Appendix i

Children's Social Care annual performance 2025/26

1. Introduction and Background

1.1. This report provides an overview of performance for Children's Social Care Services for 2025/26. The report provides comparative data by benchmarking with national data and our statistical neighbours, where this is appropriate. Haringey's statistical neighbours are a group of local authorities judged by the DfE to have the most similar demographic profile, and our statistical neighbours have been revised this year to account for latest comparable demographic data. These are:

- Barnet
- Brent
- Ealing
- Enfield
- Hounslow
- Lambeth
- Lewisham
- Redbridge
- Southwark
- Waltham Forest

The report shows changes over time and looks at how our performance has grown and developed over the period.

1.2. Children's Social Care provides services and support for children and young people who are:

- in need (CIN)
- at risk of harm and in need of protection (CPP)
- children in our care who are looked after (CLA)
- care experienced young adults (CL, Care leavers)

1.3. These children and young people have needs which are assessed as being complex or acute and require the statutory involvement of the Local Authority within the responsibilities set out in legislation, principally the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, and the Children and Families Act 2014 and various statutory guidance including Working Together to Safeguard Children: March 2026.

1.4. The governance and scrutiny of the arrangements for safeguarding children take place through this Committee and the following multi agency forums:

- Safeguarding Accountability Meetings chaired by the Leader of the Council with the Lead Member for Children, relevant Directors and, Corporate Director of Children's Services in attendance. The meeting is held quarterly and allows the Leader to hold senior officers to account, to scrutinise

performance related to vulnerable children, to be appraised of any concerns about the safety and welfare of children and to strategically drive improvements.

- Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee has a dedicated focus on Children Looked After and Care Leavers, and has in attendance seven elected members, along with senior officers in the Local Authority and wider partnership. The Committee meets quarterly and scrutinises performance and strategic planning related to children in care and care leavers.

- Haringey's Safeguarding Children's Partnership (HSCP) is overseen by annual rotational chair arrangements, supported by an Independent Scrutineer. The Executive Group meets eight times a year, including the joint board meeting with the Adults Safeguarding Board. Under the legislation, the three statutory safeguarding partners - Local Authority, Police and Health (Integrated Care Board) - must make arrangements to work together, along with the relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. The three Statutory partners were joined by the Director of Schools and Learning in March 2026, as part of the Executive Group.

1.5. The HSCP has sub-groups which oversees the work of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership in relation to Quality Performance and Outcomes, Practice Learning Workforce and Development, Safeguarding Practice Review, Housing, The Education Forum, Child Sexual Abuse Task and Finish Group, Training, Missing and Exploitation (MACE) and Race, Racism and Racial Bias Task and Finish Group. The HSCP annual report evaluates the effectiveness of safeguarding and child protection in Haringey and has set the following priorities, to improve the collective effectiveness of agencies in:

- Children impacted by mental ill health
- Children impacted by domestic abuse
- Children impacted by neglect

Going forward into the next year (2027/28), the HSCP has agreed to continue to focus on these three priorities however has added a fourth priority: Child Sexual Abuse.

1.6. While much of the Partnership's focus is support to our resident population, our impact reaches beyond that and will continue to do so in the coming years. The HSCP is committed to efficiency, integration and building and sharing good practice.

2. National Context - National Statistical Reporting

2.1. All local authorities report to the Department for Education to inform the Child in Need Annual Census and the 903 Children in Care Return, the results of which are published every October on the DfE website. The CIN census covers:

- early intervention,
- contacts and referrals to social care and the reasons,
- child and family assessments and identified factors,
- the nature and volume of child protection activity,
- the numbers of children subject to child protection conferences.

2.2. The 903 return covers:

- Children entering care and the reasons,
- the types of placements used,
- the legal status of children,
- how many children have left care and for what reasons (including adoption) and
- details about care leavers and their accommodation, employment and training outcomes and how the local authority is keeping in touch with them.
- details of allocated social worker and stability.

2.3. In addition, more detailed returns are submitted to the North London Regional Adoption board on children with an adoption plan, the timeliness of matching and placing with an adopter and the recruitment of adopters.

2.4. An annual social worker workforce survey is also submitted to the DfE about the workforce profile, recruitment, retention, sickness rates for social workers, and caseload numbers

2.5. Data to Insight (D2I) the sector-led service for local authority children's data professionals with support from DfE, DLUHC, Ofsted and ADCS, hosts The Local Authority Interactive Tool (CHAT) which collates a range of data across a number of returns and can be filtered to compare and benchmark performance across children's indicators based on the Ofsted ILACS inspection annex A data set.

3. Future Challenges and Operational Priorities

3.1. The future challenges and priorities can be summarised as follows (of note: this is not an exhaustive list, and the history of this type of work is that new priorities will emerge).

- Families First Partnership (FFP) programme aims to transform the whole system of help, support and protection, to ensure that every family can access the right help and support when they need it, with a strong emphasis on early intervention to prevent crisis.

- The service is following the development of the new Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and preparing for the implementation of new social care reforms as set out in the new national policy statement, 'Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive', Nov 2024.
- Continuing to meet the increasing demands for children's social care services and responding to factors arising from National and International challenges.
- Expand and improve the quality and timeliness of interventions available to children with presenting mental health or emotional wellbeing difficulties.
- Making use of data, alongside quality assurance findings and feedback from children and families to understand demand, identify inequalities, evaluate the impact of support and direct improvement.
- Maintaining operational effectiveness of the service in the context of new and emerging mental health and neuro-diversity support needs, the evolving and complex nature of child criminal and child sexual exploitation, the acuity of Domestic Abuse risks and needs, housing related risks and substance misuse.
- The costs associated with the placements for children in care which continue to be a significant pressure for the Council. Given the Council's current budget pressures this is an area of ongoing scrutiny. Additional corporate funding has already been given to the department, but as demand increases and the supply of placements comes under further pressure, the impact continues to be carefully monitored.
- The development of permanence planning and tracking will ensure children achieve the earliest permanence possible.
- The priority in our Short Breaks service is to finalise development and deliver an Overnight Short Breaks provision that will provide high-quality respite support for children and young people with the most complex needs and profound learning disabilities, enabling families to continue caring safely and effectively for their children at home and help to prevent family breakdown and avoidable admissions into local authority care.
- The recruitment and retention of social workers continues to be a key focus. Creative approaches to grow our own staff and draw on effective succession planning opportunities remains a source of ongoing activity.
- Haringey Children's Academy provides learning and development opportunities for the children's workforce and supported by professors and academics, remains a central part of Children's retention and skills progression strategy. To continue to lead, jointly with our MET police colleagues, on our innovative Stop and Search work that is currently being piloted across London.

4. Local Background and Context

4.1. The department continues to support high levels of need and complexity in families for the following reasons:

- In 2024/25 8,009 Children in Haringey were living in relative poverty before housing costs. This is below the SN average (9,907), but in line with the London average (7,985).
- After housing costs this number rises to 18,111
- In Haringey, this equates to 16.9% of all 0 - 16-year-olds in the borough and is the 11th highest rate of all London boroughs.
- 26% of Haringey pupils are eligible for and claiming free school meals. This is above the England average (24.6%), but below the London average (26.6%)
- Neighbourhoods in the east of the borough rank much higher on the index of income deprivation affecting children, compared to neighbourhoods in the west.

4.2. Alongside these challenges, Haringey as a local area continues to be a strong and thriving place for children growing up in the area. It is a place that has a rich history, strong and vibrant communities, great transport links and excellent facilities with a range of cultural events.

4.3. Key strengths include:

- Diverse communities where more than 180 languages are spoken.
- Over a quarter of the borough is green space – with 25 Green Flag Parks and 120 venues where cultural activities take place.

5. Our children and young people population

5.1. In Haringey, there are 53,550 children aged 0-17 years, this is 21% of the overall population (MYE 2023), largely in line with statistical neighbours and London where 21% and 22% of people are aged 0-17 respectively. Notably, the ward with the highest proportion of 0-17-year-olds is South Tottenham (29%), while the ward with the lowest is Stroud Green (15.4%). The number of under 18 children is not expected to change significantly in future years and will remain most concentrated in the east of the borough.

5.2. Almost half of the pupils in Haringey schools do not have English as a first language (47.4%). After English - Turkish, Spanish, Polish, Bulgarian, and Somali are the most spoken languages (May 22 Census).

6. Outcomes for children and young people

6.1. **Haringey's Children in Care have above average educational outcomes** with our KS4 Average Attainment 8 Score for 2025 24.2% up from 20.6% against an

England average of 17.3%. Progress 8 also scored in the top quartile of all English LAs.

6.2. Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) have higher educational outcomes, in 2025; 16 of 18 attainment measures are in the top quartile in England.

Two measures ranked 3rd of all LAs nationally:

- Foundation Stage - % Good level of Development SEN with Statement/EHCP

and

- "Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing and Maths, Expected Standard - Pupils with Statements of SEN/EHC Plan"

6.3. **Haringey has fewer secondary pupils being permanently excluded** and is better than the national average (0.01%). Its percentage of NEET children, those (Not in Education Employment or Training) improved (1.7%) from 1.9% in the previous year.

7. OFSTED

7.1. Ofsted inspectors visited the borough in January 2026, when they assessed the care, help and protection given to children, young people and care experienced young adults and their collective experiences of this support. They also examined what was being done by leaders to improve services.

7.2. Having carried out a full ILACS inspection of Haringey Children's Services Ofsted judged the service Outstanding overall for the first time. They found that since the last full ILACS inspection in 2023, all areas of improvement had been addressed and practice had improved 'significantly'.

7.3. The report also included 1 area that could improve:

- The timeliness of initial safety planning for a small number of disabled children when a risk of harm is suspected.

7.4. The report concluded the following paragraph:
"Social workers and other practitioners are overwhelmingly positive about working for Haringey. Senior leaders have established a supportive and caring organisational culture. It is evident across the workforce that staff feel respected and valued by leaders, who listen to them and act on their feedback...The diverse workforce across all teams at all levels is a real strength in Haringey, reflecting the community the council serves. Practitioners across the service feel well supported and valued by their managers and senior leaders. This helps them form a strong attachment to Haringey and deliver high-quality support to the borough's children and families".

8. Safeguarding and child in care trends

8.1. This section of the report sets out the data we monitor every month to assess our performance in supporting children in need, those who are on a child protection plan and those who are in our care. The data supports us in tracking our improvement and identifying our challenges for action and this is shown for the past three years.

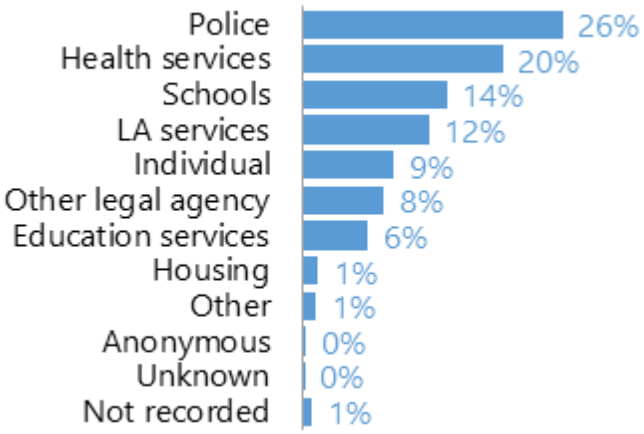
8.2. The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), which receives contacts and referrals, is our local single point of contact for anyone who is worried about a child. The service continues to effectively collaborate with key partners and has sustained the high-quality practice and performance over the year.

8.3. Our internal auditing process which remains a part of our comprehensive quality assurance framework, confirms that practice within the MASH is strong, we remain focused on continuing to strengthen practice and this means that children receive a timely and effective response.

9. Contact & Referrals to social care

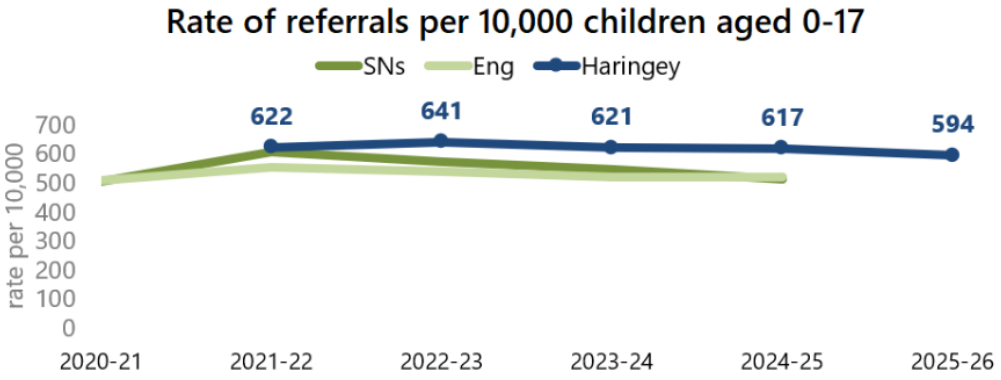
9.1. The communication of concerns from partner agencies or the public to children's social care is an important step in initiating a child protection response. Not all of these communications from partners and the public will meet the threshold for referral to assessment and result in a referral to social care. Some will be passed to the Early Help service or signposted to universal services, whilst others are simply one of our partner agencies ringing for some advice or support. These initial communications are categorised as contacts.

9.2. In the 12 months to March 2026 there were 13,214 contacts to MASH which is some 700 fewer than in the previous year. The breakdown of sources is set out below:

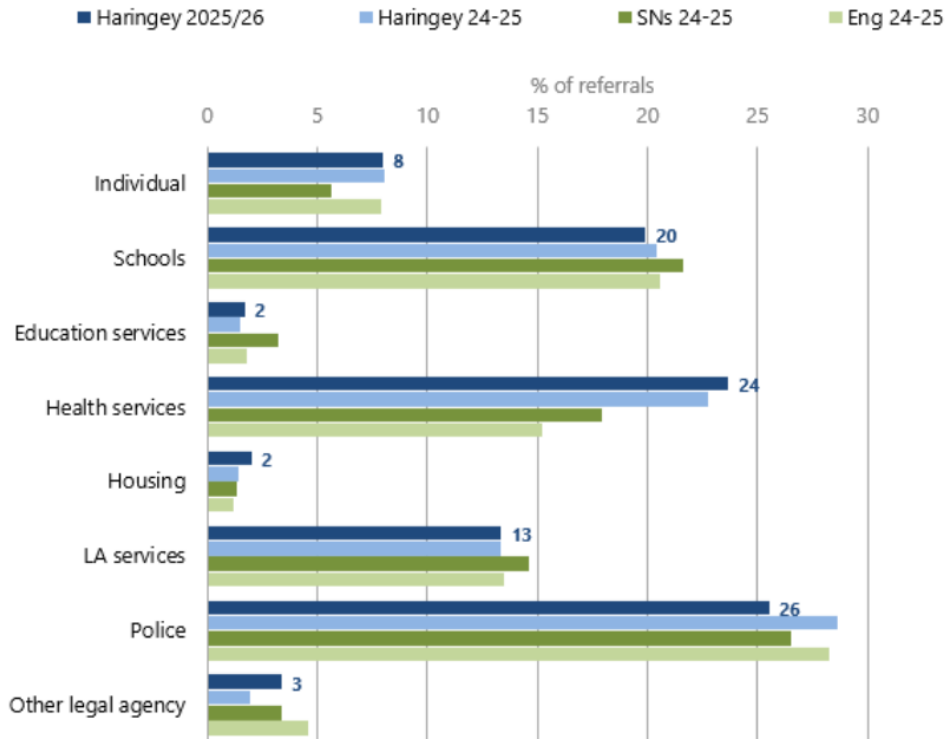


9.3. A referral is a contact that meets the threshold for services to be provided by children's social care, in respect of a child who is not currently open to the service. This means that workers across the partnership in the multi-agency assessment hub (MASH) share information and complete a risk analysis for the referral.

9.4. The number of referrals received (3,214) is similar to the past 3 years, with the rate per 1,000 population, slightly above our latest statistical neighbours.



9.5. The Police continue to be the largest source of referrals in common with our statistical neighbours and England. We have seen an increase in referrals from our colleagues in health for the second year running but the proportion from schools remains constant.



Percentage of referrals by source

9.6. Children with a disability

1. The Disabled Children's Team (DCT) continues to meet the complex and diverse nature of the range of needs experienced by children with disabilities.
2. The experience of the management team is helping to strengthen the skills, experience and expertise within the service though focus is maintained on continuing to develop and embed this across the service.
3. It is clear however that complexity of nature of cases is rising and the service saw an increase in court proceedings, impacting on timeliness and performance data. This is seen alongside an increase in children requiring on Child Protection plans, qualifying for CiN support and those being received into local authority care.
4. Regular multi-agency meetings take place with special schools and they continue to ensure the partnership approach is providing children with disabilities, robust and timely support.

9.7. SEND Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

9.7.1. At the end 2025 over 3,000 children now have active Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP), almost 100 more than in the previous year. Of the 270 new ones issued (excluding exceptional cases) 89.6% were with in the 20-week timescale. This compares with just 46.1% for all England.

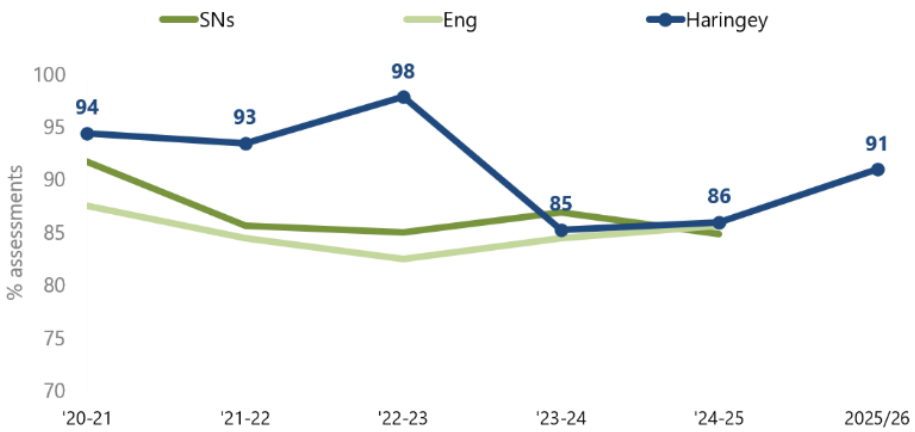
9.8. Assessments

9.8.1. A referral to social care will normally result in a decision to complete an assessment of the child's needs (which should be completed within 45 working days). In addition, if there is a concern that immediate protection may be needed as the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion with police and other partners is held immediately. At the strategy discussion it is decided whether to initiate enquires under section 47 of the Children Act 1989; which is an enquiry to decide what type of action is needed to safeguard a child and if necessary, hold an initial Child Protection conference within 15 working days initiate a Child protection Plan (CPP).

9.8.2. During 2025/26 there were almost 3,400 assessments completed at a rate of 628 per 10,000 children, down slightly from the exceptionally high previous year, 2025/26 was still the second highest rate of referrals since the pandemic.

9.8.3. The 91% of timely assessments completed within 45 working days, continues the trend of each of the past 6 years as shown in the graph below. This represents continued good performance in the completion of assessments which compares well to both statistical neighbours and England.

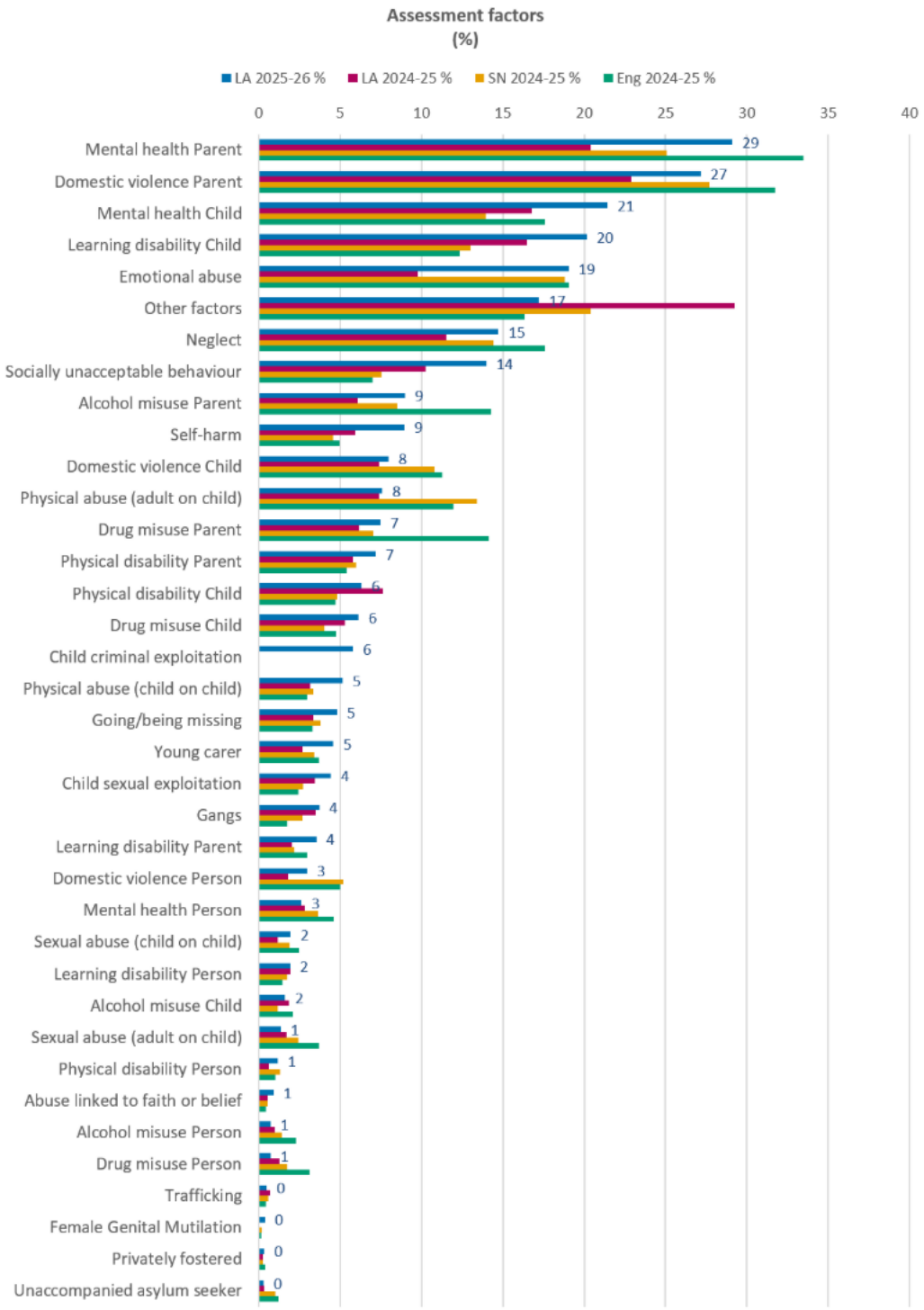
9.9. Assessments completed in 45 Working Days (%)



9.10. Factors found at the end of assessment

9.10.1. Despite an increase, Parental Domestic Abuse is now featured as second to Parental Mental Health, as the single most common factor found at the end of assessments.

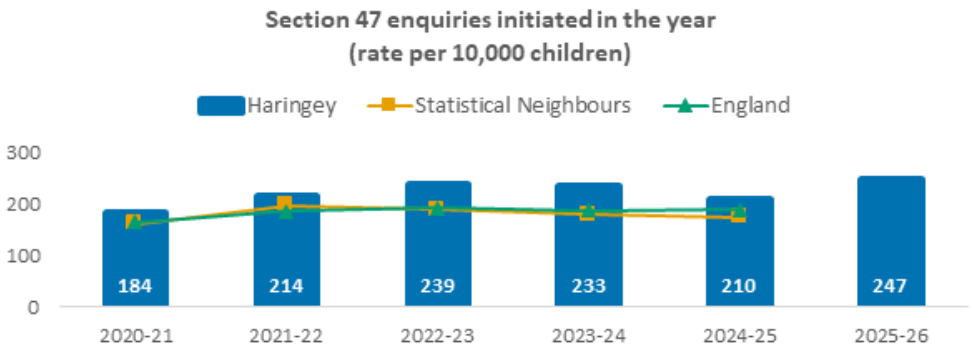
Please note multiple factors can be found in any assessment, and the category "Other factors" is usually found in addition to one of the main factors listed.



9.11. Section 47 enquiries

9.11.1. Section 47 enquiries are undertaken when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. The purpose of the enquiry is to determine whether action is required to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

9.11.2. The rate of section 47 enquiries per 10,000 children aged 0-17 increased to a rate of 247 per 10,000 children from 210 in 2024/25 our rate is still above the last published rate of 175 for statistical neighbours and the England average rate of 189.

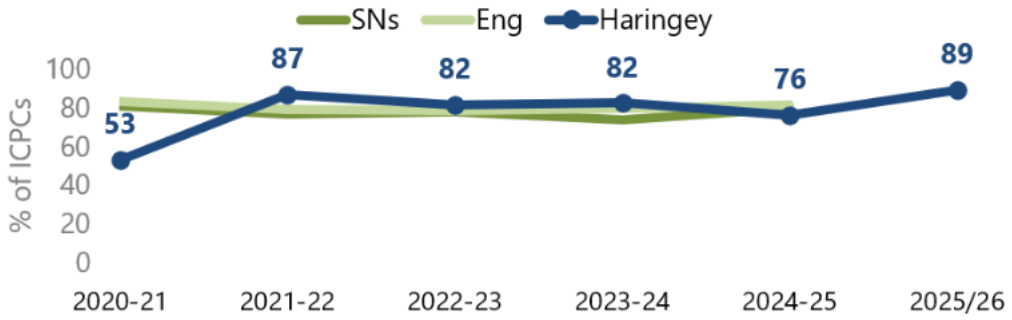


9.12. Initial Child protection conferences (ICPC)

9.12.1. Following section 47 enquiries, where needed, an initial child protection conference is held. Bringing together family members (and the child where appropriate) and all relevant information, it is the responsibility of the conference to make recommendations on how partner organisations will work together to safeguard the child, including the option of placing the child on a child protection plan.

9.12.2. In 2025/26 68% of Section 47 enquires did not require an ICPC, a total of 326 ICPCs were held, a significant increase on the 225 in 2024/25.

9.12.3. It is essential that initial child protection conferences are convened quickly. Timeliness is defined by ICPC's which take place within 15 days of the strategy discussion which triggered the Section 47 investigation, the 89% compares well with the national figure of 80%.



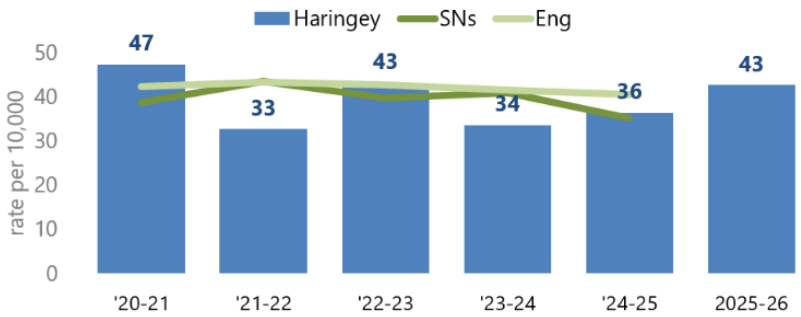
Trend of ICPC Timelines

9.13. Child Protection Plans

9.13.1. The aim of a child protection plan is to ensure the child is safe from harm and prevent further suffering and harm. The plan should promote the child's health and development and support the family and wider family members to safeguard their child, provided this is in the best interests of the child.

9.13.2. There were 229 children on a child protection plan at the end of March 2026, amounting to a rate of 43 per 10,000, which has increased but is close to latest England figure of 41.

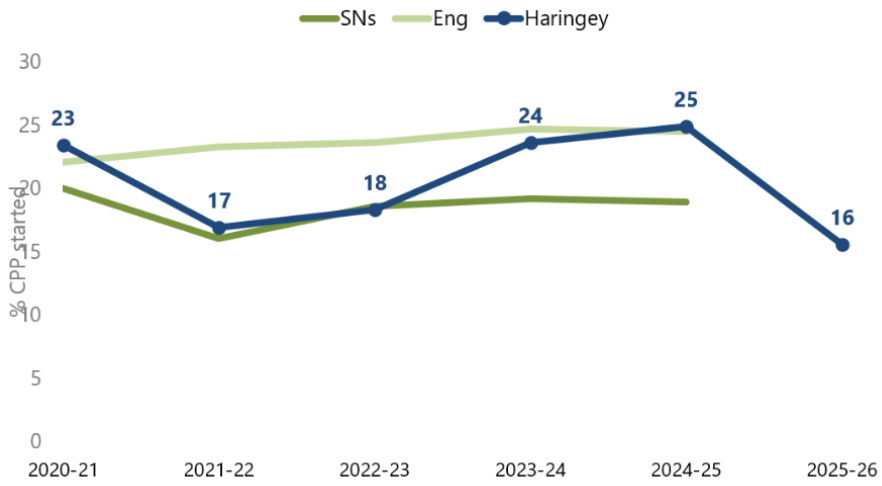
Rate of CP plan per 10,000 children



9.13.3. It is vital that children only remain subject to plans for the length of time required to bring about and demonstrate sustainable change. A simple measure for this is the rate of second and subsequent plans. If these are too high, it could be the plans have not had the desired lasting effect. If too low, it could indicate that a degree of over caution is evident. The desired percentage rate would be close to our statistical neighbours. All cases subject to subsequent plans are reviewed, to ensure that thresholds are applied appropriately and to see if there is any learning for the service in relation to early planning.

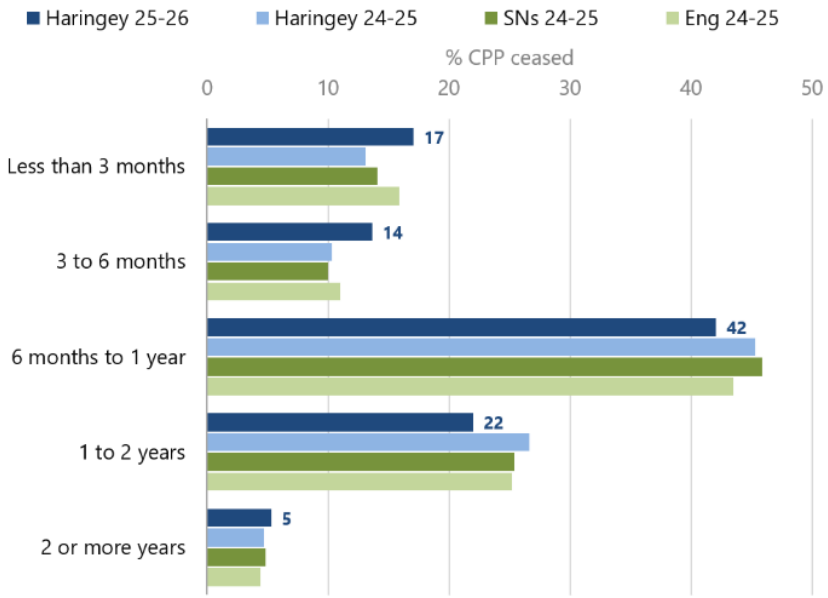
9.13.4. **Comparing re-registrations for Child Protection Plans**

During 2025/26 16% of CP Plans were re-registrations, compared with 19% of our statistical neighbours

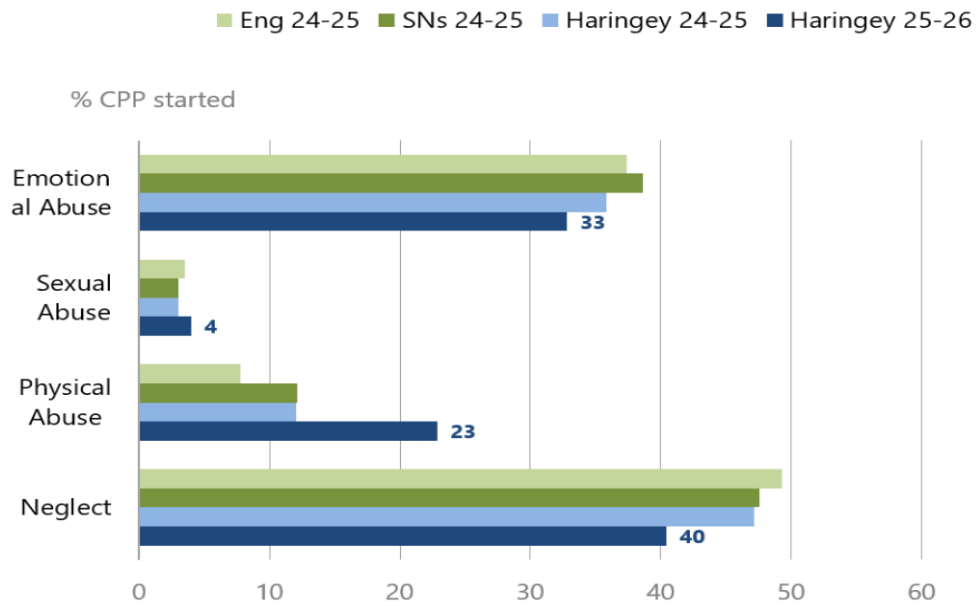


Most child protection plans cease within two years. Of the 264 plans ending during 2025/26 fourteen (5%) were open for over two years which is a similar rate to our statistical neighbours.

9.13.5. Duration of Child protection plans



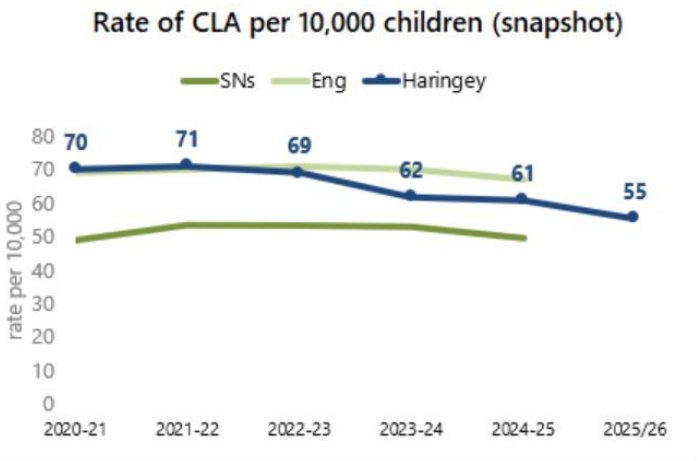
9.13.6. In common with other local authorities, the main initial reasons for children becoming subject to a child protection plan relate to emotional abuse and neglect as shown in the chart below. 2025/26 saw an increase in physical abuse as an initial category.



9.14. Children Looked After

9.14.1. A child who has been in the care of a local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a Child Looked After (CLA) also often referred to as children in care. CLA in general are either living with extended family members, foster parents, in a residential children's home or living in residential settings like schools or secure units. Children come into care for a variety of reasons, including because they are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children with no responsible adult to care for them or children's services may have intervened because it was believed that the child was at significant risk of harm. A child stops being looked after when they are adopted, are made the subject of a Special Guardianship Order, return home unless there is a Care Order in place, or turn 18. However local authorities are required to support most children who leave care at 18, until they are 25 years old.

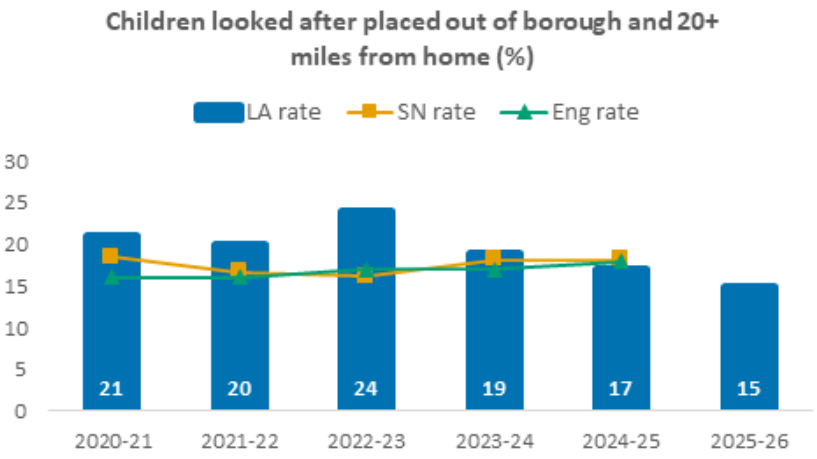
9.14.2. At the end of March 2026, 297 children were in our care (55 per 10,000 population). This is slightly fewer than in 2025



9.14.3. The table below shows the children in care by placement type at the end of March 2026. Foster placements continue to be the largest proportion of placement types with the proportion slightly higher than that of all comparator groups.

CLA at 31 March by placement	England	SNs	London	Haringey	
	2024-25	2024-25	2024-25	2024-25	2025-26
Foster placements	67%	67%	68%	72%	74%
Placed for adoption	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%
Placement with parents	6%	3%	3%	2%	0%
Supported accommodation	9%	14%	12%	10%	10%
Secure homes and children's homes	12%	10%	10%	10%	11%
Secure Children's Homes					0%
Children's Homes subject to Children's Homes Regulations				10%	10%
Other residential settings	1%	3%	2%	3%	2%
Other placements	3%	4%	2%	0%	1%

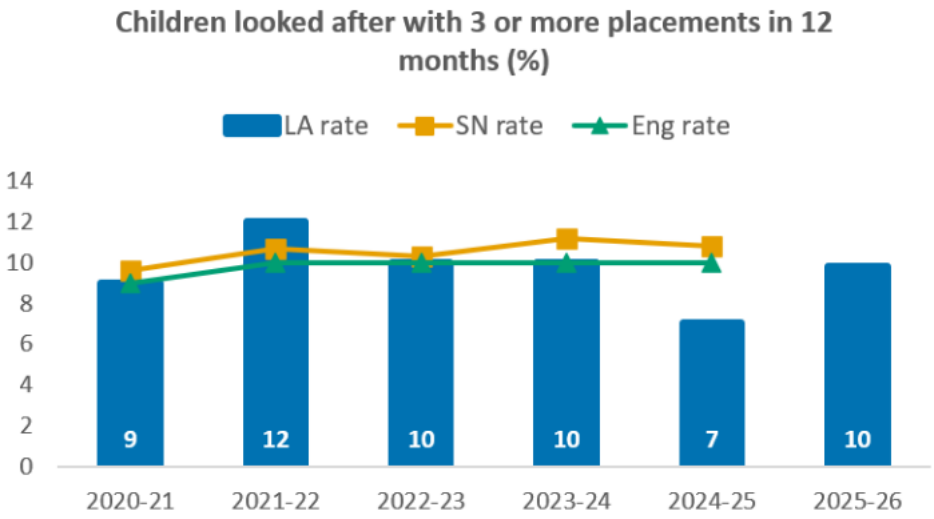
9.14.4. At the end of March 2026, 15% of children were in placements more than 20 miles from Haringey. This is lower than the previous years, and the last known data for statistical neighbours (18%). Local provision continues to be a challenge, and we continue to use our own residential provision, Haslemere, to mitigate national and local challenges. We also continue to build relationships with local providers and work with our regional and sub-regional partners to address sufficiency issues. This includes maximising the benefits of the North London in-house placement sharing arrangements across our neighbouring boroughs, for both fostering and children's homes, designed to make better use of collective in-house provision. Analysis shows that by reducing voids across both in-house fostering and in-house residential children's homes, we can keep more children closer to their family and community networks, while reducing reliance on higher-cost external placements.



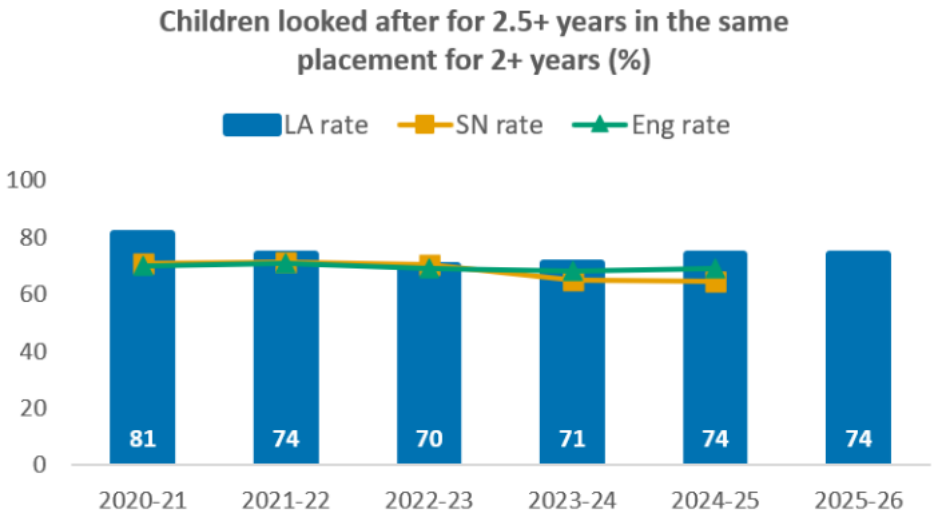
9.14.5. Placement stability is a key factor in children's wellbeing. Having the chance to settle into a foster or residential placement over a period, supports our children in developing a feeling of belonging and helps them feel secure in themselves. Stability will be achieved only by making sure that the child is in the right placement for them.

9.14.6. There are two types of placement stability that we measure – short term stability which looks at the number of placements for children in the last 12 months, and long-term stability which considers those children who have been looked after for more than 2.5 years and have been in the same placement for more than the past 2 years. It is a combination of these indicators that gives us confidence that our children in care are in a stable environment.

9.14.7. Our short-term stability performance shows that just under 10% of children in our care had three or more placements in the past 12 months. This is in line with both statistical neighbours data (10%) and the national average.



Our performance in relation to long term placement stability is good, and has been maintained at a comparatively high 74%.



9.14.8. Permanence planning is continually being monitored and strengthened, and we ensure that Independent Reviewing officers (IROs) have sufficient information to enable expedient and timely permanence planning. Our trackers are helping us monitor children who have not been matched, and we constantly check and review children's permanency plans through to permanence.

9.14.9. The data for children who go missing from care shows us that 39 (8.8%) 13% of CLA children were reported missing in the period 2025/26. This remains below our SN rate of 16%. When children do go missing from placement there is a robust and effective response from children's social care and the Police. The missing children co-ordinator tracks, and risk assesses children who go missing to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent repeat occurrences and return home interviews are routinely conducted by specialist workers.

9.15. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

9.15.1. There are two means by which UASC come to Haringey. Firstly, as spontaneous arrivals, most frequently arriving at local police stations. The second means is through the National Transfer Scheme, which aims to equitably re-distribute UASC, especially those from Kent and Croydon. In recent years, although there has been a sharp decrease in numbers, the second of these two routes has become the most prevalent.

9.15.2. At the end of March 2020 there were 48 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in care, this fell to 26 by March 2024 and was further reduced at the close of March 2026, to 15. This represents around 5% of the children in care cohort.

9.16. Adoption

9.16.1. There were 11 adoptions during 2025/26 which is in line with the last reported data from statistical neighbours, but we remain below the national average. 6 children were also granted Special Guardianship Orders giving them a permanent home.

9.16.2. Haringey and ALN (Adopt London North) have strengthened practitioner knowledge around early permanence as a placement option for children, with ALN running a number of in person and virtual training sessions for practitioners across the directorate.

9.16.3. A key priority continues to be the reduction of disparity in adoption for children of global majority heritage and improve the adoption system so that more adopters of Black heritage become applicants and choose to adopt through Adopt London.

9.17. Leaving care

9.17.1. For young people qualifying for service as Care Leavers also known as Care Experienced Young Adults, there is a requirement for Haringey to stay in touch with the young person, keep their Pathway Plans under review, continue the appointment of a Personal Adviser and provide financial assistance where the young person is employed or seeking employment to enable the young person to pursue education or training. These duties continue until the former relevant child reaches 21 or, where the child's pathway plan sets out a programme of education or training which extends beyond their 21st birthday, they continue for so long as the child pursues that programme.

9.17.2. The service has been continuing to work with the duty on local authorities to support all care leavers up to age 25 who can return to the local authority at any point after the age of 21 and request support.

9.17.3. At the end of March 2026 there were 631 care experienced young adults who were qualified for care leaver services, down from 662 in 2025.

Care Leaver Status

Eligible	~ Has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since age 14 (can be multiple periods)~ Currently looked after Age 16 or 17
Relevant	~ Age 16 or 17 ~ Has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since age 14 (can be multiple periods)~ Looked after on or after their 16th birthday ~ No longer looked after
Former Relevant	~ Aged between 18 and 25 ~ Previously an eligible or relevant child
	~ Aged between 16 and 21 (or 25 if in education) ~ Looked after on or after their 16th birthday

Qualifying	~ Not looked after for at least 13 weeks since age 14 or ~ privately fostered after the age of 16 but before the age of 18 or were looked after prior to becoming subject to a SGO"

Cohort of Care Leavers and eligibility for services

Age	Eligible	Relevant	Former Relevant	Qualifying	Other	**Total**
16	29	2	0	1	0	**32**
17	48	3	0	1	0	**52**
18	0	0	79	0	0	**79**
19	0	0	69	0	0	**69**
20	0	0	81	0	0	**81**
21	0	0	78	0	0	**78**
22	0	0	82	1	0	**83**
23	0	0	79	1	0	**80**
24	0	0	77	0	0	**77**
Total	**77**	**5**	**545**	**4**	**0**	**631**

Looking at care leavers in suitable accommodation and those in employment, education or training, Haringey has a higher percentage than both our statistical neighbours and the England rate

10. Workforce

10.1. Workforce strategy and sustainability

Haringey continues to invest in a skilled and stable workforce through the Haringey Children's Academy, bringing together recruitment, professional development and retention. Our 'grow our own' approach provides clear pathways from student and newly qualified social worker through to advanced practitioner and leadership roles. Student placements, newly qualified recruitment, the Step Up to Social Work programme and apprenticeships are complemented by internal promotion and opportunities for agency staff to move into permanent employment. Together, these approaches strengthen succession planning, management capacity and continuity of relationships for children and families.

10.2. Growing and retaining talent

During 2025/26, Children's Social Care provided 27 student social work placements, including 26 final placements. Six of the seven newly qualified social workers appointed during the year had previously completed placements or worked within Haringey, demonstrating the value of these pathways into employment. The service also supported seven Step Up to Social Work trainees and four social work apprentices. International recruitment has further strengthened the workforce, with several internationally recruited social workers

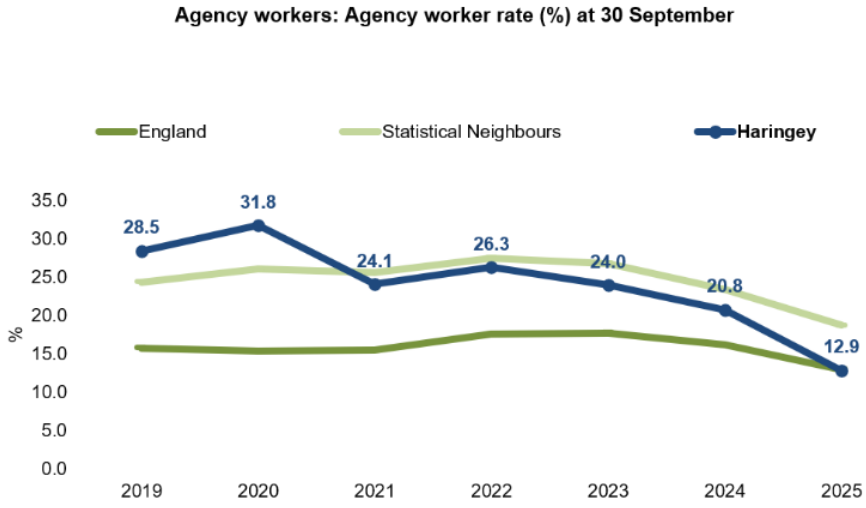
progressing into senior practitioner roles. These routes support Haringey's ambition to be an employer of choice and increase the proportion of permanent qualified social workers despite continuing national recruitment and retention challenges.

10.3. **Strengthening professional practice to improve children and families' experiences and outcomes**

Through the Children's Academy, staff at every career stage access continuing professional development informed by quality assurance activity, audit findings, practice reviews, workforce feedback and emerging safeguarding priorities. The offer includes specialist learning, reflective practice forums, management development programmes and opportunities to become practice educators, mentors and supervisors. Weekly 'Gather and Grow' sessions provide further opportunities for shared learning, professional curiosity and direct engagement with senior leaders. This investment supports practitioners to build effective relationships with children and families, analyse risk confidently and make evidence-informed decisions that improve the quality and impact of their work.

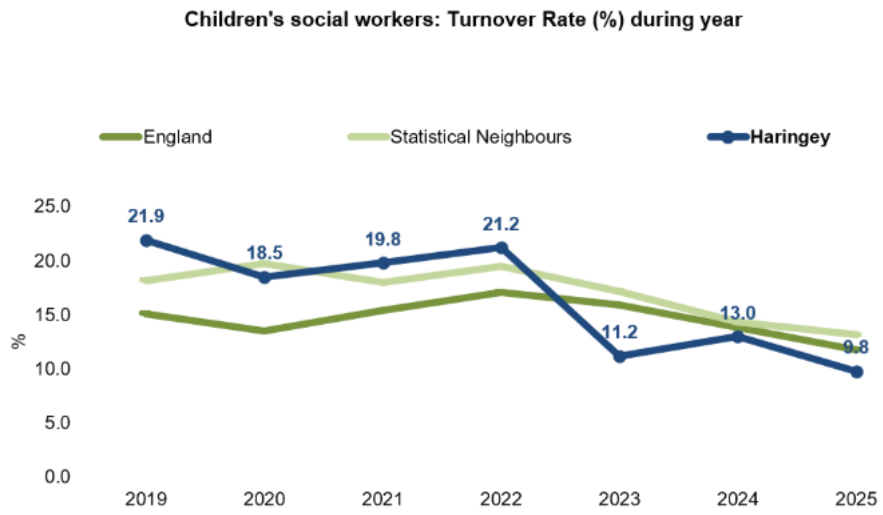
Together, this architecture strengthens professional expertise, evidence-informed decision-making and reflective practice, enabling practitioners to build effective relationships with children and families, analyse risk confidently and deliver consistently high-quality interventions. This culture of continuous learning and professional development supports effective practice and contributes to improved outcomes for children and families.

The annual national children's Social Care Workforce Census shows us that our agency rate for social workers was 21% (September 2024) which below statistical neighbours but reduced to under 13% by September 2025.



The service has reached a greater level of recruitment stability, there has been a significant focus on retention initiatives, including a contractual relationship with

Family Psychology Mutual offering reflective clinical supervision, continued access to a specialist culturally appropriate therapist to reflect the needs of our black and global majority communities, building workforce resilience in working with disproportionality. Team Managers have been supported to conduct daily team check ins which take place virtually. This has led to an improving trend in the retention of social work staff with turnover rate now 13% below our latest statistical neighbour rate of 18%.



Directors across Children's Services share responsibility for leading weekly 'Gather and Grow' sessions, providing a regular opportunity to share key messages, hear staff feedback and discuss practice. Director's Roadshows and meetings between the Corporate Director and Heads of Service provide further opportunities to understand and address organisational challenges.

Staff and partners also contribute to shaping service design and priorities. The Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) conference in June 2026, brought colleagues together to share learning and inform the next phase of Haringey's response to harm and exploitation beyond the family home.

Supporting staff wellbeing remains central to this approach. Managers have received training in risk assessment, supporting hybrid working and helping staff access the Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health. Wellbeing surveys, alongside stay and exit interviews, provide feedback to inform improvements in staff support and working conditions.

Together, these opportunities for engagement, learning and support help build a workforce that feels heard, valued and equipped to deliver effective services for children and families.