CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 5th October, 2021, 7.15 pm - George Meehan House, 294 High Road, N22 8JZ

Members: Councillors Zena Brabazon, Patrick Berryman, Sakina Chenot, Sarah James, Felicia Opoku, Tammy Palmer and Elin Weston

Quorum: 3

1.   FILMING AT MEETINGS

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

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

2.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

3.   URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair will consider the admission of late items of urgent business. Late items will be considered under the agenda item they appear. New items will be dealt with at item 10 below.

4.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A member with a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the consideration becomes apparent.

Haringey
LONDON

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' judgement of the public interest.

5.   MINUTES (PAGES 1 - 6)

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2021.

6.   PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT : CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (PAGES 7 - 12)

This report provides an analysis of the performance data and trends for an agreed set of measures relating to looked after children on behalf of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.

7.   STOP AND SEARCH (VERBAL UPDATE)

8.   ADOPT LONDON NORTH (ALN) ANNUAL REPORT (PAGES 13 - 48)

This Annual Report details the work of Adopt London North (ALN) since its inception in October 2019 until March 2021 including information about ways of working, activity and development work.

9.   HARINGEY VIRTUAL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-20 (PAGES 49 - 68)

The purpose of this report is to outline the activity of the Virtual School Head (VSH), Haringey Virtual School (HVS) and the educational outcomes of Haringey Council's Looked after children (LAC) for the academic year 2019-20. It reflects on achievements and identifies areas in need of development to achieve the best outcomes for this vulnerable group.

10.   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.   DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

25 January 2022
28 February 2022

Felicity Foley, Committees Manager
Tel – 020 8489 2919
Fax – 020 8881 5218
Email: emma.perry@haringey.gov.uk

Fiona Alderman
Head of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
River Park House, 225 High Road, Wood Green, N22 8HQ
Monday, 27 September 2021

MINUTES OF MEETING CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 15TH JULY 2021, 19.00 – 21.00

PRESENT:

Councillors: Zena Brabazon (Chair), Sakina Chenot, Tammy Palmer and Elin Weston

1. **FILMING AT MEETINGS**

    The Chair referred Members present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and Members noted the information contained therein.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)**

    Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James.

3. **URGENT BUSINESS**

    None

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

    There were no declarations of interest.

5. **MINUTES**

    The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

6. **MATTERS ARISING**

    It was confirmed that the actions detailed in the minutes of the previous meeting had now been completed.

    Two university students, Tabitha Musa and Leah Glenday, were invited to the meeting to discuss their experiences of attending university during a pandemic. It was noted that there were 48 young people within the cared for service who had now started university and the team were very proud of their achievements. Beverley Hendricks, Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Social Care, felt that it was important for members to meet some of the young people who were attending university during a particularly difficult time, who had maintained their education despite these challenges.

The two young students gave an overview of their first year at university and applauded everything that their personal advisor had done for them, who had maintained contact throughout that time.

The Committee were interested to hear the challenges the students had faced during their time remote learning. In response, Tabitha stated that the start of the first year had been in person, until November 2020. This had enabled her to form some initial relationships before the learning had moved to online. Things were just starting to open up again, although it was acknowledged that January had been a tough time for students.

Leah stated that she was fortunate that her university had smaller groups initially which had allowed them to meet in person. She had continued to stay in her accommodation since the start of the first year, as all students had stayed in their individual colleges.

The Chair recognised the great achievements of the students and questioned whether there was anything that the Council could have done differently to assist them further. In response, Leah stated that she had found some of the membership fees to various societies were very expensive, around £200, which often prevented certain individuals from joining. She had also been asked to sign a declaration that she would not undertake any employment during term time, which prevented her from having a chance to build up funds.

The Committee felt that there was a need to challenge universities. It was acknowledged that steps were being taken towards promoting inclusion for everyone, however those individuals with insufficient funds for societies were being excluded from these opportunities. The Committee would look at how this could be followed up with the universities.

It was acknowledged that not all universities had the same support packages and that it was currently up to the individual to disclose their need for support. The Committee believed that some individuals may not feel comfortable in disclosing this and therefore could be a barrier for them.

The Chair, on behalf of the committee, thanked the students for their attendance and was very proud of all that they had achieved so far.

7. **PERFORMANCE FOR 2020/21**

Richard Hutton, Senior Performance Officer, introduced the report, as set out in the agenda.

Officers responded to questions from the Committee:

- Councillor Weston challenged the PEPs and questioned whether 84% was good enough given the circumstances. In response, it was stated that they

- wished they could give healthier data, which was a reflection of a number of factors, however officers were confident that they could get the figures back up to where they should be.
- Beverley Hendricks stated that the target the service had set itself was a minimum of 80% during the pandemic, for a number of factors. It was noted that Covid had placed a significant impact on staffing levels in schools, with some having to open during school holidays to ensure that vulnerable children were still receiving a level of education. It was also stated that there had been some challenges around the 16+ age group being able to secure support from the virtual school, where a virtual school officer had been put in place for this age group. It was suggested that further discussions may take place at a future meeting to address the loss of learning and the programme focused on how to recover. **ACTION.**
- In response to a question from Councillor Palmer regarding resourcing and whether the service felt supported enough, Ann Graham, Director of Children's Services, stated that this was always a challenging question. She stated that the service wasn't adequately resourced for speech and language services, which were clear areas that required additional funding.
- Ann Graham stated that she was not concerned about the decrease in the number of looked after children, from 30 to 23. It was noted that as a result of Covid, the patterns of a large number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children had now changed. It was noted that there was currently a voluntary transfer mechanism in place from Kent.
- Richard Hutton stated that the service was beginning to see an increase in the numbers of looked after children, with more people contacting the service within the last month than in the last 18 months. The service had prepared for this surge in numbers.
- Beverley Hendricks stated that they were introducing a new system called e-PEPS and that she would come back and report on this system in more detail at a future meeting. **ACTION.** She stated that there were a number of factors that may influence the data received, however she was confident that the service worked hard to ensure that the children's outcomes were strong enough.

The Committee stated that they were very supportive of the service and didn't want them to become complacent and continue to improve each year. It was recognised that it had not been an easy year for our children, or the service as a whole.

8. **DISPROPORTIONALITY – VERBAL UPDATE**

Sheri Jiwany-Burnett, Service Manager - Operational Delivery, gave a verbal update on disproportionality at the meeting and gave a presentation at the meeting.

It was noted that a thematic inspection took place in May 2021 over a period of 4 days, as one of 9 boroughs selected, specifically to understand mixed heritage and black boys. The results of the inspection of all 9 boroughs would be combined into one report which was due to be released in September/October 2021. The key lines of enquiry looked at were governance and leadership. The format of the inspection had been kept within the youth justice service, management and focus groups. Overall, the feedback from the inspection had been positive and it was recognised that leadership

supported a culture of change within the youth justice service regarding disproportionality, which had happened over a number of years.

Officers responded to questions from the Committee:

- It was confirmed that the parenting support was for the parents of young people that offend. There was now a virtual space for parents to get support.
- In response to a question regarding school exclusions, particularly at secondary school level, it was stated that there had been a new steering group set up which focused on exclusions of young people and how these could be prevented, with a partnered approach. Ann Graham added that the exclusions group was a sub-group of the Black and Asian Minority Attainment Group. The group was working on a model of change, looking at an alternative provision strategy. The overall vision was to get to a position of zero exclusions.
- The Committee were supportive of changing the language used to 'disparity'.
- If resources were not an issue, Sheri Jiwany-Burnett stated that she would like to have the opportunity to work closely with the Metropolitan Police at Hendon to look at how they understand adolescents, as there was a need for a wholesale approach across agencies to address the issue of disproportionality.

It was noted that there was a pilot for knife crime prevention orders, aligned to anti-social behaviour orders, which focused on knife crime. Concern was raised that these orders could be placed on a child based on police intelligence, not on criminal offence. Concern was also raised that this could have an impact on racial disparity, specifically against young men, with the maximum penalty being two years in prison. Sheri Jiwany-Burnett stated that she would be challenging this and providing comments to the Home Office.

The Chair requested that a report on stop and search come to a future meeting. **ACTION.**

Discussion took place regarding early interventions and whether offenders could be identified at an early age, as part of the early years review. In response, Ann Graham referred to the 20 most prolific offenders work that had previously been undertaken. It was felt that providing speech and language support at an early age was essential and that the service was working with the CCG and the Borough Plan to get additional resources for this vital support. This would allow young people to express themselves at an early age.

9. **WORK UNDERTAKEN TO SUPPORT CHILDREN IN CARE DURING COVID – PRESENTATION**

Sarah Pike, Principal Social Worker, gave a presentation on the work undertaken to support children in care during Covid.

The Committee stressed the importance of ensuring that the voices of children were heard, which had often been lost during covid. It was noted that the leisure interventions and holiday activity fund were vitally important for young people and the summer programme was available on the website now.

The Chair referred to the Model of Change Alternative Provision Strategy and it was requested whether some of the data on children in care could be extracted and reported back to committee in the future. **ACTION.**

Beverley Hendricks referred to the issue of social workers in schools, given some of the successes of the programme. The service would therefore be making strong representations to the DfE to continue with this service until we come out of the pandemic. It was stressed that early intervention was key and that the service would like to see additional funding for this service to be rolled out to all secondary schools, with links into primary, which had been critical to vulnerable children and their families during the pandemic. In response, the Chair believed that a letter should be sent to the DfE to this effect, on behalf of Councillors.

10.   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ann Graham noted that the SEND inspection had ended the previous week and that further information would be given at the next meeting. **ACTION.**

CHAIR: Councillor Zena Brabazon

Signed by Chair ………………………………..

Date …………………………………

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Report for: Corporate Parent Advisory Committee: 5 October 2021

Item number:

Title: Performance for 2020/21

Report Authorised by: Director Children's Services, Ann Graham

Lead Officer: Richard Hutton, Performance and Business Intelligence
richard.hutton@haringey.gov.uk

**Ward(s) affected:** All

Report for Key/ Non Key Decision: Non key

1. Introduction

1.1. This report provides an analysis of the performance data and trends for an agreed set of measures relating to looked after children on behalf of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.

1.2. Section 2 contains performance highlights and key messages identifying areas of improvement and areas for focus. It provides an overall assessment relating to Children in Care so that Members can assess progress in key areas within the context of the Local Authority's role as Corporate Parent.

1.3. The report covers the period March to August 2021 with other data and benchmarking where appropriate.

2. Overall Assessment of Performance

2.1. At the end of August 2021 **395 children were in care** (rate of 64 per 10,000). This is 10 more children than was reported at the end March 2021.

2.2. The number of unaccompanied asylum seeker children (UASC) has remained at 26 which is well below the Haringey quota of 42 (0.07% of the under 18 population) This is mostly due to the impact of lockdown and the travel restrictions in place in 2020. Since that time, most UASC have continued to arrive in Kent or Croydon. These LAs have sought support from other local authorities. We responded and have agreed to accept a small number of their UASC, over and above our continued participation in the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). The NTS is a mechanism for ensuring that UASC are placed in regions across the country equitably when previously there were far greater numbers placed in London compared to other regions.

UASC as a percentage of CLA (snapshot)

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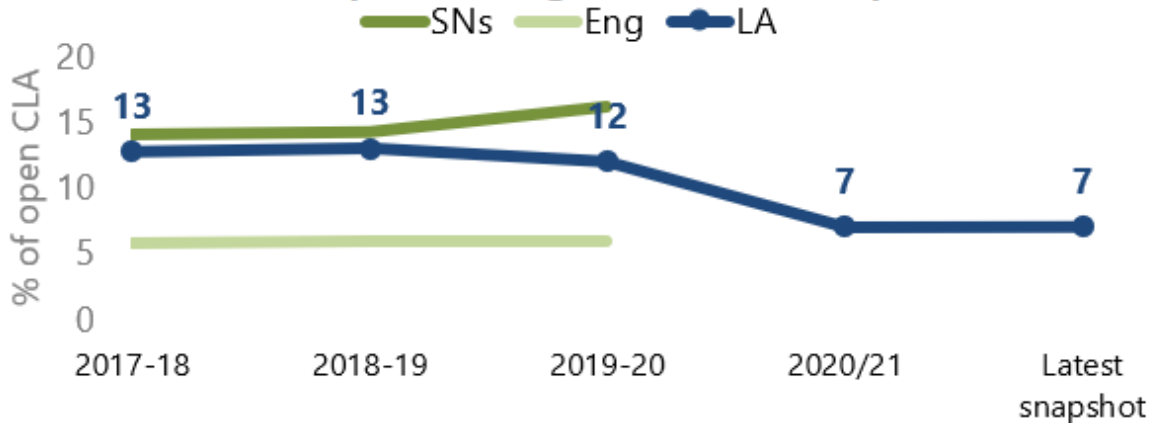
2.3. In the last six months, 76 children ceased to be looked after which is just below the rate during the 12 months to March 2021. Of these children ceasing to be looked after, 20 children (26%) returned home to live with their parents or relatives. This was 34% in 2020/21.

2.4. In the first five months of 2021/22, 73 young people started to be looked after. The same monthly rate as in 2020 /21. Twelve of the 73 starters in 2021/22 are unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) compared to a total 14 for the whole of the previous year, these 12 UASC are 16% of children starting to be looked after, down from 26% in 2019/20 being UASC

Rate of CLA started per 10,000 children

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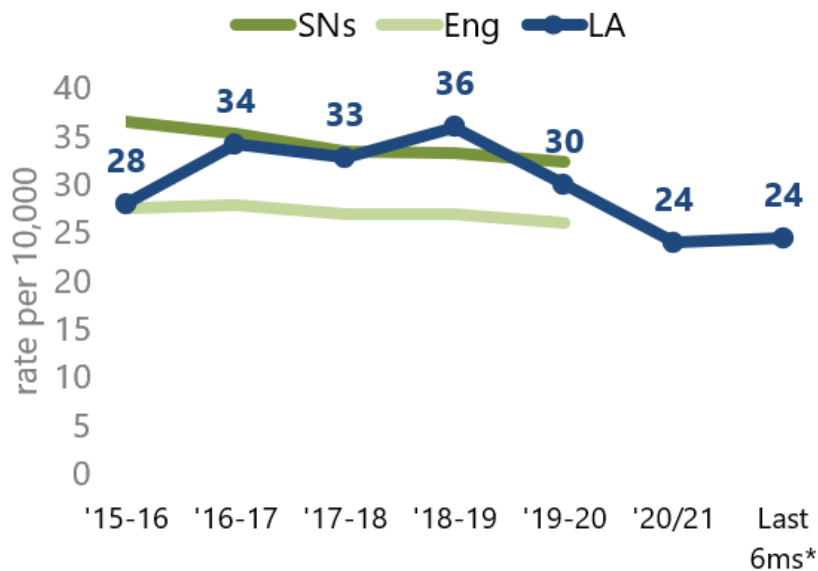
*Annualised rate for comparison purposes

2.5. **Children with a recorded permanency plan. T**he top six reasons for permanency plans are set out below along with the percentage of our children in care with that plan.

Permanence plan

	Number	%
Return to family	22	6%
Adoption	34	9%
SGO/CAO	4	1%
Supported living	16	4%
L/T residential	29	7%
L/T fostering	167	42%

(SGO – Special Guardianship / CAO – Child Assessment Order / LT – Long Term)

2.6. Four children have been adopted in the last six months; as a proportion of those leaving care this is 5%, higher than in 20/21 at 3.4% but below the statistical neighbours' average, at 9%. Of the current Children in Care population,12 are placed for adoption.

2.7. As at end of August 2021, **79%** of looked after children aged under 16 had an **up to date Care Plan**, (88% in March).   Despite problems with older children engaging, **80%** of those over 16 had **up to date pathway plans** (down slightly from 84% in March) but meeting the 80% target.
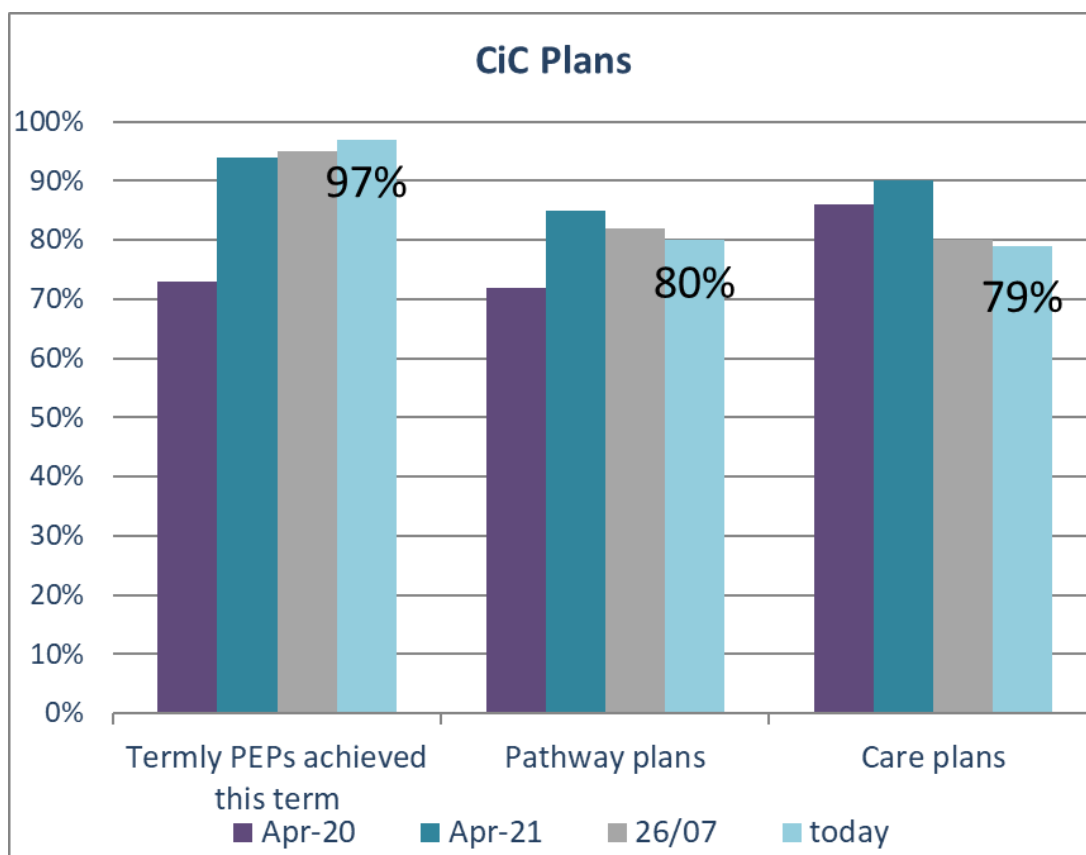
2.8.   Personal education plans (PEPs) have recovered following a challenging year and now are a new record high level of 97%, besting last year's summer term (96%)

2.9   81% of **Children in Care** were recorded as having up to date visits within the relevant timescales as of the beginning of September. This slightly lower performance is due to children being on holiday as well as staffing pressures in the children in care teams. Many of the children who do not have a recent visit on record have been seen and the visit is awaiting write up and logging on the IT system. Visits to looked after children continue to be tracked at performance meetings, held by the Head of Service for Children in Care, and along with supervision and management direction continue to be actively monitored. Of these up-to-date visits 93% were conducted face to face.

2.10   At the end of August 2021, 8% of children with an open episode of care had **had three or more placement moves in the last 12 months**. This is slightly better (lower) than all of the last quarter, last year, the London average and statistical neighbour average.

2.11   Children **under 16 who had been in care for at least 2.5 years** and **in the same placement for at least 2 years**, has improved to 68% (97 children) in line with statistical neighbour average of 70%. These two indicators should be viewed together to gain a view of placement stability for Haringey's children in care which shows a positive balanced picture.

2.12   At the end of March, 98% of children who were looked after for at least 12 months had an up-to-date health assessment, maintaining excellent performance above statistical neighbours' levels (93%).

2.13   At the beginning of September 2020, only 42% of eligible children had **up to date dental visits**. This increased to 63% by the end of June 2021 and **is now 72%.** Unfortunately, dental checks remain a stubborn and challenging area.
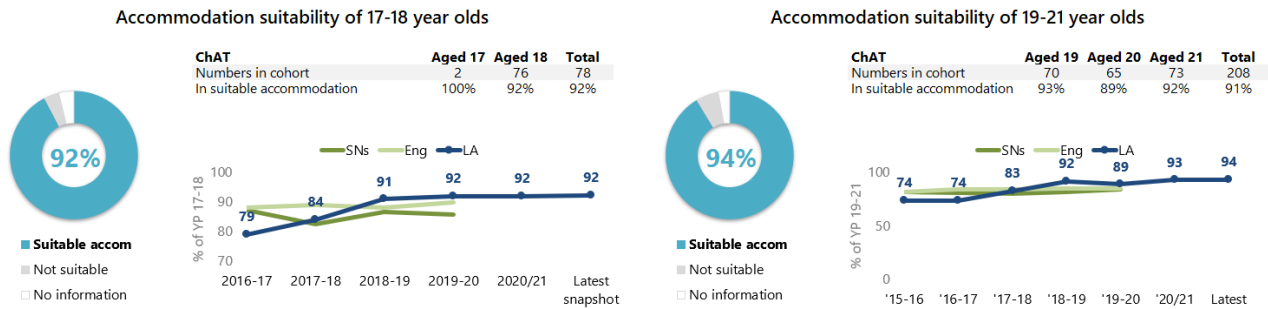
Dental Checks

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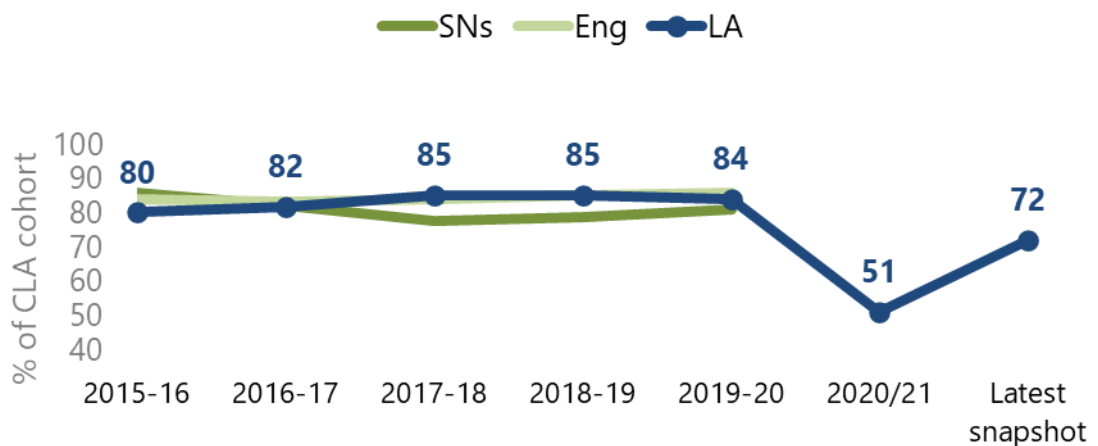
2.14. There are now 418 **care leavers** in receipt of leaving care services, a similar number to the last quarter. 97% of those **aged 19-21** and 96% of **17-18 year olds** were considered as **in touch with the local authority** at the end of November.

2.15. 133 or 57% of the 19-21 year olds and 78% (up 4pp) of the 17-18 year olds were known to be in **Education Employment or Training (EET)**

Education, Employment, or Training (EET) of 19-21 year olds

Activity types of 19-21 year olds
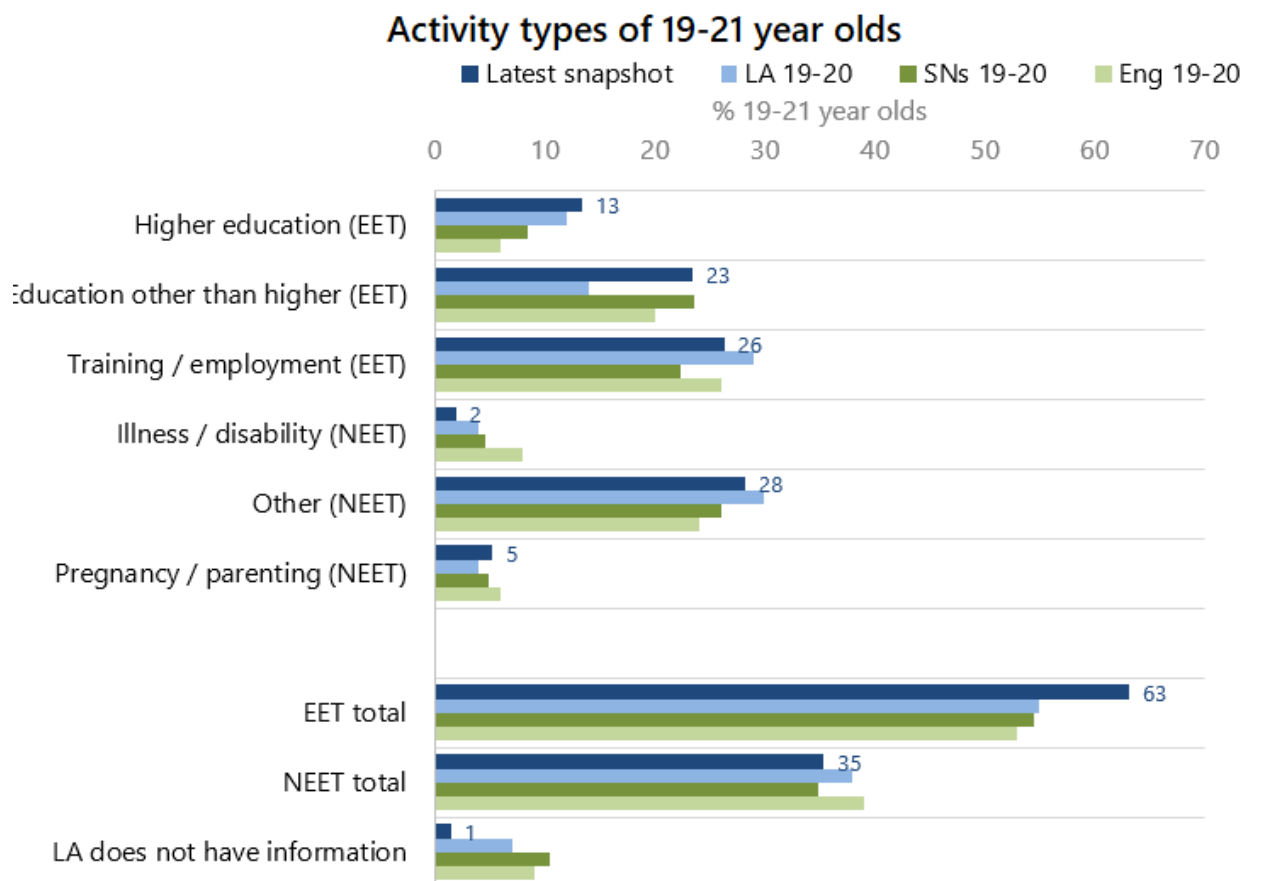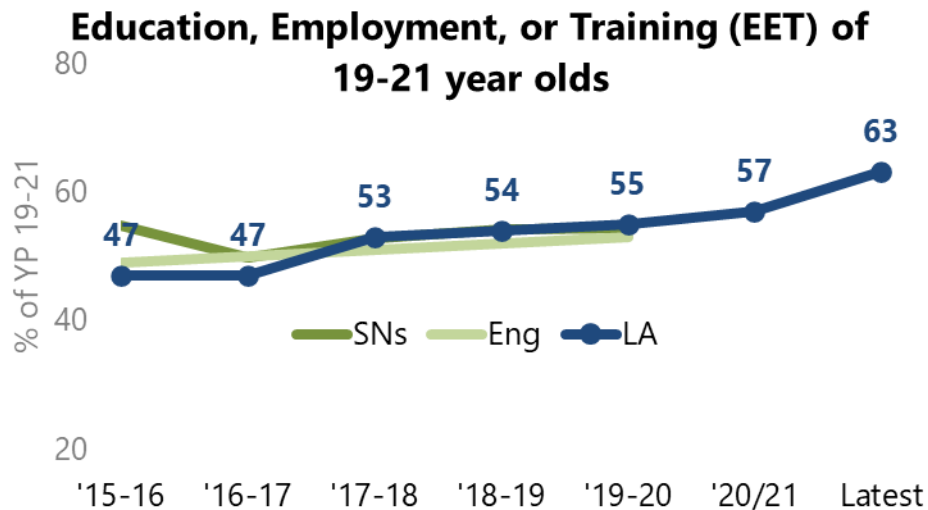
2.16.   94% of **19-21 year old care leavers** were known to be **in suitable accommodation** (89% in 2019/20, 93% last quarter) and 92% of 17-18 year olds (unchanged from 2019/20 & last quarter).

Accommodation suitability of 17-18 year olds

ChAT	Aged 17	Aged 18	Total
Numbers in cohort	2	76	78
In suitable accommodation	100%	92%	92%

Accommodation suitability of 19-21 year olds

ChAT	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Total
Numbers in cohort	70	65	73	208
In suitable accommodation	93%	89%	92%	91%

3. Contribution to strategic outcomes

3.14.   Borough Plan 2019-2022

3.15.   People Priority: A Haringey where strong families, strong networks and strong communities nurture all residents to live well and achieve their potential

Report for:	Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee : 5 October 2021
Item number:	
Title:	Adopt London North (ALN) Annual Report
Report authorised by :	Ann Graham, Director, Children's Services
Lead Officer:	Faiz Ahmed, Head of Service, Children in Care
Ward(s) affected:	N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration

This Annual Report details the work of Adopt London North (ALN) since its inception in October 2019 until March 2021 including information about ways of working, activity and development work.

2. Recommendations

For Members to receive the report which is for information.

3. Reasons for decision

N/A

4. Background information

4.1 Supporting legislation was passed in 2016 in the Education and Adoption Act, requiring local authorities to create Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA) by 2020 to be responsible for all adoption led services. This includes:

- the recruitment and assessment of adoptive parents;
- family finding for children in need of adoptive parents; and
- adoption support to adoptive families, adopted adults, and others impacted by adoption.

4.2 The first RAAs were launched in 2017. Haringey became part of the Adoption North London RAA together with Barnet, Enfield, Camden, Hackney and Islington in October 2019.

5. Contribution to strategic outcomes

N/A

6. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Adopt London North Annual Report
Appendix 2 – Young People's summary

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

- Education and Adoption Act 2016.

ADOPT LONDON NORTH
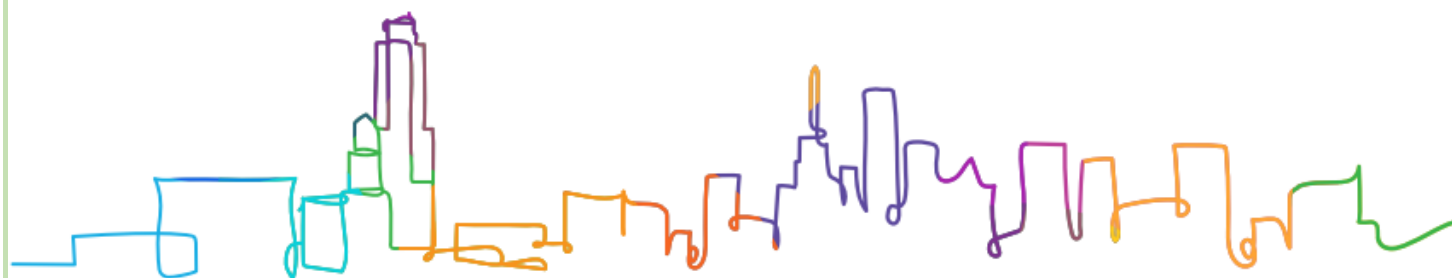
ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2019 – MARCH 2021

CONTENTS

APPENDICES

INTRODUCTION

This annual report for Adopt London North (ALN) covers the period from its launch in October 2019 until March 2021, the end of the 2020/21 reporting year.

It has been a roller-coaster period! We were live for just six months prior to the global pandemic hitting the UK in March 2020. In our first week we had 38 members of staff arrive from teams across the six member boroughs, all set up on new IT equipment and working from our brand new office space created from training rooms in Islington. Staff brought live caseloads with them which needed to continue to receive their attention and in total we transferred in around 400 active cases across the service, all of which had to be loaded onto our new specialist case recording system. Staff were working in new teams with new managers, and also adapting to covering a much wider geographical area, working across six boroughs each with their own culture and ways of practicing. We struggled without a full set of established working procedures and with what to prioritise, and those first six months were both exciting and exhausting for everyone. We focused on team and whole service time together, getting to know one another, and establishing a strong, supportive culture. In early March 2020 we were fortunate to be able to celebrate our launch properly with our other Adopt London RAA partners at a wonderful event at the Islington Assembly Halls, cheered on by David & Carrie Grant, who are north London adoptive parents to their son.

Along with the rest of the country we moved primarily to virtual working later in March. We were grateful for our new IT equipment which coped relatively well with enabling this change. One of the biggest challenges and frustrations for us created by the pandemic hitting early in our development is that we do not have strong comparative data to show clearly pre and post covid-19, and therefore to separate out the changes that have arisen from the RAA creation. With that in mind, we set out in this report the background to ALN and information about our ways of working, activity and development work over our first 18 months.

Lydia Samuel, Head of Service
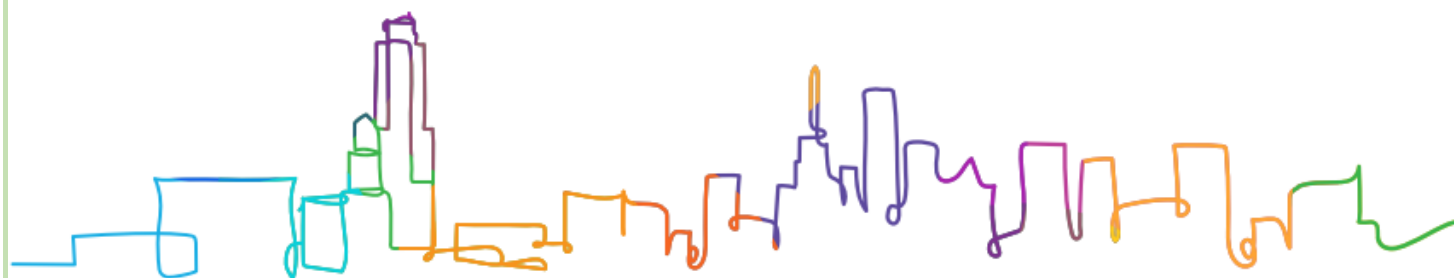
ADOPT LONDON NORTH BACKGROUND

1. National Regional Adoption Agency development

In 2015 the Department for Education (DfE) proposed that all local authority adoption services move into Regional Adoption Agencies [RAA] in order to:

- Speed up matching
- Improve adopter recruitment and adoption support
- Reduce costs
- Improve the life chances of vulnerable children.

Supporting legislation was passed in 2016 in the Education & Adoption Act, requiring local authorities to create RAAs by 2020. The DfE has continued to drive forward the regionalisation programme since. Nationally the first RAA's launched in 2017 and London RAAs launched in 2019, around the middle of the change programme. By April 2021 only a few local authorities in the country were not yet part of a live RAA. Appendix 1 shows a national map of RAAs.

Early feedback from RAAs in operation for 2½ years or more is positive. Adopters report some improved services and staff report improved job satisfaction. Ofsted reports for Local Authorities with adoption services delivered regionally have generally been positive to date. The government commissioned an evaluation of live RAAs which is ongoing, but has noted in early findings the tentative progress in cutting the time children wait to be placed with their adoptive parents as well as innovations and improvements in adoption support services. The evaluations also note the significant disruption to services caused for a period before and after an RAA is launched, and many of the challenges that RAAs face in their first years. National data shows that the majority of RAAs experience a significant drop in some areas of performance and recruitment levels in the lead up to and for a period after launching. Benefits are more clearly seen once the RAA is well-established.
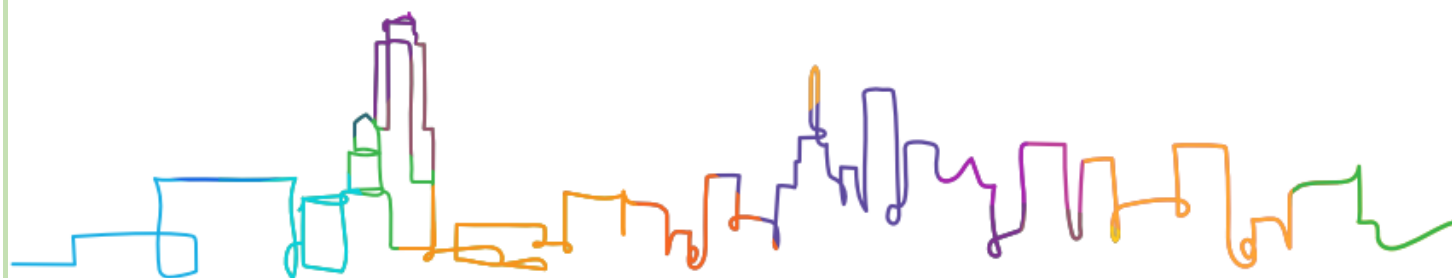
2. Adopt London North development

The six partner agencies of Adopt London North are the London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, and Islington. The boroughs previously worked together successfully for over a decade as the North London Adoption & Fostering Consortium to provide some adoption services in partnership, whilst retaining separate local adoption teams.

The adoption functions of the six boroughs officially became part of Adopt London North on 1st October 2019, hosted by the London Borough of Islington as the lead partner. The ALN Partnership Agreement covers legal and financial terms of the arrangement.

3. Scope of service

Adopt London North has responsibility for all adoption led services, delivering these on behalf of the local authority. This includes:

- Recruitment and assessment of adoptive parents
- Family finding for children in need of adoptive parents
- Adoption support to adoptive families, adopted adults, and others impacted by adoption

Responsibility for the child (including corporate parenting responsibilities) remains with the local authority. The borough is therefore responsible for the progress of the child's case through the court system and for final decisions in respect of care and adoption planning.

ALN has a responsibility to support the local authority social workers in their adoption work, including information about adoption regulations and best practice.
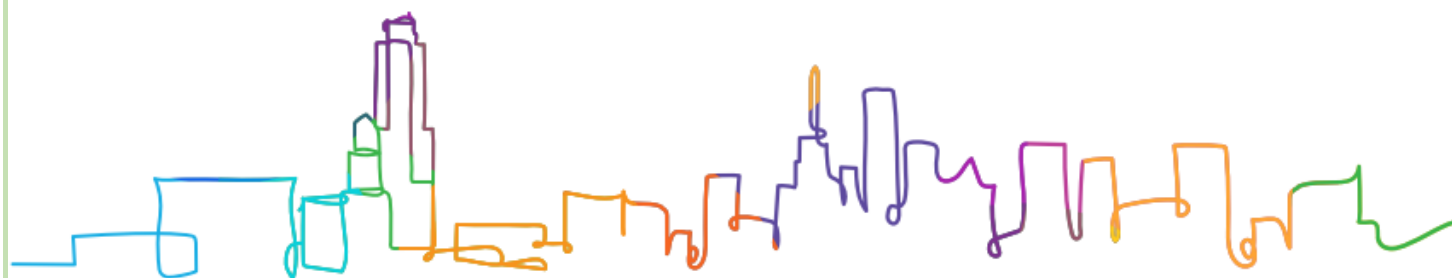
4. Outcomes

Adopt London North aims to improve outcomes for children who have a plan for adoption and those living in adoptive families in the following specific ways. We will report on these changes as we build up our data over time and will develop strategies to target different areas of improvement.

Finding prospective adoptive parents
Increase the proportion of prospective adopters who are of black and dual ethnicity
Preparing and approving adoptive parents
Improve timeliness in matching approved adopters
Reduce the number of prospective adopter approvals that are later rescinded
Planning for children
Ensure all children who would benefit from adoption are identified appropriately
Ensure that all children who would benefit from an early permanence placement are identified early and matched with adopters prepared for early permanence
Placing children with adoptive parents
Improve timescales for placing children with adoptive families
Increase the proportion of in-house and local placements
Reduce the number of children for whom the permanence plan has changed away from adoption primarily because adoptive parents could not be found within the child's timescales
Providing support to adoptive families and others
Improve consistency and timeliness in providing support for adoptive families
Increase awareness and uptake of support services amongst adoptive families in order to build resilience and reduce the need for crisis support
Provide specialist and targeted support to adoptive families with the most acute needs in order to reduce disruption in these families
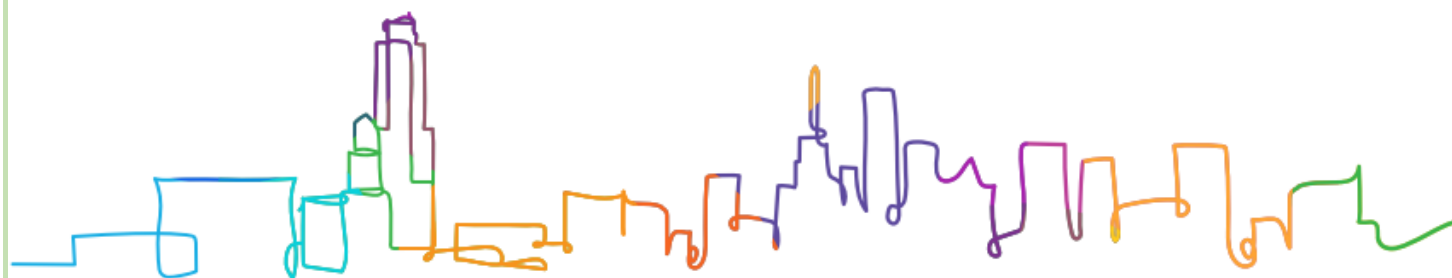
SERVICE STRUCTURE

5. Governance arrangements

All service functions and partnership arrangements are detailed within the partnership agreement. The agreement includes:
- Governance
- Finances and budget setting
- Data sharing agreement
- Dispute resolution
- Termination of agreement

The ALN Governance Board has Director level representation from each of the six partner boroughs. Directors of Children's Services are invited to specific issue meetings if required. The board meets every two to three months and has met virtually since March 2020. The Governance Board has responsibility for all partnership decisions that need to be made above Head of Service level, and for monitoring the performance and budget of ALN.

A Quality Assurance Board (QA Board) meets monthly with membership at Head of Service and Service Manager level from each partner borough. The QA Board has responsibility to monitor and improve partnership working across the boroughs and ALN, including making decisions and proposals about practice and procedures that relate to adoption work across the agencies. The QA Board also considers emerging information about differences in practice between the six boroughs, and where best practice can be implemented across all partners.

Additional meetings are held less formally at Service Manager and Team Manager level between ALN and partner boroughs focusing on specific practice issues, disseminating information and problem-solving.

6. Service delivery arrangements

ALN have one central office space at the Laycock Centre in Islington close to Highbury & Islington station. This is a well-connected location which enables travel by public transport to adoptive families across north London and beyond.
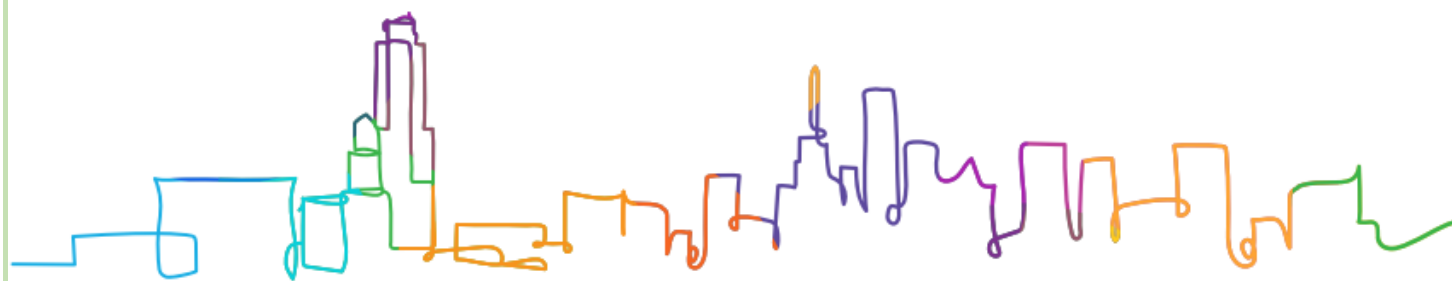
An RAA-specific case recording system was purchased and installed during the development of the RAA with all active cases from partner boroughs being transferred and uploaded to the system. Over 400 active cases were manually transferred onto the system during September and October 2019. The data sharing agreement allows for ALN staff to access local case recording systems to improve joined up working and access to historical files, however in practice this has been challenging to implement and work is still underway to find a technical solution that works for all partner boroughs.

7. Adoption Panel

The Adoption Panels continued to run locally in boroughs initially for three months post-launch and from January 2020 all cases were phased into a central ALN Adoption Panel, meeting in Islington. From January 2020 to March 2021 an interim panel chair and panel members were in place until recruitment to a permanent panel could be completed (postponed until early 2021 due to the pandemic).

The ALN Adoption Panel operates centrally and considers all adopter approvals and reviews, adoption matches, and plans for relinquished babies. The ALN Head of Service is the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) for approvals, and the borough ADM approves matches for children from their own borough. The Panel normally meets twice per month, with provision to meet three times in a month if required.

8. Staffing arrangements

ALN's initial staffing group was constituted almost entirely of staff from the adoption teams in the six partner boroughs. The Head of Service and all Social Work and Team Manager positions were filled directly from previous teams with the exception of one vacant social work post. A Service Manager (who historically worked in the adoption teams in Haringey and Enfield) was recruited externally, and a Business Manager and Business Coordinators (administrative staff) were recruited from different teams and service areas within the six boroughs. Two development posts were left vacant during the first 18 months as a result of the pandemic. A strong emphasis has been placed on building the values of the new service and establishing strong working relationships between staff. ALN has benefited from good relationships between individuals who previously cooperated as part of the consortium, however moving from well-established teams in boroughs into one agency has still been significantly disruptive to staff and they have required support throughout the process.

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ADOPT LONDON

9. Adopt London structure

Adopt London North is part of Adopt London, working in close collaboration with three other RAAs in London and together providing services for 23 London boroughs. Adopt London is unique nationally in our close, consortium approach. Through this partnership, we aim to develop a London-wide profile, improve services that benefit from economies of scale, and share best practice. The host boroughs are Islington, Southwark, Havering, and Ealing.

The four Adopt London Heads of Service work together closely to progress shared priorities and identify areas where there is potential to improve practice together. Marketing and communications leads from each of the RAAs also work closely as one team to oversee work relating to the Adopt London brand and online reach.

Heads of Service and the host borough Directors and Assistant Directors meet quarterly as the Adopt London Executive Board chaired by a non-host partner Director. The Executive Board oversees the joint project work of Adopt London, supports with problem solving, and considers Adopt London issues that need the support of Directors to resolve.

Early in 2021 the Executive Board wrote to all 23 member boroughs to request agreement to work towards an Adopt London legal partnership agreement linked to local agreements. This will formalise the responsibilities of the Executive Board and protect the ownership of our shared brand and online resources. This work is being progressed and we hope will be completed during 2021/22.

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FINDING PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS

10. Adopt London brand

Having a single brand identity and one entry point for prospective adopters covering the 23 Adopt London boroughs is transformative for the way in which prospective adopters are recruited within London. Those considering adoption can now find Adopt London easily through most related search terms online and only need to decide between adopting through a local authority-based agency (Adopt London) or through a Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA). Previously many of the Adopt London boroughs were competing with one another for adopters within close geographic spaces. Pooling resources also means a greater budget for marketing and communications spend, resulting in a more professional, creative and up to date online brand.

Through the Adopt London brand we aim to highlight these messages to prospective adopters:

- *'The heart of adoption in London'*
- London children are at the heart of what we do
- Celebrating London's diverse adoption community
- Experts in adoption
- Supporting you throughout your adoption journey
- We are stronger together.

11. Adopt London website

The website aims to provide information about adoption and about Adopt London for prospective adoptive parents with news, blogs, and adoption stories being uploaded regularly to encourage people to return to the site and spend time browsing. The website also has a growing range of information for those seeking adoption support, with pages aimed at families, adopted adults, and the birth family of children who have been adopted. The website content promotes a range of perspectives and experiences of adoption, and images are selected to realistically represent the ages and ethnicities of children, as well as highlighting different types of adoptive families.
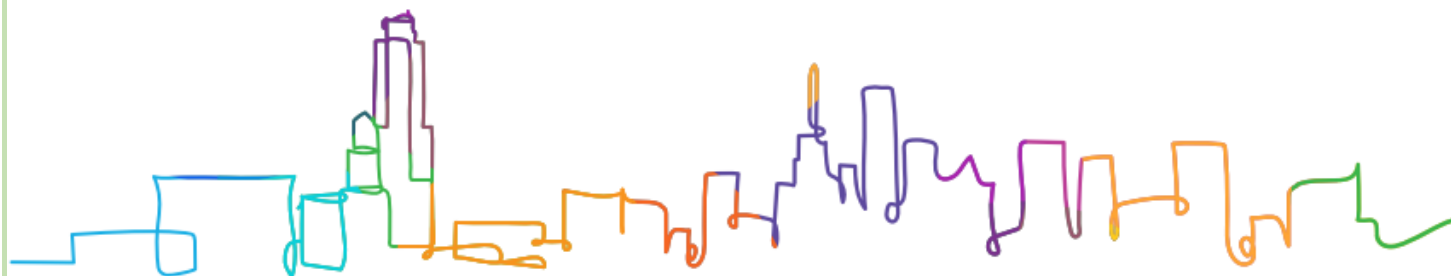
The website was launched in October 2019 and has progressed from being a new site with no prior views to receiving an average of **3600 visitors per month**, with a total of **40,416 unique visitors during the 12 months of 2020/21**. No direct paid advertising for Adopt London has been undertaken during this time but there has been careful attention paid to search engine optimisation and to growing our use of social media to bring people to the website. **Around 50% of visitors come to the site from an organic search on Google**. Specific digital campaigns launched by Adopt London have created website visit **increases of 25% - 40%**.
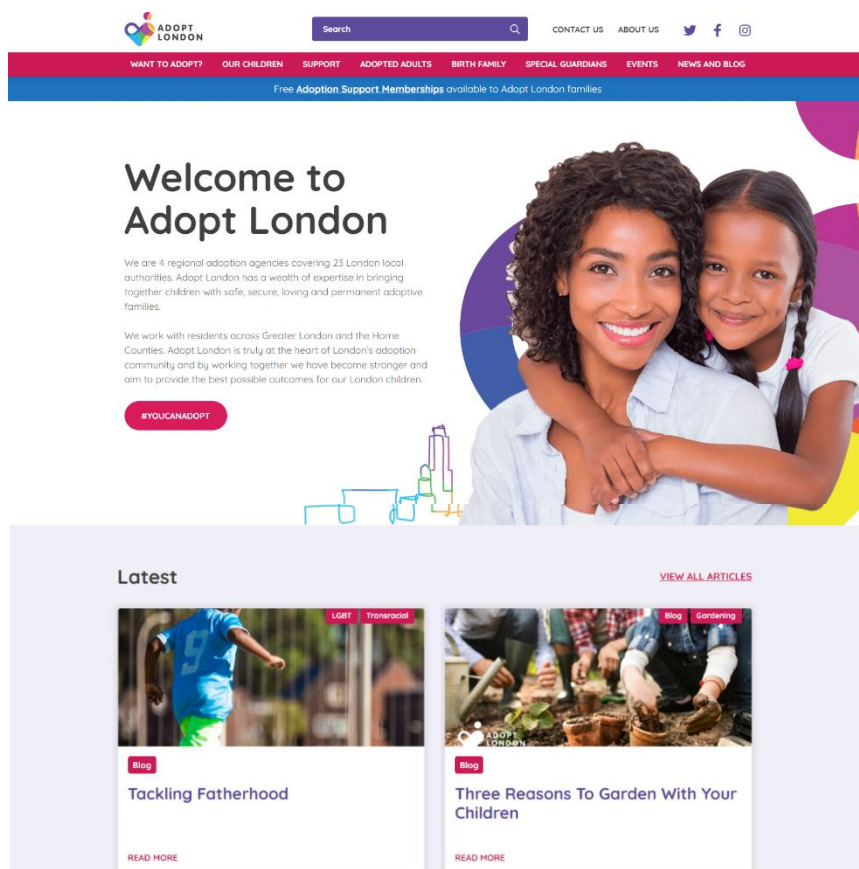
12. Adopt London social media

Adopt London has successfully developed an identity and following on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, with Instagram growing particularly fast in 2021. Social media provides an opportunity for prospective adopters to get to know our brand, and keeps us connected with them over long periods of time whilst they are considering adoption. Even once they have contacted us to get basic information about the adoption process, the majority of prospective adopters do not start an assessment immediately and may take years to consider their decision and prepare practically and emotionally. This makes it important for us provide ways to keep in touch and support them as they learn and prepare, with the hope that they return to Adopt London when ready to go forwards.

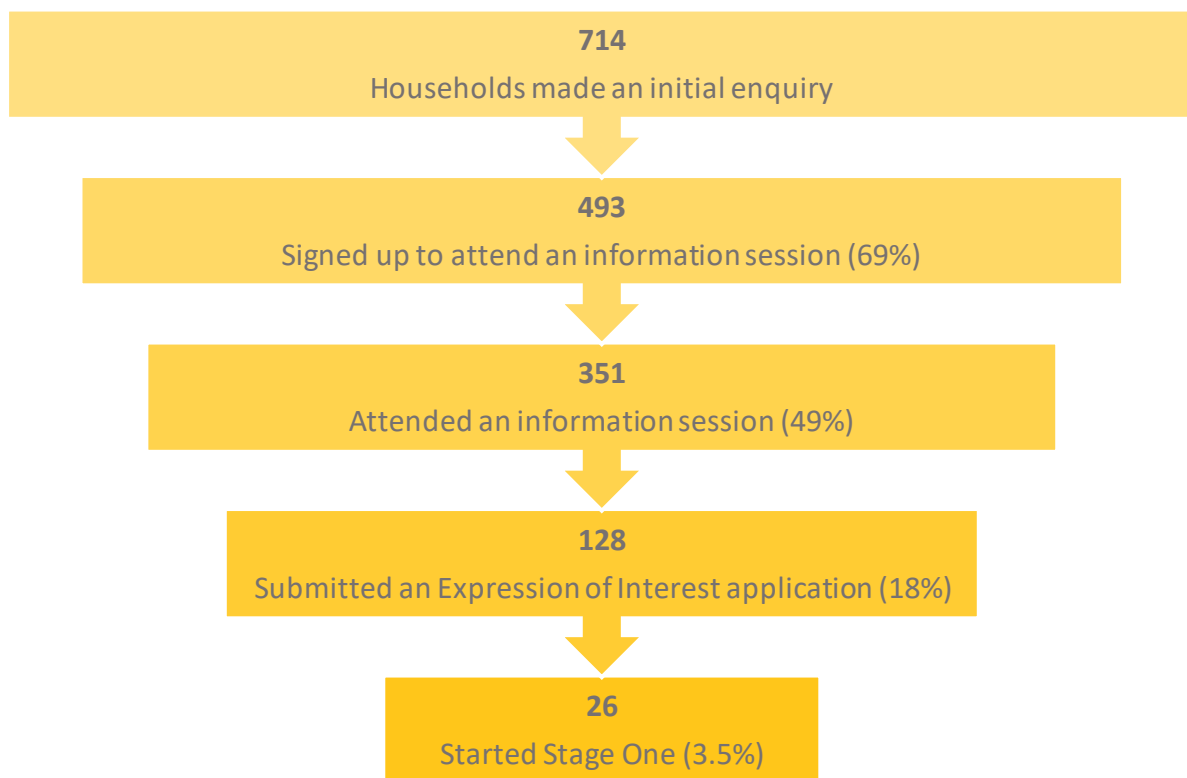We currently have **over 1400 followers** across social media platforms.
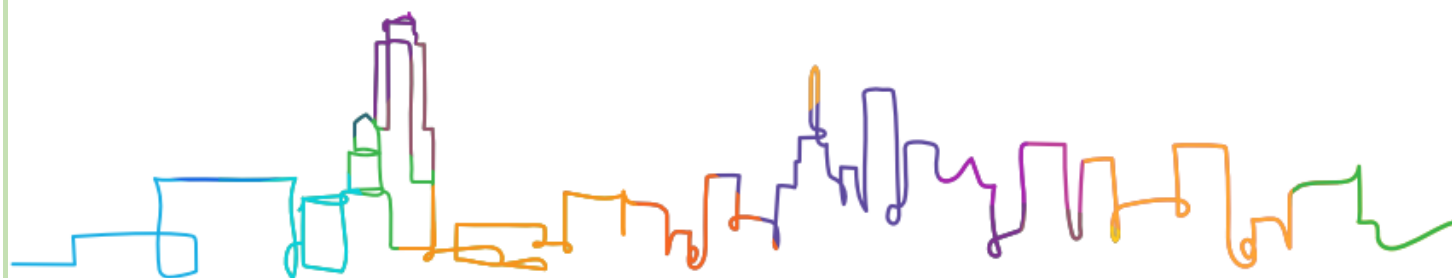
Rather than paying for advertising, the Adopt London strategy is to create original content that will be viewed and shared online with the aim to build our social media reach and the numbers of individuals visiting and revisiting our website. Adoption stories, inspirational or informative quotes, and entertaining posts that individuals want to share, are most successful at reaching our audience.

In 2021/22 we aim to continue to significantly increase our presence and engagement with prospective adoptive parents online. We want to better engage all of our partner borough communications teams to maximise the local reach that they have and to strengthen the connection for residents between their local borough and Adopt London.

ADOPTLONDONUK
Posts   Follow

adoptlondonuk   ...

"Adoption has completely changed our lives in such a positive way."

7 likes
adoptlondonuk Adopt London celebrates diversity and positively welcomes adopters from the LBGTQ+ community. ... more

ADOPTLONDONUK
Posts   Follow

adoptlondonuk
London, United Kingdom   ...

"I'm glad my partner pushed me to consider siblings. I cannot imagine my life without these two boys."

18 likes
adoptlondonuk "I'm glad my partner pushed me to consider siblings. I cannot imagine my life without these two boys, or one without the other." ... more

13. Enquiries and providing information

A small number of in-person information sessions were held in the last part of 2019/20 prior to the pandemic. These were suspended in March 2020 and we launched virtual sessions from June 2020 once it became clear that we would be able to continue to process new applicants remotely. From June to March 2020 we ran **21 virtual information sessions**. Attendees make an enquiry and sign up to a session of their choice through the website. Information sessions run twice monthly, many of them in the evening, and are hosted by an ALN senior manager.

714
Households made an initial enquiry

493
Signed up to attend an information session (69%)

351
Attended an information session (49%)

128
Submitted an Expression of Interest application (18%)

26
Started Stage One (3.5%)

2020/21 enquiry levels have been high, representing a **50% increase** for north London from 2018/19, when 486 enquiries were received (2018/19 was the last full year of the consortium). We do not know how many households attended information sessions during that period. The proportion of households who make an enquiry who later go on to submit an Expression of Interest application is high at 18%, suggesting satisfaction with the information received and a positive perception of the agency. The rate of those who submitted an application then proceeding through to stage 1 is low at 3.5%, believed to be due to the pandemic creating instability in people's lives.

For some people the pandemic has provided an impetus and opportunity to find out more about adoption, possibly leading to the increased enquiries seen. However there also appear to be a greater proportion of prospective adopters who although committed are not yet ready to proceed to an assessment, some due to instability with work or housing, and others who have very recently stopped fertility treatment due to disruption caused by the pandemic. By staying connected to these households we may see them returning ready and well prepared in significant numbers in future years.

In October 2020 in anticipation of a potentially high number of enquiries during National Adoption Week we launched virtual 'Meet the Adopter' sessions monthly. We welcome anyone interested in adoption to attend these sessions and have three sets of adoptive parents online to answer any questions put to them about their experiences. The questions and responses are wide ranging and every session has been unique. The experienced adoptive parents have consistently spoken with such honesty and warmth that they are able to relay really difficult and challenging information, always balanced with visible love for their children, and joy about being an adoptive parent. The sessions being online in the evening have meant a wider range of parents have been able to speak regularly than would be able to at an in-person event, including single parents and both partners in a couple. Some of our recently approved adopters have attended Meet the Adopter sessions most months throughout their entire adoption assessment, and this has broadened their understanding and increased their openness when considering potential children.

"I thought it was great that there was a variety of adopters from different backgrounds to hear from."

"We attended your information session and were very impressed with the energy and knowledge of your team."

"We hadn't seriously considered adopting siblings before, but now we are excited to talk to a social worker and think we can do it."

"My husband and I attended the 'Meet The Adopter' event recently and found it incredibly useful to hear all the different experiences."
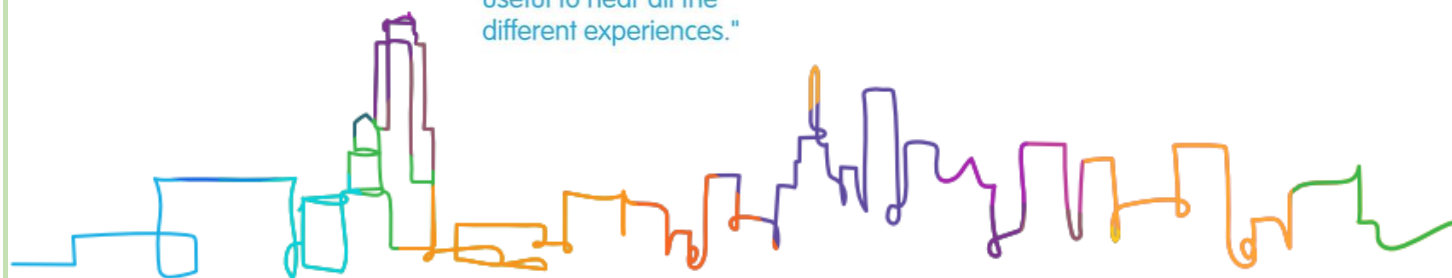
PREPARING AND APPROVING ADOPTIVE PARENTS

14. Assessments of prospective adopters

The number of approvals of new adoptive families has been lower this year for several reasons. The team were working through a number of complex and delayed legacy cases that came into ALN from the boroughs at launch when the pandemic begun. Our prospective adopter assessments became virtual, however it was necessary to slow down many of the assessments that were not already nearing conclusion in order to ensure the assessment could be carried out safely and robustly. Each assessment was carefully assessed to consider how many in-person meetings would need to be undertaken alongside virtual visits. Preparation training for prospective adopters was re-written from being a four day in-person group training, to a modular virtual group training delivered live over video call.

*Table: Adoptive family approvals by year for all six boroughs / ALN*

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
41	31	27	33	19	12

The team have completed a number of high quality assessments leading to the approval of prospective adoptive parents who are more open when considering children, and better prepared to manage challenges.

There are positive trends in the assessment pipeline, indicating that there are likely to be a significantly higher number of approvals in 2021/22, with the potential for further growth in 2022/23. **15 - 19 households are predicted to be approved within the first half of 2021/22.**

Table: Recruitment activity completed in 2020/21

| Started stage 1	Completed stage 1	Did not progress to stage 2	Started stage 2	Approved	Withdrew after approval
20	17	0	19	12	1
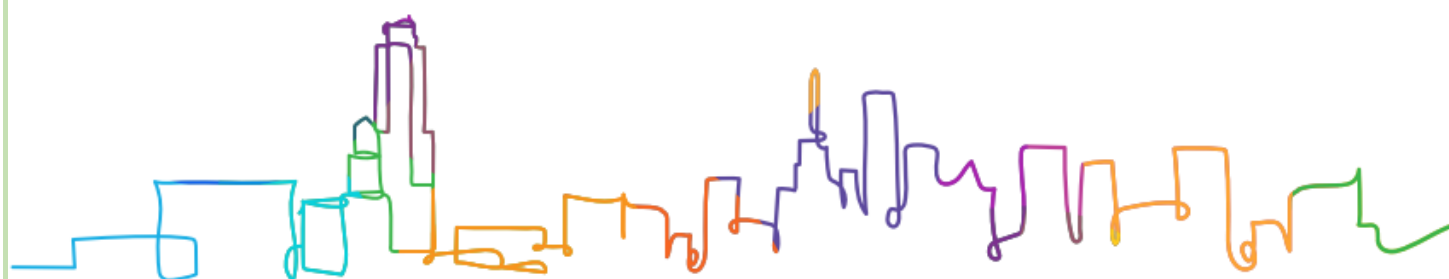
15. Proportions of black and black dual ethnicity prospective adopters

We have looked at ethnicities of the 26 households entering the formal start of the adoption process in 2020/21 and grouped them into broad categories to show the proportion of households approved from black, and black dual ethnicity households (for example where there is a couple and one individual is from a black background but the other is not). These figures give us an estimation of the number of households who might be able to adopt a child from a black ethnic background without the placement being fully trans-racial. Adequate availability of these placements is crucial to reduce delay for black children in the care system. This shows that **42% of prospective adopters** starting their adoption assessment in 2020/21 were from a black or black dual ethnicity family. Proportionately this is very similar to the **40 – 45% of black or black dual ethnicity children** known to ALN who had a Placement Order or were matched in 2020/21. However recruitment levels are not yet at a high enough level for ALN approvals to meet the needs of all children waiting for an adoptive placement and ALN therefore need to further increase the number of black and black dual ethnicity prospective adopters entering assessment in 2021/22 in order to prevent delay for children.
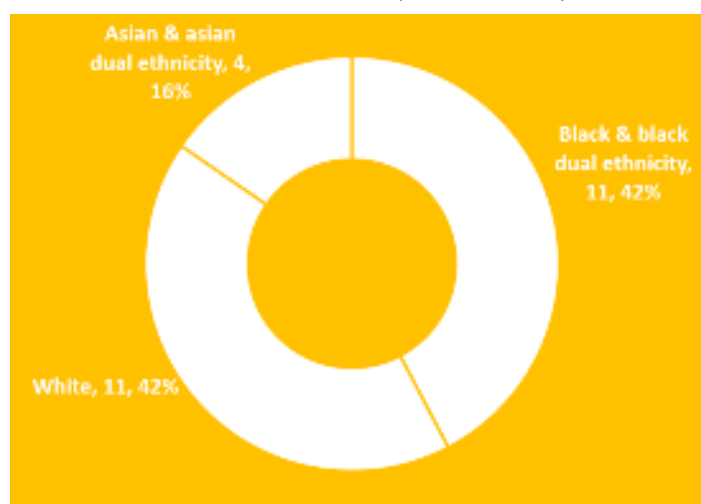
16. Increasing the number of black adoptive families

As part of Adopt London, ALN will be launching a long-term project in summer 2021 with the oversight of an external consultant to better understand our data around ethnicity across Adopt London, to reach out and listen to those with a broad range of personal and professional experiences of the adoption system in London, and to use this information to plan and implement changes that will improve the ways in which we recruit, train, assess and support black and black dual ethnicity adoptive families. This project is a long term commitment aimed at building a strong reputation with black adoptive and prospective adoptive families by genuinely improving service delivery and their experiences throughout the adoption process.
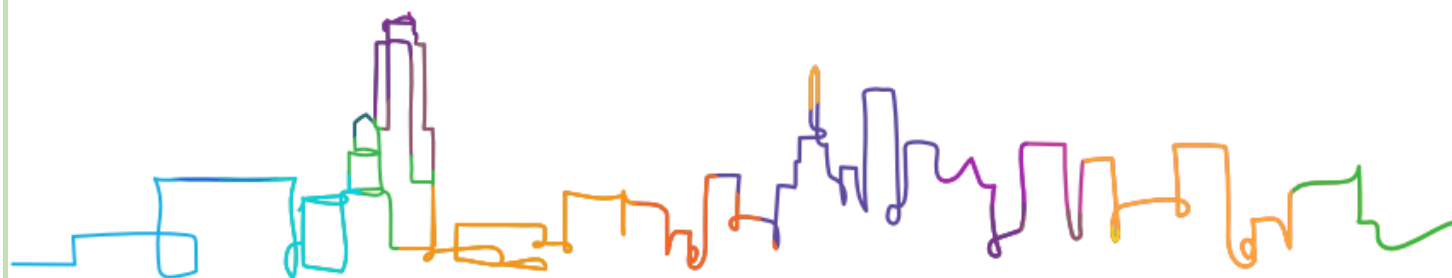
PLANNING FOR CHILDREN

17. Arrangements for adoption permanency planning

Each partner borough is responsible for permanency planning and tracking of their children. A lead Family Finder from ALN for each borough attends planning meetings and is able to provide advice and guidance about adoption plans. Referrals for children are made to ALN when the plan is likely to be adoption and the case is allocated at the point that early Family Finding work can begin, usually around the time the Best Interests Decision is made by the borough Agency Decision Maker. The table shows an increase in referrals of almost 50% in the last quarter of 2020/21, reflecting an increase in care proceedings beginning to reach a conclusion for children in the local authorities in January – March 2021.

Table: Family Finding referrals into ALN, by borough

	Cases at launch Oct 2019	2020/21 Q1	2020/21 Q2	2020/21 Q3	2020/21 Q4	Total for borough 2020/21
Barnet	14	4	7	4	10	25
Islington	7	2	0	7	3	12
Camden	8	6	6	7	2	21
Enfield	12	5	5	6	10	26
Hackney	24	2	2	4	14	22
Haringey	29	15	13	8	13	49
Total for Q	94	34	33	36	52	155

18. Numbers of children with a plan for adoption

Figures on page 18 provided by the national adoption data returns show levels of decisions made for care plans of adoption and how many plans resulted in Placement Orders at the end of proceedings over the last three years (a Placement Order is an endorsement by the court of the care plan for adoption). Whilst there has been a significant drop in 2020/21 in both plans for adoption and Placement Orders made, practice information tells us that this is largely as a result of delays to care proceedings during the pandemic, and particularly delays to courts making final decisions in cases where adoption is the plan as a result of concern for due process. At this early stage in 2021/22 we are expecting numbers to rise again this year as courts begin to function more normally.
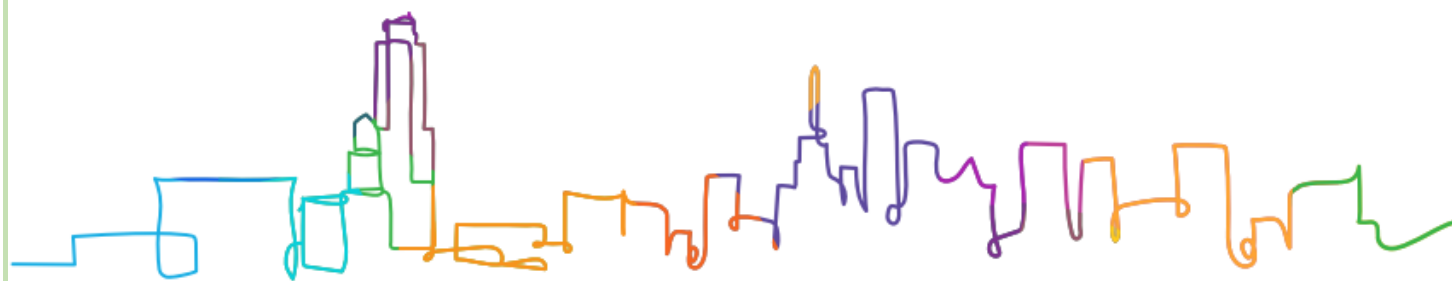
Table: Best Interest Decisions, by borough and in comparison to population size (red) – provided by ASGLB national adoption returns

Agency	Total ADM BIDs between			ADM BID rate per 10,000 *		
	1-Apr-18 to 31-Mar-19	1-Apr-19 to 31-Mar-20	1-Apr-20 to 31-Mar-21	1-Apr-18 to 31-Mar-19	1-Apr-19 to 31-Mar-20	1-Apr-20 to 31-Mar-21
Adopt London North	66	86	56	1.67	2.18	1.42
Barnet	10	28	12	1.08	3.02	1.29
Camden	10	9	5	1.96	1.77	0.98
Enfield	15	13	15	1.78	1.54	1.78
Hackney	18	18	10	2.83	2.83	1.57
Haringey	7	13	11	1.16	2.15	1.82
Islington	6	5	3	1.43	1.19	0.71

Table: Placement Orders made, by borough – provided by ASGLB national adoption returns

Agency	Total POs between		
	1-Apr-18 to 31-Mar-19	1-Apr-19 to 31-Mar-20	1-Apr-20 to 31-Mar-21
Adopt London North	53	55	40
Barnet	10	12	7
Camden	7	7	2
Enfield	7	11	7
Hackney	11	14	9
Haringey	10	9	14
Islington	8	2	1

It is worth noting that overall numbers for ALN provide a stronger indication of a trend in the data, as individual borough's figures alone are low and therefore do not show trends reliably.
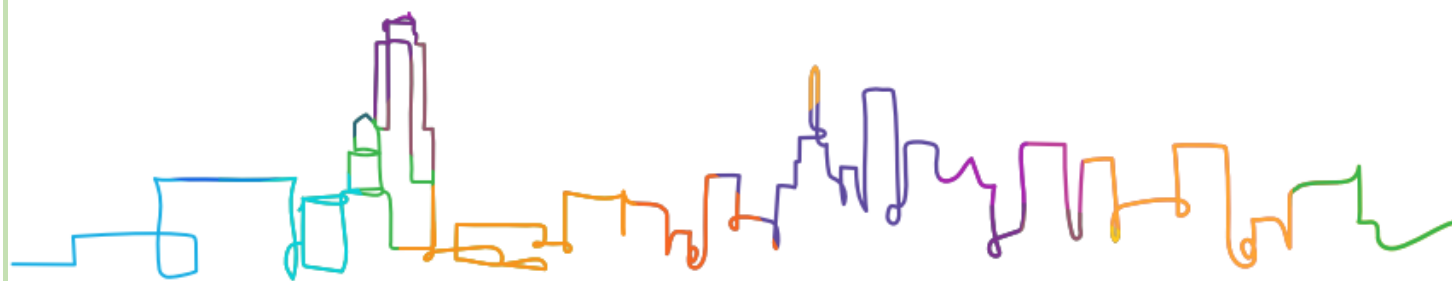
PLACING CHILDREN WITH ADOPTIVE PARENTS

19. Family finding

Our Family Finders are tenacious and use a wide variety of methods to identify potential placements for children, relying on a mixture of in-house, Adopt London, and other RAAs and Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs). Our pooled Inter-Agency Fee budget (the costs paid for placements that are made externally) means that placement decisions about children can be made quickly without the delay that would be caused by decision making by boroughs. Prior to the pandemic, Family Finders and children's social workers visited every potentially strong link for a family in their home at an early stage of consideration. As a result of virtual working this initial linking meeting now takes place online and is followed up with an in-person visit to the home if successful. This reduces Social Worker time and increases scrutiny around placement decision making because additional staff such as managers can join a virtual linking meeting at the early stages to add an additional perspective, something harder to accommodate with long distance visits in person.

The Family Finding team have been pioneers in rolling out regular **virtual activity mornings** for children who have a plan for adoption. Children join the activity morning virtually from home with their foster carer and are entertained by a professional children's entertainer. Prospective adopters join the meeting without their cameras on and so are able to observe the children interacting without causing the child any stress or uncertainty. Foster carers have commented on how successful these events are compared to in-person activity days which can be stressful and exhausting. One of our foster carers has provided this feedback after attending a virtual event with her child:

For [the child]…
"The day was much easier for her. She remained in the comfort of her own home in a safe space to watch something fun. Although the entertainment was not at her level she had toys around her to play with. It enabled her to be at her best, totally relaxed and engaging in playing as well as frequently watching all that was happening."

For me [the foster carer]…
"It was so much easier not having to take her anywhere. All the anxiety that I get about her being at 'her best' for the potential adopters was taken away as I knew in her home environment she would be relaxed. It also took away the sadness I feel at activity days when no one comes over to talk to us. It was really good to not be able to see any potential adopters. It was great to be able to see and hear the involvement of the other children."
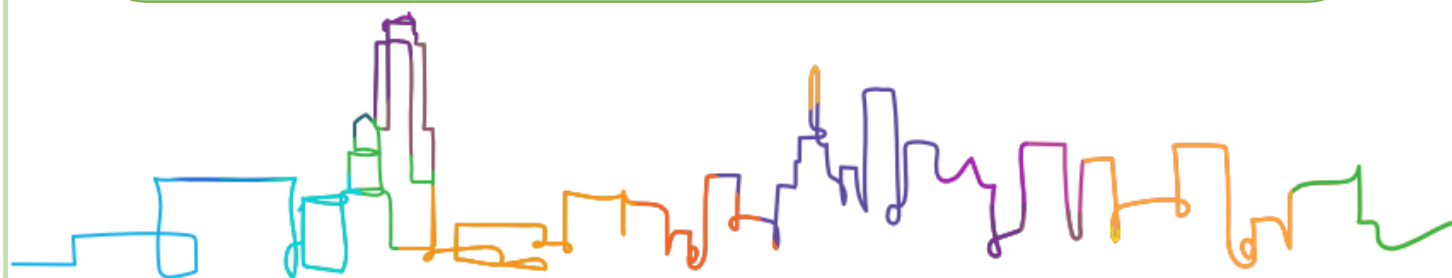
20. In-house placements

The ALN Family Finding team and Recruitment & Assessment teams now benefit from sharing a pooled knowledge of all children and prospective adopters in north London. They meet regularly across teams to consider all potential matches and will take steps to initiate an early link prior to either the prospective adopters' approval or the child's Placement Order where there is a potential in-house link. We have seen success in these early in-house matches for children and predict increases in in-house placements in 2020/21. In comparison to external placements, in-house placements enable us to provide higher levels of support and scrutiny, and mean that we can quickly problem-solve and resolve issues with the child's Social Work team if these arise. When children move to an adoptive family who are local it also means that it is much easier for us to visit frequently to provide support after their transition and it is easier for them to continue to have some contact with their foster carer. Around **a third of children (11)** in 2020/21 went to live with ALN families.
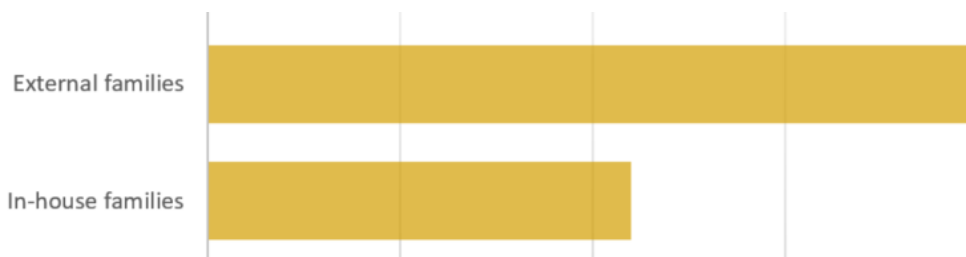
21. Specific-child publicity

We are undertaking trials to find out whether specific child publicity can be effective for some individual children who have been really hard to find adoptive families for through the usual routes. Careful and sensitive planning is undertaken in partnership with the child's social work team in the borough, and then a plan prepared by our communications lead in ALN, taking into account the specific characteristics and needs of the child, and the best audience to target. In the two examples shown we have used an artist's impression of the child and changed their name to protect their privacy. This work will be formally reviewed late in 2021.

22. Children waiting for an adoptive family

At the end of March 2021 there were 37 children for whom ALN were actively family finding. We are expecting a high level of new Placement Orders to be made in 2021/22 as a result of delayed proceedings last year, so this number may rise. Regular family finding review meetings are held for every child jointly between ALN and the child's social work team in the borough to closely monitor and review family finding activity and to ensure that the plan remains appropriate for the child. Tracking meetings take place between partner boroughs and ALN managers to monitor adoption plans for children.

Table: Children with active family finding where there is a Placement Order in place, correct on 31st March 2021

Barnet	2
Camden	4
Enfield	8
Hackney	11
Haringey	11
Islington	1
TOTAL	**37**

23. Moving children to adoptive families

Children have continued to transition into their adoptive homes throughout the pandemic, but moves have needed to be thoroughly risk assessed and planned in detail to reduce the risks of covid-19 transition. Many foster carers are older or have more vulnerable health and many have complex arrangements such as contact that they are required to facilitate. Prioritising the well-being of our foster carers whilst trying to ensure the transition takes place as close to our normal practice as possible has therefore required creativity. Wherever possible those involved have isolated prior to the introductions starting.

In autumn 2020 we started the journey towards implementing '**Moving to Adoption**', the University of East Anglia's (UEA) research-based model for transitioning children to adoptive families. This approach emphasises the importance of a preliminary pre-introductions phase and a more formalised and supported post-introductions phase to sandwich the most intensive stage which takes place primarily in the foster home. The team have received very positive feedback from children's social workers, foster carers and adoptive parents about their experiences using this model. There is more information available on the Moving to Adoption website, available by clicking on the picture.
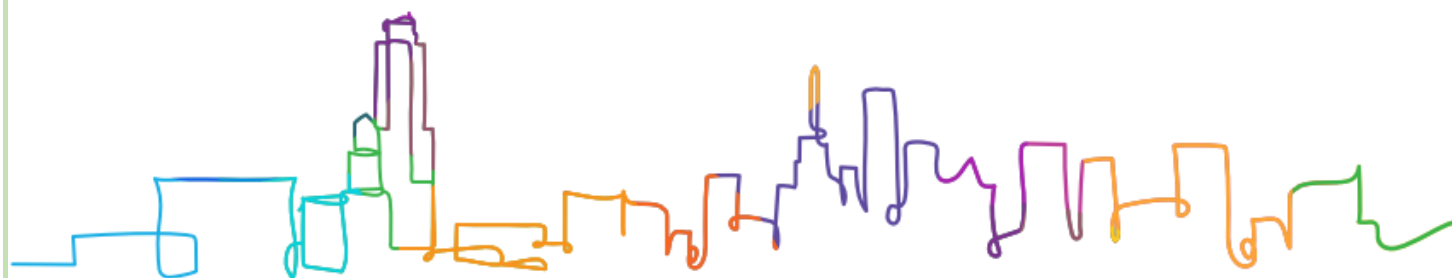
24. Placements made

As shown in the table below, the number of placements made was lower in 2020/21 than in previous years, primarily due to the reduction in Placement Orders over the same period (paragraph 18). The reduction was particularly noticeable for Barnet, primarily as a result of pandemic-related delays in care proceedings and final decisions in court. We are expecting a much higher level of placements made for Barnet children in 2021/22 and have already seen many of these starting to take place in the first part of quarter 1.

Table: Placements made, by borough

Agency	Total Placements between		
	1-Apr-18 to 31-Mar-19	1-Apr-19 to 31-Mar-20	1-Apr-20 to 31-Mar-21
Adopt London North	**62**	**50**	**33**
Barnet	14	15	4
Camden	7	4	7
Enfield	5	7	3
Hackney	12	9	7
Haringey	14	9	9
Islington	10	6	3

25. Characteristics of children placed

A **third of children placed in 2020/21 were in sibling groups** and moved to their adoptive placement together, whilst 70% were individual children. We have not placed any sibling groups larger than 2 children in 2020/21.

Children in a sibling pair 30%

Single children 70%
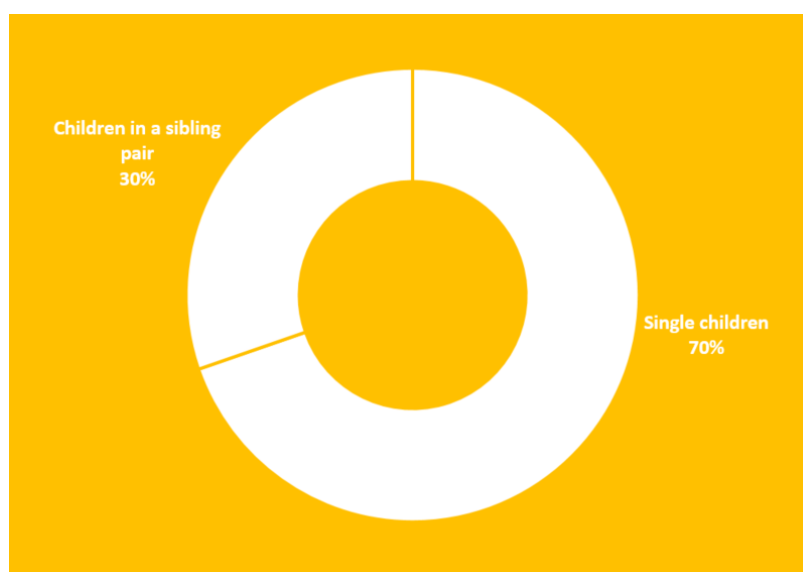
The 33 children placed for adoption in 2020/21 covered **12 different ethnic and mixed ethnicity official categories**. When these are grouped together into broader categories it shows that there were equal proportions of black and black dual ethnicity children and of white children, as well as a smaller proportion of Asian and Asian dual ethnicity children.

White
45%

Black & black dual ethnicity
45%

Asian & asian dual ethnicity
10%

6-7 years
3%

4-6 years
15%

2-4 years
20%
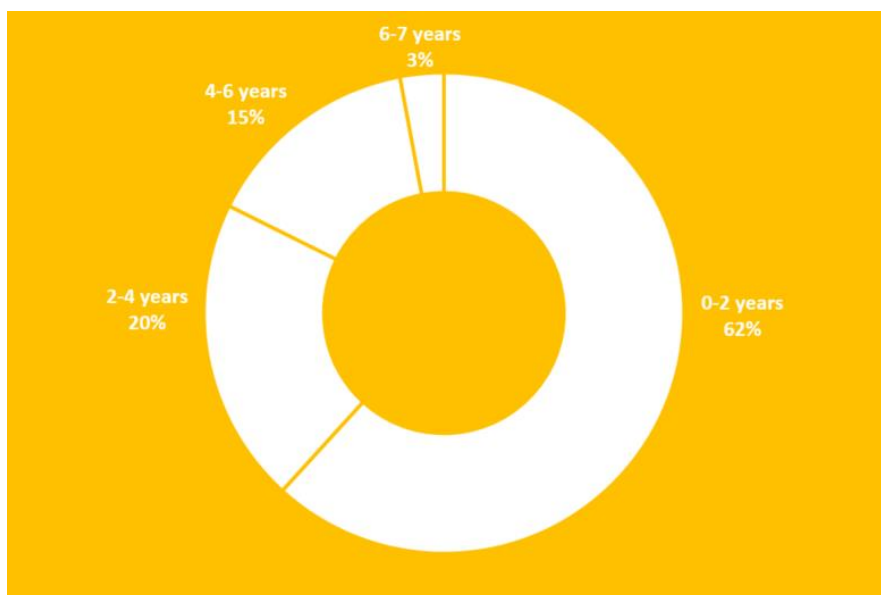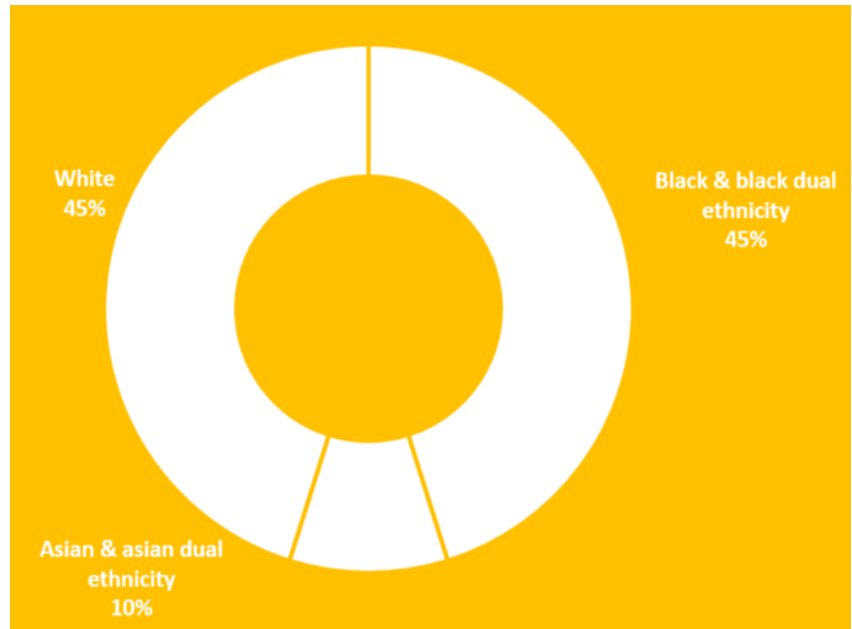
0-2 years
62%

In 2020/21 the **majority of children placed were under 2 years old**, with 85% of those children being under 18 months (around 50% of all children placed). Some of these were placed through Early Permanence and so their adoptive family acted as foster carers whilst care proceedings took place. Just under **20% of children were over 4 years old** at the point of placement, with **the oldest child placed being 6 years old**.

PROVIDING SUPPORT TO ADOPTIVE FAMILIES AND OTHERS

26. Support to families after the Adoption Order is granted

We have a large team of Adoption Support social workers providing support to all adoptive families living in our region and also contact support (between adoptive families and birth families) for all adoptive children and young people that have been previously placed by one of the six partner boroughs. In response to significantly increasing levels of demand for adoption support in 2020/21 we created a duty service to ensure that families can speak to a social worker quickly and that we can prioritise families with the most urgent needs. This arrangement has reduced a previous waiting list for support and is due to continue until at least the end of 2021 before being further reviewed.

Duty service

Short term support

Longer term support

Some families contacting ALN need only advice or sign-posting, or have a simple request that can be completed by the duty social workers. Others need a greater level of support and may wish to access therapeutic support through the Adoption Support Fund (central government fund for adoptive families). Families needing more support are allocated to a social worker who completes an

> "I want to thank you for all your kindness and words of wisdom… Your advice and support was invaluable as it helped clarify what we, and [our daughter], actually needed."

assessment of their needs and recommendation for support, including arranging therapeutic support through the Adoption Support Fund (ASF). Families with the most complex difficulties, who can often be at risk of family breakdown without support, are allocated for a longer term intervention with a social worker, who also coordinates a team around the child approach.

In 2020/21 **over £860,000** of specialist therapeutic support was provided to adoptive families through ALN.
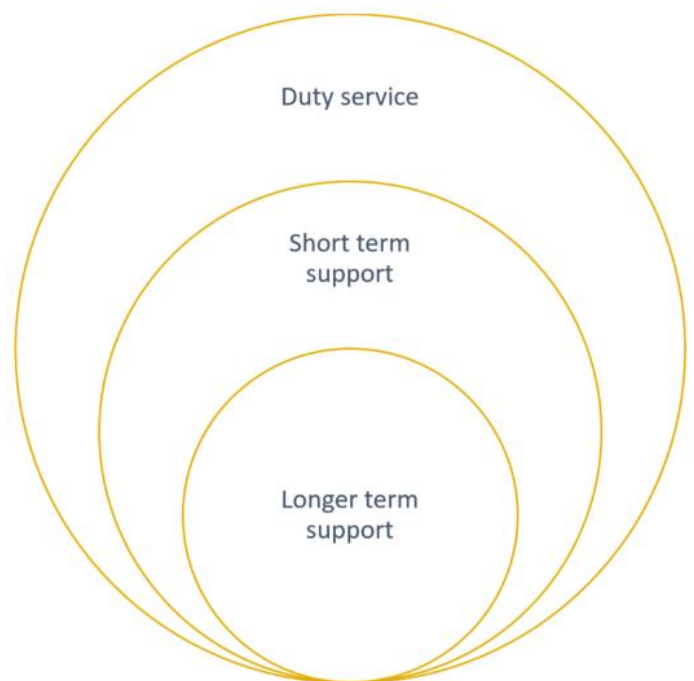
> "I really appreciate everything you and your colleagues have done to support us and all the work that has gone on… You have helped me to feel our needs/hopes are valid, and your kind and positive interactions with me have made a big difference."

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The majority of families have welcomed the move to virtual working in Adoption Support as a result of the pandemic, as this is often more convenient and feels less intrusive. Although some visits are undertaken in person (especially when requested by the family), virtual visits to families are likely to remain the most common way of undertaking adoption support assessments in future.

As a result of specific covid-19 support funds that were available to RAAs from central government in June 2020, the four Adopt London RAAs worked in partnership to design, commission and deliver almost **£1million** worth of specialist virtual therapeutic support to adoptive and Special Guardianship families and young people over a six month period. We commissioned an animated video to promote the support that was available. Feedback indicates that our promotional efforts meant that families who had not previously accessed adoption support were encouraged to do so during the early stages of the pandemic. The support was strongly welcomed by families, who found it quick, responsive to their needs and easy to access. An independent evaluation was completed which highlighted the success of pooling resources and funds to commission services at this scale across London and we have since petitioned the Department for Education to consider allowing access to the Adoption Support Fund in a similar way in the future so that support can be delivered to families more quickly.

27. Peer support for adoptive parents

From April 2020 Adopt London entered into a formal partnership with **We Are Family** (WAF), an adopter peer support organisation and registered charity that started in north London but now covers the Greater London area. Our arrangement has been supported by a grant from Adopt London to WAF, enabling them to increase their administrative capacity so they can grow their membership and apply for charitable funding themselves. WAF operate through local groups but in response to the pandemic and with the support of Adopt London they have provided alternative support online.

Page 40
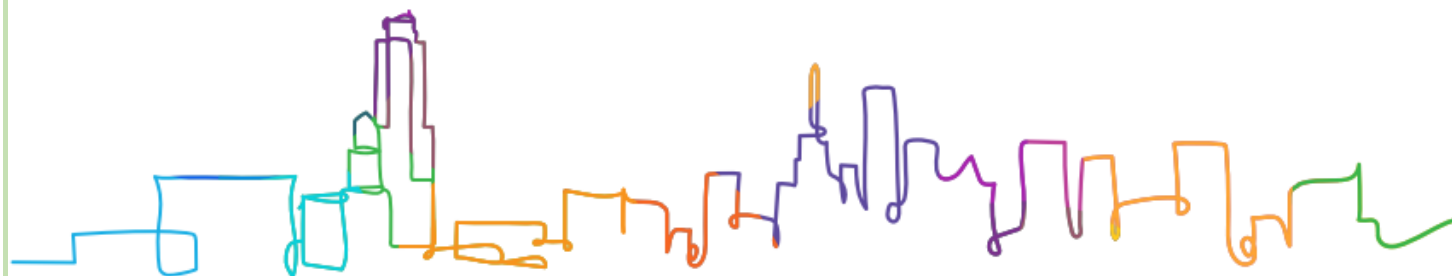
In summer 2020 WAF in partnership with Adopt London launched a regular expert webinar programme for parents 'WAF Talks', which offers talks twice a month on a wide variety of topics and access to watch these back through a new members hub. This has provided a lifeline of support for families struggling throughout 2020. Topics covered have been broad, including helping parents whose children are experiencing suicidal thoughts, hearing the perspective of a birth mother, and a research briefing about the importance of contact. Our partnership with WAF continues to grow and in summer 2021 we will be launching a new podcast series together.

"Thank you for putting on these talks. They have always been very helpful and tonight's was fantastic. Thank the speaker from the bottom of my heart. She has helped to further my education and this will undoubtedly help my children with understanding the past and their birth mother's journey."

28. Demand for support

In 2020/21 our Adoption Support service delivered this support to our adoptive families and adopted adults in north London:

941
Families accessing support, advice, & signposting

800
Families across Adopt London accessing peer support through **We Are Family**

393
Adoption Support Assessments completed

290
Adoption Support Fund (ASF) applications made

44
Adopted adults provided with support
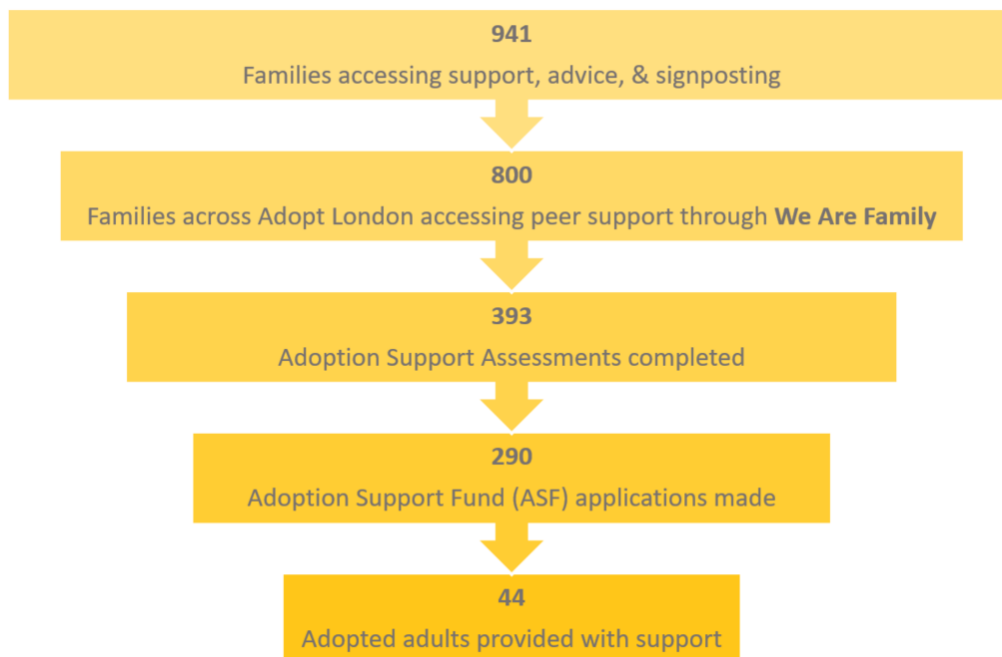
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2021/22

Finding prospective adoptive parents

1. Launch and implement phase 1 of our project to better understand the needs of black and black dual ethnicity adopters, and to improve our services to them for the long term.

2. Build the Adopt London reach and reputation on social media.

3. Improve outreach to our local communities through borough communications teams.

4. Increase the rate at which those submitting an Expression of Interest go on to start their assessment.

Preparing and approving adoptive parents

5. Increase the number of approvals whilst maintaining high standard of assessments.

6. Complete the launch of our permanent Adoption Panel.

Planning for children

7. Complete a review of Agency Decision Maker processes in the boroughs to ensure these are robust.

8. Improve early referral rates for all children in care proceedings who may benefit from a plan for adoption so that there is time for careful care planning.

9. Increase awareness of Early Permanence in children's social work teams.

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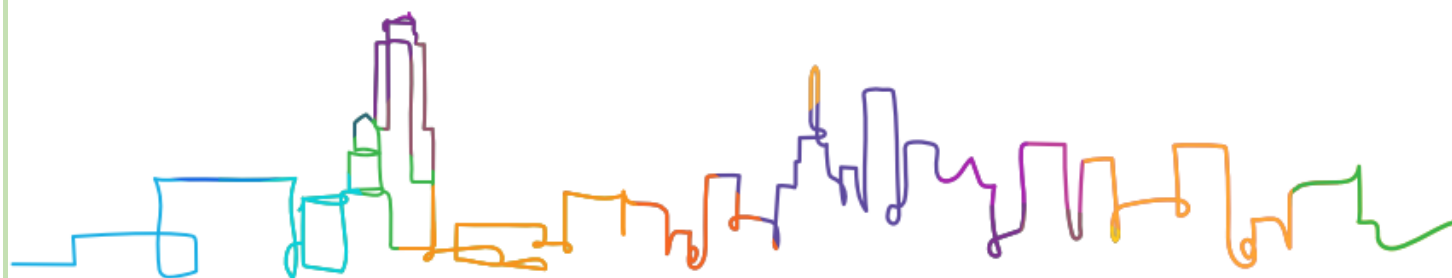
Placing children with adoptive parents

10. Increase the number of children who move to in-house and local adoptive families.

11. Evaluate specific-child publicity work and roll out recommendations.

12. Support implementation of the Moving to Adoption model for transitions by providing training and support to children's social work teams.

Providing support to adoptive families and others

13. Increase access to support resources for everyone impacted by adoption through development of the Adopt London website.

14. Launch regular drop-in support spaces for those children's social work teams that are working with adopted children and young people, and for social workers who are completing life story work with children placed for adoption.

15. Introduce tools to allow better recording and measuring of adoption support work and to capture feedback from those who have accessed services.

Working as part of Adopt London

16. Strengthen arrangements through a legal partnership agreement for Adopt London.

APPENDICES

Department for Education

Local authority areas involved in Regional Adoption Agency projects

– as at November 2020

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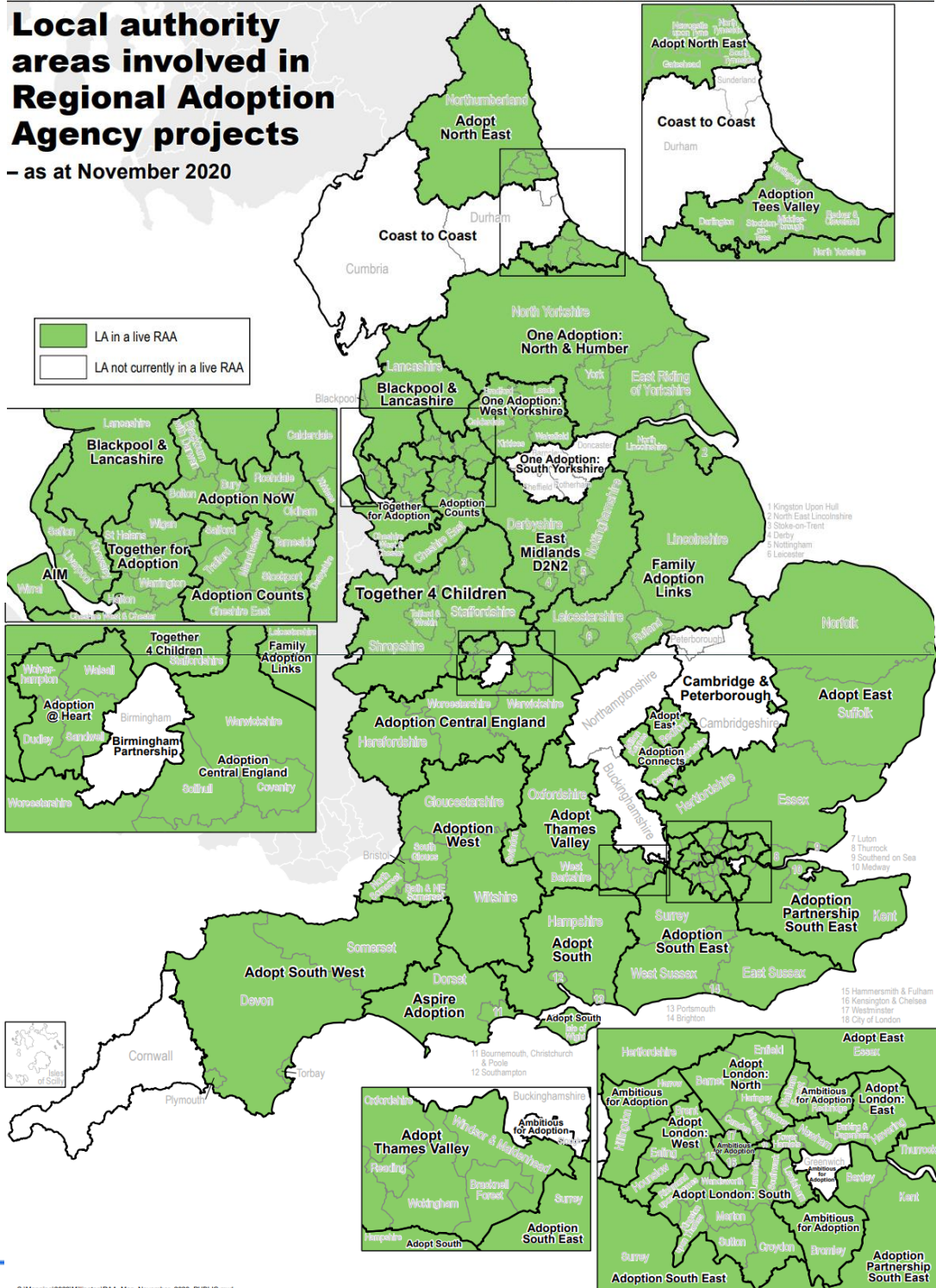
FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT 2020/21

The total budget for ALN in 2020/21 was £2,497,062. Of this, 85% (£2,097,155) was spent on staffing costs – including permanent and agency staffing, sessional workers and maternity costs.

AREAS OF SPEND IN 2020/21

- Building & facilities
- Technology
- Contracts & subscriptions
- Training
- Direct adoption costs
- Adopt London shared costs

1% 2% 1%

6%

2%

3%

85% staffing
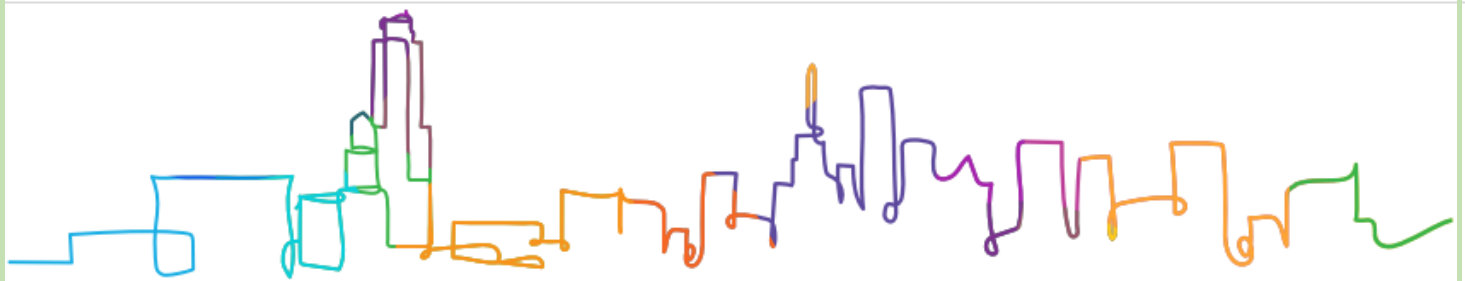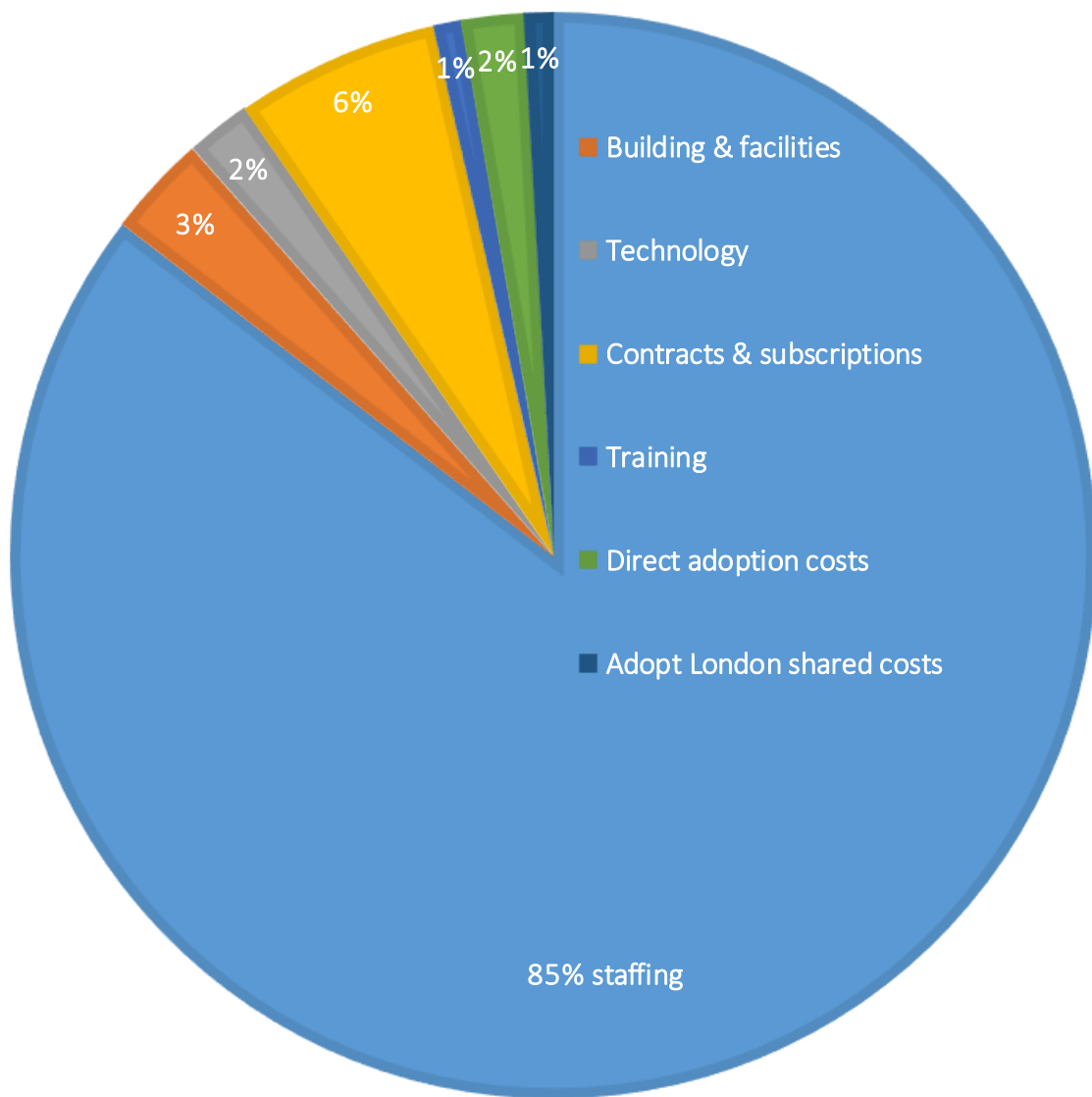
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ADOPT LONDON NORTH

ANNUAL REPORT

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2019 – MARCH 2021

- **Who we are:** We are a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) formed in October 2019 to deliver the local authority adoption services for six north London boroughs – Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, and Islington. Islington are the host borough, all ALN staff are employed by Islington. We are funded and governed by all six boroughs through a Governance Board. RAA's have been formed over the whole of England as a result of a change in the law in 2016.

- **What we do:** We support with permanency planning for children, and we find adoptive families for children with an adoption care plan; we find, train, and approve prospective adopters; we provide adoption support services to adoptive families with children of any age, and to adopted adults, and the birth parents of children who have been adopted.

- **About Adopt London:** We work as partners with three other Adopt London RAAs in London – South, East, & West so that people who are considering adopting a child or looking for support can find the information they need in one place. Together we cover 23 of the London boroughs.

- **How we find adoptive parents:** We focus our efforts online through our website, search engine optimisation, and through social media. We want everyone in London who is considering adopting a child to come to one of our information sessions, and we want to encourage people who haven't yet thought about adopting to consider it. Last year our website and social media growth was strong and we want this to keep growing in 2021/22. Our enquiries about adopting represent around a 50% increase on those received prior to Adopt London North (ALN). We run sessions online for people to hear about adoption directly from adoptive parents, and these have been really successful in 2020/21 at deepening people's understanding from an early stage.

- **New adoptive families:** We didn't approve as many new families this year as we had in previous years, partially as a result of the pandemic. We are already seeing strong signs of this being much better in 2021/22, and we hope to return to the levels of approvals seen before services were disrupted by the transition to Adopt London North.

- **More black and black dual ethnicity families are needed:** Around 40-45% of the children we place for adoption are of black or black dual ethnicity. Although over 40% of prospective adopters starting their assessment in 2020/21 had at least one parent of black or black dual ethnicity, because our number of families approved was low this is still not enough families to ensure that we can quickly and appropriately place all of our children with an adoptive family. We are launching a long-term project in 2021/22 to better understand how we need to change in order to achieve this, and to work out a plan to implement those changes.

- **Adoption plans for children:** Fewer children across north London had plans made for adoption in 2020/21 and a large factor in this is delays to final hearings in court proceedings, caused by the pandemic. ALN has a role in supporting the children's social work teams to plan for children and make sure that adoption is being considered wherever appropriate.

- **Finding adoptive families for children:** We use lots of different ways to find families for children with an adoption plan and have pioneered new approaches during the pandemic. We want to try to increase the number of children who move to live with ALN families, and where this is not possible with families who live in London and the surrounding areas. These placements make it easier for us to resolve any problems that come up, and to offer really excellent support. In 2020/21 a third of children went to live with ALN-approved adoptive families.

- **Moving children to new families:** We have introduced a new, research-based model to guide us when planning how to move children into their new families. This recognises the need for a longer planning phase before the main introductions take place, and more supported contact with their foster carers after they first move. In 2021/22 we have more work to do to support the children's social work teams in their understanding of this model.

- **Characteristics of children placed for adoption:** In 2020/21 a third of children were placed for adoption with their sibling, two thirds were individual children. Children were aged from under 1 to 6 years old at the time they went to live with their new family, with 60% of children being under 3 years old. There were 12 different official ethnicity categories recorded for our children.

- **Providing support to adoptive families:** We provide lots of different levels of support, from a duty service through to accessing therapeutic services and longer term social work support. In the first wave of the pandemic we were able to access government funds to deliver around £1million of virtual therapeutic services to adoptive and special guardianship families, which was only possible because we worked together across Adopt London to pool our funds and our resources. We have a partnership with a charity called We Are Family, run by adopters for adopters to provide peer support. During 2020/21 we delivered a webinar programme in partnership with them so that parents could access expert advice and support from home.

Report for:	Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee

Title: **Haringey Virtual School Annual Report for Academic Year 2019-20**

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

Lead Officer: Nicola Morgan, 020 84893163   nicola.morgan@haringey.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All

1.   Describe the issue under consideration

1.1   The purpose of this report is to outline the activity of the Virtual School Head (VSH), Haringey Virtual School (HVS) and the educational outcomes of Haringey Council's Looked after children (LAC) for the academic year 2019-20. It reflects on achievements and identifies areas in need of development to achieve the best outcomes for this vulnerable group.

1.2   Data contained in this report is for the looked after children (LAC) who were in the care of Haringey Council for a year or more as at 31 March 2020 and which is taken from the Statistical First Release published by the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2021.

2.   Recommendations

Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee to approve Virtual School Annual Report and to receive a report on the analysis of delays in the PEP process at the next Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee meeting.

3.   Reasons for decision
N/A

4.   Background information

4.1   The team consists of a Headteacher, Senior Business Support Officer, an Attendance and Inclusion Coordinator, three Education Improvement Consultants, a Post-16 Advisory Teacher, part-time Early Years Advisory Teacher, two part-time Educational Psychologists and a part-time Programme Coordinator.

4.2   Haringey Virtual School Training Offer has increased to include Social Care and Foster Carer Training. Further expansion of the offer is in the pipline.

Haringey
LONDON

4.3   As of 1 June 2020, over three quarters of Haringey's looked after children of statutory school age are educated out of the borough and 22% have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Of those children with an EHCP, 47 live outside the borough in 27 different Local Authorities.

4.4   Formal examinations and assessments did not take place and grades were based on a range of information including centre-assessed grades for KS4 and KS5. The Department for Education has been clear that exam and test outcomes and other related data should only be used to ensure young people transition successfully to the next stage of their education, employment or training and aggregated data should **not** be used for comparisons or performance benchmarking.

4.5   In response to the pandemic, several actions were implemented by Haringey Virtual School to support continued teaching and learning, including the purchase of laptops, additional funding for increased level of demand for 1:1 tuition, a Covid-19 specific electronic Personal Education Plan.

4.6   For the 69%[1] of young people who had benefited from these interventions, it was reported that the impact included set tasks and homework being completed; improved communication with their teachers; improved engagement in schoolwork; improved attendance in lessons and/or improved confidence.

4.7   The Post-16 ePEP was launched in Autumn 2020, to ensure more consistent and detailed ePEPs are completed. This will enable Haringey Virtual School to monitor the Post-16 young people more effectively and be able to offer more support as they transition into adulthood.

4.8   The majority (80%) of Haringey looked after children who attend a school or education provision which has been inspected by Ofsted, are in provision rated as good or outstanding. The reasons for pupils not being in schools with an unknown Ofsted rating include those who are waiting for a school place following a change of placement, schools not yet inspected and young people who are in custody or hospital.

4.9   It has been difficult to track absolute trends in attendance this year due to the pandemic. We know that the DfE asked schools to prioritise vulnerable children attending school as opposed to remote education. Following lockdown 3.0, as of 5 March 2021, approximately 51% of school age children were attending school, compared to the end of the Summer Term 2020 (following lockdown 1.0), when approximately 20% of school age children were attending school.

4.10   Expulsions and suspensions data is collected two terms in arrears, which means the latest available data is for the 2018/19 academic year. In 2018/19 the percentage of Haringey looked after children with at least one suspension is lower than national and Inner London averages. Persistent disruptive

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[1] This breakdown is for school age children and data from the ePEPs. EY and Post 16 ePEPs are in a different format. The 31% remaining from the 69% is made up of:21% No Impact, 9% Impact not yet obtained, 1% No data

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behaviour, physical assault against a pupil or an adult, verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult, were the most common reasons for suspensions.

4.11   As of 30 June 2020, the Key Performance Indicator for Valid PEPs was 91%, which is 1% above the target and the highest percentage reported since the introduction of ePEPs. The ePEP template for statutory school age children has been reviewed and revised for this academic year and ePEP templates have been developed and successfully launched for Early Years and Post 16s.

4.12   The Pupil Premium Plus was distributed in three termly instalments of £600, with £500 being retained by the Virtual School to fund central initiatives to raise children's attainment. However, in Spring 2021, a discretionary payment of £1000 was given to all eligible schools to provide additional educational IT support and/or tuition, following the third lockdown.

4.13   **Virtual School Development Plan Prorities Achieved in 2019 – 2020**

- Introduction of an Early Years, quality-assured ePEP to enable HVS to monitor and support this cohort more effectively.
- During Lockdown, HVS attended the majority of online PEP meetings to provide support and guidance.
- RAG-rated tracking system developed and used by HVS to enable attainment data to be monitored more effectively.
- Stronger links forged with Social Care, including Young Adult Service providing improved, streamlined support to Post-16s.
- A Post-16 quality-assured ePEP has now been implemented.
- A clear structure of accountability (Escalation Flow Chart) has been devised and published, to improve outcomes.
- Regular attendance by HVS representatives at Resources Panel and Unstable Placements Panel meetings to improve communication.
- Training modules were adapted for online delivery during Lockdown to ensure consistent support and guidance is provided by the Virtual School.
- HVS provided additional tuition and access to ICT to support young people in their learning during Lockdown.
- Pupil Premium section of ePEP has been updated and streamlined with impact measures listed to improve evidence of impact, with mandatory sections set to prevent gaps in reporting information.
- Post-16 and Early Years Advisory teachers have been appointed to improve quality of support and monitoring for these cohorts.

5.   Contribution to strategic outcomes

5.1   Borough Plan 2019-23 Priority 2 People - our vision is a Haringey where strong families, strong networks and strong communities nurture all residents to live well and achieve their potential.

5.2   Haringey Virtual School vision is to ensure that pupils become successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve; confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives; responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

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6.   Use of Appendices
N/A

7.   Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Department for Education: Statutory guidance for local authorities, February 2018
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

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Virtual School Annual Report for Academic Year 2019-20

Raising Aspirations, Expanding Horizons

Contents

1. Purpose of the Annual Report

The purpose of this report is to outline the activity of the Virtual School Head (VSH), Haringey Virtual School (HVS) and the educational outcomes of Haringey Council's Looked after children (LAC) for the academic year 2019-20. It reflects on achievements and identifies areas in need of development to achieve the best outcomes for this vulnerable group.

Data contained in this report is for the looked after children (LAC) who were in the care of Haringey Council for a year or more as at 31 March 2020 and which is taken from the Statistical First Release published by the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2021.

2. Role of the Virtual School

Our role is to:
- promote high aspirations and raise achievement through challenge, support and targeted interventions
- ensure that children in care access high quality teaching and learning
- work closely with all those involved in the care and education of looked after children; providing training and support to help understand the issues and challenges they face
- co-ordinate and quality assure all Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- monitor and challenge schools to make the most effective use of Pupil Premium Plus Grant (PPPG)
- ensure effective transition is provided between schools or specialist providers
- ensure Special Education Needs or Disability needs are identified and supported appropriately with an integrated plan
- celebrate the achievements of our looked after children
- lead training for Foster Carers, Designated Teachers, school governors and bespoke training for educational settings and staff in schools

The Virtual School is an additional resource, which exists to support and challenge all those involved in the education of looked after children. It is involved in, or promotes nationally and locally, various initiatives to enhance the educational achievement of looked after children. The Virtual School is not a teaching tool or environment. It does not replace the school or educational provision of looked after children.

All looked after children, from the age of 2 to 18 are monitored by Haringey Virtual School. A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is reviewed termly for each child and includes their progress and attainment information as well as a record of interventions, often funded through the Pupil Premium Plus Grant, to ensure every child is given the opportunity to make accelerated progress.

Vision

Our vision is to ensure that pupils become successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve; confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives; responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

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3. Structure of the Virtual School

The current structure of Virtual School is as below:

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                          ┌─────────────────┐
                          │ Virtual School  │
                          │   Headteacher   │
                          └─────────────────┘

              ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
              │ Senior Business  │   │  Attendance and  │
              │ Support Officer  │   │     Inclusion    │
              └──────────────────┘   │   Coordinator    │
                                     └──────────────────┘

┌───────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌───────────┐
│Early Years│  │  Education   │  │  Education   │  │  Education   │  │  Post-16  │
│ Advisory  │  │ Improvement  │  │ Improvement  │  │ Improvement  │  │ Advisory  │
│  Teacher  │  │ Consultant   │  │ Consultant   │  │ Consultant   │  │  Teacher  │
└───────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └───────────┘

               ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
               │ Educational  │  │ Educational  │  │  Tottenham   │
               │ Psychologist │  │ Psychologist │  │  Programme   │
               └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  │ Coordinator  │
                                                    └──────────────┘
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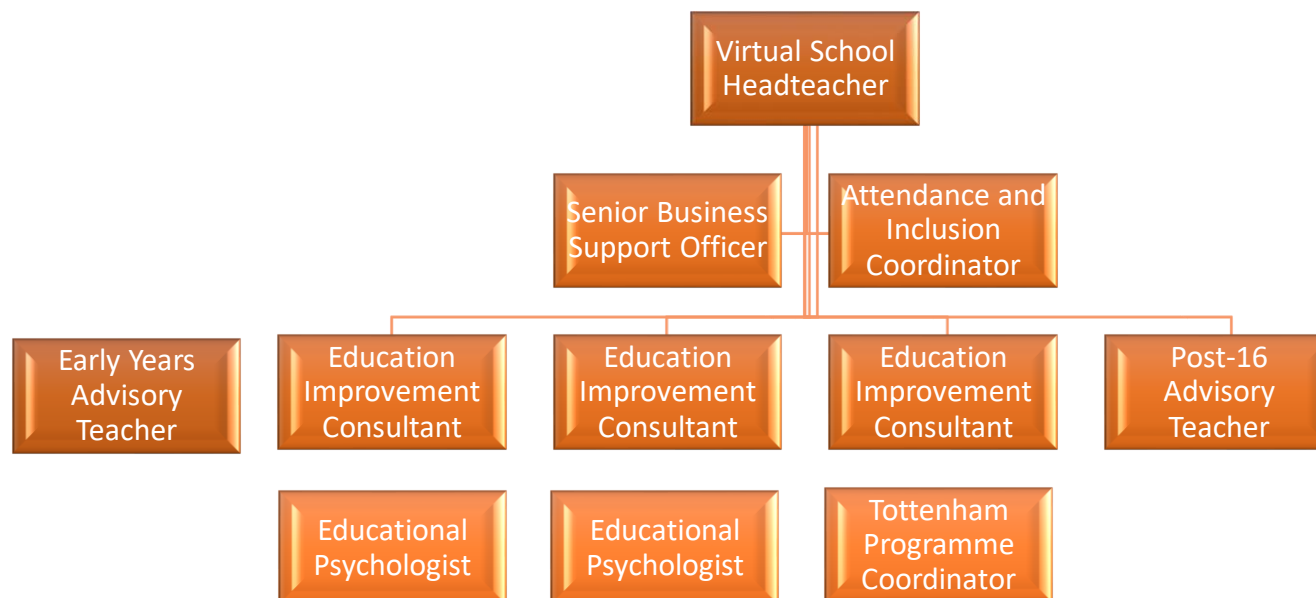
The Virtual School team is a small, multi-disciplinary team, working to raise the educational attainment and attendance of children and young people. The team consists of a Headteacher, Senior Business Support Officer, an Attendance and Inclusion Coordinator, three Education Improvement Consultants, a Post-16 Advisory Teacher, part-time Early Years Advisory Teacher, two part-time Educational Psychologists and a part-time Programme Coordinator. The Virtual School work in close collaboration with colleagues across the authority, as well as colleagues in other local authorities, and tracks educational progress, while supporting and monitoring work with children and young people who are looked after. It aims to help young people achieve their full potential and offers support and advice to those who work with and support them. It also offers support and advice for carers, parents and guardians of previously looked after children.

4. Training and Development

Haringey Virtual School is committed to ensuring that professionals   working with our children in care have the right knowledge, information and skills to enable them to fulfil their role in contributing to improving the educational outcomes for our looked after children. The Virtual School continues to deliver its multi-agency central training programme to Headteachers, Designated Teachers, school governors, Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers, Foster Carers and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). Regular training throughout the year included focus on the use of Pupil Premium, links between research and improving educational attainment and the process of admissions and transition to secondary school. Evaluations from the training is routinely used to plan and target future training.

4.1 Electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP) Training

In the Summer term, 2018 Haringey Virtual School launched its new ePEP. To support this, training sessions have continued to be delivered to provide an opportunity for role-specific training and support around educational issues pertaining to looked after children. The training included:

- Promoting the achievement of looked after children
- Roles and responsibilities regarding PEPs and PEP meetings
- Logging in procedures
- Populating the ePEP with the required useful information
- SMART targets
- Measuring performance
- Providing effective interventions and recording outcomes
- Sharing the completed ePEP with the relevant parties

The sessions aimed to equip Designated Teachers and Social Workers with the necessary skills to navigate and populate Haringey's online ePEP, which is administered by Welfare Call, and to understand the expectations, timeframes and processes that it involves.

4.2 Designated Teacher Training

The Virtual School continues to deliver termly cross-phase training sessions for Designated Teachers in all settings including Post-16 providers. The objectives of the training have expanded from implementing high quality PEPs, to developing the role of the Designated Teacher in accordance with Statutory Guidance. The overall aims of the training are to:

- understand the leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked after child.
- appreciate the central importance of the child's Personal Education Plan.
- raise awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher.

(In light of Covid-19 restrictions, training has been especially adapted to enable it to be delivered online).

4.3 Designated Teachers Forum

The Designated Teachers for Looked after children Forum meets termly, with representation from local primary, secondary and special schools. It has been running for several years, with the aim of sharing good practice, highlighting new legislation and providing an opportunity to hear from colleagues across Haringey Council who work with children and families.

4.4 Social Care Training

The Virtual School delivers termly training sessions for Social Workers, Personal Assistants, Team Managers and IROs. The objective of the training is to highlight the roles and statutory responsibilities of all parties involved in the PEP process, how to implement an effective and high-quality PEP as well as promoting the educational achievement of every looked after child. (In light of Covid-19 restrictions, training has been especially adapted to enable it to be delivered online).

4.5 Foster Carer Training

The Virtual School provides training to foster carers to promote the educational achievement of their looked after children. This training gives the foster carer insight into the roles and statutory responsibilities of key professionals, how the PEP process should work and strategies to support education at home and school. (In light of Covid-19 restrictions, training has been especially adapted to enable it to be delivered online).

4.6 Attachment Aware Schools Training

Some of our children will have experienced varying degrees of trauma; victimisation and/or neglect; bereavement and/or loss; or formed poor attachments. Many will communicate this distress to school staff via a whole range of behaviours. The Virtual School has recognised that many schools our looked after children attend are not Attachment Aware.

Haringey's Anchor Project is an early intervention that uses attachment and trauma theory to inform practice and support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. In conjunction with this project, training for schools has been offered by an Educational Psychologist attached to Haringey Virtual School. This course is designed to make educational professionals more aware of the barriers faced by looked after children, provide strategies to support teaching and learning and to reduce fixed term exclusions.

(In light of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the delivery of this training is currently under review).

5. Cohort Characteristics

Haringey is the 6th most deprived borough in London, and the 30th most deprived local authority in England (out of 326). Within the borough there are extreme contrasts: neighbourhoods in some of the western wards, such as Highgate, Muswell Hill and Crouch End are among the most prosperous in the country; in the east of the borough, many neighbourhoods are classified as being among the most deprived in the country.

During recent years the number of children in care has been stable. The needs of those who are in care are becoming increasingly complex with children often entering care with a history of disrupted education.

As of 1 June 2020, over three quarters of Haringey's looked after children of statutory school age are educated out of the borough and 22% have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Of those children with an EHCP, 47 live outside the borough in 27 different Local Authorities; Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bury, Cambridgeshire, Camden, Croydon, Derbyshire, Doncaster, East Riding, East Sussex, Enfield, Essex, Hampshire, Havering, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lambeth, Leicestershire, Lewisham, Liverpool, Medway, Neath Port Talbot, Northamptonshire, Telford and Wrekin, Walsall, Waltham Forest, and Warrington.

	Number	Percentage
Total LAC	410	-
Boys	250	61%
Girls	160	39%
Statutory school age	254	62%
In borough	50	20%
Out of borough	204	80%
EHCP	57	22%
Rec	9	4%
Year 1	6	2%
Year 2	9	4%
Year 3	7	3%
Year 4	11	4%
Year 5	14	5%
Year 6	17	7%
Year 7	24	9%
Year 8	30	12%
Year 9	33	13%
Year 10	33	13%
Year 11	61	24%
Early Years	21	5%
Post 16	135	33%
Data extracted 1 June 2020		

5.1 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

Haringey continues to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. As of 1 June 2020 we had 60 UASC children, 16 of statutory school age and 44 in Years 12 and 13. It can be challenging to find appropriate education provision for some of the young people in Year 12 and 13, particularly when they arrive in the middle of the academic year. The Virtual School commissioned Winchmore Camps to run an ESOL Summer Camp for those young people who were waiting to enroll at college. The Virtual School works closely with colleges and Post-16 provisions, to ensure that our Post-16 pupils have access to education that is appropriate for them.

6. Attainment for Early Years and Key Stages 1, 2 and 4

This section would normally have addressed progress and attainment of Looked after children. However, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, they have been omitted this year. Formal examinations and assessments did not take place and grades were based on a range of information including centre-assessed grades for KS4 and KS5. The Department for Education have been clear that outcomes and other related data should only be used to ensure young people transition successfully to the next stage of their education, employment or training and aggregated data should not be used for comparisons or performance benchmarking. All those working with schools and colleges, such as Ofsted, Department for Education regional teams and local authorities, will use data from previous years when assessing school and college performance, and not the 2020 data. Therefore, in line with these recommendations, there is not any aggregated data or comparisons included within this report.

As with most organisations, the Virtual School has had to adapt working practices in the light of the pandemic. This has been a difficult period and staff have had to adjust to working from home. The current situation is unprecedented; the Virtual School is committed to working with education providers, carers, social workers and young people to ensure that any additional support is facilitated. During Lockdown 1.0 the main challenge was the variable education offer that schools and other educational establishments were making available. Some schools were offering a full complement of subjects online, while others were sending packs of work home. The education offer schools have made in Lockdown 3.0 has improved significantly. HVS has collated and recorded details pertaining to provision and engagement during all three lockdowns. An analysis of education provision during Lockdown 3.0 can be seen in the chart below.

Analysis of Provision during Lockdown

Learning Type	KS1		KS2		KS3		KS4	
Blended Learning	26%	5	20%	8	15%	11	26%	19
Remote Learning	37%	7	34%	14	47%	35	42%	30
Onsite provision	37%	7	49%	20	38%	28	24%	17
Refusing							6%	4
TOTAL NUMBER	100%	19	100%	42	100%	74	100%	72

Has a laptop		KS1		KS2		KS3		KS4	
	Yes	74%	14	95%	40	96%	71	97%	72
	No	26%	5	5%	2	4%	3	3%	2
TOTAL NUMBER		100%	19	100%	42	100%	74	100%	72

Impact of interventions		KS1		KS2		KS3		KS4	
	Yes	68%	13	93%	39	78%	58	72%	52
	No	32%	6	7%	3	22%	16	28%	20
TOTAL NUMBER		100%	19	100%	42	100%	74	100%	72

For DMT/CPAC info. only:

Key Stage 4

			Grand Total	% English and Maths 9-5
Count of CLA	37	9	46	20%

			Grand Total	% English and Maths 9-4
Count of CLA	30	16	46	35%

Average of KS4_ATT8				Average Attainment 8
26.70934783				26.7

8

In response to the pandemic, several actions were implemented by Haringey Virtual School to support continued teaching and learning, including:

- During lockdown 1.0, HVS purchased 20 laptops to enable children who were out of school or had no access to IT equipment, to access their online learning.
- HVS put forward 218 school-age looked after children for Government funded laptops. The remainder already had access to a laptop.
- During Lockdown 3.0 schools have been encouraged to purchase suitable devices for their pupils, to ensure they can access any online learning.
- Additional funding was provided by HVS to enable tuition to be put in place for all children, for whom it was deemed appropriate.
- A COVID-19 specific ePEP was implemented to enable closer monitoring by the Virtual School of any potential issues. (See section 11 for more details)
- Targets on ePEPs were adapted, in the light of provision available in schools, for children. (See section 11 for more details)
- Education Improvement Consultants were able to attend a higher proportion of PEP meetings than usual, on a virtual basis.
- Foster Carers were more widely supported by the Virtual School to assist with home learning.

The impact of these interventions was obtained for 195/218 of our young people with the following breakdown:

	NO. OF YOUNG PEOPLE /218	%
IMPACT DEMONSTRATED	150/218	69%
NO IMPACT	45/218	21%
IMPACT NOT YET OBTAINED	20/218	9%
NO DATA (New into Care)	3/218	1%

For the 69% of young people who had benefited from these interventions, it was reported that the impact included set tasks and homework being completed; improved communication with their teachers; improved engagement in schoolwork; improved attendance in lessons and/or

improved confidence. It appears that some young people thrive in this learning environment where they are either not exposed to the anxiety of navigating school procedures and are better able to work at their own pace.

7. Early-Years

Coinciding with the launch of the new Early Years ePEP in Autumn 2020, HVS now also have a dedicated Advisory Teacher for Early Years who works on a part-time basis. The Advisory Teacher for Early Years has been instrumental in getting many nursery providers onto the Welfare Call system and supporting with ensuring high quality ePEPs are in place to support the educational achievement of this young cohort.

8. Post-16

The Post-16 ePEP was launched in Autumn 2020, to ensure more consistent and detailed ePEPs are completed. This will enable Haringey Virtual School to monitor the Post-16 young people more effectively and be able to offer more support as they transition into adulthood. The HVS team has further expanded with the addition of a Post-16 Advisory Teacher.

It is often the custom that once a looked-after young person turns eighteen years of age they are no longer monitored by the Local Authority. Haringey Virtual School believes that this is an important time, particularly for those completing A-levels and for others transitioning into the workforce, so has offered care-leavers an opportunity to continue being supported and monitored until the end of their Year 13 (or equivalent), with their consent. Haringey Virtual School also work very closely with the Young Adults Service, ensuring that adequate support is provided.

9. Quality of Provision
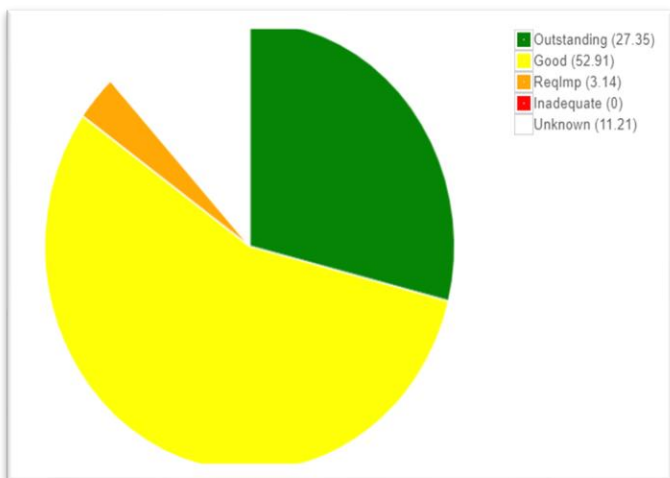
Outstanding (27.35)
Good (52.91)
ReqImp (3.14)
Inadequate (0)
Unknown (11.21)

The majority (80%) of Haringey looked after children who attend a school or education provision which has been inspected by Ofsted, are in provision rated as good or outstanding. The reasons for pupils not being in schools with an unknown Ofsted rating include those who are waiting for a school place following a change of placement, schools not yet inspected and young people who are in custody or hospital. In all cases, close monitoring of progress in these schools occurs on a regular basis by the Virtual School. Where necessary, an action plan is instigated with the social worker to monitor the school and child's progress and put in remedial support if required.

Children who attend schools with an Ofsted rating of less than good were either in the school prior to becoming looked after and it was assessed as less detrimental to their development to maintain their school place, or they were placed as there were exceptional evidence-based reasons for doing so. The Virtual School Head attends the weekly social care Resources Panel where children moving placements are discussed and is part of the decision-making process including school choice.

10. Inclusion
10.1 Attendance

It has been difficult to track any trends in attendance this year due to the pandemic. Following lockdown 3.0, as of 5 March 2021, approximately 51% of school age children were attending school, compared to the end of the Summer Term 2020 (following lockdown 1.0), when approximately 20% of school age children were attending school. This can be attributed to schools having enhanced educational provision and improved covid-secure arrangements for vulnerable pupils in place since the first lockdown.

	National LAC			Inner London LAC			Haringey LAC		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
Overall absence	4.5	4.7	5.5	4.8	5.0	6.4	6.2	4.9	6.9
Unauthorised	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.5	1.7	2.7	1.80	1.7	2.7
Persistent absence	10.6	10.9	12.5	11.9	13.4	14	16.6	14.9	17.3

The percentage of Haringey looked after children with attendance of less than 90%, and classed as Persistent Absentees, had decreased to 14.9 in 2019 but had risen again to 17.3 in Autumn Term of 2019-2020. This is above both the national and inner London averages for looked after children. However, these figures are not directly comparable as previous figures had been calculated over one year, the 2019-20 figure is only for the Autumn Term, due to the Covid pandemic.

The Virtual School celebrates excellent school attendance, through their reward scheme, for children who achieve 100% attendance in a term or an improvement of 10%. During the Covid pandemic when attendance was disrupted, instead of the usual termly attendance rewards, the Virtual School asked schools to nominate young people who were engaging well despite the current challenges. Several KS2 and KS3 young people were nominated and received a beautiful personalised engraved pen in recognition of their hard work.

Any child identified as having 90% or below attendance is monitored closely by the Virtual School and PEPs are attended to ensure that strategies are discussed and in place to improve attendance.

10.2 Expulsions and Suspensions

% of looked after children with at least one suspension	2017-18	2018/19
Haringey LAC	14.08	10.81
Inner London LAC	11.83	11.75
National LAC	11.28	11.38

Expulsions and suspensions data is collected two terms in arrears, which means the latest available data is for the 2018/19 academic year. An expulsion (formerly a permanent exclusion) refers to a pupil who is expelled from school and who will not come back to that school, unless the expulsion is overturned. This is matched to the looked after children from year ending 31 March 2019, which is a year earlier than the other information in this report. The expulsion rate for looked after children at 31 March 2019 was 0.11, which was similar to the rate for all pupils. In comparison the equivalent rate for CIN at 31 March was higher, at 0.75.

The table above shows the percentage of pupils with at least one suspension. In 2018/19 the percentage of Haringey looked after children with at least one suspension is lower than national and Inner London averages. Persistent disruptive behaviour, physical assault against a pupil or an adult, verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult, were the most common reasons for suspensions. Virtual School Education Improvement Consultants have been in regular contact with the schools these children attend and offer advice and guidance with the aim of reducing further incidences.

Strategies to further reduce numbers will include monthly meetings to review all expulsions and suspensions; Virtual School representative to aim to attend every reintegration meeting for an exclusion; and offering additional Pupil Premium Plus to ensure preventative actions agreed in reintegration meetings are being implemented; and closer working with our Educational Psychologists who can provide strategies and support to schools to reduce expulsions and suspensions.

11. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

Haringey's PEP completion performance was 74% at the end of July 2017. This was below the target of 90%. Since July 2017, the percentage of PEPs completed has varied and has never reached the target of 90%. The new Electronic PEP (ePEP) was launched in Summer 2018 and work continues to embed it in practice to ensure it is being used effectively to improve the achievement of our children. Haringey Virtual School is committed to ensuring that our children and young people have the benefit of a high-quality ePEP. All ePEPs are reviewed termly and are quality assured and approved by the Virtual School Education Improvement Consultants. As of 30 June 2020, the Key Performance Indicator for Valid PEPs was 91%, which is 1% above the target and the highest percentage reported since the introduction of ePEPs.

The ePEP template for statutory school age children has been reviewed and revised for this academic year and ePEP templates have been developed and successfully launched for Early Years and Post 16s. The new ePEPs are slowly becoming embedded in practice and being used effectively to improve the achievement of our children and young people. Haringey Virtual School is committed to ensuring that our children and young people have the benefit of a high-quality ePEP. PEPs continue to be audited termly and every PEP is quality assured and approved by the Virtual School Education Improvement Consultants. Increased focus on this area will continue with weekly performance meetings to review out of date and incomplete PEPs, setting targets for completion, in addition to the Virtual School offering training and individual support for social workers and Designated Teachers to discuss and prepare for upcoming PEPs.

12. Pupil Premium Plus Grant (PPPG)

Pupil Premium Plus is a government grant to support and promote the education of children and young people in care. From 1 April 2014 Pupil Premium Plus has been available to provide each school age looked after child support with their education. However, some children may get more, some less, depending on an assessment of their individual needs. The amount for 2019-20 was £2345. The Pupil Premium Plus was distributed in three termly instalments of £600, with £500 being retained by the Virtual School to fund central initiatives to raise children's attainment. However, in Spring 2021, a discretionary payment of £1000 was given to all eligible schools to provide additional educational IT support and/or tuition, following the third lockdown. Additional funding can be requested for example, to provide support for children where significant and delayed trauma may manifest in unpredicted high levels of need. The expectation is that an individual request will be made with a clear plan of how the money will be spent, and the expected impact. Pupil Premium Plus Grant (PPPG) has enabled schools to put in place timely additional personalised interventions for looked after children with the aim of accelerating their progress and closing the attainment gap between them and their peers.

The majority of Headteachers and Designated Teachers make effective use of Pupil Premium Plus to support children through their education, offering learning support resources and enrichment activities. These are generally well-matched to the learning needs of individual children and young people. Pupil Premium spend is linked to PEP targets and the targets themselves are improving, but there is more improvement to be made. The regular Quality Assurance and termly training offered by the Virtual School is addressing this.

13. Local and National Initiatives

Haringey Virtual School is part of a North East London cluster group of Virtual Schools along with Barking & Dagenham, Enfield, Hackney, Camden, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, and Waltham Forest. The Virtual School Heads meet quarterly to share good practice around key practice areas, such as improving PEP audits, tracking and monitoring of data and working with looked after children placed out of area. In the next year, there are plans to develop opportunities for joint training across the authorities to pool resources and extend the offer to Designated Teachers.

Haringey is also part of the Pan London network of Virtual Schools and the National Group, which has now become the National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH). Regional representatives meet regularly with DfE and Ofsted to look at improving policies and practice to drive the agenda for raising looked after children's educational attainment. The Pan London network of Virtual School Heads arranged a London-wide conference for Virtual School colleagues to support their CPD, celebrate their work, share good practice and provide opportunities to network and establish lasting partnerships. A successful NAVSH Conference took place online on 2-3 January 2021 which was attended by the Virtual School Head and some members of the HVS team.

Raising Aspirations and Increasing Participation

13.1 To Care is to Do

Building on the work that has been established over a number of years, Haringey Virtual School, in partnership with the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation, run a number of activities during the year specifically for children and young people in the care of Haringey, as part of the 'To Care is to Do' (TCTD) programme. The focus is to support educational attainment of children which, research has shown is improved through the engagement in culture and leisure activities and creating a sense of belonging. To Care is to Do uses the unique brand appeal of THF to engage and inspire looked after children and care leavers in Haringey. The creation of opportunities and high-quality experiences supports education success and leads to long term targeted vocational qualifications, in addition to pre and post-employment support. Tottenham Hotspur provides a positive connection for young people who are the responsibility of Haringey and builds links to the community and their staff.

The programme provides a range of activities, with the objective of improving educational engagement and attainment, increasing employability, developing life skills and promoting healthy and active lifestyles for children in care of statutory school age and opportunities for Post 16 and care leavers.

This comprehensive programme aims to build pathways to the opportunities provided by the Stadium Regeneration, to ensure that our more vulnerable young people have the skills and support to access them. The programme caters for all ages, including foster carers and provides mentoring, life-skills workshops, work experience, enrichment and aspirational activities including:

- First Friday Art Club
- Mentoring
- Year 6 -7 Transition Group
- Education Achievement Awards
- Work experience

13.2 Collage Voices

Engagement in professional recording studios and TV studio on multimedia and digital design training. Applicable at any entry level, students learn and develop tools to successfully apply hard skills within music/digital design, editing, performance (if desired), animation, sound recording, and sound engineering. Soft/transferable skills in communication, teamwork, planning and professionalism are developed. 24 sessions across 12 weeks.

13.3 Groundswell Arts - 'Sing Our Story'

The Sing Our Story Project has been developed by Groundswell Arts over the past 10 years. It is a bespoke approach to music making that connects the young person and a professional musician to write an original song about people, places and ideas that matter to them. Working with a musician over a number of sessions young people have the opportunity to meet online or over the phone and share ideas, experiences, thoughts and feelings about things that make them unique. The musician then takes these ideas to compose a song which the young person receives as an Mp3 download along with the lyrics, which will serve as a precious memory for the future.

13.4 Big Green Envelope

Twice a year, every child and young person receives a Big Green Envelope of books, with a carefully chosen theme and selection of reading materials, to help them build their own 'libraries' and support the learning environment with foster carers. (Due to the pandemic, only one parcel was able to be successfully.)

13.5 Publicity

Haringey Virtual School has a website that reflects recent changes in statutory guidance and accurately outlines the work of the Virtual School. It provides information on activities, events and resources. The Virtual School publishes an ePEP Bulletin every half-term (six times per year) which provides up-to-date information about any ePEP or PPPG Grant funding changes and any current events or activities, which is distributed to our education providers and social care. There is also an information booklet available from HVS: 'Nursery to University' which gives information on a range of topics including; the PEP process, guidance on looked after young people with SEN, admissions and the changes in the way schools assess pupils. The Virtual School has published a comprehensive education guide extending the information included in the booklet so that it can be used as a reference for social workers, schools and carers. All publications are currently under review to ensure they are up to date.

14. Virtual School Priorities

WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2019-2020	SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PRIORITIES (SDP) 2020-2022
Early Years Advisory Teacher appointed to improve quality of support and monitoring for this cohort.	Early Years - To support and maintain the number of children that achieve a GLD through the embedding of the PEP process.
Introduction of an Early Years, quality-assured ePEP to enable HVS to monitor and support this cohort more effectively.	KS1 – To increase the number of children making or exceeding age-related expectations and/or reaching agreed targets in all four strands.
During Lockdown, HVS attended the majority of online PEP meetings to provide support and guidance.	KS2 – Increase the numbers of children achieving ARE in Reading, Writing and Maths and the combined measure of RWM.
RAG-rated tracking system developed and used by HVS to enable attainment data to be monitored more effectively.	KS4 – To increase the numbers of young people achieving both English and Maths combined at Grade 5+.
Strong links forged with Social Care, including Young Adult Service providing improved, streamlined support to Post-16s.	To increase the number of Post-16 Pupils in Employment, Education and Training through the embedding of the PEP process.
A Post-16 quality-assured ePEP has now been implemented.	To promote excellent attendance for all looked after children.
A clear structure of accountability (Escalation Flow Chart) has been devised and published, to improve outcomes.	Develop partnerships in and out of borough to reduce the number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions.
Regular attendance by HVS representatives at Resources Panel and Unstable Placements Panel meetings to improve communication.	Improve partnerships with Children's Social Care teams to improve planning for placement change and consequent changes of school.
Training modules were adapted for online delivery during Lockdown to ensure consistent support and guidance is provided by the Virtual School.	Strengthen schools' abilities to meet the needs of our Looked after children, who are placed there.
HVS provided additional tuition and access to ICT to support young people in their learning during Lockdown.	Improve use of the Pupil Premium Plus to achieve, and provide evidence of, better outcomes for pupils.
Pupil Premium section of ePEP has been updated and streamlined with impact measures listed to improve evidence of impact, with mandatory sections set to prevent gaps in reporting information.	Embed, sustain and refine improvements in the Personal Education Plan process.
Post-16 and Early Years Advisory teachers have been appointed.	Increase staffing capacity and develop further the Virtual School team.

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