



**Haringey** Council

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

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# **Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee**

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TUESDAY, 17TH JULY, 2012 at 18:30 HRS - CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, N22 8LE.

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

### **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 12 below.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

A member with a disclosable pecuniary interest or a prejudicial interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered:

(i) must disclose the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent, and

(ii) may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must withdraw from the meeting room.

A member who discloses at a meeting a disclosable pecuniary interest which is not registered in the Members' Register of Interests or the subject of a pending notification must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the disclosure.

Disclosable pecuniary interests, personal interests and prejudicial interest are defined at Paragraphs 5-7 and Appendix A of the Members' Code of Conduct.

**4. MINUTES (PAGES 1 - 16)**

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and the minutes of the joint meeting with Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee held on 22 March 2012.

**5. MATTERS ARISING**

**6. TERMS OF REFERENCE (PAGES 17 - 20)**

To note the terms of reference for this committee agreed by Cabinet on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

**7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT : CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (PAGES 21 - 32)**

The committee will consider headline performance information relating to Looked After Children as at the end of May 2012.

**8. INTERIM INDEPENDENT REVIEW OFFICERS REPORT (PAGES 33 - 38)**

Members of the committee will be asked to consider an interim report on the direction of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) service for Looked after Children in Haringey. The report contains initial findings on the work of the service for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

**9. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE (PAGES 39 - 46)**

Information and update report on the work of the Adoption Service.

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

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of item 11 as it contains 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.

**11. UPDATE ON THE CLOSURE OF COUNCIL CHILDREN'S HOMES**

This report will be tabled to ensure that the most up to date information can be provided to the committee about the placement of young people previously living at the home.

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Date of next meeting **04 September 2012 6.30pm.**

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**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MONDAY, 19 MARCH 2012**

Councillors Allison, Brabazon, Reece, Reith (Chair) and Watson

Apologies Councillor Solomon

Also Present: Debbie Haith, Wendy Tomlinson, Atracta Craig, Rachel Oakley, Shanti Jacob

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>	<b>ACTON BY</b>
<b>CPAC 148</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Solomon.	
<b>CPAC 149</b>	<b>URGENT BUSINESS</b>  There were no items of urgent business put forward.	
<b>CPAC 150</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  There were no declarations of interest put forward.	
<b>CPAC 151</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>  The minutes of the 31 January were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
<b>CPAC 152</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>  It was noted that the Fostercare Consortium were currently discussing the recruitment of specialist foster carers. This would include specialist carers that were able to care for young people on remand and deal with behavioural issues. There were ongoing discussions with the YOS team about training potential specialist foster carers.  In light of changes to the youth justice bill, the Chair had recommended that the committee consider a report, at their next meeting in June, about the support to LAC when they are in custody. It was further agreed to invite Linda James (Youth Offending Service manager) to attend. The committee agreed that the report include the number of LAC in custody, a background of their route into care, and explain what the council will be responsible for (following changes to the bill).  An update was provided on safeguarding the access of children and	<b>Head of YOS</b>

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	<p>young people, in the care of the local authority, to social networking sites. The committee noted that there was guidance available to foster carers and residential homes on being aware of the safeguarding issues around vulnerable children and young people's access to social networking sites. The Safeguarding Board were also completing further work in this area. Historically the council had provided ICT access to carers through contracted services but this had been costly and currently, as part of the registration process, new foster carers would need to provide their own access to ICT.</p> <p><b>Completion of PEPs</b> - Since this action was agreed by Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee, training programmes had been provided by the council on the completion of PEPs (Personal Education Plans) for looked after children. Schools were now confident enough to deliver this programme themselves with the support of Social Workers.</p> <p>While discussing the type of training provided by the council to teachers, it was agreed that Attracta Craig provide Councillor Brabazon with the contact details of Kate Cairns, a leading professional who has trained teachers in how to support vulnerable children experiencing trauma.</p> <p>Cllr Allison and Wendy Tomlinson agreed to speak after the meeting to resolve the outstanding issue on the difference in figures for the number of people making foster care enquiries and attending information sessions.</p> <p>Following debate on the use of the pupil premium grant and the need to ensure that the required element of the funding was being used to support LAC, Cllr Reith agreed to write to all schools seeking an understanding about how they were spending the pupil premium grant in relation to LAC. It was further agreed that Attracta Craig make contact with the school governing body team to discuss what can be incorporated into the Safeguarding Governor's job description to provide more responsibility for monitoring how the LAC children element of the Pupil Premium grant is being spent. Alternatively advice could be sought on whether this monitoring role can be taken forward by the designated teacher for LAC at relevant schools.</p>	<p><b>AC</b></p> <p><b>Chair</b></p> <p><b>AC</b></p>
<p><b>CPAC 153</b></p>	<p><b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT : CHILDREN AND FAMILIES</b></p> <p><b>OP200 - Cost of Service per looked after child</b> - Agreed that more detailed information on how the service were managing this cost be added to the forthcoming report to be considered by the committee in June.</p> <p><b>OP409 - Foster carer recruitment</b> - Committee requested that the number of kinship carers recruited be separated out to provide an idea of how many stranger foster carers (people without a connection to the child/ young person) were being recruited over the year. Agreed that any positive news on the efforts to recruit foster carers should be added.</p>	<p><b>DH</b></p> <p><b>DH</b></p>

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<p><b>OP414 – Percentage of Children becoming looked after previously subject to a Child Protection Plan</b> - There would be an audit in relation to this area in April which would try and uncover the main routes of children into care and look further at the reasons for children, on a care plan, coming into care. Agreed that information on the audit findings be added to the commentary.</p>	DH
<p><b>OP414 percentage of children becoming looked after previously subject to CP plan</b> – Agreed that further clarification be provided in the minutes on the value attached to this indicator and the total that it is applicable to.</p>	DH
<p><b>OP389 – Children in care including unaccompanied minors.</b> The Chair requested a report to the next meeting on the efforts by the service to take children out of care. Previously the Committee had learned about the options being taken forward such as adoption, supervision care, LAC allowed to go home (whilst remaining on care orders) and the committee wanted reassurance that this work was having an impact on the number leaving care. The report should not include children who were turning 18.</p>	DH/CC
<p>A committee member recalled that, in a previous report to committee, 80 children were identified by the service as being in care too long and it was requested that the above report include information on their progress. Also this report should also include a further update on the number of children currently deemed to be too long in care. It was further agreed that issues impacting on how quickly a child could leave care such as delays as a result of court proceeding should also be included to provide an understanding of the timescales.</p>	DH/CC
<p><b>OP386 Children in care cases reviewed on time</b> – All cases had been reviewed but as some were not done within the set time limit, the target could not be calculated as being met. The delay in completing the visits and reviewing cases had been due to vacancies in the IRO team. These posts were in the process of being filled and performance should improve for this indicator.</p>	
<p>There was a consensus that there should be exception reports, on the performance figures that had a red status, explaining the activities to address this performance rating.</p>	DH
<p>Agreed, overall, that there should be increased commentary attached to the performance figures and an indication of the status by adding R, A or G to the report as they were printed in black and white.</p>	DH
<p><b>OP148 – care leaver in education employment or training</b> - Further investigation of these figures by the Head of Children in Care indicated that some figures had been incorrectly input. This information would be updated and performance figure updated and supplied to the committee.</p>	CC

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<p><b>CPAC 154</b></p>	<p><b>PRESENTATION ON THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK</b></p> <p>The committee received a presentation about the quality assurance activity in the Children and Young People’s service. The service was currently reviewing all their 40 quality assurance activities to understand their reason, use, type, value and intended outcome. This information would be assessed against the principles of quality assurance to understand how much they were being met. The review would aim to instigate change, support development ensure that the chosen strategies of quality assurance could be maintained</p> <p>Further to considering the presentation the chair advised that Member’s enquiries should be also is included as a source for indicating the quality of service provided.</p> <p>Following questions from members the following information was provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging users about the service received, was a key part of quality assurance and the review would be mapping out areas of good practice ,currently in use, that could be shared and used as a whole by the service.</li> <li>• Introduction of Viewpoint, an online questionnaire for children and young people, to communicate their views about any topic and for services to consider them.</li> <li>• Developing teams in children services to think about the reason why they are collating information and what it will be used for i.e. making information count.</li> <li>• Information is moved around stakeholders and there would need to be more responsibility given to them for making changes when required.</li> <li>• In future there will need to be a higher understanding provided of the requirements of data with managers able to explain to officers how they contribute to compiling the fuller picture the service needs to go forward. For example how the data will be the evidence behind, decisions, compilation of strategies and policies.</li> </ul>	<p><b>RO</b></p>
<p><b>CPAC 155</b></p>	<p><b>INDEPENDENT REVIEW OFFICER SECOND CHECKLIST AUDIT OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2011</b></p>	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During October to December 2011, the Independent Review Officers had repeated an audit undertaken in the first quarter of 2011-12 using a basic checklist to carry out a random sample analysis of looked after children reviews. The audit was designed as a quick process that could provide some immediate data, identify trends and areas for further investigation. This report contained a feedback on how the areas identified for improvement, from the previous audits had been taken forward and contained information from the most recent audit of LAC reviews. Actions progressed included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussion of issues at the LAC multi agency meeting,</li> <li>• meetings between Social Workers and IRO officers to improve understanding of IRO role,</li> <li>• Introduction of Children in care workflow (integrated system of working which brings together required information about a LAC case to facilitate required IRO decisions being made within timescale).</li> <li>• Use of court care plan,</li> <li>• Re-launch of VIEWPOINT, Children and young people will be directed to use this to share their views about their care (younger children will be assisted by social workers to use this online questionnaire).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Analysis from the recent audit showed that there were care plans available but they required updating. There was an awareness exercise to be undertaken to re-iterate the importance of this document as a planning tool and the committee were assured that the results in this area would further improve in the next audit.</p> <p>A shorter template would be issued to Social Workers to enable them to complete a court care plan more speedily.</p> <p>The Children's service were launching Viewpoint and would be strongly advocating its use at reviews as it would enable children/young people to participate in decisions being made about their care.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>That the report be noted</p>	
<p><b>CPAC 156</b></p>	<p><b>ADOPTION UPDATE</b></p> <p>The committee received a verbal update from the Deputy Director for Children and Families about Adoption and the new action plan from government to speed up and instigate more use of the adoption process. The government currently used data to rank boroughs performance in the speed and number of adoptions being made. In 2011 Haringey was ranked 123 out of 152 boroughs with an average of 63% of adoptions being made within 12 months of the decision to adopt over the previous 3 years. The committee noted that this figure had already improved and the council were currently performing at 75% against the national</p>	

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	<p>average of 74%.</p> <p>The committee were informed that there would be an introduction of performance thresholds, set to monitor the overall time of the journey through the adoption process.</p> <p>All local authorities would be receiving a performance scorecard to help profile and track progress. The committee were provided with an example of its likely content and would be provided with the final version of the score card when issued by government.</p> <p>The Chair commented on the need for the service to monitor any counter effects of the government's action plan such as: a lower number of children being placed in the adoption process because a placement may not be found within the set thresholds or if there is an increase in placement breakdowns through the process being made shorter. Officers agreed that it would be important to prioritise considering all the adoption case specifics rather than meeting targets.</p> <p>The committee noted that the court will in future ratify the care plans rather than the adoption review panel. It was felt that the Adoption panel should continue these quality assurance measures with updates on cases being considered at their meetings so that they can continue to provide independent analysis on cases going forward.</p> <p>The committee continued to consider information on the number of children and their age range currently progressing through the adoption process. It was noted that once the family was identified that the local authority would need to await the court placement order before placing the child with the family. The family would then need to place the adoption order.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>That the adoption update and sample scorecard be emailed to all committee members after the meeting.</p>	<p><b>DH</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p>
<p><b>CPAC 157</b></p>	<p><b>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</b></p> <p>The press and public were excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following as it contained exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985): paras 1 &amp; 2: namely information relating to any individual, and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.</p>	
<p><b>CPAC 158</b></p>	<p><b>REGULATION 33 VISITS</b></p> <p>The report discussed the recommendations arising from the regulation 33 visits made in January and February 2012 to the two council run</p>	

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	<p>children's homes.</p> <p>Members asked about how plans were progressing to relocate the remaining 8 young people residing in the children's homes following expected closure in July. The committee noted that there were plans to move the young people to either foster care placements or semi independent living accommodation in the coming three weeks. The committee requested that a written update be provided on their situation, as part of the matters arising report, to be considered in the exempt part of the agenda at the next meeting.</p>	<b>WT</b>
<b>CPAC 159</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>It was agreed that all tabled papers received at the meeting be circulated to members. The agenda plan of items for Corporate Parenting Committee in 2012/13 was attached to the matters arising report for members to comment on and return any suggested changes to the clerk.</p>	<b>Clerk All to note</b>

Cllr Lorna Reith

Chair

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**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE & CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 22 MARCH 2012**

Councillors Allison, Brabazon, Amin, Reith(Chair), Stennett, Hare, Rice, Davies

Apologies Councillor Reece, Watson, Solomon, Stewart

Also Present: Hilary Corrick, Sylvia Chew, Debbie Haith, Marion Wheeler, Iain Lowe, Liz Fajasmin

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>	<b>ACTION BY</b>
<b>JC20</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR</b>  Previously the Joint Committee had agreed that the role of Chair at these meetings is alternated between the Chair of Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and Chair of Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee. Cllr Reith, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee chaired this meeting.	
<b>JC21</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE(IF ANY)</b>  Apologies were received from Cllr Solomon, Reece, Stewart and Watson.  Cllr Amin provided apologies for lateness.	
<b>JC22</b>	<b>URGENT BUSINESS</b>  There were no items of urgent business.	
<b>JC23</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  No declarations of interest were put forward.	
<b>JC24</b>	<b>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/QUESTIONS</b>  There no deputations, petitions or public questions for the joint committee to consider.	
<b>JC25</b>	<b>PRESENTATION ABOUT THE MULTI AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB(MASH)</b>  The committee received a presentation from the Head of First Response about the newly established MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub). This team builds on the existing First Response Multi Agency Team (FRMAT) which had been operating since May 2010. It co-located the Metropolitan Police, health and social workers, together with support from education and housing. The MASH enhanced this model by adding	

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police intelligence, and co-locating other agencies such as adults safeguarding, probation and mental health. The MASH team were together in one secure location, working together to best ensure vulnerable children in the borough were identified and properly cared for and protected.

Haringey was one of only two boroughs, in the country, currently operating with the MASH. Confidentiality was paramount and in this co location partners were able discuss the referrals they received instantly in a multi-agency meeting, sharing information about the family and deciding on the course of action for the child/ young person. This information sharing process also allowed the team to analyse information and identify any trends/patterns to referrals. Tim Loughton MP visited the MASH recently and commended the team on how well they worked together. He had also been impressed by how members of the team had followed up the cases they had referred onto services. Indeed extracts from recent Ofsted inspections compared to those in the past, demonstrated how far the service had come in improving the speed and quality of decisions being made to safeguard vulnerable children and young people.

The early information sharing about a family in a multi-agency environment also aided identifying how to support families at an early stage. The multi agency discussion would enable the right package of services to be commissioned for the family or appropriate links made with services, such as a children's centre. Early intervention with families was key to stopping children coming into care

The committee asked about benchmark figures to better understand the performance of the MASH in comparison to other comparator boroughs. Other boroughs, apart from Devon, had yet to fully establish a MASH (Multi Agency safeguarding Hub) but this would change over time as more teams were compiled. The Children's Service would then be able to look at how quickly Initial assessments and referrals were being completed in comparison to other boroughs with the MASH and provide this to members. In terms of a review of the performance of the team, it was noted that the London Safeguarding Board would monitor this. Members of the committee were also welcome to visit the MASH and see first hand their work.

Members sought understanding on how information from different databases of partners was interpreted and shared, in particular mental health service files. It was noted that the MASH were able to access the front page of a mental health service referral which would provide them the necessary information on whether the client had children and enable and the nature of the referral. The partner representative themselves would interpret the data from their own partner agency and share this with the other representatives in the MASH. This mitigated against mis - interpretation of data.

The composition and nature of the MASH team allowed the partner representatives to continue with the necessary daily activities of their

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	<p>role and also flexibly deal with safeguarding enquiries as and when needed.</p> <p>Although the partner representatives were working outside the premises of their original teams, they still reported to their own partner organisations. To allow the MASH team to share concerns and consider potential issues, there were two weekly meetings held which the Head of First Response also attended. She would report back any key concerns to fellow senior colleagues at the relevant partner agency.</p> <p>The work of the team was reported to the Children's Trust which in turn reported to the Health and Wellbeing board and also the LSCB. The team were also accountable to the London Safeguarding Board.</p>	
<p><b>JC26</b></p>	<p><b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DATA - CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FEBRUARY 2012</b></p> <p><b>Safeguarding performance data</b></p> <p>There were no significant reduction in the number of contacts and referrals to the safeguarding service during the month of February. The committee noted that the service was investigating the rate of referrals but to be aware that there would be genuine reasons for the number contacts becoming referrals.</p> <p>The service was reaching their targets for the completion of initial and core assessments. The independent member of the Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee had completed recent audits for the committee and had not raised concerns regarding the quality of assessments.</p> <p>The number of child protection cases held by Haringey was higher compared to comparator boroughs but the service were confident, upon investigation of the cases, that this number was correct. This also applied to the number of children on a child in need plan. Regular audits were completed on plans to check progress against their original objectives. The committee learned that when children were passed to the children in need team, it was because there were universal community based services that could help manage the risks and issues identified in the plan.</p> <p>Members sought understanding about the Safeguarding Service's links with the newly restructured children's centres which were working to a cluster model. It was noted that there was an allocated Social Worker to each cluster who would also have links to the MASH. Under four's represented 41% of cases referred to the MASH and there was current discussion with the Head of Early Years about the high referral rate of children from this category and considering whether the assessments of under 4's, at children centres, needed to be different to provide more placements for these children.</p>	

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**LAC Performance data**

The Joint Committee continued to consider performance information relating to LAC in the month of February which had also been considered at the start of the week by the Corporate Parenting Committee.

- **HY34 Number of social work posts permanently filled-** The vacancy level did not warrant concern and the levels of staff turnover were at expected levels.
- **Op200 – Cost of service per looked after child** -The imminent closure of the two children's homes meant that no new young people were being admitted to them. It was clarified that the high weekly cost of placements, per looked after child, was not associated with the proposed closure of the two residential children's homes. Reducing the cost of service per looked after child was a major priority for the children service and part of this involved reducing procurement and commissioning costs. In relation to this the NLSA were funding a commissioning manager who was based in Haringey but working on behalf of the other NLSA boroughs to examine driving down unit costs associated with commissioning services for LAC and also examining increasing the quality of service that they can access.
- In preparation for the closure of the children's homes the service were putting in place semi independent accommodation for young people currently living in the homes and recruiting more specialist foster carers. This course of action would continue and members were assured that, should the use of private residential homes be called upon, only those with a good or outstanding rating would be used.
- **OP 409 Foster carer recruitment-** Corporate Parenting Committee had asked for a breakdown of the background to the newly recruited carer's i.e. Whether they were kinship carers or stranger carers.
- **OP 414 – Percentage of children becoming looked after previously subject to CP Plan** - This was explained to be a proxy indicator which was in place to monitor the circumstances that children were becoming looked after.
- **OP389 A the rate of children in care per 10,000-** The aim was to achieve a balance between those children coming into care and those leaving care. The service were looking at cases where the child was looked after for less than a month to understand if better decisions could have been made at the start of the referral to stop the child becoming looked after for a short period of time.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OP417 Care Proceedings initiated</b> - This had reduced from 243 in 2010/11 to 134 cases and currently there were 117 open proceedings. There were timelier decisions being made by the courts in relation to cases which assisted with getting earlier placements for the child/young person in turn improving their outcomes. At the start of the process there were better authoritative practices being taken forward by Social Workers. The service were commencing with community based support to also stem the number of cases reaching the legal proceedings.</li> <li>• <b>OP386 Children in care cases reviewed on time</b> – All cases had been reviewed but as some were not done within the set time limit, the target could not be calculated as being met. The committee were assured that since the summer months these reviews had been completed on time.</li> <li>• <b>NEET – OP148 –Care leavers in education employment or training</b> - Managers in the Children in Care team had been emailed to re consider these figures and provide updated information. The current figures provided were incorrect or did not contain enough background. This would be rectified and updated with information sent to members of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.</li> <li>• <b>OP419 number of children missing/absconded from care at any point in the month</b> - The number of children in care reported missing was contained in performance figures and tracked on a month by month basis. Those which were reported missing in one month could also be included in the following months figures, if they were still missing. The Corporate Parenting Committee had recently received presentations from Barnado's about their externally funded work for the council with children that are at risk of going missing or absconding from care. This work had begun in December 2011 and it was agreed that it would be worthwhile to hear back from Barnardos on their work at a future CPAC meeting.</li> </ul>	Clerk
JC27	<p><b>FAMILY INTERVENTION PROJECT</b></p> <p>The committee received a presentation on the work of the Family Intervention project and noted that the project was part of the Children and Families team. The project was established in Feb 2010 with external grant funding and was unique to other services provided by the Children and Families teams in that it was not solely working with the child but working with the family as a whole. The family perspective was taken forward in the assessment process. The team working with the families came from a multi discipline of backgrounds and used evidence</p>	

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based practice and intervention methods. They worked with highly complex families and had the aim of building on their strengths.

When looking at the issues faced by the family, they would consider how individuals in the family unit had contributed to the issues being faced and assess how to support them. The work involved empowering the families to take control of the solutions that needed to take place to change their circumstances. Often the families had been subject to investigation by statutory agencies and had consequently developed a negative view of them. For the family to achieve their intended outcomes they would need accept this support from the outset and be willing to participate in an intensive programme. The work with the families was likely to last 2 years and changes take place incrementally.

The work with a family started from 7.00am until 8.00pm and meant that support workers were only allocated 4-6 families. It began with 16-25 weeks of persistent outreach work. Support workers usually undertook practical tasks with families, helped them build relationships, make use of a range of interventions, challenge poor behaviour. Their overall aim was help build the capacity of the family to deal with issues and problems independently.

It was a hybrid service and community based but helping families deal with a range of services and partner agencies. Currently the project was undertaking a review and evaluation of their work over the last two years and would be checking if the families had achieved their intended outcomes i.e. a supportive network. Also the Deputy Director for Children and Families would be examining the model of working that has been used to support the families and whether it could be expanded out in the children and young people's service. Following questions to the project co-ordinator, committee members gained the following knowledge:

- Although the focus of the work was with the family, the needs of the child/ children were paramount. Families were advised, at the start, by the support worker that if there was found to be risk of harm to child/children in the family then it would be reported to the Safeguarding Team.
- Again the relationship between the family and the support worker would work was set out at the start. The support worker would explain that there would be no collusion with the family if illegal activities were identified
- To secure any potential future funding for the project there was an intricate cost exercise being undertaken to demonstrate the savings being made by working with the troubled families. This meant trying to estimate how interventions have avoided episodes with the Police and statutory agencies, in turn saving money i.e. On legal proceedings or dealing with the effects of anti social

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE & CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 22 MARCH 2012**

	<p>behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of the support workers were locum staff and had overall remained constant to the project over the last two years. Should the project cease to be funded then they would be subject to redeployment procedures. The workers were from a range of backgrounds including housing, social work, and psychotherapy. The support worker was regarded as a coach working with young and older members of the family to provide them with skills on how to change behaviour, improve parenting and deal with statutory agencies instead of avoiding them .</li> <li>The type of outcomes seen were children coming off protection plans, improvement of housing conditions, access to benefits, access to information about activities in their area , development of a family routine, access to alternative sources of education and improved parenting.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked Liz Fajasmin for the informative presentation and it was agreed to provide this to all members of the committee after the meeting.</p>	Clerk
<b>JC28</b>	<b>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b>	
	There were no new items of urgent business to consider.	
<b>JC29</b>	<b>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</b>	
<b>JC30</b>	<b>NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS(IF ANY)</b>	
	There were no new items of exempt business to consider.	
<b>JC31</b>	<b>NEXT MEETING</b>	
	October 29 <sup>th</sup> 2012 provisional - to be confirmed at Council AGM.	

Cllr Lorna Reith

Chair

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**Haringey Council**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Item Number:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Terms of reference</b>		
<b>Report Authorised by:</b>			
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>Ayshe Simsek</b>		
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>Report for Key/Non Key Decisions:</b>		

**1. Describe the issue under consideration**

To ratify the terms of reference agreed by Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012

**2. Cabinet Member introduction**

N/A

**3. Recommendations**

To ratify the terms of reference

**4. Other options considered**

N/A

**5. Background information**

Provision exists in the Council Constitution for the Cabinet to establish advisory or consultative bodies the membership of which is not limited to Cabinet Members.

The Joint Area Review report into Haringey's Children Services in 2009 identified the need to improve governance of safeguarding arrangements for children. The



**Haringey Council**

Children’s Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee and Corporate Parenting committee were established in July 2009 in response to this and they have continued to be re-established by the Cabinet since this date.

Most council do have a Corporate Parenting Committee as they provide an overview of the Council’s role as corporate parent for children and young people who are in care. It is responsible for ensuring that the life chances of children in care are maximized in terms of health, educational attainment and access to training and employment, in order to aid the transition to a secure and fulfilling adulthood.

In April 2012 the Governance review delivery group considered decommissioning the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and they proposed a scrutiny panel on Children’s Services take on its functions and responsibilities. However following further study in May the group felt that as the scrutiny panels were not prescribed at this stage, and given the importance of fulfilling the Council’s role as corporate parent to children in care, they recommended that this Committee continued in 2012/13. The Committee could then be reviewed once the scrutiny panels were more firmly established.

Subsequent to this direction by the Governance Delivery Group, the Cabinet formally established the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee at their meeting on the 12 June 2012 with the following membership and terms of reference

**Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee  
Membership**

Councillors:                Waters (Chair)  
                                     Stennett  
                                     Brabazon  
                                     Allison  
                                     Reece  
                                     Solomon  
                                     1 Labour position to be filled

**Quorum**

The quorum will be two members.

The terms of reference are set out below:

- i. To be responsible for the Council’s role as Corporate parent for those children and young people who are in care;



**Haringey** Council

- ii. To ensure the views of children in care are heard;
- iii. To seek to ensure that the life chances of children in care are maximized in terms of health, educational attainment and access to training and employment to aid the transition to a secure and fulfilling adulthood.
- iv. To ensure that the voice and needs of disabled children are identified and provided for;
- v. To provide an advocacy function within the Children's Trust and the Council on behalf of children in care;
- vi. To monitor the quality of care provided by the Council to Children in Care;
- vii. To ensure that children leaving care have sustainable arrangements for their future wellbeing.

## **6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

### Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report;

Report to the Cabinet on 24 February 2009 entitled Action Plan in Response to the Joint Area Review of Safeguarding in Haringey.

Report to the Cabinet on 21 July 2009 entitled Appointment of Cabinet Advisory Committees.

Report to Cabinet on 15 July 2010 entitled Appointment of Cabinet Committees.

Report to Cabinet on 07 June 2012 entitled Appointment of Cabinet Committees

Report to Cabinet on 12 June 2012 entitled Appointment of Cabinet Advisory Committees.

The background paper is located at River Park House, 225 High Road, Wood Green, London N22 8HQ.

To inspect it or to discuss this report further, please contact Ayshe Simsek on 020 8489 2929.

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<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Item Number:</b>	
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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Exception Report - performance</b>
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<b>Report Authorised by:</b>	<b>Debbie Haith</b>
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<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>Debbie Cotterill</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>Report for Key/Non Key Decisions:</b> <b>NA</b>
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## 1 .Introduction

Below is a further breakdown of performance where the indicator shows a performance lower than the target which has been set.

## 2. Care leavers in education, employment and training

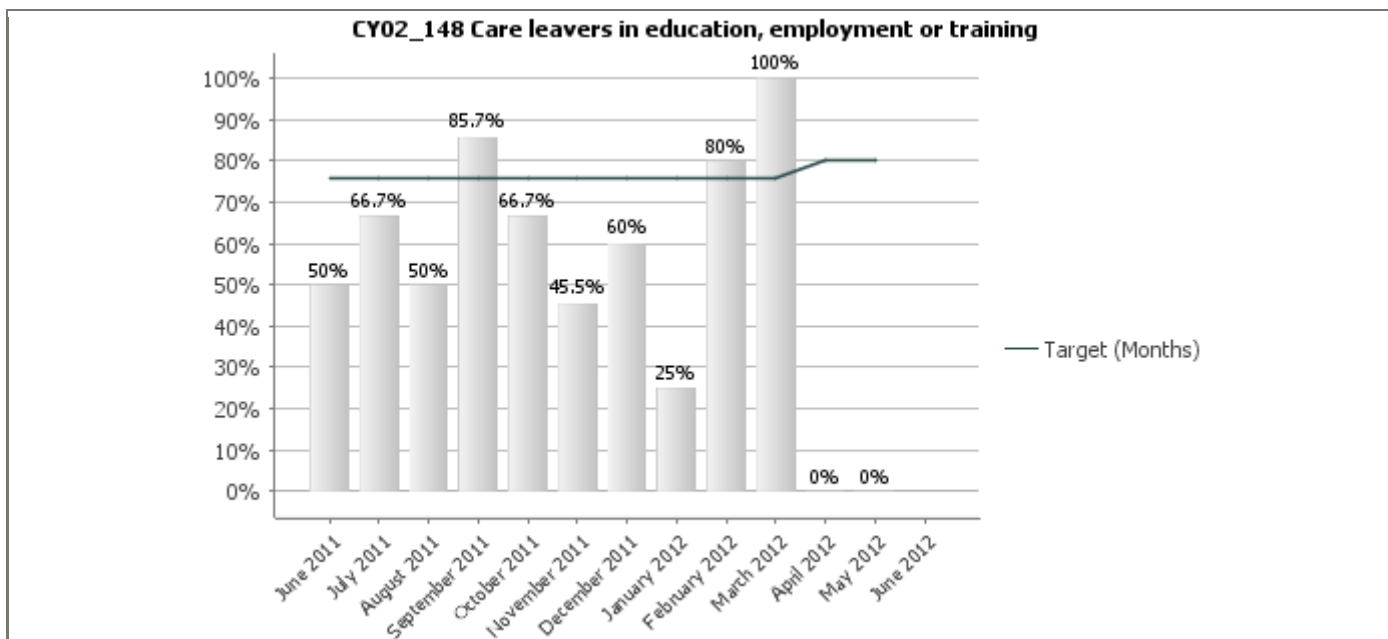
### Op148 Care leavers in education, employment or training

The indicator measures levels of participation in education, employment or training (EET) for young adults formerly in care – a key group at risk of social exclusion. The indicator is part of the Social Exclusion PSA and is intended to drive improvements in long-term outcomes for care leavers, by ensuring they receive the support they need to access EET.

	Value	Current Target	Trend	
2011/12	63.9%			
	Value			
2011/12	63.9%			
	Value			
Mar 2012	100%			
Apr 2012	0%			
May 2012	0%			
	Value			
2012/13	0%	<b>76%</b>		<b>Red</b>

Monthly percentages for this indicator are based on small numbers and should be interpreted with care. 1 young person turned 19 in May and 60 young people are due to turn 19 in the rest of the year.


Of the 4 young people who turned 19 in April, 2 were in touch however they were not in touch within the four month timeframe and therefore are counted as not in touch.



### 3. Care leavers in suitable accommodation

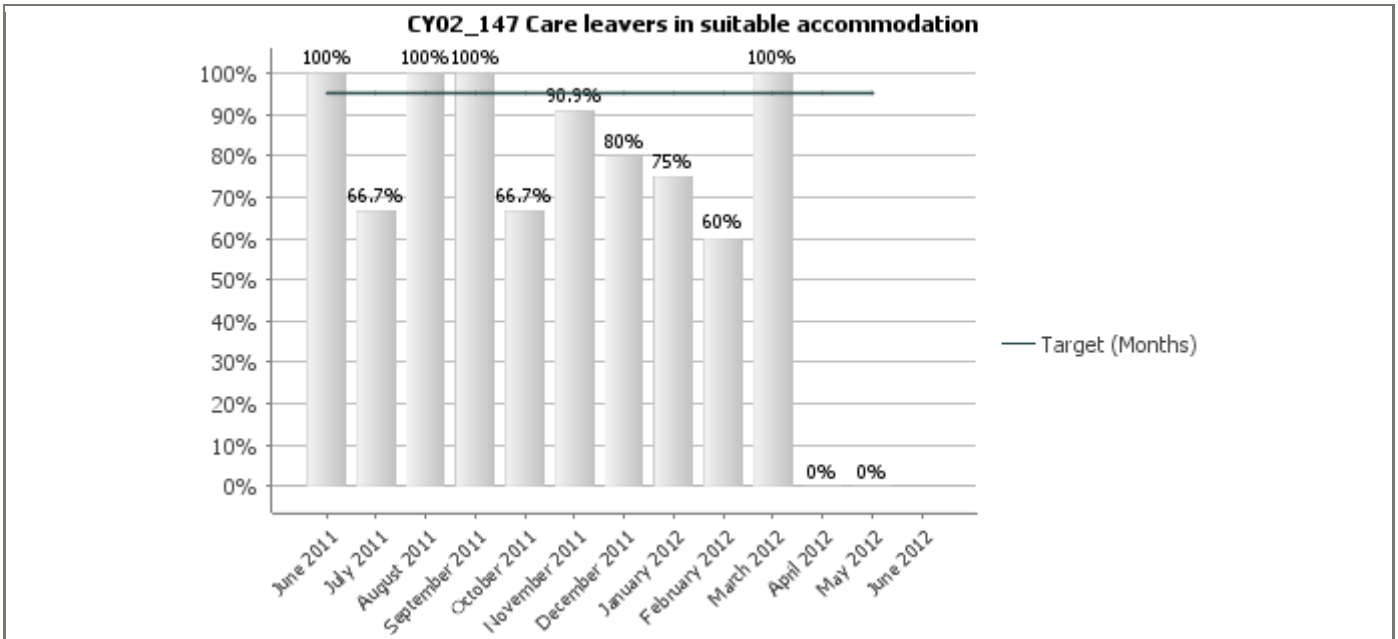
**Op147 Care leavers in suitable accommodation**

The indicator measures accommodation outcomes for young adults formerly in care – a key group at risk of social exclusion. The indicator is intended to increase the proportion of former care leavers who are in suitable accommodation. This will help minimise the risk of care leavers being in unsuitable housing or becoming homeless.

	Value	Current Target	Trend
2011/12	91.8%	93%	
	Value		
2011/12	91.8%		
	Value		
Mar 2012	100%		
Apr 2012	0%		
May 2012	0%		
	Value		
2012/13	0%	93%	Red

Monthly percentages for this indicator are based on small numbers and should be interpreted with care. 1 young person turned 19 in May and 60 young people are due to turn 19 in the rest of the year.

Of the 4 young people who turned 19 in April, 2 were in touch however they were not in touch within the four month timeframe and therefore are counted as not in touch.



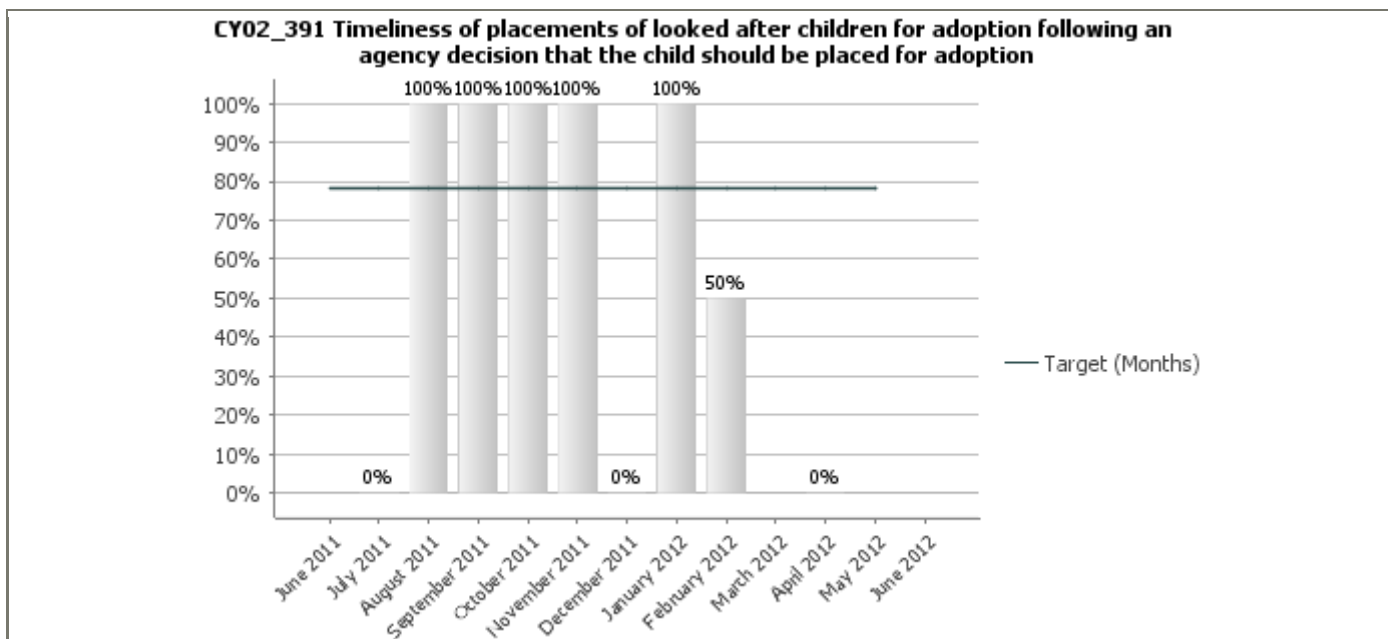
**4. Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption**

**Op391 (NI61) Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption**

The safeguarding set should include an indicator on adoption, as this is one of the main options for permanence for children in care, who cannot return to live with their birth parents. One of the main aims of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, which came into force on 30 December 2005, is to improve the process of adoption. This indicator will provide an indication of how quickly children are placed with an approved prospective adopter(s) following the decision that they should be placed for adoption, but will exclude cases where a child was placed for adoption but then adopted in a different placement (i.e. disrupted placements). The Adoption Service Report will provide the detail action which in place to improve the timeliness of placements.

	Value	Current Target	Trend	
2011/12	71.4%	78%	↓	Red
	Value			
2011/12	71.4%			
	Value			
Mar 2012				
Apr 2012	0%			
May 2012				
	Value			
2012/13	0%			

One child has been adopted in the year to date.



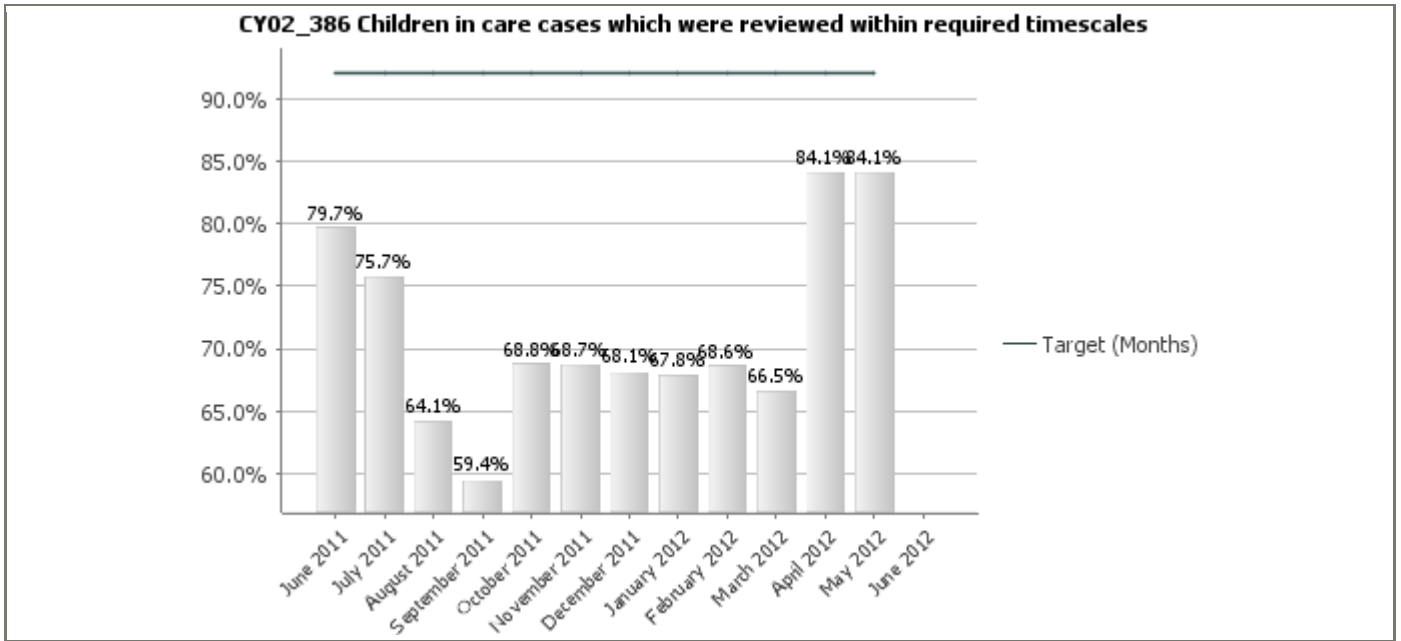
**5. Children in care cases which were reviewed within required timescales**

**OP386 (NI 66) Children in care cases which were reviewed within required timescales**

To improve compliance with local authorities' legal requirements under the Review of Children's Cases Regulations 1991. Performance currently varies widely, with several local authorities performing at 100%, but with some as poor as 17%. The review is one of the key components within the core processes of working with looked after children. The purpose of the review is to consider the plan for the child's welfare, to monitor the progress of the plan and amend it as necessary in light of changed information and circumstances. The relevant regulations prescribe the statutory intervals - within 28 days of placement, then within 3 months and six monthly thereafter- within which reviews must be held. But reviews may be rescheduled or held inside these intervals if there are significant changes to the child's care plan. Through performance monitoring arrangements improved performance will be secured.

	Value	Current Target	Trend
2011/12	66.5%	92.0%	<b>Red</b>
	Value		
2011/12	66.5%		
	Value		
Mar 2012	66.5%		
Apr 2012	84.1%		
May 2012	84.1%		
	Value		
2012/13	84.1%		

Staff difficulties and vacancies within the IRO team have impacted on performance; there is a planned recruitment drive which will take place in July. Contingency planning will also ensure timeliness of reviews.





**Haringey** Council

## Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee – May 2012

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

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

### Organisational effectiveness and finance information.

Description	Eng. - Average 2010 /11	SN - Average 2010 /11	2011/12			2012/13			Status	Comments
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Target		
HY34 % Social Work posts permanently filled – annual indicator			90.9%					84%	Green	Reported quarterly
OP 200 Cost of service per looked after child			£882						-	Unit costing is being revised to be reported at next meeting
OP 409 Foster carer recruitment			47	6	4	0	4	20	Green	The figure for 11/12 is for kinship and new foster carers. 4 foster carers recruited to date – all kinship. There were no new carers approved at the May Panel as the focus was on re-approvals of current carers and de-registration of carers.

### Volume, activity, timeliness and outcome -Children Looked After

Description	Eng. - Average 2010 /11	SN - Average 2010 /11	2011/12			2012/13			Status	Comments
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Target		
OP414 Percentage of Children			23%	10%	60%	23.1%	39.1%		-	This is a local indicator and no comparator data is

Description	Eng. - Average 2010 /11	SN - Average 2010 /11	2011/12		Mar 2012		Apr 2012		May 2012		2012/13		Status	Comments
			Value		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Target		
becoming looked after previously subject to CP plan														available
Children in care including unaccompanied asylum seeking children	431	430	574	574	568	562	562	562	562	562	562	562	-	The number of children in care excluding 28 unaccompanied minors is 534.
OP389 The rate of Children in care per 10,000 pop	59	80	116.9	116.9	115.67	114.45	114.45	114.45	114.45	114.45	114.45	114.45	-	The rate of children looked after per 10,000 population excluding Unaccompanied Minors in May 2012 is 108.7
Op415 Children becoming looked after	180	189	245	10	10	13	10	13	13	13	37	37	-	
Op416 Children ceasing to be looked after	177	229	253	13	17	21	13	21	21	21	56	56	-	
OP457 Number of LAC who ceased to be looked after who had been looked after for less than a month			81	3	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	1	-	
OP458 Total No. days children have been in care (Excluding placed at home)			212,812	16,950	16,332	16,750	16,950	16,332	16,750	16,750	33,082	33,082	-	
HY32 Percentage of children placed in Haringey Provision			35.0%	34.8%	35.6%	35.2%	34.8%	35.6%	35.2%	35.2%	35.2%	35.2%	-	
Op382 Children in Care visits			96.7%	96.7%	97%	94.8%	96.7%	97%	94.8%	94.8%	94.8%	94.8%	Amber	
Op417 Care Proceedings Initiated- (No. of			137	3	9	12	3	9	12	12	21	21	-	



Description	Eng. - Average 2010 /11	SN - Average 2010 /11	2011/12		Mar 2012		Apr 2012		May 2012		2012/13		Status	Comments
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Target				
children)														
Op 419 Number of children missing/absconded from care at any point in the month			88	16	16	13							-	13 individual children went missing/absconded in May and 4 were recorded as missing at the end of the month
HY62 Stability of placements of looked after children: number of moves	10.9 %	11.6 %	10.3%	10.2%	10.6%	10.6%	10.6%	10.6%	10.6%	10.6%	10.6%	11%	Green	
Op63 Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement	68%	69.8 %	68.6%	70.3%	71.6%	71.8%	71.6%	71.8%	71.8%	71.8%	71.8%	72%	Amber	
OP386 Children in care cases which were reviewed (NI 66) within required timescales	90.5 %	91.0 %	66.5%	66.5%	84.1%	84.1%	84.1%	84.1%	84.1%	84.1%	84.1%	92.0%	Red	
Op391 (NI61) Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption	72.4 %	68%	71.4%									78%	Red	
Op 418 Number of adoptions/special guardianship orders	20	16	27	0	2	7	2	2	7	7	11		-	
Op 418a Number of adoptions			14	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	15	Amber	
Op 418b Number of special guardianship orders			13	0	1	7	1	1	7	7	8	20	-	

Description	Eng. - Average 2010 /11	SN - Average 2010 /11	2011/12		Mar 2012	Apr 2012	May 2012	2012/13		Status	Comments
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Target		
Op148 Care leavers in education, employment or training	61%	63.4 %	63.9%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	76%	Red	
Op147 Care leavers in suitable accommodation	90%	92.1 %	91.8%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	93%	Red	
HY483 Average days from becoming looked after to being placed for adoption for children adopted in period			715		625	N/A				-	New indicator data and performance to be reported at next committee
Op486 Placed for adoption within 21 months of becoming looked after			50%							-	New indicator data and performance to be reported at next committee





## Interim Independent Reviewing Officer Report



### Introduction

This is an interim report to update members on the direction of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) service for Looked after Children in Haringey. The report contains initial findings on the work of the service for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. A full report will be produced in September 2012.

### 1. Legal Context

1.1 The Children and Young Peoples Act 2008 which came into force in April 2011 significantly strengthened the role of the IRO's and gave them the responsibility of monitoring the function and performance of the local authority in relation to outcome for children looked after. The intention of these changes was to give IRO's the power to provide effective independent challenge and scrutiny of children's case and to ensure that the child's interests are protected throughout the care planning process.

1.2 The 1989 Children's Act, the IRO handbook and the more recent Care Planning and Case Review Regulations 2010 brought together a single set of regulations with those duties which are at the heart of effective corporate parenting to improve the outcomes of looked after children namely;

- Placing the child at the centre of the work
- Effective care planning
- Ensuring that a child or young person is provided with accommodation which meets his/her needs
- To appoint an IRO
- Ensuring that an effective review is conducted of the child's case within the specified timescales
- 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
- 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

1.3 In November 2011 The Family Justice Review reported on the role of the IRO their findings were as follows;

- The role of the IRO is an important to local authorities and they would very likely recreate it were it removed from them. The priority should be to improve the quality of the function and ensure its effectiveness and visibility

- We recommend that the local authorities should review the operation of their IRO service to ensure that it is effective. In particular they should ensure that they are adhering to guidance regarding case loads
- We recommend that the Directors of Children's Service/Directors for social Services and lead Member for children receive regular reports from the IRO on the work undertaken and its outcomes. Local Safeguarding Children's Board should also consider such reports
- Courts would benefit from this information too alongside outcomes of care cases. The pilot recommended earlier (for courts to receive information about the outcomes for children and families on which they have adjudicated) should include information from the IRO
- The courts and IRO's need to develop more effective links. Guardian and IRO's should strengthen their working relationship

## **2. The Independent Reviewing Service in Haringey**

The IRO's are part of the Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Practice Development Service.

Over many years there has been a stable team of IRO's who have offered consistency and an extensive knowledge of Haringey's children and young people in care. During the year three long standing permanent members of the team have moved on and the vacancies have been covered by experienced IRO's on an agency and session capacity. To achieve the stability children and young people needed we are in the process of advertising the vacant posts. There are currently 7 established Independent Reviewing Officers posts, with additional capacity of two

### **The Practice Context**

Over the last year IRO's have embedded their role further by:

- Developing stronger links and raising their profile with the Children in Care teams, this has enabled them to exercise their statutory functions more effectively. Social workers increasingly value their expertise and independence.
- Making presentation to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee on the work and findings of the IRO's
- Delivered induction training for social work students on the Looked After Children process
- Working with colleagues in Systems Support to steam line the FWi systems for recording reviews decisions and discussion.
- Undertaking a sample audit of children who came into care during October 11- January 12 and a series of checklist audits to identify concerns, issues and themes.
- Contributing to the work of the permanency tracking meetings and the and the Multi-agency Health and Educational wellbeing group

3.1 The formal procedures for the resolution of concerns are now more rigorously and routinely used, this has made it possible for the service to not only identify and address concerns in relation to individual children but to monitor emerging themes and capture the collective experience of children looked after. This information has been used on a number of occasions to influence the direction of policy and effect changes in the way services are planned and delivered.

Concerns have centred on a number of key areas of policy and practice:

3.2 Timeliness of assessment, decision making and action – a number of the concerns related to drift and delay at various stages of a child's journey in care. Analysis of the data shows the need for clear timely planning for permanency and in working towards reunification, there also appears to be a need to look at ensuring proactive planning for young people in care who have been in secure accommodate/prison. In addition to timeliness in planning, a number of issues related to timely decision making around finances and access resources. In the majority of cases funding was agreed but the delay can impact on the child's care experience. Achieving "timeliness" in care planning is a priority activity in the Council Plan, and for social workers and managers across Children and Families.

3.3 The funding arrangements for foster carers of young people of 18 plus who would like to stay in their foster placement during their last year at school prior to moving on to further education. This has been raised by the IRO's on a number of occasions and has resulted in the 18 Plus Service working on the development of a "Staying Put" policy which makes explicit the financial support that will be offered to carers in these circumstances. When in place this policy and the financial planning behind it will support Social Workers and the Placement Service in working with in-house and external carers at a earlier point to make the transition to the post 18 arrangements. This will prevent the situation where young people experience unnecessary uncertainty when their focus should be on achieving the necessary exam results and making future plans

3.4 The issue of whether the local authority should be paying for young people in their care to apply for British Citizenship has also a risen a number of times.

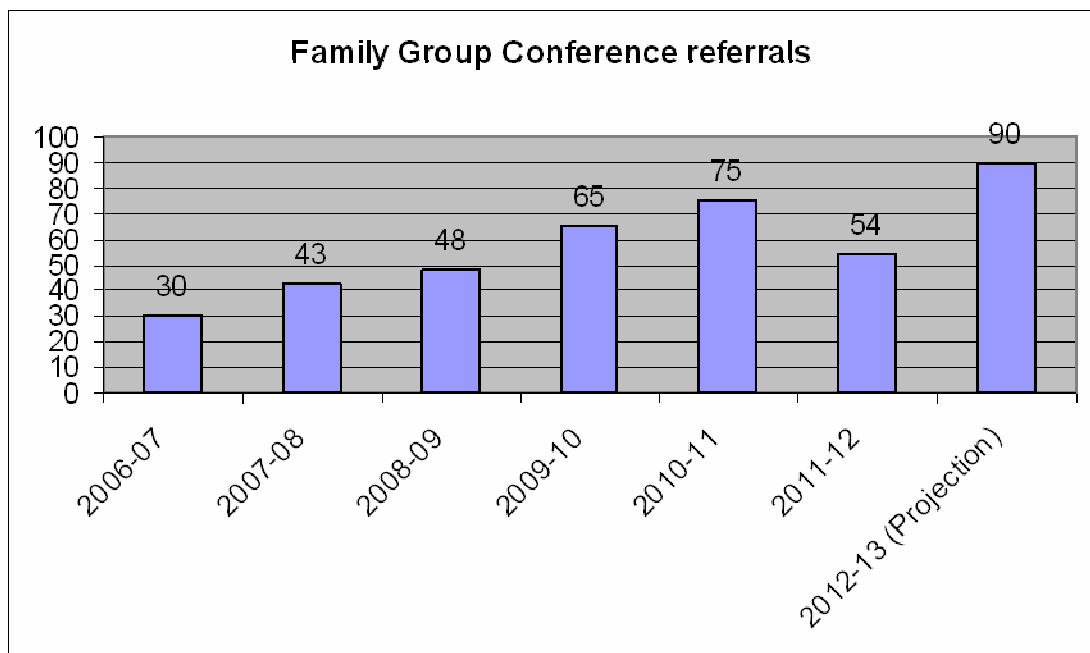
3.5 All the above issues were resolved through discussion with the social work teams and senior managers and there was no need to escalate outside the local authority to CAFCASS.

### **3. Family Group Conferences**

4.1 A family group conference is a process led by family members to plan and make decisions for a vulnerable child/children who are at risk. Families, including extended family members and in some cases close family friends are assisted by an independent family group conference coordinator to

prepare for the meeting. At the first part of the meeting, social workers and other professionals set out their concerns and what support could be made available. In the second part family members meet on their own to make a plan for the child. Haringey is now using FGC's for children in the community and those in care where family members are being sought as an alternative to a foster placement or adoption outside the family.

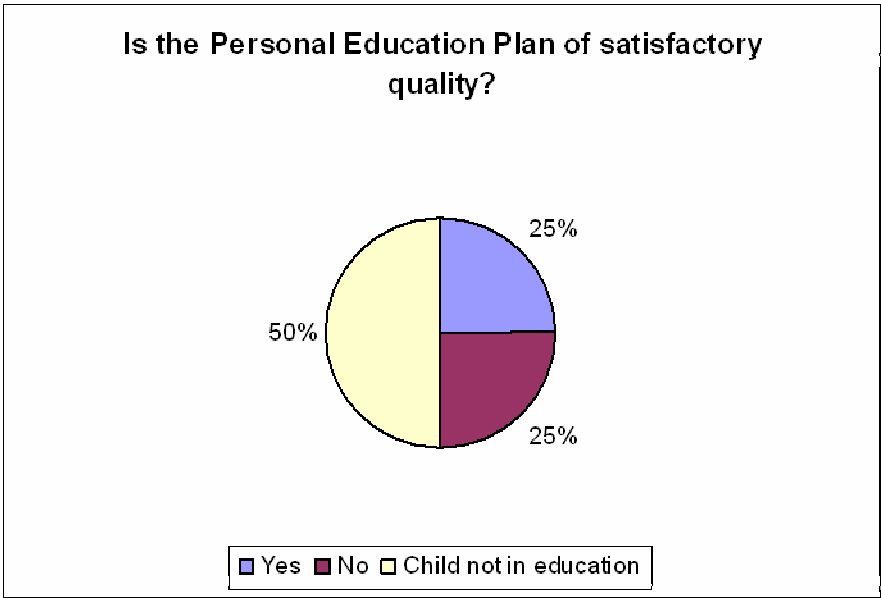
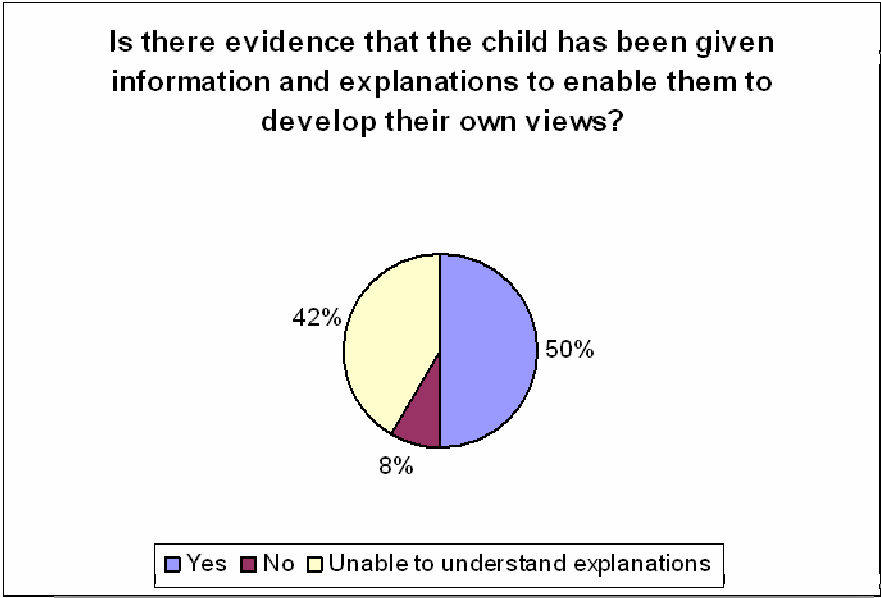
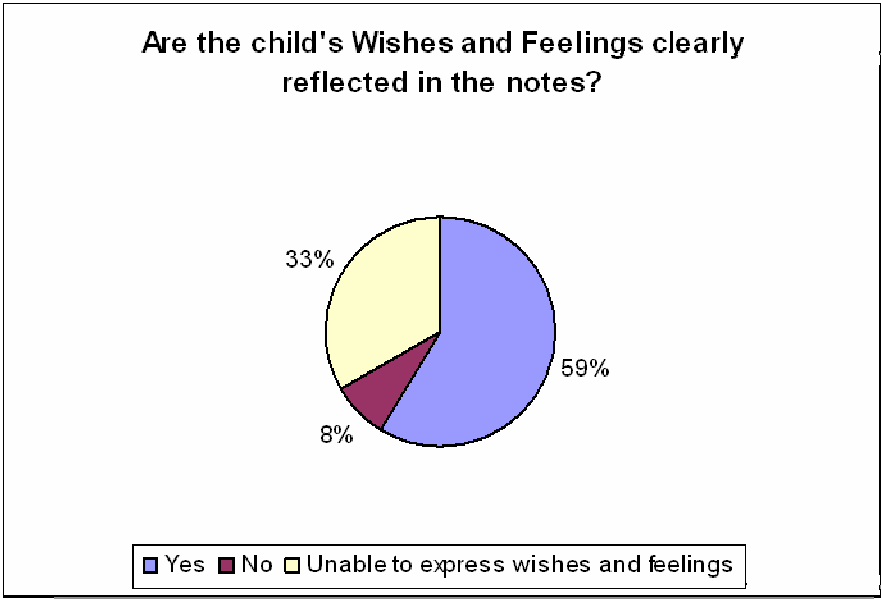
4.2 The Family Group Conference service is located in the Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Practice Development Service. During 2011-12 there was a decline in the numbers of referrals for FGC. To redress this, the service has been re-launched as part of the drive towards earlier intervention and family support. A series of short workshop for social workers and managers promoted the rationale behind Family Group Conferences, the leaflet for families has been redesigned and FGC Coordinators are going to provide open surgeries which will enable workers to discuss specific cases and debate more general issues relating to engaging the wider family. It is projected that in 2012-13 there will be in the region of 90 referrals for FGC's.



#### 4. Audits

The team recently completed a small snapshot audit involving the Childs care plan, wishes and feelings, PEP, paternal involvement and placement the feedback from this was as follows:





The audit has highlighted the need for further work, especially, in relation to capturing the views, wishes and feelings of our Looked after Children. To progress this we are currently conducting a piece of work with the Child Protection Advisors to enable us to better understand how we can ascertain children's views. Specifically we aim to identify which tools social workers use to assist them in ascertaining the child's opinions and feelings and how once gathered the information is used. Currently the IRO's seek the view of children and young people through a paper questionnaire and VIEWPOINT (electronic consultation document). Following the audit stage it is the intention to talk to young people and get them to inform us about they would like to be communicated with.

## **5. Future Work**

- IRO are involved in the implementation of the Family Justice Review and the work to prevent delay in care proceedings. This will include further strengthening their role in relation to permanency planning, when the remit of the Adoption Panel is reduced and working with Cafcass to achieve a seamless hand over of responsibilities from the children's Guardians.
- To ensure that every child/young person has a named IRO and that their review is held within the given timescales and decisions and minutes are circulated on time.
- To scrutinise care plans and inform managers where written documents are not completed
- For an IRO to attend the Safeguarding Panel for the interests of Looked After Children
- To be part of any working parties for Sexual Exploitation.
- To recruit and establish a permanent group of IRO's
- To establish effective and timely feed-back mechanisms between the IRO's and the operational managers and staff across Children and Families so that issues of concern can be addressed and dealt promptly and emerging themes highlighted.
- Retaining a focus on children and Young people participation – developing age appropriate approaches to consultation.

**Perminder Chahal**  
**Manager IRO Service**



**Haringey Council**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Committee</b>	<b>Item Number:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	Annual report of the Adoption Service		
<b>Report Authorised by:</b>	Debbie Haith		
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Lesley Kettles		
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b> <b>All</b>	<b>Report for Key/Non Key Decisions:</b> <b>N/A</b>		

## 1. Recommendations

This report is submitted to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee (CPAC) for information. The Committee and other Council Committees are not required to make formal decisions based on this report.

## 2. Description of the service

The Adoption Service is located within the, Commissioning and Placements which principally provides placements for Children in Care. It is a critical part of the service whose purpose is to provide permanent placements through Adoption or Special Guardianship for children in the Council's care.

The Service functions are provided by two teams of social workers who undertake the range of activities and services delivered by the service, as well as by the Adoption and Permanence Panel constituted under the Adoption Agency Regulations. In addition to this, the advertising, communication and marketing functions for the recruitment of adopters is one of the responsibilities of the Senior Marketing Communications Officer. However it is important to stress that social workers from a range of teams in Children's Services also make a significant contribution to achieving adoption and special guardianship for a child, as do health and education partners. One of the principle aims of the service is to ensure that these specialist functions are integrated into the overall work of the team around the child through effective liaison and robust partnership working.



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### **3. Background information**

Purpose of the Report.

The Adoption Service is regulated by the Adoption and Children Act 2002, and the National Minimum Adoption Standards. The Service is inspected on a regular cycle by Ofsted. The last inspection, in July 2011, deemed the service as satisfactory. The Adoption Service is required to:

- A. Demonstrate that it consistently follows good recruitment practice, and all applicable current statutory requirements and guidance in the recruitment of staff, volunteers and persons on the central list (NMS21.2)
- B. Prepare children's permanence reports in a full and complete way to ensure the Adoption Panel and prospective adopters have all the information needed to make recommendations and effect sound matching in every case. (Adoption Agencies Regulations, 17 and 31)
- C. Ensure that all new staff, including agency staff, undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards (NMS 23.3)
- D. Ensure that the executive of the local authority receives twice yearly reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency. (NMS 25.6)
- E. Ensure that staff is provided with regular supervision; a written record is kept by the agency which details the time, date and length of the session. (MNS 24.4 and 24.5)
- F. Demonstrate that written minutes of the adoption panel meetings are accurate and clearly cover the key issues and views expressed by panel members and record the reasons for its recommendations. (NMS 17.10)
- G. Demonstrate that life story work exists in a format appropriate to the child's age and understanding and its preparation is co-ordinated in a timely way (NMS 2.5 and 2.6)

An action plan was subsequently developed and implemented and was presented to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012.

This Annual Report document provides a description of services offered by the two principal teams, a brief analysis of performance and key issues for the future.

### **4. Recruitment**

Recruitment advertising takes place in a range of different publications in order to make sure all sections of the community are reached. Adopters for specific children looked after by Haringey Council are routinely sought by advertising in specialist adoption publications such as "Be My Parent" and "Children who Wait". Children for whom an in house adopter is



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not immediately available are routinely referred to the Adoption Register. A particularly effective innovation has been the making of DVD recordings which showcase children waiting for permanent placement and providing greater insight for prospective carers. We have completed 11 of these since April 2011.

The Marketing and Communications officer has co-ordinated profiles of all children referred to this service for adoption placements and regularly distributes these profiles to all adoption agencies in the country. The staff team members attend Adoption Exchange Days facilitated by the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium (NLAFC) and the Adoption Register. In addition, the NLAFC hosts general adopter recruitment events throughout the year. The Consortium has recently set up a focus group to recruit a higher volume of black and ethnic minority adopters. The Haringey Service has developed a recruitment strategy to do this also, as this is a deficit in our service.

The overall aim is to recruit a pool of adopters to enable matches with specific children to be made as quickly as possible, thus minimising any drift and delay in securing permanency. It is only when the service is unable to place with Haringey approved families that inter-agency placements are sought.

## 5. Preparation

The formal application to adopt is taken up before the preparation group as required by guidelines. Applicants are expected to attend the preparation and training course as the first stage of the assessment process. Inter country adopters attend the preparation courses run by the Norwood Adoption Agency, which also undertakes their assessment on behalf of the NLAFC. In addition each member of the NLAFC offers places to applicants on their preparation groups. Each preparation group is run over 4 days. In 2011 – 2012 this Service ran 2 preparation groups. This was as a result of staff shortages and high staff turnover which has now been addressed.

In 2012 – 2013 the service plans to hold 4 preparation groups, one of which has already taken place on 20 February to 1 March 2012 of which there were nine households consisting of 7 couples and two single applicants.

Further preparation training groups are planned in 2012- June, September, November and February 2013.

## 6. Assessment

Our aim is to complete assessments in 8 months, which includes the preparation period, in line with the Adoption Agency Regulations. However, due to a range of factors including staffing changes, the average length of time was 10 months. The service approved 11 adoptive households in the last year, and 3 inter-country adopters were approved by Norwood Adoption Agency on behalf of Haringey. Despite the staffing issues referred to above, this was more than a 40% increase on the previous year's performance when only five adoptive parents were approved.

## 7. Panel



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Haringey's Adoption and Permanence Panel meets twice monthly. As per regulation and considered good practice, we have an independent chair that has substantial professional experience of adoption. There are 4 independent members, 2 of whom are adoptive parents and 2 of whom were adopted. In the last year Panel considered 39 adoption plans, 40 long term fostering plans, 12 approvals of new adopters, 16 matches for adoption, and 5 matches for long term fostering. Six adoption plans were rescinded. There have been no referrals to the Independent Review Mechanism, the regulatory body which hears appeals of applicants who were not approved by the Agency Decision Maker.

The service has introduced a system whereby the Panel chair feeds back to the Agency Decision Maker on cases which were presented, in particular where there are possible concerns about practice.

The Panel plans to have 2 business meetings a year.

## **8. Placements for adoption**

The service placed 16 children for adoption, 8 children placed were from BME groups. The average age of children at placement is 3.2 years the average is increase due to the age range of children being placed. 8 of the children were placed with LBH adopters.

The timeliness of adoptive placements has been measured through national statistical returns for many years, and a national indicator since 2008. The performance indicator looks at the placement history of children adopted each year and measures the percent placed for adoption within 12 months of the agency decision that Adoption is the plan. The average length of time to adoption is 18 months. 50% of children were placed within 12 months of the adoption plan decision, 36% were placed within 24 months of agency decision and the remainder within 3 years, there are very case specific reasons for this length of time and our current tracking arrangements would ensure that individual cases are closely monitored.

There is no comparator data available in relation to 2010 – 2011 for the indicator in relation to adoption orders, nor is there comparator data for children placed in the year.

The Adoption and Permanency Service has introduced monitoring systems for the different components of the process, which will enable us to determine whether we are on target, and to take corrective action when we are not. In addition, we have introduced fortnightly link meetings which focus on making links between children referred and families approves at the earliest possible stage. The aim is to make formal matches as soon as possible after the granting of the Placement Order, which gives the local authority legal permission to place for Adoption. There is a renewed focus on achieving Adoption Orders in a more timely fashion, and the development of holistic assessment of children's needs and robust support plans for adopters to assist them in meeting these needs is an integral part of the process.

The above mentioned systems are part of the service improvement planning and underpin the awareness that significant improvements in performance are necessary.

## **9. Children waiting**



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There are currently 58 children on referral for adoption placements. Links and matches have been identified for 21 of those children. A further 11 children's plans for adoption have not been presented to the Adoption Panel as yet. The introduction of fortnightly linking meetings as well as tracking meetings overseen by Service Heads, and a strong focus across the Children and Families Division on achieving permanency will have a positive impact on improving performance in this area.

## **10. Adoption orders granted**

Over the past year Adoption Orders have been granted on 14 children. This includes 3 sibling groups.

## **11. Support**

The support an adoptive family may need over time is carefully considered as part of the assessment and approval process which then contributes to the Adoption Support Plan for the individual child/ren to be placed. The assessment for support will include the following areas:-

- a) Financial support and ongoing allowances.
- b) Support Groups through the NLAFC
- c) Contact arrangements.
- d) Accessing local health and education services.
- e) Services to prevent family breakdown; and
- f) Counselling, advice and information.

The vast majority of support services are delivered through the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortia (NLAFC), and there is a contract between the NLAFC boroughs with the 'Post Adoption Service' a specialist charity, to deliver parenting support and therapeutic services. In the event of a child with particular emotional and behavioural difficulties there is the provision to deliver specific therapeutic parenting packages.

## **12. Disruptions**

There have been no disruptions of Adoption Placements made by Haringey in the last year. However, one match did not go ahead to placement and the family withdrew. Where we have received referrals re possible placements on the verge of disruptions from adopters who live within the Borough and where LBH did not assess or place the adoptees the adoption support Team will coordinate support services available that are deemed appropriate within LBH and North London Consortium to support adopters in maintaining the placement.

## **13. Other areas of work**

The 'support' arm of the Adoption and Permanency Service offers a service to adult adoptees living in the Haringey area who are seeking support and advice in relation to their own adoption and adoption history. This work is important in terms of providing learning from past practice and feeding the experiences of adoptees for current service development. We are required to offer Adoption and intermediary Service-(pre commencement Adoptions) Regulations 2005 (ISR) and the Disclosure of Adoption



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Information (Post Commencement Adoptions) Regulations 2005 (AIR) recognise the important role that counselling, support and advice can play for the applicant and subject of the application.

The Service also offers assistance to adult adoptees in tracing relatives. Letterbox contact between adopted children and birth relatives is managed through this part of the service, and direct contact in special guardianship cases. The team also undertakes special guardianship assessments and in the past year Assessments were undertaken.

### **14. Complaints**

One complaint was received in relation to the adoption service, which was in relation to a contact arrangement.

### **15. Key Issues Going Forward**

The main challenge for Haringey is in recruiting and assessing sufficient numbers of adoptive families to meet the needs of the diverse range of children requiring adoption placements and in making placements in a timely fashion. It is clear that improvement in performance in timescales from care to Adoption Orders is indicated and necessary if more children are to enjoy the security and stability of permanent placements. The report details the measures which are being undertaken to secure service improvements. In addition, the Service has set up a Service Improvement Multi Agency Development Group with the aim of service development to achieve service improvement and notably outstanding Ofsted inspection ratings. Another key initiative, in conjunction with the Children in Care Service, is the introduction of the Permanency Planning Strategy and Procedures to drive the permanency agenda.

### **16. Staffing of the service**

The staff complement consists of the following:-

1 Deputy Head of Service,  
2 Team Managers,  
7 Adoption Social Workers  
2 Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Social Workers.  
In addition there are currently 2 social workers above establishment who undertake special guardianship assessments.

The Service has only been fully staffed since January 2012. It already noted that the new stability of the workforce is beginning to contribute to improved outcomes and will continue to do so.





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