

Haringey's Children and Young People Service – POST OFSTED ACTION PLAN



June 2023

Introduction

Haringey Children’s Social Care Service was inspected in accordance with legislation and the new Ofsted inspection framework that became operational in December 2022. The findings from the inspection were published on 11 April 2023 and the inspectors judged that **Haringey is now judge for overall effectiveness as a Good Children’s Services**. The inspection noted significant improvement since the last full inspection which was published in December 2018.

Children’s services were subject to a full Ofsted inspection called the [Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services \(ILACS\)](#) by a team of Ofsted inspectors over a three-week period. During the first week of the inspection, inspectors were off site and were provided with data and information in line with the guidance in the ILACS framework. Inspectors were based in Haringey for the last two weeks of the inspection from 13 February to 24 February 2023.

The inspection framework is focused on evidence about improving outcomes for children and young people and evidence of the impact of leaders. There is a strong emphasis on examining frontline practice, talking directly with practitioners and taking into account the views of children, young people, parents and carers.

In advance of the inspection, the service produced a self-evaluation that set out the strengths, areas for improvement and actions needed to improve services. Ofsted received a copy of the self-evaluation in advance of the inspection and used this alongside a set of required data and information to form their key lines of enquiry. As part of the inspection process, inspectors look for evidence of progress from previous inspections. The last full inspection of children’s services took place in 2018 and inspectors noted significant improvement since the last full inspection which was published in December 2018.

The judgement from the inspection is that **the overall effectiveness of the service is ‘Good’** .

Judgement	Grade
OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	GOOD
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences of children in care	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children care leavers	Good

Delivering further improvement

The Ofsted inspectors ' in 2018, inspectors judged Haringey children's services to require improvement to be good. Since then, an ambitious and stable leadership team has made considerable progress and much of the service is now transformed. The senior leadership team has achieved steady improvement in the quality and impact of social work practice for children in need of help and protection and sustained good support for care leavers. Services in these areas are now good, with some examples of excellent child and family-centred practice' (Inspection of Haringey local authority children's services report, April 2023, page 9).

Ofsted acknowledged that most children are now well supported and 'that leaders know there is more to do to achieve the same level of progress in developing services for children in care'. Under a heading, 'what needs to improve', inspectors noted the following areas for improvement:

- The effectiveness of permanence planning for children in care, including the challenge brought by independent reviewing officers.
- The identification of and response to children in private fostering arrangements.
- The provision and quality of life story work at key developmental stages in children's lives.
- The quality of supervision in ensuring that plans for children make a positive impact.
- The understanding and knowledge of frontline workers about adoption.

This action plan has been sent to Ofsted in advance of their deadline of 18 July 2023. The action plan will be overseen by the X Board and progress will be reported to the CYPS Directorate Management Team, Corporate Leadership Team, the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee, to Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel with updates to CAB/Cabinet.

Strategic leadership and oversight

The recent inspection of Haringey Children's Services has recognized that services for children and their families are overall good. This is, in our view, a very significant achievement particularly given the long history of previously Requires Improvement and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are also pleased that the inspection acknowledged our improvement journey, and we are ambitious for our children and young people.

The aim of this Post Ofsted Action Plan is to address the findings made by the Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection conducted in 2023 clearly indicating how we will implement the 5 recommendations. Alongside this plan, we have a clear vision for working with children and families, which is underpinned by our getting to excellence initiative. The Excellence Board will be chaired by a sector-led expert with the Director of Children's Services.

1. Strengths based - actively exploring and acknowledging family strengths as well as their difficulties. We will use methods for building hope and motivation, reducing resistance or ambivalence to change. Providing families with consistent, multidisciplinary, and where appropriate 'high challenge, high support' to become more resilient.
2. Children and young people's wishes, feelings and experiences placed at the centre; a relentless focus on the timeliness, quality and outcomes in the help given to children, young people and their families.
3. The development of professional expertise to work effectively with children, young people and their families.
4. Truly valuing and acting on feedback from children, young people and families; and continuous learning and improvement, by reflecting critically on practice to identify problems and opportunities for a more effective and efficient system.

In our drive towards achieving consistently good services, we follow a cycle of improvement, continuously reviewing and testing our practice and oversight to ensure that we are making progress and creating actions to address our priority areas. In addition, a suite of key performance indicators will be used to track and monitor progress against each recommendation and priority area.

Governance and Accountability

As a senior leadership team, we will take responsibility for the delivery of our plan. We will monitor improvements in performance and practice, measuring impact of our plan quarterly through the:

- Divisional Management Team – Lead Officer, Director of Children's Services
- Achieving Excellence Board – Lead, Independent Scrutineer
- Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee – Lead Member for Children and Families
- Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee – Lead Member for Children's & Young People's scrutiny

1. Improve the effectiveness of permanence planning for children in care, including the challenge brought by independent reviewing officers.

Leads: Heads of Services

What Ofsted told us

- ❖ Some children have experienced repeated placement moves or have not been able to achieve permanence in a timely manner
- ❖ More progress is needed to improve the effectiveness of matching and timeliness of securing permanence for children.
- ❖ Some children in care have experienced drift and delay.
- ❖ For some of these children, there has been insufficient consideration of matching based on their needs, and this has made it harder for them to settle and make progress.
- ❖ Some children have remained on court orders when they are no longer necessary, and others have not been formally matched with foster families with whom they have lived for significant periods of time.
- ❖ Some older children with very complex needs have experienced multiple moves despite careful matching.
- ❖ Recently, systems and plans have been developed to improve matching and permanency, but these are not fully embedded to ensure that all children benefit. Recent permanence planning and matching for some younger children leaving care through adoption has been more effective
- ❖ Decisions for children to return home, live with family friends or to be cared for by extended family are informed well by thorough parenting and specialist assessments. Manager oversight and scrutiny of these arrangements is not yet regular enough to ensure that these plans remain the most appropriate for children.
- ❖ Children's care plans are variable in quality. Stronger plans reflect consideration of children's voices, views, cultural, religious and language needs and provide clear outcomes and timescales to achieve these. Weaker plans are not routinely updated to reflect current circumstances or situations and tasks are not achieved in a timely manner.

What impact this plan will have over the next two years

- ❖ Our overall plan is for children in care to benefit from certainty about their living , and care arrangements at the earliest opportunity. We want children and young people to know that as their Corporate Parents we will be tenacious, caring , and consistent in our planning to reduce any delays. With robust management oversight and consistent meaningful challenge from IRO's we aim to reduce drift and delay for children in our ambition of achieving permanence, through long-term fostering or Special Guardianship Care.

Suitable and timely plans for permanence are made for children if it is not suitable for them to return home									
Ref	Action	Lead	Milestone	Impact measures	Milestone completion timescales				
					Jun 2023	Sept 2023	Dec 2023	Mar 2024	June 2023
1.1	Through our recruitment and retention approach we will ensure that children in care experience consistent and meaningful relationships with their social workers . We will do this by setting and maintaining a target of 85% of the CIC workforce being permanent.	Head of Service, Children in Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recruit to the Edge of Care/VVE Service manager by October 2023 b. Recruit 1 permanent TM in the Children in Care Team c. Recruit 1 social worker in the Fostering and Kinship team d. Effectively settle and induct our two international social workers in the Children in Care team by June e. Continue with our grow your own pipeline approach and assign Step Up and ASYE's 	85% permanent staff by December 2023					
1.2	Increase the business support capacity	Head of Service for Children in Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recruit BSO support in the Children in care service to reduce the administrative over reliance on QSW by May 2023 	Performance and administrative support					
1.3	Strengthen the skills of the social workers who have less court experience	AD for Safeguarding through the HCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CPD proficiency targets met annually b. Workforce survey reports confident, skilled practitioners c. Learning cycle engagements well attended 	Positive Feedback from stakeholders and 90% of cases concluded on time with SMART and child centred care plans.					
1.4	Improve the practice in relation to early permanency	Service Manager for Children in Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Deliver the SLIP programme of work from 6th March to 30th June for IRO's b. quality assure and audit 10% of our midway reviews and feed any learning to the HCA to targeted and bespoke learning and development, through this partners will be 	Improvement analysis evidence the					

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1.6	Strengthen the impact of the IRO service on early permanence planning	Head of Service for Engagement, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We will seek the support of those that are best in class and others who do this successfully, such as SLIP, to support IRO practice improvement b. The IRO service will develop and provide monthly reports, including feedback from children, families, partners, setting out issues relating to systems, timeliness and early permanency c. Greater triangulation and scrutiny to evidence the impact of the IROs 	<p>Permanency plan identified at second LAC review</p> <p>Quality assurance dip sampling of IRO challenge</p> <p>Matching to be completed within 6 months of Full care orders and 3rd LAC review</p>						
1.7	Identify a diverse range of carers to meet our children's needs	Head of Corporate Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to run successful fostering recruitment campaigns b. Improve matching by ensuring our placement planning approach is robust and placement of children in new placements or settings has the input of team managers, the virtual school lead and the linked health professional c. Continue to explore all options for matching children to permanency – SGOs, Connect Carers d. To ensure 95% annual reviews are completed and that they are high quality so that foster carer information is up to date and that there are no delays for matching e. Quarterly themed audits of annual reviews reported to the AD for Safeguarding 	Net increase of 20 foster placements in borough and representative of the permanency needs including language and cultural matches.						
1.8	Build on our relationships with the RAA Adoption to support effective family finding for	AD for Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Social workers across the service are familiar with adoption through permanency b. The RAA continues to be present in all Permanency Planning meetings in order to support effective family finding 	95% of new born's matched to prospective adopters through EP						

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1.10	Ensure children's voices are central to early permanence work	Principal Social worker and ASPIRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Launch the obsessions and the focus on early permanence, for example through assessments, CLA reviews and through audits b. Re launch the Language that Cares and finalise the Aspire Voice of the Child development Plan 	All CIC views, experiences and wishes are, (with consent) routinely shared and factored into all aspects of their care planning					
1.11	Implement our Children Looked After Sufficiency strategy	Head of Service for Corporate Parenting and Commissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expand our 'edge of care' offer and non-residential placement step down options b. Increase the sufficiency of placement provision in borough c. Increase step up and step-down options for high-risk young people d. Strengthen the discharge planning and options from Tier 4 services e. Expand placement options for 16–18-year-olds f. Improve permanency options for children in care and care leavers g. Strengthen our approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with disabilities and their families h. Build a workforce with the skills, expertise and qualities to ensure children and young people report positive experiences of their period in care i. Confident workforce promote –the Haringey Way across the wider Haringey workforce 	Corporate Parenting Champions evidence the embedding of the Council Family adopting and applying the principles of corporate parenting.					

2. Improve the identification of and response to children in private fostering arrangements

Lead: Head of Service for Corporate Parenting

What Ofsted told us

- ❖ The need to improve the identification and awareness of private fostering arrangements was noted at the last inspection.
- ❖ This has not been addressed quickly enough and work in this area remains underdeveloped.
- ❖ Haringey has only identified an unexpectedly small number of children in such arrangements, and practice lacks rigour and management oversight.

What impact this plan will have over the next two years

We want to be assured that there is an effective awareness raising programme and high-quality practice embedded across the safeguarding system that identifies and response to the needs of children and young people who may be privately fostered. The practice system extends to other partners and as such the outcome we are trying to achieve is a relaunch of our awareness campaign with the net result of increasing referrals for private fostering from across the partnership.

- ❖ Number of children privately fostered increases
- ❖ Quality of the assessment enhanced and incorporate the Think Family Principles

Improve identification and monitoring of children in private fostering arrangements

Ref	Action	Lead	Milestone	Impact measures	Milestone completion timescales				
2.1	Joint operation between HSCP and CSP to develop and support Private Fostering Champions	AD's for Safeguarding and CSP	a. By the end of August 12 PF champions to be appointed across both partnerships to promote the Fostering App and challenge sessions within agencies including Faith Communities, Voluntary sector organisations and within communities requiring tailored outreach.	Net increase of 40% in referrals for Private fostering by the end of March 2024					
2.2	All frontline practitioners across Early Help and Social Care continue to be supported to apply the private fostering pathways and through	Private Fostering SSW	a. 100% inductions for agency and newly appointed front line workers to receive the mandatory training within first 7 weeks of employment b. The delivery of annual private fostering awareness campaign to continue through the LADO and the KCSIE Officer with a sharper focus on Schools, Safer Neighbourhood police, Housing Concierge's and the	Widen the awareness across the safeguarding agencies and make Private Fostering					

3. Improve the provision and quality of life story work at key developmental stages in children's lives

Lead: Head of Corporate Parenting

What Ofsted told us

- ❖ Life story work is underdeveloped and has been absent for too many children in care.
- ❖ Operationally, there has been limited understanding about the importance of this work to enable children to make sense of their identities, stories and histories at different stages of their development.
- ❖ Leaders have appropriately recognised this gap and training is planned.
- ❖ Many do not receive individualised, sensitive life story work to help them understand their journeys.

What impact this plan will have over the next two years

- ❖ We have spoken to Children and young people from Aspire and developed a collective desired outcome to reset the foundations for this work. Over the next 2 years Children and young people will benefit from stable and meaningful relationships with social workers whose practice will be informed on the day to day understanding of their lived experience pre and post permanency into care.

Children in care are helped to understand their life histories, experiences and identities

Ref	Action	Lead	Milestone	Impact measures	Milestone completion timescales				
					Jun 2023	Sept 2023	Dec 2023	Mar 2024	June 2024
3.1	a)Ensure that every child and young person including UASC have a life story book. b)And as appropriate all CIC with adoption as the permanency plan for adoption has a Later life letter	Service Managers for CIC and Young Adults Services	a. Life story work is tracked through the permanency panel b. Life story work is effectively tracked via supervision and children looked after reviews	95% of children with a life story book and as appropriate 100% children to be adopted have a Later life letter					
3.2	Continuation of commissioned specialist	Head of Corporate Parenting	Practice embedded at pace and the work of the Life Story Practitioner Social workers is supported to develop the	Marked increase in high quality Life Story and Home Books –					

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3.3	More frequent use with children and young people of their life stories by practitioners and carers, supported if needed by the clinical psychologist.	Service Managers for CIC and Young Adults Services		95% of children with a life story book and as appropriate 100% children to be adopted have a Later life letter					
3.2	Continuation of commissioned specialist training of all relevant practitioners in effective evidence-	Head of Corporate Parenting	Practice embedded at pace and the work of the Life Story Practitioner Social workers is supported to develop the skills needed for effective life story work through the HCA Audits demonstrate that social workers recognise the	Marked increase in high quality Life Story and Home Books – 95% of children in matched foster placements and SG					

4. Improve the quality of supervision in ensuring that plans for children make a positive impact

Lead: Principal Social Worker, (PSW) and all Safeguarding Heads of Services

What Ofsted told us:

- ❖ Most CP conferences are timely. Multi-agency core groups and CIN meetings are held regularly, and most are used effectively to review and update plans. However, some plans lack clarity about risks, desired outcomes and timescales. Where this is the case, progress is not consistently measured against or continuously evaluated in supervision.
- ❖ Supervision across children’s services is regular, but it is not consistently strong enough to progress all children’s plans. In good supervision, social workers participate in reflective discussions alongside the reviewing of tasks and compliance activities.

What impact this plan will have over the next two years

- ❖ Our plan aims to ensure that we will continue to strengthen effective policy and procedures that promote practice development in a culture of high support /high challenge ensuring the factors exist for practice to thrive. We aim to promote the professional confidence of social workers to see their role as central to effective safeguarding partnership and to listening to and valuing the contributions of children and young people. In the next two years the skills and assets of our team managers will ensure there are able to operate with resilience to deliver and participate in the actions below:

Improve the quality and impact of supervision

Ref	Action	Lead	Milestone	Impact measures	Milestone completion timescales				
					Jun 2023	Sept 2023	Dec 2023	Mar 2024	June 2023
4.1	Deliver the Core Obsessions Series Training for Team Managers	PSW	<p>Our performance data will indicate timely and skilled interventions</p> <p>The impact of timely decision making the eradicates drift and delay and achieves the balance and need to continue building sustainable outcomes, reflected in the feedback from parents, carers, children, young people and professionals on 70% of cases</p> <p>Representing the child’s story through supervision tracking delays through SMART actions and continued use of</p>	<p>Social Workers are clear on the priority actions for children to reduce drift and Delay</p> <p>Audits identify Team Managers distinction between</p>					

5. Improve the understanding and knowledge of frontline workers about adoption.

Lead: Head of Children in Need of Support and Protection

What Ofsted told us:

- ❖ Haringey has been part of the Adopt London North regional adoption agency (RAA) since October 2019. These partnership arrangements are serving Haringey children well.
- ❖ Recent permanence planning and matching for some younger children leaving care through adoption has been more effective.
- ❖ The RAA has a good understanding of children’s needs, and the local authority has good oversight of the RAA’s work.
- ❖ However, leaders and managers rightly recognise that there is a lack of understanding amongst frontline teams about adoption.

What impact this plan will have over the next two years

- ❖ Our aim is to continue to consistently achieve widespread higher standards of social work practice and management oversight . Although mitigated by effective auditing, permanency planning and adoption for frontline teams is not always effective, so the work to effect change for some children does not hold permanency through adoption in mind.

Improve the quality and impact of supervision									
Ref	Action	Lead	Milestone	Impact measures	Milestone completion timescales				
					Jun 2023	Sept 2023	Dec 2023	Mar 2024	June 2023
5.1	Review the parallel planning and early permanency process so that it starts from the assessment team	HOS for Children in needs of support and protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All Team managers in, Assessment Team attend permanency planning meetings to discuss cases stepped up from Early Help and those Edging into care. b. Extend the permanency and parallel planning Terms of reference and practice guide to ensure all front-line practitioners ensure that children have a secure, stable and loving family to support them through their minority and early adulthood. 	<p>Audits evidence that permanence is achieved for children without delay.</p> <p>Underpinned by effective management oversight and decision-making, early planning, and monitoring</p>					