



Haringey Council

Report for:	CPAC	Item Number:	
Title:	LAC		
Report Authorised by:	Marion Wheeler		
Lead Officer:	Chris Chalmers		
Ward(s) affected:	Report for Key/Non Key Decisions:		

1. Describe the issue under consideration

This report is a review of progress made by the Children in Care Service in relation to service development including the issues previously addressed through the LAC Action Plan. The restructure of the service is now far more embedded with timeliness in care planning consistently monitored. The permanent staffing establishment has made a huge impact on progress of casework in terms of stability and building relationships with service users. The profile of Aspire is now increased with far more influence on shaping the service through young people's participation. We are listening more actively to their priorities and striving to achieve these.

The Homesafe Team (Southwark Judgement cases) has developed considerably with much stronger joint work with other services, including the beginnings of partnership work with other services to achieve early help. Activity across the service is based on more robust commissioning arrangements, for example, the SLA with Legal Services, the new Tavistock Haringey Service contract, MST (Multi Systemic Therapy) and close monitoring of placement agreements through the Placements and Resources Service.



2. Background information

2.1 Children and Young people for whom rehabilitation is the plan

A significant proportion of children who have been subject to care proceedings have returned home since the April 1st this year. 38 children have returned home to date with appropriate support packages in place. In some instances practical support has been given in the form of items of essential furniture for children's bedrooms, purchase of school uniform etc. Some families have been linked to FIP and other relevant support services. In situations where there is higher risk Supervision Orders have been made in order for the oversight to continue in a more formal way. The introduction of the MST project has given the opportunity for intensive (24/7) intervention to families and Haringey have made full use of places available on this project. Outcomes are so far very positive.

2.2 Children and young people in long term care

Independent reviewing officers and team managers have much improved oversight of long term plans for children in care. This has impacted positively on thorough review of children's progress and suitability to return home. Closer attention has been paid to looking differently at young persons' needs and the strong links that some may have with their families. There is an awareness that, whether we plan for this or not, young people may start to have more contact with their families and if this is properly planned we can help them far more positively. There are some instances where, when children are older and home circumstances have changed considerably, it is more realistic to look at their rehabilitation home to one or both parents. In a few circumstances, where long term foster placements have broken down, family members have stepped forward to offer care and have been assessed as kinship foster carers. There are six young people where Special Guardianship orders are currently being considered. Six young people have been rehabilitated home, including one case involving two siblings where the care order was rescinded, with a few more expected shortly.

2.3 Move from residential to a family placement

There is regular review of options for young people in residential care. The (draft) permanency policy emphasises that residential care is not to be accepted as a long term option for children in care. When young people have suffered repeated foster placement breakdowns and are exhibiting exceptionally challenging behaviour residential care is sometimes necessary for a limited period of time. Young people are regularly reviewed in the context of the Resources Panel and move on plans are made at the earliest suitable opportunity.



2.4 Semi independent provision

For some young people of 16+ there has been a measure of success in moving them to semi independent placements. They have actually benefited from fewer constrictions as long as there has been effective key work support and consistent social work support. The possibility for those of 17 and a half years old to start bidding for permanent accommodation and hopefully to move to their own flats at 18, without having to move between different temporary housing has lent stability to the later stages of the care experience for looked after children.

Six young people have moved from residential care to semi independent so far this year and 13 have moved from foster care to semi-independent. This type of accommodation presents more obstacles for young people who have a greater level of vulnerability. The overview is that there are less young people moving to semi independent as a greater number are remaining in foster care. This is obviously positive in terms of their placements being more settled but also indicates that young people requiring semi independent accommodation now have more complex needs than previously. The other factor in this reduction is that we have a lower number of unaccompanied minors. The completion of our training house (with three places) provides more intensive support to prepare young people to move on and take up their own Council tenancies. We hope that this will be the first of several such properties.

2.5 Transition at 18

This is referred to in some detail in the Transitions and Leaving Care report being presented on 4 December. We have established more robust advance planning for transition at age 18. 39 have turned 18 so far this year with a further 21 becoming 18 before the end of the year.

2.6 Special guardianship and adoption orders

Permanency planning has been strengthened with the roll out of workshops on permanency planning and a permanency policy is now drafted and ready for sign off. There is far more scrutiny of timescales in the achievement of legal permanency for children in care. There is much more effective use of the monthly tracking meetings chaired by Heads of Service across the Permanency Team and Children in Care Service. We have 18 SGOs and 9 adoption orders to date as an outcome of care proceedings. The Court Team anticipate at least five further SGOs this financial year with a further six adoption orders. The target for 2012 is 30 permanent orders. We should therefore be successful in achieving at least 38 SG and adoption orders by March 31st 2013. In addition we have a total of 23 children placed in adoptive placements. A number of these are very recent placements and will therefore not result in adoption orders before March 31st 2013.



Haringey Council

During 2013 we will commence the tri-borough court project, working in partnership with Barnet, Enfield and Barnet Court. Our key objective in this piece of work is to reduce length of care proceedings (with good quality outcomes) to reflect the new care proceedings target timescale of 26 weeks in accordance with the recent family justice reform. This project will underpin work already started with regard to achieving timely adoptions for LAC with avoidance of delay being pivotal.

3. Conclusion

The Children in Care Service has put a range of initiatives into place to safely reduce numbers of looked after children. For those in longer term care the far more stable staff group, development of the management team and continual thorough review of care plans has added impetus to the planning for all children. Key objectives referred to in this report are ongoing, in particular the emphasis on participation of young people themselves, the tri borough court project and drive to achieve legal permanency through adoption and special guardianships.