



Haringey Council

NOTICE OF MEETING

Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee

TUESDAY, 28TH JUNE, 2011 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 - 6)

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2011.

5. MATTERS ARISING

6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT : CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (PAGES 7 - 16)

This report is an update of Children in Care National Indicators and other key performance information at the end of April 2011.

7. CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY (PAGES 17 - 34)

Committee to consider and agree the final draft of this strategy.

8. NORTH LONDON ADOPTION AND FOSTERING CONSORTIUM (PAGES 35 - 56)

To consider for information purposes the Annual report of the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium.

9. ATTENDANCE OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OFFICER (PAGES 57 - 62)

Information on the role and responsibilities of Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) to accompany and inform a discussion on the stability of placements.

10. ADOPTION PROCESS (PAGES 63 - 66)

Briefing note on Adoption Agencies and the adoption process.

11. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of items 12-15, as they contain exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985): paras 1 & 2: namely information relating to any individual, and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

12. END OF YEAR REPORT TO THE ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE PANEL FOR THE YEAR APRIL 2010 - MARCH 2011 (PAGES 67 - 76)

The committee to consider key information from the end of year report considered by the Adoption and Permanence Panel .

13. INDEPENDENT VISITOR REPORTS (PAGES 77 - 82)

To receive details of Regulation 33 inspections made to Haringey's residential homes.

14. VERBAL UPDATE ON RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES

15. CHILD SAFEGUARDING

To provide a verbal update as necessary on safeguarding issues pertinent to the remit of the Committee.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Date of next meetings:

22 September 2011

11 October 2011 – Joint meeting with the Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee

27 October 2011

13 December 2011

31 January 2012

05 March 2012 - Joint meeting with Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee

19 March 2012

David McNulty
Head of Local Democracy and Member Services
5th Floor
River Park House
225 High Road
Wood Green
London N22 8HQ

Ayshe Simsek
Principal Committee Coordinator
Tel: 0208 489 2965
Fax: 0208 489 2660
Email: ayshe.simsek@haringey.gov.uk
Circulated 20 June 2011

This page is intentionally left blank

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 19 APRIL 2011**

Councillors Alexander, Allison, Reith (Chair), Stennett and Watson

Apologies Councillor Engert and Peacock.

Also Present: Councillor Brabazon and Solomon, Wendy Tomlinson, Debbie Haith, Jennifer James, Chris Chalmers, Sanjay Green.

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
CPAC69.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Engert and Peacock. Cllrs Solomon and Brabazon respectively attended in their place.</p>	
CPAC70.	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no items of urgent business.</p>	
CPAC71.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
CPAC72.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>Subject to a couple of minor spelling corrections, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2011 were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
CPAC73.	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>The Committee considered the matters arising report and noted the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering update: it was confirmed that out of date statistics had been removed from the Council's website as part of the ongoing work to review and improve content. It was advised that new key fostering images had been approved and would be used for campaigns and promotional information going forward. As part of this, it was proposed that the Committee consider the new Fostering Strategy at a future meeting. <p>On a related issue, Cllr Solomon advised that she had carried out a mystery shopping exercise on the Fostering Service and provided positive feedback on the quality of service received. The Head of Service (Commissioning & Placements) agreed to feed this back to the team.</p> <p>In response to a question on progress with foster care strategic commissioning, it was confirmed that work was underway as part of the North London Strategic Alliance to map costs across the region</p>	<p>Debbie Haith</p> <p>Wendy Tomlinson</p>

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 19 APRIL 2011**

	<p>which was scheduled for completion in the autumn. Work was also underway to manage the procurement process more effectively within the Council, including running a two day event with providers in May with a view to enhancing working relationships and improving standards and pricing. An update would be provided to the meeting after next.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was confirmed that the safeguarding element of IT access had now been incorporated within the Virtual School policy. • In relation to publishing the complaints procedure for CiC online, it was proposed that this be added on an interim basis to Youth Space until dedicated CiC pages were established as part of a longer term project. It was agreed that Committee members would be informed once the information was live. 	<p>Wendy Tomlinson</p> <p>Chris Chalmer s/ Jennifer James</p>
<p>CPAC74.</p>	<p>DISCUSSION WITH JUDY MACE, DESIGNATED CHILDREN IN CARE NURSE, ON HER WORK WITH CHILDREN IN CARE</p> <p>Judy Mace from the Children in Care (CiC) Nursing Team gave a short presentation on the work of the team which was centred on the statutory responsibility for health reviews to be undertaken for all Haringey CiC. The function had previously been the responsibility of GPs but transferred to the CiC nursing team at the beginning of the year. The three full time nurses within the team visited all CiC to undertake health reviews, even those placed out of borough, and were achieving good performance overall. Each full assessment took approximately 8 hours to complete including requesting medical records, the appointment and follow up work such as making referrals. It was reported that the most prevalent health issues seen in CiC population were mental health problems, emotional distress and incomplete immunisation history.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence suggested that the quality of health reviews and the engagement of CiC had increased since the service transferred to the new team. The new service would also allow an overall picture to be gained on the health issues of CiC and generally as a model, facilitated better linkage with other health services including school nurses, the Tavistock Service for mental health issues and with the two residential children's homes.</p> <p>In response to a question on the costs of the new service, it was confirmed that these were currently being calculated but provisionally appeared to be on an equal level to the previous GP model of delivery.</p> <p>Work was underway to incorporate feedback from CiC into the health review process and to consider in particular enhancing support for Southwark young people and those leaving care to help improve the transition to adult services. Consideration would also be given to ways of enhancing the participation of older children who were often the most difficult to engage, for example through adoption of a drop in centre approach etc.</p>	

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 19 APRIL 2011**

<p>CPAC75.</p>	<p>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT : CHILDREN AND FAMILIES</p> <p>The Committee considered performance management data for the Children and Families Service for February. It was advised that the number of CiC had increased over this period primarily due to the impact of a number of large families becoming looked after, although this was set against a general stabilisation observed over the longer term. It was advised that future performance reports would provide further breakdown of the 10-15 age classification for children coming into care owing to the complexities within this age range.</p> <p>In response to a question about the impact of unaccompanied minors, it was advised that the general trend was a reduction in their numbers, More proactive work practices were also now in place including a weekly Gateway Panel considering cases at the point of referral to look at options other than coming into care including rehabilitation plans etc.</p> <p>In considering the ethnic classification of children entering care and whether further breakdown of groupings could be provided, it was advised that this risked diluting the interpretation of data as a significant proportion of children had complex heritage. It was agreed that a more detailed breakdown of ethnicity data relating to CiC be provided to the Committee on a quarterly basis in order to help monitor demographic trends across the borough. Clarification was also sought on the Council's approach to adoption with regards to recent press coverage highlighting the poorer adoption outcomes for black children. The Deputy Director confirmed that the fundamental consideration in relation to adoption remained what was in the best interest of the child and the imperative of ensuring the stability of placements. Adoption was a complex area with a number of compounding factors including age, family grouping etc. Ethnicity was considered in a broad way in reflection of the importance of ensuring the cultural needs of the child were met and was also discussed regularly at Consortium meetings.</p> <p>In relation to the children missing from care, confirmation was provided that monitoring arrangements were in place for frequent absconders. The Committee asked for further information on how occupancy was monitored at the borough's residential homes, particularly in relation to the impact of frequent absconders. It was agreed that the Chair and Deputy Director would give consideration to the most appropriate format for this to be submitted to the Committee.</p>	<p>Debbie Haith</p> <p>Debbie Haith</p> <p>Debbie Haith/ Cllr Reith</p>
<p>CPAC76.</p>	<p>ATTENDANCE OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OFFICER TO DISCUSS WORK ON THE STABILITY OF PLACEMENTS</p> <p>The Committee were advised that the Independent Review Officer (IRO) due to give a presentation to the meeting was unfortunately unable to attend. As a result, it was agreed that the Deputy Director would provide a short overview of the role and responsibility of IROs as a prelude to an IRO attending the next meeting for a more detailed discussion session. A briefing would also be circulated in advance of the meeting. The Committee requested that this include information on the number of IRO changes for children and on any escalations made by IROs and the</p>	<p>Debbie Haith</p>

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 19 APRIL 2011**

	<p>reasons why.</p> <p>The role of IROs was to provide independent scrutiny of care plans, advocacy for CiC and at a broader level, look at the quality of service provided by the authority. IROs, experienced social workers, were assigned to each CiC. Recent legislative changes had strengthened the role of IROs including new powers for external challenge and establishment of an IRO handbook setting out roles and functions more clearly. Recent changes meant that the separate IRO role covering CiC and child protection care plans would be merged in the future to allow continuity. An annual IRO report would also be produced, identifying trends and issues and would be submitted for consideration by the Committee in the autumn.</p>	Debbie Haith
CPAC77.	<p>DEVELOPMENT WORK ON DEALING WITH THE ISSUES OF ISOLATION FACED BY YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE</p> <p>The Committee considered a report setting out issues facing young people leaving care, particularly in relation to the potential for isolation if established support networks were not in place. Placement stability and educational engagement were also compounding risk factors. General support provided to care leavers was outlined within a pathway plan including that from social workers and other key workers. Work was underway to improve support offered from other sources, for example the current tendering process for semi-independent accommodation providers who provide formalised support for young people, aimed to improve the quality of accommodation and service.</p> <p>A number of participation pathways were also available for care leavers to help mitigate feelings of isolation including the CiC Council, Total Respect training, Regulation 33 inspections etc. Further work was planned to develop a peer mentoring scheme for care leavers with younger CiC and ultimately establishing a leaving care course to allow a more consistent, consolidated approach to passing on life skills to CiC. The Committee recognised the value of potentially extending any mentoring scheme to include adults volunteers which could potentially be achieved through reactivation of the Independent Visitors scheme. It was also proposed that people making enquiries to the fostering service could also be encouraged to participate in any scheme introduced.</p> <p>It was agreed that a report would be provided to the next meeting or the following one exploring the potential around Independent Visitors and peer mentoring schemes with associated costings.</p>	Chris Chalmers
CPAC78.	<p>CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY</p> <p>It was advised that the Corporate Parenting Strategy had been recently discussed at the Children's Trust meeting and would require further revision in order to incorporate comments made including making the Strategy more child focussed. As a result, it was proposed that the Committee defer consideration of the Strategy to the next meeting.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the time it was taking to progress the</p>	Debbie Haith

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 19 APRIL 2011**

	<p>Strategy. It was agreed that the updated version of the Strategy would be circulated for comment to the Committee prior to the next meeting in order to facilitate the Committee approving the final draft at the next meeting. This would also provide the opportunity for the underpinning action plan to be considered in more detail.</p>	Debbie Haith
CPAC79.	EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC	
CPAC80.	<p>EXEMPT PERFORMANCE INFORMATION</p> <p>The Committee considered a number of case examples linked to key performance data with the aim of making the data more 'live'. It was agreed that the case examples were useful and it was requested that future examples be provided on larger sibling groups, cases where placement stability had been an issue and cases of young people going missing.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about Committee members not having a full understanding of how cases were progressed and the stages and process for these. It was however recognised that focus needed to be maintained on the overall picture for CiC and not individual cases and as such, it was agreed that this could be an area to be explored with the CiC Council to allow more general discussions on young people's experience of the care system.</p>	<p>Debbie Haith</p> <p>Debbie Haith/Jennifer James</p>
CPAC81.	<p>INDEPENDENT VISITOR REPORTS</p> <p>The Head of Service (Commissioning & Placements) provided an update on recent changes made to Regulation 33 visits process including the piloting of a new reporting template from a preferred provider which allowed for a copy of the report to be left on site following the inspection. Further instruction and training had also been given to staff at both homes to help them manage Regulation 33 visits, including taking a more proactive approach and focussing on outcomes. A recent review had also been undertaken in conjunction with placement officers, residential home staff, Members and representative of young people. A meeting had also been held with Corporate Property to set out expectations in relation to maintenance issues with the children's homes with a view to improving the working relationship and prioritising works required.</p>	
CPAC82.	<p>VERBAL UPDATE ON RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES</p> <p>Confirmation was provided in relation to the outstanding registration of the Manager at Coppetts Road that all required information had been submitted to Ofsted who would be undertaking a final site visit and interview on 5 May. The Chair stressed that lessons needed to be learnt from this protracted process. It was confirmed that this was being looked into carefully.</p>	

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 19 APRIL 2011**

CPAC83.	CHILD SAFEGUARDING There were no issues to be referred to the Committee.	
CPAC84.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	

Cllr Lorna Reith

Chair



Haringey Council

Briefing for:	Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee
Title:	Performance Management Data in Children and Families – April 2011 data
Lead Officer:	Debbie Haith
Date:	27 June 2011

1. Background

This report is an update of Children in Care National Indicators and other key performance information at the end of April 2011.

1.1 Note that the Government is currently undertaking a review of National Indicators and all statutory data returns. We will update members of any changes to our statutory reporting requirements following the outcome of this review but will continue to report on this data until such time.

1.2 Haringey's Ofsted Statistical Neighbours group includes the following boroughs:

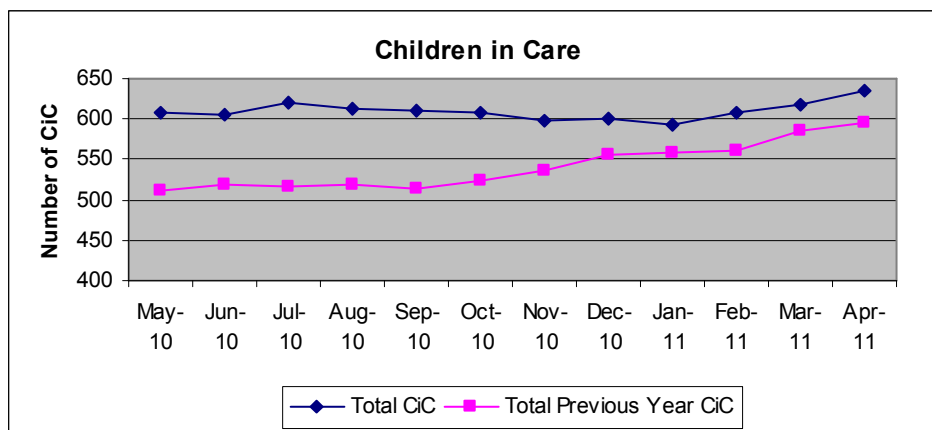
- Croydon
- Greenwich
- Hackney
- Hammersmith and Fulham
- Haringey
- Islington
- Lambeth
- Lewisham
- Southwark
- Waltham Forest
- Wandsworth



Haringey Council

2. Children in Care Performance Data – 30 April 2011 (a 2010/11 year-end report of all key child in care indicators with agreed 2011/12 targets will be presented to the next meeting of CPAC).

- 2.1 Following a sharp rise in numbers of children in care in 2009/10, although slightly higher, overall numbers of children in care stabilised throughout 2010/11. However, there was an increase in the proportion of care proceedings initiated in 2010/11 with 243 care proceedings initiated between April 10 and March 11 compared with 186 between April 09 and March 10, requiring more complex work and allocation of resource.
- 2.2 At the end of April 2011, there were 635 children in care (based on a manual calculation done mid-year, this equates to an estimated 400 families). This remains higher than comparator averages. 35 children became looked after in the month and 12 children ceased to be looked after in the month. The chart below shows the month by month changes to the total numbers of children in care compared with the previous year.

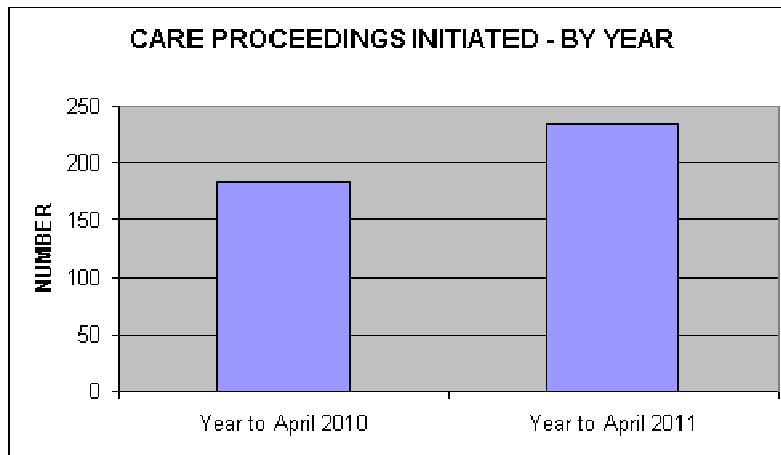


Children who Came into Care by Age – Apr 2011	
Age	Number
Under 1	6
1-4	5
5-9	9
10-15	11
16-17	4
Total	35



Haringey Council

5 care proceedings were initiated in April. The graph below shows the increase in the 12 months to the end of April 2010 and the 12 months to the end of April 2011. This is around 30% higher than the previous 12 months.



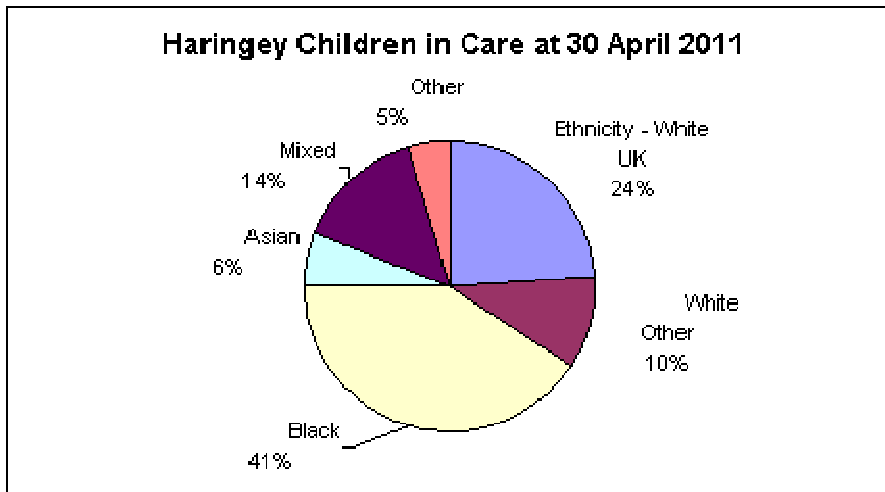
2.3 The total number of children in care at the end of April equates to a rate of 129 children per 10,000 population, a slightly higher position to that at the end of March 2010. The table below shows a breakdown of numbers of children in care in our statistical neighbour comparator boroughs and rates per 10,000 population of children under 18 at 31 March 2010. The graph shows the increase in the rate of children in care in Haringey over the last 3 years compared with our statistical neighbours and the national picture. Lambeth is demographically our most directly comparable borough.

	2009/10	2009/10 Rate Per 10,000
Hackney	305	59
Ham and Fulham	255	82
Haringey	590	121
Islington	315	94
Lambeth	565	105
Lewisham	525	90
Southwark	555	101
Wandsworth	205	41
Croydon	1010	126
Greenwich	590	111
Waltham Forest	340	63
SN Average		90
National Average		58

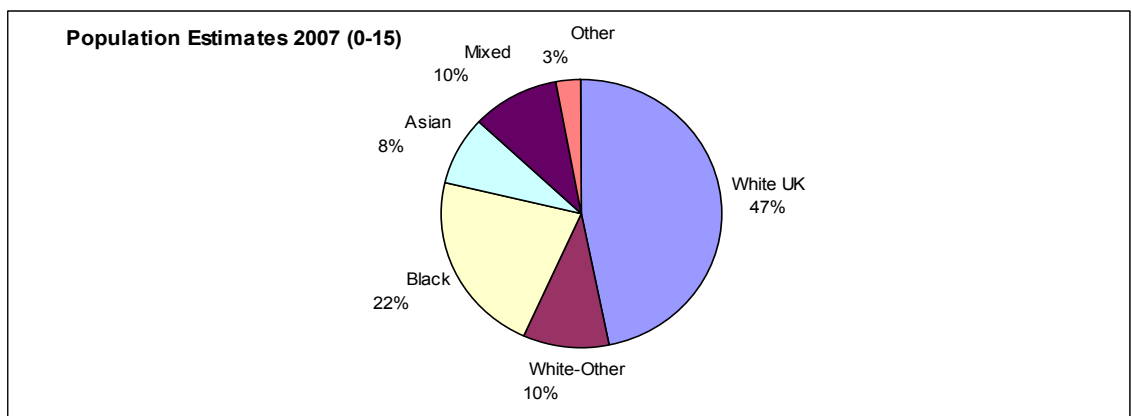


Haringey Council

- 2.4 Of the 635 children in care at the end of April 2011:
- 38 are unaccompanied minors (6%).
 - 12 children are those who have been placed in care as a result of the Southwark Judgement (16/17 year olds presenting as homeless) (2%).
 - 27 are children recorded with a disability and allocated to the children with disabilities team (4.3%).
- 2.5 The ethnic breakdown of children in care at the end of April is detailed in the charts below, this also shows a breakdown of 2001 census data on ethnicity of children aged 0-17 in the borough and the 2007 population estimates for children aged 0-15 in the borough (estimates are not available for 0-17 year olds as these only go up to working age and then beyond):

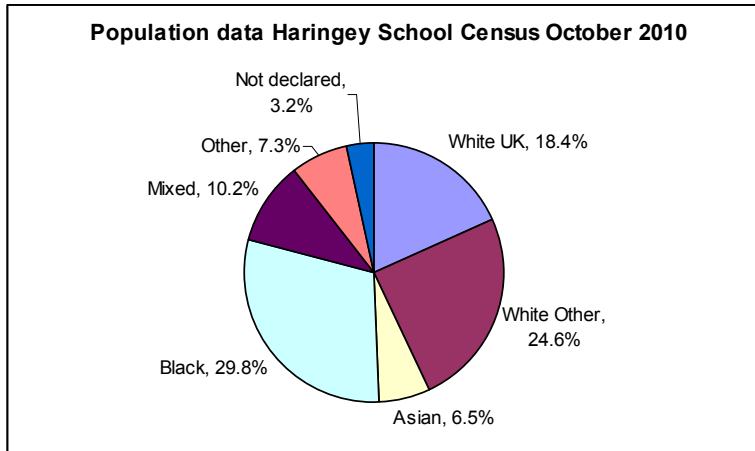


This chart shows that the largest proportion of children in care are black (41%), an over representation when compared with a school population of around 30% of under 18's or 22% of 0-15 (ONS population statistics).

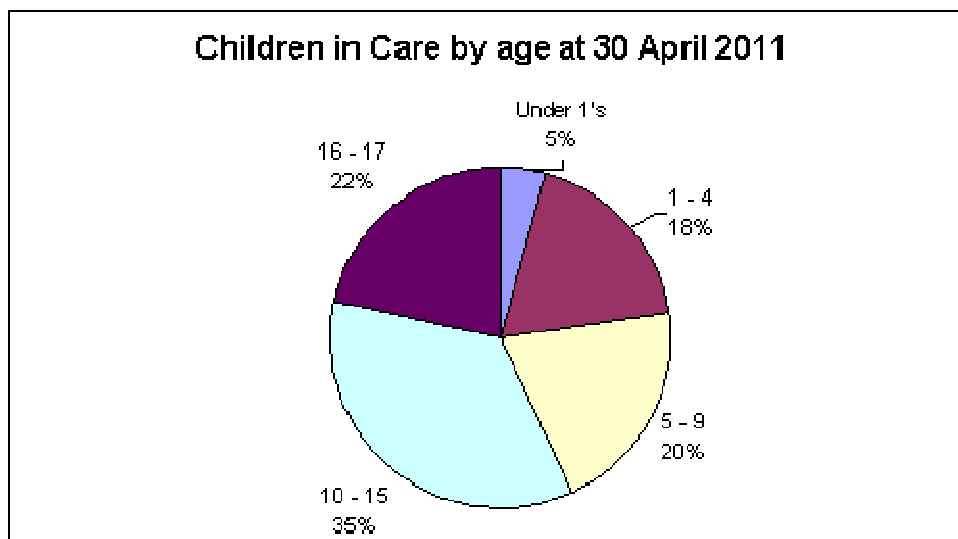




Haringey Council



2.6 The age breakdown of children in care at the end of April is as detailed below, the largest proportion of children we currently work with are between 10 and 15 year olds (35%) and the smallest proportion is those under 1 (5%).

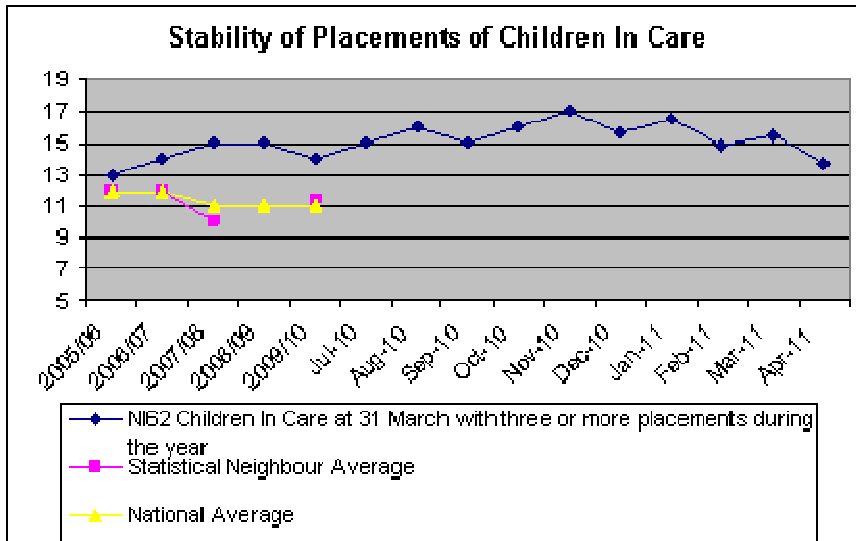


2.7 Children in care must have their circumstances and care plan independently reviewed every 6 months. 92% of children in care cases which should have been reviewed at the end of April, were reviewed in timescale, this is 14 who were not reviewed in timescale to date.

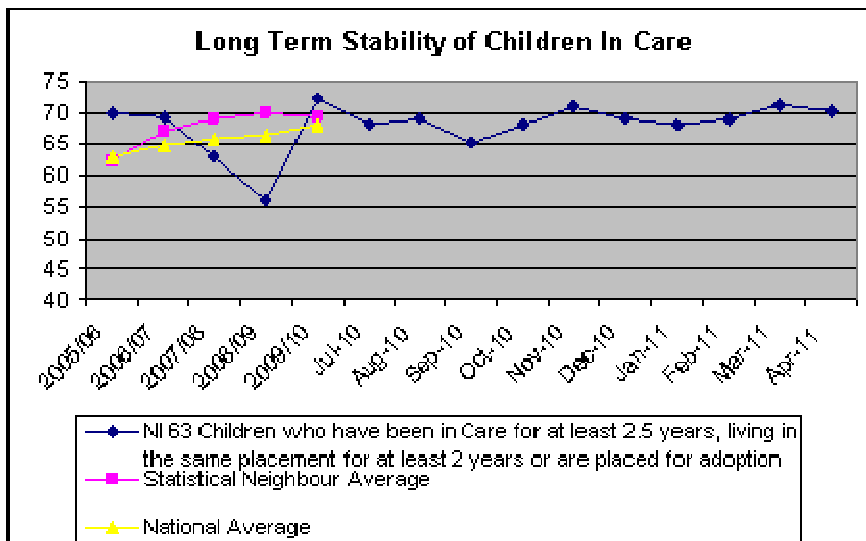
2.8 Placement stability– Good performance in this area is indicated as achieving less than 16% of children in care moving 3 or more times in the whole year. In the previous 12 months 13.7% of children have had 3 or more placements. The graph below shows comparative data for this indicator over the last 5 years:



Haringey Council



2.9 NI63 – This is another measure of placement stability. 70% of children in care for 2.5 years or more had been in their placement for at least 2 years at the end of April 2011. This is 101 out of 144 children who were looked after for 2.5 years or more and in their placement for 2 years or more. The graph below shows comparative data for this indicator.



2.10 **Children placed out of borough** (note that a children placed in foster placements out of borough will include those placed with a Haringey foster carer living outside of Haringey). Around 70% of children looked after are placed outside of Haringey, the breakdown below details the proportion of children placed outside of Haringey by borough (note that this summary is based on December data and is updated quarterly – those shaded are those in our neighbouring boroughs).



Haringey Council

Haringey placed in	Number of Children placed outside Haringey	% of children placed outside Haringey By LA
Enfield	97	16.1%
Other	95	15.8%
Waltham Forest	41	6.8%
Redbridge	23	3.8%
Barnet	21	3.5%
Islington	19	3.1%
Kent	16	2.6%
Croydon	13	2.1%
Essex	13	2.1%
Lewisham	10	1.6%
Bexley	9	1.5%
Camden	9	1.5%
Havering	7	1.1%
Hillingdon	7	1.1%
Medway	7	1.1%
Newham	7	1.1%
Ealing	6	1.0%
Epping forest	6	1.0%
Brent	5	0.8%
Hackney	5	0.8%
Surrey	5	0.8%
Total placed out borough	421	70%
Total CiC @ 31 Dec 2010	600	

* Other = A combination of LA that have less than 5 Haringey children placed in them. These are Barking and Dagenham, Bedford, Birmingham, Braintree, Bromley, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cotswold, Cumbria, Derby, Devon, Doncaster, Dudley Metropolitan, Durham, Ealing, East Riding of Yorkshire, East Sussex, Epping Forest, France, Gravesend, Greenwich, Hammersmith and Fulham, Hampshire, Harrow, Hastings, Hertfordshire, Hertsmere, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Isle of Wight, Lambeth, Lincolnshire, Luton, Merton, Milton Keynes, Neath Port Talbot, North Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Powys County Council, Preston, Reading, Rochdale, Rochester, Shepway, South Gloucestershire, Southend on Sea, Southwark, Staffordshire, Stevenage, Stockport, Suffolk, Sutton, Telford & Wrekin, Tower Hamlets, Upminster, USA, West Sussex, Worcestershire, Worthing.



Haringey Council

In addition, there are a number of children from other boroughs placed in Haringey. The breakdown by borough is tabled below:

Borough placing child in Haringey	Number of children
* Other	64
Islington	44
Enfield	29
Barnet	27
Camden	27
City of Westminster	11
Brent	10
Waltham Forest	10
Essex	8
Hammersmith & Fulham	8
Tower Hamlets	5
Total	243

* Other = A combination of Local Authorities that have less than 5 Children placed in Haringey. These are: Bexley, Birmingham City Council, Calderdale Council, Coventry City Council, Croydon, Denbighshire County Council, Dundee City Council, Ealing, East Yorkshire, Greenwich Council, Hackney, Hertfordshire, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kent County Council, Lambeth, Lewisham, Bromley, Luton, Milton Keynes, Manchester City Council, Newham, Peterborough, Redbridge, Rotherham, Kensington and Chelsea, Sheffield, Surrey, West Sussex, Westminster

- 2.11 Visits to Children in Care. 84% (532 out of 635) of children in care at the end of April (excluding those who came into care in the last week of the month) had a visit completed in timescale (6 weekly or 3 monthly where agreed by a manager).
- 2.12 A special guardianship order on 1 child has been granted in April and no adoption orders.
- 2.13 77% of children in care were placed in foster placements or placed for adoption at the end of April and 21% were placed in residential accommodation. The remaining proportion of children are placed at home or missing from placement.
- 2.14 We report on two performance indicators in relation to young people leaving our care. One is a sub-set of the overall Not in Education Employment or Training activity – 1 out of 3 of care leavers who turned 19 in April were in education training or employment on or around their 19th birthday.



Haringey Council

2.15 2 out of 3 care leavers turning 19 in April were living in suitable accommodation on their 19th birthday.

2.16 Children missing from Care – April 2011. 3 children were missing from care at the end of April. New protocols have now been agreed for Care Homes and Foster carers to make a clear distinction between children absconding and children missing from care and the appropriate action to take depending on the assessed risk to the child/young person.

4. Foster Carer Recruitment

77% of all our children are placed in foster care. More than half are placed with carers provided by the independent sector. These placements are on average twice the cost of our in-house carers and often at some distance from the borough.

The pressure to increase the numbers of in-house foster carers is therefore significant and a considerable amount of work is underway to increase and improve our performance in this area – including the construction of a more accessible and professional website and improved marketing materials. In the month of April:

- We have had 49 enquiries
- 22 people attended information sessions
- 5 prospective carers attended initial visits. From this visit and assuming they are still interested and we believe they are potential carers, they will attend a 3 day training/preparation course and be taken through a lengthy and detailed assessment which is then presented to the Fostering Panel
- No new carers have been approved in April

From start to finish this process can take six months and there is generally a high attrition rate – 10% conversion from initial interest to be coming a carer is considered normal.

This page is intentionally left blank

**Haringey** Council

Briefing for:	Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee
Title:	Corporate Parenting Strategy
Lead Officer:	Debbie Haith
Date:	27 June 2011



Haringey Council

Corporate Parenting Strategy

Lead Directorate: Children and Young People's Services

DRAFT

Directorate**Document control****Needs completing**

Version 0.1	Status <i>Draft 5 – 14 June 2011</i>	Author <i>Patricia Walker, Principal Policy Officer, Corporate Policy and Performance, Chief Executive's Service</i>
Document Objectives:		
Intended Recipients: Any staff working with children in care		
Monitoring Arrangements: The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee will monitor the strategy and action plan.		
Training/Resource Implications:		
Approving Body and Date Approved Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Council Cabinet		<i>Authority to Vary Month 20XX</i>
Date of Issue		<i>Month 20XX</i>
Scheduled Review Date One year after date approved or following and major legislative changes.		<i>Month 20XX</i>
Lead Officer: Debbie Haith, Deputy Director Children and Families		
Path and file name \\boh\boh-shared-data\hgyf\all\pip\policy, equalities and partnerships\corporate policy\corporate parenting\policy document\110419 corporate parenting strategy - cllr comments.doc		

Version History

Version	Change/Reasons for Change	Date
V0.1	<i>Initial draft</i>	<i>12/12/10</i>
V0.1.1	<i>Draft 2 – following initial feedback from CYPS</i>	<i>21/12/10</i>
V0.1.3	<i>Draft 3 – following Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee</i>	<i>28/2/2011</i>
V0.1.4	<i>Draft 4 - following Children's Trust meeting</i>	<i>14 April 2011</i>
V0.2	<i>Final draft</i>	
V1.0	<i>Final</i>	

Approval history

Version	Approving body	Date
V0.2	<i>Internal Management Team</i>	
V0.2	<i>Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee</i>	
V0.2	<i>Children's Trust</i>	
	<i>Cabinet</i>	

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	6
2. Definition.....	7
3. Scope	7
4 Roles and responsibilities	8
4.1 The role of Councillors.....	8
4.2 The role of council officers and partners	9
5. What our looked after children and young people have to say 9	
5.1 Involving children and young people	9
5.2 What looked after children and young people want	10
6 Our Vision and Aims	10
7 Principles	11
8. Objectives	12
9 Implementation.....	13
9.1 Governance arrangements.....	13
9.2 Officer arrangements.....	13
9.3 Monitor.....	13
9.4 Training.....	14
9.5 Review.....	14
10 Equalities and diversity	14
11 Appendices	16
Appendix 1: Definitions of eligible, relevant and qualifying young people ..	16
Appendix 2: The legal context.....	17
Appendix 2: Guidance and resources	18

1. Introduction

The concept of "corporate parenting" was introduced with the launch of the *Quality Protects* programme in 1998. The principle is that the local authority is the parent of any child in their care, and thus has a legal and moral duty to provide the kind of support that any good parents would provide for their own children. This includes enhancing children's quality of life as well as simply keeping them safe (House of Commons Children, Schools and Family Committee March 2009).

This Corporate Parenting Strategy shows Haringey Council's commitment to ensuring that every child and young person in our care has a right to achieve the outcomes we want for every child. We want the children and young people in our care to grow up as happy and successful as possible.

The strategy will be accompanied by an action plan to guide implementation, which requires the active engagement of all staff and of elected members.

The circumstances and experiences of children and young people who are in care mean that they can be subject to many disadvantages. Since the 1980s research has shown that these young people have significantly different outcomes from their peers. The most recently published national statistics show that, despite recent improvement, at September 2009:

- on average 58 per cent of looked after children in the appropriate age group achieved level 2 at Key Stage 1 and 51 per cent achieved level 4 at Key Stage 2. The comparable percentages for all children were 85 per cent and 82 per cent respectively;
- 15 per cent of children looked after continuously for at least twelve months obtained at least 5 GCSEs or GNVQs at grades A*- C compared with 70 per cent of all children;
- 9 per cent of looked after children aged 10 or over, were cautioned or convicted for an offence during the year, two and a half times the rate for all children of this age.

Poor outcomes can be due to circumstances before the young person came in to care, such as irregular school attendance, or circumstances while in care such as placement instability. In addition more recent research is showing evidence that exposure to high levels of parental stress, neglect or abuse can have a severe effect on brain development. There are clear gaps between the development of children who face such stresses and those being brought up in less stressful households, gaps which continue through life. Many children in care will have experienced such circumstances.

So children and young people in care or looked after need champions to ensure they are given opportunities to help them overcome such disadvantages and to achieve to their maximum potential. They have a right to expect the outcomes we want for every child that they will:

- be healthy
- be safe

- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic wellbeing

They need people to promote and encourage these outcomes on their behalf in the way that all good parents would.

2. Definition

The responsibility of local authorities in improving outcomes and actively promoting the life chances of children they look after has become known as 'corporate parenting' in recognition that the task must be shared by the whole local authority and partner agencies. The role of the corporate parent is to act as the best possible parent for each child they look after and to advocate on his/her behalf to secure the best possible outcomes.¹

In our [Children and Young People's Plan 2009-2020](#) the Council and its partners in the Haringey Children's Trust state that we have a special responsibility for our children in care:

We have to act as parents. Together we need to ensure that our looked after children attend school and are supported to do well; that they get regular health checks; that they make friends and have a social life and that they are helped to prepare for living independently. Above all our responsibility is to listen to them.

3. Scope

There were 600 children and young people in care at the end of 2010. This strategy applies to all the children and young people in the care of Haringey Council.

It also applies to young people aged 16-21 (or 24 in certain circumstances) who have been in care and meet the criteria to be an eligible, relevant or qualifying young person for support or assistance after leaving care. Definitions of these terms is given in *appendix 1*. The definitions can also be found in the [Children's Social Care Procedures Manual](#).

We recognise that many agencies in the borough have a role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and therefore contribute to the well being of children in care or young people who have been in care.

¹ The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Mach 2010

4 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The role of Councillors

Under the 2004 Children Act and accompanying statutory guidance² the Cabinet Member for Children's Services has the lead political role in ensuring that children looked after by the local authority have:

- their interests protected,
- their opportunities maximised,
- their educational achievement enhanced,
- their voices heard, and
- care services shaped to meet their needs.

However the guidance also states that all members of the local authority have a shared responsibility for corporate parenting.. Councillors do not have to be social care experts to help children who are in care or looked after. They need to make it their business to find out who and where these children are and to make sure the council is doing its very best to help them. The role of the Corporate Parent is to ensure for children in public care the outcomes that every good parent would want for their own children. Councillors have a right and a duty to question practice. Councillors who do not have a direct role with children can still exercise this responsibility and promote the interests of children in care through their involvement with other council services, their ward work or external roles such as being a school governor.

In 2003 the DfES (DCSF as was) published *'If this were my child: A councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent'*. This guide emphasised the role of councillors as:

If this were your child... you would want to know they were well looked after, making progress at school, getting good health care and being given the chance to pursue hobbies and interests.

If this were your child... as they grew older, you would want to know that they were being encouraged to become independent, with support if they needed it, that they were well linked in to the community and that opportunities for further education, training and jobs were opening up to them.

Haringey has a Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee (CPAC), which brings together members from across the political spectrum to focus on the corporate parenting role. It is supported by officers from the Housing Service, Health service and Children and Young People Service. The CPAC is responsible for the Council's corporate parenting role and for those children and young people who are in care. It will oversee the implementation of this strategy and the action plan. Further information on the CPAC is given in the section on implementation and governance arrangements below.

² [The Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services](#)

4.2 The role of council officers and partners

Under the Children Act 2004 the Director of Children's Services (DCS) has a statutory role. Guidance stipulates that one of their key roles is supporting looked after children, in particular by promoting strong corporate parenting and focusing on improving their outcomes.

All officers in the Council and Children's Trust are corporate parents and have the following specific roles:

- promoting the needs of children in care and care leavers;
- considering the impact on the lives of children in care and care leavers when setting priorities and establishing policies;
- contributing to the development of services which aim to improve the life chances of children in care and care leavers and which reflect the priorities of the corporate parenting strategy.

5. What our looked after children and young people have to say

5.1 Involving children and young people

In Haringey we take seriously what looked after children and young people themselves expect from us. We will work to ensure that the issues identified as crucial by young people themselves³ are met. All young people must be consulted about plans made for them, and their reviews, in ways appropriate for the individual young person.

We use a variety of measures to consult with our young people in care overall about their experiences of, and views on, being in care. This includes:

- The Director of the Children and Young People's Service meets young people in care every six weeks;
- Quarterly meetings for young people in the leaving care and asylum service;
- Stocktake – an annual evaluation⁴ of services by young people in care;
- The Boys Group, for primary school age boys;
- Young Advisors – young people who provide a consultancy service for professionals;
- Youth Mark Assessors who will assess and evaluate how well organisations provide services;
- Involving them in staff recruitment, the commissioning process for services and tendering for semi-independent housing;
- Training young people for regulation 33 inspections;
- Involvement in Total Respect training.

The Council has set up a children in care council, called Aspire: Giving Haringey Young People in Care a Voice. A report on the proposals was submitted to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee in November

³ [Celebrating success: what helps looked after children succeed](#) SWIA Jun 2006

⁴ [Children in Care Stocktake](#) June 12th 2010 report to Corporate Parenting Group July 2010

2010. The report noted that initial meetings had taken place with young people in care who were suggesting that the forum should be called the Young and in Care Council (YCC). They have also proposed that YCC should have two sub groups, one for children under 12 and another for older children aged 13 and above, and a representative for the national forum.

5.2 What looked after children and young people want

We know from national studies that children in care want:

- to have more people that genuinely care about them;
- increased stability and consistency;
- more encouragement, support and opportunity for greater participation;
- social workers to spend time with them and act in their interests;
- social workers and others to take decisive action where their needs are not being met;
- increased support for them in their education;
- good support for those leaving care and becoming independent;
- more positive attitudes towards them.

From the stock take activity in July 2010 we know that locally:

- the majority of younger children felt safe in care but the opposite was the case for older children;
- 25% of younger children thought that help with their education was poor and 40% that help in finding good jobs in the future was poor;
- 78% of the teenagers thought that help with education and getting good jobs was poor or very poor;
- 60% of younger children said they enjoyed good activities and leisure time, but 22% had very negative responses and 64% of older children rated these experiences as poor;
- both groups said they would prefer their social worker to visit monthly;
- both groups had little confidence in their views being listened to.

A full summary of the results is included in the ¹ [Children in Care Stocktake](#) report to the Corporate Parenting Group in July 2010.

6 Our Vision and Aims

Haringey's Children and Young People's Plan 2009 –2020, developed by the Children's Trust, has adopted the following vision for all children and young people locally:

We want every child and young person to be happy, healthy, safe and confident about the future.

This strategy works to put this vision in place for the children and young people for whom we are the corporate parents. It aims to ensure that:

- Young people in care can access the local services when they need them, and their experience is of the highest quality.

- Officers across the council and their relevant partners know who to talk to, feel comfortable working together, share information and are jointly accountable for their work with young people in care.

7 Principles

All partners in Haringey's Children's Trust have adopted the [London Pledge](#). The Pledge aims to ensure that children and young people in care across London have equal access to the same range of key services and support wherever they live, go to school or access employment or training opportunities in London.

The London Pledge is a commitment from all Children's Trusts and their partners to all children and young people in care and leaving care. This pledge has been developed in partnership with young people, Lead Members for Children's Services and partners from the Community and Voluntary Sector.

The Council and its partners are fully committed to delivering on the principles within the London Pledge. The next section sets out our specific objectives that we are committed to achieving for our looked after children.

Principles

1. We will only promise you things that we know we can do.
2. We will care for you as an individual person with your own specific needs which we will plan to meet.
3. You will have the opportunity to talk to your social worker alone every time he/she visits you.
4. We will always involve you in the decisions we take for you and we will respect your right to make choices about your life.
5. We aim to be the best as parents and to make your experience of being looked after a positive one.
6. We want you to be healthy, safe, have fun and gain achievements for yourself. We want you have stability in your life, to make a positive contribution to your community and to leave care able to make your way successfully in life. We will support you to achieve all this.
7. We will have expectations of you as well and we will make these clear to you.
8. We will listen to you as individuals and as a group and we want you to tell us when you meet us whether we are keeping our promises.
9. We will take account of your particular needs, especially those relating to disability, race, culture, religion and sexuality. We will take account of anything that is leading to you being treated unfairly and will give you support to

overcome it, including anyone treating you unfairly because you are in care.

10. We will ensure you receive your full set of rights, as set out in relevant legislation, regulations and guidance and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

11. We will also ensure you receive your London Pledge entitlements, wherever you live. Any failure on the part of councils and their Children's Trust partners to deliver this will be promptly resolved.

8. Objectives

To meet the vision, key outcomes and the principles set out above as well as acting on what our looked after children have told us we have developed the following key objectives:

A. We will improve the care (including quality and stability of placements) for all of our looked after children through:

- ensuring children are well matched to the best placement for them and supported in those placements based on care plans that are regularly reviewed and positively assessed externally by Ofsted
- children and young people are cared for by staff or carers who are safely recruited, trained, supervised and managed to deliver the highest quality of care

B. We will seek to maintain and improve the health of our looked after children through regular health assessments and ensuring their health needs are responded to quickly and effectively

C. We will improve the emotional well-being of our looked after children and increase self esteem and confidence so that they can contribute and make positive contributions that mean they influence the development of services and policies / plans that impact on them now and in the future

D. We will improve the educational outcomes of our looked after children to ensure that they reach their potential, with support and additional help when needed

E. We will increase opportunities for our looked after children to enjoy themselves through ensuring they have access to the same range of social activities, places to go and things to do, that are available to all young people

F. We will ensure that our looked after children are supported in planning for their future through seeking their engagement in education, employment and training opportunities that will support them in achieving future economic well being and success

9 Implementation

9.1 Governance arrangements

The responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this strategy lies with Haringey's Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee which was established in April 2009. The Committee reports to the Cabinet and full Council. It is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and has three other Members of the Majority Group and three Members of the Minority Group.

The terms of reference originally agreed by Cabinet and then reconfirmed by the Council's Cabinet in June 2010 are as follows:

- To be responsible for the Council's role as Corporate parent for those children and young people who are in care
- To ensure the views of children in care are heard
- To seek to ensure that the life chances of children in care are maximised in terms of health, educational attainment and access to training and employment to aid the transition to a secure and fulfilling adulthood
- To ensure that the voice and needs of disabled children are identified and provided for
- To provide an advocacy function within the Children's Trust and the Council on behalf of children in care
- To monitor the quality of care provided by the council to Children in Care
- To ensure that children leaving care have sustainable arrangements for their future wellbeing

Twice a year the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee meets with the Children in Care Council to ensure members are aware of the views of young people on the progress of corporate parenting in Haringey.

9.2 Officer arrangements

There is an interagency officer corporate steering group which is responsible for the development of services to secure the best outcomes for children and young people looked after. This group will take forward the corporate parenting strategy through the development of an action plan to be agreed annually by the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee. They can also be commissioned to undertake particular pieces of work.

9.3 Monitor

The [Children and Young People's Plan](#) and [Safeguarding and Children Looked After Children Action Plan](#) include the key activities to ensure that this policy is implemented. We will audit and monitor performance of our activities to ensure that we are fulfilling our role as corporate parents and achieving the outcomes set out in section 5.

We will monitor that all looked after children have:

- An allocated social worker
- Statutory reviews at least as often as specified in the Children Act 1989 regulations, or more often if needed
- A care plan

- A placement plan
- A personal educational plan (for all 5 -16 year olds)⁵
- Specific educational monitoring and support via the virtual school for looked after children
- Regular health assessments and reviews
- Free accommodation whilst they are in full time higher education
- Free access to leisure facilities
- The right to an independent advocacy service
- The right to know how to make complaints and to have their complaints investigated, with feedback
- Their views taken into account

We will monitor that all children leaving care have:

- a pathway plan and personal advisor if they are aged 16 or over and meet the eligible, relevant or qualifying criteria, see section 3 above
- if they are not eligible they should be assessed as a child in need and a plan drawn up to identify the support and services which will be needed by them and their family to ensure that the return home is successful

We will consider:

- the looked after children service plan
- the annual reviews of the statement of purpose and overview report of Haringey children's homes, the fostering service and the adoption service
- the annual report of the looked after children review service
- the overview of complaints relating to looked after children and young people and care leavers

9.4 Training

All relevant officers will be made aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities through generic and specific training.

9.5 Review

This strategy will be reviewed **annually**, or sooner if new legislation, codes of practice or national standards are introduced.

10 Equalities and diversity

In order to evidence that the needs of **all** local looked after children and young people are met the following should be recorded:

⁵ And up to 18 for children who remain in education. This will apply to all children in 2015 when the school leaving age rises to 18. It will rise to 17 in 2013.

- All equalities strands should be considered throughout assessments and when services are being provided (disability, HIV/AIDS, gender, race, nationality, belief and religion, sexuality)
- The communication and language needs of looked after children and young people and their carers should always be considered e.g. there may be need for an interpreter or written material in an alternate format or a language other than English.
- Arrangements should be made for advocates, interpreters, relatives or friends, to assist a looked after child or young person where necessary.

DRAFT

11 Appendices

Appendix 1: Definitions of eligible, relevant and qualifying young people

Child protection procedures manual (extract): leaving care

Eligible Young People

They are aged 16 or 17, have been Looked After for a period or periods totalling at least 13 weeks starting after their 14th birthday and are still Looked After. There is a duty to support these young people up to the age of 18, wherever they are living. This does include young people remanded into local authority care if the period of remand is for 13 weeks or more and asylum-seeking young people, if they were looked after for the required 13 weeks. It does not include children who have been in receipt of a number of planned short-term breaks, and return to their parents / someone with parental responsibility after each one or young people who return home whilst still looked after for a period of 6 months or more.

Relevant Young People

They are aged 16 or 17 and are no longer Looked After, having previously been in the category of Eligible Young Person when Looked After. There is a duty to support relevant young people up to the age of 18, wherever they are living. This does include young people detained by the Court or in hospital who would otherwise be eligible. However, if after leaving the Looked After service, a young person returns home for a period of 6 months or more to be cared for by a parent or adult relative and the return home has been formally agreed as successful, he or she will no longer be a "Relevant Young Person".

Former Relevant Young People

They are aged 18 to 21 (or up to 24 if attending an agreed course in further or higher education), and have left the Looked After service having been previously either "eligible", "relevant" or both. There is a duty to consider the need to support these young people wherever they are living. If at the age of 21 the young person is still being helped by the local authority with full-time education or training, s/he remains a former relevant child to the end of the agreed programme.

Qualifying Young People

In order to be a qualifying young person s/he should have been Looked After for at least 24 hours post his/her 16th birthday, apart from those young people covered by the fact they were being Privately Fostered or subject to a Special Guardianship Order.

Any young person aged under 21 (under 24 if in full-time education or training) who cease to be Looked After or Accommodated in a variety of other settings, or ceases to be Privately Fostered.

Appendix 2: The legal context

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

Built on varied legal systems and cultural traditions, the Convention is a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations. These basic standards—also called human rights—set minimum entitlements and freedoms that should be respected by governments.

[The Children Act 1989](#) is the key piece of legislation with respect to corporate parenting and sets out the duties of local authorities in relation to children looked after by them. Section 27 of the Act places a duty on Housing, Education and Health Authorities to assist Social Services to fulfil their functions under the Act, and this includes assisting with the corporate parenting function.

[The Children \(Leaving Care\) Act 2000](#) set the agenda and duties of local authorities towards young people who have been looked after in bridging the gap between these young people and their peers.

[The Children Act 2004](#) provides a legislative spine for the wider strategy for improving children's lives. The Children Act 2004 places a new duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.

[Children and Young Persons Act 2008](#) reforms the statutory framework for the care system to ensure that children and young people receive high-quality care and support and to drive improvements in the delivery of services focused on the needs of the child.

[The Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services.](#) DCSF 2009 (statutory guidance issued under sections 18[7] and 19[2] of Children Act 2004)

[The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement Case Review](#) March 2010 DCSF/DfE [came into force on 1st April 2011]

This guidance sets out the functions and responsibilities of local authorities and partner agencies under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989. In particular it describes how local authorities should carry out their responsibilities in relation to care planning, placement and case review for looked after children. These responsibilities are designed to support the local authority in its primary duty set out in section 22(3) of the 1989 Act to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked after children and act as good corporate parents.

[The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(England\) Regulations 2010](#) Statutory Instrument 2010 No. 959 made 24th March 2010 [came into force - - 1st April 2011]

[The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers](#) DfE [came into force on 1st April 2011]

[Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering services \(HTML format\)](#) published by Department for Education 11 March 2011

The guidance sets out the functions and responsibilities of local authorities and their partner agencies in relation to fostering services under Parts 3, 7 and 8 of the Children Act 1989. It also covers responsibilities arising from the Children Act 2004 and the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 in relation to fostering services.

[Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children](#) Department of Health 16 November 2009

[Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities](#) DCSF/DfE March 2010

Appendix 2: Guidance and resources

[The Who Cares trust website.](#) Gives an insight into what life in care is like and what the issues are for children in care.

[Having Corporate Parents:](#) A report of children's views by the Children's Rights Director for England. Ofsted 2011

[Young person's guide to care planning](#) DfE worked with the Office of the Children's Rights Director to produce this young person's guide to the Care Planning regulations. Available on Welcome to Rights4me! the website of the Children's Rights Director for England. March 2011

[If This Were My Child:](#) a Councillor's Guide to Being a Good Corporate Parent DCSF 2003 (this has been archived by DfE but is still available for reference use)

[The Ofsted Inspection framework](#) – on the Ofsted website.



Haringey Council

Briefing for:	Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee
Title:	NORTH LONDON ADOPTION AND FOSTERING CONSORTIUM ANNUAL REPORT 2010 – 2011.
Lead Officer:	Wendy Tomlinson
Date:	28 June 2011

This page is intentionally left blank

NORTH LONDON
ADOPTION AND
FOSTERING
CONSORTIUM

ANNUAL REPORT
2010 – 2011.



Contents

1. Introduction from Liz Hill, Chair of the North London Adoption & Fostering Consortium.	3
2. Report from Peter Stevens, NLAFC Manager. The Consortium	4 4
3. Membership and Organisation.	6
4. Consortium Activity.	6
5. Publicity, Advertising and Recruitment.	8
6. Training.	9
7. Heads of Service Meetings.	10
8. Adoption Managers Meetings.	10
9. Fostering Managers Meetings.	11
10. Special Guardianship Managers Meetings.	11
11. Adoption Support Meetings.	12
12. Adoption Preparation Group Organiser's meetings.	13
13. Norwood Report.	13
14. Adoption Register Report.	14
15. Development Plans 2011 – 2012.	15
Appendix 1 NLAFC Training Programme for adoption staff, 2011.	16
Appendix 2 NLAFC Training for adopters, 2011.	17
Appendix 3 Proposed NLAFC Budget 2011 – 2012.	18

1. “Welcome to the Annual report of the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium.”

2010-11 has been a busy and active year for the consortium. All five boroughs have continued to work well together and we have had helpful support from our associate member, Norwood.

We have tried out some new initiatives in our adoption work and have made a good start in developing our work in fostering. Already we are starting to see where we can operate more efficiently together and where we can learn from each other’s practice in this area of work.

We have been ably supported by our consortium manager, Peter Stevens who has taken on the additional challenge of developing our fostering work with great enthusiasm and expertise.

We look forward to another successful year, despite the harsh economic climate, as it is quite clear that by working together as members of our consortium we can produce efficiency savings and more effective usage of the resources that we do have.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Liz Hill', is positioned above the typed name.

Liz Hill – Chairperson and Head of Looked After Children’s Services,
London Borough of Enfield.



2. Report from Peter Stevens, NLAFC Manager.

Introduction:

This has been an exciting year of consolidation and expansion for the Consortium against a backdrop of political, economic and legislative change. A new political era has heralded rethinking and challenging of the way things are done in Adoption and Fostering. The economic crisis is necessitating radical cuts in the public sector and a general reappraisal of priorities. Finally, on April 1st, 2011, we are awaiting the new Adoption Guidance and National Minimum Standards in Adoption and Fostering and the implementation of Sufficiency. For the Consortium this has meant rethinking and planning how best a collaborative approach amongst its members can meet these challenges and provide opportunities for maintaining, or even developing services.

In response to these developments the Consortium :

- Is revising its Memorandum of Understanding to become the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium.
- Agreed to appoint a part time Project Manager for a year to develop Fostering in the Consortium. I agreed to take on this post to get it established and so will work full-time until October 2011. This has been achieved partly due to a grant from the North London Strategic Alliance. An Action Plan is in place and developments will be detailed later in this report.
- Is progressing new joint commissioning initiatives in adoption and fostering, and developing collaborative working in existing and new areas of work in the Consortium teams.

I find these developments exciting and challenging. But they could not be achieved without the trust and goodwill built up within the Consortium. So I would like to extend my thanks to the Managers and team members who have built such effective collaborative working relationships. Finally, my particular thanks go to Liz Hill for chairing the Consortium and acting as my supervisor and support in the last year..

The Consortium.

The last Annual Report identified some key areas of work that needed to be progressed:

- **On a strategic level Child Sufficiency Plans should incorporate NLAC activities and drive further developments (check on this)**
- **The introduction of ideas from the Northamptonshire model will be used to enhance matching of children with adopters across the Consortium and increase the number of such placements** - The Parents for Children Evening model has been adopted and the first Consortium matching evening was held in October 2010.
- **The possibilities for further joint commissioning of adoption services needs to be explored, particularly in post adoption. The idea of commissioning services needed rather than buying into existing services to be explored** – A Consortium Post Adoption Service Specification is near completion, after which contractual negotiations will proceed with the Post Adoption Centre. Other possibilities for joint commissioning are being actively explored.
- **A new administrator of the NLAC website to be commissioned. NLAC Manager to promote pan London adoption consortium initiatives in recruitment, linking and training** – The Consortium now has two websites, one for Fostering and one for Adoption. These websites have been designed, and are now administered, by the Consortium Publicity and Recruitment Group.
- **NLAC Adopted Children's Group to be established** – The Proposal for the Children's Group has been drafted and agreed by Heads of Service and Managers. The first Children's Group will take place in 2011.
- **NLAC Adoption Panel Advisors Group to be set up and annual training for Adoption Panel members to be arranged** – At present the need for a Panel Advisors Group has not been agreed. Training for Adoption Panel Members has been set up and is detailed below in Section 6.
- The Black Adopters Group has been reviewed and the decision taken not to continue due to lack of demand.
- **NLAC Manager to arrange meetings with Fostering Managers and Heads of Service to explore areas of developing joint working** – an annual Planning Meeting is held with Heads of Service and all Fostering and Adoption Managers, in the Consortium, to establish priorities and objectives, including joint commissioning proposals, for the following year.

LAC figures have increased from being stable at about 60,000 to 64,400, at the end of March 2010. As expected, the number of children adopted declined last year 3,200 looked after young people were adopted during the year ending 31 March 2010. This represents a 4% decrease from the previous year's figure of 3,300 and a 14 %

decrease from the 2006 figure of 3,700. This decline probably reflected the increased use of Special Guardianship Orders instead of adoption. However, it is expected that the numbers of children adopted will increase this year in line with the increase in numbers of Looked After Children, and of those in younger age groups.

3. Membership and Organisation.

Membership.

The Consortium comprises the five London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington. Norwood continues to be an associate member. Following letters of invitation being sent to adoption agencies in North London, in 2010, the Post Adoption Centre has been accepted to fill the second associate member place . In 2010/11 the Consortium was chaired by Liz Hill, Head of Childrens' Services in Enfield. In 2011/12 it will be chaired by Sally Joseph, Head of Childrens' Services in Camden.

Meetings.

The Consortium meets at various levels and in relation to various functions, with ongoing meetings in place for:

- Heads of Service
- Adoption Team Managers
- Fostering Team Managers
- Special Guardianship Team Managers
- Adoption Support Team Managers
- Adoption Preparation Group Organisers
- Adoption and Fostering Publicity and Recruitment Coordinators.

The work of these groups is detailed later in this Report.

Websites.

The North London Adoption Consortium website has just been completely revised this year and is now fully administered by the Consortium Publicity and Recruitment Group Organisers. This has achieved a saving of nearly £4000 annually, and also enables them to continuously update the website themselves. The website can be found at www.adoptionnorthlondon.org

This year we have also developed and posted a North London Fostering Consortium website, which is also fully administered by the P & R Group Organisers. It can be found at www.fosteringnorthlondon.org.

The websites are used as recruitment and information resources to the public, and as tools for communication and information sharing across the Consortium.

4. Consortium Activity.

Information Exchange.

One of the key functions of the Consortium is to exchange information about approved adopters and children waiting for adoption, and approved foster carers and children looking for foster homes. This is done in a variety of ways:

- On regularly updated spreadsheets which are circulated by the Consortium Manager to all the adoption and fostering teams
- In Team Manager meetings, where profiles on children to be placed are shared
- My circulating profiles by email among Consortium Managers and Adoption Social Workers.
- On occasions, profiles are circulated to all the London Consortium Managers and, on one occasion to all the national Consortia Managers. I have developed a mailing list to enable us to now circulate profiles nationally, when asked to do so.

In 2010/11, 5 children needing adoptive families were placed with approved adopters from other Borough members in the Consortium. This is an increase of 2 over the previous year. The plan is to develop Consortium matching activities to increase upon this number next year. The following table shows the number of children placed for Adoption and Special Guardianship in the Consortium by team, and those placed for adoption in other Consortium teams:

Table 1: Children placed for adoption in the NLAC Member Boroughs 2010-2011.

	Total Adoption & Special Guardianship Orders	Total children placed with other NLAFC Consortium Teams
Haringey	AO - 15 SGO - 12	3
Enfield	AO - 14 SGO - 7	1
Camden	AO - 4 (poss 7 by end March) SGO -	0
Barnet	AO - 6 (poss 13 by end March) SGO - 10	0
Islington	AO - 3 SGO - 22	1

In October 2010, the Consortium piloted a Parents for Children Evening, based on the Northamptonshire model of linking children with prospective adopters. 9 prospective and approved adopters from across the Consortium were invited to a meeting to view details of 10 children/sibling groups approved for adoption. Although no matches were made on this occasion, we learned:

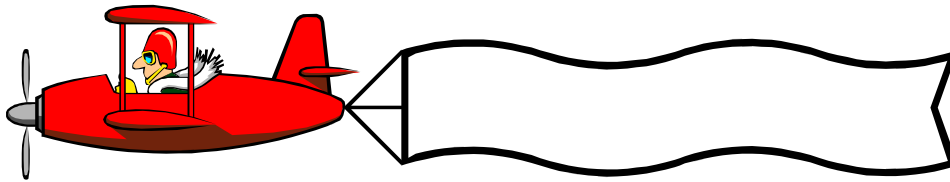
- We can run such an event across the Consortium. There had been concerns about the feasibility of such an event.
- Initial verbal feedback from the adopters who attended was good. They found it very helpful to see the children on DVD and be able to talk to the Family Finding workers about them. Several commented that it made them think more about the type and ages of children they were considering
- There is an issue in finding enough available adopters to attend, even from across the 5 Boroughs in the Consortium; and making the childrens' DVD's is a complex process.

As a result, we will be running another evening in July and we hope to make some positive links for children waiting.

The North London Adoption Consortium Manager also links in with other London Adoption Consortium Managers to exchange information about children needing adoptive homes, and to organize an Exchange Event, which took place in September, 2010, and attracted over 100 potential adopters from across London.

The Consortium also participates in 2 Adoption Exchange Events, organised by the Adoption Register, each year.

5. Publicity , Advertising and Recruitment.



The Publicity and Recruitment Group consists of five publicity and marketing officers from each of the five Boroughs comprising the Consortium. The Group is in charge of planning and co-ordinating the Consortium's Annual Adoption Recruitment Event which took place this year at the Islington Assembly Rooms, during National Adoption Week, on 2 November, 2010. Despite there being a tube strike, the event was attended by 120 interested members of the public (85 in 2010), 15 adoption social workers and all 5 Consortium Heads of Service, and acknowledged by everyone to have been a very successful evening. Sinitta was the main guest speaker and shared her experiences of adopting two children. Ian Fitzsimmons, an Islington adoptive parent gave a very informative talk about the adoption matching process and Cat Lewis gave a moving account of her experience of being adopted. Finally Patricia McCinty, from BAAF, spoke about the children who are waiting. A lively and very informative question and answer session followed. Following the event, Norwood contacted and screened over 70 of those who attended, the remainder could not be reached. 15 firm expressions of interest resulted and were passed to the Consortium adoption teams to follow up. Of these, at the beginning of December, 2010, 10 were still being progressed. Thanks go to all those who helped in the organisation and production of such a successful event.

The Group also represented the Consortium at a number of Adoption Exchange events throughout the year, as well as being present at targeted events, including London School and the Black Child, Capital Woman etc.

The Publicity and Recruitment Group meet every 4-6 weeks to discuss ways they can work together to improve the services they offer to prospective adopters and children

waiting, and recently to the fostering teams.. They then feed back respectively to each of their teams, facilitating a clear and consistent flow of communication between the five Boroughs. The Group is also responsible for the NLAC and NLFC websites, which were both updated in 2010.

The Group is currently working on a joint Consortium Fostering Marketing Plan with a view to advertising and recruiting collectively in 2011/2012.

6. Training.

- The NLAC Manager arranges a monthly training programme for adoption team members from the Consortium. The programme for 2010 is attached as Appendix 1. All courses are well attended and feedback has been positive. Certificates are issued to attendees to evidence continuing professional development. An evaluation was undertaken of attendees feedback, of 4 of last year's courses, on a random basis, and feedback was generally Good to Excellent , for each course.
- Each member Borough arranges a training course for approved adopters from across the Consortium. As such there are 5 courses per annum. The 2010 programme is attached as Appendix 2.
- The Consortium is planning large training events, in partnership with the other London Adoption Consortia, and a Conference was held with Dan Hughes on 11 February, 2011, on "Meeting the psychological needs of fostered and adopted children and young people, and their families." 400 delegates attended and feedback was universally outstanding. The cost per delegate was under £10 per head! Many thanks to Islington for letting us use the Assembly Rooms. The London Consortia Managers have agreed that we will arrange at least one such Conference each year.



- The Consortium put on an Adopting Changes Training for Trainers Course in May 2010 and ran its first course for adopters from across the Consortium, over 6 sessions, from September to November. This is a Webster-Stratton/positive parenting training programme for adopters of older children or children with behaviour management issues. The Consortium now has a pool of trained Leaders from each adoption team, who are introducing elements of the course into Preparation Training, and running shortened versions in their areas. I attended the final day of the first course and was delighted with the adopters' feedback – 10 adopters completed the training and they reported changes in their parenting; the value of having a toolbox of new strategies and techniques; and possibly avoiding the need for therapy had they been on this course when they first had their children placed. The course represents value for money for the Consortium insofar as places usually cost £400 - £500 per person.
The next course is planned for May – July, 2011.

- The Consortium ran one course for Adoption Panel Members in September, 2010. A further course will be arranged annually by the Consortium for Fostering and Adoption Panel members.

The London Consortia Managers are increasingly working together to provide high quality training at low cost. Induction training for Fostering and Adoption panel members is planned in November. The NLAFC will have 10 places at a cost of about £8 per place. Other Panel member training is planned on Safeguarding, and the National Minimum Standards, in 2010.

7. Heads of Service Meetings.

This is the steering group of the North London Adoption Consortium and meets bi-monthly to plan and develop the work of the Consortium at a strategic level. During the year this group has overseen:

- The redrafting of the Consortium Memorandum of Understanding
- The monitoring of the new pre-adoption counselling service for birth families;
- The planning of the annual adoption publicity and recruitment event and the Fostering Marketing Plan for the Consortium.
- The introduction of parents for Children evenings in the Consortium.
- The implementation of the Fostering Action Plan, appointment of the Project Officer, and the development of joint working in fostering across the Consortium.
- And provided the Consortium Chairperson.

The HOS and Managers meet annually to plan the development of the Consortium. The meeting with the Adoption and Fostering Managers in 2011 will consider developments such as joint commissioning of post adoption and other adoption services; joint recruitment and commissioning in fostering; developing shared protocols in Special Guardianship.

8. Adoption Managers Meetings.

This is the NLAC operational management group for adoption and meets monthly. The meetings have been used to:

- 1) Oversee all aspects of the NLAC operations.
- 2) Help co-ordinate the Annual Training programme.
- 3) Monitor the implementation of the Birth Family Counselling Scheme and the Overseas Adoption Service. There is a quarterly monitoring process for the Pre-Adoption Birth Family Counselling Scheme provided by Adoption Plus. There are Service Level Agreements between the five Boroughs and Norwood Adoption Agency for the provision of the Overseas Adoption Service, and the Norwood manager with responsibility for Overseas Adoption attends the NLAC Adoption Team Managers' meetings bi-annually for monitoring purposes. Feedback about this service continues to be very positive.
- 4) Exchange information about children waiting for adoption and approved adopters waiting for children.
- 5) Exchange information about best practice, policies and procedures, Ofsted inspections; administering letter box contact etc.
- 6) Oversee new developments in the Consortium e.g. Parents for Children evenings.
- 7) Develop joint commissioning e.g. post adoption services; tracing utilities.
- 8) Oversee the annual recruitment event, the NLAC website etc.

9. Fostering Managers Meetings.

This group is comprised of the five Fostering Managers from Consortium Borough teams who now meet monthly to:

- Share information about best practice, policies and procedures in Fostering and Private Fostering e.g. they have shared annual review forms; and set up a meeting to share information about Supportive Lodgings.
- Discuss issues arising from Ofsted inspections, new legislation, guidance and National Minimum Standards.
- Protocols and procedures have been developed for the sharing of Foster Carers across the Consortium. Managers are starting to try and share information about vacant long-term foster carers and children waiting for carers, and a spreadsheet is updated and circulated regularly.
- Managers have exchanged contact information about themselves and their teams so that, when placements are urgently required by other Consortium teams, they can be contacted before going to IFP's.
- Managers are considering areas for joint commissioning of services e.g. they have just agreed a proposal for a support service for foster carers who have had an allegation made against them.

A Fostering Action Plan is in place to outline planned Consortium developments in 2011 and this is monitored by Heads of Service, and the North London Strategic Alliance, who are partly funding the Fostering Project Management work currently being undertaken by the Consortium Manager..

10. Special Guardianship Managers Meetings:

These Managers meet four times per annum and focus on sharing best practice, policies and procedures, and organisational issues.

At a recent London Fostering and Adoption Network Meeting the NLAFC agreed to lead on trying to develop protocols for allowances and grants to Special Guardians in the London area.

Training for special guardianship teams will be included in the Consortium training programme and in October, John Simmonds, BAAF's Director of Policy, Research and Development, will be running a day on "New developments and best practice in Special Guardianship."

11. Adoption Support:

A Consortium Adoption Support Group meets bi-monthly to plan and develop collaborative working initiatives and share best practice. As a result, a number of exciting and productive ventures are run on a Consortium basis:

- **The NLAC Adopted Adults Group:**

Adults who have been adopted who live in North London can now attend a Consortium bi-monthly support group. This very successful group has been running for 2 years in a comfortable centre in Holloway. It provides an opportunity for attendees to discuss how adoption has influenced their lives, to consider the impact of searching for birth family members and hear other peoples' stories. The group also runs its own website.

This is what people said about the group:

'A platform for thoughtful & considerate, interactive comments'

'An opportunity to connect with other adopted adults and share experiences and hope'.

'I really enjoy the time I spend with other adults who have had similar experiences to myself. Understanding others situations and how it has affected them has helped me to come to terms with the aspects of my personality that may have been a result of moving family a lot as a child.

(Submitted by Judith Ellis, Adoption Support Social Worker, Enfield.)

The group is run by a Steering Group of adopted adults and supported by a small group of adoption support social workers from across the Consortium.

- **The NLAC Adopted Childrens' Group:**

This group is planned to run in October, 2011.

- **Joint Training of adopters:**

Five Consortium training courses are run each year for approved adopters, one by each Borough Adoption Support Team. Feedback from staff is very positive as to how these are working. The courses for 2011 are detailed in Appendix 2.

- **Pre – adoption birth family counselling:**

This is externally commissioned and provided by Adoption Plus. A Quarterly Monitoring Group meets with the service provider and reports back to Heads of Service and Adoption Managers. This service is provided by qualified counsellors in two centres in the Consortium. Referrals are steadily increasing and we are reaching a point where the additional funding allocated for extra sessions is now being utilised. Feedback from service users is good e.g. In the last quarter, the Adoption Plus Manager has received five positive feedback reports, and I have received positive emails from Managers in Barnet saying the service user “feels that Adoption Plus is an invaluable service and has further sessions booked”, and Islington reporting that everyone working with a service user of the scheme had “observed significant changes in him.”

This is an excellent example of where a tailor-made service can be commissioned to meet the needs of a particular service user group, and provide a high quality service at a lower cost.

12. The NLAC Adoption Preparation Group Organisers Meetings:

These are held quarterly involving the Adoption Preparation Training Organisers from all the Consortium members. Each Borough runs two Preparation Training Groups, per annum, for adoptive applicants from the whole Consortium area, resulting in a total of ten Groups per annum. There is an agreed protocol in place for managing this. Feedback from the Organisers is that this continues to work well

13. Norwood Report, 2010-2011:

The Norwood Adoption Service has continued to value its associate membership with NLAC, and believe we have made a valuable contribution to the work of the Consortium over the last year.

The Adoption Service continues to provide a duty and assessment service for the Consortium and the Adoption Manager provides regular updates to Team and Service Managers as requested.

Although the number of inter country enquiries has reduced in the last year, following national trends, the number of inter country assessments being presented to Panel have remained similar with 2 more than in 2009/2010.

Following the decision of the Head of Inter Country Adoption to leave Norwood in October 2010 there is now one manager responsible for both the Domestic and Inter country Service.

We are pleased to report that the Norwood Adoption Service took responsibility for the telephone screening in November 2010 following the annual recruitment event. This was well received and acknowledged in a ‘thank you’ letter from Liz Hill – Chair of the NLAC Consortium.

Norwood is continuing to develop and promote our Domestic Adoption Service and also provides a range of post adoption support services and workshops available to both inter country and domestic adopters.

In view of the revised Adoption Guidance recently circulated and at a time of significant restructure in many Local Authorities, we look forward to working with our partners in the coming year for what will hopefully provide opportunities to enhance the availability of appropriate placements for children within the statutory and voluntary sector.

BREAKDOWN OF STATISTICS - NLAC
1ST APRIL 2010 TO 31ST MARCH 2011

Local Authority	Service	1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011
Barnet	Referral	17
	Panel	4
	Welfare Supervision	2
Camden	Referral	11
	Panel	6
	Welfare Supervision	3
Enfield	Referral	18
	Panel	1
	Welfare Supervision	0
Haringey	Referral	18
	Panel	4
	Welfare Supervision	1
Islington	Referral	9
	Panel	7
	Welfare Supervision	3



14. Report to the North London Consortium from the Adoption Register for England and Wales 2010 – 2011.

The Adoption Register works very closely with the consortium and all its member agencies and in the near future the Register Manager will be attending a consortium management meeting to report on use of the Register by the consortium and the new pilot project 'Maximising the use of the Adoption Register'. The following is information about how the consortium agencies have used the Register.

Current referrals - Currently there are 45 children referred to the Register by the 5 Local Authorities, 32 of whom are from BME backgrounds and 17 of whom are aged 5 years and over.

There are also 14 families referred, 5 of whom would consider a sibling group, 7 from BME backgrounds and 8 who would consider a child aged 5 years or over.

Matches - As a result of links identified by the Adoption Register 3 Local Authorities made 7 placements, in total 10 children.

These were 4 single placements and 3 sibling groups of 2.

Of these 10 children 2 were aged 4 years or over and 5 were from BME backgrounds.

Also, as a result of links made by the Adoption Register, 4 agencies had a total of 5 children placed with 5 of their families. These agencies included 1 VAA and 3 LA's. All these 5 children were placed singly. 4 were from a BME background and all 5 were aged under 2 years.

In comparison with last year the number of children from the consortium referred to the Register has risen by almost a quarter which is in line with the trend throughout England and Wales. There has been a significant decrease in the number of adopters on the Register from the consortium with fewer than half the number there was this time last year. This is not particular different from the trend seen throughout England and Wales. 10 children were matched through Register links this year compared to 3 last year which may reflect the need for agencies to look outside the consortium for families as local resources are used up quickly with the increasing numbers of children. There was also an increase in the number of Register matches made with families from agencies in the consortium.

The consortium also fully involves itself with the exchange events organised by the Register and is a regular attender at both National and BME events with all agencies represented, profiling children in need of placement and inviting their approved adopters to attend. Children have been placed from the consortium as a result of these events. The Register also provides all the Local Authorities with information for court reports on the potential availability of families for children in proceedings for whom adoption is the LA's plan. One agency in the consortium is part of the DfE pilot project 'Maximising the use of the Register'.

Andy Stott, Adoption Register Manager, April 2011.

16. Development Plans for 2011 – 2012

Adoption:

- Adoption Panel Advisors meeting to be established
- Shared support groups across some teams in the Consortium
- Joint commissioning
 - Post adoption services
 - Tracing services
 - Intensive services to families – CAMHS; Tavistock

Fostering:

Shared training opportunities – Fostering Changes? Mother/Baby ?

Shared Skills To Foster groups to be explored.

Supportive Lodgings group consultation – April 2011

Relief carer protocols

Specialist schemes – Mother/Baby; Therapeutic fostering; Emergency and Assessment

Joint commissioning - support to foster carers who are subject to allegations.

Joint publicity and recruitment campaign.

Special Guardianship:

London allowances protocol to be steered by NLAFC.

General:

Increased links with London Adoption and Fostering Consortia and National Consortia, to share best practice, arrange training; promote matching for children and adopters etc

Peter Stevens.

Manager, North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium.

Appendix 1.

**North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium Staff Training
2011.**

1. Wednesday, 19 January, 2011
“Meltdowns and muddles - More on direct work with children in transition.”
Trainers - Marietjie Strydom, independent social worker and play therapist and
Lizanne du Plessis paediatric occupational therapist.
2. Friday, 11 February, 2011
“Meeting the psychological needs of foster and adopted children, youth, and their
families.”
Trainer - Dan Hughes, PH.D, is a Psychologist and the developer of Dyadic
Developmental Psychotherapy, an attachment focused treatment for childhood.
3. Thursday, 17 March, 2011:
“Learning from Research – How social Workers can Improve their relationship with
birth parents during court proceedings and when placing children for adoption.”
Trainers - Dr Beth Neil, Senior Lecturer, University of East Anglia and Joanne Alper,
Director of Adoption Plus.
4. Monday, 18 April, 2011
“Managing Diversity in assessments” – Roana Roach , BAAF.
5. Wednesday, 18 & 25 May, 2011
“The new Adoption Guidance, and National Minimum Standards in Adoption and
Fostering for Staff. – Seamus Jennings, Independent Training Consultant.
6. Thursday, 16 June, 2011
“Legal and Medical issues and updates in adoption.” – Rebecca Evanson, Medical
Advisor, London Borough of Islington and Leonie Jordan, Solicitor.
7. Thursday, 21 July, 2011
“The new Guidance, and National Minimum Standards in Adoption and Fostering for
Panel Members. – Seamus Jennings, Independent Training Consultant.
8. September
TBA
9. Thursday, 27 October, 2011
“Special Guardianship” – John Simmonds, BAAF.
10. November
TBA



Appendix 2

The NLAC Training Programme for Approved Adopters – 2010.

1. **January** – Islington – Education in Adoption – Louise Bomber, PAC and Independent Trainer.
2. **March** – Camden – How to keep your child safe (on computers) – Camden IT Team.
3. **May** – Enfield – Emotion and Behaviour – Mary Corrigan, Independent trainer.
4. **July** – Barnet – Talking about Adoption – Liz Segal, Barnet Adoption Team.
5. **November** – Haringey – Parenting adopted children in teenage years – Elsie Price, Independent trainer.



Appendix 3 : PROPOSED NLAFC BUDGET 2010 – 11

Item	Cost	Justification/ notes
Adoption Programme Manager including expenses etc	£32,320	£42,813 pro rata = £25,934 + 2,594 pension + 2,020 NI + 2,020 expenses. (0% increase on 2010).
Fostering Project Worker until 30 September, 2011.	£12,500	16 hours per week (until October, 2011) £5,000 funded by North London Strategic Alliance (until October, 2011)
Birth family counselling	36,000 9,000	For additional sessions from Adoption Plus
Adoption Staff training Adoption Panel member training	15,000 1,000	As per 2009/10
Adoption support	6,700	1,000 Adopted Adults Group 2,200 Adopted Childrens' groups 2,500 NLAC Adopters training 1,000 Adopting Changes training.
P&R/ Advertising	15,000	5,000 Annual Adoption Recruitment Event. 10,000 Fostering advertising.
Websites	2,000	New provider
Adoption Exchange/ London Consortia	2,000 1,500	Adoption exchange days and costs. Parents for Children matching meetings.
Haringey Admin. Fee	5,000	As per 2009/10
TOTAL	£138,020	

This page is intentionally left blank



Haringey Council

Briefing for:	Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee
Title:	Independent Reviewing Officer role (stability and escalation)
Lead Officer:	Perminder Chahal – IRO Manager
Date:	28 June 2011

Briefing Note on the role and responsibilities of Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO)

“When they meet the child they should do this one to one so that the child can talk freely. They must check with both the child, and other people working with the child, on whether the child is OK and happy where they are living and with their care plans. They must regularly ask each child whether they are happy with how things are being done for them, and keep checking what is happening for each child against that child’s plans and the decisions made at their reviews.”

The above is an extract from the 2010 IRO hand book which is the statutory framework directing the work of IROs. The guidance and regulations aimed to keep the voices of children and young people consistently in mind.

1 The legal context

A House of Lords judgement in 2002 concluded that a local authority that failed in its duties to a looked after child could be challenged under the Human Rights Act 1998, most likely under article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights relating to family life. The judgement recognised that some children with no adult to act on their behalf may not have any effective means to initiate such a challenge. In response, the Government made it a legal requirement for an IRO to be appointed to participate in case

reviews monitor the local authority's performance in respect of reviews, and to consider whether it would be appropriate to refer cases to the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass). This is set out in 1989 Act, as amended by the 2002 Act. Later, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Reviewed Case Referral) Regulations 2004, made under section 26 of the 1989 Act, extended the functions of Cafcass so that on a referral from an IRO they could consider bringing proceedings for breaches of the child's human rights, judicial review and other proceedings.

The 2008 Act extends the IRO's responsibilities from monitoring the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to a child's review to monitoring the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to a child's case, as set out in sections 25A-25C of the 1989 Act (inserted by section 10 of the 2008 Act). The intention is that these changes will enable the IRO to have an effective independent oversight of the child's case and ensure that the child's interests are protected throughout the care planning process.

Together 1989 Act and the more recent Regulations specify:

- the duty of the local authority to appoint an IRO;
- the circumstances in which the local authority must consult with the IRO;
- the functions of the IRO both in relation to the reviewing and monitoring of each child's case; and
- the actions that the IRO must take if the local authority is failing to comply with the Regulations or is in breach of its duties to the child in any material way, including making a referral to Cafcass.

Legislation includes a power to confer the delivery of IRO services to a national body outside the control of local authorities, if, in the future, the measures to strengthen the IRO function do not contribute to a significant improvement in outcomes for looked after children.

2. The practice context

The IRO's primary focus is to quality assure the care planning and review process for each individual child and to ensure that his/her current wishes and feelings are given full consideration. To be successful, the role must be valued by senior managers and operate within a supportive service culture and environment. An effective IRO service should enable the local authority to achieve improved outcomes for children.

Every IRO should feel confident in his/her role and personal authority and understand his/her responsibilities to monitor and review the child's case and, where necessary, challenge poor practice. The guidance recognises that it is not the responsibility of the IRO to manage the case, supervise the social worker or devise the care plan. Although it is important for the IRO to develop a consistent relationship with the child, this should not undermine or replace the relationship between the social worker and the child.

3. Core functions, tasks and responsibilities

The statutory duties of the IRO are to:

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

The primary task of the IRO is to ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects the child's current needs and that the actions set out in the plan are consistent with the local authority's legal responsibilities towards the child. As corporate parents each local authority should act for the children they look after as a responsible and conscientious parent would act.

There are now 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. In both aspects of their role they must be robust in challenging decisions where professional practice is poor and not in children's interests. Equally they must question where insufficient weight has been given to the child's perspective and ensure that there is proper forward planning and an opportunity for reflection on the child's progress

As part of the monitoring function, 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 emerging not just around individual children but also more generally in relation to the collective experience of it's looked after children of the services they receive.
- Where IROs identify more general concerns around the quality of the authority's services to it's looked after children, the IRO should immediately alert senior managers about these. Equally important, the IRO should recognise and report on good practice.

4. Quality Assurance and reporting arrangements

The manager should be responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the corporate parenting board. This report should identify good practice but should also highlight issues for further development, including where urgent action is needed. It should make reference to:

- procedures for resolving concerns, including the local dispute resolution process and it should include an analysis of the issues raised in dispute and the outcomes;

- the development of the IRO service including information on caseloads, continuity of employment and the make up of the team and how it reflects the identity of the children it is serving;
- extent of participation of children and their parents;
- the number of reviews that are held on time, the number that are held out of time and the reasons for the ones that are out of time;
- outcomes of quality assurance audits in relation to the organisation, conduct and recording of reviews; and
- Whether any resource issues are putting at risk the delivery of a quality service to all looked after children.

In Haringey the annual report will be presented at Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee. The report should be available as a public document from the local authority and It would be good practice to publish this on the local authority's website.

5. Haringey Independent Reviewing Service

The IRO Service in Haringey consists of seven IROs and a manager. Over the last eight years this has been a settled and consistent team, providing stability and continuity in children's lives in very difficult and changing circumstances when the turnover of social workers has been high.

In addition to the stability they have offered children, they have been able to provide guidance and assistance to new social workers who are often unsure of systems and structures and offer a sound knowledge base in regard to placements, expectations and care planning.

When an IRO is allocated to a child/young person who has come into care they have remained with that child throughout their journey in care ensuring both continuity and stability and an ongoing knowledge of the child's history.

As part of the review process IRO's not only chair the review meeting but in many circumstances spend time talking with children and young people/parents/others prior to the actual review meeting to ensure that participants feel engaged and comfortable and all the necessary information is elicited to support decision making. In order to develop expertise and develop stronger working links with social work teams, IRO's have been assigned specialist areas of work, such as adoption and permanency. Reviews are planned to take place at times which prevent interruption of the school day and are usually held where the young person lives. Who attends the review meeting depends on the circumstances and age of the child, older children will have a say in who should actually attends the meeting and who will contribute in other ways.

As the role describes the IRO has a duty to escalate any issues that need resolution and where a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved through facilitating discussion and negotiations with social workers and managers. Over the last year (since June 2010) there have been 5 issues which have had to be escalated, they relate to transport, location and suitability of placement and sibling contact.

All issues were successfully progressed and resolved without a need to formally escalate them outside the local authority.

The increased number of looked after children has resulted in the case loads of the IRO's increasing significantly, with each post having an allocation of 85 + children they are responsible for reviewing and overseeing.

6. The development of the Independent Reviewing Service

From the 1 June 2011 the IRO service has become part of the Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Practice Development service, which has the remit of establishing a new and robust quality assurance framework covering both child protection and looked after children. The creation of this new service has coincided with the implement of the new regulations with the more rigorous expectations of challenge and with the retirement of two IRO's and another moving on to a position in another Borough.

As part of moving to the new service configuration it has been decided to amalgamate the roles of IRO and Child Protection Advisors, which whilst allowing individuals to specialise will create greater flexibility and as such has the potential to enhance capacity. The new roles are being advertised at the end of June 2011.

This page is intentionally left blank



Briefing for:	Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee
----------------------	---

Title:	Briefing Note: Adoption Agencies
---------------	---

Lead Officer:	Debbie Haith
----------------------	---------------------

Date:	28 June 2011
--------------	---------------------

1. Introduction

Adoption is based on the premise that the importance of family life cannot be overstated and that it is the fundamental right of every child to belong to a family. Where children cannot live with birth parents for whatever reason, society has a duty to provide them with a stable, safe and loving alternative.

2. Functions of an Adoption Agency

Local authorities have a duty to maintain an adoption service in their area, they is not obliged to provide all the facilities of an adoption service itself, but may make use of the services provided by voluntary adoption agencies and adoption support agencies.

The services provided are:

- Deciding whether a child should be placed for adoption
- Preparing, assessing and approving prospective adaptors
- Matching and proposing a placement
- Adoption Support Services
- Post Adoption Services

An effective specialist service in relation to inter-country adoption is provided for Haringey applicants by Norwood, voluntary adoption agency. Norwood assesses prospective adopters and undertakes welfare supervision on our behalf. The statutory reviews are chaired by our IRO.

3. Making the adoption process work well

We know how successful adoptions can be. Experience and research has made clear the factors that make the adoption process work well for the child, birth parents and adoptive parents. The local authorities that are most successful in finding adoptive families for looked after children will generally be those with a very clear care planning process that always considers adoption as a possible permanence option.

Avoiding delay in the adoption process, includes starting the family finding process as soon as adoption becomes the plan following a statutory review. Any delay which prevents the needs of the child from being met is unacceptable. Legislation makes clear that delays in coming to a decision and in the subsequent stages of the adoption process, are likely to prejudice the child's welfare.

Key elements:

- Actively promote adoption
- Taking the fullest account of the views and wishes of the child
- Placing a child with a prospective adopter who can meet most or all of the child's identified needs. Any practice that effectively stops a child from being adopted because the child and prospective adopter do not share the same racial or cultural background is not child-centred and is unacceptable.
- Providing an effective adoption support service
- Effective collaboration with the local authority's other social services and with voluntary adoption agencies so that services may be given in a coordinated manner. This avoids delay and duplication
- Developing and sustaining constructive links between adoption and looked after children's teams and the courts in order to minimise delays in court proceedings
- A practical and balanced understanding of the circumstances in which special guardianship may be more appropriate than adoption and how to manage the different processes and legal requirements.

The Legislative Framework

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 (the Act) is the principle piece of legislation governing adoption in England and Wales. It has been in force since 30 December 2005, and has been amended by other legislation since 2002. While the Children Act 1989 sets the general framework for the support of children in need and planning for their future if they become looked after, the Act provides the framework for implementing plans for adoption. Much of the detail of the adoption system is set out in regulations.

4. Adoption Panels

Adoption Panels need at least five members present including the chair/vice chair, adoption social worker and one independent member.

The Adoption Panel makes recommendations to the agency-decision maker who is a senior officer as described in the National Minimum Standards.

The panel has an adviser who is experienced in adoption, a medical adviser and a legal adviser.

When a looked after child's review recommends that adoption would be in the best interests of a child an adoption plan is developed. The process for a child to be placed with adoptive parents involves rigorous scrutiny by the agency and the court.

Guidance recommends that a child should be placed with a suitable prospective adopter within 6 months of the agency decision. Prospective adopters should expect to be considered by the panel within 8 months of their application, following a full assessment.

Haringey Adoption Service belongs to the North London Adoption Consortium (NLAC). The consortium consists of seven adoption agencies, five local authority agencies and two from the voluntary sector. The local authorities are Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington, while Norwood and PAC (Post Adoption Centre) are our voluntary agency partners.

Particular areas of co-operation include exchange of information of approved adopters and systems to more effectively achieve placements for children waiting for adoptive families. The consortium arranges preparation programmes for applicants and training for adoptive families and for staff.

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is exempt

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is exempt

This page is intentionally left blank