Safeguarding Children's Partnership (HSCP), involving the Local Authority, Police, and ICB, met regularly to review safeguarding arrangements. The HSCP Executive Board convened six times annually and was chaired by the Director of Children's Services.

HSCP sub-groups monitored areas such as performance, workforce development, training, and exploitation. The annual report set priorities around mental health, early intervention, older children needing protection, and contextual safeguarding.

National Reporting Context

Haringey submitted data to the Department for Education for the Child in Need Census and the 903 Children in Care Return. These covered referrals, assessments, protection activity, care placements, legal status, and outcomes for care leavers. Additional reports were submitted to the North Central London Regional Adoption Board and an annual workforce survey detailed recruitment, retention, and caseloads. Data to Insight (D2I) supported benchmarking through the Local Authority Interactive Tool (CHAT).

Future Challenges and Priorities

Key operational priorities included:

- Implementing the Families First Partnership programme to enhance early support.
 - Preparing for the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and reforms from the national policy "Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive" (Nov 2024).
 - Responding to rising demand and complex challenges such as mental health, exploitation, domestic abuse, housing instability, and substance misuse.
 - Managing financial pressures from care placements.
 - Strengthening recruitment and retention of social workers, including internal development strategies.
 - Advancing permanence planning and improving data systems for performance tracking.
 - Establishing local Overnight Short Breaks provision for children with profound disabilities.
 - Continuing professional development through Haringey Children's Academy.
 - Leading innovative Stop and Search initiatives in partnership with the MET police.
- Members had sought insight into the reasons behind the strong performance of young people, including those in the Council's care. It was noted that several factors contributed to this success. Since taking on the role as Head of the Virtual School, Gala had significantly raised the profile of children with a social worker, which included looked-after children. There had been a clear strategic

focus on inclusion and on meeting the individual needs of children. Many of these children were identified as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and the quality of the SEND provision had continued to strengthen over time. These combined efforts were believed to have played a key role in the improved outcomes.

- It was stated there had been a decline of the children coming into this service and wanted reason for the reduction in the numbers. There had been a noticeable decline in the number of children entering the service. Initially, the service managed around 400 children, with fluctuations of about 20. The first significant reduction occurred when unaccompanied asylum-seeking children stopped arriving via the Channel Tunnel, instead using alternative routes. This shift led to a drop of approximately 30–35 children within a year, and the numbers remained at that lower level.
- While this decline initially eased budget pressures and allowed for better caseload management and increased system capacity, efforts to restore previous numbers of asylum-seeking children were unsuccessful. Another contributing factor to the reduction was the growing stability within the service. Consistent leadership and staffing helped improve the quality of practice, enabling the team to build stronger relationships with families and make more confident decisions about managing risk. This stability allowed the service to support more children outside of statutory systems. Staff were able to review all cases within the original cohort of 400, ensuring that children received appropriate support without remaining unnecessarily within the formal care system.
- Members had asked for clarification regarding a safeguarding chart under section 8, specifically about contact sources. They noted that police referrals to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) had decreased slightly, while health referrals had increased. They queried whether this represented a typical fluctuation or indicated a more unusual trend. It was explained that The team had reviewed the matter locally and found no specific systemic changes that explained the fluctuation. Regular discussions took place with colleagues from both police and health services across various forums. Although the shift in referral sources had been noted collectively, it was not attributed to any development. Police and health professionals had consistently been the primary sources of contact throughout the year, and it was common for them to alternate in terms of which service generated the most referrals.

RESOLVED:

Recommendations:

3.1. That Members noted the performance data as set out in appendix i.

3.2. Committee was asked to note the report and, in particular: The service improvement and challenges contained within the report as well as the actions taken during 2023/24 in response to local demand and the financial pressures experienced

by the service in relation to placements and the areas identified as priorities for 2024/25 following analysis and review of the year's performance

Reasons for decision

4.1. This report is for information only

Alternative options considered

N/A

7. PERMANENCY PLANNING

Permanency planning had focused on securing long-term, stable living arrangements for children, aiming to reduce disruptions and promote emotional security. The process considered each child's social, emotional, educational, health, cultural, and identity needs.

Three key dimensions of permanence were addressed:

- Legal permanence through arrangements such as reunification with birth parents, adoption, or legal orders like Special Guardianship.
- Physical permanence by ensuring stability in home and community environments.
- Psychological permanence through secure attachments and a sense of belonging.

Haringey had prioritised early permanency planning, engaging practitioners and managers in continuous discussions about suitable long-term options for children entering care. This approach aligned with best practice and legal expectations under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Children Act 1989. Courts were required to assess the impact of harm, current and future needs, and the adequacy of long-term care plans. Social workers applied principles from the *Re B-S* judgment, ensuring thorough analysis and evidence in care recommendations.

During the 2023 Ofsted inspection, Haringey was praised for its creative and committed social workers and improved adoption matching for younger children. The borough moved from "Requires Improvement" to "Good" overall, though permanency planning was identified as an area needing further embedding.

Following the inspection, Haringey strengthened its permanency processes through:

- Monthly Permanency Panels, chaired by senior managers, to monitor progress.
- Eight-weekly Permanency Planning Meetings within teams, focusing on children yet to achieve permanency.

These meetings evaluated long-term stability and explored all viable options, including parallel planning—where rehabilitation with birth parents was pursued alongside preparation for alternatives like kinship care or adoption.

The main routes to permanency included:

- Return to parents
 - Special Guardianship
 - Placement with connected carers
 - Long-term foster care
 - Adoption
-
- A member had expressed interest in learning more about the role of the Court Progression Officer, describing it as a particularly engaging topic. It was explained that Haringey had benefited from appointing a Service Manager for Court Service Assurance and Progression, especially given recent developments within the court system. A former court manager, who had spent time working as a principal social worker in another local authority, had returned to Haringey in this enhanced role. Their experience and leadership had helped strengthen relationships with the courts and with Cafcass, ensuring that the quality of work remained consistently high. The team had also recently met with their legal colleagues and the link judge to reinforce these collaborative efforts
 - Stakeholder involvement was actively encouraged. Birth parents, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), and Adopt London North (ALN) all contributed to planning and tracking progress. Leadership and oversight were reinforced by appointing a Service Manager for Court Service Assurance and Progression, who tracked cases from the Public Law Outline stage to permanency. Team Managers led regular planning meetings, while Service Managers reported progress at the monthly panel, co-chaired by the Director of Children's Safeguarding and Social Care and the Head of Service for Children in Care.
 - A question had been raised about the age range of children adopted in Haringey, specifically whether adoptions involved mostly babies or included older children as well. It was confirmed that both age groups had been represented. Over recent months, the borough had successfully secured adoption orders for several older children, including those with additional needs. While approximately two-thirds of adoptions involved younger children, older children had also been adopted successfully. One notable case involved a child aged eight who had been in care for five years prior to their adoption.
 - A question had been raised about the additional support provided to adoptive parents of older children, acknowledging that such adoptions could be more challenging from a parental perspective. It was explained that Haringey had a range of support offers in place, including access to the Adoption Support Fund. Locally, the service had placed strong emphasis on addressing the therapeutic needs of children in care, particularly those awaiting adoption, to ensure smooth transitions into adoptive families. The preparation work undertaken with children—especially older ones—had been described as of a very high standard, aimed at giving adoptive families the best possible chance of success

- The report had been praised for its clarity and concise presentation. Members felt it effectively captured the progress and efforts made, describing it as a well-drafted and engaging account of the work undertaken. Appreciation was expressed to everyone involved, noting the discussion had been particularly interesting.

RESOLVED:

Recommendations

3.1. That Members noted contents of this report.

Reasons for decision

4.1. This report was for information only.

Alternative options considered

N/A

8. COLLABORATIVE COMMISSIONING

This report delivered a strategic overview of collaborative commissioning efforts across North Central London (NCL) and Pan-London, with a particular emphasis on market management and placement sufficiency.

It highlighted key developments, emerging opportunities, and Haringey's active role in regional initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for children in care and those with complex needs. Local authorities across London had faced mounting challenges due to rising demand, limited-service provision, and increasing costs. In response, both the NCL sub-region and the Pan-London network, coordinated through the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA), led joint commissioning efforts to enhance placement availability, quality, and cost-effectiveness. Haringey had played a significant part in shaping and implementing these initiatives.

- Concerns had been raised about the sudden surge in interest from individuals wanting to open children's homes in Haringay. It was stated that while there was enough residential capacity for children in need, the units were located in the wrong areas—primarily in the North, where property was cheaper—while most children requiring care were based in the South. This mismatch meant children had to be transported long distances. It was suggested that planning approvals should be restricted in the North and encouraged in the South to better align supply with demand. There was also a risk of oversaturating certain areas with residential units, potentially attracting the wrong individuals and creating unsafe environments. Efforts were being made to build early relationships with providers, ensure quality care, and negotiate placements for local children. Small, well-managed homes were seen as beneficial. The team emphasised the importance of supporting registered managers to deliver high-quality, non-exploitative services.

- Questions had been raised about the rationale behind opening multiple four-bedded children's homes. Some wondered whether this approach was cost-effective or aligned with best practice, especially given the operational demands—each home required senior staff, strategic oversight, and substantial social work input. It was acknowledged that this was an important issue when placing young people in care, many of whom had experienced trauma. Matching residents carefully was essential to avoid overcrowding and conflicting needs. Smaller homes were considered a sensible strategy to better meet individual needs and prevent those needs from being overlooked in larger settings.
- Concerns were raised about whether current initiatives—particularly those outlined in section 6.1.3—were sufficient to meet the needs of highly vulnerable children, especially those with complex mental health issues. It was acknowledged that these efforts were likely just a starting point, with only a small number of placements available, such as two beds for young people ready for hospital discharge. While this marked progress, it was clear that further development and collaboration across boroughs were needed. Health services had been actively involved, particularly in discussions around joint funding packages. Variations in contributions from different local authorities highlighted the need for a consistent protocol to ensure equitable funding. Ongoing meetings with health partners, including those related to ICB mergers and the North London Foundation Trust, were seen as a positive step toward integrated support.

RESOLVED:

Recommendations

3.1. That Members noted the contents of the report.

Reasons for decision

4.1 This report was for information only.

Alternative options considered

N/A

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were none.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date

Report for: CPAC 4 November 2025

Item number: To be added by the Committee Section

Title: IRO annual 2024-25

Report authorised by : Ann Graham, Corporate Director of Children's Services

Lead Officer: Dionne Thomas Director of Safeguarding & Social Care

Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** For Information and Noting

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This report produced by the Independent Reviewing Service, is prepared in accordance with the statutory requirement to inform the Corporate Parenting Board and senior leaders about the Council's performance in respect of children in the care of the local authority.

1.2 The report covers the reporting period April 2024 to March 2025.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

3.1 That Members note the performance data as set out in appendix I.

4. Reasons for decision

4.1 This report is for information only

5. Alternative options considered

N/A

6. Background information

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-2024 High level Strategic outcomes'?

N/A

8. Carbon and Climate Change

N/A

9. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

N/A

10. Use of Appendices

Appendix I – IRO annual report 2024-25

11. Background papers

N/A

Engagement, Safeguarding & Quality Assurance

Independent Reviewing Officer's Annual Report 2024- 2025.



Author: Nazim Hussain

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Haringey Council – Children’s Services

IRO Annual Report 2024-25

Executive Summary

This Annual Report produced by the Independent Reviewing Service is prepared in accordance with the statutory requirement to inform the Corporate Parenting Board and senior leaders about the Council’s performance in respect of children in the care of the local authority. The report covers the reporting period April 2024 to March 2025. This report's data is derived from Liquid Logic, the data system utilised by Haringey Children’s Services

At the end of March 2025 Haringey had 320 children looked after in our care. There has continued to be a continued decrease in the number of children entering care compared to previous years, along with an increase in the number of children who reached 18 years of age. During the same period in 2023/24, 334 children were looked after compared to 370 children in 2022/23. Full demographics are contained below.

In this context the IRO Service has continued to provide high levels of support to children and young people, our review timeliness is high, and we have taken the learning from different areas to improve our services to children in our care. We recognise areas where performance can be further strengthened, and we are actively implementing action plans to drive continuous improvement and deliver even better outcomes.

We remain a very stable service which has contributed to our children having a consistent relationship with their IROs over the long term. Having a consistent IRO over many years provides children in care with stability, continuity, and a trusted adult who understands their history and needs. It helps build trust, ensures the child’s voice is heard, and supports better care planning by allowing the IRO to track progress, challenge delays, and advocate effectively. This consistency can be especially reassuring for children who have experienced frequent changes in professionals or placements.

Purpose of service and legal context

The Independent Reviewing Officer has been a vital statutory function since 2004, and the role was updated through the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (2021). Over time, the role of the IRO has evolved to encompass not only the coordination of review meetings but also a broader responsibility for ongoing case oversight including when safeguarding issues arise, regular monitoring and proactive follow-up between reviews to ensure children's needs remain at the forefront. The strengthened function includes a responsibility to consult the child about his/her care plan at each review and at any time that there is a significant change to the care plan.

The statutory duties of the IRO are to [section 25B (1), 1989 Act]:

- monitor the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to the child's case.
- participate in any review of the child's case.
- ensure that any ascertained wishes and feelings of the child concerning the case are given due consideration by the appropriate authority; and
- perform any other function which is prescribed in regulations.

The core tasks of the IRO are defined as follows:

- The IRO ensures that as corporate parents, each local authority should act for the children they look after as a responsible and conscientious parent would act.
- The IRO also has a duty to monitor the performance of the local authority's function as a corporate parent and to identify any areas of poor practice. This should include identifying patterns of concern. Where IROs identify more general concerns around the quality of the authority's services to its children looked after, the IRO should alert senior managers. Equally important, the IRO should recognise and report on good practice.

There are two clear and separate aspects to the function of the IRO:

- chairing the child's review; and
- monitoring the child's case on an ongoing basis.

The Haringey Context

Haringey is the twelfth most densely populated of the London Boroughs, with an estimated population of 293,503 people living in approximately 29.6 square kilometres based on Census 2021 dataset. Based on this data, there is estimated to be 54,422 children aged 0-17, which makes up 19% of the population. We have 29,800 female children under the age of 18 and 30,000 male children. Haringey has the fourth highest number of children across all London local authorities.

Haringey Council's strategy is set out in [The Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026](#). Some of Haringey's key ambitions for children and young people are for them to have:

- The 'Best Start in Life'
- Have 'Happy, healthy and Secure childhoods'
- Have 'Successful Futures'

Haringey's Corporate Parenting Board provides robust assurance of the whole corporate parenting system, ensuring Haringey is an outstanding corporate parent to its children; and that all children looked after and care leavers can achieve their full potential in life. Haringey's Corporate Parenting Board puts children looked after and care leavers at the heart of everything we do. The [Corporate Parenting Strategy](#) has been reviewed and the Strategy 2023 to 2026 covers:

- Our vision and high aspirations for our children.
- How we plan to achieve our aims.
- Explains how we will fulfil our corporate parenting responsibilities to all our children and young people in care and care leavers.

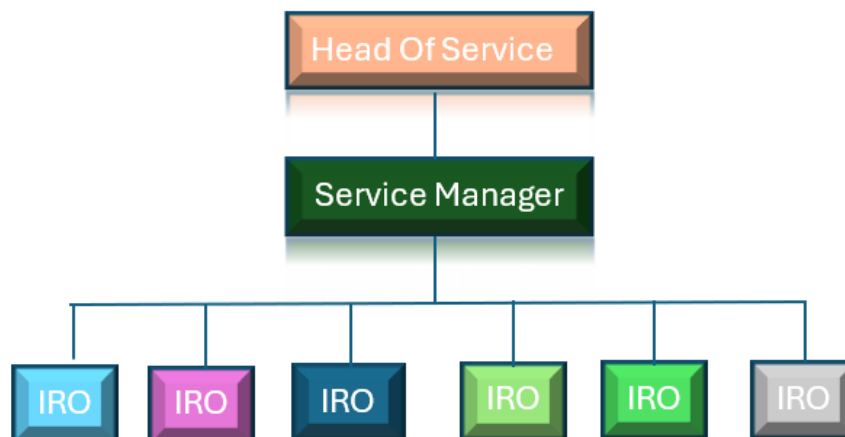
The Local Offer for Care Leavers is accessible [online](#).

The Independent Reviewing Service in Haringey

The Independent Reviewing Service sits within the Engagement, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service. It is made up of 6 Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs). Presently, the team consists of six highly experienced IROs bringing diverse expertise to the table.

The diversity within the IRO Service reflects the cultural backgrounds of the children looked after in Haringey. With proficiency in eight languages, the staff's linguistic abilities enrich the service's communication capabilities, especially when engaging with children are not yet fluent in English, utilising alternative communication methods where necessary such as interpreters or online translating services.

IRO Service Structure

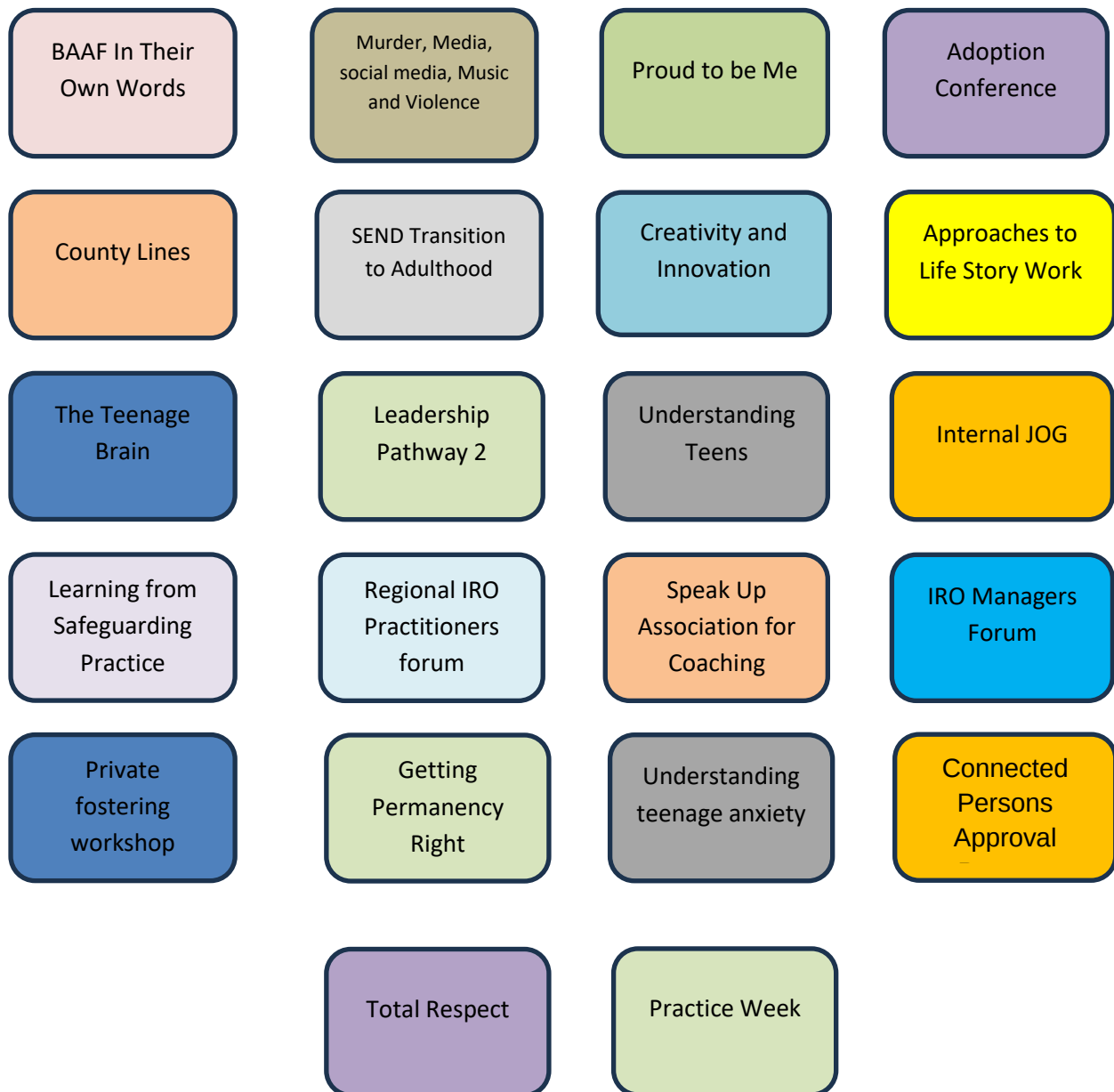


The average caseloads for 2024/25 have been just under the recommended range as set out in the IRO Handbook (2011) for children looked after. Within the team, there is a range of specialist knowledge and expertise, including knowledge of children with disabilities, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), care leavers, fostering and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

Training & Professional Development of the IRO Service

Haringey Children's Academy, Tri-X online procedures, Research in Practice, Making Research Count, My Learning and workshops organised via the Haringey Safeguarding Children's Partnerships form the professional development offer provided to IROs regarding research developments, policy and legislative updates in addition to training opportunities both virtually and face to face.

Some of the learning and development by IROs in 2024-25 includes:



There are three fully qualified Practice Educators within the service, all of whom have supported social work students in 2024-25.

Additionally, the IRO service collectively utilises external resources and shares acquired knowledge and learning with colleagues, thereby enhancing the quality of service for children in the care of the

local authority. For example, team meeting briefings have been conducted on topics such as the Proud to Be Me Project, Social Care Reforms and reflective group case discussions.

Key Areas of Focus 2024-25

The IRO Service has made significant strides to enhance the outcomes for children looked after and young people. Key areas of focus, as highlighted in the IRO annual report 23/24 are being actively addressed to provide meaningful and lasting improvements:

Priority 1: To place children and young people at the centre of everything we do.

IROs place children and young people at the heart of their practice, ensuring their voices, experiences, and needs shape every aspect of care planning and review. This child-centered approach is evident in the many ways IROs advocate for and support those they work with. For example, IROs actively promote relationships by facilitating and maintaining contact between brothers and sisters, recognising the emotional importance of these bonds. They also provide support beyond their formal responsibilities. For example, by helping to ensure children's belongings are safely and respectfully moved when they transition between homes, preserving their sense of identity and continuity.

In addition, IROs advocate for families to receive the financial support they are entitled to, ensuring that assessments of their ability to care for their children are fair and not influenced by economic hardship. This reflects a commitment to keeping families together where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Children's participation is also a key focus, with IROs encouraging young people to chair or co-chair their own reviews—88 such reviews took place this year—empowering them to take ownership of their care journey. IROs continue to prioritise lifestory work, offering guidance to practitioners and making recommendations to ensure children understand their personal histories. This collective commitment was recognised by Ofsted during their February Focused Visit, which praised the quality and impact of the lifestory work being undertaken.

Together, these examples demonstrate how IROs consistently champion the rights, voices, and well-being of children and young people, ensuring they remain central to all decisions made about their lives.

Priority 2: Listen to and respond to children and young people

Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) consistently demonstrate a strong commitment to listening to and acting on the voices of children and young people, placing them at the center of care planning and decision-making. Observations of CLA reviews in 2024 by Service Managers and Practice Week observers provided clear evidence of this child-focused approach in action.

"The most prominent learning for me was the young person was at the center. Although professionals and family shared their views/thoughts, The IRO ensured that the young person constantly shared his views, what he was willing to try."

Observer

“Think was an excellent observation for my learning. The IRO chaired this meeting with a very open approach that really felt comfortable for all to share their views and thoughts. It did not feel formal, which I feel set a good environment for the attendees to speak openly, particularly the young person and his family.”

Observer

IROs ensure that review meetings are welcoming and inclusive by keeping them small and involving only those central to the child’s care, helping young people feel safe and comfortable. They come well-prepared, familiar with each child’s Personal Education Plan, health assessments, and support needs, which allows them to advocate effectively and ensure that all aspects of a child’s well-being are considered.

Established, trusting relationships between IROs and young people have been key to encouraging participation. For example, when children have expressed a desire for more time with sisters and brothers, or to see wider family members, IROs have actively promoted increased family time and ensured these wishes are reflected in care plans. Where there are concerns around placement provisions for children looked after then they will raise challenge and advocate on their behalf.

IROs have also responded to children’s emotional cues, such as behaviors indicative of trauma, by working with professionals to strengthen support around the child or explore more suitable options. In one instance, an IRO helped delay a planned goodbye family time session, to ensure the child had more time to process the change and say farewell in a way that felt right for them.

Flexibility is another hallmark of IRO practice. They adapt review formats—whether in-person, virtual, or hybrid—based on the child’s preferences, and use a variety of engagement methods including video calls, phone calls, social media, and face-to-face visits. For children unable to attend meetings, IROs make time to speak with them separately, ensuring their views are still heard and considered.

To make reviews more engaging, IROs have introduced creative activities like cooking, drawing, or dressing up, helping children feel more at ease and encouraging meaningful participation. These thoughtful, responsive approaches reflect the IROs’ unwavering focus on ensuring that every child feels seen, heard, and valued in their care journey.

Priority 3: We will be ambitious for Our Children

IROs continue to demonstrate high aspirations for children in care, driving improvements and championing opportunities that support each child’s potential. One of the most significant achievements this year has been the improvement in the timeliness of reviews, rising from 70% in 2023/24 to 92% in 2024/25. This ensures that children’s needs are identified and addressed promptly, allowing for more responsive and effective care planning.

In response to Ofsted's 2022 feedback, we prioritised consistency in midway reviews. A total of 262 midway reviews were completed this year, supported by a dip sample audit to assess the quality of recorded information. These reviews have been instrumental in progressing permanence, as reflected in the increased number of children matched with long-term carers. The audits also highlighted that midway review reports were written in a consistent use of language that cares.

IROs are ambitious not only in process but in practice. They have advocated for young people to access life-changing opportunities, such as advocating for a young person to access a springboard scholarship and assisting her in accessing the right support to sit exams that would enable her to access a selective school. This kind of advocacy reflects a deep commitment to helping children overcome barriers and achieve their aspirations. IROs have also supported young people stepping down from residential care into more family-based settings, ensuring that transitions are well-planned and that the right support is in place to promote stability and success.

For children in secure accommodation, IROs have maintained a positive and forward-thinking approach, focusing on long-term goals and ensuring that care plans remain aspirational. They have also challenged placements in areas where risks are heightened, advocating for safer alternatives that better meet the child's needs and reduce exposure to harm.

The voice of the child remains central to IRO practice. Audits captured rich, personal details about children's lives, including their interests, dislikes, and significant milestones—such as receiving a new bicycle or exploring post-18 care options. When children have expressed a desire for more time with brothers and sisters or to see wider family members, IROs have responded by promoting increased family time and ensuring these wishes are reflected in care plans.

Practitioners have responded positively to IRO recommendations, with minimal delays in implementation. Where delays have occurred, IROs have used the Dispute Resolution Process to escalate concerns and ensure timely action. Ongoing quality assurance through supervision continues to focus on the quality of review minutes, ensuring that the child's journey is clearly captured and that our practice remains ambitious and child-centred.

Ofsted Focus Visit

Ofsted undertook a Focused Visit to Haringey in February 2025.

The area of practice that inspectors looked at was, 'the effectiveness of permanence planning for children in care'. This is the area that was judged, 'Requires Improvement to be Good,' in the full inspection that took place in February 2023 where Haringey was judged Good overall.

It was delightful to learn that inspectors could see great improvement since the last inspection.

The visit took place over two days and during that time inspectors spoke with many professionals and reviewed children's case files.

The letter is glowing with positivity about the work we do for children and young people and how we care for them and the outcomes that they achieve.

In their feedback on their final day on site, inspectors spoke very highly of our social workers and of their child centred practice that was creative in finding ways to help children in our community.

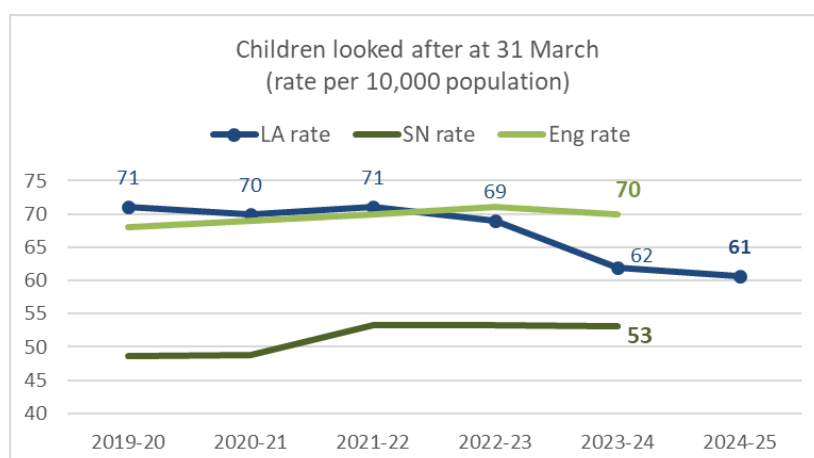
“Children’s progress is supported by effective IROs, who develop meaningful relationships with children. Mostly, IRO summaries following reviews are written to the child in age-appropriate language. Careful scrutiny and challenge from IROs have led to impactful changes in children’s care plans. Creative social work intervention promotes the well-being of children who haven’t achieved permanence or who face instability” – Ofsted Letter, March 2025

The full letter can be seen here: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80498>

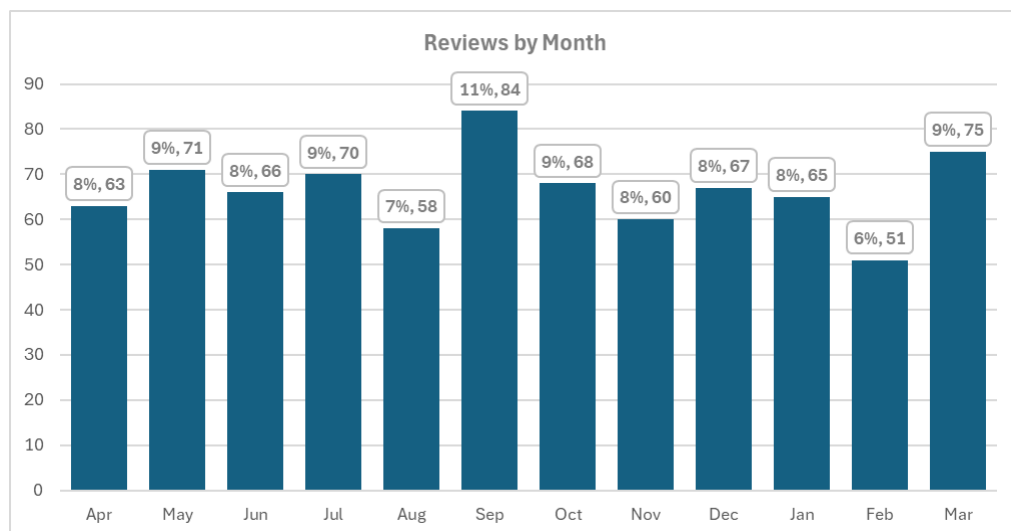
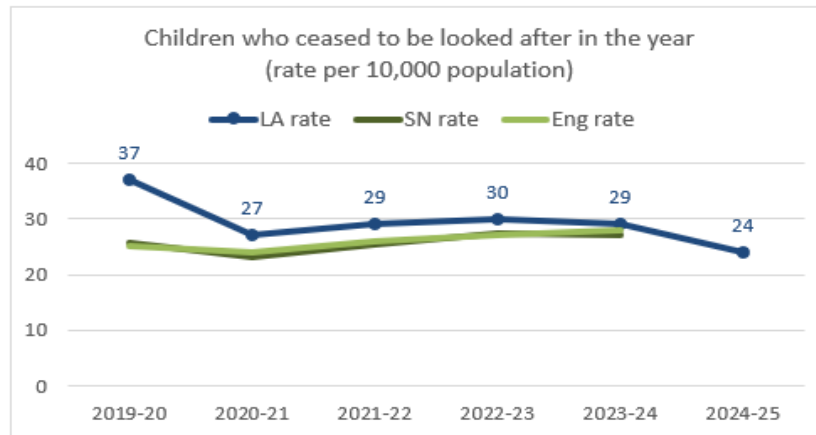
Our continuous focus is on achieving permanency for our children looked after. Through the year we have strengthened our permanency planning with permanency planning meetings being held within respective services and overview through the Permanency Tracking Panel, to ensure care plans for children are robust and where appropriate and possible, they can be cared for within the family network.

Children Looked After Reviews April 2024 – March 2025

At the end of March 2025, 320 children were looked after in Haringey. There has been a continued decrease in our looked after population compared to previous years. This is attributed to both fewer children becoming looked after and more children ceasing to be looked after. Over the last year Haringey Children’s Service have continued to embed the Early Help offer and robust Edge of Care Panel, which focusses on working with our children and families to deliver better and more timely interventions at an earlier stage. This in turn has enabled more children to remain within the family or support networks where it is safe to do so.



The data indicates a decrease in the number of Children Looked After during the 2024-25 reporting period, from 334 in April 2024 to 320 in March 2025. This reduction reflects the positive impact of Early Help and frontline services in providing effective support, thereby reducing the necessity for children and young people to enter care as well as young people aging out of care.

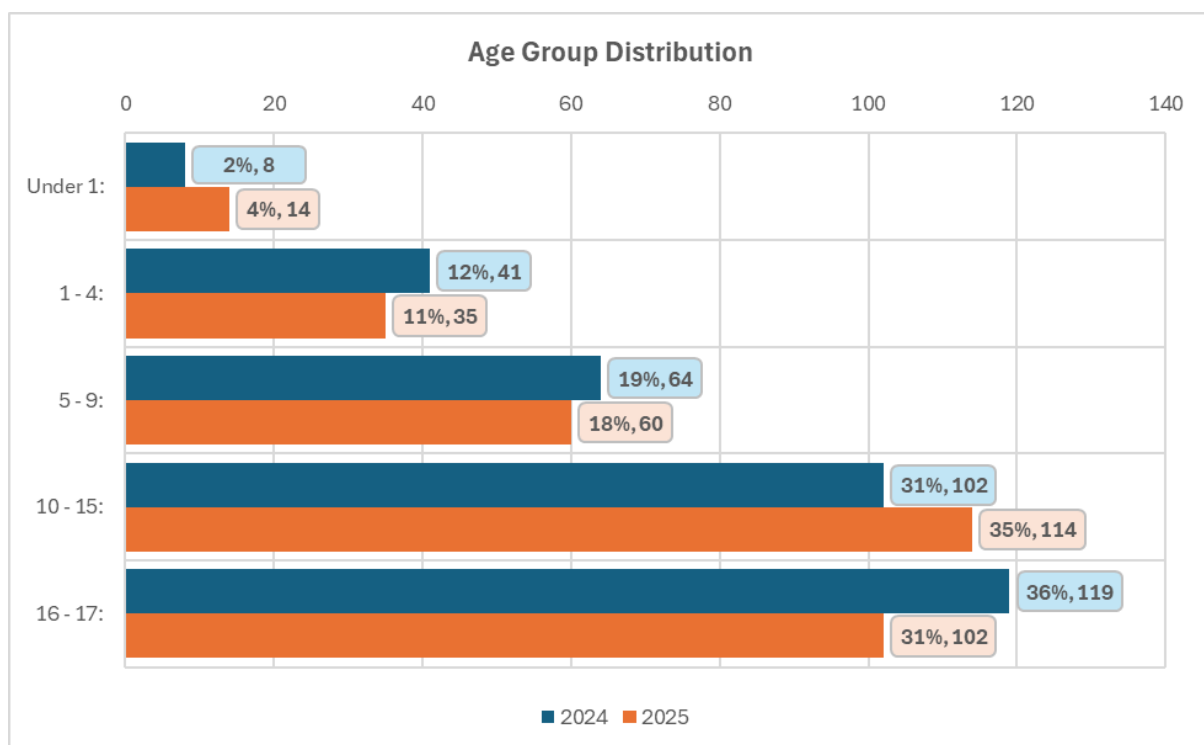
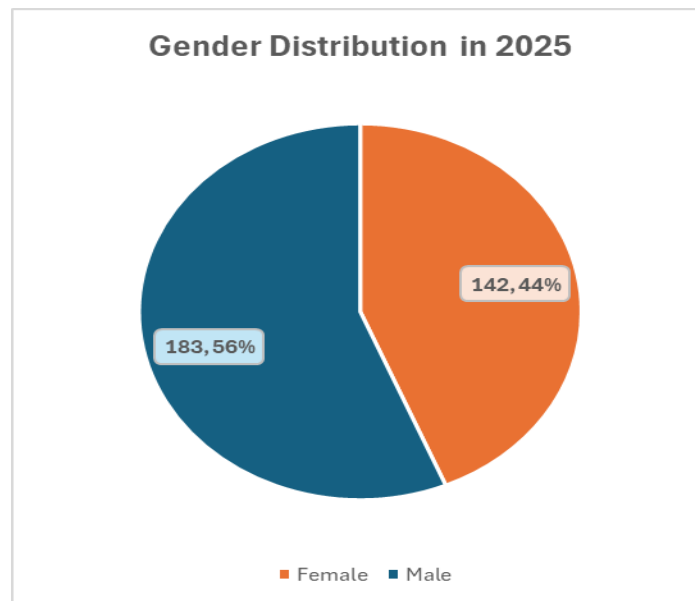


13 children left care before their first review. By the second review, 14 children and young people were reunified with their families, with an additional 21 reunified by the third review. This demonstrates the effective collaboration between IROs, practitioners, and the HART service in supporting reunification efforts.

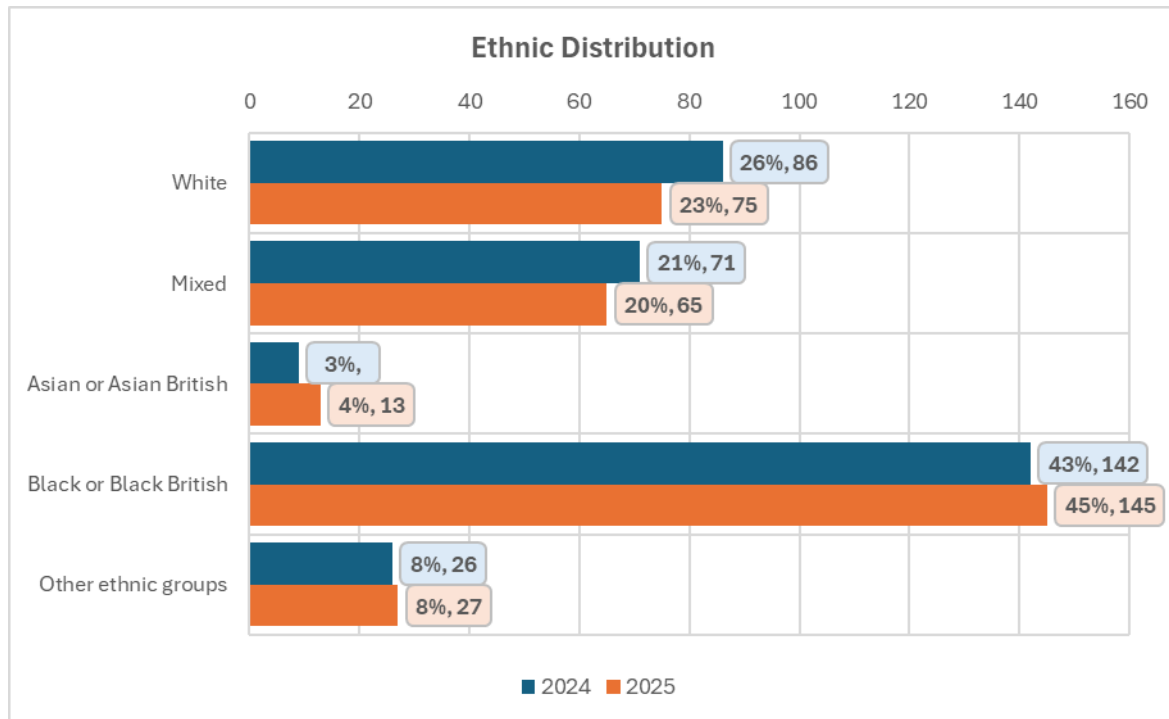
Family Group Conferences (FGCs) have played a pivotal role in supporting reunification for children who entered care. Of the 123 children who came into care during 2024/25, 68 FGCs were convened. As a result, 21 children and young people successfully returned home, and tracking over the subsequent 12 months confirmed that none of them re-entered care. Notably, FGCs have also contributed to a reduction in the level of statutory intervention required. In many cases, children's circumstances shifted from child protection or Public Law Outline processes to child in need support, helping to divert children from entering care and easing pressure on the wider system.

Looked After population during 2024-25.

There has not been any meaningful change in the gender breakdown of Haringey's children looked after. The data shows that we continued to have more boys than girls in our care, with 56% (183) in the 2024-2025 period, reflecting a small decrease from 59% in the previous year. Additionally, 66% of the children and young people in our care during this period were aged 10 or older, marking a slight decrease from 67% in the previous year.



The age profile of children in Haringey has remained similar to last year and broadly in line with national figures. Our largest age groups are aged 10-15 years and those over 16 (102 children), each representing 31% of our looked after population.



The demographic breakdown of children and young people in care in Haringey reflects a rich diversity, with 26% recorded as white, 42% as Black, 21% as having mixed heritage, 3% as Asian, and 9% identifying with other ethnicities. These figures are consistent with those from the previous year. In comparison, 20.5% of Haringey’s population is made up of White British, 61.9% Asian, mixed or other ethnic groups, and 17.6% Black African and Black Caribbean (Census 2021).

While the IRO service recognises the overrepresentation of Black children and young people within the children in care population, it also acknowledges the greater challenges that come with supporting these children and families. These challenges stem from systemic inequalities such as poverty, racial bias, and limited access to culturally appropriate services. Black children can experience care environments that fail to reflect their cultural identity, which can lead to feelings of isolation and disconnection.

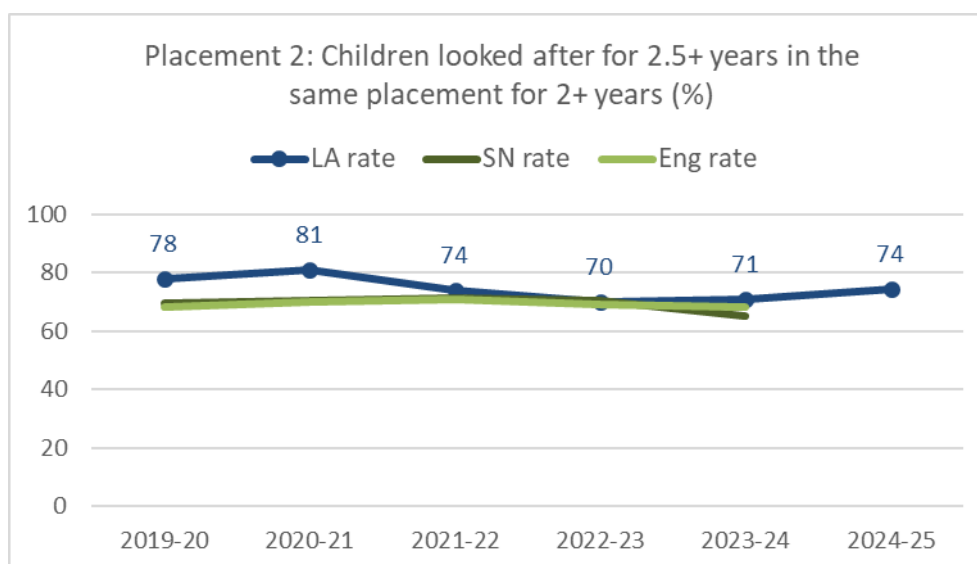
In response, IROs advocate for culturally sensitive care planning, challenge poor practices, and escalate concerns when necessary. They also attuned to improving cultural competence, promote identity and belonging in care placements, and collaborate with community-based services. The IRO service is committed to providing tailored support and advocacy to ensure that all children in care, regardless of their ethnic background, have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

Independent Reviewing Service Performance

Once a child becomes looked after, their first review should take place within 20 working days, with the second review taking place within three months of the first review and the third and subsequent reviews are held within six months of the previous review. A child's review meeting can be completed as a single meeting or a series of meetings. The child should be central (taking into consideration age and ability) in making the decision on how they would like their review meeting to be held and who they would want to be part of it and present for their meeting. They may also choose to meet with their IRO separately and then for the rest of their network to meet without them; or have everyone together at the same time.

IROs have 5 working days to complete their outcomes or recommendations from the child's Looked After Review and 15 working days to complete the review record following the completion of the review process.

IROs completed 798 looked after reviews during 2024/25. This is fewer reviews compared to the 901 completed 2023/24, which would correspond with the decrease in the number of new children looked after and higher number of children whose care journey ended during 2024-25. It could also be contributed by the improvements in placement stability over the year, which means fewer children required additional reviews during the year due to change in care plans or unplanned placement moves. IROs have contributed to the stability of children looked after by maintaining consistent oversight of care plans, advocating for timely interventions, and ensuring that placements are supported to meet children's needs, thereby reducing the frequency of disruptions and unplanned moves.



IROs continue to evidence their footprint on children's records, undertaking their Quality Assurance (QA) function through completion of IRO Monitoring forms following reviews, providing commentary and analysis of areas such as quality of social work reports and recorded visits, as well as engagement with children in reviews.

In addition to fulfilling their core statutory responsibilities, IROs have played a key role in supporting the learning and development of social work professionals and students. Several IROs are qualified practice educators and have actively contributed to the training of social work students, offering valuable insights into care planning, review processes, and child-centred practice. Their involvement helps shape the next generation of practitioners with a strong foundation in safeguarding and advocacy.

Throughout the year, IROs have continued to promote professional development by delivering targeted workshops on key topics such as the health needs of children looked after, understanding Children Looked After (CLA) processes. These sessions have helped practitioners deepen their knowledge and improve the quality of care provided to children and young people.

Having an IRO on the fostering panel brings a valuable child-centred perspective to decision-making. The IRO can draw on the teams' direct experience of the quality of foster homes to help inform panel outcomes and decisions. Additionally, IROs can highlight patterns or concerns from their oversight role, contributing to more informed, reflective, and holistic panel discussions that ultimately support better outcomes for children in care.

IROs have also ensured that the voices of children and young people are represented in multi-agency forums, such as strategy meetings, exploitation and stability panels, where they advocate for child-centred approaches and contribute to strategic decision-making. Their presence in these panels reinforces the importance of safeguarding and ensures that care planning is informed by lived experiences.

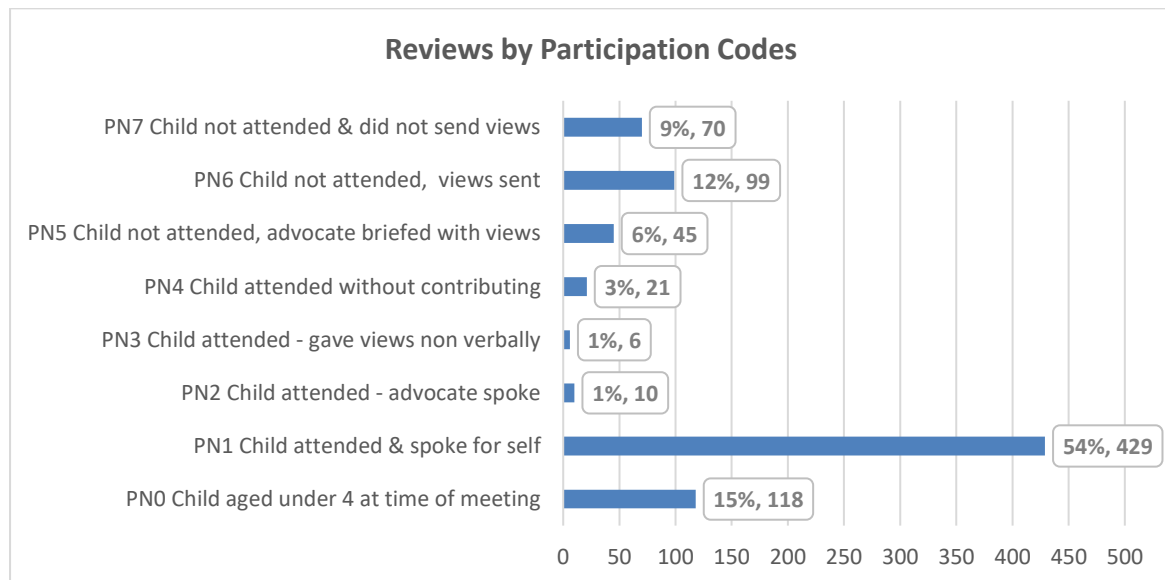
Furthermore, IROs consistently offer practice support and guidance to social workers, helping to strengthen reflective practice and improve outcomes for children. Whether through supervision, informal consultation, or structured learning opportunities, IROs remain committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration across the service.

Timeliness of Review Meetings

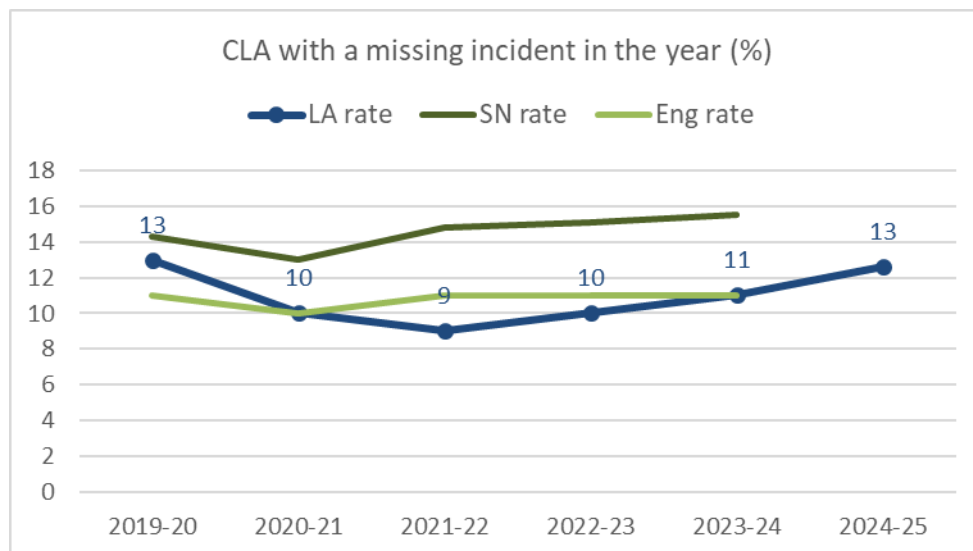
We saw a marked improvement in the timeliness of completing looked after reviews during 2024/25, with 93% of children having an up-to-date review by the end of the financial year—an increase from 70% in 2023/24. Additionally, a further 6% of reviews were held within the required timescales, with only a delay in recording them on our electronic system, reflecting strong performance in practice and a continued focus on improving data accuracy.

We continue to make progress in improving the timeliness and quality of looked after review records. Ongoing oversight by Service Managers, alongside regular practice observations and reflective supervision, is helping to drive consistency and strengthen the overall quality of our review processes.

Children and young people's participation in reviews



During the year ending March 31, 2025, 90% of children aged over four participated in their Looked After Child reviews through various methods, including attending meetings, sharing views with IROs or trusted adults, or using consultation documents and advocates. For children under four, IROs relied on observations and routine information to interpret their perspectives. While 54% of older children attended and spoke for themselves, others used alternative methods such as text or symbols, or had their views represented by advocates. Although 9% were recorded as not participating—an increase from the previous year—this figure was affected by data inaccuracies, highlighting the need for improved coding and training. Some non-participants were also facing complex challenges, reinforcing the importance of trauma-informed and tailored support to re-engage them in their care planning.



To maintain contact with these vulnerable young people, they are offered a choice of having a return Home Interview through their social worker or our dedicated Exploitation Team when they are reported missing. These interviews play a crucial role in re-establishing communication and promote safety. Despite the challenges presented by these circumstances, IROs are unwavering in their efforts to stay connected with this group, ensuring they continue to be supported. However, it is important to note that many of these young people frequently change their contact details when they go missing, which can make it increasingly difficult to maintain consistent communication.

IROs are deeply committed to empowering children and young people to take ownership of their care planning. Of the 798 reviews held 20 young people chaired their own review with 5 young people chairing their review twice this year and 63 children and young people co-chaired their review with the IRO, with 14 young people co-chairing more than one review. 146 children and young people were offered the opportunity but declined. For the remaining reviews it was not felt appropriate due to age or complexity of issues discussed.

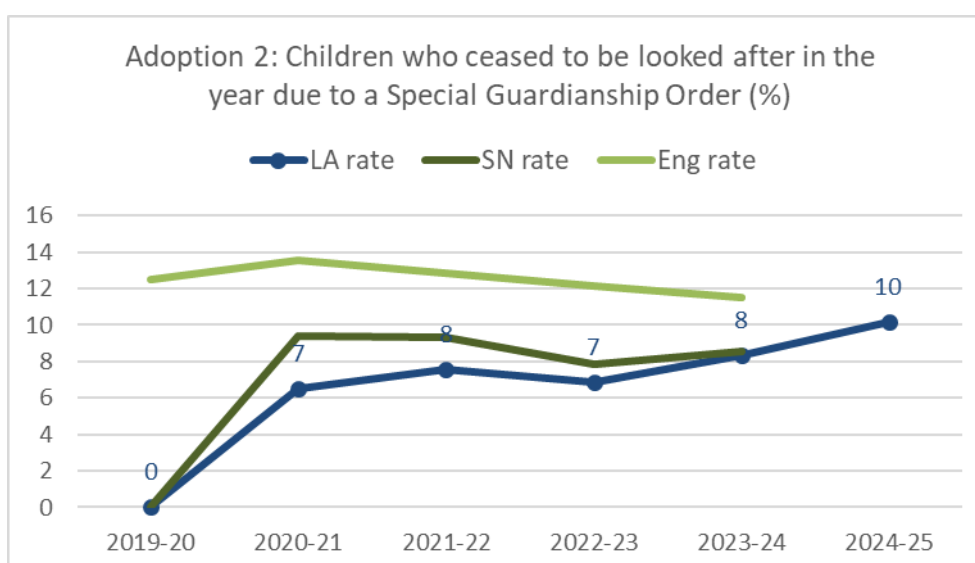
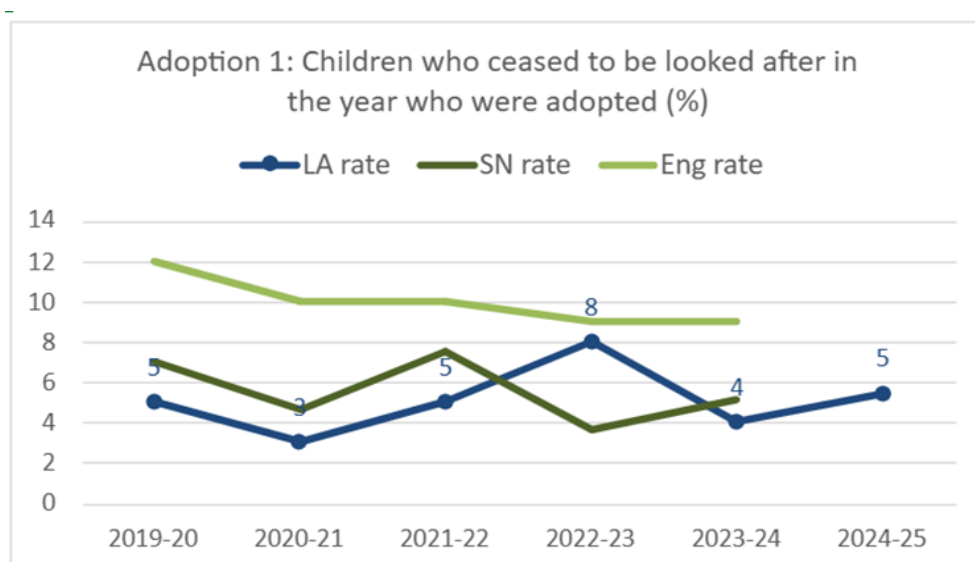
IROs also ensure that young people with additional or complex needs have every opportunity to communicate effectively, using methods that best suit their individual needs. For those, whose communication is not verbal, IROs actively explore a range of alternative communication methods, including eye gaze technology, communication boards, PECS, speech-generating devices, and other augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools. This personalised approach ensures that every child has a means of communicating in their care planning and review process. 98% of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (32 young people, 62 out of 63 reviews) attended and participated in their review meetings with the support of an interpreter.

Driving forward to achieving Permanence

IROs play a key role to ensure timely permanence is secured for children looked after. The traction of the permanency plan for a child is reviewed by their IRO through their looked after review meetings and midway reviews. They provide data through completed IRO Monitoring forms and provide feedback to permanency planning meetings and the Permanency Tracking Panel.

The first consideration would be for the child to return safely to their parents' care. Or where this is not possible, that suitable family members or connected carers are identified to ensure the child can continue to grow up within their family network. This could either be through Special Guardianship or a Child Arrangement Order. Foster carers may consider permanency through Special Guardianship Orders for a child as well. Where it has been assessed that the parents, family, or friends are unable to provide a long-term home for a child, permanency through either adoption or long-term fostering should be secured as timely as possible.

For 7 children permanency was secured through adoption, an increase from 2023/24 (6). Permanency was also achieved for a further 13 children through Special Guardianship Orders, another increase from 2023/24 and higher than our statistical neighbours. These permanency arrangements that see children exiting the care system within secure family arrangements are good evidence of the efforts made to secure positive outcomes that support children to remain within a family environment.



In 2024/25, we exceeded our target by achieving 43% (99) of children and young people being matched with long-term foster carers—an increase from 35% in 2023/24 and above the national average. This progress reflects our commitment to providing children with the reassurance and stability that long-term placements offer.

IROs played a key role in this achievement, using their oversight and advocacy to ensure that care plans prioritised permanence and emotional security. Notably, IROs successfully matched 14 young people aged 16 and over with long-term foster carers through their CLA reviews. These matches are particularly significant, as they offer older young people a sense of belonging and continuity as they prepare for adulthood.

Consideration is also given, where appropriate, to reunification within the family network when children have been in care for an extended period, and where family circumstance may have changed. IROs have recommended for a family group conference, to explore who within the child's family network could offer safe and suitable long-term care and support. There has been significant success for work completed with families by practitioners, 48 children (7%) and young people have returned, and remained at home with their birth family by their third review. Through the Edge of Care Panel, there has also been an increase in referrals to the Family Group Conference (FGC) Service to explore what support may enable families to continue to care for children within their own network thereby reducing the need for becoming looked after.

IROs further support achieving permanency for children in a timely way through regular contributions at Permanency Planning Meetings (PPM) and Permanency Tracking Panel. IROs feed into these meetings through the Service Manager and if there are any concerns re. drift and delay, this is raised.

IROs also recognise the significance part that Independent Visitors can play in the lives of our children in care. At the end of this reporting year 16 children were matched with an IV. Several of our young people have benefited from the support of an IV for up to 8 years, indicating the strength of the relationships formed. These young individuals have enjoyed a wide range of activities with their IVs, such as shopping, meals, mini-golf, rock climbing, sports games, museum visits, and many others.

With the continued success of the YP/IV relationships, Haringey continues to see the value these relationships bring in enriching the lives of children and young people in care.

For more detailed information about the IV Service and how Independent Visitors support children in care, often over the long term, please see the Independent Visitor Service Annual Report.

Dispute Resolution Process

The IRO Handbook emphasises the vital role of the Dispute Resolution process in Haringey, particularly in addressing challenges that arise from the care planning process for our children. A well-established process is in place that both IROs and Social Work teams understand. IROs proactively seek to manage issues arising through effective communication. If matters remain unresolved, IROs use the Dispute

Resolution stages until resolution is achieved. This escalation path includes Team Managers, Service Managers, Heads of Service, Assistant Director, Director, and CAFCASS.

Through the reviewing of care plans/pathway plans for a child’s review, the review itself, the midway meeting held between statutory reviews, all contribute to the timely progression of a child’s care provision and meeting that child’s needs. With the additional oversight of an IRO, any areas of drift or delay should be highlighted as quickly as possible, to address and resolve.

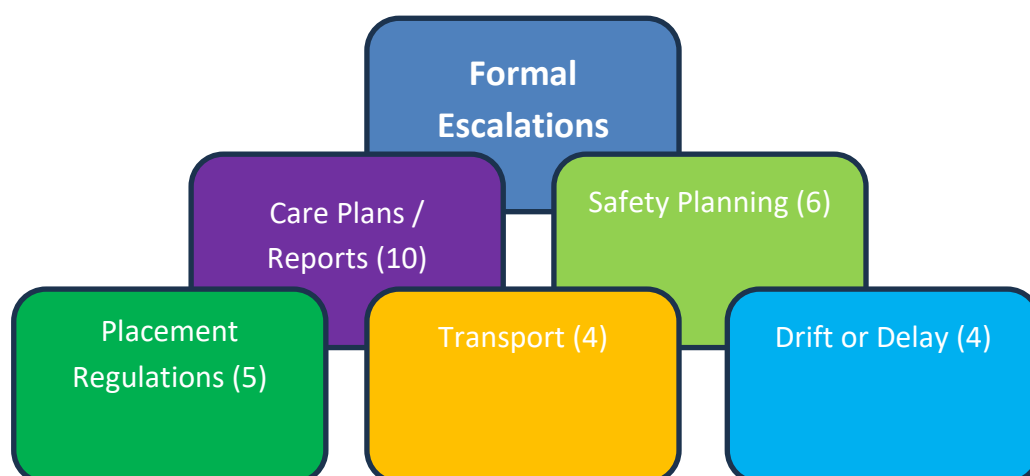
IROs collaborate with colleagues across Social Work teams to resolve issues whenever possible swiftly and informally. If a timely response is lacking or resolution remains outstanding, the matter will progress through the six-stage process. The overarching goal is to ensure that issues are consistently resolved within a 20-working-day timeframe, aligning with the statutory guidance outlined in the IRO Handbook.

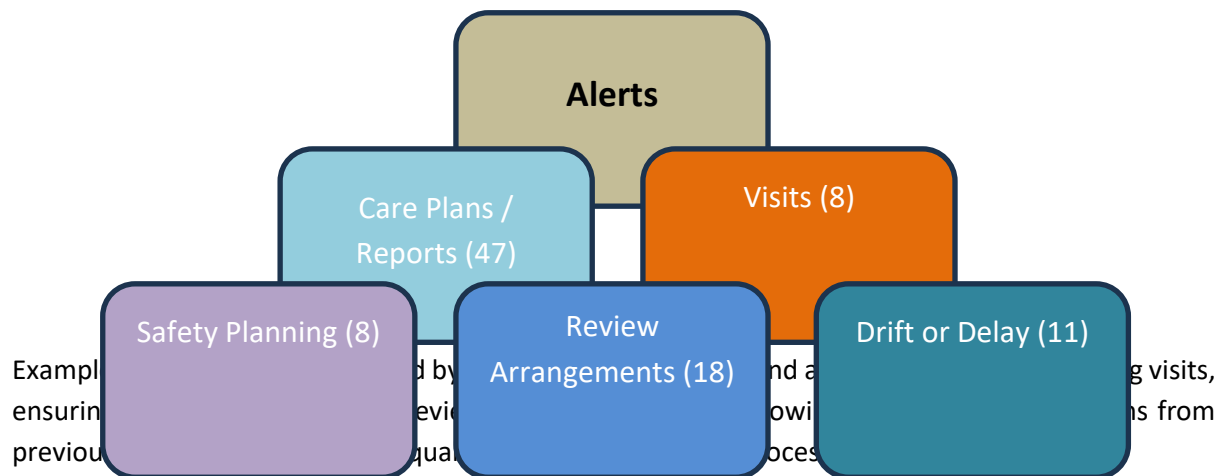
During the period from April to March 2025, the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) was utilised a total of 181 times, comprising 124 informal alerts (93 children) and 57 formal escalations (40 children). Comparing this with the same period in 2023-2024, there has been a slight decrease of 9% in the initiation of the dispute resolution process.

The Ofsted Focused Visit positively affirmed that our strategy of encouraging IROs to engage in more conversations and discussions with social workers, team managers, and service managers has effectively reduced the need to use the DRP. correct punctuation: We have found that quite often there is no dispute as such, between the IRO and operational teams, but discussions have helped progress matters for our children in care. IROs have recorded such discussions in activity case notes.

IROs have continued to champion the needs of children and young people by initiating dispute resolutions that have led to meaningful outcomes. These include securing senior management support to ensure continuity in education for a young person following a placement move, ensuring timely and coordinated responses when young people go missing from care through strategy discussions and safety planning, initiating necessary regulatory assessments for kinship placements, and addressing delays in achieving permanency. These actions reflect the IROs’ commitment to safeguarding, stability, and the best interests of the children they support.

The top five reasons for use of the DRP in the period April 24 -March 2025 are:





Overall, the views expressed by IROs is that they can see a steady improvement in service delivery for our children looked after, which correlates with the decrease in informal and formal alerts. More Alerts were raised at and resolved at a lower level than last year.

Feedback

IROs work tirelessly alongside social workers, our children’s carers, parents, educational staff, health professionals and any other professional or volunteer supporting our children, to ensure that they have the right care plan that meets their holistic needs. IROs will attend additional meetings where this is appropriate to ensure the care plan is right for the child. They work collaboratively to try and resolve any issues of concern as soon as this is identified. They will escalate through the formal process when needed.

There is a range of methods we use to collate information to assist in evaluating impact such as the dispute resolution process, feedback through complaints, feedback from service users, informal feedback shared by children and their network with IROs and their managers and so forth.

The feedback received shows that the IRO service is viewed as a consistent, collaborative, and child-focused team that plays a vital role in advocating for children and young people. IROs are recognised for their effective communication and partnership working, particularly in escalating concerns when care plans are not progressing. Their consistency provides valuable continuity, especially during social worker changes, and their individual strengths contribute to a well-rounded, skilled team. Overall, the feedback reflects a service that is trusted, responsive, and committed to ensuring the best outcomes for children in care.

The stability and consistency of the Independent Reviewing Service provide a reliable foundation for our children looked after, ensuring they receive continuous and dependable support. This consistency helps build trust and fosters a sense of security, which is crucial for their well-being and development.

Below are some examples of commentary or reflections of good practice and positive feedback shared by young people, IROs, parents, carers and professionals:

“Think was an excellent observation for my learning. The IRO chaired this meeting with a very open approach that really felt comfortable for all to share their views and thoughts. It did not feel formal, which I feel set a good environment for the attendees to speak openly, particularly the young person and his family.” – **Practice Week Observer**

“I felt listened to by the IRO and my views were taken into account” – **Parent**

“This was M’s final review. It was very positive as M is doing very well, which was noted by the IRO who brought attention to positive progress and made appropriate recommendations.” – **Social Worker**

“Review was well chaired, actions were clear, and all voices were heard. Ending the meeting by asking attendees to share something positive/one thing that they are proud of regarding the young person was positive and child focussed.” – **Carer**

“It was also really lovely to see when we all entered the lunch hall, C pointed at you and yelled “that’s my social worker”. He was very proud and testament to your dedication to him. Your planning for his move was meticulous and very child centred. Thank you so much”. – **IRO**

“I liked the people at the meeting, and I would keep everything the same – I was happy with everything” – **Young Person**

“My IRO was very straight forward, clear and very nice” – **Young Person**

“There was a relaxed atmosphere conducive to gaining positive outcomes” – **Manager.**

Summary & IRO Service Priorities 2025-26

The IRO Annual Report 2024–2025 has been produced to provide a detailed and balanced overview of the service’s performance in supporting Haringey’s looked after children. It highlights a clear trajectory of improvement, especially in review timeliness (up from 70% to 93%) and in achieving stable, permanent outcomes for children through adoption, special guardianship, and long-term fostering. The report reflects a child-centred culture, with strong examples of advocacy, inclusion, and flexible engagement. The service has also been commended by Ofsted for its relationship-based practice and meaningful contributions to care planning.

The report demonstrates transparency about challenges, such as maintaining engagement with children experiencing complex needs or who are missing from care, and recognises areas for ongoing development—particularly around improving data accuracy, strengthening communication methods for children with disabilities, and increasing co-chairing opportunities for young people. The IRO team’s stability, cultural competence, and collaborative approach with partners and families underpin

the progress made. Overall, the report reflects a mature, reflective service committed to continuous improvement and delivering better outcomes for children and young people in Haringey.

Our key areas of focus for 2025/2026 include:

1. IROs will ensure that children's voices are central to all planning and review processes, promoting meaningful participation through child-led or co-chaired reviews, inclusive communication tools, and personalised engagement tailored to each child's needs and preferences.
2. IROs will ensure that risks of child sexual exploitation are identified early, by maintaining oversight of safeguarding measures, advocating for timely assessments, and challenging care plans that do not robustly address risk, safety planning, or trauma recovery.
3. IROs will ensure that care planning reflects a strong understanding of children's digital lives, including online risks, and that support is in place to promote digital resilience, protect against online harm, and address any exploitation concerns raised in reviews.
4. IROs will ensure that the cultural, linguistic, and identity needs of every child are fully reflected in their care and placement plans, particularly for children from Black, global majority, and underrepresented backgrounds, in line with anti-racist and inclusive practice.
5. IROs will ensure that reviews reflect the wider context of family vulnerability, such as parental mental health, domestic abuse, or substance misuse, and will challenge plans that fail to consider the impact of these issues on the child's lived experience or future support.
6. IROs will ensure that the views of children and young people who do not participate in their reviews are represented and given due consideration.

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Report for: CPAC 4 November 2025

Item number: To be added by the Committee Section

Title: Fostering service annual report 2024-25

Report

authorised by : Ann Graham, Corporate Director of Children's Services

Lead Officer: Dionne Thomas Director of Safeguarding & Social Care

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: For Information and Noting

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This report provides an overview of the work of the Haringey Fostering Service for the year 2024/25 and highlights the service outcomes, quality of practice and innovations with plans to continue to improve the service.

1.2 The report outlines the activity of the Fostering Service in fulfilling its obligations within the Fostering Services Regulations (2011), to review and improve the quality of care, and National Minimum Standards (2011), to report to the executive side of the Local Authority.

1.3 The report outlines the performance and developments in the council's delivery of Fostering Services; how the council is compliant with key national minimum standards; the service offered to those seeking to foster and those children in care who are fostered.

1.4 The report details the work of Haringey Fostering Service from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 and sets out plans for service development until 31st March 2026.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

3.1 That Members note the performance data as set out in appendix I.

4. Reasons for decision

4.1 This report is for information only

5. Alternative options considered

N/A

6. Background information

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-2024 High level Strategic outcomes’?

N/A

8. Carbon and Climate Change

N/A

9. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

N/A

10. Use of Appendices

Appendix I – Fostering service annual report 2024-25

11. Background papers

N/A

HARINGEY FOSTERING SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT **2024/25**



PURPOSE OF ANNUAL REPORT

This report provides an overview of the work of the Haringey Fostering Service for the year 2024/25 and highlights the service outcomes, quality of practice and innovations with plans to continue to improve the service.

The purpose of this document is to report on the activity of the Fostering Service fulfilling obligations in the Fostering Services Regulations (2011) to review and improve the quality of care, and National Minimum Standards (2011) to report to the executive side of the Local Authority. It will cover performance and developments in the council's delivery of Fostering Services; how the council is compliant with key national minimum standards; the service offered to those seeking to foster and those children in care who are fostered.

This report details the work of Haringey Fostering Service from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 and sets out plans for service development until 31st March 2026.

Summary of 2024/25 Fostering Service Achievements

- Delivered targeted marketing campaigns to promote fostering in Haringey via digital media and community events.
- Embedded the Secure Base Model into Foster Carer Annual Reviews to ensure child-focused assessments.
- Continued regular Reflective Practice sessions to support peer learning and critical thinking.
- Used the Assessment Handbook to improve timeliness and quality of foster carer assessments.
- Delivered training on Kinship Care and Regulation 24 placements, with enhanced support for Viability Assessments.
- Improved timeliness of Foster Carer Annual Reviews with support from Independent Reviewing Officers.
- Approved 5 Task Centred Foster Carers; 9 applicants progressed to stage two of assessment.
- Approved 9 connected foster carers; 7 secured Special Guardianship Orders for permanence.
- Completed 36 Special Guardianship Assessments; 12 Orders granted; 10 connected carer assessments completed.
- Provided specialist training via Adopt London North on Permanency Planning and adoption legal processes.
- Introduced Foster Carer letters to children before each CiC review, supporting life story work.
- Delivered "Skills to Foster" training with care-experienced young adults.
- Included care-experienced young adults as members of Haringey's Fostering Panel.
- Implemented a 4-year Marketing and Recruitment Strategy to increase diversity and reduce reliance on IFAs.
- Achieved/exceeded 90% target for timely Annual Reviews.

- Maintained strong attendance at Foster Carer Support Groups.
- Launched a male Foster Carer Support Group, achieving a 400% increase in attendance.
- Re-launched the Mockingbird Project with new staff and partnership with the Fostering Network.
- Exceeded target of increasing placement capacity by 35 placements.

The Fostering Service is led by the Head of Service for Fostering, Children in Care, Brokerage and Permanency, and managed through a Service Manager.

In February 2023, Haringey Children and Families Services was inspected by OFSTED. Whilst the Fostering Service was not subject to its own inspection, there was positive feedback provided with some areas for development noted.

Ofsted confirmed that the recruitment of foster carers is an improving picture and has increased the number of foster carers available. They also said that foster carers receive a high level of support from their Supervising Social Workers, and a good training offer is available to our carers.

Areas identified for further development were the timeliness of support being provided to connected carers and lack of clarity on the number of foster carers taking up our training offer. As a service, we have continued to focus on our areas for improvement and continued good practice through 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

The demand for foster placements has continued to grow, with an increased demand for family groups, care for teenagers and for children with complex needs resulting from experiencing multiple traumas during their childhood, or complex needs arising from disability.

We have developed a dynamic strategy, geared towards supporting the recruitment of new foster carers to meet the assessed needs as determined by the needs analysis; and is integrally linked with other key strategic plans and strategies for the Council. This report should also be read with Haringey Fostering Service Statement of Purpose

A key priority for Haringey Council is to ensure that children grow up safely and happily with their birth parents or within their wider extended family network. Where we identify that children cannot remain within their family, they may need foster care. The Fostering Service contributes to improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people who are looked after by Haringey Children's Social Care.



We recognise that when a child is in our care, it is one of the most important and significant changes in their life and it is critical that the families who look after our most vulnerable children through foster care, provide the highest quality of care. A strength of Haringey Fostering Service is the ability of the staff to remain child-focused whilst providing an elevated level of support to foster carers.

The Fostering Service is a regulated service and subject to inspection by Ofsted as part of the ILACS inspection framework. Haringey Council's Fostering Service provides a range of short-term and permanent foster carers who have a diverse range of skills and experience. Foster carers provide family-based services ranging from weekend respite/short breaks to supporting birth parents and carers, preparing a child for adoption, or providing a permanent home for a child through to independence. We continue to see a high number of family members and friends come forward for assessments, while legal proceedings are underway, requesting to care for a child. In Haringey, we are committed to keeping children with their birth parents in line with the Families First agenda where it is safe to do so. Where it is not, we endeavour to keep them within their family networks.

Our Fostering Service

Haringey's Fostering Service comprises of four teams in total. There are two teams that provide day-to-day support and supervision to our in-house foster carers and connected carers, each comprising of a team manager and 5 supervising social workers. In addition to the Fostering Support Teams, we have:

- A team dedicated to foster carer recruitment
- Special Guardianship and Connected Carers assessments
- Kinship Care and post order support.

The service aims to listen and respond to our carers and over the years we have cemented our relationship and built on trust and transparency. Using carers' knowledge and experience has also helped us shape the service and build upon our strengths.

We aim to provide high quality care for children and young people in safe, secure, and nurturing families through recruiting and developing highly skilled foster carers.

The Service

Providing loving, secure, nurturing, fostering families for our children in care, is central to our corporate parenting strategy, and the backbone of our placement sufficiency

work. For another year Haringey's Fostering Service has continued to work very hard to recruit, approve and support new fostering families, whilst ensuring that our fostering community continues to understand, and support the children in their care.

Principles

- Children should be supported to remain with their families or connected carers where appropriate.
- If staying with family is not possible, early permanence through adoption or fostering is prioritised to promote emotional wellbeing and belonging.
- Children and young people's voices must be respected, with active engagement in decisions about their care and services.
- High-quality placements and robust support for parents and carers are essential to meet children's needs.
- Where appropriate, children should be placed within Haringey with local carers to maintain community connections.
- Parents and carers are integral in planning for the child.

The Fostering Service - Vision and Priorities

The fostering service is committed to delivering high-quality care and support for children in care and fostering families. The following priorities guide our approach:

Children in Care

- Live in warm, stable home and these homes shall be safe, secure, and nurturing.
- In these homes, will be receive care that promotes their confidence and future aspirations.
- Will receive support to achieve the best possible outcomes—short, medium, and long term.
- Are actively involved in their care planning.
- Have a voice in shaping the services designed to support them.

Social Workers

- Understand and value the role of foster carers.
- Receive relevant training and development to enhance their practice and support fostering services.

Fostering Families

- Are provided with high-quality, personalised training and development opportunities.
- Receive inclusive support, including appropriate out-of-hours assistance.
- Are recruited based on a wide range of skills and experiences to meet diverse needs, including family groups, older children, and children with additional needs.
- Are recruited from diverse backgrounds to improve the quality of matching and reflect our communities.

Service Values and Delivery

- Demonstrates core values of equality and diversity in both operational actions and strategic planning.
- Complies with all statutory, regulatory, and legislative frameworks.
- Embraces learning opportunities and ensures robust monitoring, review, and development of service delivery.
- Promotes a team-based approach centered on the child's needs, ensuring all professionals work collaboratively to achieve best practice.

The National Fostering Context (according to the DfE)

Key Statistics (as of March 2024):

- 83,630 children were looked after in the UK.
- 57,000 of these were in foster care — a 4% decrease from the previous year.
- 42,616 fostering households in England.
 - 11% were newly approved in the year.
 - Of these, 45% were Local Authority (LA) carers, 55% Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs).
 - LA-approved task centred carers have declined 16% since 2020.

Recruitment & Retention Challenges:

- 8,485 households applied to foster (up from 8,010), but only 4,055 were approved.
- 4,820 households ceased fostering — a net loss of 765 carers.
- 60% of current carers are considering quitting due to burnout and lack of support.

Systemic Issues:

- The fostering decision process can take up to 2 years, making it hard to evaluate recruitment campaign effectiveness.

- Public perception is a barrier: while 73% are concerned about the shortage, only 7% would consider fostering in the next 10 years.
 - Common concerns: financial insecurity, housing, age.

Placement Impact:

- 13% of children are placed 20+ miles from their home authority.
- Separation of family groups and inappropriate placements are increasing due to carer shortages.

Government Response:

- £16 million (2025–26) and £25 million (2026–28) pledged to recruit 400 new households and enhance support (e.g., mentoring, training).
- Sector leaders argue that funding alone is insufficient — systemic reform is needed to improve carer experience and retention.

Children in Foster Care in Haringey 2024/2025

325 children were looked after by Haringey Council

235 children in fostering homes

65 children are cared for outside of a fostering arrangement.



136 children with Haringey foster carers

30 children with kinship carers ↑

18 children matched long term to their carer at Fostering Panel

95 children matched long-term to their carer

98 children with IFA carers ↑

The trend in Haringey saw a decrease of 11.65% in children in foster care from 266 in 2023/2024 to 235 in 2024/2025. We believe in part, this decrease is because of the implementation of a strong Early Help offer, an increased referral rate for Family Group Conferences, young people remaining with their carers post 18 under a staying put arrangement.

Further successful strategies implemented to prevent children coming into foster care included; parenting assessments completed at the child protection stage to identify support to parents, and therapeutic services working with children and their families while children remain in their families.

The number of children cared for by connected carers decreased from 46 in 2023/24 to 36 in 2024/25, a decrease of 21.74%. Again, we believe that this is through the work completed while children remain living with their families, and the network of family support being utilised to support parents and carers.

Alongside this, we have children where connected carers arrangements have ceased due to either a Special Guardianship Order being granted or a young person turns 18, and therefore no longer a child in care.

The number of children living with a Haringey task centred foster carer not a relative or friend was 124 in 2024/2025 which is a decrease from 125 in 2023/2024.

In 2024/2025 there were 9 Connected Carer approvals at Fostering Panel, which was an increase from 6 in 2023/2024, an increase of 33.33%. In 2024/2024 there were 30 children in kinship placements and 18 children in Reg 24 placements.

The number of children matched long-term in 2024/2025 through the Fostering Panel was 10, this was a decrease from 16 children in 2023/2024. This represents a 37% decrease in children being referred to fostering panel for long-term matching in 2024/2025. However, we should not lose sight of the overall increase in children being long term matched overall.

During 2024/2025 there were 7 children long term matched at Fostering Panel with Haringey foster carers which was a decrease from 10 children in 2023/2024. Of the 7 children long term matched in 2024/2025 there were 4 children who were matched with along with their brother or sister.

During 2024/2025 three children were matched with Independent Fostering Agency foster carers (IFA), this was a decrease from 6 children in 2023/2024, a 50% decrease.

CHANGING AGE PROFILE

Children with Haringey Foster Carers

Year	Age Group					
	Under 1	1 – 5	6-10	11 - 15	16+	Total
2024/ 2025	6	27	40	51	41	165
2023/ 2024	2	36	35	53	45	171

Children with Haringey and IFA Carers combined

Year	Age Group					
	Under 1	1 – 5	6-10	11 - 15	16+	Total
2024/ 2025	12	43	63	81	62	261
2023/ 2024	4	50	55	80	77	266

- The largest demographic of children in foster care of children by age, continues to be those aged over 11 years of age. Data indicates that outside of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, abuse and neglect and families in acute stress were the primary presenting needs identified at assessment.

Other factors included:

- Exposure to extrafamilial harm on young people including child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Adolescent behavioural challenges

Haringey continues to monitor and acknowledge these pressures and that a multi-agency approach to provide support to young people and families, and to ensure the right support and resources are made available to foster carers to meet the needs of all children.

Ethnicity of Children Looked After (2024/2025)

Total number of children: 325

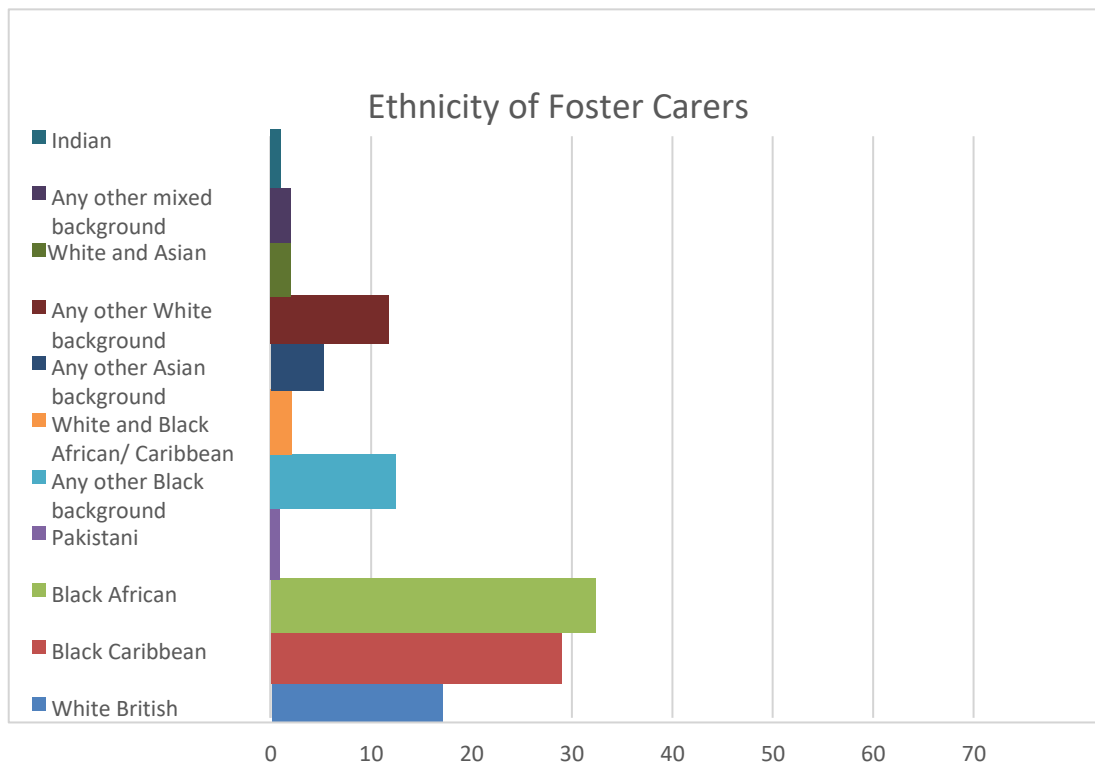
Ethnicity	Number of Children	Percentage
Other Ethnic Group	22	7.12%
Chinese	0	0.00%
Other Black background	49	15.08%
Caribbean	31	9.61%
African	45	13.85%
Asian	3	1.07%
Any Other Mixed Background	37	13.17%
Mixed White/Black(African/Caribbean/Other) background	29	8.92%
Mixed White Asian	3	1.07%
White British	42	12.92%
White Other	33	11.74%
Asian Other	9	2.77%
Other	23	7.08%

The majority of looked after children in Haringey in 2024-2025 were from a White or Black (African/Caribbean) background totalling 60.63%. In the year 2024-2025 the percentage of children looked after in Haringey in these groups entering foster care decreased on the year 2023-2024 from 67.6%. Although the number of children in these groups increased by 6 children, the overall percentage of children looked after in other categories reduced. This figure is also informed by the reduction in numbers of children looked after in 2023/2024 from 334 to 325 in 2024/2024.

The demographics of foster carers in Haringey are broadly reflective of our looked after children, enabling Haringey to achieve better matching of children to carers. In 2023/2024 we were able to meet 64.29% of our placements need with in-house foster carers. In 2024/2025 this reduced to 63.22% due to several carers retiring from fostering.

There is work underway to increase our capacity of in-house foster carers through up-skilling a proportion of our in-house foster carers and through targeted recruitment of specialist foster carers who have particular skills and experience and can care for children with more complex needs.

Ethnicity of 129 Foster Carers in Haringey



Overview of Ethnic Representation

ETHNICITY OF FC	NO
Asian Pakistan	1
Mixed White & Black African	1
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	1
Asian Indian	2
Not Obtained/Unknown	2
White Irish	2
Any Other Ethnicity	3
Asian Other	5
White Other	10
Black Other	13
Not recorded on LL	13
White British	17
Black Caribbean	27
Black African	32
Grand Total	129

Haringey's Provision of Foster Carers



As of 31st March 2025 there were 109 approved fostering households made up of 136 approved foster Carers.

Of the 109 fostering households, 12 households were made up of approved connected foster carers and 18 households were made up of Kinship Carer households (Regulation 24).

This equates to 11.9% of Haringey's Fostering Households being kinship carers.

Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025 there was a total of 30 Kinship Carer households in Haringey. This is in line with Haringey's emphasis on keeping children with their families and networks where possible and safe to do so and puts Haringey in a strong position for implementation of the plan for children's social care reform.

"The DFE reported that at March 2024, 13,660 children in care in England were living with kinship carers. This means that 24% of all fostering households are kinship households, representing an 18% increase over the last five years.

Haringey has also seen a gradual increase in kinship care households. Approvals during this period has increased from 6 to 9 (50%), while general fostering household approvals has decreased from 8 to 7 compared with 2023-2024 figures."

Source: Haringey Annual Fostering Panel Report 2024-2025 (copy in appendix)

Newly approved foster carers/connected carers 2024/2025

Ethnicity	Number
White British	10*
Black British Caribbean	5*
Black British African	1*
British South Asian	3*
White European British	4*

**Includes carers jointly approved.*

Total= 23 carers.

The 23 newly approved foster carers made up 13 newly approved households.

7 Task Centred Foster Carers (5 fostering households)

16 Kinship Carers (9 fostering households)

Newly approved foster carers 2023/2024

Ethnicity	Number
Black British African	1
Black British	5*
White British Caribbean	3*
White British European	5*
White European	2*
South Asian British	2*
Mixed White British/ Black Ethiopian	1*
White British	7*
Identity requested	2*

**Includes carers jointly approved.*

Total= 28 carers.

The 28 newly approved foster carers made up 15 newly approved households.

14 Task Centred Foster Carers (9 fostering households)

9 Kinship Carers (6 fostering households)

In 2023/2024 there were 334 looked after children in Haringey, whilst in 2024/2025 we had 325 looked after children. While the numbers of children looked after remains steady, in 2024/2025 there is an increase in approval of kinship carers and a reduction in approved task centred foster carers.

Utilisation of Foster Placements

As of 31st March 2025, showed Haringey had 325 children looked after, of which 136 children were cared for by in-house foster carers. With a total of 109 approved task centred fostering households, there was a 52.1% utilisation rate of fostering households. Through review of utilization of approved fostering households, it was noted that 25.7% were not utilised due to several factors set out in the table below.

Foster Carer on Hold	Foster Carer awaiting closure	Foster Carer has resigned awaiting closure	Inactive Foster Carer	Awaiting de-registration at Fostering Panel	Total
12	3	10	2	1	28

Work has already begun to improve utilisation of fostering households and to present foster carers to Fostering Panel for de-registration where this is appropriate. Haringey Fostering Service will seek to improve the utilisation of foster placements by de-registering carers more efficiently where they are no longer able to foster for varying reasons. Carers were on hold for various reasons ranging from ill-health, taking a break, caring responsibilities with family members etc.

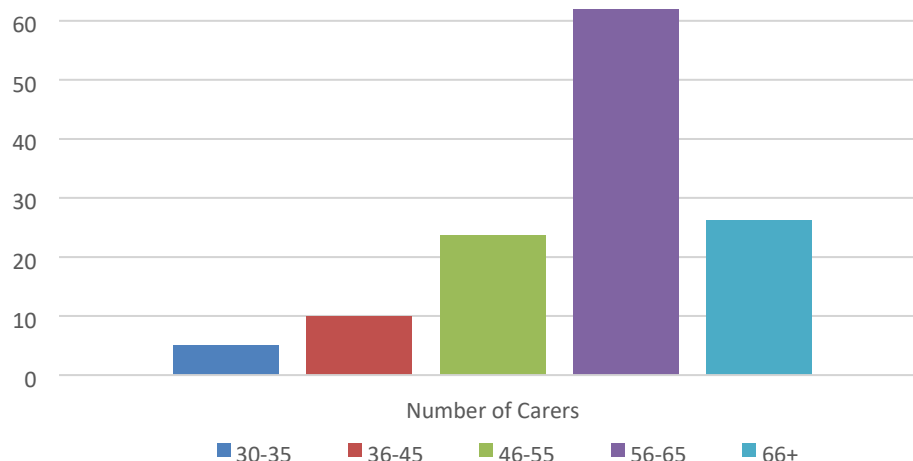
The duty Supervising Social Workers and Placements Officers work closely together and seek to identify placements for looked after children 'in-house' as a priority, keeping Haringey children in or close to the Haringey area and community. While it is acknowledged that 100% utilisation is not realistic or achievable for several reasons such as, respite placements will not always have a vacancy, and carers who commit to staying put arrangements will not be able to also accept an additional looked after child, we have set a target of 82% utilisation of fostering households for 2025/2026.

Haringey celebrates and appreciates its carers who have demonstrated care, commitment and resilience to our looked after children. There are currently 57 foster carers who have fostered for over ten years. There are 15 foster carers who have fostered for over 20 years, three of these have given thirty years of service. In addition, we hold a Foster Carers Celebration event where recognition is given for the care provided to our children.

We recognise that there is a need to recruit and retain carers who can offer Haringey children a similar level of commitment through their public service as Foster Carers. Haringey are continually thinking of ways this can be done within the current national climate of budgetary constraints on Local Authorities. An ongoing offer through foster carer development, appropriate support, training, supervision and reward seeks to underpin foster carer retention.

In 2024/2025, 9 carers were de-registered. Of these de-registrations, 4 carers were over 60 years old. Other reasons included personal reasons and competing work commitments. In one sense this is positive as this confirms that foster carer numbers are reducing for reasons outside the Council's control. Currently of the 129 approved foster carers, 62 are over 60 years old. This amounts to 48.06% of our foster carers approaching an age where they may consider retiring from fostering. This suggests that year on year, there is likely to be a comparable number of foster carer resignations due to retirement. To address this trend Haringey has in place a clear recruitment strategy.

Foster Carers by Age Range



The chart above shows the age range of Foster Carers and illustrates the need to recruit the next generation of carers to ensure sufficiency for foster homes in the future.

Fostering recruitment will need to target carers who are able to care for a range of children requiring foster homes. This is particularly necessary to increase choices for children with complex needs, adolescents, large sibling groups, unaccompanied minors and those at risk of child sexual and criminal exploitation. In addition, we have several children with disabilities who have specialist needs and there will be a focus on recruiting foster carers with additional and relevant skills who can offer short breaks or longer-term care to these vulnerable children.

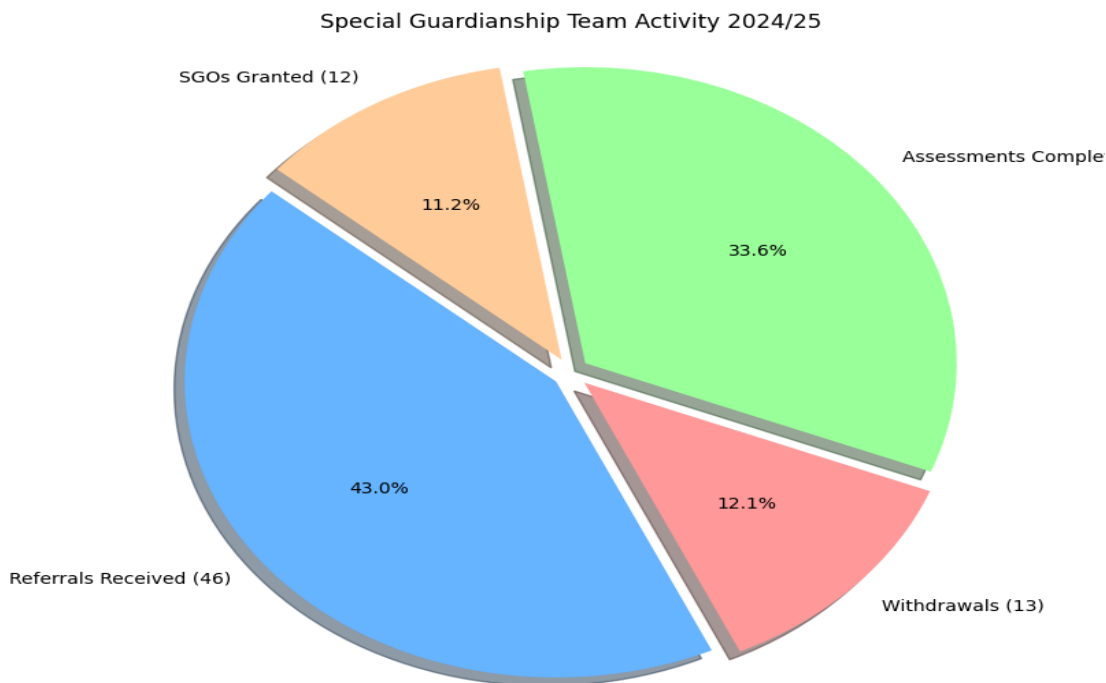
Special Guardianship and Post Order Support Team

The special guardianship team have a focus on assessing kinship and connected carers and supporting Special Guardians. Once assessed, carers are presented to fostering panel who consider recommendations for their approval as connected carers.

Wherever possible, when children cannot be reunified with their parents and where there is a positive assessment - the local authority would support connected foster carers in applying for a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) to secure permanence for the children outside of the local authority care system. This approach aligns with the government's national kinship strategy and children's social care reforms, which

aims to champion kinship care and set out support for family networks providing loving and stable homes for children.

Much has been done to ensure connected carers are presented to panel in a timely manner.



The Special Guardianship Team received 46 referrals in 2024/25. This was a 100% increase on the previous year (2023/24) of 23. There were no recorded withdrawals from a Special Guardianship assessment in 2023/24, however, in 2024/25 there were 13 withdrawals.

The team completed 24 assessments in 2023/24 and 36 assessments in 2024/25. A 50% increase.

There were 12 Special Guardianship Orders granted in Care Proceedings during 2024/2025, 9 of which were court directed. This compares favourably to the previous year when 7 Special Guardianship Orders granted, six of which were court directed through care proceedings.

There were 10 connected carer assessments completed by the team in 2024/25.

There has been an increased emphasis within Haringey Children's Service to keep children within their family and network where possible and safe to do so. This practice is reflected in the increase in assessments being completed and presentations for Fostering Panel of connected carers.

Kinship (Connected Carers)

The Kinship part of the service has a dual role, to assess and support kinship carers as well as to provide on-going support to our special guardians once an order has been granted.

	2023/24	2024/25
Number of referrals received for Special Guardianship and Connected Carers Assessments	23	46
Number of Special Guardianship Assessments completed	14	30
Number of Special Guardianship Orders granted	7	12
Number of Special Guardianship allowances being paid.	No figure	122
Number of Connected Carers Assessments completed	6	9

Kinship Care is unique to local authorities. Within Haringey we have experienced a significant growth in our kinship carers group, year on year. There has been a continued rise in family and friend placements, which has impacted on the service in relation to the following:

- Reduced capacity to complete assessments in-house.
- Where children are placed with carers under a Reg 24 arrangement, carers are approved as connected carers pending the decision of court to grant a Special Guardianship Order.
- This has resource implications through the financial commitments of the service as well as the allocation of a supervising social worker as a statutory obligation for connected carers.

The safeguarding and support teams undertake viability assessments, following which:

- The Special Guardianship Team are alerted to the possibility of a kinship placement at the earliest opportunity
- Support is provided to the safeguarding and support teams as well as the children in care teams to understand the processes involved in Reg 24 placements and the assessment of prospective family members/friends.

- There is a pool of Independent Social Workers (ISW's) that Haringey work closely with for the completion of Special Guardianship Assessments that are overseen and quality assured by the service. This has enabled the service to have better oversight and drive the quality of assessments being completed.

Much work has been done to develop smooth processing of such placements. This includes the development of a process map for staff and delivery of workshops to all social workers across all service areas. This work will continue through 2025/26.

THE FRONT DOOR OF OUR SERVICE – THE RECRUITMENT TEAM

Welcoming – Informative - Efficient

Fostering Recruitment Team Overview – Haringey Council

The Recruitment Team serves as the initial point of contact for individuals interested in fostering, playing a crucial role in attracting and processing public enquiries. They manage communications across multiple channels including phone, email, website, and text, and host regular public events to promote fostering opportunities.

Working in collaboration with the Communications Team, the Recruitment Team Manager develops targeted and cost-effective campaigns aligned with service needs. These campaigns leverage social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, alongside traditional outreach methods like posters, leaflets, banners, radio, and local publications.

The team is committed to delivering a service that is welcoming, efficient, informative, and inclusive—ensuring all enquiries are handled fairly and in line with Haringey Council’s core values and behaviours.

The Recruitment Team consists of:
1 Team Manager
2 Recruitment and Assessment Social Workers
1 Marketing Officer
1 dedicated BSO support.

We are proud members of:



Objectives achieved in 2024/2025

Consistent and regular review and development of the fostering webpages to ensure that information is clear for customers and enables online enquiries to be completed

Monthly review of the effectiveness of the Fostering Service marketing strategy, and changes made as required to achieve the aims of the service

Carefully planned marketing campaigns were delivered. This included hosting 3 Fostering events. A Carer Retention Event, a joint Haringey and Islington Fostering Event and a Fostering Taster Event for Foster Carer Fortnight. In addition, 13 drop-in events were attended where fostering for Haringey was promoted. For example, at community events, libraries, art centres etc. This promoted the fostering service and generated visibility and promoted fostering for Haringey.

Delivered information about foster carers upskilling to become specialist foster carers. including the additional support and training and support package.

We increased our presence on social media to boost the visibility of the fostering service. These efforts led to significant marketing successes: we have reduced graphic/leaflet design turnaround times from an average of 3 weeks to 1 week (a 67% improvement), achieved a 14% growth in social media followers. Furthermore, the service's recruitment efforts have led to a jump in monthly enquiries.

Our marketing campaign and strategy generated 117 fostering enquiries.

5 foster carers were recruited, assessed and approved in 2024/2025. whilst the target of 13 new task centered foster carers, was not achieved in year, 9 task centred foster carers were in stage two of the assessment process meaning approval would be considered in 2025/26.

Recruitment

During 2024/2025 Haringey Fostering and Recruitment Team delivered the marketing and recruitment strategy. The focus was to increase the recruitment and retention of foster carers, thereby increasing the availability of loving and nurturing family homes for children and young people across Haringey.

Haringey is one of the most diverse areas in the country, with communities representing

a wide range of identities, cultures, and abilities. To address the diverse needs of Haringey children requiring foster placements, including long-term and short-term foster carers, as well as those who can support children with additional needs and children in need of remand placements; our marketing and recruitment strategy encouraged foster carer enquiries from all sections of our diverse community.

Marketing

Our new full-time Marketing Officer assumed the role in late November 2024. As part of our strategic objectives, we focused on enhancing the use of internal communication initiatives to promote fostering without incurring council expenses. For example, through internal communications and borough publications. We increased our number of drop-in events and stalls, as well as increasing our presence on social media to boost the visibility of the fostering service.

Imagery

Our marketing campaign selected vibrant and positive imagery of domestic people portraits. A range of images were selected to better reflect Haringey's diverse communities and enable potential foster carers the opportunity to see themselves as foster carers.



Language

Our marketing and promotional language emphasised simple accessibility by avoiding jargon. We introduced fostering concepts and terms in a manner that was clear and easily understood. We communicated positive messages to challenge negative perceptions and stigma around foster care. We communicated the impact fostering can have and how lives have been changed, through myth busting, sharing experiences of our carers and care leavers, as well as providing information about allowances and support.

Enquiries & Approvals

Between 31st of March 2024 and the 1st of April 2025 there were consistent, positive increases in our fostering enquiries, as shown in Fig. 1 below.

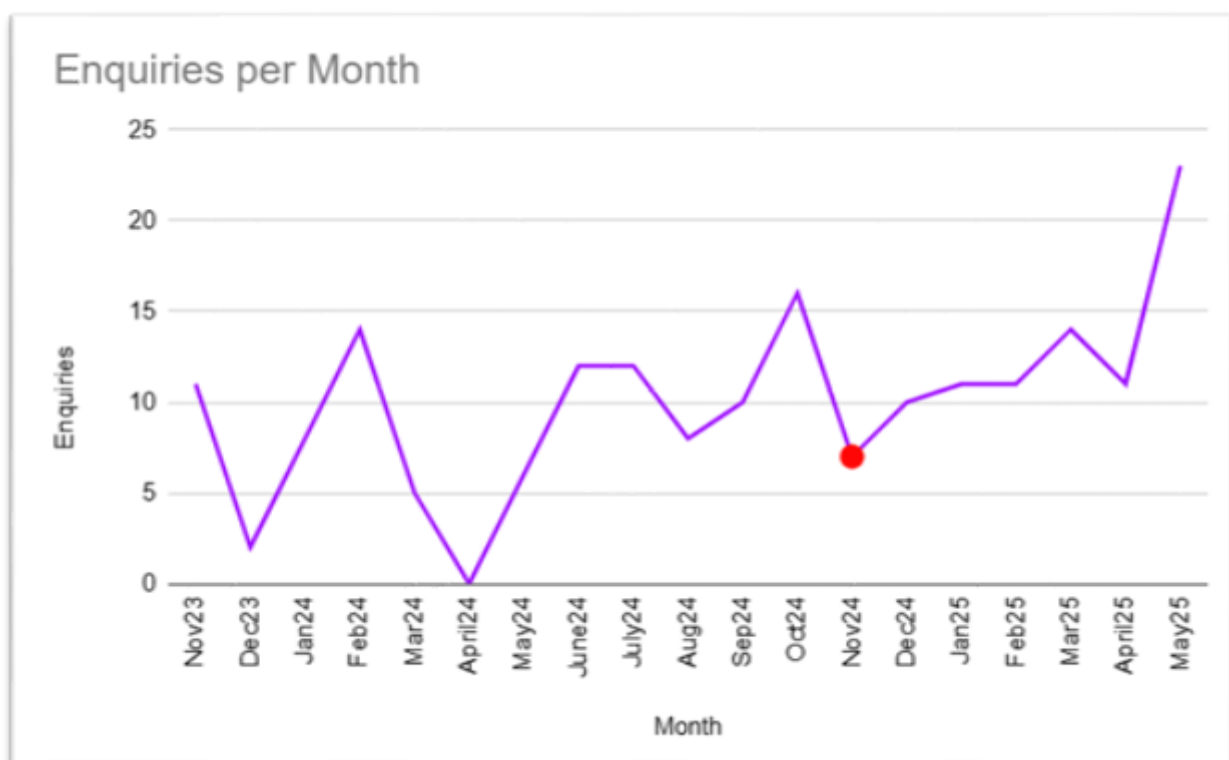


Fig. 1: The red point indicates where our full-time Marketing Officer started in post. From the first full month of work, enquiries consistently rise to 10 or more each month.

Website

Our website (Fig. 3) is a key part of our marketing toolkit. Our page serves as an information hub where residents can learn more about fostering, find out about our recruitment activities, and enquire about becoming a carer with Haringey.



Fig. 3 – Our website landing page as of May 2025.

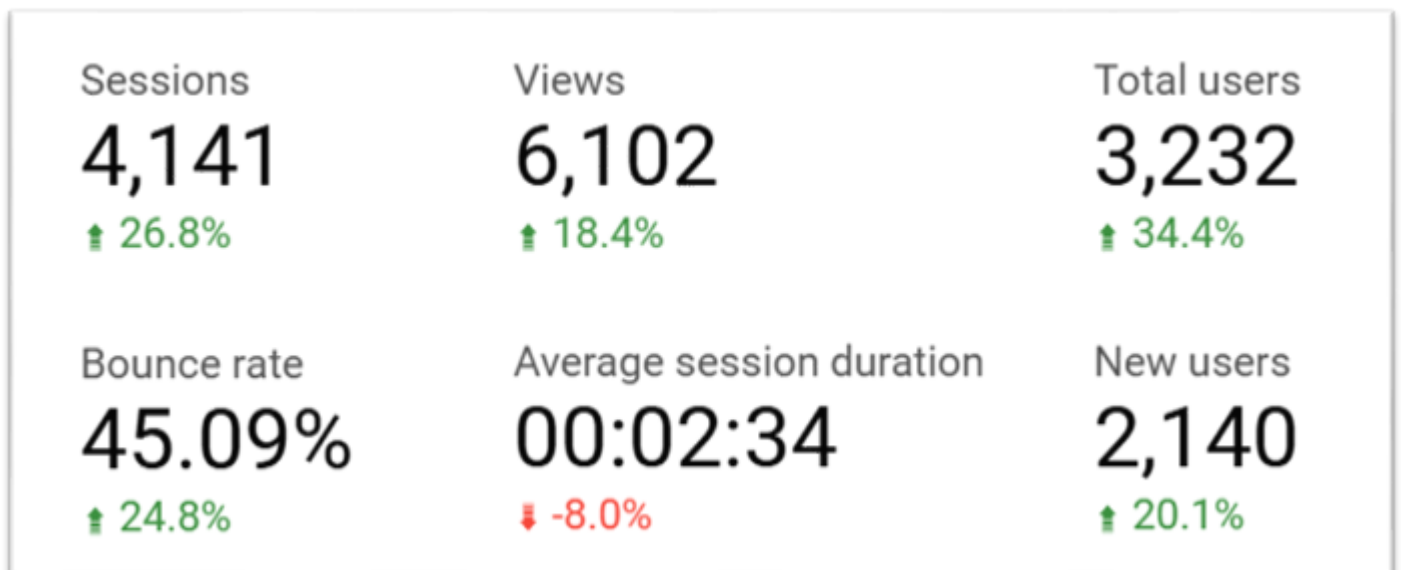


Fig. 4 – Webpage analytics from 1 May 2024-22 May 2025.

In 2024/2025 our total number of page views, users, and sessions went up. We reached more people, with more than 2,100 users visiting our site who had not previously visited before.

However, our 'bounce rate', which calculates how many users do not stay on the page for more than 10 seconds, was also up by 25%--this indicates that whilst a higher number of users are clicking on our webpage, they are not staying on our page, clicking on links, or engaging with our content.

The website refresh provides good groundwork for a more user-focused page. We are now focussing on making our user journey dynamic and seamless to capture those new users and keep their attention. This website refresh is part of a wider business case for digital marketing pending approval.

Social Media

Being active on social media is paramount to connecting with and expanding our fostering community. We have increased our activity on Instagram and are sharing fostering updates via the Council's main Facebook page using the Communications team's Meltwater platform.

Our Instagram post frequency has increased from 21 posts across May 2023-October 2024 to 35 posts from November 2024-May 2025. This is a 67% increase from the previous six months ago.

Our impressions (the number of times content appears on a user screen) increased significantly; impressions measure how often a piece of content appears on a user's screen, regardless of whether they have clicked on the post. Impressions are an important measure of our marketing reach, and our impressions show our posts are reaching a wider

audience.

Our average impression count per post in November 2024 was 56, by May 2025 it had increased to 205. This is an increase of 266%. Our likes are also up, with our average likes per post having increased from 2 to 4, an increase of 100%.

This success is due to a few factors, including the addition of calls to action such as redirecting users to our website or an event ticket management website, as well as the inclusion of colourful and dynamic graphics.

Our marketing strategy uses collaboration on posts with the larger Haringey Council Instagram run by Internal Comms, which gives us access to a much wider audience (at the time of writing, HC's Instagram is at 7,817 followers, compared to 165 followers on our Fostering account)

Furthermore, in March 2025, we successfully organised a fostering giveaway (Fig. 8) at no cost to our service by collaborating with bestselling author and UK foster carer Beth Moran. We reached out to Ms. Moran following an interview she did with BBC Radio 4 about fostering; Beth graciously donated a copy of her latest book (a novel inspired by her fostering journey) to be awarded as the giveaway prize. This initiative not only engaged our community but also showcased the significance of fostering through the support of a prominent cultural figure. This giveaway gave us a follower boost of 14%.

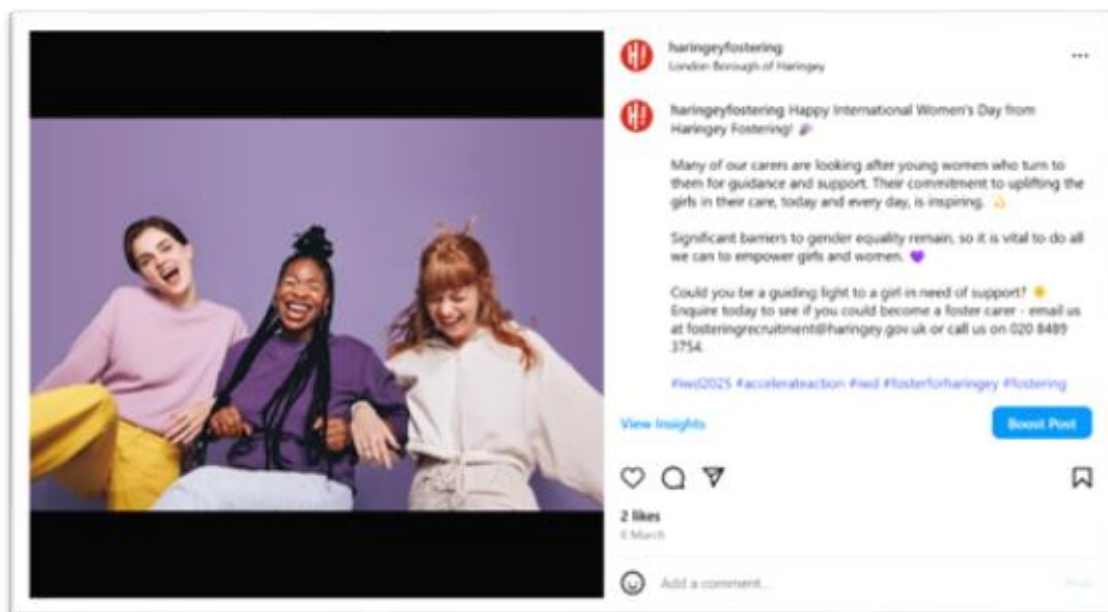


Fig. 5 – A post to our Instagram for International Women's Day (8 March 2025)

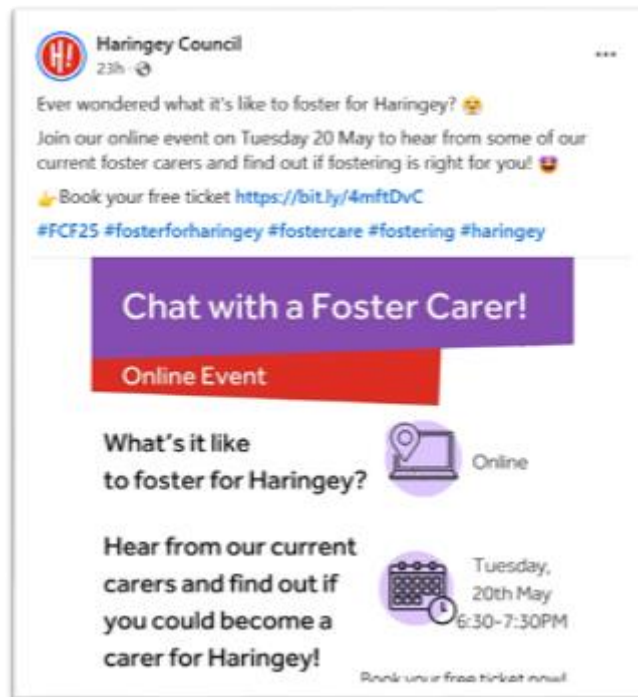


Fig. 6 -- A post to Haringey Council's Facebook via Meltwater, May 2025

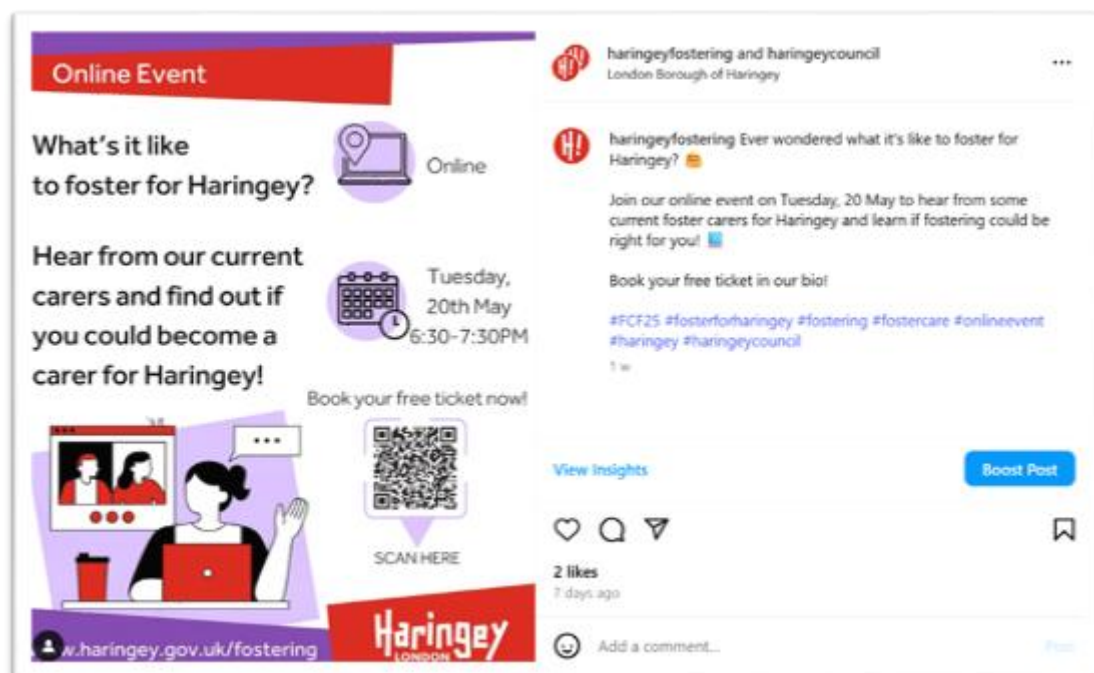


Fig. 7 -- A post to Haringey's Fostering Instagram, May 2025



Fig. 8 -- A giveaway post on Haringey's Fostering Instagram which garnered a record-breaking 38 likes and 1,342 impressions (10 March 2025)

Campaign Promotion

We currently use a combination of direct marketing (banners, merchandise, leaflet handouts, internal newsletters, and targeted external newsletters) as well as digital marketing (social media promotion, Clear Channel ads, Haringey screens) to promote the fostering service and our recruitment activities.

Campaigns

Haringey Fostering Service jointly delivered the Consortium Christmas Campaign. This collaborative campaign with the North London Fostering Consortium used the 12 Days of Christmas to explore a different element of foster care across 12 days in December.

This provided information on the importance of fostering and how to apply to become a foster carer in Haringey. This was promoted digitally on Instagram. We also jointly delivered the Consortium New Year's Campaign in January 2025-New year, new beginnings!

This campaign encouraged residents to make becoming a carer part of their new year resolutions and busted fostering myths. This was also promoted digitally on Instagram.

The campaign "Become a Foster Carer" was also delivered. This was an ongoing campaign and seeks to find task-centred carers in Haringey. This was routinely promoted physically at events such as drop-in sessions, on our fostering stalls, as well as digitally on Instagram, Facebook, Clear Channels, and Haringey Screens.

The Better Together campaign is another ongoing campaign and is a partnership between Haringey Council and Islington Council focused on the recruitment of new emergency and respite carers. We collaborated in March 2025 on an information event and did a joint stall in May 2024 to answer residents' questions about emergency foster care. This is promoted digitally on Instagram, Facebook, Clear Channels, and Haringey Screens, as well as in the Haringey Community Press' external newsletter.

"Do Something Incredible" is an ongoing campaign to recruit foster carers for children with disabilities across the borough. This is promoted physically at events, drop-in sessions, on fostering stalls, and leaflet drops across the borough, as well as in SEND Power Haringey's newsletter.

"Remand Fostering" is an ongoing campaign to recruit foster carers for children who need to stay with a carer whilst they await court dates for alleged criminal offences. This is promoted physically at events, at drop-in sessions, at fostering stalls, and through leaflet drops across the borough.

In-Person Activities

Our in-person activities so far have focused on events we have hosted and events we have attended, as well as drop-in events.

In 2024/2025 the in-person events had varying degrees of success.

Our March Foster Carer Pancake Breakfast served as an opportunity to encourage carers to join our working group, from which we had 1 carer sign up.

Attendance to our March 2025 joint event with Islington brought in an attendance increase of 50% on the total of all joint events with Islington in 2024. However, attendance has not been as high as with our drop-in events or online events, largely due to the limitations of our current advertising capabilities.

Despite robust marketing campaigns using social media promotion, advertising in HPX and external newsletters, Clear Channel and Screen promotion across the borough, Facebook pushes via Meltwater, and appeals to internal staff via Viva Engage, we are simply not getting the attendance numbers we would like to have.

Of attendees at our in-person events in 2024/2025, 66% said they found out about the event via our Clear Channel/Internal Screen campaigns, and 33% found out via our fostering newsletter, thus demonstrating our digital marketing efforts are effective.

We have also linked with Haringey Comms to promote our events via the What's On in Haringey page for greater visibility to boost attendance (see Fig. 9 below).

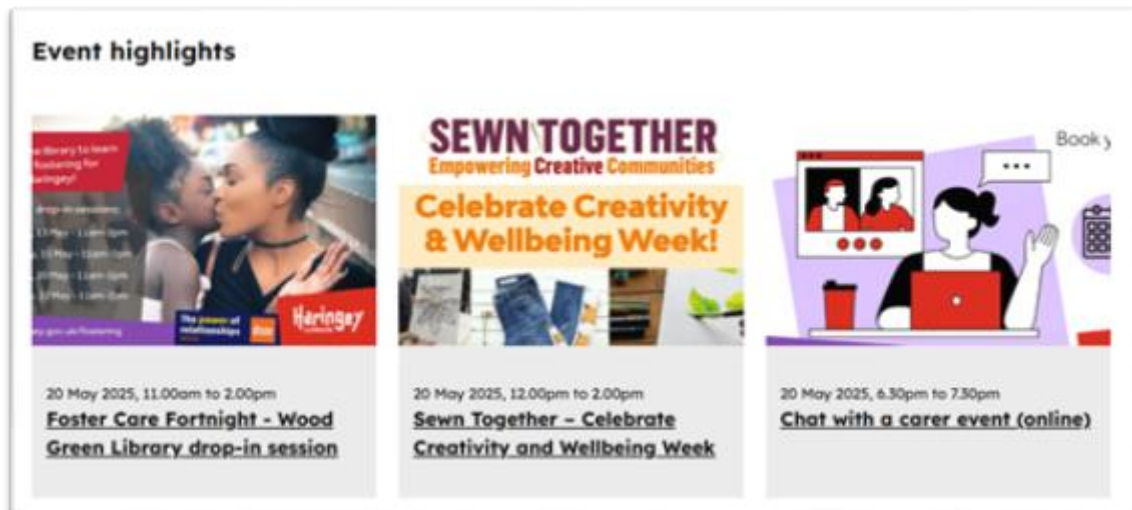


Fig. 9 – Events Highlights page on What's On in Haringey (May 2025)

Drop-In Events

Our drop-in events have had more success than events we host, due to increased foot traffic at public places and flexibility to accommodate various schedules, unlike fixed-time events.

We have attended a variety of drop-in events, from stalls at NHS Wellbeing days to informational drop-ins at Jackson's Lane Art Centre, North Middlesex Hospital, GP offices, Winkfield Resource Centre, Wood Green Shopping Centre, Wood Green Library, Stroud Green Library, and drop-ins to encourage discussion with our Haredi Jewish community.

Within a 6 month period (November 2024-March 2025), we amassed 44 enquiries from drop-ins alone, which account for more than half (52%) of our total enquiries in the same 6 month period.

Online Events

Our fostering website contains information about online sessions with ticket links. We also promote our Online Sessions via social media and Clear Channel/Haringey Screens.

We also created an Online Fostering Information Session PowerPoint to use as a visual aid during online sessions, which has helped attendees better understand the fostering application process.

As shown in the chart below (Fig. 10), we have seen a significant increase in public interest in our online events since implementing this promotional strategy in February 2025. Between February 2025 to May 2025 across 3 online sessions, 3 enquiries were generated.

Fostering Info Sessions



Fig. 10 – Fostering Info Session Data (Dec 23-April 25)



Fig. 11 – An example of our ticket booking page for Online Fostering Info Sessions



Fig. 12 – Online Session Webpage Box

Our Social Workers also report a keen interest from our foster carers towards their own online support group option, with one Social Worker feeding back: 'the evening group is now a large group as it is convenient for lots of people with up to 30 to 40 people attending'.

We have found that online events are growing more popular with both internal and external fostering audiences.

Newsletter

We have also increased consistency on our monthly fostering newsletter, now ensuring they are sent out monthly, rather than bi-monthly. We have also attended multiple foster carer support groups to get direct feedback from the carers as to what they would like to see in the newsletter. Moreover, we liaised with internal comms to streamline the newsletter design in December 2025, creating uniformity in the design.

Carer feedback led to the implementation of the following sections of our newsletter:

Tier Refresher

Monthly Fostering stories from our carers—these have proved especially popular, and we have received feedback that the carers featured are very pleased and proud to have their accomplishments showcased to their fellow carers. We will be building on this success, by exploring a wider distribution of these stories.

Awareness raising regarding Private Fostering

Working Group Recruitment Information—this has led to the recruitment of 6 carers to our working group

Overall, the total number of 'opens' from newsletter recipients has increased by 20%.



Fig. 13 – Fostering Newsletter Header (April 2025)

Our Plans for 2025/2026

- To review and develop the fostering webpages to ensure that information is clear for customers and enables online enquiries to be completed
- To review the effectiveness of Marketing Strategy and make changes as required to achieve the aims of the service
- To undertake carefully planned marketing campaigns
- To host and attend community events to promote the fostering service and generate visibility and promote fostering in Haringey.
- To ensure that current foster carers are well supported and trained to ensure retention of active carers in the borough, as well as encouraging carers to upskill to become specialist carers
- To increase our annual enquiries to 120/per year
- We aim to have a minimum of 13 new task-centred carers approved by the end of this year 2025-26, and 2+ specialist carers

The Assessment Team

We have dedicated Social Workers that are committed and focused solely on the recruitment process of new foster carers, including the delivery of marketing campaigns. The team is made up of experienced, flexible, enthusiastic and competent social workers. The team undertake:

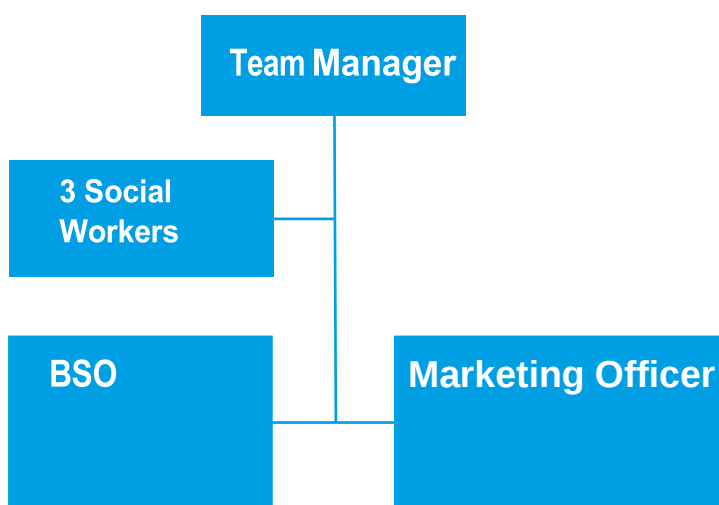
Mainstream Fostering Assessments

Connected Carers Assessments

Leading on the delivery of Skills to Foster Training

Involvement in the delivery and facilitation of various marketing campaigns.

Assessment Team Staff Structure:



Assessment Team Update:

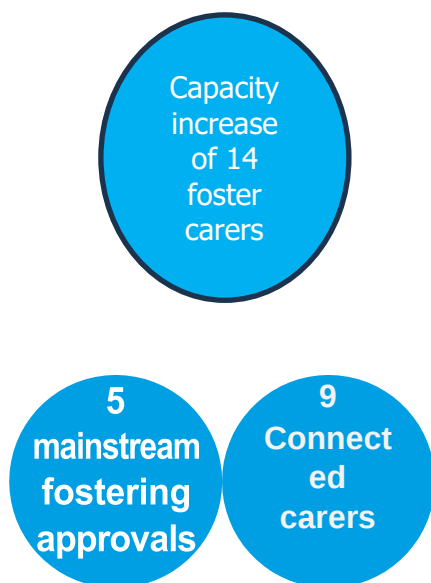
The Assessment Team have two Social Work assessors dedicated to completing Form F assessments which facilitates the recruitment of new task centred foster carers. There is a Senior Practitioner dedicated to the monitoring and progression of connected carer assessments and the completion of Special Guardianship assessments completed by Independent Social Workers.

In the Assessment Team, the two-stage process of fostering assessments are merged – meaning that all assessments could be considered ‘fast tracked’. This has benefits for our applicants, who, after deciding they would like to foster, want to be approved as quickly as possible and for the service, as we have approved carers ready to take placements of children in far shorter timescales than previously achieved. This has been achieved through the implementation of running stage 1 and stage 2 of the assessment process concurrently to prevent any delay with checks being received in a timely manner.

The aim has been to reduce the timescales for completion of fostering assessments from 12 months to 4.5 – 6 months. All cases are booked onto the Fostering Panel on allocation,

with 4.5 – 5 months being allowed for completion of the assessment. The Assessment Team in 2024/25 averaged 6.5 months per assessment. On consideration of those cases which took longer than our 4.5 – 6-month goal, there were justifiable reasons for delay, as opposed to there being drift e.g. additional work identified with birth children in assessment / applicants having to take time out for personal matters or issues with statutory checks being returned.

Approvals 2024/2025:



The Assessment Team had a target of assessing and approving 20 task centred foster carers. The Assessment Team did not meet the target of recruiting 20 new carers, but did have 9 active assessments in stage two in preparation for presentation to Panel by 31st March 2025 and 5 applicants had paused their Form F assessments for varying personal reasons. All but 1 sought to resume their assessment within the following 6 months. These factors impacted on the approval target being reached in 2024/2025.

One household withdrew from the assessment process for unavoidable personal reasons.

In all, this highlights the quality of the screening process of our enquiries, further supported through initial visits to potential applicants yielding a good result.

The Fostering Service target of increased placement capacity of 35 was exceeded through a range of different placements being confirmed. This was achieved in partnership with the Fostering Support team. Through this approach the Fostering Service were able to increase placements capacity through developing a broader pool of nine Regulation 24 carers and we considered our current carers and looked at ways in which they could be supported to increase their approval numbers. This is significant progress and a positive

step forward in growing our cohort of carers, keeping children local and, ultimately, making savings for the Local Authority by reducing reliance on independent fostering agencies.

There were 9 connected carer assessments completed by the team in 2024/25. There has been an increased emphasis within Haringey Children's Service to keep children within their family and network where possible and safe to do so. This practice is reflected in the increase in assessments being completed and, presentation for Fostering Panel of connected carers.

Skills to Foster Training



The Recruitment and Assessment Team deliver the skills to foster training. This is co-delivered with staff from the Fostering Support Teams, Foster Carers and Care experienced Young Adults. This joint working has enhanced the content and delivery of the Skills to Foster training. The Consortium alternate delivering the training and so Haringey Assessment Team will also deliver Skills to Foster training to applicants from neighbouring boroughs.

Haringey Fostering Support Teams: Empowering Foster Carers

- Haringey have two dedicated Fostering Teams, each with a Team Manager and 5 Supervising Social Workers who provide the day to day support and supervision to our foster carers and connected carers.
- Monthly support groups are offered to carers who can attend either virtually or in person. Support groups are facilitated by supervising social workers and are aimed at provided a safe space for carers to gather and learn from each other. This space also offers themed workshops and guest speakers to support the learning and development of our carers.

Psychological & Emotional Support

- **First Steps Plus:** Offers psychological health screening and one-to-one consultations for children aged 0–17 at risk of placement instability, within a 20-mile radius of Haringey. First Steps Plus also work directly with our carers to provide them with support in managing complex situations.

Peer Support & Mentoring

- Experienced carers provide outreach and respite support.
- New carers are paired with seasoned carers for guidance and encouragement.
- Carers have a WhatsApp group where they can reach out for support from other carers within the service

The Mockingbird Project

- The model consists of a constellation of 10 fostering families supported by a hub home carer.
- Offers sleepovers, peer support, training, and social activities.
- Promotes placement stability and a sense of community.
- A Liaison Officer bridges Haringey Fostering Service and The Fostering Network.

Multi-Agency Collaboration

- Close work with Children in Care Team, Exploitation Team, Young Adult Service, Health, and Education.
- Foster carers and social workers participate in multidisciplinary planning meetings.
- Work closely with Adopt London North to support children and their carers through the transition period for adoption.

Training & Development

Our current training offer ranges from online to face-to-face training opportunities covering a wide range of topics to aid development throughout a Foster Carers career. There is particular emphasis on training around trauma informed practice and to support carers to provide loving homes for children with more complex needs. Supervising Social Workers provide support to our carers to learn creatively and understand differing learning styles. This informs the agreed yearly individualised learning and development plan for each foster carer. We also welcome Special Guardians onto training detailed within our training brochure.

- Annual training brochure updates to reflect evolving needs. The training offer in Haringey is vast to suit the varying learning styles of our carers including generic to more targeted themes.
- Training includes trauma-informed practice and support for complex needs.

- Individualised learning plans tailored to each carer's style and goals. This is kept under review by the supervising social worker to ensure that carers have completed all mandatory training as well as other identified areas for their learning and development.

24/7 Support Access

- Out-of-hours support available every day from supervising social workers within the service:
 - Weekdays: 6pm–11pm
 - Weekends/Holidays: 10am–11pm
- Daytime support via Supervising Social Workers or Duty Team.
- Emergency Duty Team available at all other times.

Foster Carer Retention in Haringey

In Haringey we recognise the importance of retaining our foster carers and work hard to ensure they are valued and feel part of the service.

Celebrating Long-Term Commitment

- **57 carers** have fostered for Haringey for over 10 years.
- **15 carers** have fostered for over 20 years.
- Long service awards recognise and celebrate these milestones.

Demographic Challenges

- A significant proportion of our foster carers are aged over 60.
- Many are considering retirement or pausing due to health needs.
- Rising cost of living affects fostering capacity, especially when adult children return home.

Recruitment Pressures

- Without proactive steps being taken to address the Resignations may outpace new approvals in coming years. We have a clear and concise Marketing Strategy to support with the recruitment of new foster carers.
- Marketing and Recruitment Strategy targets:
 - To increase placement capacity.
 - Skilled foster carers to provide homes to children where there may be more complexities.
 - Diverse backgrounds to meet the needs and support appropriate matching of our children in care.

Valuing Foster Carers

- Acknowledges fostering as both rewarding and demanding. We have events to bring our carers together and give recognition to their hard work and commitment, through appreciation events.
- Emphasises the importance of carers feeling **valued, supported, and equipped**.
- Involving our carers through bi-monthly meetings to hear their voices and involve them service delivery.

Financial Recognition

- 2023 uplift in allowances for carers of children aged 11–18. This has ensured that Haringey's fostering allowances are in line with our neighbouring authorities.
- Tiered payment system (Tier 1–3) based on experience and complexity of care. This systems allows for financial reward in line with the foster carers professional development.
- Discretionary payments available for high-needs placements.

Consistent Support

- Each carer has an allocated Supervising Social Worker. The Supervising Social Worker will visit their carers at a minimum of every 6 weeks, or sooner if needed.
- Staffed by permanent, experienced professionals, meaning that Supervising Social Workers know their carers well and in some cases have been working with their carers for a number of years. Carers report that they have good relationships with their Supervising Social Workers and feel well supported.

Trauma-Informed Practice

- Carers trained in the **Secure Base Model**:
 - Builds resilience and equips our carers to work with and care for children through a trauma informed lens.
 - Enhances understanding of trauma and behaviour and equipes carers to use various methods to support children to overcome challenges.
 - Supports reflective practice and growth.

Community & Connection

- **Annual Picnic in the Park**: fosters community and fun for carers and children.
- **Men's Group**: dedicated space for male foster carers to share, learn, and support each other.
- **Monthly Support Groups**:
 - Daytime (face-to-face)
 - Evening (virtual)

- Includes guest speakers and training opportunities

Expanding the Mockingbird Project

- We currently have one active constellation with 10 families. This includes a Hub Carer that offers support in various way to other fostering households within the consortium.
- Plans underway to launch a **second constellation**, extending the support network.

Independent Reviewing Officers in Haringey Fostering Service

The Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) play a pivotal role in ensuring the quality, stability, and compliance of foster care within Haringey Fostering Service. Their work supports both foster carers and children in care through rigorous review processes and child-centered approaches.

Stability and Continuity

Haringey employs one full-time and one part-time IRO; both permanent staff members. This arrangement fosters continuity and strong professional relationships, which are essential for meaningful and reflective annual reviews of foster carers.

Annual Review Performance

In the 2024/2025 period, IROs completed **98** Foster Carer Annual Reviews, with around 90% completed on time. Delays were primarily due to carer availability issues such as illness or travel, ongoing investigations related to allegations, and cases involving resignations or pending deregistration.

Quality Assurance and Regulatory Oversight

IROs ensure that foster carers maintain high standards of care and comply with regulatory requirements. Foster carers are reviewed and return to the Fostering Panel every three years, as recommended by the IROs, to maintain ongoing approval and quality assurance.

Secure Base Model Integration

The review process incorporates the Secure Base Model, assessing foster care across five key domains: sensitivity, availability, acceptance, cooperation, and family membership. This framework promotes trauma-informed practice and supports the development of foster carers in providing nurturing and secure environments.

Holistic Feedback and Child Voice

IROs actively gather feedback from multiple sources, including foster carers' birth children, children in care, social workers, and support staff. The wishes and feelings of children are central to the review process, ensuring their voices influence care planning and support.

Celebrating Commitment

IRO reviews highlight the dedication and commitment of Haringey's foster carers. Through their efforts, children benefit from safe, nurturing homes and enriching experiences that contribute to their well-being and development.

This section provides a comprehensive overview suitable for inclusion in reports to stakeholders, demonstrating the critical role of IROs in maintaining and enhancing foster care quality within Haringey.

Haringey Fostering Panel

The role of a fostering panel is to **recommend whether someone is suitable to become (or remain) a foster carer**. Every fostering service must set up at least one fostering panel. This should include a range of people with relevant knowledge and experience.

Haringey Fostering Panel Composition

15 members on the central list:

- 1 Independent Chair
- 1 Independent Vice Chair
- 6 Agency Social Workers (including 2 IROs)
- 1 Local Authority Councillor
- 6 Independent Members (including foster carers, Special Guardian, psychotherapist, former disabilities manager, and care-experienced member)

Support Roles

- Panel Advisor: Ensures report quality and regulatory compliance.
- Panel Administrator: Manages logistics and produces detailed minutes.

Panel Functions

- Approving foster and kinship carers (initial, temporary, and continued approval)
- Reviewing carers post-allegation or standard of care concerns
- Conducting first and third annual reviews
- Quality assurance and recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM)

- resignations/de-registrations

Panel Operations

- Held virtually twice a month, improving accessibility for carers.
- Each panel includes six members, ensuring diversity in skills and backgrounds.
- Two members resigned in 2024/25; recruitment for replacements is underway.

Appraisals & Training

- Appraisals held in Feb 2025: Members expressed commitment and valued their role.
- Training priorities: LGBTQ+ and transgender awareness, sensitive questioning.
- Mandatory training in Sept 2025: Topics include Form K, Corporate Parenting, and effective questioning.

Panel Activity (April 2024 – March 2025)

- 21 meetings held (3 cancelled due to rescheduling needs)
- 66 cases heard, including:

Type of case heard	Number
Connected Carers approval	9
Foster Carer approval	7
Regulation 25 extension	15
Return to panel following allegations	0
Standards of Care	1
1 st Annual Review	5
3 rd Annual Review	9
Change of approval	2
Long Term Match to IFA	3
Long Term Match to in-house carer	7
Resignation	9
Deferral	1

Fostering Matches – Long-Term Matching Panel Overview (2024/2025)

In Haringey, while long-term fostering matches are not mandated under fostering regulations, it is considered best practice to present these matches to the fostering panel. This approach has been positively received, with panel members valuing the opportunity to meet children and hear directly from them. Feedback has consistently highlighted the importance of permanency in fostering, offering children a sense of belonging and stability.

Key Highlights:

- **Children Presented:** 10 children were referred to the panel for long-term matching in 2024/2025, a decrease from 16 in 2023/2024 (↓37%).
- **Panel Recommendations:** All 10 matches were recommended by the panel.
 - **Haringey Carers:** 7 children, including one sibling group of 2.
 - **Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA):** 3 children, including one sibling group of 2.
- **ADM Ratification:** All panel recommendations were ratified by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM).

Fostering and Kinship Households – 1st and 3rd Year Reviews (2024/2025)

Regulatory Context:

- **1st Year Reviews** are a statutory requirement and must be presented to the fostering panel to confirm continued approval.
- **3rd Year Reviews** are not mandatory but are considered best practice. Haringey has adopted this approach to ensure panel oversight of carers' ongoing suitability and support needs.

Panel Observations:

- **Training:** Attendance sometimes falls short of the required 30 hours/year. Action plans with timescales are now required to address gaps.
- **TSDS Completion:** Panel recommends improvement in timely completion of the Training Support and Development Standards.
- **Record-Keeping:** Carers use varied methods (e.g., diaries, phones, printed templates). Panel recommends a clear plan to support transition to an electronic recording system.

Reg. 25 Extension of Kinship Carers temporary approval Kinship Carers extension requests

Kinship Carer assessments must be completed and ratified within 16 weeks otherwise temporary approval ends, and the placement becomes unlawful.

In exceptional circumstances, an additional 8-weeks extension can be granted under Regulation 25, Care Planning & Placement Review (2010) to ensure the placement remains lawful while the assessment is completed. Reg. 25 extension requests are usually made when there is a delay in the return of necessary DBS/medical checks or other factors impacting on completion of the assessment. However, requests are also sometimes made

to ensure a placement remains lawful while waiting for an imminent Court date to obtain a Special Guardianship Order.

It is noted that social workers are presenting these requests to panel in a timely manner to prevent placements becoming unlawful. Efforts are also being made at an earlier stage to ensure kinship carers have the necessary paperwork required, to prevent delays in the processing of compliance checks such as DBS (Police) checks.

Return to Panel Following Standards of Care or Allegation

Panel Returns Overview

Category	2023/24	2024/25
Standards of Care	1	1
Allegations	4	0

In **2024/2025**, **1 foster carer** was returned to panel due to a **Standards of Care** concern.

- **No returns** were made due to allegations during this period, marking a positive shift from the previous year.

Resignations and Termination of Approval

Resignations and De-registrations

Category	2023/24	2024/25
Resignations	11	7
Transfer	0	2
De-registrations	1	0

7 resignations were acknowledged by panel in 2024/2025:

- **2** carers transferred to other local authorities.
- **2** retired due to personal or family health issues.
- **3** resigned after children in their care reached independence.
 - Notably, one foster carer supported a child for **10 years**, retiring only after the child reached adulthood.
 - Another transitioned from fostering to offer **Shared Lives support** following a **Staying Put arrangement**.

Fostering Panel's role in Quality Assurance

Quarterly quality assurance meetings with senior management and team managers continues to work well. Through this mechanism, discussions take place to address practice ranging from the quality of reports, training plans, timeliness of checks and any other panel issues identified. It also provides an opportunity for relevant local and national updates to be discussed.

Comments from our carers on the panel process:

- I am glad the members of Panel were amazing. They welcomed me in such a warm and positive way with smile on their faces makes me feel appreciated and welcomed and also made me instantly happy and helped me to calm down my worries.

- Ah! It was a rigorous experience. One doesn't want to have this too often. The process was thorough while feeling quite comfortable.

- I was very nervous to start with. My nerves settled as the panel meeting went on. I was put at ease by the chair. I was very surprised to get approval today. Thank you.

- We thought it was a good experience.... Everyone was polite and we understood what was asked of us, thank you so much.

- It was an experience for me after 20 years of being foster carer.

- The meeting was set up really well, it felt professional and well led. We appreciated the time to suit us with our children and the advance notice of when it would take place.

- Communications were clear and precise.

The feedback from social workers and team managers on their panel experience was also very positive. All 36 received invitations between 5 -14 days of panel. 27 felt they had prepared their Carers for panel and 30 felt their Carers had an 'Excellent' experience, while 6 described it as 'Very Good'. Of the 36, 27 felt difference and diversity was addressed 'Very well, and 9 'Well'. All social workers felt they were treated with respect, and 32 described their overall view attending panel as 'Excellent' and 4 'Very good'.

Areas for development identified by the Fostering Panel:

- DBS and medical checks for kinship care assessments should be completed in a timely manner to ensure assessments are presented within the 16-week timescale.
- All Learning & Development Plans should be fully completed with dates training was attended and learning outcomes in relation to the child/ren in placement.

- Children's social workers must provide requested written feedback for all Carers' annual reviews, including feedback on children that have left the placement within the reviewing period.
- A plan with timescales to support all Carers transition to the local authority's chosen method of record keeping needs to be progressed.

Complaints and Allegations

The Fostering Service continues to offer multiple avenues for carers to raise and resolve concerns. Regular bi-monthly meetings between the Fostering Service Manager, Team Managers, and Foster Carers provide a structured forum for open discussion. Additionally, the Service Manager remains accessible to meet with carers individually or in groups, ensuring that all voices are heard and issues are addressed promptly.

In the 2024/2025 period, the service responded to **three formal complaints**, all of which were managed in line with our procedures and commitment to continuous improvement.

Quality Assurance

Within our Fostering Service, we are committed to achieving excellence across all areas of our work. We have enhanced our review documentation to gather more meaningful feedback and will continue to refine these tools to support ongoing improvement.

We actively seek evidence of our impact, capturing feedback at every opportunity to inform and shape our practice. Every six weeks, we hold Service Meetings that bring the entire team together to reflect on achievements, share learning, and evaluate the effectiveness of our work. In addition, fortnightly managers' meetings provide a space to discuss performance, service developments, learning opportunities, and examples of good practice.

Team Managers produce monthly reports that highlight team performance, emerging themes from supervision, and insights gained through management oversight. These reports often lead to targeted action plans for teams or individual staff members, which are then reviewed in wider management meetings to identify trends, share good practice, and determine whether broader service-level actions are required.

We have implemented clear and simple methods for teams to demonstrate how they are embedding the Secure Base model into their practice.

Audits play a central role in our Quality Assurance Strategy. They help identify key areas for development and are used to drive improvements across the service. Findings from audits are shared with teams, accompanied by timelines for implementing improvements. This process ensures that management oversight remains effective and that practice is consistently raised across the department.

Our Plans for 2025/2026

The needs of children entering care continue to grow in complexity, and Haringey recognises the importance of recruiting and developing foster carers to meet these evolving demands. We remain committed to a multi-agency approach, ensuring that young people and their carers receive the right support and resources.

Expanding Placement Capacity

We are actively working to increase our ability to meet the placement needs of looked after children through our in-house foster carers. This will be achieved by:

- Expanding placement capacity within our current cohort.
- Up-skilling foster carers to support children with more complex needs.
- Targeted recruitment of specialist carers with relevant experience.

Recruitment and Retention Strategy

Our recruitment efforts will continue to utilise:

- Online and print media.
- Local media outlets.
- Social media platforms.

We aim to attract professionals with transferable skills by promoting fostering opportunities through organisational communication channels. A key initiative will be the launch of our **"Do Something Incredible"** campaign, focused on recruiting carers for children with disabilities.

Retention remains a priority. We offer:

- A comprehensive training programme via our fostering services training brochure.
- Access to over 100 online training topics.
- Bespoke training tailored to carers' and children's needs.

Training will support carers in areas such as:

- Complex emotional and behavioural needs.
- Parent and child placements.
- Remand placements.
- High-level care for children with disabilities.

We also support carers in evidencing their learning through creative approaches, including literature, podcasts, and television series.

Service Development Priorities

- **Foster Carer Profiles and Chronologies:** This remains a key area for

development. A clear strategy for implementation, tracking, and monitoring is in place, with the goal of all profiles and chronologies being up to date by **March 2026**.

- **Feedback and Audits:** A satisfaction survey rolled out in January 2023 received a 33% response rate. Key findings included:
 - 69% felt well supported by their Supervising Social Worker.
 - 69% expressed dissatisfaction with allowance rates.

In response, allowances for carers of children over 11 were increased to align with neighbouring boroughs.

Although a formal survey was not conducted in 2024/2025, bi-monthly meetings with carers provided valuable feedback and supported timely responses to concerns. A new satisfaction survey will be launched shortly, with findings to be included in the next annual report.

Audit activity will resume in 2025/2026, with a renewed focus on service improvement.

Placement Utilisation

Efforts are underway to improve the utilisation of fostering households. This includes presenting carers for de-registration where appropriate, ensuring that available placements are used effectively and that the fostering service remains responsive to current needs.

Forthcoming Year Priorities – Fostering Service

<i>Priority Area</i>	<i>Description</i>
Increase Placement Capacity	Expand fostering capacity by 30 additional placements.
Foster Carer Recruitment	- Approve a minimum of 13 task-centred foster carers. - Recruit at least 3 specialist foster carers to meet the complex needs of looked-after children. - Continue targeted marketing to attract carers with the skills required to support diverse and specialist placements for children.
Foster Carer Deregistration	Efficiently process the deregistration of carers who are no longer active.
Carer Development and Support	- Support existing carers to develop skills for caring for children with complex needs. - Ensure all foster carers have up-to-date profiles and completed learning and development plans, including training dates and outcomes linked to children in placement. - Promote the transition to digital daily logs for all Haringey foster carers.
Kinship Care Assessment Timeliness	- Complete all Regulation 24 kinship care assessments within 16 weeks. - Only seek Regulation 25 extensions where unavoidable.

	- Closely monitor and track assessment progress to reduce the risk of placements becoming unregulated - Ensure timely initiation and completion of DBS and medical checks for kinship and approved carers.
Case File Management	- Maintain consistent and up-to-date chronologies on all carer files, reviewed at least every three months. - Update carer case file summaries quarterly with relevant and current information.
Looked After Child Reviews	Ensure foster carers consistently produce Looked After Child letters for CIC reviews.

A Final Word from the Interim Service Manager, Marsha Smith

I am proud to say that Haringey Fostering Service has been a foundational part of my social work journey, beginning in 2001 when I spent eight years as an Assessment and Supervising Social Worker. Returning to the service in February 2025 and stepping into the Interim Service Manager role in June 2025 has been a full-circle moment. It has been heartening to see many foster carers still committed to caring for Haringey children, alongside newer carers who have joined us in providing loving and nurturing homes.

I have witnessed, and am proud to be part of, a Fostering Service where both carers and staff embody the Haringey Council Values — caring, collaboration, courage, creativity, and community focus. These values are evident throughout our service, from initial recruitment and marketing to post-order support.

We have cultivated a strong Fostering Family, reflected in our daily practice — from responding to enquiries and conducting timely visits, to supporting applicants through the approval process and beyond. Our collective efforts have led to many successes this year, and while we celebrate these achievements, we remain focused on continuous improvement.

Placement stability is a key strength of our service, supported by initiatives such as the Mockingbird Project. Our team works proactively to minimise disruption, with flexible staff who provide timely and tailored support.

Our recruitment team has embraced Secure Base training, using this learning to develop a child-focused assessment tool that evaluates applicants' ability to meet all domains of the Secure Base model. Moving forward, our assessment team will continue to embed this model from the earliest stages of the fostering journey.

Our objective for 2025/2026 is to evolve creatively, ensuring the needs of our looked after children remain central to our work while continuing to support our foster carers. We are committed to maintaining manageable caseloads so that our social workers can deliver the right support at the right time — and we will keep our aspirations high.

I am incredibly proud of our foster carers, our staff, and the tenacity of our Team Managers, who consistently go the extra mile to make a difference.

Report for: CPAC 4 November 2025

Item number: To be added by the Committee Section

Title: Children's Social care performance quarters 1&2 2025-26

Report authorised by : Ann Graham, Corporate Director of Children's Services

Lead Officer: Richard Hutton Performance, Data & Analytics Manager

Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** For Information and Noting

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 This report provides an analysis of the performance data and trends for an measures relating to Children Looked After (CLA), and care leavers, and those who ceased to be looked after in the period
- 1.2 This report notes the progress and the consistent, effective performance with regards to safeguarding children and young people in Haringey for 2024/25.
- 1.3 The report identifies key developments, summarises performance activity levels and details several future priorities for vulnerable children.
- 1.4 Appendix i contains performance highlights and key messages identifying areas of improvement and areas for focus. It provides an overall assessment so that Members can assess progress in key areas within the context of the Local Authority's role as Corporate Parent and duties under section 17 of the Children Act.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction
N/A

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Members note the performance data as set out in appendix i.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 This report is for information only

5. Alternative options considered

N/A

6. Background information

6.1 The welfare of Haringey's vulnerable children is one of the Council's highest priorities.

6.2 This quarterly report is intended to inform the Committee of the performance of Children Social Care Services in 2025/26.

6.3 Committee should be aware of the progress made against managing the safeguarding demands. The report, in addition to other measures, enables Members to assure itself that the necessary arrangements are in place for the Council to effectively discharge its children social care obligations. In this regard, there is a distinct leadership role for the Leader, Lead Member for Children and Young People's Services, the Chief Executive and Director of Children Services; also, there is a wider corporate parenting role for all members of the Council.

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-2024 High level Strategic outcomes'?

N/A

8. Carbon and Climate Change

N/A

9. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

N/A

10. Use of Appendices

Appendix i.

Progress against key Performance indicators for Children Looked After (CLA)

11. Background papers

N/A

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Appendix I

Children Looked after performance for quarters 1&2 2025-26

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 This report provides an overview of performance for Children Looked After (CLA) Services for 2025/26. The report provides comparative data by benchmarking with our statistical neighbours and looks at how our performance has grown and developed, where this is appropriate. Haringey's statistical neighbours are a group of local authorities judged by the DfE to have the most similar demographic profile and have been revised this year to account for latest comparable demographic data. these are:

- Barnet
- Brent
- Ealing
- Enfield
- Hounslow
- Lambeth
- Lewisham
- Redbridge
- Southwark
- Waltham Forest

1.2 Children's Social Care provides services and support for children and young people who are:

- children in our care who are looked after
- care experienced young adults
- Adopted children in the period

2. National Context - National Statistical Reporting

2.1 All local authorities report to the Department of Education to inform the Child in Need Annual Census and the 903 Children in Care Return. The results of which are published every October on the DfE website. The CIN census covers early intervention, contacts and referrals to social care and the reasons, Child and Family assessments and identified factors, the nature and volume of child protection activity, the numbers of children subject to child protection conferences. The 903 return covers children entering care and the reasons, the types of placements used, the legal status

of children, how many children have left care and for what reasons (including adoption) and details about care leavers and their accommodation, employment and training outcomes and how the local authority is keeping in touch with them. The 903 now also include details of allocated social worker and stability.

The 903 used as a basis for publishing the educational outcome for Children looked after which is published each spring

2.2 In addition, more detailed returns are submitted to the North Central London Regional Adoption board on children with an adoption plan, the timeliness of matching and placing with an adopter and the recruitment of adopters.

3. Local Background and Context

3.1 The department continues to support high levels of need and complexity in families for the following reasons:

- In 2023, 17.3% of children in Haringey lived in relative poverty, close to the London average but lower than similar areas and the national rates (19.8%)
- Haringey has the highest alcohol sales per adult in London, with a significantly higher rate of alcohol related hospital admissions.
- 2% of Haringey's working age population claim Employment Support Allowance for mental health and behavioural disorders, the fifth highest in London
- The borough has the eighth highest rate of domestic abuse with injury in London
- Haringey ranks 8th in London for households in temporary accommodation, an improvement from 5th in the previous year

3.2 Alongside these challenges, Haringey as a local area continues to be a strong and thriving place for children growing up in the area. It is a place that has a rich history, strong and vibrant communities, great transport links and excellent facilities with a range of cultural events. Key strengths include:

- Diverse communities where more than 180 languages are spoken.
- Over a quarter of the borough is green space – with 25 Green Flag Parks and 120 venues where cultural activities take place.

4. Our children and young people population

4.1 In Haringey, there are 53,550 children aged 0-17 years, representing 21% of the overall population (MYE 2023), largely in line with statistical neighbours and London where 21% and 22% of people are aged 0-17 respectively. Notably, the ward with the highest proportion of 0-17-year-olds is South Tottenham (29%), while the ward with the lowest is Stroud Green (15.4%). The number of under 18s is not expected to

change significantly in future years and will remain most concentrated in the east of the borough.

4.2 Almost half of the pupils in Haringey schools do not have English as a first language (47.4%). After English, Turkish, Spanish, Polish, Bulgarian, and Somalian are the most commonly spoken languages (May 2022 Census)

4.3 One of the most significant challenges is inequality in outcomes. Poverty is a crucial determinant of poor outcomes. Childhood deprivation is unequally distributed across the borough and children in the east of the borough are substantially more likely to be affected by income deprivation. In 2023, 10,863 children in Haringey were living in relative poverty and this equates to 17.3% of all 0-16 year olds. This is the 11th highest of all London boroughs.

5. Outcomes for children and young people

5.1 **Haringey's Children in Care have above average educational outcomes** with our KS4 Average Attainment 8 Score for 2024 of 20.6% against an England average of 18.3. Progress 8 also scored in the second top quartile.

5.2 **Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) have higher educational outcomes**, 22 of 27 measures featuring in the top quartile in England.

In 2024 for pupils with SEN Support for the following measures Haringey ranked in the top15 Local Authorities:

- Attainment 8 score per pupil at end of Key Stage 4
- Progress 8 score per pupil at end of Key Stage 4
- Progress 8 score per pupil at end of Key Stage 4 for pupils with EHC Plan
- English Baccalaureate - Average Point Score
- %19 year olds qualified to Level 2 and level 3

5.3 **Haringey has fewer secondary pupils being permanently excluded** and is better than the national average (0.01%) and its percentage of NEET children, those (Not in Education Employment or Training) improved (1.7%) from 1.9% in the previous year.

6. SEND Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

6.1 In 2024 a similar number of EHCPs were issued to the previous year, with 84% within the 20-week timescale with allowed exceptions discounted. This compares with 46.4% for England and 70% for our statistical neighbours.

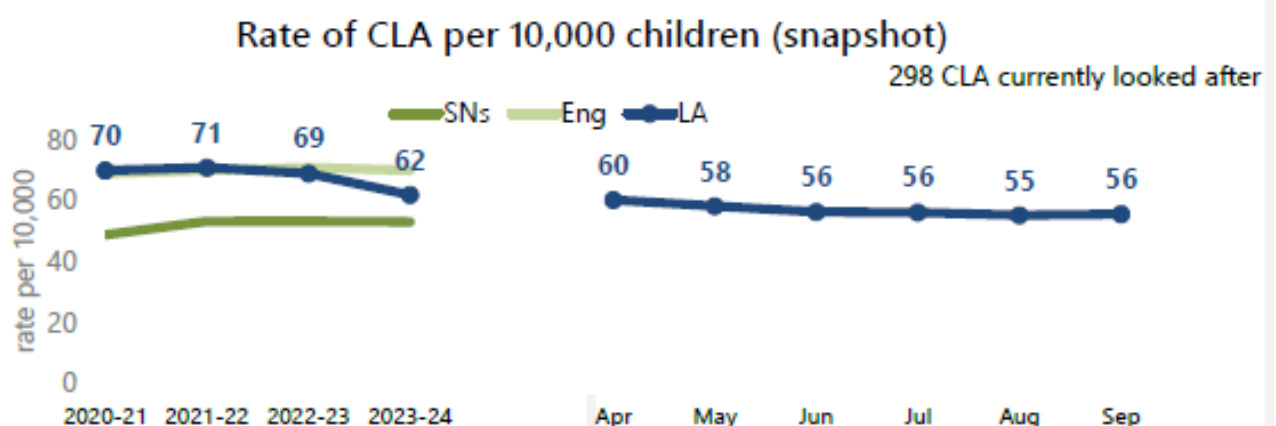
6.2 For the first 9 months of 2025 some 295 plans were issued, when the exceptional cases are excluded 85% were within 20 weeks

7. Children Looked After

7.1 A child who has been in the care of a local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a Child Looked After (CLA) also often referred to as children in care.

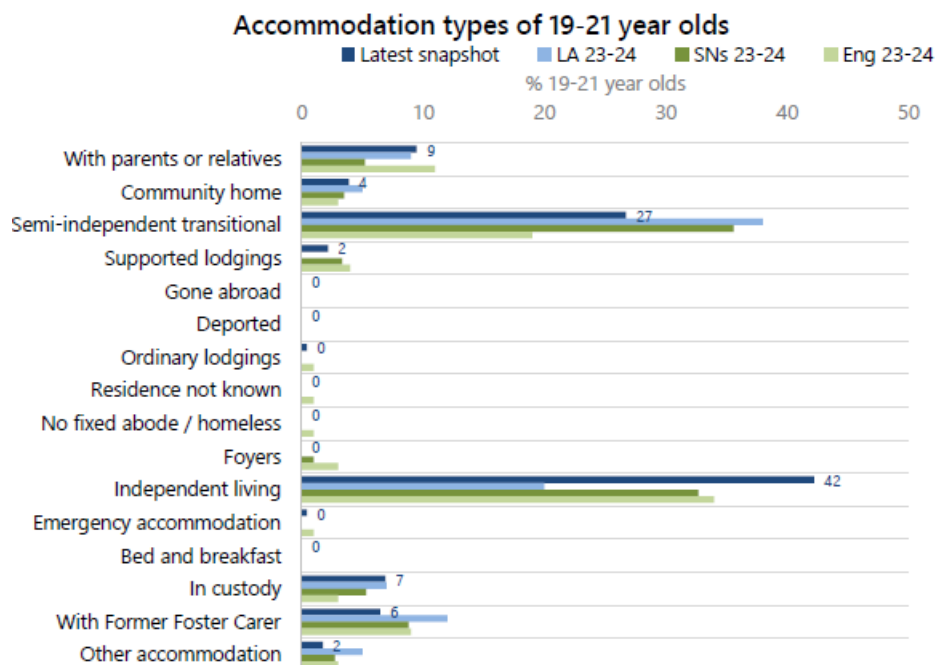
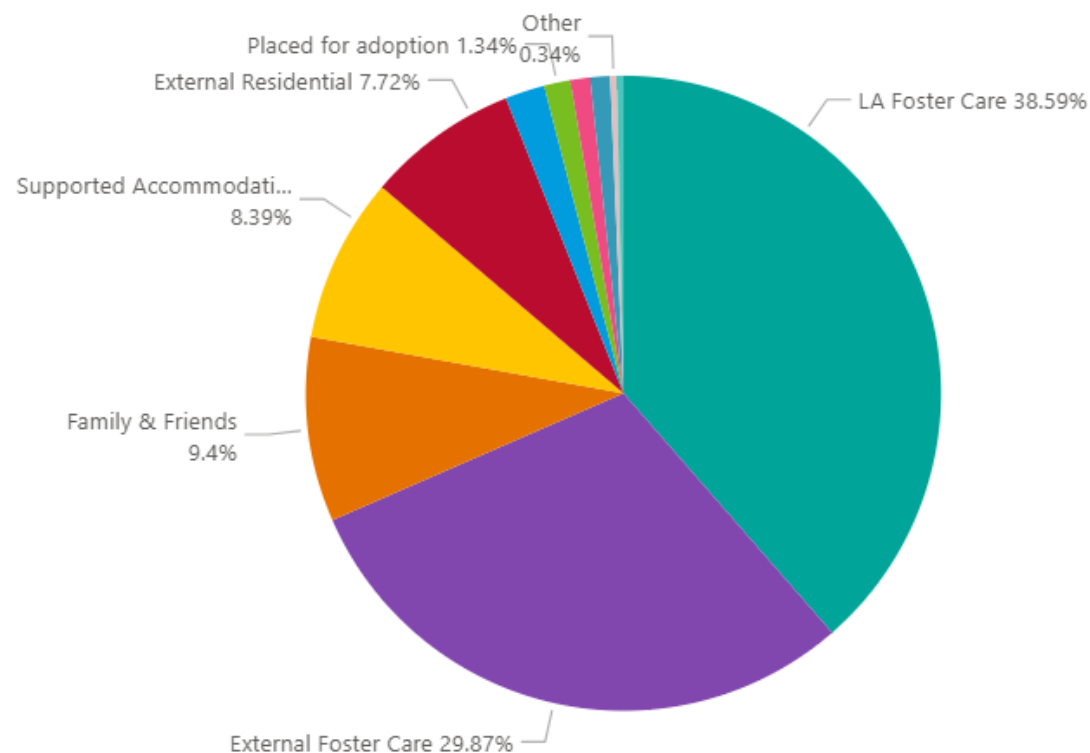
Children in care in general are either living with extended family members, foster carers, in a residential children's home or living in residential settings like schools or secure units. Children come into care for a variety of reasons, including because they are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children with no responsible adult to care for them or children's services may have intervened because it was believed that the child was at risk of significant harm. A child stops being looked after when they are adopted, are made the subject of a Special Guardianship Order, return home unless there is a Care Order in place, or turn 18. However local authorities are required to information, advice and or support most children who leave care at 18, until they are 25 years old.

7.2 At the end of March 2025, there were 325 children in our care. This has fallen to 298 by the end of September. This is one of the lowest ever rates in Haringey. The rate is shown in the chart below to best compare to other local authorities



7.3 Placement types, the proportion of our CLA in different placement types is shown below

CiC by Latest Placement Grouping

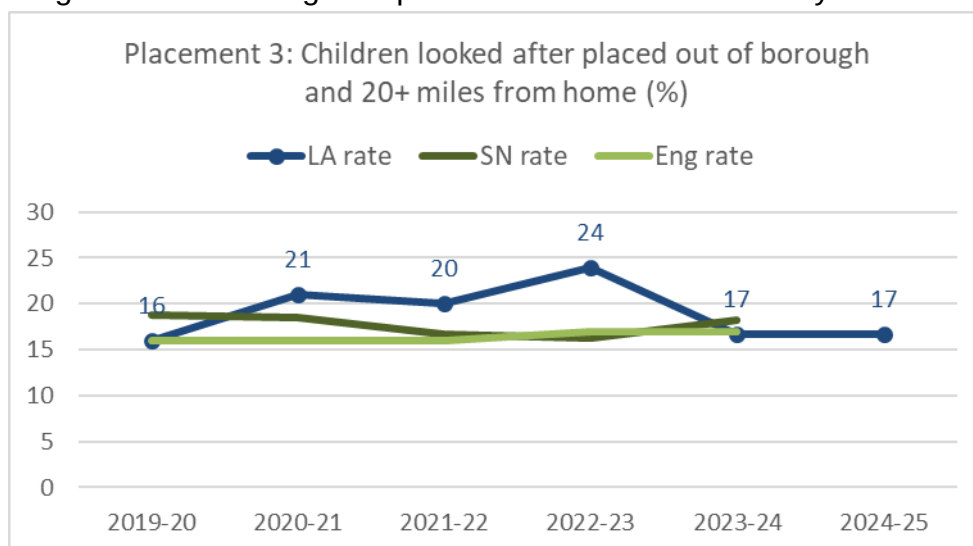


7.4 The table below shows the children in care in foster placements. Foster placements continue to be the largest proportion of placement types with the proportion slightly higher than that of all England. Of those children 41.2% are long term matched with their foster cares, this is in the DfE's expected range but reported to be well above the national average.

	Hgy Sep 2025	Haringey 2024-25 No.	Haringey 2024-25 %	Haringey 2023-24 %	SN 2023- 24 %	Eng 2023- 24 %
Foster placements	232	234	72%	70%	68%	67%

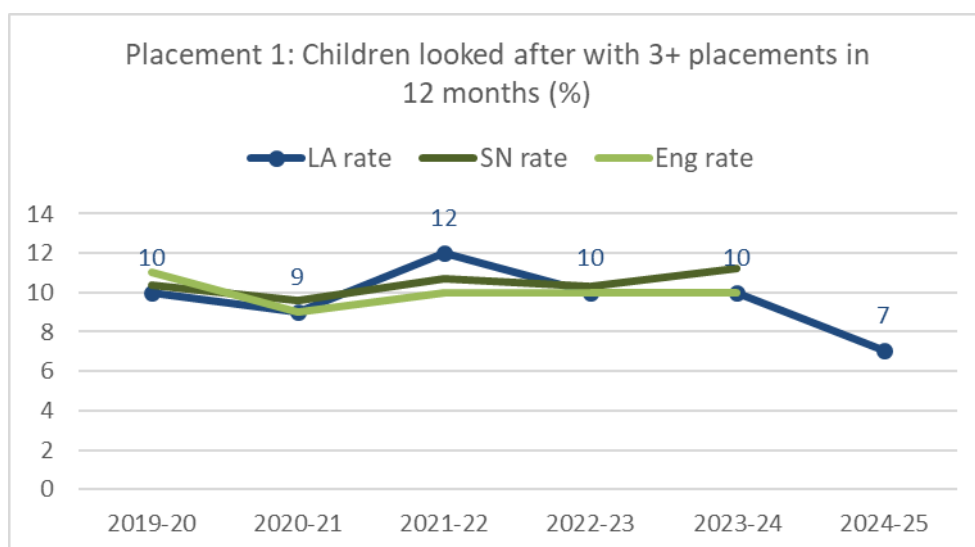
7.5 Whilst only 64 of our CLA are placed within the borough at the end of March 2025, 17 % of children were in placements more than 20 miles from home. This matches the previous year, and the last known data for statistical neighbours (17%).

Local provision continues to be a challenge, and we continue to use our own residential provision, Haselmere Children's Home, to mitigate national and local challenges. We also continue to build relationships with local providers and work with our regional and sub-regional partners to address sufficiency issues.



7.6 Placement stability is a key factor in children's wellbeing. This gives young people the chance to settle into a foster or residential placement over a period of time, supporting our children in developing a feeling of belonging, helping them feel secure in themselves. Stability will be achieved only by making sure that the child is in the right placement for them. There are two types of placement stability that we measure – short term stability which looks at the number of placements for children in the last 12 months, and long-term stability which considers those children who have been looked after for more than 2.5 years and have been in the same placement for more than the past 2 years. It is a combination of these indicators that gives us confidence that our children in care are in a stable environment.

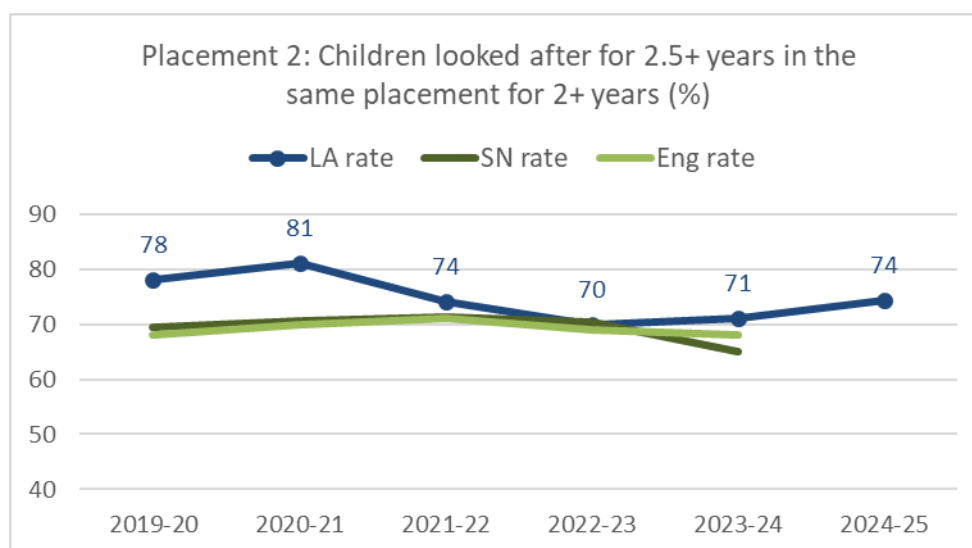
7.7 Our short-term stability performance shows that only 7% of children in our care had three or more placements in the past 12 months. This is lower than recent years, statistical neighbour data (10%) and the national average.



In the 12 months to September 2025, 267 of our children had only one or no placement moves

7.8 Our performance in relation to long term placement stability is improved from a strong 71% to 74% at the end of March 2025.

Of the 109 children who have been looked after for over 2½ years 44 have been in the same placement for the past 2 years



7.9 Permanence planning is continually being monitored and strengthened, and we ensure that Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) have sufficient information to enable expedient and timely permanence planning. Our trackers are helping us monitor children who have not been matched with a new permanent family arrangement and we constantly check and review children's permanency plans through to permanence.

7.10 The data for children who go missing from care shows us that 13% of children were reported missing in the period 2024-2025. This remains below our SN rate of 15%. This fell to 9% (35 children) in the rolling year to September

When children do go missing from placement there is a robust and effective response from children's social care and the Police. The missing co-ordinator tracks, and risk assesses children who go missing to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent repeat occurrences and return home interviews are routinely conducted by specialist workers. 69% of were offered a return home interview with an acceptance rate of 63%

8. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

8.1 There are two means by which UASC come to Haringey. Firstly, as spontaneous arrivals, most frequently arriving at local police stations. The second is through the National Transfer Scheme, which aims to equitably re-distribute UASC across the country, especially those from Kent and Croydon, in recent years although there has been a sharp decrease in over numbers the second of these two routes has become the most prevalent.

8.2 At the end of March 2020 there were 48 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in care, this fell to 19 by March 2025 and is 17 at the end of September.

9. Adoption

9.1 There were 7 adoptions during 2024/25 which is in line with our statistical neighbours, but was beneath the national average. There has been an increase with 9 adoptions in the first 2 quarters of 2025/26.

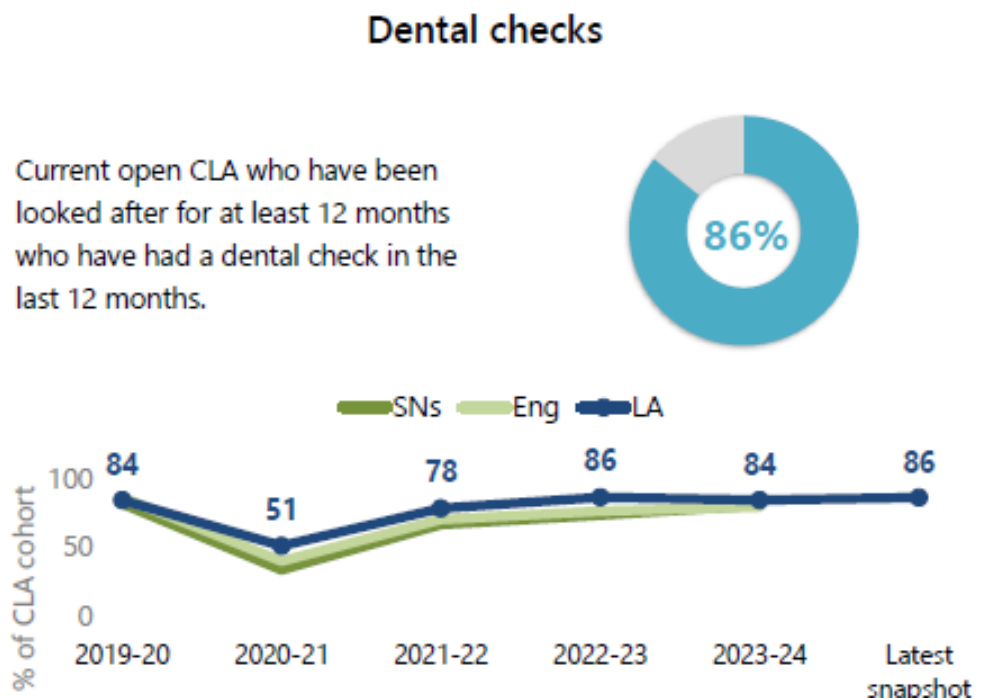
9.2 Haringey and the ALN (Adopt London North) have strengthened practitioner knowledge around early permanence as a placement option for children, with ALN running a number of in person and virtual training sessions for practitioners across the directorate.

9.3 A key priority continues to be the reduction of disparity in adoption for children of global majority heritage and improve the adoption system so that more adopters of Black heritage become applicants and choose to adopt through Adopt London.

10. Health and dental

10.1 95% of the 204 CLA who have in cre for over 12 months have an up to date health assessment recorded

10.2 86% of the current CLA have up to date dental checks, matching our high in 2022/23



11. Leaving care

11.1 For young people qualifying for service as Care Leavers also known as Care Experienced Young Adults, there is a requirement for Haringey to stay in touch with the young person, keep their Pathway Plans under review, continue the appointment of a Personal Adviser and provide financial assistance where the young person is employed or seeking employment to enable the young person to pursue education or training. These duties continue until the former relevant child reaches 21 or, where the child's pathway plan sets out a programme of education or training which extends beyond their 21st birthday, they continue for so long as the child pursues that programme.

11.2 The service has been continuing to work with the duty on local authorities to support all care leavers up to age 25 who can return to the local authority at any point after the age of 21 and request support.

11.3 At the end of March 2025 there were 662 care experienced young adults who were qualified for care lever services this has fallen slightly to 645 by the end of September

Eligible	~ Has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since age 14 (can be multiple periods)~ Currently looked after Age 16 or 17
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Relevant	~ Age 16 or 17 ~ Has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since age 14 (can be multiple periods)~ Looked after on or after their 16th birthday ~ No longer looked after
Former Relevant	~ Aged between 18 and 25 ~ Previously an eligible or relevant child
Qualifying	~ Aged between 16 and 21 (or 25 if in education) ~ Looked after on or after their 16th birthday ~ Not looked after for at least 13 weeks since age 14 or ~ privately fostered after the age of 16 but before the age of 18 or were looked after prior to becoming subject to a SGO"

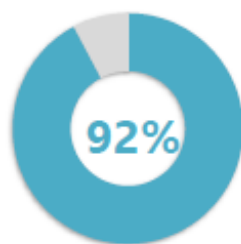
Cohort of Care Leavers and eligibility for services

Age	Eligible	Relevant	Former Relevant	Qualifying	Total
16	32	1	0	1	34
17	44	7	0	3	55
18	0	0	83	1	83
19	0	0	82	0	82
20	0	0	69		69
21	0	0	82	2	82
22	0	0	88	1	90
23	0	0	77	0	77
24	0	0	73	0	73
Total	76	8	552	7	645

11.4 Looking at care leavers in suitable accommodation and those in employment, education or training Haringey has a higher percentage than both our statistical neighbours and the England rate

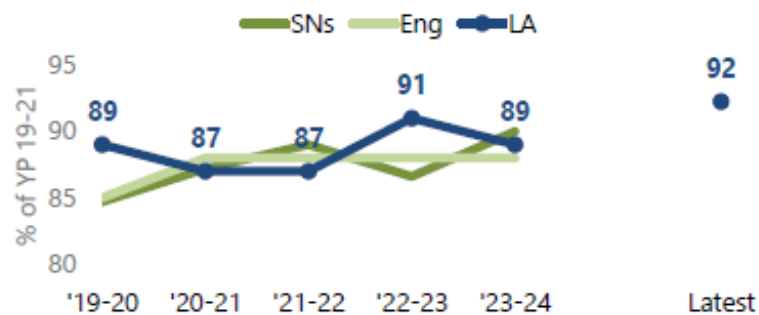
11.5 Accommodation types. For care leavers aged 19-21 Independent living has seen an increase since the turn of the year

Accommodation suitability of 19-21 year olds (former relevant)

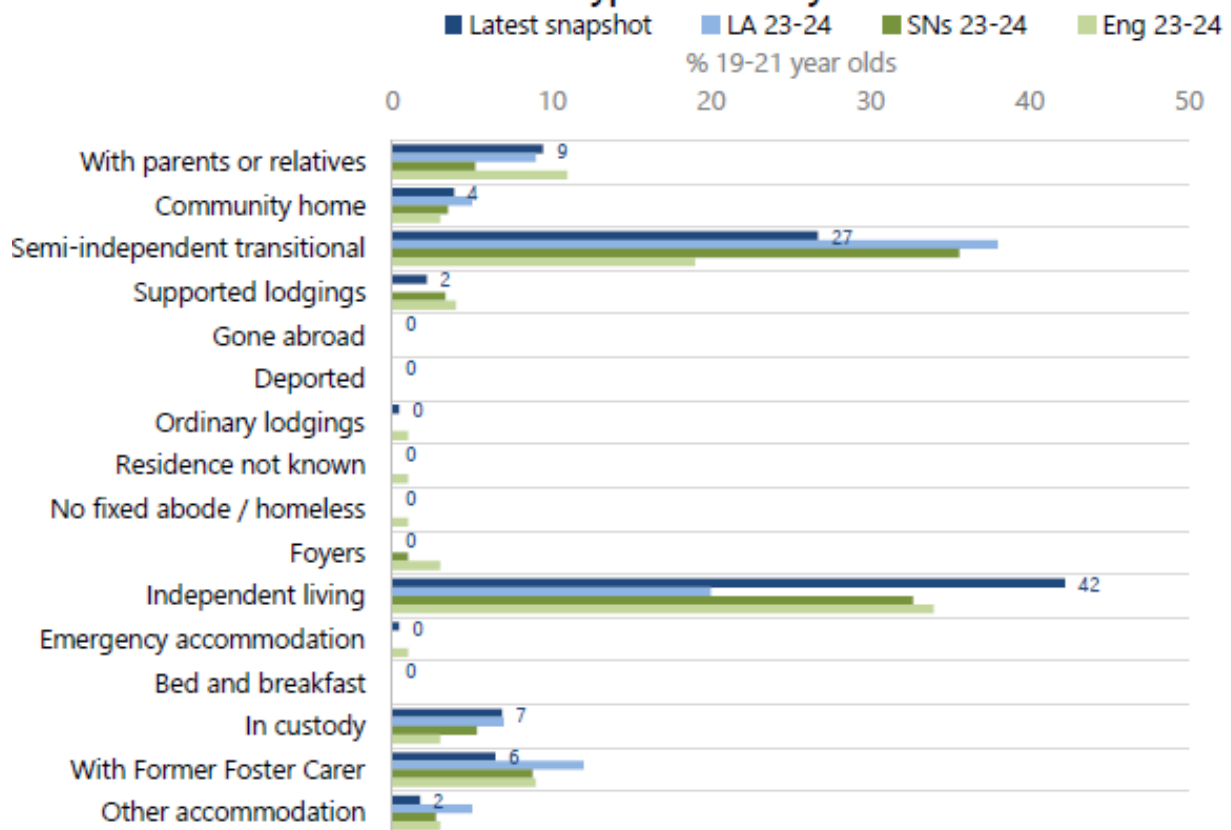


■ Suitable accom
■ Not suitable
□ No information

ChAT	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Total
Numbers in cohort	81	69	82	232
In suitable accommodation	96%	87%	93%	92%
In suit accomm (In touch only)	96%	87%	94%	93%



Accommodation types of 19-21 year olds



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