



Haringey Council

NOTICE OF MEETING

Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee

TUESDAY, 31ST JANUARY, 2012 at 18:30 HRS - CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, N22 8LE.

MEMBERS: Councillors Allison, Brabazon, Reece, Reith (Chair), Solomon, Stennett and Watson

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

2. URGENT BUSINESS

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

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A member with a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is 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.

4. MINUTES (PAGES 1 - 8)

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 06 December 2011.

5. MATTERS ARISING

6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT : CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (PAGES 9 - 12)

To consider key performance data concerning looked after children as at the end of December 2011.

7. ADOPTION SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN. (PAGES 13 - 34)

To consider the OFSTED inspection report on the Adoption service and the service improvement plan.

8. FOSTERING INSPECTION IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PAGES 35 - 56)

Haringey Fostering Service was inspected on August 2011. This action plan addresses the recommendations following the inspection and forms the basis for improvements if the service is to move from its current 'satisfactory' rating to one of at least 'good'.

9. OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF DIRECTLY PROVIDED CHILDREN'S HOMES

The report will provide information on the various options for the future of the residential provision for Looked after Children directly by the Council. **Report to follow**

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of items 11-13 as they contain exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985): paras 1 & 2 and 3: namely information relating to any individual, and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual Also Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

11. OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF DIRECTLY PROVIDED CHILDREN'S HOMES

To consider exempt information concerning the options for the future of residential provision provided for Looked After Children directly by the Council. **Report to follow**

12. FOSTERING INSPECTION IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PAGES 57 - 68)

To consider exempt information relating to Fostering recruitment activities.

13. REGULATION 33 VISITOR REPORTS (PAGES 69 - 72)

The Committee will receive details of Regulation 33 inspections made to Haringey's residential homes.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Date of next meeting is the 19th March 2012 6.30pm

The next joint meeting with the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee is due to take place on the 05 March 2012 at 7.00pm.

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**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2011**

Councillors Reith, Reece, Brabazon, Watson, Allison, Stennett, Solomon

Apologies

Also Present: Debbie Haith, Marion Wheeler, Chris Chalmers, Gloria Stott(Barnardo's) Babette Bleach(Barnardos) Rachel Oakley, Shanti Jacob, Attracta Craig, Sandjea Green.

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTON BY
CPAC 124	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY) Apologies for absence were received from Wendy Tomlinson, Head of Commissioning and Placements.	
CPAC 125	URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of urgent business put forward.	
CPAC 126	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest put forward.	
CPAC 127	MINUTES The minutes of the Corporate Parenting meeting held on the 11 th October 2011 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes of the joint meeting between Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee held on the 11 th October were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
CPAC 128	MATTERS ARISING Members of the Committee had been sent a briefing on the outcomes of fostering week publicity activities undertaken in June. There were separate tables both showing different figures for enquiries into fostering and the number of people attending an information session on fostering for the same month. The Head of Commissioning and Placements would provide an explanation of the difference between	

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	these figures to the Committee by email following her return from leave.	WT
<p>CPAC 129</p>	<p>PRESENTATION FROM BARNARDOS</p> <p>The Committee received a presentation from Gloria Stott and Babette Bleach of Barnardo’s about their work with the Council on children’s rights, sexual exploitation and trafficking. Barnardos had been working, contractually with the Council since 1995 until 2011 on these areas of work. At the start of this financial year they had entered into a spot purchasing arrangement with the Council to provide an advocacy service to identified children , undertake independent visits to children’s homes and work with young people who had been identified by the Council as being vulnerable to trafficking, and sexual exploitation. Recently external funding had also secured the services of a practitioner from the Barnardo’s to work in the Safeguarding service with missing children, 2 days a week.</p> <p>Although the Children’s service had block commissioned 6 places for supporting children at risk of sexual exploitation this did not limit them procuring further places if the need arose. On an influential level, Barnardos’ was educating the Safeguarding service about the circumstances that can put a child /young person at risk of sexual exploitation. Barnardo’s also shared intelligence about potential cases of sexual exploitation and worked with the services when cases were identified by them. Barnardos also offered a child /young person an alternative support provision separate to the local agencies that they were required to deal with.</p> <p>The Committee further considered information about the Children’s Rights services provided by Barnardo’s. The Advocacy service had started as a short term project and had been expanded in the last three years. This had culminated in a contract between the Council and Barnardo’s to provide advocacy support services to 87 children/young people. This support from Barnardos was about enabling children / young people to provide their views on their care and feel independent of the process.</p> <p>Barnardos also provided independent visits to the Council’s children’s residential homes and were contracted to support 10 young people living at these homes. Members were reassured by this as there was a separate non statutory body that could make visits to the homes and speak with the young people at the home.</p> <p>A question was asked about how issues raised by young people through advocacy services were taken forward with the Council. In particular concerns about independent living arrangements. The Committee noted that there were regular monitoring meetings held between the Children’s service and Barnardo’s where each party provided an update on all the cases that they are working on. As part of</p>	

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this working relationship with the council, Barnardo's felt able to raise the individual issues of children/young people as well as are influential in the types of services provided to them. In the unlikely event that they found their views not taken on board by the Children's Safeguarding service, Barnardo's representatives were aware that they could advance their concerns to a higher management level.

Members were interested in how the service decided on the children that would access the services provided by Barnardo's. This information was sought to be assured, as corporate parents, that there was not an over demand being dealt with, meaning some children would miss out on the service. An example was provided on how a child or young person was identified as needing advocacy. Usually this was through a case review which would have the input of the IRO (Independent Review officers) and there would be a criteria followed to help understand whether an independent person was needed to advocate for the young person/child.

A question was asked about the overlap in sexual exploitation and trafficking. Gloria Stott of Barnardos explained that often where children and young people were trafficked for involvement in criminal activity and domestic servitude, unfortunately due to their age and vulnerability they were susceptible to sexual exploitation. The trafficking workers worked with a number of agencies to locate the trafficked children remove them from this situation.

In terms of sharing local intelligence and liaising with government agencies, this was a critical in identifying children that were being trafficked as usually a trafficked child would be moved around rapidly. Where a local concern was reported to housing such as an illegal appropriation of a house involving children from a particular transient community then this information would be considered by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This team included housing officers who were able to share concerns with the other agencies on the hub and quickly identify if there were any safeguarding issues which needed further investigation and action from local agencies such as the Police and Health.

The Committee noted the nature of Barnardo's work in investigating sexual exploitation in Haringey. Barnardo's further provided yearly training sessions to the Safeguarding team to ensure that Social Workers and officers were able to detect the signs of sexual exploitation.

In response to the question about the number of places available on the advocacy programme it was noted that there was not an impediment to renegotiating the contract with Barnardos to provide advocacy services if there was a demand for places.

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	<p>Representatives from Barnardo's advised that they were due to provide a presentation of their targeted work with the Council on missing children to a Scrutiny panel. This was a recent project and Barnardo's felt that it would be too early to report on the outcomes of this work in January and asked that Scrutiny colleagues be asked to defer this presentation to an April meeting.</p> <p>The Committee thanked Barnardos for their informative presentation and it was agreed that the clerk re distribute the background information provided on Children's right service, trafficking and sexual exploitation service.</p> <p>Members of the Committee were welcome to put forward any further information requests or questions to Barnardo's after the meeting.</p>	<p>Chair & Cllr Reith/DH</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>All to note</p>
<p>CPAC 130</p>	<p>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT : CHILDREN AND FAMILIES</p> <p>Members of the Committee were asked to comment on and consider a new format for the regular performance report which contained a set of key indicators. In future, more detailed analysis or data queries were proposed to be considered and reported through separate exception reports.</p> <p>Comment was made on the cost of service per looked after child. The figure of £854 was the weekly cost and included overheads. Members asked that a benchmark figure also be included to provide Members with a comparison. The Committee were advised of the difficulty in providing benchmark figures as local authorities all had dissimilar ways of calculating the cost of LAC. However, there was ongoing work with the NLSA (North London Strategic Alliance) to compile one category of cost, for looked after children, which would be followed by all of the 6 North London boroughs in the NLSA and would therefore provide ready benchmarking figures.</p> <p>Item 3 – Foster Care Recruitment - The Committee recommended that the background to the foster carer that was recruited be added i.e. if they were family or friend.</p> <p>Item 6 - Percentage of referrals to children's social care going onto initial assessment - Agreed that the correct figure for August 2010/11 be distributed to the Committee.</p> <p>Members discussed the increase in the number of referrals resulting in an initial assessment and sought understanding about the reasons for the increase in this number over a two year period. The Committee were advised that these numbers of referrals were post examination by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and therefore these</p>	<p>All to note</p> <p>DH</p> <p>DH</p>

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	<p>referrals would not all culminate in child protection plans. This information was included as part of helping the service understand the pathways into care. The Committee concluded that the information provided needed to be clearer on the number of children that had moved from an initial assessment to a Child Protection Plan and the timeline of this.</p> <p>It was agreed that overall the comments section of the table provide more detail on the context around the indicators as a public document.</p> <p>There was consensus that performance figures relating to Looked after Children were in the remit and responsibility of this Committee. Performance indicators containing information about referrals which do not lead to child protection plan or a child becoming looked after was the responsibility of the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee and should be separated out of the report. Having accepted this, there was still felt to be a need for the Committee to have a better understanding of the information being considered by the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee and this would need to be explored.</p> <p>Item 23 -Children in Care for a month or more with an up to date health assessment . Statistical averages for this indicator would be available in the following months report. Agreed that the target of 75% be added to the latter column.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The format of the report is agreed. ii. That the comments, provided above by Committee Members, be factored in the forthcoming report. 	<p>DH</p> <p>DH</p> <p>DH</p> <p>DH</p> <p>DH</p>
<p>CPAC 131</p>	<p>PERMANENCY STRATEGY</p> <p>The Committee considered a tabled paper outlining the developing Permanency strategy. The Chair asked that in future briefings were not tabled at the meeting but distributed to members prior to the meeting with the despatch of papers.</p> <p>The paper contained some early headlines of the information to be included in the strategy. The strategy would address the key issues which impact on permanency, set out the options for permanency such as special guardianship orders, adoption and residential care, and the circumstances where these options will be considered. The strategy would also contain details about planning for permanency and the set of</p>	

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	<p>data and create a benchmark for future audits. At the time of the audit there had been vacant IRO posts which were now in the process of being filled therefore in future there would be more capacity to compile a more sophisticated audit which would highlight any underlying issues that needed attention and resolution in the children's service.</p> <p>The IRO officer spoke of the positive findings from the audit which were the rate that decisions from the LAC review were implemented and ensuring that a children were included and prepared for their LAC review. The areas to be further investigated by the IRO officers were the number of social work reports not available and total number of care plans available for inspections These findings were being discussed with children's service and the IRO's recognised that there was a need to be more rigorous in identifying and reporting where a care plan or social work report had not been found. The increase in IRO officers would assist with this.</p> <p>Regarding the number of total care plans available; Members were assured that the figure reported did not mean that no care plan was in place. There were either legal care plans or draft care plans in place which had not formally been drafted. The Committee were further advised that there would be recommendations coming forward from the IRO officers about the implementation of care plans for Social workers to follow. The Committee suggested alternative ways of looking at the data concerning LAC reviews such as examining the timescale of when the care plans are being completed within. The Committee learned that the IRO's had completed a further audit on the care of LAC examining cases in September ,October, November which would be reported back to the Committee in the new year.</p> <p>The Committee were informed that the Quality Assurance and Practice Development service had been in place since June and its role was to provide independent scrutiny on the systems and process in place for the care of children. The service was working on a quality assurance framework and a report on this development work focused on Looked after Children could be considered by the Committee at their January meeting.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>CPAC 133</p>	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>The press and public were excluded from the meeting for consideration of Item 11 as it contained exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985): paras 1 & 2: namely information relating to any individual, and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.</p>	
<p>CPAC</p>	<p>REGULATION 33 VISITS</p>	

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134	<p>Members considered the findings of recent regulation 33 visits to the Council's Children's Homes and noted the recommendations arising from these visits and the actions being taken forward.</p> <p>Previously Members of the Committee had raised concerns about the understanding key workers had at the children's homes of the use and importance of the SAM codes. This code was allocated to each young person in the home to help them access online learning systems. Key workers were expected to know the importance of these codes and be able to assist the young person in using them. It was agreed that the Haringey Virtual School Head, when making her regular visits to the children's residential homes, discuss the current use of the SAM codes and further gauge the key workers understanding of them.</p> <p>Members referred to a recommendation relating to the use of the Framework 1 system by staff at the children's homes and recalled a previous explanation that agency staff were not permitted to add information to the system. Members commented that where agency staff have been working at the home for long period of time or are regularly called upon to assist in the home, they should have access to the system to add case notes. Agreed that the Head of Safeguarding, Quality Assurance & Practice Development seek a resolution to this recommendation and report back the outcome in the matters arising report to be considered by the Committee at their January meeting.</p> <p>A visit to a home, in October, reported on a shortness of a visit due to disruptive behaviour. The Committee asked that further details be provided on the nature of the disruption to provide understanding on reasons for the visit being brief.</p>	<p>AC</p> <p>RO</p> <p>WT</p>
<p>CPAC 135</p>	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Date of the next meeting 31 January 2012</p>	

Cllr Lorna Reith

Chair

Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee – 31 January 2012

Headline performance information relating to Looked After Children. More detailed analysis can be provided through exception reporting.

Audience - Elected Members, Snr Managers, readers seeking high level summary information

Organisational effectiveness and finance information.

Description	2010/11	Eng. - Average 2010/11	SN - Average 2010/11	Oct 2011	Nov 2011	Dec 2011	2011/12		Comments
	Value			Value	Value	Value	YTD	Target Status	
HY34 % Social Work posts permanently filled – annual indicator	77.0%	-	-				-	82.0%	-
OP 200 Cost of service per looked after child	£911	-	-	£860	£873	£875	£875	£838	

Volume, activity, timeliness and outcome -Children Looked After

Description	2010/11	Eng. - Average 2010/11	SN - Average 2010/11	Oct 2011	Nov 2011	Dec 2011	2011/12		Comments
	Value			Value	Value	Value	YTD	Target Status	
OP389 Children in care including unaccompanied asylum seeking children	613	431	430	623	616	608	608	-	The number of children in care excluding 32 unaccompanied minors for the month of December 2011 is 576.
OP389a The rate of Children in care per 10,000 pop	125.86	59	80	126.9	125.5	123.8	123.8	-	
Op415 Children becoming looked after	311	180	189	16	20	13	207	-	
OP414 Percentage of Children becoming looked after	-	-	-	46.7%	35%	30.8%	24.2%	-	

Description	2010/11	Eng. - Average 2010/11	SN - Average 2010/11	Oct 2011	Nov 2011	Dec 2011	2011/12		Comments
	Value			Value	Value	Value	YTD	Target Status	
previously subject to CP plan									
Op416 Children ceasing to be looked after	304	177	229	11	25	20	198	-	-
OP457 Number of LAC who ceased to be looked after who had been looked after for less than a month	-	-	-	4	10	0	67	-	-
OP458 Total No. days of care provided. (Excluding placed at home)	217,488	-	-	18,155	17,541	18,101	162,046	-	-
HY32 Percentage of children placed in Haringey Provision	33.0%	-	-	34.5%	36.0%	34.4%	34.4%	38.0%	
Op382 Children in Care visits	86.1%	-	-	95.8%	93.8%	92.6%	92.6%	95%	
Op417 Care Proceedings Initiated- (No. of children)	243	-	-	4	6	8	121	-	-
Op 419 Number of children missing/absconded from care at any point in the month	-	-	-	22	33	17	-	-	-
HY62 Stability of placements of looked after children: number of moves	15.3%	10.9%	11.6%	13.3%	12%	12.2%	12.2%	13%	
Op63 Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement	72%	68%	69.8%	72.2%	70.6%	67%	67%	72%	
OP386 (NI 66) Children in care cases which were reviewed within required timescales	87.8%	90.5%	91.0%	68.8%	68.7%	68.1%	68.1%	92.0%	
Op391 (NI161) Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should	62.5%	72.4%	68%	100%	100%	0%	72.7%	78%	

Description	2010/11	Eng. - Average 2010/11	SN - Average 2010/11	Oct 2011	Nov 2011	Dec 2011	2011/12		Comments
	Value			Value	Value	Value	YTD	Target	
be placed for adoption									continuing to work very hard on family finding activities and every effort is made to ensure suitable families are identified to minimize delays for children.
Op 418	27	-	-	1	5	1	20	-	-
Op 418a	16	20	16	1	3	1	11	-	-
Op 418b	11	-	-	0	2	0	9	-	-
Op148	72.9%	61%	63.4%	66.7%	45.5%	60%	61.4%	76%	Numbers for this indicator in month are small and should be interpreted with care. 44 young people have turned 19 so far and 22 young people are due to turn 19 in the rest of the year.
Op147	91.5%	90%	92.1%	66.7%	90.9%	80%	90.9%	93%	

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Report for:	Corporate Parenting Advisory committee	Item Number:	
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Title:	Adoption Service Improvement Plan.
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Report Authorised by:	Wendy Tomlinson / Debbie Haith
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Lead Officer:	Wendy Tomlinson
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The Haringey Adoption service was inspected on the 8th July, 2011. The overall quality rating is satisfactory, with some good features.

This plan encompasses the actions identified by the inspectors and actions identified by the Adoption Management Team as being necessary to improve permanency outcomes for looked after children. These actions will enable the Service to move from a satisfactory to a good OFSTED Inspection rating. Requirements noted in **bold** are statutory requirements described in the Ofsted report.

This improvement plan will support the Permanency Strategy and the Bi-annual report on the Adoption Service which are due to be presented at a future CPAC.

The positive outcomes identified in the inspection included:

1. Children benefit from an experienced and skilled adoption team which works well with other teams in the authority and agencies in their best interests.
2. The effective support provided to families is a strength of the service.
3. The information provided to adopters in the early stages of the process helps them make informed decisions that increase the likelihood for secure and stable placements.
4. Overall the adoption management, team and staff work co-operatively with their colleagues in the child care teams to achieve good outcomes for children and young people.

5. The service is focused on the welfare of children and ensures that they are safe and protected from significant harm. Allegations and suspicions of harm are handled in a way that provides effective protection and support for children, the person making the allegation, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.
6. The agency is committed to engaging birth families in the adoption process and encourages birth parents to contribute to the planning for their children's futures. It takes seriously the wishes and feelings of birth parents and works with them to achieve manageable outcomes. Birth parents are encouraged, and given the opportunity, to access independent counselling services at any stage of the adoption process, or afterwards, if required.
7. Contact is well recorded.
8. There is good scrutiny of assessments presented to the Adoption Panel and the Panel's role in monitoring the agency's progress is sound.
9. Children and service users receive a service from staff, panel members and decision makers who have the competence to meet their needs.
10. The adoption service approves prospective adopters who can meet most of the needs of children who are able to be placed for adoption. The recruitment strategy is based on knowledge of trends in children becoming looked after and activities are monitored and shortfalls identified.

		standards. 1.1 INDUCTION PROGRAMME WILL BE COMPLETED AND IMPLEMENTED BY 31 st JANUARY.		
3. NMS 25.6 The executive of the local authority receives twice yearly written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency.	An annual report was presented to CPAC, in future a report will be presented 6 monthly.	1.Twice yearly reports to commence from 31 st MARCH, 2012 and presented to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee. 1.1 REPORTS TO BE PRESENTED TO THE CPAC IN MARCH AND OCTOBER, 2012.	Commencing March, 2012	Lesley Kettles
5. NMS. 24.4 and 24.5 Staff are provided with regular supervision, a written record is kept by the agency which details the time, date and length of time of the session.	Current practice is in line with these standards. Inspectors praised the supervision system. Inspectors confirmed that concerns raised about the frequency of supervision referred to the Children in Care Service.	Action referred to the Children in Care Service.	January 2012	Wendy Tomlinson
6. NMS. 17.10 Written minutes of panel meetings are accurate and clearly cover the key issues and views expressed by panel members and record the reasons for its recommendations.	Current practice is in line with this standard. Following the implementation of new regulations and NMS the presentation and content of minutes has been reviewed.	No further actions needed.		

		<p>ordinary tracking meetings with Adoption and Permanency Service and CiC Service.</p> <p>DRAFT HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND IS READY FOR CONSULTATION></p> <p>OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING DRAFTED.</p> <p>TRAINING WORKSHOPS ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING PLANNED.</p>		
Standard 10. Recruiting and Assessing Adopters.	The recruitment and assessment of a pool of adopters who can meet the multiplicity of looked after children's needs is essential to ensure that they have optimum opportunity to enjoy permanent placements. There is a Recruitment Strategy in place for 2010 – 2011 but this needs revising and updating to include both methodology and specific targets. There are procedures and guidance notes in place for the assessment process. Monitoring procedures are being put in place as part of the supervisory and management information processes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updated Recruitment Strategy for 2012 – 2013. 2. Monitoring processes to be implemented to ensure compliance with statutory timescales. 3. Increase pool of suitable adopters. 4. Targets for completed assessments to be included in Service Plan and Performance Plans. 	<p>March, 2012.</p> <p>January, 2012.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Lesley Kettles</p> <p>Adoption and Permanency Management Team.</p> <p>Adoption and Permanency Team.</p> <p>As above.</p>
Standard 13 Matching and Placing The Child With Adopters Who Can Meet Most of Their Assessed	Children are matched with adopters through a variety of methods, including with in house adopters, through the North	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of specific employee and service targets. 	<p>March, 2012.</p>	<p>Lesley Kettles and</p>

Needs.	London Consortium, referrals to nation wide local authorities, The Adoption Register, BAAF, Adoption UK and to Voluntary Adoption Agencies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Monitoring of progress to targets and reporting mechanisms. 3. Introduction of matching linking considerations at each team meeting to identify potential matches at the earliest possible opportunity and to minimise reliance on use of external agencies. Where no in house match is identified immediate referral to Adoption Register, BAAF, Adoption UK and national LA and voluntary adoption agencies. 4. Professional booklets of children's profiles to facilitate above process. 	<p>March, 2012.</p> <p>Already commenced.</p>	<p>Management Team.</p> <p>Lesley Kettles and Management Team.</p>
Service Plan and Employee Performance/ Work Plans.	There is a Service Plan in place and work plans.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Service Plan for 2012 – 2013 to be formulated to contain overall service objectives and targets. 2. Individual performance plans to be introduced to include specific employee targets cascading from overall service targets. 3. Monitoring and reporting processes to be introduced to ensure compliance. 	<p>March, 2012</p> <p>March, 2012.</p> <p>March, 2012.</p>	<p>As above.</p> <p>As above.</p> <p>As above.</p>

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16/12/2011

Ms Wendy Jane Tomlinson
London Borough Of Haringey
Head Of Service Commissioning &
Placements
40 Cumberland Road
London
N22 7SG

Our Reference SC055355

Dear Ms Tomlinson

Updated report

As a result of the concerns you raised about your recent inspection report, we have now updated your report.

Please find attached the updated version of your inspection report which Ofsted will publish on the internet.

If you have any queries about this letter, please call 0300 123 1231 quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Janice Palmer", written over a horizontal line.

Janice Palmer
Inspection Support Team

London Borough of Haringey Adoption Service

Inspection report for local authority adoption agency

Unique reference number	SC055355
Inspection date	08/07/2011
Inspector	Paul Gillespie / Marian Denny
Type of inspection	Social Care Inspection

Setting address	London Borough of Haringey Social Services, 40 Cumberland Road, LONDON, N22 7SG
Telephone number	020 8489 3635
Email	
Registered person	London Borough of Haringey
Registered manager	Lesley Kettles
Responsible individual	Wendy Jane Tomlinson
Date of last inspection	08/07/2011

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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a statutory local authority adoption service. It provides, or makes arrangements for, all matters relating to the adoption of children and support services for anyone affected by adoption. This includes the recruitment, assessment and approval of adopters, and the matching and placement of children with suitable families. Support services are provided or commissioned to support placements before and after adoption, birth parents and adopted adults; this includes birth records counselling and intermediary work.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This announced full inspection was carried out by Marian Denny and Rosemary Dancer and all key national minimum standards were assessed. This is a satisfactory service with some good features. Children benefit from an experienced and skilled adoption team which works well with other teams in the authority and agencies in their best interests. Potential adopters are assessed in terms of their ability to care for children's holistic needs. The effective support provided to adoptive families is a strength of the service and contact is well promoted. Also, the information provided to adopters in the early stages of the process helps them make informed decisions that increase the likelihood for secure and stable placements. Overall the adoption management team and staff work co-operatively with their colleagues in the child care teams to achieve good outcomes for children and young people.

However, one breach of regulation was identified, specifically regarding the accuracy of recordings in Child Permanence Records. This does not ensure the adoption panel and prospective adopters have all the information needed to make recommendations and effect sound matching in every case.

In addition, other shortfalls include the quality assurance system not identifying omissions or errors in recordings; not verifying, in every case, the references for staff to confirm their suitability to work in adoption; improving the thoroughness of induction that would aid retention of new staff; not providing the executive of the local authority with written reports on the management of the agency every six months; written minutes of panel meetings not being sufficiently accurate to reflect the key issues and views expressed by panel members and the reasons for its recommendation and life story work not always presented in a format appropriate to the child's age and understanding or its preparation being coordinated in a timely way.

Improvements since the last inspection

Three actions were made at the last inspection. Although progress has been made in inviting applications from prospective adopters before they undertake preparation training, two actions have yet to be fully met. Children's permanence reports although improved, still do not fully comply with regulations. Recruitment procedures for all staff still need to be more robust to ensure the suitability of all staff to work with children and service users.

Two recommendations were made at the last inspection one of which has been addressed through updating the children's guide. However a repeated recommendation has been made in respect of life story work being available to adopters and children in a timely manner and in a format appropriate to the child's age.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The service is focussed on the welfare of children and ensures that they are safe and protected from significant harm. Allegations and suspicions of harm are handled in a way that provides effective protection and support for children, the person making the allegation, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Social workers are clear about their supportive role when visiting adoptive families; all those who have contact with children have current checks and references. This service has fostered positive working relationships with other colleagues such as the looked after children's team with whom there are regular surgeries to share good practice. Additionally the service has ready access to the child and adolescent mental health team who are available for consultation and advice.

Children's physical, emotional and psychological health is well promoted and the service ensures that they access services to meet their needs. Healthy living is covered in the assessments of adopters and they have written information about children's health, delegation of responsibilities and a sound understanding about where consent for medical treatment needs to be obtained.

There is a strong motivation in the agency to ensure children's backgrounds and birth family histories are accurately and suitably recorded in child permanence reports. However there were shortfalls in some instances regarding the accuracy of the content; for example inaccurate dates of birth, a full chronology of care and

capturing fully in CPR's the wishes and feelings of members of birth families. This has the potential to impact negatively on the matching processes and the understanding of adopters of children's needs.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Haringey is strongly committed to supporting their adopters. The support available to, and provided for, families with children in placement is responsive, sensitive to need and underpinned by a good range of resources. The adoption service's practice is child focussed. It provides good levels of support to adoptive placements and is committed to ensuring qualitative matching of children with adopters.

Adopters are made aware of the support services available at an early stage in their contact with the agency. Adoption placement plans and children's adoption care plans are generally well written. Adoption support plans are of a good standard and distributed in a timely manner. Any requests for support are responded to promptly and provided in a sensitive and thoughtful manner. Adopters state that the support provided is very good. Comments from adopters included that, 'they are prepared very well for panel' and that 'preparatory training meets their needs well.'

Good working relationships exist between the adoption service and other services within the council. This enables adoptive families to access a variety of other specialist services to meet their needs, for example, the provision of additional educational support. There is also a good relationship with the looked after children's services and the child and adolescent mental health team.

This effective multi-agency working ensures the service is able to offer a range of packages of support. These are individually designed to meet the family's assessed and holistic needs and are provided in a creative and flexible way.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Social workers are clear about their supportive role when visiting adoptive families; the service has fostered positive working relationships with other agencies and services which also benefit children.

The agency is committed to engaging birth families in the adoption process and encourages birth parents to contribute to the planning for their children's futures. It also takes seriously the wishes and feelings of birth parents and works with them to achieve manageable outcomes. Birth parents are encouraged, and given the opportunity, to access independent counselling services at any stage of the adoption process, or afterwards, if required.

The service undertakes life-story work. This is of a good standard in many cases. However, in some instances the life story books are not age appropriate or always

completed in a timely manner.

Contact arrangements are well recorded. Direct contact is usually managed by the adopters; however, the service will provide support to adopters when the arrangements are difficult or complex. This was particularly evident in the sensitive manner in which distressing news had been shared with an adult affected by adoption.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The service ensures that the promotion of equality and diversity is reflected in their policies and practice. Prospective adopters' assessments address the applicants' views on disability, ethnicity and culture, both in terms of the types of children they are being assessed to adopt and their suitability to bring up children to have balanced, fair and non-discriminatory views. The agency works hard to find appropriately matched placements for children, taking into account their background or specific needs and provides extremely effective adoption support for children with complex needs. Respect for birth parents and their families are clearly demonstrated in their work and efforts are made to involve them in planning for their children's future.

There is good scrutiny of assessments presented to panel and the panel's role in monitoring the agency's progress regarding their own recommendations is sound. Panel minutes overall are clear however they do not always sufficiently set out clearly the reasons for recommendations reached and the views expressed by panel members.

The decision making is timely with appropriate decisions made with the objective of promoting the welfare of children placed for adoption.

The adoption service has a clear Statement of Purpose which outlines its objectives and how the service will meet outcomes for children. This document is supported by a range of policies and procedures, which inform and underpin the operations and strategic direction of the agency. The service has an attractively presented children's guide which is in a user friendly format.

The agency is managed by staff with appropriate experience, skills and qualifications. There are some vacancies which are covered by agency workers although the agency works hard to reduce the impact of the current vacancy levels. Responsibilities and duties, and lines of accountability are clear. Recruitment practices overall ensure that children are safe and checks such as Criminal Record Bureau checks and references

are routinely obtained. However, in one instance there was an omission regarding securing verification of references. This does not fully ensure a robust recruitment is being followed for staff in every case.

Children and service users receive a service from staff, panel members and decision makers who have the competence to meet their needs. The adoption team social workers confirmed that the level and frequency of formal supervision is good and they report they have regular access to their managers for more informal supervision and support when required. There are good training opportunities provided to support continued professional development for staff. However induction is not always sufficiently thorough for all staff including agency to adequately prepare and support them in their role which impacts on retention.

The adoption service approves prospective adopters who can meet most of the needs of children who are to be placed for adoption. Their recruitment strategy is based on knowledge of trends in children becoming looked after and activities are monitored and shortfalls are identified. A range of recruitment strategies are used which is beneficial in increasing the resources of the adoption team. Enquirers receive information packs in a timely manner and approved adopters said that the response from the service was useful and beneficial to them.

There are suitable policies and procedures for recording information on files. The premises are fit for purpose and a business continuity plan is in place. Facilities for safe storage protect confidential information and the building is secure.

The reporting to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee of the authority is not currently in line with the standards. Consequently they are limited in their ability to ensure the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg	Statutory Requirement	Due date
	prepare children's permanence reports in a full and complete way to ensure the adoption panel and prospective adopters have all the information needed to make recommendations and effect sound matching in every case. (Regulation 17 & 31 The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005)	13/01/2012

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure in all cases telephone enquiries are made to each referee to verify the written references for all people working in or for the purposes of the agency (NMS 21.1)
- improve the quality assurance audit processes to identify any shortfalls, in for example the recording of key information, and take action to address any issues raised by this monitoring (NMS 25.2)
- ensure that all new staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards (NMS 23.3)
- ensure the executive of the local authority receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency every six months (NMS 25.6)
- ensure that written minutes of panel meetings are accurate and clearly cover the key issues and views expressed by panel members and record the reasons for its recommendation (NMS 17.10)
- ensure that the life story book is in a format appropriate to the child's age and understanding and its preparation is coordinated in a timely way. (NMS 2.5 and 2.6)

Report for:	Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee	Item Number:	
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Title:	Fostering Inspection Improvement Plan
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Report Authorised by:	Debbie Haith
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Lead Officer:	Wendy Tomlinson
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Haringey Fostering Service was inspected on August 2011. This action plan addresses the recommendations following the inspection and forms the basis for improvements if the service is to move from its current 'satisfactory' rating to one of at least 'good'. The plan will be developed further as part of the CYPS Strategic Improvement Plan.

The inspection report highlighted some areas of good practice which will continue to be strengthened.

- Children report positive relationships with our foster carers. They often feel like they are part of the family. Children are supported by foster carers in their education and leisure activities and foster carers advocate well for children in their care.
- Children are well consulted about the services they receive and benefit from a number of activities and groups set up by the Fostering Service.
- The Fostering panel and Agency Decision Maker make appropriate recommendations and decisions.
- Parents value the short breaks service.

Note: Where the requirement is in bold this is an Ofsted requirement
 Update January 2012 - Updates , Actions to be taken , Senior managers to action

Requirement	Present position	Improvement Plan	Time scale	By whom
<p>1. Ensure that the foster home is inspected annually, without appointment, by the fostering service to make sure that it continues to meet the needs of children (NMS 10.5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspectors noted that some foster carers had not been visited 6 weekly as required and some further had not had a recent unannounced visit as required. Monitoring of recording by Team Managers signing off 6 weekly visit reports has been ongoing but has not highlighted where visits have not happened Independent monitoring from reviewing officer detailed in foster carers annual review report does mean that situations are monitored Senior Team Manager monitoring signing off foster carers annual reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up unannounced visits for all Carers who have not had an unannounced visit in the last 6 months. Review all carers who have not been visited within timescales. <p>Update Unannounced visits set up for carers who had not received one visit in 2011. Figures to date (Oct.2011) 136 carers 33 visits done 19 planned 9 carried out and failed (carer not home, to be visited again)</p> <p>System now in place on FWi to collect unannounced visit</p>	<p>Completed September 2011.</p> <p>Monitoring is on going Performance monitoring</p> <p>monthly performance monitoring</p>	<p>Janice Darling</p> <p>Janice and Fostering managers</p> <p>Dec 2011</p>

		<p>information.</p> <p>Review of carers not visited within timescale by managers. Clear reasons for delays recorded. There are 38 carers on hold who are not having 6 weekly visits. Plans are in place to deregister or return to fostering for each carer.</p> <p>Independent review of fostering households and oversight of reviews by senior team manager is ongoing . System now in place on FWi to collect data on reviews</p>	<p>October 2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Monthly performance monitoring</p>	<p>Janice</p> <p>Reviewing Officer</p>
<p>2. Further to point 1. Supervising Social Workers are not carrying out supervisory visits in line with procedures nor are reports comprehensive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This point is mentioned in the Inspection report but is not a 'requirement' as such. It refers to the quality of the supervisory visits and the subsequent recording. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is to form part of staff supervision and Team Meetings. Next follow up Team Meeting due. <p>Update Ongoing work in the fostering service joint team meetings relating to expectations and recording practice at 6 weekly visits</p>	<p>October 2011.</p> <p>23 Nov 2011</p>	<p>Janice Darling / Beverlin McKenzie / Mary France-Stewart / Teresa Stratford.</p> <p>STM /TM Fostering</p>

		<p>Random audit of 6 weekly recordings</p> <p>To observe staff supervisions to gain a clearer perspective</p>	<p>Nov 2011. by STM recordings were satisfactory</p> <p>STM April 2012</p>	<p>STM</p> <p>Janice</p>
<p>3. Prepare and implement a written policy on acceptable measures of control, restraint and discipline on children placed with foster carers. (Regulation 13 (1))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedure was not clear enough about use of restraint. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update in draft and consultation with consortium <p>Update Document completed</p> <p>Senior management to approve</p> <p>To be Implemented</p>	<p>Nov 2011</p> <p>By March 2012</p>	<p>Janice Darling</p> <p>Wendy</p> <p>Janice and Jeanette STM/ DHOS CWDT</p>

			Training to be rolled out to staff and carers	April 2012	Julia Training manager, Cleopatra trainer
4. Risk assessments for children who are at risk of going missing are not always in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspector noted that there was evidence of some strong practice in keeping children safe. However, risk assessments that would highlight concerns more readily, were not always evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Social Workers to make sure that a risk assessment exists and is made available to carers for every child who goes missing. 	Update Plans exist but are not consistent. Work is underway to address these issues.	New system in place across C&F as of 26 th September 2011. March 2012	CiC / S&S / FRTeam Managers. Fostering Managers and SSWs. STM/ HOS
5. Prepare and Implement a written procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While we were able to show that every allegation had been followed up and children kept safe, it was clear that these matters were not concluded in as timely a way as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spreadsheet is now up to date. Written procedure to be 		End Oct 2011.	Janice Darling / LADO

<p>of abuse or neglect and to provide for written records to be kept of any allegation of abuse of neglect, and of the action taken in response. (Regulation 12)</p>	<p>they should have been. Further to this, spreadsheets detailing outcomes were not up to date due changes in the staffing arrangements.</p>	<p>updated with clear and manageable expectations about timescales. There are not outstanding investigations were the outcome is not know.</p> <p>Update No action taken</p>	<p>March 2012</p>	<p>Janice Darling / LADO</p>
<p>6. Ensure that children have access to independent advice and support from adults they can contact directly and in private about problems or concerns, which is appropriate to their age and understanding. (NMS 1.5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When a child becomes looked after they should be advised how to make a complaint and access independent advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is being undertaken across CiC Services about how to make best use of existing professionals in a child's life to ensure that they have someone to reach out to as described. Yong people now get information on making a complaint and how to access the Independent Advocacy Service <p>Update Childrens Guide updated and with young people for</p>	<p>End April</p>	<p>Wendy Tomlinson / Chris Chalmers</p> <p>Janice</p>

		consultation	2012	Darling
7. Ensure that the Fostering Service recruits, assesses and supports a range of foster carers to meet the needs of children they provide for.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspector noted that there are a large number of children in care in Haringey and not enough of internal carers to meet the for placements need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to Fostering Strategy and gap analysis. <p>Update see attached document</p>	Ongoing and for review at CPAC	Wendy Tomlinson
8. Ensure that there is careful selection of staff and fostering households and there is monitoring of such people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspectors found a staff members HR file which did not have references with verbal verification as required. Inspector also found some carers whose support carer CRB checks are not always completed in a timely way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since that staff member's referees are still available, retrospective checking will take place so that this does not come up again. Processes re: CRB checking are being updated but are still dependant upon CRB timescales. 	End October 2011.	Debbie Haith / Wendy Tomlinson
9. Ensure that there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring the activities of the service. (NMS 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This refers to systems to gather quantitative information as required by the annual fostering return data. For example, the number of children placed in arrangements which differ from those originally requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Data Performance Team and Fostering Service have met to explore better ways to gather this data without creating unnecessary work. This information is required to assist with sufficiency planning. A development to the Framework I system will ensure this is remedied. 	Work has begun. Some changes are due by end November 2011. Changes to the use of FWi are likely to be finalised by the end of March 2012.	Denise Sourris

		Update Workflow for recruitment	Drawn up Implement March 2012	Vas Soteriou – ICS team
		System to collect unannounced visits stats.	In place	Dec 2011
		Foster carers register, updated and system in place to maintain records on Fwi	In place	Dec 2011
		6 weekly visit reporting can now be collected from FWi	In Place Monthly monitoring	Nov.2011 Fostering managers

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23/09/2011

Ms Wendy Jane Tomlinson
London Borough Of Haringey;
Head Of Service Commissioning &
Placements
40 Cumberland Road
London
N22 7SG

Our Reference SC042906

Dear Ms Tomlinson

Updated report

As a result of the concerns you raised about your recent inspection report, we have now updated your report.

Please find attached the updated version of your inspection report which Ofsted has published on the internet.

If you have any queries about this letter, please call 0300 123 1231 quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely

Deborah McAvoy
Inspection Support Team

London Borough of Haringey Fostering Service

Inspection report for local authority fostering agency

Unique reference number	SC042906
Inspection date	05/08/2011
Inspector	Sue Winson / Jackie Graves
Type of inspection	Social Care Inspection

Setting address	London Borough of Haringey Children and Young People's .service, Commissioning and Placements, 40 Cumberland Road, LONDON, N22 7SG
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Registered manager	
Responsible individual	Wendy Jane Tomlinson
Date of last inspection	25/01/2008

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Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The London Borough of Haringey Fostering service provides planned and emergency foster care for children and young people aged between birth to under 18 years. Children receive individualised placements which are short term or long term. A specialist short break respite service supports children who have a disability. Children also benefit from placement with their family or friends within kinship arrangements. The culturally diverse staff team includes a manager known as the Head of Service, senior team manager, three team managers for the different services provided by fostering service and qualified social workers who supervise the foster carers.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This is a satisfactory service with some good aspects. It is a developing service where some improvements in outcomes for children have been achieved, for example in education, leisure and some aspects of support to foster families. The service has worked to increase foster carer attendance at training, and take up of Training, Support and Development Standards (TDS) with some success. The service has insufficient foster carers and does not fully demonstrate that children's progress and the safety of foster homes is regularly monitored through supervisory and unannounced visits. Behaviour management policies are not clear and do not contain appropriate information, in line with regulations. Allegations of abuse or neglect are not always concluded in a timely manner. The service provides some opportunities for children and foster carers to express their views, and has been responsive in developing groups to meet identified needs, for example, a men's group and a forum for the sons and daughters of foster carers to discuss issues specific to them. Independent visitors have not been provided to all those children who have been identified as needing them. The service's auditing and monitoring systems are not robust enough to demonstrate outcomes for children or to provide information for their improvement agenda.

Improvements since the last inspection

The actions and recommendations from the last inspection have been largely addressed. Foster carer approval terms are now appropriate, fostering social workers look at daily logs written by foster carers and strategies are in place to recruit foster carers to meet the cultural and diverse needs of all children and young people needing foster care.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children in foster care largely live in environments where their physical, emotional and psychological health is promoted and where their care generally meets their individual needs. Foster carers receive training to guide them in promoting healthy lifestyles and those who look after very young children receive appropriate training. A high number of children have health and dental checks. Specialist training to meet the needs of disabled children is provided routinely to family link carers who provide respite placements and their skills are valued by the children's parents.

The local Looked after Children (LAC) nurse visits children and young people in their foster homes to carry out health assessments and provide advice. While there she is able to assess how well their needs are being met. Fostering social workers are not carrying out supervisory visits in line with the fostering service's procedures, nor are the reports of the visits comprehensive. As a result they do not demonstrate that they are monitoring health needs on a regular basis.

The Haringey/Tavistock partnership provides a Child and Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to children in foster placement and it is evident that this support is valued by foster carers and contributes to the stability of placements and positive outcomes for children. However, there are delays in accessing services which impacts on children and their carers.

Children generally live in foster homes which provide adequate space to a suitable standard. The service has listened to children's views on having small bedrooms, and taken their views into account when assessing potential foster carers. Health and safety checks, including dog assessments, routinely take place during initial assessments. The fostering service does not consistently carry out annual unannounced inspections on all foster homes to make sure that they continue to meet the needs of children placed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children say that they feel safe in their foster homes, know how to make a complaint and that the service has listened to and addressed their concerns. Their carers are trained in safe caring practices and safeguarding. The fostering service has started to raise awareness of internet safety through foster carer training. Placing social workers say that the fostering service provides safe and appropriate placements, even in an emergency. Although written risk assessments are not always in place, it is evident that practice serves to protect vulnerable young people, including those who may go missing.

Children are protected by the policies and practices in regard to absence without authority. Protocols are in place and meetings with local police happen where there

are concerns about children's safety. A very small number of children have been missing from foster homes in the last year. The service's behaviour management policy states that it is permissible to restrain children to prevent them going missing from home. There is no evidence of safety guidelines, or training, to protect children who have little or no understanding of risk and danger, such as those on the autistic spectrum.

Checks on foster carers and people in their household largely protect children. Delays in Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks and a lack of assessment of new partners in foster homes where children are placed, were picked up by the fostering panel and social workers have been asked to provide more information.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children and young people enjoy positive relationships with their foster carers and commented that they are treated, 'like their own daughter' and as 'one of the family'. Children benefit from largely stable placements and foster carers receive training and support to manage their behaviour, including a twelve week course to develop their understanding of trauma and behavioural issues. Foster families reported significant support which has improved the behaviour of children in their care and relationships within the home.

Education is well promoted and children are supported to attend and achieve. They and their foster carers receive a range of support through the virtual school and the special educational needs service, which is tailored to individual needs and benefits children. For example, support is routinely provided when children are starting school and at the stage of transfer to secondary school and young people are assisted to find appropriate college courses. Professionals and foster carers advocate on children's behalf to ensure they have appropriate education and support while in school. Leisure activities are encouraged and children benefit from being able to develop their interests and skills. Fostering households are stimulating and encourage pre-school learning and education in its wider sense.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

There are a range of opportunities for children in foster care to express their views, and they do so. They are given information about their rights to complain. Independent reviewing officers (IROs) see children on their own and foster carers were positive about how well children are consulted. The local authority has an online service for children's comments and the fostering service runs groups to ascertain their views. Foster carers own sons and daughters benefit from groups which address their needs. Changes have been made as a result of listening to children. The fostering services does not routinely invite the views of parents of children in foster care. Consultation with foster carers has developed, and there is an

active foster care association. Foster carers' views of the service are gathered at various stages, however, there is no analysis of responses to guide the improvement agenda.

Children are encouraged to develop positive self view, emotional resilience and understanding of their background. Foster carers receive training on life story work and keep memory boxes and mementos for when children move on. Contact is well promoted and children benefit from their carers having an understanding of the position of parents and empathy towards them. Preparation and ongoing training is effective in helping foster carers understand the importance of contact for children. Examples were given where contact arrangements are being managed in a very natural way by foster carers, where siblings are not placed together. Kinship carers are supported to manage the complexities of contact in ways which benefit children. The service is aware of issues where, directed by the court, contact is continuing to the detriment of children; this is being addressed through the legal department.

The extent to which children move into and leave foster homes in a planned and sensitive manner is variable. Some children have the benefit of seeing photographs and receiving information about their foster carers beforehand while others do not. Foster carers know what is good practice in moving children on and transferring attachments.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people in foster care are supported and encouraged to develop skills for life and further education and work is promoted. They and their foster carers are involved in compiling and implementing pathway and transition plans. Foster carers receive training and the leaving care social workers regularly attend support groups to update them on changes in regulations and expectations. There is facility for some children to remain with their foster carers after their 18th birthday in order to maintain stability.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Some examples were seen where children receive individualised care to meet their holistic needs. The short breaks scheme provides a commitment to providing enjoyable short breaks for children with disabilities. People are encouraged to request information in different languages or in Braille or audio formats. Not all children who have been identified as needing an independent person who they can contact, have been provided with one.

The fostering service has insufficient foster carers to meet the needs of children in the borough. The recruitment and assessment team have access to a designated marketing and publicity officer and works in partnership with other local authorities

to raise awareness about fostering within the community and to recruit carers. Their website contains appropriate and non-discriminatory information. The use of independent fostering agency placements, many of which are close by, increase placement choice to some degree. The service is aware of the shortfall and recruitment is ongoing. Assessments are carried out by qualified and experienced workers. As mentioned earlier, full assessments are not always carried out on all adults in the fostering households. Annual reviews are chaired by an independent reviewing officer and all first reviews are presented to the fostering panel.

The fostering panels and the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) make appropriate recommendations and decisions, and have a role in quality assurance of the service. The panels members have a range of relevant experience and panels are child-focussed and challenging. The service has begun a re-organisation of the panels to provide independent chairs and ensure that delays in panel meetings do not continue to impact on children. Applicants are assessed on their suitability and ability to meet the needs of children and young people.

Full preparation training is provided for all applicants, delivered by the service's learning and development manager alongside foster carers. The fostering service has worked to increase the take-up of ongoing foster carer training, with some success. On line training has been welcomed by some foster carers who find it difficult to attend courses. Workshops to assist people to complete TDS have been well attended. Preparation training is thorough and clearly prepares people for the tasks of fostering. There is a range of on-going training and facilities for specialist training to meet the needs of specific children. Different times and venues have been tried to increase attendance. Foster carers' views on training is variable, some finding courses useful and informative while others find them not relevant. The service has started work with foster carers about their changing role under the new NMS, but as yet this has not included children's social workers. Support groups are ongoing and include specific groups for men, boys in foster care and the sons and daughters of foster carers. An active local foster care association provides support and regular newsletters are produced to keep foster carers informed.

Foster carers receive support and supervisory visits, however, the latter are not happening at the frequency laid down in the fostering service's procedures. Full details of supervisory visits are not recorded so the service cannot demonstrate that outcomes for children are being monitored on a regular basis. Foster carers reported visits being often cancelled, but were positive about the support their own children receive. Some commented about the lack of facilities for them to have respite.

The fostering service's operation largely meets the aims and objectives in its Statement of Purpose.

Staff files do not all contain the required information, so the service cannot demonstrate robust recruitment. Full employment histories, two written references and proof of identity were not held on all staff files. Staff say that they are well supported and supervised by their line managers and they have access to in house training. Issues about the capacity and workloads of the fostering teams is being addressed through re-organisation. At present, fostering social workers do not

always attend placement agreement meetings, statutory reviews and core group meetings. There have been some delays in allocating support workers to newly approved foster carers.

The senior management team meet regularly with the staff. The systems for auditing and monitoring are not robust enough to identify areas for development and drive forward planning. Information is gathered through a range of feedback methods and questionnaires, but no analysis of the information is evident. Social workers commented on the delays in decision making which impacts on children, and sometimes leads to them sitting in social work offices for long periods before a foster placement is agreed and identified. There have been considerable delays in the investigations of complaints and allegations, some of which have taken over a year to resolve. Strategic planning to ensure that children receive the range of services they need, through partnership working, is not evident. Statistics provided about outcomes for children were largely for LAC children in general, rather than those in foster care.

Foster carer and children's files are held electronically with appropriate safeguards in place to ensure confidentiality is maintained. The offices used by the fostering service are adequate. Difficulties reported due to the recent reduced administrative support, including late payments to foster carers are being resolved. Foster carers know the allowances that they can claim, but say they do not always do so, due to the bureaucracy and delays in processing and payments.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the foster home is inspected annually, without appointment, by the fostering service to make sure that it continues to meet the needs of children (NMS 10.5)
- prepare and implement a written policy on acceptable measures of control, restraint and discipline of children placed with foster carers (breach of Regulation 13(1))
- prepare and implement a written procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect and to provide for written records to be kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response (breach of Regulation 12)
- ensure that children have access to independent advice and support from adults they can contact directly and in private about problems or concerns, which is appropriate to their age and understanding (NMS 1.5)
- ensure that the fostering service recruits, assesses and supports a range of foster carers to meet the needs of children they provide care for (NMS 13)

- ensure that there is careful selection of staff and fostering households and there is monitoring of such people (NMS 19)
- ensure that there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the service. (NMS 25)

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