

Haringey Looked After Children (LAC) Sufficiency Strategy 2022-2026: a progress report

Sufficiency Strategy

- The strategy was presented to CPAC February 2023 & CYP Scrutiny March 2023
- Agreed that we would bring back an update on progress with a particular focus on achieving the targets in the strategy

Sufficiency strategy priorities

- **Priority 1** - Expand our 'Edge of Care' offer and non-residential placement step down options.
- **Priority 2** - Increase the sufficiency of placement provision both in, and out of borough.
- **Priority 3** – Increase step up and step-down options for high-risk young people.
- **Priority 4** – Strengthen discharge planning from Tier 4 services.
- **Priority 5** - Expand placement options for 16- to 18-year-olds.
- **Priority 6** - Improve permanency options for children in care and care leavers.
- **Priority 7**- Strengthen our approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with disabilities and their families.
- **Priority 8** – Build a workforce with the skills, expertise, and qualities to ensure children and young people develop during their period in care – the Haringey Way across the wider Haringey workforce.

Some of our challenges

- Increasing **complexity and year on year rises in referrals** – community risks to children, contextual safeguarding, language and cultural challenges with families from other countries
- **Growth in child poverty** - the cost of living crisis, families with no recourse to public funds, intentionally homelessness, rising rental/landlord costs
- **Insufficient social workers** and the additional costs of employing agency staff
- Significant uplifts to existing placements – negotiating with providers, however the market is very constrained with significant supply issues and increasing costs
- **Lack of sufficient placements** for children locally, regionally and nationally is contributing towards the Council's placement cost pressures
- **New Ofsted regulation** for placements for 16- and 17-year-olds in semi-independent provision
- **Increasing numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children** often requiring age assessments and significant support in relation to the trauma they have experienced and the lack of funding for these children when they turn 18 (alongside duties to support young people to 25)

Key measures from our plan that we said would tell us we are making a difference

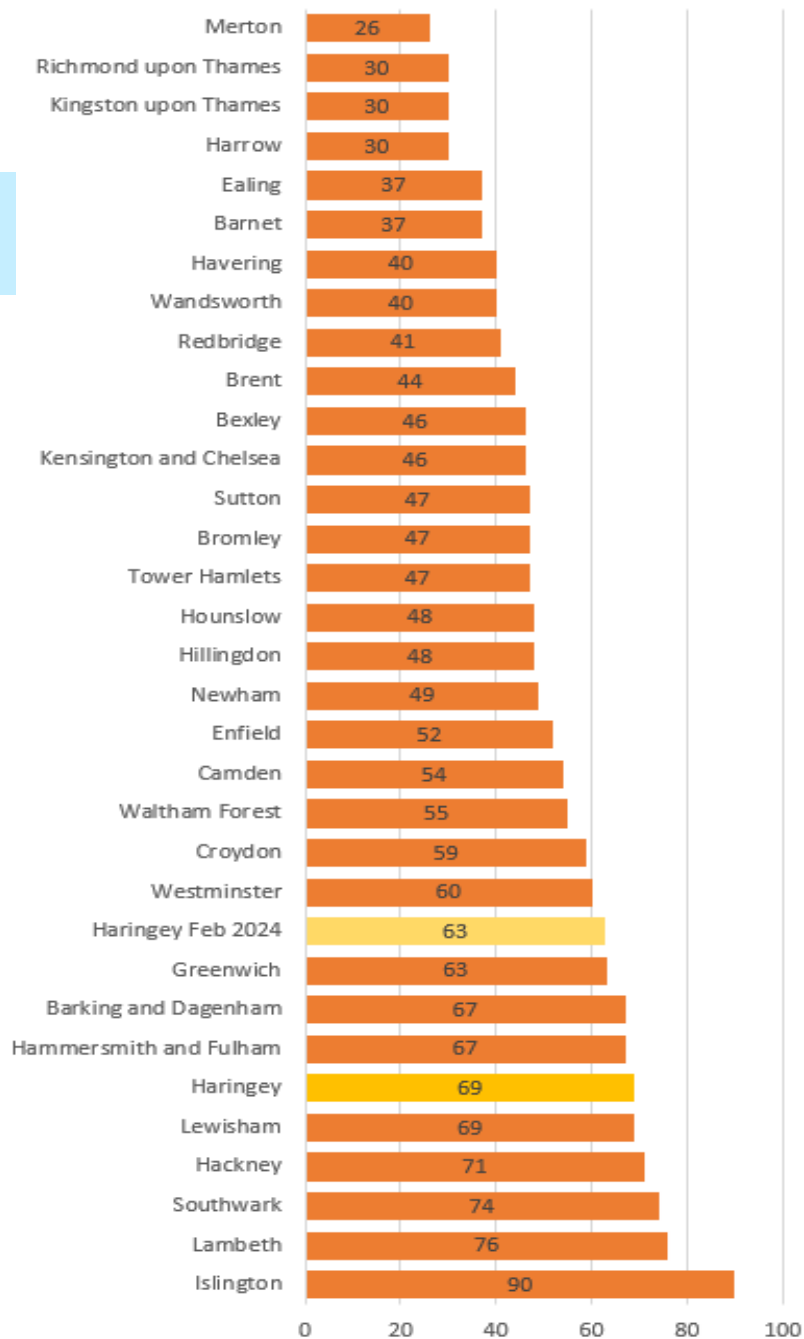
What will tell us we are making a difference?	RAG rating	Commentary
In-borough placement capacity for children and young people	Green – on track	Expanding in-borough provision is on track through a mix of activities including new residential provision being delivered and provision that is currently in the planning phase.
Opening of Haslemere in house children’s residential home	Blue - Completed	Haslemere opened in 2023.
The number of in-house foster carers	Amber – off track	Recruited 8 foster carers to date and 9 have deregistered. To mitigate this, placement capacity has been increased by 39 as a result of assessing and agreeing kinship and special guardianship carers. There remain national and local challenges in recruiting foster carers.
The number of children placed in good and outstanding provision	Green – on track	21 children looked after in residential provision Outstanding :3 Good:16 Requires improvement: 1 Not yet inspected:1
The number of children and young people stepping down from residential care into family-based placements or supported semi-independent provision	Green – on track	25 children have stepped down since 2022. 7 children have stepped down in the current year and a further 1 under review.

Priority 1 - Expand our 'Edge of Care' offer and non-residential placement step down options

In the strategy we said we would increase the number of children and young people able to remain at home

- Our multi-agency Edge of Care Panel meets every two weeks to review children who are at risk of coming into care to identify what support is needed for each child and family
- Family Group Conferences and Family Mediation Services are a key to bringing the wider family together to see if children can be supported safely in family settings – 87 families have been referred for a family group conference in the current year and 14 have been successful in supporting families to stay together
- Children Looked After numbers remain near an historic low for Haringey of 344 (9/2/24)
- Our rate of looked after children has moved from the highest quartile (top 8 in London) into the interquartile range (middle 50%)
- Our statistical neighbours are skewed towards the higher rates and in quarter 2 (2023/24) statistical neighbours were reporting a rate of around 69%.

London CLA Rates March 2023



Priority 2 - Increase the sufficiency of placement provision both in, and out of borough

In the strategy we said we would increase the number of in-house foster carers and ensure we had the right supply of provision to meet complex social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs

- The fostering team have a recruitment strategy with a target of 20 in-house foster carers for 2023/24 year and the recruitment campaign has been successful with 131 enquiries from people interested in becoming a foster carer
- 8 in house foster carers have been recruited to date and 1 foster care room extension developed creating 1 extra placement
- There are 3 potential carers in the stage 2 assessment process and 9 at the approval stage
- A key challenge is the age of our foster carers and 9 have deregistered this year
- 2 foster carers have been identified for upskilling to meet the needs of more complex children
- 42 Special guardians' assessments have also been completed this period
- Haslemere, our new residential provision opened and is supporting our children looked after. A bed has been block booked by Islington Council to support the operational costs.
- Work is progressing to develop our parent and baby assessment unit with a number of property options being considered. We are also in negotiation with two LA partners to sign an offer in principle for two beds once the weekly placement rate is firmed up
- There are also ongoing series of provider events planned throughout 2024- beginning with provider forum events in March 2024 alongside our work with providers to ensure compliance with new OFSTED rules around semi-independent provision

Priority 3 – Increase step up and step-down options for high-risk young people

In the strategy we said we would increase placement options for children and young people with complex needs including developing the capacity of independent fostering agencies to support children and young people with more complex needs

- Our HART Project has supported 25 children to step down to family settings since 2022.
- During the current year there have been 7 children who have stepped down from residential placements into a family setting (bespoke foster placements) or parental care with a further 1 under review
- We use our BERRI tool to support our psychological assessment of children which ensures they have the right support and the right placement and as a result all step-downs in 22/23 remain stable

Priority 4 – Strengthen discharge planning from Tier 4 services

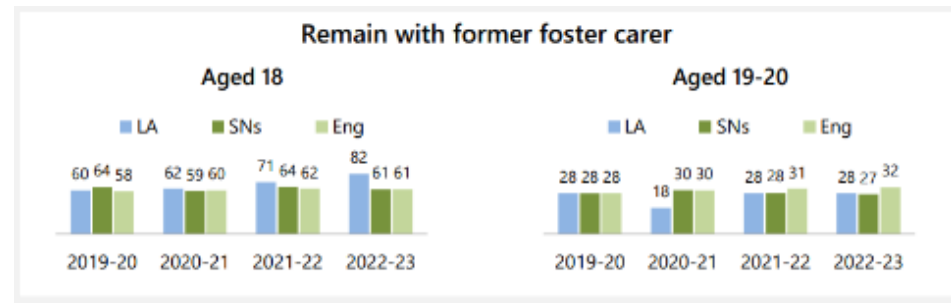
In the strategy we said we would reduce gaps in provision for children and young people being discharged from Tier 4 and increase the timeliness of discharge

- The Complex Care Tier 4 Panel meets monthly with a wide range of partners – SEND, CAMHS and people from the Provider Collaborative (ICB initiative where providers come together to identify providers in the mental health sphere)
- This is a monthly review of all children in Tier 4 provision – looking at current admissions, discharge plans, plans for education and post admission
- Our Tier 4 lead ensures discharge planning is in place, smooth and timely and to track the progress once discharged
- The team have worked with the North Central London Integrated Care Board to identify how Tier 4 step-down provision can be provided to ensure that bed blocking is avoided and that those being placed back in the community with mental health needs can be best supported.

Priority 5 - Expand placement options for 16 to 18 year-olds

We said in the strategy that we would improve longer-term planning for children in care by developing and embedding an end-to-end planning approach for our rising 16 cohort.

- We are continuing to ensure that the quality of our pathway plans reflect the wishes and feeling of our 16+ in terms of how they transition into adulthood, this is being reviewed through audits and supervision.



- The IROS are holding mid-way reviews to ensure that pathway plans are progressing effectively.
- The pathway plans capture the voices of the young people, identifying their needs around accommodation and support and enabling early referrals to the transitions team.
- We currently have 31 staying put arrangements in place for care leavers, 14 of which have been created within the last 12 months.
- Our January 2024 data shows that 82% of young people aged 18 remained with former foster carers – this performance is significantly better than the national average (61%) our statistical neighbour performance (61%)

Priority 6 - Improve permanency options for children in care and care leavers

In the strategy we said we would continue our focus on developing the number of in-house foster carers who can support children and young people to step down from residential care and increase our focus on 'staying put' long term permanent fostering arrangements

- As reported elsewhere we continue to recruit in-house foster carers and we have 60% of young people living with their foster carers at 18
- Latest January 2024 data shows that 86 out of 234 foster placements (37%) of our children in care (up to 18) have a permanence plan that is long term fostering – we have aspirations on reaching our current target of 40%
- We continue to develop a range of options for in-borough accommodation for care leavers

Priority 7- Strengthen our approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with disabilities and their families

In our strategy we said that this priority would be informed by work that has already begun in Haringey to develop our Preparation for Adulthood Strategy and implement a refreshed short breaks and respite offer

- Proposals are being developed for respite for carers – business cases and feasibility studies are in train and we are identifying properties currently
- Our [Short Breaks Statement \(2023-2025\)](#) has been updated and published on the Local Offer. The short breaks available include:
 - children and young people may attend day activities or after-school clubs
 - children may go out during the day with a carer or a befriender
 - children may stay overnight in a carer's home
 - children may stay overnight in a residential setting
 - help may be provided in the family home to help with some of the household tasks such as getting the children ready for school or bed
 - nursing care may be provided in the child's home if appropriate
 - Money may also be provided in the form of Direct Payments so that families can arrange and pay for their own short breaks.

Priority 8 – Build a workforce with the skills, expertise, and qualities to ensure children and young people develop during their period in care – the Haringey Way across the wider Haringey workforce

In the strategy we said that we want to increase the availability of local provision with the skills and confidence to support the needs of children and young people with disabilities and complex behaviour support needs.

- Ofsted reported that ‘our social workers and personal advisers supporting care leavers are dedicated to and knowledgeable about their young people...they visit young people regularly to develop trusting and caring relationships....they work proactively to support young people with complex needs, doing all they can to support and prepare them for the next stage of their journey into adulthood’. (Ofsted, 2023).
- Strength based approaches continue to underpin our practice approach. We use a Signs of Safety practice framework in Social Care and Early Help and our practitioners continue to make use of Research in Practice and Making Research Count to support their development, alongside learning development opportunities through our [Haringey Children’s Academy](#). The Academy’s learning and development offer continues to be wide-ranging, promoting evidence-based practices. Ofsted noted that, ‘Staff have access to a wide range of training opportunities through Haringey Children’s Academy and other accredited training opportunities. Workers appreciate the training offer, although accessing training can be challenging at times due to caseload demands’. (Ofsted, 2023).
- In June 2023 the Academy held its third conference focused on ‘Building the healthy minds of children’. 79% of staff report that they are satisfied with the Learning and Development Opportunities offered in Haringey (Organisational health check 2022).