



Report for:	Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee 29 April 2013	Item Number:	
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Title:	Corporate Parenting Performance Assessment - Performance for the year to February 2013
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Ward(s) affected: All	Report for Key/Non Key Decision: N/A
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1. Introduction

This report sets out performance data and trends for an agreed set of measures relating to Looked After Children. Section 2 provides an overall assessment of performance in the service and performance highlights. Appendix 1 provides a series of tables and graphs for each of these measures, grouped by topic, showing monthly data, performance against target, long term trends and benchmarking where applicable. It also contains performance and service comments for each area to provide context.

2. Performance Highlights

- The rate of **children in care** continues to decrease, 530 children on the last day of February or 92 per 10,000 population, which remains higher than the level in similar boroughs but a significant reduction on this point last year (rate 101).
- There have been 12 **adoptions** in the year to February, 14 as at 27 March; the target set for adoptions is 15 and was not achieved. There have been 27 **special guardianship orders** in the year to February and 31 SGOs at the end of March giving us a total of 45 legally permanent orders this year.
- In the year to date, **children waited an average of 694 days from becoming looked after to being placed for adoption**. This is higher than the 639 day national threshold but an improvement over Haringey's three year average for 2009/12 (749).
- The proportion of **children placed in Haringey** is 26% and 74% are placed outside Haringey. 80% were placed within 20 miles of Haringey.
- 15 children were **missing from care** during the month of February including 2 who remained missing at the end of the month.



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- The **number of children in care** is reducing steadily, 530 in February from 573 at the end of March 2012. The 530 includes 27 unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This equates to a rate of 92 per 10,000 population, a significant reduction compared to this time last year (101). Haringey's rate remains significantly higher than the statistical neighbour average (74 as at March 2012). In the year to January 170 children have become looked after and 215 have ceased to be looked after meaning that the cohort has decreased by 45 children in the year to date. The numbers and rate of children in care continue to be monitored to ensure that numbers are reduced appropriately and children remain safeguarded at home.
- In terms of **children coming into care** we have three areas of pressure, unaccompanied minors (at the rate of almost two young people a month on average), the Youth Detention placements which then count as looked after children (though of the five so far this month, only one young person will remain in care) and several young people who have been accommodated after assessment under the Southwark judgment. The UASCs are mainly young Albanians allocated to us on the Croydon Rota.
- Of the **children becoming looked after** in February 7 children (58%) were **previously subject to a child protection plan** (7 out of 12). A larger proportion than last year, 40% (59 out of 147) in the year to date compared to 23% (59 out of 257) in 2011/12.
- The proportion of **children placed in Haringey** is 26% and 74% are **placed outside Haringey** as at February 2013. 80% were **placed within 20 miles** of Haringey. There is great emphasis on placing children closer to Haringey where at all possible. The placements service is working to acquire a higher proportion of placements in borough from independent providers, both for foster care and residential placements.
- **Foster care** (in house) **placements** including those **placed for adoption** are showing a reducing trend (from 202 in April to 192 in February). An external review of Haringey Fostering Services is being commissioned to help us understand the trend and take appropriate action.
- As at February 2013 of all the looked after children excluding unaccompanied minors, 82.7% were in **foster care**, 16.1% were in **residential care** and 1.2% were either **placed at home or missing from care**.
- The percentage of up to date **children in care visits** continues to exceed the 95% target.
- 15 children were **missing from care** during the month of February, 2 remained missing at the end of the month. The number of missing children has reduced and some regular absconders have settled better in their placements. We have been making full use of the return to care interviews and these have provided helpful feedback. The Youth Service are now introducing review meetings for young people to



take place a month after the original missing interview. These should assist in tracking progress and picking up any new issues.

- Some work with the Police and children's homes to assess how effective our processes are and the levels of risk in tracking these children is planned with an overview of findings to be reported to the Child Sexual Exploitation Group. The next stage is bringing together feedback from interviews to inform practice with those young people who go missing. There are differences in the definitions of 'missing from care' between DfE and the police. This means data between the two are not directly comparable. DfE has been working with a cross government/agency group to investigate how to improve the robustness and consistency of the data collected on missing children. This included agreeing a new definition of missing from care which DfE are proposing to use in the future:
 - Missing - Any missing looked after child up to the age of 18 whose whereabouts are unknown (whatever the circumstances of their disappearance);
 - Absent - Any missing looked after child up to the age of 18 whose whereabouts are known (but they are missing from their placement) and it is considered that they may not be safe.
- The new categories move away from the 24 hour rule for missing from care. This should align our data more closely with the police. DfE will be looking to make the changes from the start of the 2014-15 year. The changes will be introduced in the form of a new 'missing from care' module within the 903 collection.
- There has been some criticism about the two-tier definition and police chiefs have been accused of putting vulnerable children at risk of sex abuse whilst chief constables say that the new definition will give better protection to children and vulnerable adults. Until now all missing person calls were treated the same, with response officers called out to investigate until the person was located. Police call handlers will now put calls into one of two categories: missing or absent. The new definition of "**missing**" will be: "**Not at the place they are expected to be, but the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests they may be subject of a crime or at risk of harm to themselves or others.**" The definition of "**absent**" will be: "**Not at a place where they are expected or required to be.**" Full investigations will still be launched into "missing" cases, but specialist officers will record and monitor only those who regularly go "absent" and explore the reasons why. From next month the new approach will be applied by all police forces to the 327,000 people reported missing each year, two-thirds of whom are children. The new policy will be introduced nationally in April after being piloted in three police forces as part of the joint Home Office and Acpo Reducing Bureaucracy programme. In London it will be introduced across the whole of the MET with a uniform approach.
- At the end of February 83% of **children in care cases** were **reviewed within required timescales**. Whilst below target this is a significant improvement on levels achieved in 2011/12 and tracking where reviews have been missed is in place with



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IROs monitoring on a monthly basis. The target for children in care reviews in timescale is 92% for 2012/13. All Looked After Children have an IRO allocated to them at the point of referral to the service, they are responsible for scheduling reviews according to the timescales laid down in the legislation. All of the cases where the Review was reported as being held late at some point in the year have been looked at and it can be confirmed that the review has now taken place. Twenty three of the cases became out of time scale in the early part of the year due to the sickness of the IRO allocated, the need to maintain consistency in the reviewing arrangements was deemed paramount. There is an increasing number of Kinship Placements that have been referred late to the service and this will need to be rectified.

- Indicators around **stability of placements** are in line with statistical neighbours. The proportion with 3 or more placements is at 7.9% and the number of children with 2 placements is also tracked and appears to be increasing (97 as at February or 18.3%).
- 69% of **children under 16 who have been in care for 2.5 years have been in the same placement for at least 2 years** similar to statistical neighbour average and close to the 72% target. There have been a few placement disruptions this month for difficult reasons but some of the other reasons for moves are much more positive. For example, moves to a long term foster placement or a pre adoptive placement. A few older young people have moved to accommodation that will better meet their transitions needs when they become 18.
- Performance on **care leavers in suitable accommodation** is below the target of 95% but monthly numbers are small and should be interpreted with care. 77% of the cohort in the year so far was in suitable accommodation (46 out of 60). In the 903 return (Children Looked After) 2011/12 92% of Haringey's care leavers were in suitable accommodation, higher than the England figure of 88% (2011/12).
- **Care leavers in education, training and employment (ETE)** is below target. 64% of Haringey care leavers were in ETE in 2011/12 and 60% (36 out of 60) were in ETE this year. This is in line with our statistical neighbours and at a similar level to that reported in 2011/12. Whilst all 5 of the young people in February's cohort were in suitable accommodation & ETE, 1 young person (studying at university) has failed to engage with repeated attempts to contact him and had to be excluded as we were not in touch within the required timeframe (3 months before or 1 month after their 19th birthday).
- There have been 12 **adoptions** in the year to February, 2 in February and 14 as at the 27th March; the end of year target is 15 and we did not achieve it despite the fact that a further 7 applications were lodged with the courts. We should have achieved 16 but there was a last minute application from the birth parent of two children, who had hearing dates booked, which meant that those final hearing dates could not proceed as planned. The matter will be dealt with but there is legal process to complete before the final orders can be achieved. Targeted work is being undertaken by both the Adoption and Children in Care Service to minimise delay. There have been 27 **special guardianship orders** (SGO) in the year to February, 31 as at 27th March or 34 if we



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include 3 children who went onto residency orders after ceasing to be looked after so who are classed as children in need and not looked after children. This compares with 14 adoptions and 13 SGOs (27 legally permanent orders) at this time last year and indeed at the end of year 2011/12 and with 45 legally permanent orders in 2012/13.

- The 903 comparative data for 2011/12 showed that of the children who ceased to be looked after in the year 5% were adopted, this compares to 8% in London and 9% in our comparator authorities, the highest being Hackney at 17%. Of the 197 children that have ceased to be looked after this year 35 (17.8%) have moved on to a legally permanent placement of which 5% have been adopted. We have an unprecedented number of children now placed in pre adoptive placements awaiting orders. This will really boost potential for adoption orders during 2013-14 and secures the permanency plans for around 30 children in care. The Council has undertaken a range of activities to improve its performance on adoption and the Permanency Policy was put to Cabinet at the end of March 2013.

3. Appendices

- Appendix 1: Performance Analysis and Benchmarking