

Report for: Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee

Item number: 8

Title: LAC sufficiency strategy 2022-2026

Report

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Ward(s) affected: ALL

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This document sets out how Haringey Council intends to fulfil its duties, as a Corporate Parent, and ensure that a dynamic and responsive offer is in place to meet the diverse accommodation needs of our looked after children and young people and those leaving care.

1.2 This sufficiency strategy sets out how the Council will seek to achieve this through understanding the needs of children and young people in our care and working collaboratively to ensure that there is sufficient, appropriate accommodation within the local authority area in response to those needs. We will be stringent in our efforts to ensure that all accommodation in scope is well placed to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Members note report contents

3. Reasons for decision

N/A

4. Background information

4.1 This strategy comes at a time when children, young people, families, and communities across the country are emerging from the global COVID 19 pandemic. Since early 2020, the outbreak has had an immeasurable impact on children, young people, families, and communities across the borough, impacting on health and wellbeing and adding to existing social, economic and health inequalities. In developing this document and assessing the current sufficiency picture in the borough to inform the priorities for action, it has been important to acknowledge the challenges the pandemic has presented in relation to familial stress, placement stability and the capacity of the placement market to respond to commissioning needs.

4.2 Demand for children's social care and health services remains high and means there continues to be significant pressure across the whole system. We know that those providing accommodation for children and young people are facing increasing running costs and need to plan for meeting increasing complex needs. We also know that the limited supply of high-quality provision locally and regionally is contributing to the Council's placement cost pressures. There is a need for the close monitoring of costs, whilst we continue to develop more innovative approaches to meeting our parental responsibilities and collaborate with local authority and health partners to address the system-wide issue of the availability of suitable and sufficient placement provision.

4.3 The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, introduced changes that have a direct impact on the current sufficiency of accommodation for under 16-year-olds. From September 2021, the placement of any under 16- year-old child in an unregulated provision became unlawful. Whilst offering greater protection for vulnerable children, this legislative change creates a need to develop capacity amongst providers and increase the volumes of regulated care available. In addition to this, ensuring that 16- and 17-year-olds, particularly the most vulnerable, are in accommodation most suitable for their needs is a key priority.

5. Contribution to strategic outcomes

6. Use of Appendices

7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A