

London Borough of Haringey

Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers

and

Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board¹

Inspection date: 20 May 2014 – 11 June 2014

Report published: 18 July 2014

The overall judgement is **requires improvement**

There are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. However, the authority is not yet delivering good protection and help and care for children, young people and families.

It is Ofsted's expectation that, as a minimum, all children and young people receive good help, care and protection.

1. Children who need help and protection		Requires improvement
2. Children looked after and achieving permanence		Requires improvement
	2.1 Adoption performance	Requires improvement
	2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers	Requires improvement
3. Leadership, management and governance		Requires improvement

The effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is **requires improvement**

The LSCB is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of good.

¹ Ofsted produces this report under its power to combine reports in accordance with section 152 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This report includes the report of the inspection of local authority functions carried out under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the report of the review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board carried out under the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Review) Regulations 2013.

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Section 1: the local authority

Summary of key findings

This local authority requires improvement and is not yet good because

1. Haringey does not yet have a comprehensive and co-ordinated early help offer that meets the needs of children, young people and their families. The number of families receiving early help via the common assessment framework has remained low for the last three years.
2. Strategy discussions within the First Response team do not routinely involve agencies other than children's social care services and the police.
3. Although children's social care services have significantly improved the number of initial child protection conferences held within 15 working days of the decision to undertake a child protection investigation, performance is below expectations, resulting in some children not receiving co-ordinated help and support via a child protection plan as quickly as they should.
4. Some children who are referred to children's social care services where concerns relate to chronic neglect may not always receive timely or thorough assessments; this leads to delays in receiving a service and in fully exploring risks and needs.
5. The sufficiency and quality of the in-house fostering service provision are under-developed. Foster carers are not adequately supported through training and by their supervising social workers, so they do not have the necessary skills to deal with the challenging behaviours and complex needs of some looked after children and young people.
6. There is insufficient understanding of the impact of risky behaviour in assessments and plans for older looked after children. Their vulnerability and susceptibility to involvement in gangs, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and offending behaviour, and the subsequent impact on their life chances, are not always fully explored.
7. Although timescales for placing children for adoption have improved, the authority currently takes an average of 39 weeks to match a child to an adoptive family, following the making of a Placement Order. This is outside the 26 week statutory timescale.
8. Long term planning arrangements for some children are under-developed. This means that some children will experience more placements, because opportunities are missed to place them early with the foster families that will go on to adopt them. For others, suitable contingency plans are not in place, so they could experience delay or an unnecessary additional move.

9. Insufficient priority is given to life story work to support children who are subject to adoption. Some children have important gaps in their knowledge about their past, leading to difficulties in developing their sense of identity and in their emotional and behavioural development.
10. Some care leavers are not aware of their entitlements to financial support, or how to access the leaving care grant. Care leavers have very limited choice of supplier when making use of their grant to set up home. All care leavers have a pathway plan, but the quality of these is variable. The plans are not specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited (SMART), and are not used effectively to take account of young people's aspirations or to shape and map out their future.
11. Some aspects of previously good performance have not been sustained. For example, the proportion of care leavers in education, training and employment has deteriorated from 63% in March 2013 to 47% in March 2014.

The local authority has the following strengths

12. Haringey is making progress in the delivery of its children's social care services. The senior leadership team has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and is clear about its priorities.
13. Referral rates have steadily reduced over the last four years, from a very high rate in 2009–10. The rates of children subject to a child protection plan and the number of children entering the looked after care system have stabilised and numbers are now beginning to reduce safely. The majority of casework seen by inspectors was of good quality.
14. The timeliness and quality of assessments are improving and this is leading to earlier and more effective interventions and to improving outcomes for children, young people and families.
15. The voice of the child is clearly evident in the majority of case recording and assessments. This is supported by the structure of a single assessment report which is enabling social workers to focus more sharply on the presenting needs of children and to shape plans and interventions to safely reduce risk.
16. Swift action is taken when child protection concerns are identified. The screening team and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) arrangements promote good information sharing to inform effective investigations and ensure that the most vulnerable children who need protection are safeguarded in a timely way. In most cases seen by inspectors, parental consent was obtained prior to information sharing if appropriate.

17. Good quality pre-proceedings work and the effective use of the Public Law Outline are ensuring that children remain with their families whenever possible and that they do not enter the care system unnecessarily.
18. Most looked after children have sustained and meaningful relationships with their social workers, who know them well; this is leading to improvements in the quality of recent assessments and plans.
19. Ensuring good educational outcomes for looked after children is a strong feature of the looked after children service. Children who are looked after do well in their education at all key stages. A good proportion remain in education post-16 and good support is provided for young people who aspire to higher education.
20. Adoption performance is improving from a low base. The capacity of the service has been increased, and better targeting and matching are leading to more children achieving permanence and leaving care through this route.
21. Overall, permanence arrangements for children are improving; this includes good use of Special Guardianship Orders and long term foster care.
22. Social workers provide good support for prospective adopters throughout the adoption process, from the initial enquiry to post-adoption support.
23. Aspirations and support for care leavers into higher education are strong features of the service. Currently 65 care leavers are at university and 106 are in further education. Young people are encouraged to take up places at college and university, and they are supported effectively while they are there.
24. All care leavers have a named personal adviser who offers them support on housing, education, independent living skills and employment to guide them into adulthood.
25. Although performance on the rate of young people living in suitable accommodation has declined this year from 79% in March 2013 to 74% in March 2014, there is a good and increasing range of housing options available. This is underpinned by strong partnership work to ensure that care leavers know and understand the importance of maintaining their tenancy. No young person is currently placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.

What does the local authority need to improve?

Areas for improvement

26. Accelerate plans to provide a comprehensive and well coordinated multi-agency early help offer which builds on the principles of integrated working. This should include shared commissioning arrangements which maximise resources, so that the needs of children and young people across the borough are met.
27. Ensure that strategy discussions include all relevant agencies.
28. Ensure that all children in need receive a timely assessment, and the support that they need at an early stage to safely reduce risk.
29. Improve the quality of assessments for children who are referred to children's social care where concerns relate to chronic neglect, so that they fully consider historical concerns, particularly where these include concerns relating to domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse and adult mental ill health.
30. Ensure that adequate steps are taken to promote awareness of privately fostered children in the borough, and that children who are privately fostered receive a timely, high quality assessment and the support that they need.
31. Consolidate recent improvements made in the number of timely completions of initial child protection conferences held within 15 working days, so that children do not experience delay in receiving co-ordinated support to address risk and needs through the use of a child protection plan.
32. Ensure that all agencies know and understand the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer, and know what to do if they have any concerns.
33. Ensure that sufficient in-house and local foster carers are recruited, so that more looked after children and young people can live nearer to their communities, if appropriate.
34. Ensure that all looked after young people have a pathway plan which is produced jointly with them, so that they know and understand their plan and recognise its relevance in supporting their progression into independence and adulthood.
35. Ensure that life story work is completed at the first opportunity, so that looked after children understand their life journey in the care system.

36. Ensure that risks posed to looked after children and young people are comprehensively assessed, documented and reviewed, taking into account the changing age and stage of their lives, and that managers and social workers consider the life histories of children and relevant research when making medium- and long-term plans for children.
37. Ensure that the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is enhanced so that they properly challenge drift and delay in plans and escalate concerns about the quality of service provision, so that risks posed to specific groups of children and young people are known and understood and action is taken.
38. Review the way services to 'hard to engage' young people are delivered, including to those involved in the criminal justice system, so that risk can be better assessed and well-targeted services provided to support them to improve their life chances.
39. Consolidate performance in areas that were previously good, such as employment, education and training, suitable accommodation for care leavers and dental health checks for all looked after children so that the recent dip in performance is quickly rectified.
40. Ensure that all looked after children and care leavers know and understand their rights and entitlements and know how to make a complaint, to ensure that their needs are fully understood and acted on.
41. Ensure that care leavers are informed about their health histories and that they know and understand the arrangements to access their health records should they need to in later life.
42. Ensure performance management and data collection and retrieval systems are robust, and that quantitative data and qualitative data are used to better inform management decisions and drive improvement.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences of children and young people who have needed or still need help and/or protection. This also includes children and young people who are looked after and young people who are leaving care and starting their lives as young adults.

Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children, young people and families. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with families and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the local authority knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

The inspection of the local authority was carried out under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board was carried out under section 15A of the Children Act 2004.

Ofsted produces this report of the inspection of local authority functions and the review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board under its power to combine reports in accordance with section 152 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The inspection team consisted of seven of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted.

The inspection team

Lead inspector: Gary Lamb HMI

Team inspectors: Linda Steele HMI, Dominic Stevens HMI, Karen McKeown HMI, Susan Myers HMI, Jon Bowman HMI and Peter McEntee HMI.

Information about this local authority area²

Children living in this area

- Approximately 58,200 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Haringey. This is 22.5% of the total population in the area.
- Approximately 31.9% of the local authority's children are living in poverty.
- The proportion of children entitled to free school meals:
 - in primary schools is 26.4% (the national average is 18.1%)
 - in secondary schools is 32.6% (the national average is 15.1%).
- Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 70% of all children living in the area, compared with 21.5% in the country as a whole.
- The largest minority ethnic groups of children and young people in the area are White Other 29.2%, White British 18.7%, Black African 16.6% and Black Caribbean 9.2%.
- The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language:
 - in primary schools is 54.2% (the national average is 18.1%)
 - in secondary schools is 47.7% (the national average is 13.6%).
- Haringey's Children and Young People's Plan 2013–2015 shows that:
 - 87% of children eligible for free school meals live in the east of the borough
 - 7,388 households have dependent children and no adults in employment (14.8% in Northumberland Park compared to 1.6% in Crouch End) (2011 Census ONS)
 - 72.6% of children living in poverty live in lone parent households
 - 10.4% of households are lone parents, with most living in Northumberland Park
 - 723 children are known to provide unpaid care to family members
 - 5,000 children and young people under 18 years old live in temporary accommodation (July 2013)
 - there are 11,445 households with children living in accommodation classified as overcrowded (2011 Census ONS).

² The local authority was given the opportunity to review this section of the report and has updated it with local unvalidated data where this was available.

Child protection in this area

- At 31 March 2014, 2,469 children had been identified through assessment as being formally in need of a specialist children's service. This is a reduction from 3,074 at 31 March 2013.
- At 31 March 2014, 201 children and young people were the subject of a child protection plan. This is a reduction from 268 at 31 March 2013.
- At 31 March 2014, 13 children lived in a privately arranged fostering placement. This is an increase from 12 at 31 March 2013.

Children looked after in this area

- At 31 March 2014, 507 children were being looked after by the local authority (a rate of 88 per 10,000 children). This is a reduction from 540 (93.8 per 10,000 children) at 31 March 2013. Of this number:
 - 359 (or 74%) live outside the local authority area
 - 21 live in residential children's homes, of whom 90% live out of the authority area
 - 7 live in residential special schools³, of whom 100% live out of the authority area
 - 388 live with foster families, of whom 77% live out of the authority area
 - 4 live with parents, of whom 50% live out of the authority area
 - 35 are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- In the last 12 months:
 - there have been 38 adoptions
 - 26 children became subjects of Special Guardianship Orders
 - 259 children have ceased to be looked after, of whom 5% subsequently returned to be looked after
 - 4 children and young people who have ceased to be looked after have moved on to independent living
 - 13 children and young people who have ceased to be looked after are now living in houses of multiple occupation.

³ These are residential special schools that look after children for fewer than 295 days.

Other Ofsted inspections

- The local authority operates one children's home. It was judged to be satisfactory at its most recent Ofsted full inspection.
- The previous inspection of Haringey's safeguarding arrangements for children was in February 2011. The local authority was judged to be adequate.
- The previous inspection of Haringey's services for looked after children was in February 2011. The local authority was judged to be adequate.

Other information about this area

- The Director of Children's Services has been in post since April 2014.
- The chair of the LSCB has been in post since May 2014.

Inspection judgements about the local authority

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection require improvement

43. Haringey provides a range of good quality early help programmes but, for children whose needs are below the threshold for statutory social work intervention, services are not well co-ordinated. This means that some children in Haringey do not currently receive an appropriate range of co-ordinated early help services when they need them. The local authority is currently developing early help service delivery through the use of three pilots, focusing on different age groups. One pilot is located in a children's centre, one in a primary school and another in a high school; the pilots have helpfully targeted children across all age ranges to learn and help shape plans for future service delivery. The three early help pilot schemes do not include the full range of relevant agencies. The local authority is aware of the gap in early help services, and firm plans are in place with partner agencies to improve the scale and range of the early help service offer.
44. The number of families receiving early help via the common assessment framework (CAF) has remained low for the last three years, and agencies do not have a common approach to assessing need and co-ordinating help. Children do not always receive help early enough when complex or more serious needs are emerging; the help that is provided is not always built on a clear assessment or developed in response to their changing needs.
45. Although limited in the geographical area they cover and the range of agencies involved, the three early help pilots have had a positive impact on improving outcomes for some Haringey children, and inspectors saw examples of good early help to support children and families. Haringey's response to the government's Troubled Families programme, 'Haringey Families First' (April 2013 to March 2014), has resulted in some good joint agency working. Within its first seven months of operation, 390 families were targeted, and improved outcomes have already been achieved for children in 125 of those families.
46. Referral rates have steadily decreased from a high level over the last four years, and in 2012–13 were below similar authorities and England. Most contacts and referrals to children's social care services are dealt with in a timely manner by the local authority's screening team, the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and the out-of-hours emergency duty team. However, some contacts are held in the screening team for three days and occasionally longer, which leads to delays in seeing children and obtaining parents' consent to share information.

47. Decisions about thresholds of need and risk are made by qualified and experienced workers. The range of agencies involved in the MASH, including health and the police child abuse investigation team, mean that it is a particularly effective arena for sharing information and taking multi-agency decisions about protecting children.
48. In most cases, thresholds for access to children's social care services are appropriately applied. Decisions are supported by a clear and detailed threshold document which includes the identification of children at risk of significant harm, children in need and guidance on when it is appropriate to step-down support to an early help level. In almost all cases seen by inspectors, children who are assessed as meeting the threshold of significant harm at the point of referral are swiftly passed to one of the local authority's First Response teams for intervention and further assessment.
49. There is a high level of deprivation in Haringey, and concerns about child neglect were seen in many cases examined by inspectors. In a few cases where there are concerns about chronic neglect, the risks arising from longstanding patterns of behaviour, including those relating to domestic violence, mental ill-health and drug and alcohol abuse, are not identified quickly enough. This leads to a failure to escalate some cases to a child protection investigation, or to provide relevant services in a timely way. The local authority has recognised this issue; it has appointed four additional staff and has begun a review of child in need work.
50. Child protection strategy meetings held in the MASH benefit from relevant attendance and information from partner agencies to inform effective decision making. Meetings are clearly recorded and authorised by a manager; responsibilities and timescales for action are agreed. Although appropriate decisions are being made based on the perceived risks posed to children, strategy discussions held within First Response teams do not always include all relevant agencies, resulting in decisions about risk and necessary actions being less well informed.
51. Almost all social workers are knowledgeable about the children they are working with. They see them regularly and see them alone. Inspectors saw good examples of effective and creative direct work to enhance workers' understanding of the child's world. This helps to build meaningful relationships with children. Social workers' case records are up to date and some demonstrate good analysis and a focus on the voice of the child. Although chronologies are being maintained in most of the cases seen, and some recent chronologies are of good quality, practice is not consistent.
52. Assessments are increasingly timely: 76% of assessments were completed within 45 working days between July 2013 and March 2014 and current performance is at 86%. Most assessments are comprehensive, consider

historical information, have a strong sense of the child's voice and contain clear analysis which helps shape appropriate plans. The quality of assessments has improved since the introduction of the new single assessment format in July 2013.

53. The number of initial child protection case conferences held in Haringey has reduced and is now in line with similar areas. The percentage held within the statutory 15 working day timescale has improved significantly, from 16% in March 2013 to 45% March 2014 and 68% for April to May 2014. However, this figure is still too low and, although no children were identified as being inadequately risk assessed or in immediate risk of significant harm, some children are not receiving co-ordinated help via a child protection plan as quickly as they should.
54. Decisions made at initial child protection conferences reflect the assessed level of risk, and children are not subjected to child protection plans unnecessarily. Almost all child protection and child in need plans are reviewed regularly by well-attended review conferences, core groups and child in need meetings. Most plans are clear about the outcomes needed for children and the actions necessary to achieve them. However, in a minority of plans this is not the case. This does not help families to understand what is expected of them or promote effective joint working.
55. In most situations, the risks posed to children from domestic abuse are well understood. Specialist support services are quickly identified and information about high risk cases is shared with the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) so that safety plans can be put into place. Work to engage perpetrators of domestic violence has been strengthened recently through the commissioning of a 26-week programme which is now being offered to some perpetrators of domestic violence; the early analysis of impact and outcomes shows that social workers are increasingly confident in engaging perpetrators, determining where improvement has been made and making case work decisions where change has not occurred.
56. Children missing from home or care are identified, and return interviews are offered to them with a worker from the independent 'Miss-U' service. The Council recorded 120 instances of children going missing during the preceding year in its April 2012 scrutiny report. This figure is in line with other London Boroughs. However, information is not analysed regularly or in sufficient depth for trends or outcomes for children, and this makes it difficult to assess impact or identify possible service improvements. In May 2014, 146 Haringey children were missing from education. While in most cases children successfully re-engage in education, there is notable delay in more complex cases. Opportunities are being missed to tackle the presenting issues early to prevent a pattern of absence developing.

57. Individual children and young people who are identified as at risk of sexual exploitation receive a tailored assessment and support. Ten cases have been referred in the six months prior to the inspection. However, this work is still in its early stages of development. Information is not used to develop an understanding of trends, or how perpetrators operate to abuse children. For example, information gathered from return interviews when children go missing is not analysed or used to link to intelligence and information on gangs or to map risks.
58. Despite recent additional resources, the number of known private fostering arrangements is low and efforts to raise awareness have been unsuccessful.
59. Partner agencies do not have sufficient awareness of the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in investigating allegations against professionals; in particular, there are low numbers of referrals from health agencies and early years settings. The most recent LADO annual report lacks clear analysis, so the local authority cannot be assured that all agencies know and understand their roles and responsibilities and what to do if they have a concern.
60. Disabled children in Haringey experience timely and effective interventions based on good assessments of their needs and risks to ensure that they are protected and their welfare enhanced. This work is underpinned by a detailed disabled children's threshold document covering a full range of work with disabled children and giving helpful guidance to workers. This is supporting good practice and improving responses to this vulnerable group of children.
61. Help provided by children's social care services takes account of the ethnicity, language and culture of children and their families; good use is made of interpreters and other resources, for example, a Romanian project worker. The local authority has a dedicated team providing specialist support to children and families who have no recourse to public funds. This team's work is enhanced by a worker sponsored by the Home Office, and has demonstrably improved the welfare of children through practical and specialist support with issues such as housing and determining immigration status.

The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence require improvement

62. The number of children becoming looked after is reducing as a result of a better application of the thresholds for care, supported by effective pre-proceedings work. A small number of children enter the system through emergency powers, so the vast majority of children and young people who become looked after do so in a properly assessed and planned way. Effective use of the Public Law Outline, improvements in the quality of court work and liaison with Children's Guardians have resulted in a significant reduction in the time spent by children in achieving permanence through the courts. This has reduced from 67 weeks in 2012–13 to 33 weeks at the end of 2013–14, which is now better than the national average. Inspectors saw some good examples of the use of family group conferences to establish potential carers early, but delays have occurred in making permanent arrangements, largely due to family members wishing to be assessed as carers late in proceedings. The quality of letters sent to parents or carers before proceedings is too variable. Some letters miss important details, for example the date of the letter, and others lack clarity in the detail of what is required from parents to address the concerns of the local authority.
63. Although the plans for the majority of children and young people who enter court proceedings are not to return to their birth families, where there is a plan for them to return home, a range of specialist interventions is used to support them. Multi-systemic therapy with 12 to 17 years olds is used successfully for families, both where care is being considered and for those children who are returning home. The Family Intervention Project is used well to provide intensive individual help and parenting support as part of assessment and rehabilitation plans. In cases seen by inspectors, sensitive work was undertaken to re-integrate children with their families, including increasing contact to meet the needs of the children and good links with community groups to support the family. In 2013–14, 104 looked after children returned home. During the same year, 27 children returned to care after being at home for less than 12 months.
64. The majority of social workers in the children in care service are experienced and many have worked for the local authority for a long time. As a result, many children and young people have longstanding relationships with workers who understand them well and have aspirations for their future. Almost all statutory visits are undertaken within timescales, despite a number of children being placed at a distance from the local authority area. On visits, children are routinely seen and seen on their own. Social workers talk to them about their lives and their views about their placements, and help them celebrate their successes. However, some children are visited within school settings and, in arranging these visits, there is insufficient thought about whether this is in the interests of the child or young person.

65. Case recording is largely up to date and reflects the progress of the case, and there is appropriate management oversight. Care plans reflect the immediate needs of the child or young person. However, there is insufficient consideration of life histories of children and young people, and of the use of research findings in making plans for their medium and long term future. Life story work is not prioritised for children where the plan for permanence is not for them to return home, meaning that some children do not have a clear view of their life history.
66. For some older children, their care plan and the services they receive do not sufficiently consider potential risks that they may be exposed to in their lives, for example that of sexual exploitation or the influence of gang culture. Where children are involved in the criminal justice system, communication occurs between the relevant youth offending teams and social workers, but there is insufficient co-ordination of work to ensure that these children and young people remain engaged and their needs are met. Children who go missing from care are offered an interview with a member of the participation team within the local authority, who will visit them at their placement. Where these interviews occur, children and young people are offered support to address any problems that they have highlighted. Most children live in long-term, stable foster placements. Processes to find suitable placements for children are sensitive to the individual needs of the child, including their cultural identity and their need for a long-term placement with families who can support them as they grow up. The authority's sufficiency strategy is clear that residential placements are not considered permanent placements for children. As a result, the vast majority of children benefit from a placement with a family, with just 21 children of the 507 looked after who are placed in children's homes.
67. The authority effectively prioritises the placing of children with their brothers and sisters, where this is in their best interests. Where this is not the case, arrangements for contact are well considered, and inspectors saw some good examples of work with foster carers so that siblings can share time positively together. Special Guardianship Orders are used well as a way to ensure permanence and where children have specific needs; carers continue to be well supported by the local authority. The local authority has a policy of placing children in provision judged good or better, and the vast majority of children are placed in good or better placements. Two children living in children's homes more than 20 miles from their home who were visited by inspectors for this inspection are making good progress. A review system is in place to consider the impact on the individual child of a placement judgement being reduced following an inspection. At the time of the inspection, two young people were placed in semi-independent settings that were judged as inadequate. The local authority has undertaken visits and is proactive in its efforts to ensure that the individual young people concerned are safe, and it is actively supporting progress to make improvements in these situations.

Effective and timely responses are made to meet the needs of homeless 16 and 17 year-olds and those remanded to the care of the local authority under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

68. The local authority does not have sufficient in-house foster carers with relevant skills and experience. This means that too many children and young people live more than 20 miles from the borough. The local authority has begun to take action to improve this. An external social work provider has been commissioned to recruit and train new foster carers and to improve the quality of in-house provision through a range of strategies, including ensuring better support and training for existing carers. However, at the time of the inspection, foster carers did not feel properly engaged with the improvement process. They reported to inspectors that they received variable levels of supervision and support from their supervising social worker. Some foster carers had not been allocated a supervising social worker to support them for long periods of time, or they had experienced a succession of agency social workers who did not give them consistent advice. There are no systems in place within the local authority to celebrate the achievements of existing foster carers or recognise their contribution to services for looked after children. Although a scheme for delegated responsibility for foster carers is in place so that they can make some decisions about the lives of the children who live with them, children, young people and foster carers seen by inspectors were not clear about the decisions that they could make.
69. The majority (95%) of reviews of looked after children take place on time and children are invited to contribute to these meetings. Children and young people are encouraged to attend, and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) routinely see children before their review. There is an under use of the provision made for children and young people to have access to an independent advocate, with only a small number of examples where this has taken place, so opportunities are missed for them to benefit from this service. Children and young people seen by inspectors said that they did not feel that they were fully involved in the decisions made for them. Reviews do not routinely consider whether children can benefit from the use of an independent visitor. The local authority is aware that access to independent advocacy and independent visitors is under-utilised and is taking action to rectify this, but it is too early to see the impact of this. The role of the IRO in challenging drift and delay in the cases seen by inspectors is not yet fully developed, particularly in ensuring that cases are returned to court when care plans have been changed, or in escalating concerns about the quality of services and support provided to children and young people.
70. All children who become looked after are screened for their health needs. However, performance on the percentage of looked after children who had their teeth checked by a dentist during the year ending 31 March 2014 is low at 71.4%. This proportion has declined from 91% in the

previous year. The looked after children nurses offer age-appropriate medical screening, with specialist nurses for younger children and those aged over 12. First Step, which provides psychological health screening for looked after children and young people in Haringey, offers an effective range of therapeutic support for children and young people who have emotional and mental health issues. The service also offers consultation and training to social workers. Where children are placed away from the local area, access to appropriate health services is monitored well and, where necessary, specialist services are commissioned locally.

71. The virtual head teacher and the virtual school team offer highly effective support for looked after children's education so that looked after children achieve well. Comprehensive tracking and the good use of data ensures that the virtual school maintains good oversight of the progress of looked after children. Workers are tenacious in their approach and tailor support very effectively to meet the individual needs of children and young people. As a result, children and young people get the type of support and help that they need, when they need it. Looked after children achieve well at all key stages and they make good progress relative to their starting points. The attainment gap between looked after children and the non-looked after children population at Key Stage 4, including English and maths has been closing well for the last three years, reducing the gap from 44% to 30%. A good proportion (87%) of looked after young people stay in education after the age of 16.
72. Nearly all looked after children and young people are in receipt of full time education. Attendance at school is good, with nearly 80% of looked after children achieving over 95% attendance. Most young people attend mainstream schools, with just 10% in alternative provision and very few refusing to engage in education. Almost all of these children and young people engage in the educational opportunities provided. The proportion of fixed term exclusions is lower than in similar areas, and a very small proportion of children and young people become permanently excluded from their school. The virtual school has excellent knowledge of the whereabouts of all looked after children, their educational status and circumstances. Of the 330 looked after children of school age, 80% attend a good or outstanding school. Of those educated out of the area 69% attend schools in London. Wherever they are living, children and young people benefit from targeted support based on good knowledge of their individual needs.
73. The pupil premium is used well to support a wide range of activities that encourage the progress of looked after children, for example 1-1 tuition, mentoring, after school activities and educational trips and visits. The virtual school provides good challenge to schools to ensure that the pupil premium is used effectively. Around three quarters of young people have an up-to-date personal education plan (PEP), representing an improving trend. The local authority recognises the need for all looked after children

to have a high quality PEP and the virtual school has developed a useful guide to support social workers to complete plans effectively.

74. There is a good focus on promoting activities that enrich and enhance learning in the classroom. These include a weekly study club to support young people to complete their homework, and activity clubs such as a maths club and science taster events. The achievements of looked after children are celebrated well through an annual awards event. Other out of school activities are promoted well.
75. Aspire, a representative group of looked after children and care leavers, works with the local authority to improve services. They regularly meet with the corporate parenting board and senior officers and members. Young people from the group have been involved in training for new foster carers and undertaking interviews for staff, for example for new IROs. The feedback from these young people has also led to some improvements in services, such as in the provision of leisure passes to looked after children.
76. The authority has not fully informed looked after children and care leavers about their rights and entitlements. The London-wide Pledge that the authority makes to the young people in its care is not clear and it is not communicated to children well. A specific Haringey Pledge is currently being developed to make this clearer but, at the time of the inspection, young people were not clear, for example, about whether they could stay with their foster carer once they have reached the age of 18.

The graded judgement for adoption performance is requires improvement

77. Adoption performance in Haringey is improving from a low base and there has been a steady increase in the percentage of children who leave the care of the authority through adoption. In the year 2013–2014 this was 14%. A further 10% of children left care as a result of Special Guardianship Orders which, although fewer than in the previous year, means that the overall performance on children achieving permanence is improving gradually. However, some children in Haringey are waiting longer to move in with their adoptive families than in other areas. The average time it takes between a child entering care and being placed with their adoptive family is 778 days, which is significantly higher than the national average of 647 days. In the twelve month period prior to the inspection, 13 of the 21 cases in proceedings had been completed within the target of 26 weeks. This means that 62% of cases in proceedings have been completed within the recommended timescales.
78. The number of Black and minority ethnic (BME) children being adopted has risen year on year, and the gap between Haringey and the rest of the country is closing. Special Guardianship Orders have been used for 8% of

BME children in Haringey, and in the majority of cases this has involved good use of extended family members or connected persons.

79. At the time of the inspection there were 16 approved adopters; 51 children waiting to be adopted, of whom 21 were placed with their adoptive families, seven have been matched and four children have had their plans changed to long term fostering. Family finding is taking place for the remaining children. The average time taken to match a child with an adoptive family after a court order has been granted is 39 weeks, which is longer than the national target of 26 weeks. The team is using local consortia arrangements, adoption parties and national networks to recruit adopters, and have had some positive results in finding adopters for older children and for placing brothers and sisters together. This means that some children who have been waiting to be adopted for a long time have now been found adoptive families.
80. There is currently little use of parallel or concurrent planning. This means that some children experience more moves than is necessary and wait longer to achieve permanence. Staff spoken to by inspectors understand the benefits of these approaches to maximise the opportunities for children to achieve permanence, but they are not yet being promoted effectively or developed in practice.
81. Insufficient priority is given to life story work, so some children have gaps in their knowledge about their past, which is important to enabling them to form a strong identity to support their development and particularly their emotional well-being.
82. The adoption panel is strong and membership is stable, with the chair offering appropriate oversight and challenge. There is a good working relationship between the chair and the agency decision maker, who thoroughly and promptly considers decisions made by the panel.
83. Adopters are well prepared and supported throughout the process of adoption, and this includes post-adoption packages of support. They receive a swift response when they make initial enquiries and are moved on to preparation and training sessions in a timely way. Adopters told inspectors that the sessions are delivered by social workers who are approachable and knowledgeable and who give a true and honest picture of the realities of adoption. In the 12-month period before this inspection there were 20 requests for post-adoption support and 20 packages of support have being provided.

The graded judgement for the experiences and progress of care leavers is requires improvement

84. All young people leaving care are allocated a personal adviser from the Young Adults service, who supports them to secure housing, provides

advice on training and employment and helps them to move towards independence. Young people with a disability are also allocated a social worker from the Adults Social Care team, which helps to ensure their specific special needs are met. Young people have the opportunity to build stable and warm relationships with their adviser and this is a strong feature of the service; young people know their worker well and many feel their personal advisor provides a good level of support.

85. The '18' programme delivered through the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation provides good mentoring support and access to a wide range of learning and development opportunities for care leavers. Young people receive good pastoral support and practical help in working towards their career and life goals. However, the programme has been scaled down since January 2014, and now offers just 10 places annually instead of 40 places to care leavers in Haringey. As of March 2014, the proportion of care leavers in education, training and employment had declined from 63% (March 2013) to 47% (March 2014), which is considerably lower than similar areas at 87% (March 2013).
86. Access to higher education is very well promoted. Currently 65 care leavers are at university and 106 are in further education. The virtual school is working well to raise aspirations for future care leavers through visits and taster sessions to university. Care leavers are given good financial and practical support throughout their university careers, including during holiday periods.
87. The quality of pathway planning is too variable. Not all young people have a written pathway plan to which they have contributed. The majority of plans seen by inspectors do not reflect individual young people's goals and future needs in a meaningful way. Some young people told inspectors that pathway planning felt like a task that had to be completed rather than achieving a plan that had meaning for them, that they own.
88. The proportion of young people in suitable accommodation has reduced from 79% in March 2013 to 74% in March 2014. Nevertheless, there is a good range of accommodation and housing options for young people and good partnership work with housing providers to ensure that care leavers are given priority. As a result, the number of homes allocated specifically for care leavers has increased and there are now a number of two-bedroomed homes available for young parents. Some young people spoken to were unhappy with their accommodation and not all were able to choose who they shared accommodation with. Some young people are benefiting from the staying put policy and continue to live with their foster carers after the age of 18, but this is not yet publicised to all young people.
89. The quality of support to help young people leave care and live independently varies. Many receive a service which meets their individual

needs, but help to manage personal finances is particularly identified as a deficit by care leavers. Young people who spoke to inspectors had no shared view of their entitlements to funding, and said that access to funding is slow and inflexible. This means that a small number of young people find it difficult to access their set up home grant and many are restricted to where they spend it. Some young people spoken to did not know about their rights and entitlements to such things as advocacy or how to complain about the services they receive.

90. Support for care leavers to manage their health and promote healthy living is not consistently available. Young people are reminded to register with a general practitioner and dentist, but most are not provided with a copy of their health records and do not know how to access them.

Leadership, management and governance require improvement

91. The new senior leadership team is improving the quality of services and its priorities are clear. The leadership team is ambitious and is effectively striving to provide good quality services through incremental and targeted plans for improvement, including building capacity within the service. Although performance is improving in some important deficit areas, such as in child protection and adoption responses, performance has not been sufficiently consolidated in other key areas. This has resulted, for example, in a decline in the rate of care leavers living in suitable accommodation and in the number engaged in employment, education and training. The local authority and its partners know the population of Haringey well; they demonstrate a good understanding of service strengths and weakness and how these impact on service delivery. Haringey's recent self-evaluation identifies strengths, areas for improvement and priorities for development which are consistent with the findings of this inspection.
92. A new senior leadership team has recently been appointed, including a new Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services (DCS). The DCS is identifying the key changes required and setting ambitious targets for service improvement. Performance is benchmarked against similar authorities who have good or better performance, so that service strengths and weaknesses are identified and analysed. As a result, Haringey has made progress in safely reducing the number of children who are subject to a child protection plan and those who are looked after. The local authority has also improved the timeliness and quality of social work assessments, which has been a stubbornly difficult aspect of service delivery to improve.
93. Effective and purposeful relationships are in place between the Chief Executive, the Lead Member, the DCS and the LSCB chair. Elected members discharge their statutory duties effectively; governance and reporting arrangements have been strengthened through the accountability protocol for the DCS. The Leader of the Council has recently been appointed as chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB). The priorities of the HWB are not sufficiently linked to children's social care priorities. In particular, early help is not identified as a priority, and more work is required to ensure that the HWB is sufficiently focused on the effectiveness and commissioning of services for children and young people.
94. The local authority has ensured that investment in children's social care services continues to be a priority. The Haringey 54,000 transformational programme, designed to improve outcomes for the 54,000 children and young people in the borough, is driving the local authority's agenda for children and families. Looked after children have been consulted as part of

the arrangements to redesign services for early help and provide help for families at an early stage.

95. Commissioning arrangements are informed by a needs assessment, with effective engagement of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), statutory and voluntary sectors. This has resulted in some good outcomes for children and young people. For example, the joint commissioning of multi-systemic therapy for children on the edge of care has contributed to the safe reduction in the number of children entering the care system. However, commissioning arrangements to support a comprehensive multi-agency early help offer to meet the diverse needs of the population of Haringey is as yet under-developed. Although plans to address this are being progressed, the early help strategy has not been signed off by partner agencies and the pace of change is slow.
96. The local authority has recently agreed a placement sufficiency strategy and has commissioned an external social work agency to recruit and assess prospective foster carers. However, it is too early to demonstrate impact and too many children continue to live away from their local communities.
97. The majority of recommendations from previous inspections have been addressed through appropriate monitoring and action planning. Three serious incident notifications have been received by Ofsted between 31 March 2013 and 1 April 2014; two have resulted in Serious Case Reviews being commissioned by the LSCB.
98. Performance management arrangements are in place at all levels of the service. The use of performance management information is increasingly effective but not all data and information are reliable or used to support improvements in service delivery. For example, data and information about the patterns of offending of children looked after are not systematically collated or analysed. As a result, there is little consideration of the impact of this behaviour on the future life chances of this group of children and young people. Performance management arrangements for early help are under-developed. This means it is difficult for the local authority and partner agencies to judge how successful they are at delivering early help and ensuring that children and families receive help at the earliest possible stage. Also performance on immunisations and dental checks appears weak for looked after children, at 68% for immunisations and 71% for dental checks, although managers believe this to be a recording issue.
99. A comprehensive rolling programme of casework and thematic audits is in place within children's services. This enables a shared understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of practice and contributes to improved service delivery. However, these arrangements do not extend to early help

services, so there is no clear systematic and comprehensive approach to inform service development of these services and programmes.

100. There are effective relationships with the Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), the family courts and the local Family Justice Board. This has resulted in improved timescales in private and public law proceedings, reducing delay for children and young people.
101. Corporate parenting panel members demonstrate a strong commitment to children looked after in Haringey. The Corporate Parenting Board has helped to increase housing provision through securing a number of two-bedroomed properties specifically for care leavers who have children. Aspire (Haringey Children in Care Council) is consulted on developing service provision. Both the Lead Cabinet Member and the DCS attend an advisory panel meeting with Aspire to enable them to have a clearer understanding of issues and to drive improvement. Young people told inspectors how they have influenced the introduction of leisure passes for children looked after, and are involved in training foster carers and the interviewing of staff.
102. Senior managers provide visible and consistent leadership for children's services. They meet young people and are aware of significant case issues. Monthly safeguarding assurance days are undertaken by the Cabinet Member and the DCS; they meet staff, observe front-line practice and have a good understanding of the issues faced by staff. Regular performance meetings chaired by the DCS and attended by managers and social workers ensure performance is challenged and areas of strengths and weaknesses known and understood.
103. Effective management oversight of social work practice is demonstrating a recent improvement in quality and, as a result, plans for children are improved. Although the majority of staff say they feel well supported and morale in the social work teams visited by inspectors is high, the quality of social work supervision is too variable, with some examples of poor quality supervision records which are not sufficiently focused on next steps and the action social workers are required to take. More recent casework demonstrates better supervision, with some examples of reflective practice, but more needs to be done to improve the quality of reflective supervision and the degree of challenge.
104. Social workers have manageable caseloads; they are motivated and positive about working in Haringey. The diversity of the workforce reflects the community. The local authority recruitment strategy is realistic, and is based on a detailed analysis of the workforce market. An effective social work trainee scheme has secured eight post-graduate appointments in the last 12 months. Newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) spoken to by inspectors report that their caseloads are protected and they are particularly positive about the support, supervision and training they

receive. Managers recognise the importance of NQSWs undertaking a variety of case work to enhance their skills, and to strengthen their professional confidence. The use of agency staff is currently 12.1% which is comparable to the national figure. The turnover of social workers has reduced to 19.9%, but is still higher than the national average. Inspectors saw a small number of cases where children had experienced frequent changes in social workers. For those children, this has affected relationship building and the effectiveness of delivery of plans.

105. Training needs are identified through workforce surveys, audit findings, feedback from children and young people, learning from complaints and serious case reviews. Learning from a recent court judgement has led to far-reaching changes, for example, with revised information sharing protocols for the MASH and changes made to the Pan-London procedures. The number of complaints received by children's social care is low. Complaints are dealt with effectively, with all complaints being resolved at an early stage. However, not all young people, particularly care leavers, understand how to make a complaint or are aware of their rights and entitlements, so opportunities are being missed to harness their views to inform service improvements.

What the inspection judgements mean: the local authority

An **outstanding** local authority leads highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** local authority leads effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and those who are looked after and care leavers have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a local authority that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the authority is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children, young people and families.

A local authority that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after or care leavers not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Section 2: The effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

The effectiveness of the LSCB requires improvement

Areas for improvement

106. Ensure that schools are more fully involved at Board level so that their representations are known, understood and considered and their contribution fully harnessed to influence the shape of services.
107. Review Haringey's CSE multi-agency guidance and consider whether the involvement or association with gangs by young women should be included as a risk factor to strengthen arrangements to provide a co-ordinated response to this vulnerable group of young people.
108. Accelerate plans to formally agree the draft CSE strategy and ensure it is clearly linked to the gang action plan. Make clear how the strategy will link to front-line practice, and what success criteria will be used to measure and evaluate progress.
109. Ensure that the Board receives an annual report on children missing from home, missing from care and missing from education to assure itself that appropriate processes and practice are in place to safeguard this vulnerable group of children and young people. Strengthen the existing Board's annual report arrangements to include an evaluation of service responses for missing children, to support multi-agency actions and reduce risks posed to children.

Key strengths and weaknesses of the LSCB

110. The LSCB complies with 'Working Together 2013' and has effective governance arrangements, enabling partners to assess whether they are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities to protect children.
111. The Board identified as a response to its Peer Review in January 2014 that understanding the effectiveness of early help is a priority, and now has a work programme to take this forward. However, the Board has yet to demonstrate influence in ensuring that the early help offer is targeted appropriately and is making a measurable difference.
112. The Board is able to prioritise its work and has a business plan that reflects local needs, with a strong focus on ensuring that the voice of the child is heard more clearly and that children have better outcomes. However, some aspects of the Board's work have not been given sufficient priority. Although the Board receives some data on children missing, it has not received or sought a qualitative analysis or report in relation to children missing from home and care, although it has sought information

on those children and young people missing education. The Board has not established an overview of performance or the effectiveness of practice in relation to children missing. The Board has also not established an overview of private fostering practice, although it is aware that further resources have been put in place by children's services in response to the low number of arrangements being identified.

113. Multi-agency CSE guidance has been reviewed in May 2014. The CSE guidance makes appropriate links to the vulnerabilities of children looked after and those children who go missing, and identifies the often unrecognised sexual exploitation risks to boys and young men. The guidance is wide-ranging, but it does not identify clearly exploitation issues in relation to association with gangs and gang culture. There is no mention of gang association as a risk factor for young women in the risk categories identified. This gap means that front-line practitioners, despite accessing available training, may not recognise risks in relation to gang association early enough to ensure that young women receive appropriate support.
114. A CSE strategy remains under-development. Both the CSE task group and now the vulnerable children sub-group of the Board are working to ensure that strategy, processes and practice link closely together. However, the evaluation of the impact of initiatives has not as yet been sufficiently co-ordinated, measured and understood by the Board.
115. The Board is appropriately constituted and has one lay member; it is seeking to recruit a further lay member. Members' attendance is mostly good, although regular representation from schools has not been achieved. The Board is financially sound.
116. The chair of the Board has only recently been appointed but, as the author of a report in 2013 reviewing the effectiveness of the Board, he has good knowledge of its performance. The chair is a member of the Children's Trust and a recent member of the Health and Wellbeing Board.
117. The Board maintains a 'challenge and impact log'. This includes examples of intervention, including seeking assurances from the Haringey Chief Executive on staffing structure and workforce stability of senior staff in children's services, ensuring training for housing staff in relation to neglect, and ensuring that the third sector are better informed about who to contact if they wish to make a referral to children's social care services.
118. The Board ensures that partners hold each other to account, and each agency completes a Section 11 audit of safeguarding every two years. This is further strengthened by an independent inspection of audit returns by agencies, conducted by other Board members to ensure that agency self-reports are accurate. The Board ensures that cross-cutting themes are identified and action taken to influence change.

119. The Board conducts a range of multi-agency audits through an annual programme; for example, in 2013 audits were undertaken on Section 47 decisions, safeguarding of children with a disability, and compliance with policies and procedures. Also, a case review took place following recommendations arising from a management review involving adult mental health issues and the care of children. These audits have produced learning areas, recommendations and action plans as a result, with practice issues for a range of agencies including adult services, which are helping to influence the shape of provision.
120. The Board has developed a learning and improvement framework and a schedule setting out the means by which the Board, agencies and services across Haringey will seek to learn from experience. This includes learning through audits of work, Serious Case Reviews and multi-agency case reviews where the criteria for a Serious Case Review are not met.
121. The Board has been active in ensuring that cases are appropriately identified as requiring either a Serious Case Review or a multi-agency case review. This includes three Serious Case Reviews, one published in October 2013 and two that are completed but will not be published until the respective court proceedings are completed. The Board ensures through its training program that lessons learned from these local cases, and also from national cases of concern, are effectively disseminated to staff across agencies.
122. The Board has been active in ensuring that policies are in place including, for example, threshold guidance, multi-agency thresholds for children with disability and an escalation policy. The Board has also contributed to awareness raising of the risks of neglect, including work with housing staff on the signs of neglect.
123. The Board's business plan for 2013–14 has identified a number of key priorities, including engaging young people and families, monitoring the effectiveness of MASH and early help intervention and identification and response to young people at risk of CSE or who go missing. The Board monitors the progress of the priorities identified and is able to demonstrate progress in most, but not all, of its priorities. Progress includes a survey by Haringey youth council of young people's views on safeguarding and asking the gangs action group (GAG) to present a strategy to the board. The Board has delayed its review of missing from home and care guidance because the pan-London child protection procedures are being updated.
124. Training is offered to staff in agencies across Haringey according to their role and the level of contact they have with children and families. Training includes a safeguarding introduction across all levels and a focus on CSE. Other training includes young people and domestic violence, and serious case review workshops. Bite size courses increase the range of training

and learning opportunities. Training is evaluated three months after attendance to assess its effectiveness on practice.

125. An annual report is produced which provides an overview of the Board's work, including the activity of the six sub-groups. The report includes some analysis of key issues, including its response to child sexual exploitation and findings of audits conducted, but the Board has recognised in its self-assessment that an improvement in performance data is required to ensure that the next annual report is better informed. The report contains information from key agencies, reports on completed serious case reviews and case management reviews and includes an annual report on the LADO function and the work of Independent Reviewing Officers. The report does not contain information or any analysis on services for children missing from home and missing from care or those in private fostering arrangements.
126. The LSCB web-site is well constructed and provides up to date information on Board activities, policy and practice guidelines, threshold documents and Serious Case Review and case management review reports.

What the inspection judgements mean: the LSCB

An **outstanding** LSCB is highly influential in improving the care and protection of children. Their evaluation of performance is exceptional and helps the local authority and its partners to understand the difference that services make and where they need to improve. The LSCB creates and fosters an effective learning culture.

An LSCB that is **good** co-ordinates the activity of statutory partners and monitors the effectiveness of local arrangements. Multi-agency training in the protection and care of children is effective and evaluated regularly for impact. The LSCB provides robust and rigorous evaluation and analysis of local performance that identifies areas for improvement and influences the planning and delivery of high-quality services.

An LSCB **requires improvement** if it does not yet demonstrate the characteristics of good.

An LSCB that is **inadequate** does not demonstrate that it has effective arrangements in place and the required skills to discharge its statutory functions. It does not understand the experiences of children and young people locally and fails to identify where improvements can be made.

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