



Overview - IRO Annual Report 2023-24

The IRO Service

Overview:

- Part of the Engagement, Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Service under Children and Young People's Services.
- Team: 5 permanent IROs, 1 fixed-term IRO, led by a Service Manager.
- Diverse expertise and cultural backgrounds, proficiency in 8 languages.
- Long-term relationships with children, young people, and families.
- Stability and continuity with many children having the same IRO for years.

Role of IROs:

- Ensure consistent practice for the well-being of looked after children and care leavers.
- Prevent delays, ensure effective care planning, and monitor local authority actions.
- Identify and communicate concerns to senior leadership.

Professional Development:

- Provided through Haringey Children's Academy, Tri-X online procedures, Research in Practice, Making Research Count, My Learning, and Haringey Safeguarding Children's Partnerships.
- Two fully qualified Practice Educators, one IRO undertaking the PE course.

Service Priorities 23/24

- **Priority 1:** To place children and young people at the centre of everything we do.
 - Review minutes produced with each child in mind.
 - Improved efficiency and timeliness of delivering review minutes.
 - Care Plans consistently up to date with the introduction of Liquid Logic system (LCS).
- **Priority 2:** Listen to and respond to children and young people.
 - Focus on performance data to prioritize children's reviews.
 - Improved quality, timeliness, and recommendations of review minutes.
 - Engaged children and young people in providing feedback.
- **Priority 3:** We will be ambitious for Our Children.
 - High-quality care plans with a focus on achieving permanence.
 - Increased face-to-face visits with children.
 - Opportunities for children to chair/co-chair their reviews.
 - Collaboration with Islington Partners in Practice to review IRO Practice Standards and CLA Practice Guidance.

Our CLA

- Decrease in number of Children Looked After during the 2023/24, from 368 in April 2023 to 334 in March 2024 - reflects the positive impact of Early Help and frontline services in providing effective support, thereby reducing the necessity for children and young people to enter care.
- Average caseload for IROs are in line with IRO Handbook – allows IRO to respond swiftly and effectively to the changing needs of our young people, proactive approach in adapting to evolving circumstances and working to achieve the best outcomes for every child in our care.
- 13 children left care before their first review, while 12 children and young people were reunified with their families by their second review - effective work of practitioners and the HART service in supporting reunification efforts.
- 901 reviews held – continue to have more male than female (59%) and higher representation of black ethnic groups (39%) - highlights the importance of continuing to address systemic and socio-economic factors that can contribute to this disparity.

Review performance

- 70% (631) of initial CLA reviews were held on time due to the implementation of the new LCS system requiring the adaption of practitioners to new recording processes - significant progress since April 2024
- 340 Midway reviews held in 23/24 – highest number recorded - evidences a strong commitment to maintaining oversight.
- 95% (773) of children and young people participated in their reviews
- 5% (41) of young people who did not attend their reviews, some are missing and experiencing social and emotional challenges often associated with past experiences.
- IROs actively explore a range of alternative communication methods, including eye gaze technology, communication boards, PECS, speech-generating devices, and other augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools

Feedback

- ...so great to meet him in person and hear someone so invested in his role and supporting T. I'm sure everyone knows this but he is an asset to the profession and your local authority. **Head Teacher**
- There is nothing that would change (about the review)– **Young Person**
- **It was my first CLA review as a SW. S was very supportive as a professional and that made things easy for me.** - Social worker
- *Very friendly and open discussions were welcomed. It was a lovely opportunity to share the progress - Parent*
- It has been a pleasure working with the IROs at Haringey. I have observed dedication, passion and care for the children and young people...If I were to sum up the work of the IROs in Haringey I would say dedication, and it is brilliant that our young people and children have a team that challenges services to secure the best outcomes for our children and young people. – **Virtual School**

SEND Inspection

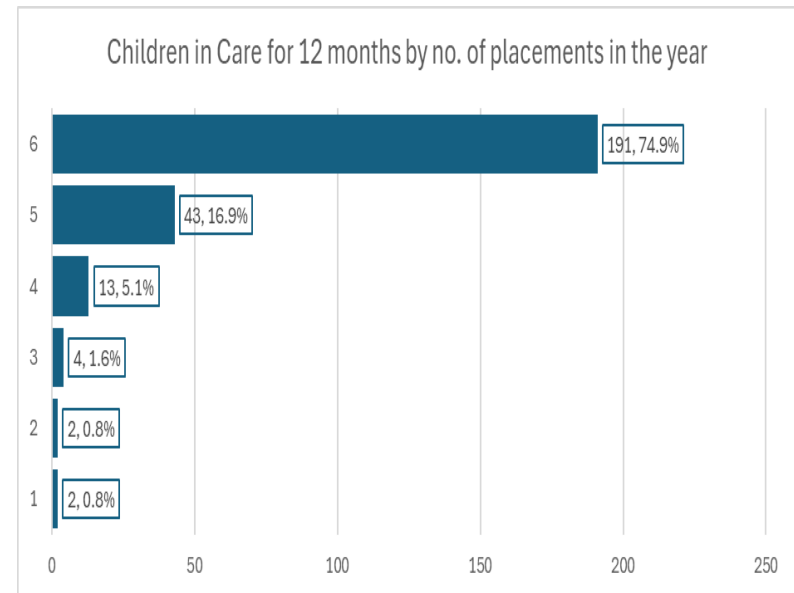
- 'Professionals across the partnership work creatively to address the rising numbers of children and young people with SEND'
- 'The voice of the child or young person rings very clearly through EHC [Education, Health and Care] plans'
- 'Children and young people with SEND do well at school' and 'benefit from a broad and developing range of out-of-school activities'
- 'Knowledgeable, culturally sensitive professionals offer direct support to families'
- 'Leaders have used creative commissioning to reduce waiting times across the partnership'

As at March 2024, 99 Children Looked After (CLA) under the age of 16 in Haringey have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). These young people are placed across 29 different local authorities.

Stability & Permanence

To help promote stability IROs are:

- Mindful in ensuring that children are accessing the support identified within EHCPs and that this support remains appropriate particularly for those children who have emotional and behavioral needs.
- Making recommendations for young people to be referred to CAMHS and/or for social workers to arrange consultation meetings with First Step where young people have complex histories, have experienced significant trauma or where SDQs reflect a need to do so.
- Contributing to the Placement Stability Panel.
- Involving Supervising Social Workers more effectively and raising challenge where appropriate to do so.



Permanence

- - Emphasis on advocating for secure, stable, and nurturing families.
- - Long-term placements (2.5+ years) consistently high at 71%, surpassing statistical neighbours and national average.
- - Active role in Permanency Tracking Panel and ADM forum.
- - 25 young people matched with long-term foster parents.
- - 13 Special Guardianship Orders and 7 Adoption Orders granted.
- - Enhanced monitoring and tracking of key performance indicators and permanency.

Improvements:

- - Use of midway reviews to monitor progression of permanency.
- - Increased vigilance of permanence decisions on case files.
- - Collating data for young people at 16+ matched in their CLA reviews.

IRO Challenge

- From April to March 2024, the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) was utilised a total of 193 times, comprising 135 informal alerts and 58 formal escalations.
- Reviewed its use of the DRP to be more impactful - IROs having more conversations and discussions with social workers, team managers and service managers which has helped avoid the need to use the DRP



Impact

- **University Enrollments:** 42 former Children Looked After from Haringey are currently enrolled in universities
- **Breaking Barriers:** Among these exceptional individuals, four young adults are studying Law, with one attending Cambridge University. Additionally, we have a talented young adult at Oxford University, studying Modern Languages & Linguistics.
- **Graduations:** 14 of our young people are expected to successfully complete their studies and graduate this year. A further nine are expected to graduate in 2025.
- **Education, Employment, or Training:** In the 19-21-year-old age group, 55% (128) of our young adults are in Education, Employment, or Training - reflects the positive impact of our collective efforts in ensuring their successful transition into adulthood.
- **76** young people have moved into their own one-bedroom flats, while **6** young parents have been provided two-bedroom flats. 4 reciprocal arrangements with other local authorities, allowing these young people to maintain stability in their geographical areas and thus maintaining important established local relationships.

Additional Achievements

- IRO Team Links
- Vulnerable, Violence & Exploitation Panel
- Introduction to Health Service workshops
- Risk Management Panel
- Organisational Learning & Development

Providing out of hours to support young people overcome anxiety and feel empowered

Spending time with a young person who experienced an altercation – enabling better joint working between the LA and placement provider

Spent several hours with YP who needed reassurance with the post 18 options available – able to facilitate an agreed way forward

Supporting young person to remain within a placement where notice to end had expired

Priorities 2024/25

- **Priority 1:** To place children and young people at the centre of everything we do.
- - We will continue our focus on review minutes to children being good quality and sent out in a timely manner.
- - We will continue to promote children and young people chairing or co-chairing their review.
- - We will help ensure children and young people understand their care journeys.
- **Priority 2:** Listen to and respond to children and young people.
- - We will review our current systems on how we ascertain feedback from children and young people and widen this to include the wider service that they receive.
- - We will continue to hold timely reviews.
- - We will continue to embed midway review and monitoring ensuring that there is appropriate challenge to help progress care planning.
- **Priority 3:** We will be ambitious for Our Children.
- - We will ensure that Family Group Conferences or Family Network meetings are held at the earliest opportunity to help children and young people reunify with their parents or remain in their wider family network.
- - We will ensure that children and young people who are placed with their parents have their circumstances regularly reviewed.
- - We will continue to prioritise achieving permanence for children in our care and develop systems to identify young people being matched within reviews.
- - We will ensure that we hold 95% of reviews within timescales.
- - We will explore developing critical learning groups for IROs with other Good and Outstanding Local Authorities.
- - Raise greater awareness of the Transitional Safeguarding Protocols.