



Haringey Council

Report for:	Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee 3 October 2013	Item Number:	1
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Title:	Corporate Parenting Performance Assessment - Performance for the year to July 2013/14
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Lead Officer:	Margaret Gallagher
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Ward(s) affected: All	Report for Key/Non Key Decision: NA
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1. Introduction

1.1. 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

- 524 **children were in care** on the last day of July or 92 per 10,000 population, which remains higher than the level in similar boroughs although a significant reduction on this point last year (rate 95).
- There have been 26 **adoptions** and **special guardianship orders** in the year to July 2013 putting us on track to deliver our targets for 2013/14.
- In Quarter 1 13/14, **children waited an average of 1,069 days from becoming looked after to being placed for adoption**. This is higher than the 639 day national threshold but is skewed by 2 children placed for adoption in June outside the threshold, 1 child (14 years old) placed in 3,912 days. If these children were excluded the average days would be below the threshold and an improvement over previous periods at 423 days.
- The percentage of **children placed 20 miles or more from Haringey** is 18.8%, the aim is to reduce this to 16% in 2013/14.



- 6 children were **missing from care** during the month of July
- Performance on **care leavers in suitable accommodation and in education, employment and training** is below target. We are now monitoring outcomes for care leavers on their 20th and 21st birthday and although numbers are relatively small and in some cases there are justifiable reasons, performance in 2013/14 indicates a downward trend and is below last reported levels achieved by our statistical neighbours.
- Indicators around **stability of placements for looked after children** are in line with statistical neighbours and targets.

- 2.1. The number of **children in care** has reduced steadily, 524 children as at the end of July from 540 at the end of March, a reduction of 16 children. The 524 includes 28 **unaccompanied asylum seeking children**. This equates to a rate of 92 per 10,000 population, a significant reduction compared to this time last year (95). Haringey's rate remains significantly higher than the statistical neighbour average (74 as at March 2012). Our target is to reach an equivalent rate to that of statistical neighbours rated good or outstanding by April 2015.
- 2.2. In the year to July, 59 children have **become looked after**. Some of the children brought into care as an interim protective strategy have been rehabilitated home after work has been done to manage risk factors. Other children have been placed in adoptive families and some will be subject to a further period of assessment. There has been a slight reduction in the number of young people presenting as UASC and robust approaches have been taken where age assessments are queried.
- 2.3. There are still examples of children and young people being brought into care as a risk management strategy who may be better managed through Child Protection processes. Strengthening the partnership risk management at 'edge of care' cases will enable us to more effectively balance risks and needs without resorting to short term protective care admissions. A target based on a staged reduction to the looked after rate of our good or outstanding statistical neighbours means we plan a profiled reduction to approximately 450 by March 2014. This will be achieved by swifter decision making and shortening the time children spend in care, improving our permanency work and offering a wider range of early help services designed to support children safely in their homes.
- 2.4. 7 young people came into care on a legal status of remand which is the same level as reported in the same period last year. Remand into LA care remains a small but constant cohort of young people in care. These usually occur when family are not willing to accept the young person back or where the court is not satisfied that parental control and oversight will modify the young person's criminal behaviours. Most young people in this category have gang affiliations and are at additional potential risk in home areas, but their offences are not such that they are remanded in custody. The numbers and rate of children in care continue to be monitored to ensure that numbers are reduced appropriately and children can remain safeguarded at home.



- 2.5. Of the children becoming looked after, 16 children out of 41 (39%) were previously subject to a child protection plan, as at the end of July. This is around the same proportion as last year, 39% (66 out of 170 children) but higher than the 2011/12 level of 23% (59 out of 257 children). This figure reinforces our view that a well managed risk assessment and child protection response coupled with a solid support package could avoid some admissions into care. The June figure suggests that 70% of children accommodated are new referrals. We will undertake to do an in depth analysis to gain a clearer picture of contact with services prior to accommodation, and whether other pathways might be used, it is also likely that a number of children in this cohort will be newly arrived in borough.
- 2.6. The service is beginning to make good progress in placing looked after children closer to home and within the Borough boundaries. The target set was to place not more than 16% of looked after children outside Haringey. 18.8% of **looked after children were placed over 20 miles outside Haringey** as at the end of July 2013. However, the service has a commitment to only placing children in outstanding or good placements, so, if high quality placements are unavailable within Borough, then looked after children have to be placed outside the Borough boundary. This will be resolved with the development of a commissioning function within Children's Services.
- 2.7. The placements service is working to acquire a higher proportion of placements in borough from independent providers, both for foster care and residential placements. A review of Haringey fostering service has just been completed and once its recommendations have been considered and implemented, this should further reduce the need to place outside the Borough. Some young people, because of specific needs are placed in therapeutic or other specialist residential units which are outside the 20 mile radius. Similarly a number of young people have been placed outside London to distance them from gang activities and networks.
- 2.8. There has been a consistent drive recently to place young people with carers within the 20 mile radius and to return young people to within that catchment. The number in residential care, overall, has reduced and we are working to maintain this. This is in keeping with our Permanency policy which aims to ensure the right to family life for all of our children.
- 2.9. As at June 2013 of all the looked after children, excluding unaccompanied minors, 85.7% were in **foster care** compared with 81.3% in June 2012, 13.3% were in **residential care** down from 16.3% at this point last year and 16.1% at the end of March 2013. The remaining 1.4% were either **placed at home or missing from care** down on the 1.9% at the same point last year.
- 2.10. Six children were **missing from care** during the month of July, these are those who have been missing for more than 24 hours and have been recorded as missing. Numbers missing have reduced from an average monthly level of 15 for



the past year or so. Overall missing from care numbers are steady with concentration being on those who are 14 plus in age.. Overall the oversight of cases where young people are missing has been improved with clear follow up when young people return to their placements and an opportunity for them to speak to someone independently about what isn't working for them in their placement. The Lead Member and DCS are briefed on all cases of missing LAC at their weekly meeting to indicate the priority to be given to this vulnerable group.

- 2.11. There were 41 children (25 families) where **care proceedings were initiated** in the year to July, these numbers remain below numbers reported for the same period last year and are closely monitored. The majority of care proceedings are still initiated in an emergency situation and in our 'frontline' teams. The introduction of the new court manager role as part of the North London Tri Borough Care Proceedings Pilot will increasingly have impact and ensure that proceedings are only issued in circumstances where the child is likely to need a permanence plan and that pre proceedings work to engage parents is done beforehand.
- 2.12. The introduction of the 'linking' meetings has led to permanent placements being identified for children at an earlier stage. This, coupled with dedicated posts for family finding, will drive further performance improvements. *We have an overall target to reduce the length of care proceedings which*, in turn, will impact on reducing the number of days children are in care before being placed for adoption. Court authority to place for adoption will be acquired more speedily and finding a family will therefore be timelier.
- 2.13. For 2013/14 we will be reporting on the number of **care proceedings concluded within 26 weeks**. Systems have been put in place with tracking commencing from 1 June. A quarterly report will be available in October covering the period June to August and will provide an indication of the current proportion of cases which are concluded in 26 weeks. Cafcass data for Quarter 4 2012/13 shows Haringey's care application duration is at 71 weeks against a national average of 42 weeks, this unsatisfactory performance is partly attributable to the backlog of cases at the Principal Registry but also partly due to our need to improve and streamline our assessment and planning in proceedings work. This is a clear area for improvement and will therefore be brought regularly to the LMCS and DCS meeting at regular intervals.
- 2.14. At the end of July 95.8% of **children in care cases** were **reviewed within required timescales** exceeding the 92% target and a significant improvement on levels achieved in 2011/12 and 2012/13. Tracking where reviews are 'at risk' will be put in place and assessed for immediate action to avert becoming out of time.
- 2.15. Indicators around **stability of placements** are in line with statistical neighbours and targets. The proportion with **3 or more placements** is at 9.5% (50 out of 529 children). Stability of placements is positively affected by the stability of the staff group in maintaining relationships with children and attention to dealing promptly with issues that arise for young people. Opportunities to succeed in



education and enjoy fulfilling leisure activities are enhanced by the continuity such placements afford.

- 2.16. 73.2% (153 out of 209) 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. Figures remain positive with a good number of moves being made for transfer into permanent placements.
- 2.17. Performance on **care leavers in suitable accommodation** is below the target of 90% but monthly numbers are small and should be interpreted with caution. 70% (14 out of 20) of the 19 year old cohort in the year to July were in suitable accommodation. 70% of the 20 year old cohort and 64.3% of 21 year old cohort were in suitable accommodation. In June there were six care leavers aged 19, two of these young people have severe disabilities and live in supported accommodation. The four who were known to the Young Adults Service are all in suitable accommodation. 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) but this reduced to 79% in 2012/13. There is a new requirement to monitor outcomes for care leavers at their 20th and 21st birthday and we will be reporting progress on this throughout the year.
- 2.18. **Care leavers in education, training and employment (ETE)** is also below target. 64% of Haringey care leavers were in ETE in 2011/12 and 63% (41 out of 65) were in ETE in 2012/13. In the year to July 40% (8 out of 20) of the 19 year old cohort were in ETE. There were six care leavers aged 19 in June. Two of these young people cannot work due to severe disability. The other four were in ETE. We were not in touch with 2 young people in the required timeframe, both are in ETE but cannot be counted. The remaining care leavers include 2 that we are not in touch with, young people with mental health and or drug usage, a non engager with offending activity and 1 young person has a level 2 business plan who plans to go onto level 3 but is not currently in ETE.
- 2.19. 60% of the 20 year old cohort (12 out of 20) were in education, employment or training, 1 young person was in prison and 42.9% (6 out of 14) of the 21 year old cohort were in ETE. The current level of performance for 19 year olds is below that of our statistical neighbours but as stated above there are often reasons associated with the ETE status of these young people and contact must be established within four months of leaving care or they cannot be counted as in EET or suitable accommodation.
- 2.20. There have been 16 **adoptions** and 10 **Special Guardianship Orders** in the year to July. There are a further 6 adoption orders expected in August and we are maintaining a good rate of orders indicating that the annual target will be met in the first half of the financial year. The number of special guardianship orders is reduced from last year but these placements under special guardianship continue to be made at a steady pace and a further 12 assessments were being undertaken



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in August. Targets have been set at 20 adoptions and 25 special guardianship orders in 2013/14 and we are on track to exceed these.

2.21. The Council has been highlighted as a top performer in the **North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium** after almost trebling its number of adoptive parents being successfully assessed, as well as increasing the number of children placed with approved adopter families.

2.22. Good progress has been made on both the volume of placement orders and the timeliness of placements. There were 2 adoptions in June where both children were placed for adoption outside the threshold and this has affected the average days indicator. For one child aged 14 yrs old, this was a good outcome as he was finally adopted by his long term foster carers in 3,912 days. Another child was also adopted outside the threshold but having lived with foster carers for a significant amount of time before being placed for adoption. A separate indicator has been introduced on the government adoption scorecard which excludes time spent in foster care and will give a more accurate reflection of average days from a child becoming looked after to being placed for adoption. The adoption scorecard which shows progress against the key adoption measures has been updated for Quarter 1 and is attached at Appendix 2.

2.23. Based on only the 8 children who were adopted up to Quarter 1 (this is what is reported in the adoption scorecard) and adjusted for the days where the 2 children were with their long standing foster carers, the average days from becoming looked after to being placed for adoption reduces to 423 days, a significant reduction. The figure including these 2 children is 1,069 days for Quarter 1. We will report on both these measures going forward.

2.24. 9 of the 16 children adopted to date were placed within 12 months and 15 out of 37 children were placed for adoption within 21 months of becoming looked after in under the 639 threshold number of days. There is improvement in both the average number of days from coming into care to court permission to place and court permission to place to placed for adoption. Management scrutiny, improved staff engagement and rigorous tracking have lead to improved performance.

3. Appendices

- Appendix 1: Performance Analysis and Benchmarking July 2013
- Appendix 2: Adoption Scorecard Quarter 1