



CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

TUESDAY 7 APRIL 2009

6.00 PM

PANEL AGENDA (ADVISORY)

**COMMITTEE ROOM 6,
HARROW CIVIC CENTRE**

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 3)

Chairman: Councillor Janet Mote

Councillors:

**Husain Akhtar
Miss Christine Bednell
Eric Silver**

**Mrs Margaret Davine
Mitzi Green**

Reserve Members:

1. Mrs Myra Michael
2. Mrs Vina Mithani
3. Julia Merison
4. Mark Versallion

1. B E Gate
2. Raj Ray

**Issued by the Democratic Services Section,
Legal and Governance Services Department**

**Contact: Damian Markland, Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 020 8424 1785 E-mail: damian.markland@harrow.gov.uk**

***NOTE FOR THOSE ATTENDING THE MEETING:
IF YOU WISH TO DISPOSE OF THIS AGENDA, PLEASE LEAVE IT BEHIND AFTER THE MEETING.
IT WILL BE COLLECTED FOR RECYCLING.***

HARROW COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

TUESDAY 7 APRIL 2009

AGENDA - PART I

1. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

To note the attendance at this meeting of any duly appointed Reserve Members.

Reserve Members may attend meetings:-

- (i) to take the place of an ordinary Member for whom they are a reserve;
- (ii) where the ordinary Member will be absent for the whole of the meeting; and
- (iii) the meeting notes at the start of the meeting at the item 'Reserves' that the Reserve Member is or will be attending as a reserve;
- (iv) if a Reserve Member whose intention to attend has been noted arrives after the commencement of the meeting, then that Reserve Member can only act as a Member from the start of the next item of business on the agenda after his/her arrival.

2. **Declarations of Interest:**

To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from:

- (a) all Members of the Committee, Sub Committee, Panel or Forum;
- (b) all other Members present in any part of the room or chamber.

Enc. 3. **Minutes:** (Pages 1 - 6)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2009 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

4. **Public Questions:**

To receive questions (if any) from local residents or organisations under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

5. **Petitions:**

To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

6. **Deputations:**

To receive deputations (if any) under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

7. **Any Other Urgent Business:**

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

- Enc. 8. **INFORMATION REPORT - Activity and Performance:** (Pages 7 - 30)
Information Report of the Corporate Director of Children's Services.
- Enc. 9. **INFORMATION REPORT - Update on the development of the "Children in Care Council" in line with the London Pledge:** (Pages 31 - 34)
Information Report of the Corporate Director of Children's Services.
- Enc. 10. **INFORMATION REPORT - Progress on the implementation of the London Pledge for Children Looked After:** (Pages 35 - 38)
Information Report of the Corporate Director of Children's Services.
- Enc. 11. **INFORMATION REPORT - Adoption Services provided by Harrow Council Children's Services:** (Pages 39 - 54)
Information Report of the Corporate Director of Children's Services.

AGENDA - PART II - NIL

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CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

13 JANUARY 2009

Chairman: * Councillor Janet Mote

Councillors: * Husain Akhtar * Mitzi Green
Miss Christine Bednell * Eric Silver
* Mrs Margaret Davine

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**62. **Attendance by Reserve Members:****RESOLVED:** To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.63. **Declarations of Interest:****RESOLVED:** To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members in relation to the business to be transacted at this meeting.64. **Minutes:****RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2008 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.65. **Matters Arising:****Minute 57: Putting Corporate Parenting into Practice**

The Chairman informed the Panel that, following the discussion that had taken place at the previous meeting, an information stand would be placed outside the Council Chamber at the next Council meeting on 2 April 2009. She explained that the purpose of the exhibit was to raise Councillors' awareness of their Corporate Parenting responsibilities. In addition to the stand, the Chairman stated that the Senior Co-ordinator for Children Looked After would be in attendance and would distribute copies of a booklet entitled "Putting Corporate Parenting into Practice", a document that would provide Councillors with additional information regarding their responsibilities. A number of Members requested that, if possible, the exhibit include a video presentation. The Chairman agreed that the use of a video presentation would be favourable.

The Panel unanimously agreed that, whilst the exhibit would be beneficial in raising awareness amongst Councillors that had limited involvement with Looked After Children, formal training was still needed. The Chairman informed the Panel that the Member Development Team was aware of the need to provide Corporate Parenting training and that, in her opinion, the training should be compulsory. Following a discussion, it was agreed that the Chairman would write the Chairman of the Member Development Panel to highlight the need for action.

Minute 60: Care Matters Update – Harrow's response to the Children and Young Persons Bill 2007

An officer informed the Panel that the Children and Young Persons Bill had received royal assent in November 2008 and that the Council were currently awaiting draft guidance. He explained that the Children and Young Persons Bill was only part of the Care Matters reform package and that it would be supported by additional regulations as well as proactive partnerships with local authorities to share and develop good practice.

An officer stated that she had presented the Care Matters proposal to a number of bodies and reception had been both supportive and positive. She explained that the proposal was still to be reviewed by Children Looked After Life Chances Forum but that it would most likely continue in its current form for the next few years, with slight revisions made when necessary.

A Member queried whether a Personal Education Plan (PEP) Coordinator had yet been appointed. The Panel were informed that the Council was working hard to fill the post but, despite utilising recruitment agencies and offering a competitive remuneration

package, the position remained vacant. However, an officer assured Members that she was confident that the position would be filled in the near future.

Minute 61: Adoption Inspection

An officer informed the Panel that the Council had met and surpassed its adoption target for the year, and that Members would be provided with a more detailed update shortly. Members requested that the information be made available to them as soon as possible, but that a verbal update also be provided at the next Corporate Parenting Panel.

66. **Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum procedure rules 16, 14 and 15 respectively.

67. **INFORMATION REPORT - Approval of a London Pledge for Children Looked After:**

The Panel received an information report of the Corporate Director of Children's Services which provided an update on the London Pledge, an initiative that aimed to ensure children and young people in care across London had equal access to key services. The report also detailed the potential cost implications if the recommendations were fully implemented.

An officer drew the Panel Members attention to section 2.5 of the report which detailed the costs involved in producing information packs for Looked After Children. The officer explained that whilst the packs were highly beneficial for those within the care system, printing the documents could be expensive, especially if made available in multiple languages.

Following a question from a Member regarding the possibility of distributing the information electronically via a website, the officer explained that such a scheme might not be feasible. The officer explained that the information packs were usually given to an individual at their Viewpoint (VP) session, with the VP officer ensuring that the information was understood. As the distribution of the information was monitored, there was a certain degree of quality assurance that could not be guaranteed if an individual was to access the information independently via the internet. The officer stated that the internet could be used as an additional method of distribution but that the printed documents were still required.

Another officer informed the Panel that, in accordance with the Pledge, the Council would be expected to provide a range of opportunities for Looked After Children including free leisure cards to access facilities across London. In addition, the Council would be required to support the purchase of a bike and related safety equipment. The officer stated that, whilst he had calculated the potential cost of the schemes, he was still considering how they could be implemented effectively. However, he stated that the Pledge was essentially a blueprint that needed to be refined on both a local and individual level in order to suit both the authority and the individual children it served. The officer explained that different children would require different pledges and that the Council needed to be flexible in order to cater for individual needs. Another officer added that the primary concern of the pledge was to improve the life-chances of Looked After Children by ensuring they were offered the same opportunities and experiences as children growing up in traditional families.

A Member requested an update on the status of the bid made to the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), sought in order to secure funding for IT equipment for Looked After Children. An officer informed that Panel that the Council had secured the sum of £95,000 and that it was intended that the money would be used to purchase laptops, acknowledging that the equipment needed to be portable.

Following a discussion concerning the educational achievement of Looked After Children, some Members of the Panel raised concern that the Pledge placed too great an emphasis on the attainment of good GCSEs and, for some children, such targets were unattainable. Members queried whether the wording of the Pledge needed to be altered to take into account non-academic personal achievements. An officer assured the Panel Members that there would be an individual pledge for every child and targets would always be realistic. However, the officer stated that performance indicators were important and educational attainment did need to be both promoted and monitored.

The Chairman stated that the Council had previously organised sessions in conjunction with carers during which Looked After Children were presented with personal achievement awards. She suggested that, whilst non-academic achievements were hard to measure, acknowledging personal success was likely to be highly beneficial to the individual. An officer informed the Panel that the Council intended to revive the scheme.

A Member suggested that it was important not to underestimate the academic ability of those in care and recommended that, as corporate parents, local authorities should set high expectations, just as traditional parents would.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

68. **INFORMATION REPORT - Activity and Performance:**

The Panel received an information report of the Corporate Director of Children's Services which set out key data relating to Children Looked After (CLA) and Children on the Child Protection Register (CPR), including key performance indicators up to the end of November 2008. An officer outlined the following key points and issues:

- the Council had exceeded its adoption and special guardianships target;
- whilst core assessment performance had dropped, action was being taken to prevent any further decline;
- participation of Looked After Children in reviews was higher than the statistics indicated as some new data had yet to be included in the results;
- long term stability of placements was over 60%, although the figure was likely to fall due to the policy of pursuing adoption or special guardianships for those that had remained in long term placements;
- there were now 3 CLA in secure units.

In response to questions concerning the use of secure accommodation, officers clarified that:

- children were placed in secure accommodation when they posed a high risk to either themselves or those around them. Such action was seen as a last resort;
- the placement of a child in secure accommodation was reviewed by the Courts on a monthly basis;
- the use of secure accommodation cost the Council approximately £4,000 per week for each child.

Following questions from the Panel concerning the age at which Looked After Children were offered the opportunity to live independently, officers explained that such arrangements were available from the age of 16, provided the individual in question was considered capable. Semi-independent accommodation was provided in the first instance for 16-17 year olds. However, although individuals were given the opportunity to live independently, the Council continued to monitor their progress to ensure that the arrangements were working.

Following a general discussion concerning the data provided in the report, officers clarified that:

- the CLA population was never static and, though some trends existed, it was not possible to predict fluctuations with absolute certainty;
- the data collected by the performance team was used by managers to identify and target specific issues. Updates were provided to the Head of Service on a monthly basis;
- officers had access to more detailed data than that included in the report. At the request of Panel Members, officers agreed to provide more detailed data at future meetings;

- it was possible to benchmark Harrow's performance against that of other authorities, although such comparisons were generally limited to Councils that fell within the same statistical neighbourhood group. At the request of Panel Members, officers agreed to try and provide as much benchmarking data as possible at the next meeting.

The Panel noted that there had been a significant improvement in the educational achievements of Looked After Children within the borough and recommended that the Council publicise the accomplishment. Officers agreed to prepare an article for borough-wide circulation. The Chairman supported the proposal.

In response to questions from the Panel regarding the logging of non-GCSE qualifications, the officer explained that this was something that the Council was eager to pursue. She stated that the Council currently utilised the services of "Welfare Call" to monitor truancy levels amongst Looked After Children and, for an additional fee, the company could also monitor the educational achievements of pupils. The officer suggested that this was an area where the Care Matters grant could be put to good use.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

69. **Any Other Urgent Business:**

Consultation on Changes to the Admission Rules for Harrow Community Schools from September 2010

An officer tabled a document outlining the consultation on changes to the admission rules for Harrow Community Schools from September 2010. The officer detailed the proposed key changes and explained that the document was being provided for information purposes as the proposed alterations would impact upon Looked After Children in the borough.

Harrow Foster Carers Association Annual Event

An officer informed the Panel that the Harrow Foster Carers Association were due to hold their annual event and recommended that the Corporate Parenting Panel send a representative. It was agreed that full details would be forwarded to the Chairman.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 6.05 pm, closed at 7.25 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JANET MOTE
Chairman

Appendix 1

**Officers in
attendance:**

Andreas Kyriacou

Senior Co-ordinator, Children
Looked After

Gail Hancock

Head of Service for Safeguarding &
Family Support

Dipika Patel

Senior Performance Officer

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Committee:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	7 April 2009
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – Activity and Performance
Responsible Officer:	Corporate Director of Children’s Services - Paul Clark
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services - Councillor Christine Bednell
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	CLA & CPP Activity and Performance Report

1. Summary

FOR INFORMATION

This report sets out key data relating to Children Looked After (CLA) and Children with Child Protection Plans (CPP), plus key performance indicators for the end of February 2009.

Key Points:

- We have exceeded our target with a total of 19 Adoptions / Special Guardianship Orders. We are in the top banded performance on this indicator
- Core assessment performance has dropped and we are unlikely to meet our target. Robust action is being taken in the Children’s services teams to address this. Managers are ensuring that quality checks remain in place. We remain confident that the 3 year LAA target will be met.
- CLA missing 25+ days of school - Target of 10% already exceeded. There are some issues around finding school places for new unaccompanied Asylum seeking children. The EWO has an Action in place for the remainder of the year.

- Work continues to progress with Children with Disabilities who are also in residential care as they impact on some of our indicators. The issues will be resolved before year end submissions

2. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Name: **Emma Stabler**



on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: **25 March 2009**

3. Performance Issues

This report provides latest performance on statutory indicators for children's social care. The Panel may wish to provide direction following an analysis of current performance.

4. Contacts

David Harrington, Service Manager, Performance
020 8424 9248 / david.harrington@harrow.gov.uk

Dipika Patel, Senior Performance Officer, Children's Social Care
020 8424 9258 / dipika.patel@harrow.gov.uk



Corporate Parenting

March 2009

**CLA & CPP Activity
To end of February 2009**

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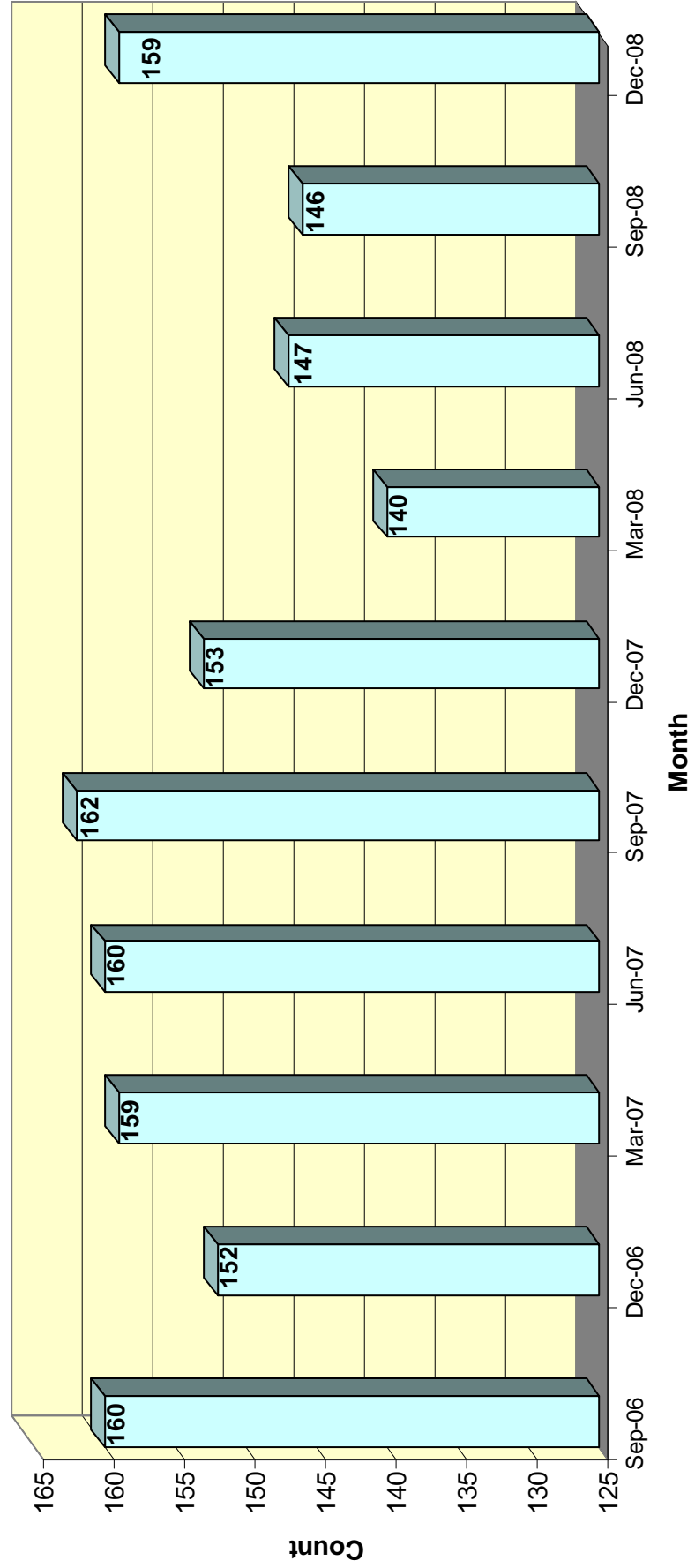
1) Safety of Vulnerable Children (Children Looked After)

There were **149** children looked after in Harrow on 28th February 2009.

The bar chart below shows the number of children looked after by quarters from 2006

Month	No. Of CLA
Sep-06	160
Dec-06	152
Mar-07	159
Jun-07	160
Sep-07	162
Dec-07	153
Mar-08	140
Jun-08	147
Sep-08	146
Dec-08	159

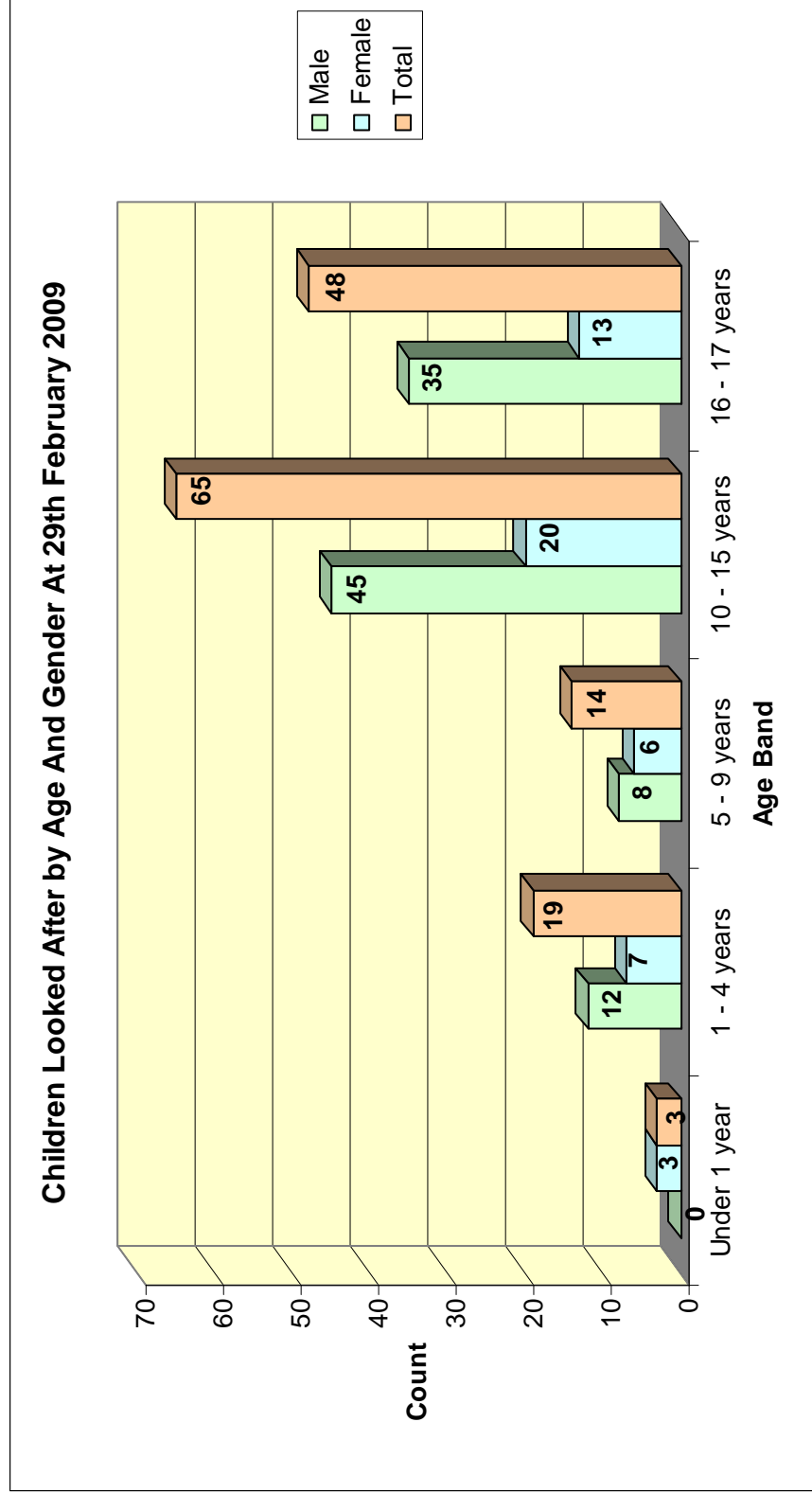
Number Of Children Looked After at Quarterly Intervals



Data to February 2009

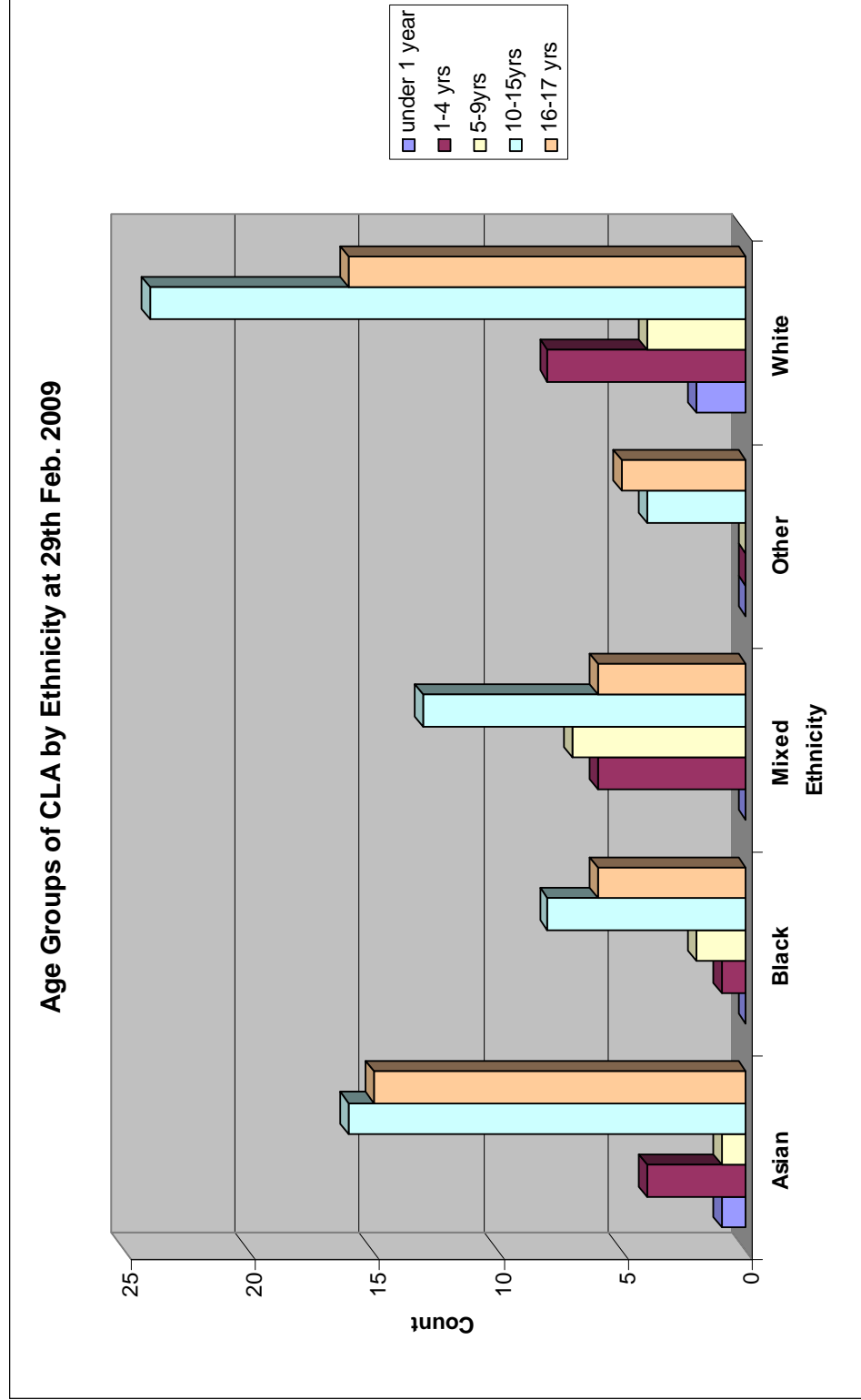
2) CLA Age and Gender Breakdown

Age	Male	Female	Total
Under 1 year	0	3	3
1 - 4 years	12	7	19
5 - 9 years	8	6	14
10 - 15 years	45	20	65
16 - 17 years	35	13	48
Total	100	49	149



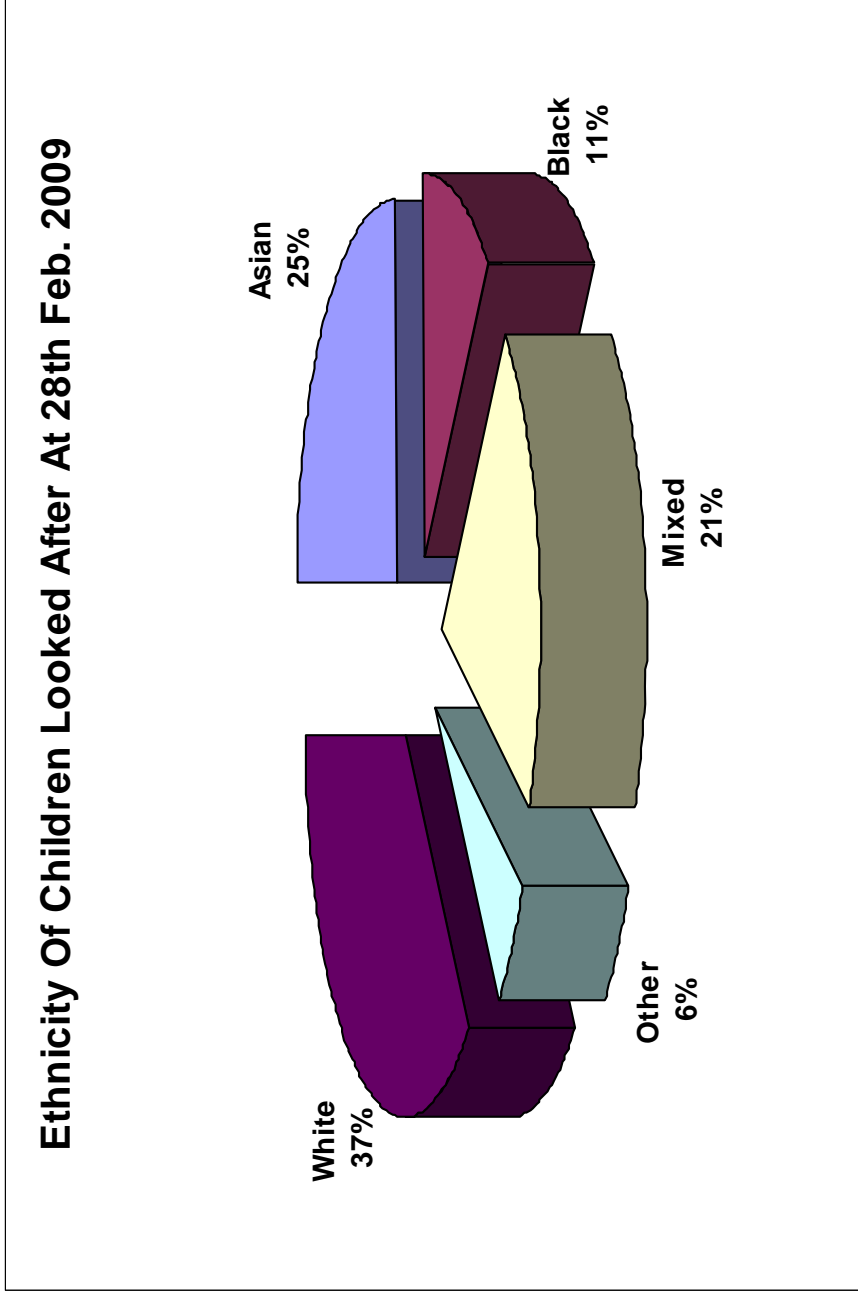
2.a) Age Groups of CLA by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	under 1 year	1-4 yrs	5-9yrs	10-15yrs	16-17 yrs	Total
Asian	1	4	1	16	15	37
Black	0	1	2	8	6	17
Mixed	0	6	7	13	6	32
Other	0	0	0	4	5	9
White	2	8	4	24	16	54
Total	3	19	14	65	48	149



3) CLA by Ethnicity

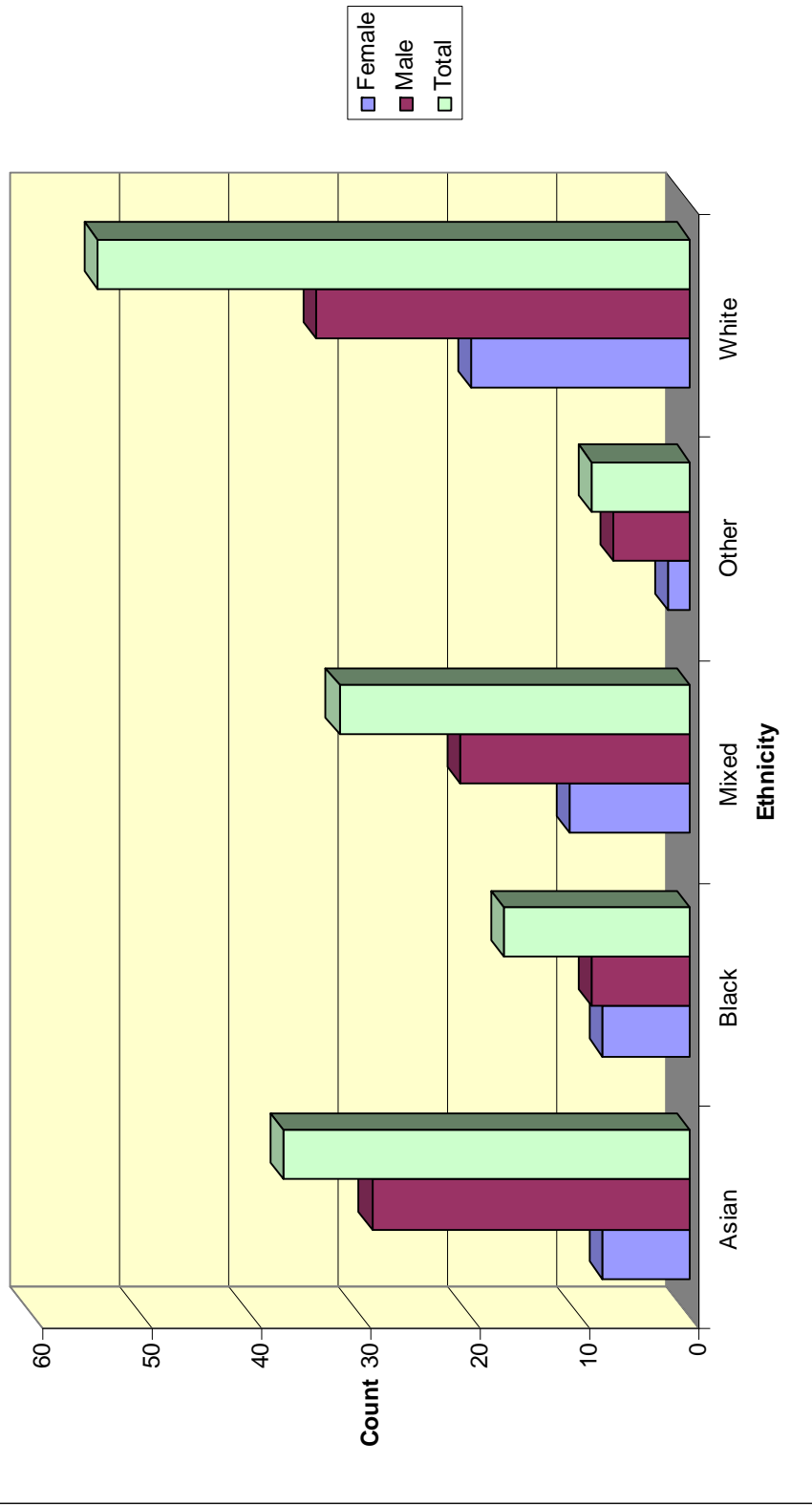
Ethnicity	No. Of CLA
Asian	37
Black	17
Mixed	32
Other	9
White	54
Total	149



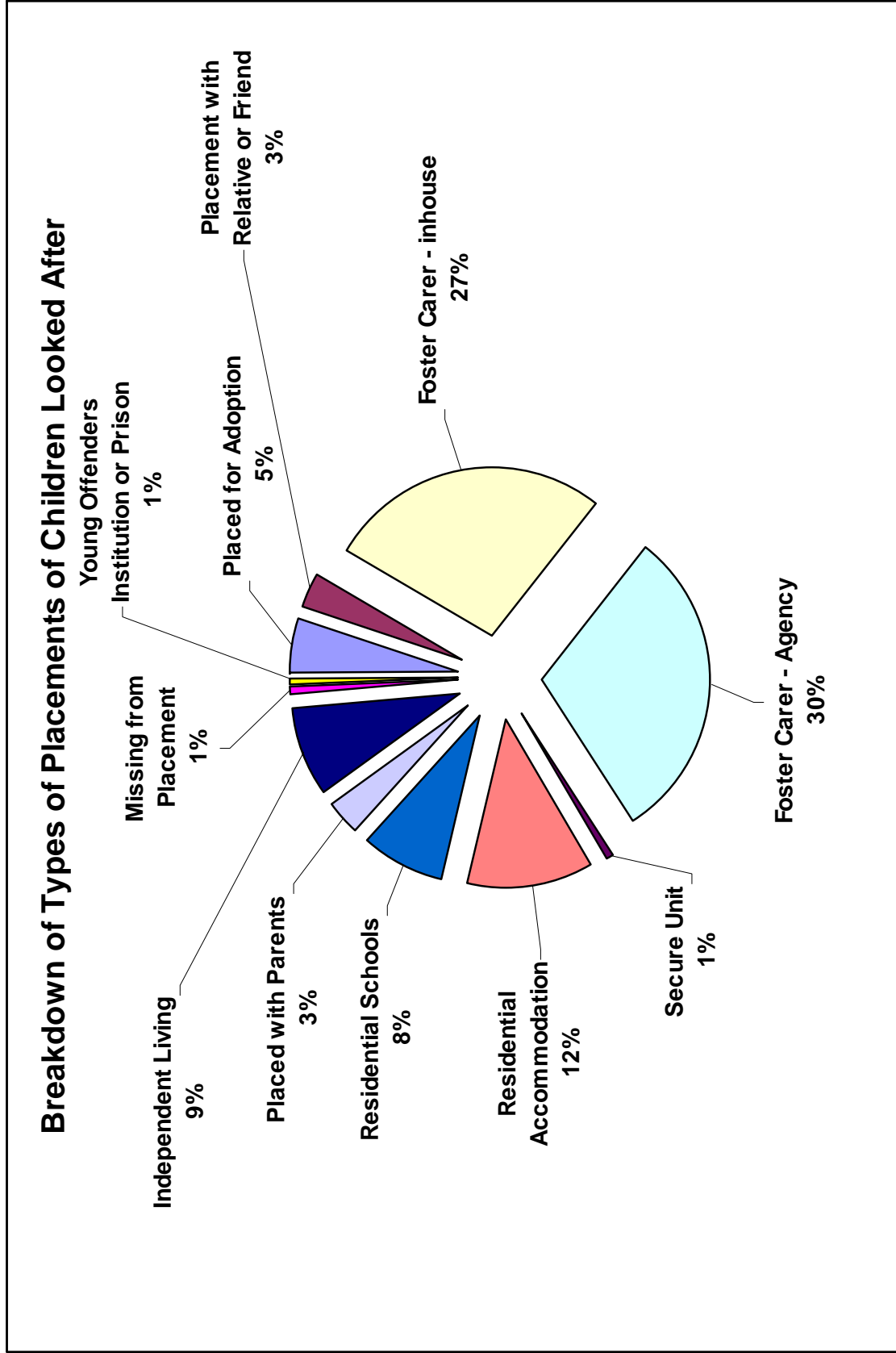
3.a) CLA by Ethnicity & Gender

CLA by Ethnicity & Gender at 28th Feb. 2009

Ethnicity	Female	Male	Total
Asian	8	29	37
Black	8	9	17
Mixed	11	21	32
Other	2	7	9
White	20	34	54
Total	49	100	149



4) CLA by Placement Type

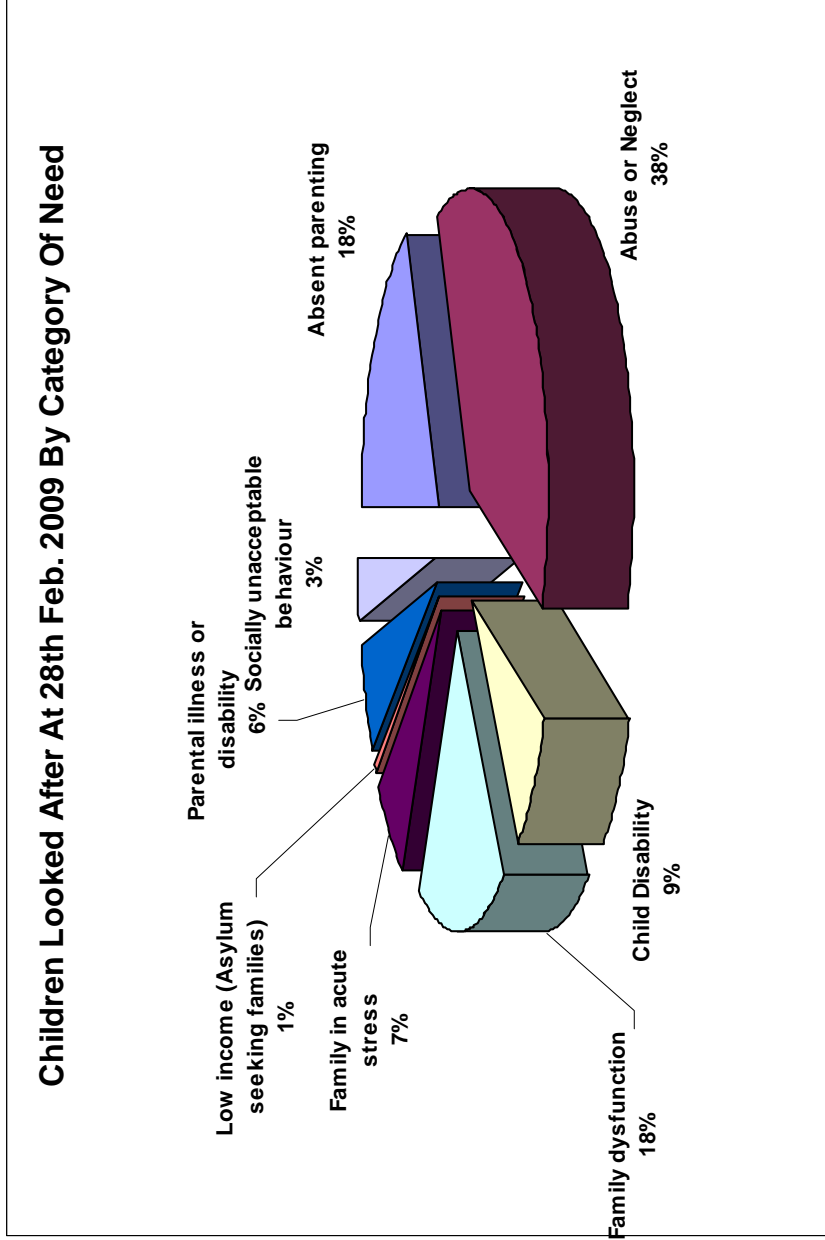


Children Looked After - Other Data as at 28th February 2009:

	31 st Aug. 2008	30 th Nov. 2008	February 2009
Number of Children Placed Out of Borough:	55	59	64
<u>Breakdown Of types of Residential Placements:</u>			
304 Honeypot Lane:	6	6	5
External Children's Homes:	9	6	9
Secure Unit:	0	3	1
Other supportive residential placements (pre - independence, mother & baby etc):	4	3	1
Residential Schools:	12	11	12
Social Work Allocation:	100%	98.72%	100%
Prediction for Adoptions: We are predicting 14 adoptions during the year.	3 adopted	6 adopted	19
<u>CLA GCSE Results -</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	
Attained at least 1 A* - G:	46.15%	66.7%	
Attained 5 or more A* - G:	43.15%	33.3%	
Attained 5 or more A* - C:	5.38%	11.1%	

5) Breakdown of Category of Need Of CLA

The breakdown of category of need as recorded when a child becomes looked after.

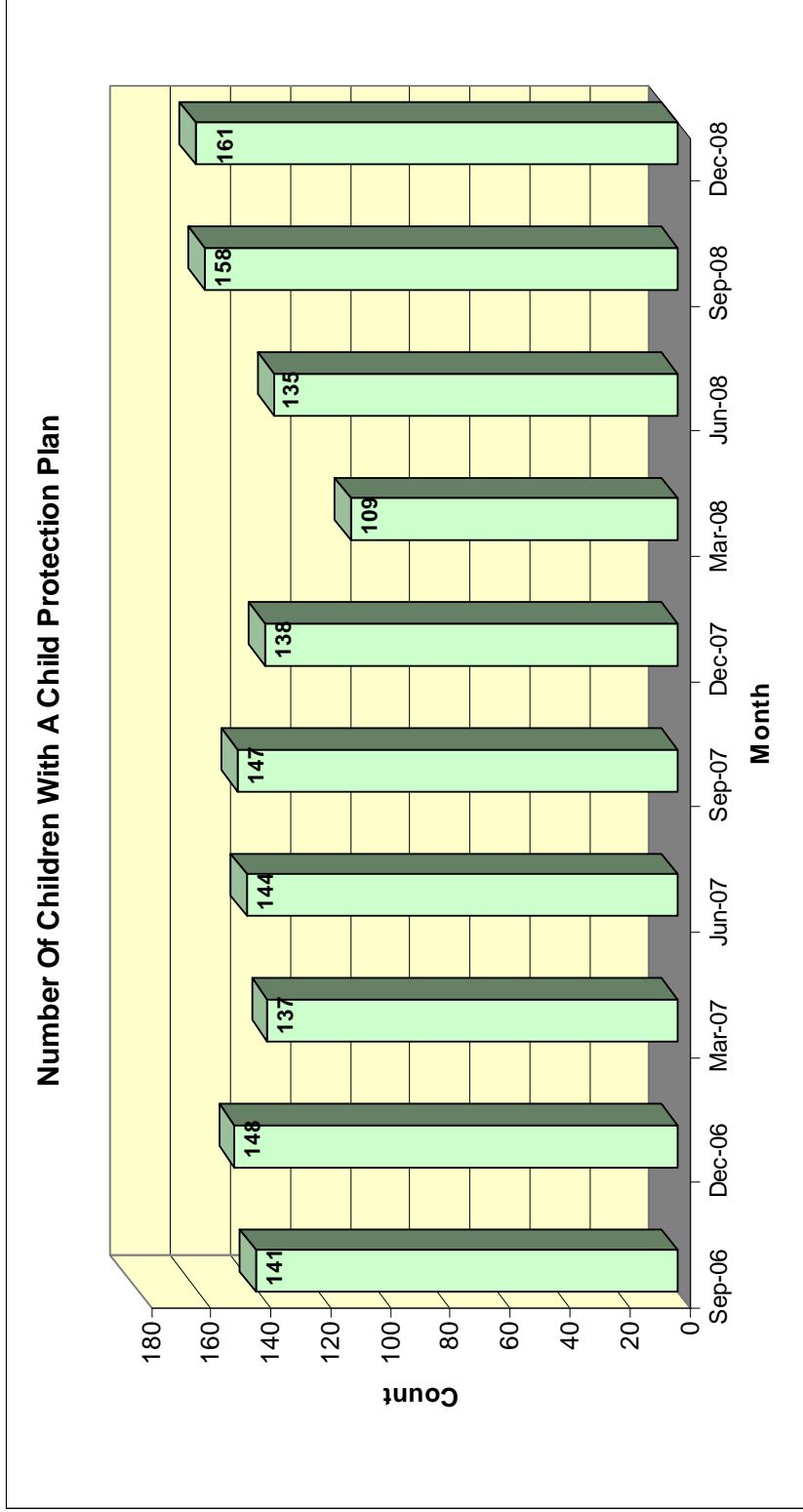


Category Of Need	Count
Absent parenting	27
Abuse or Neglect	57
Child Disability	13
Family dysfunction	27
Family in acute stress	10
Low income (Asylum seeking families)	1
Parental illness or disability	9
Socially unacceptable behaviour	5
Grand Total	149

**6) Safety of Vulnerable Children (Children Protection Plans)
 CPP by Quarters since April 2006**

There are 155 children who have a child protection plan in Harrow on 30th November 2008.

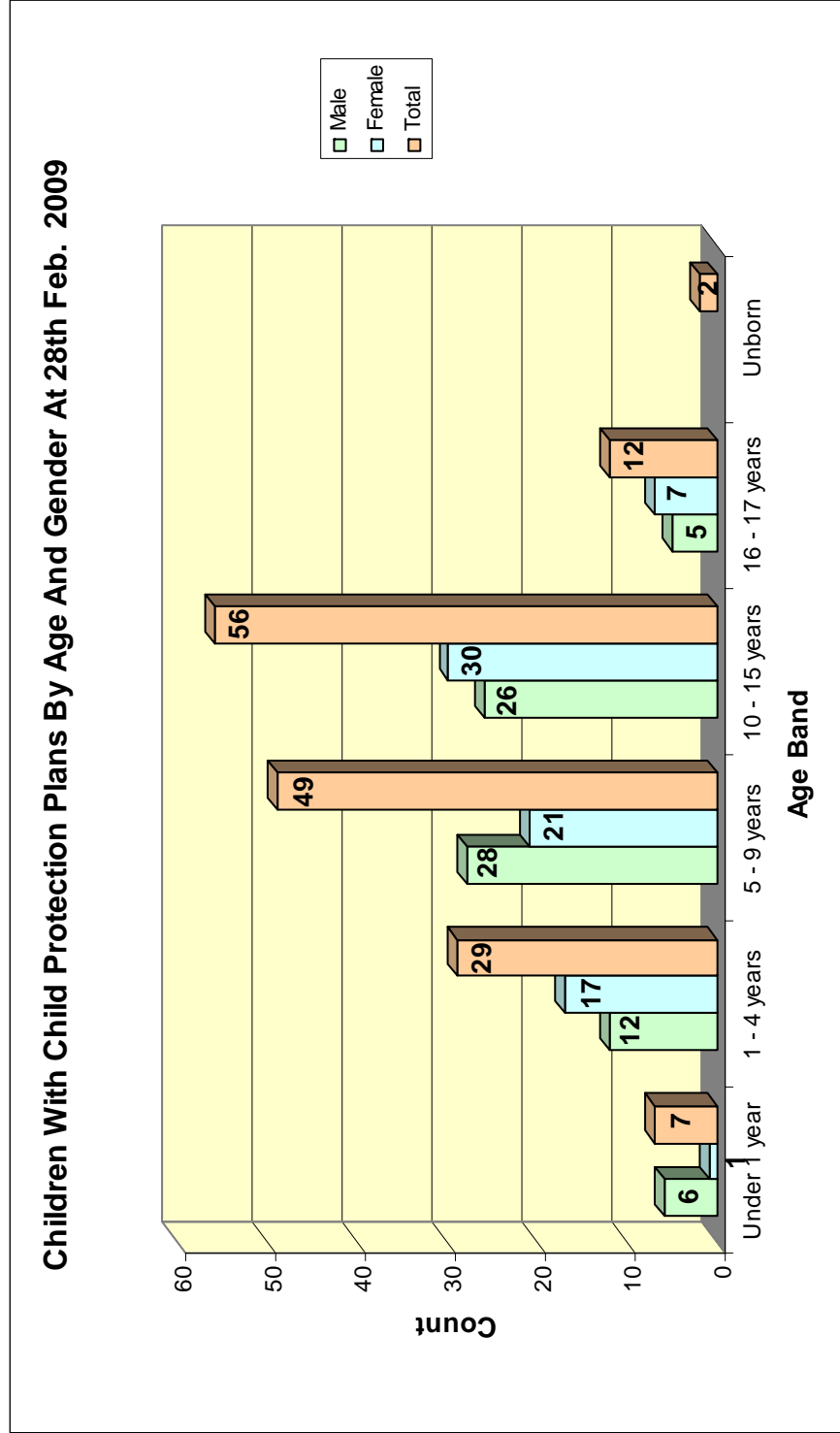
The bar chart below shows the number of children with Child Protection Plans by quarters since 2006



Month	No. Of CLA
Sep-06	141
Dec-06	148
Mar-07	137
Jun-07	144
Sep-07	147
Dec-07	138
Mar-08	109
Jun-08	135
Sep-08	158
Dec-08	161

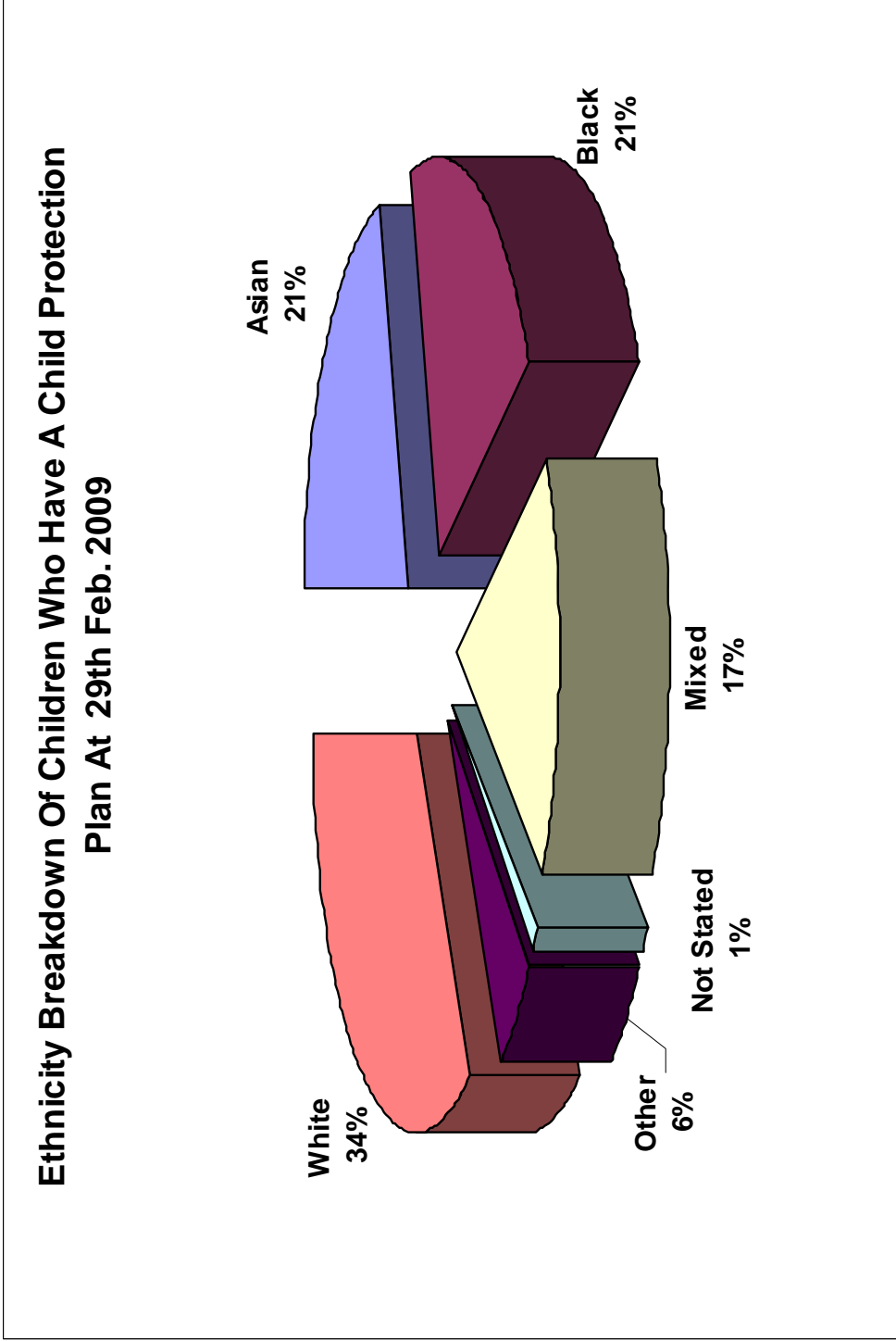
7) Children who have a CPP by Age and Gender

Age	Male	Female	Total
Under 1 year	6	1	7
1 - 4 years	12	17	29
5 - 9 years	28	21	49
10 - 15 years	26	30	56
16 - 17 years	5	7	12
Unborn			2
Total	70	74	155



8) Ethnicity of Children with a Child Protection Plan

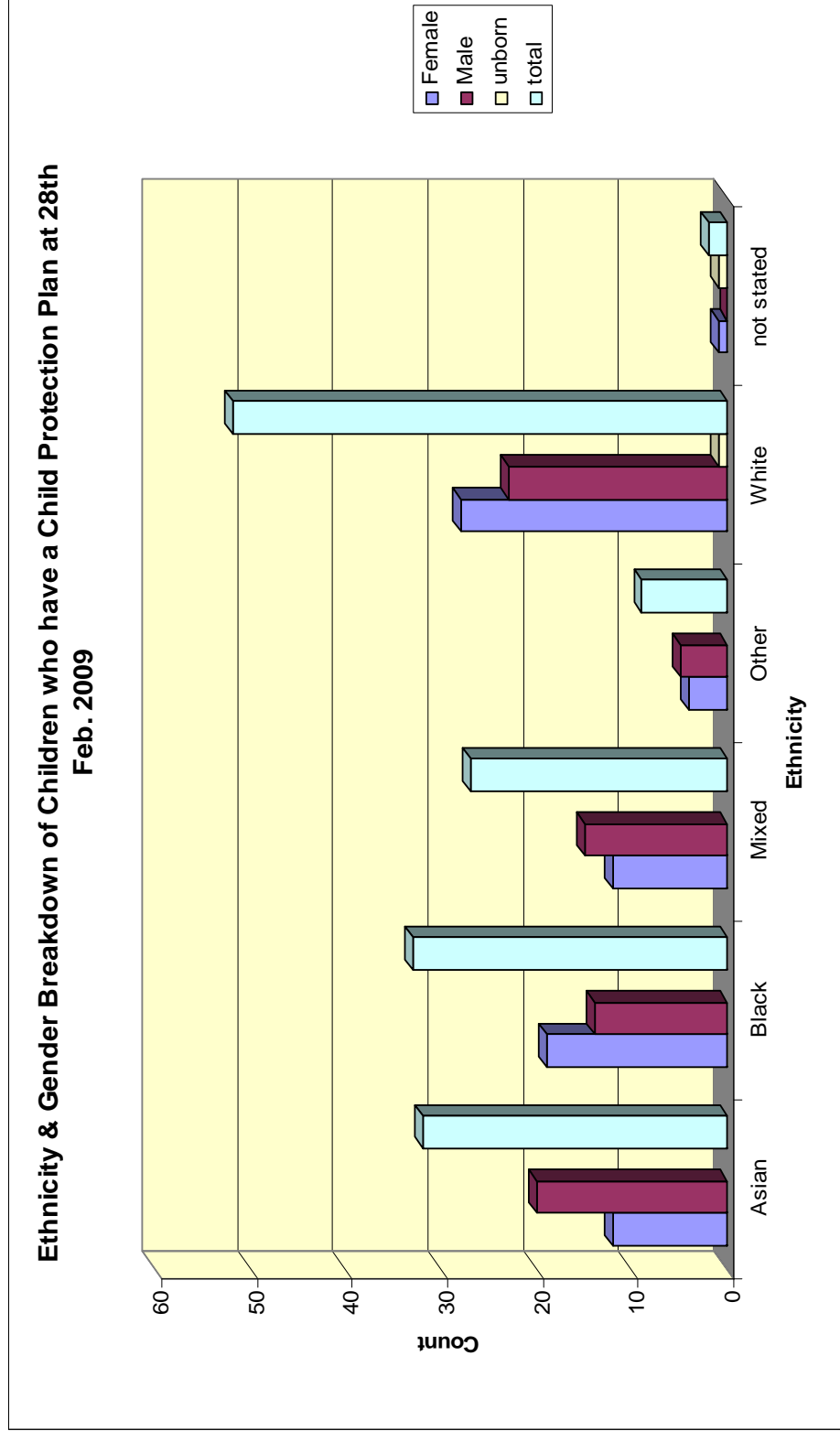
Breakdown of ethnicity of children with a Child Protection plan



Ethnicity	No. Of CLA
Asian	32
Black	33
Mixed	27
Not Stated	2
Other	9
White	52
Total	155

8.a) Ethnicity & Gender Breakdown of Children with a Child Protection Plan

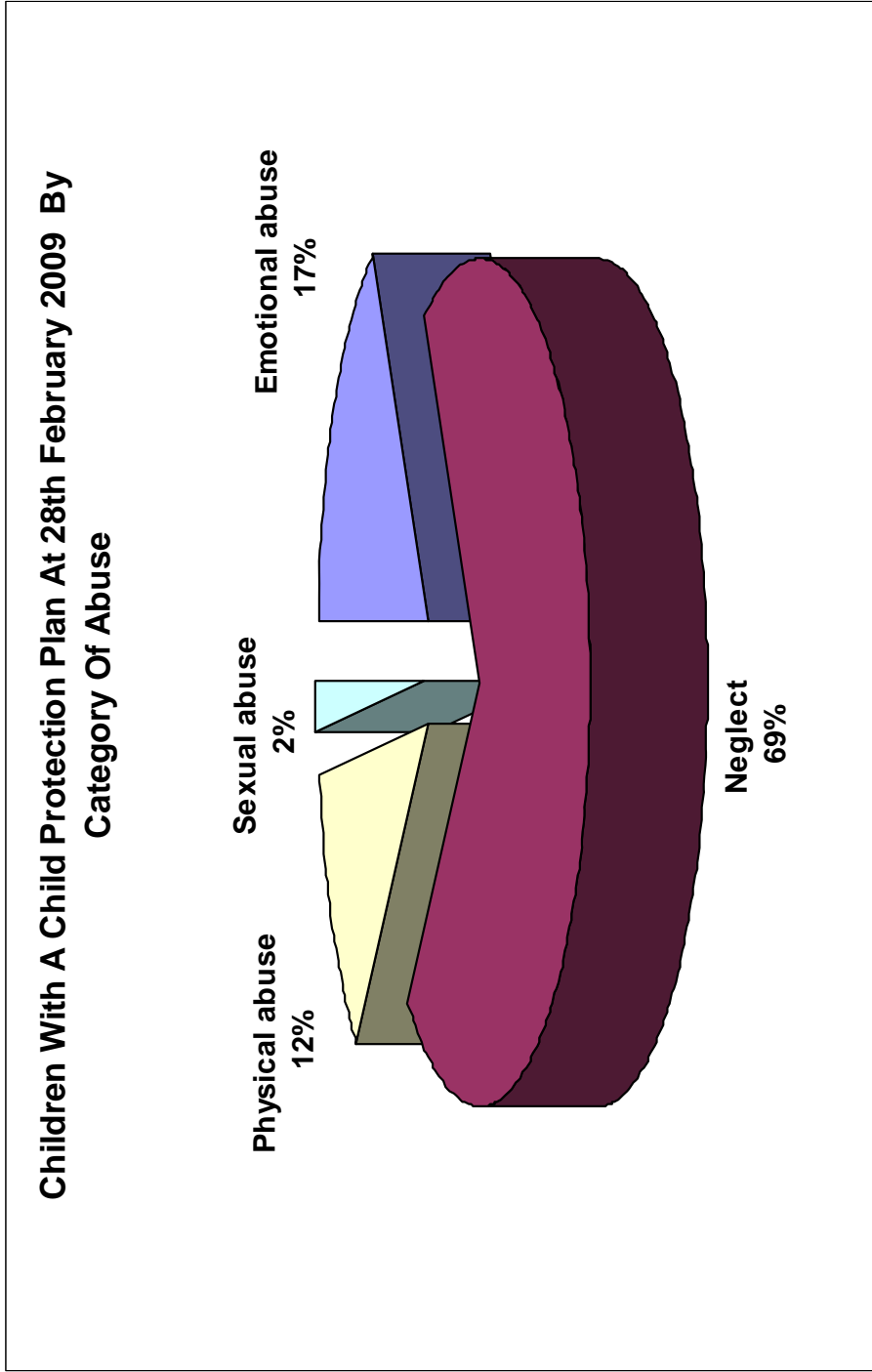
Ethnicity	Female	Male	unborn	total
Asian	12	20		32
Black	19	14		33
Mixed	12	15		27
Other	4	5		9
White	28	23	1	52
not stated	1	0	1	2
Total	76	77	2	155



9) CPP by Category of Abuse

Breakdown of categories of abuse of children with a Child Protection plan

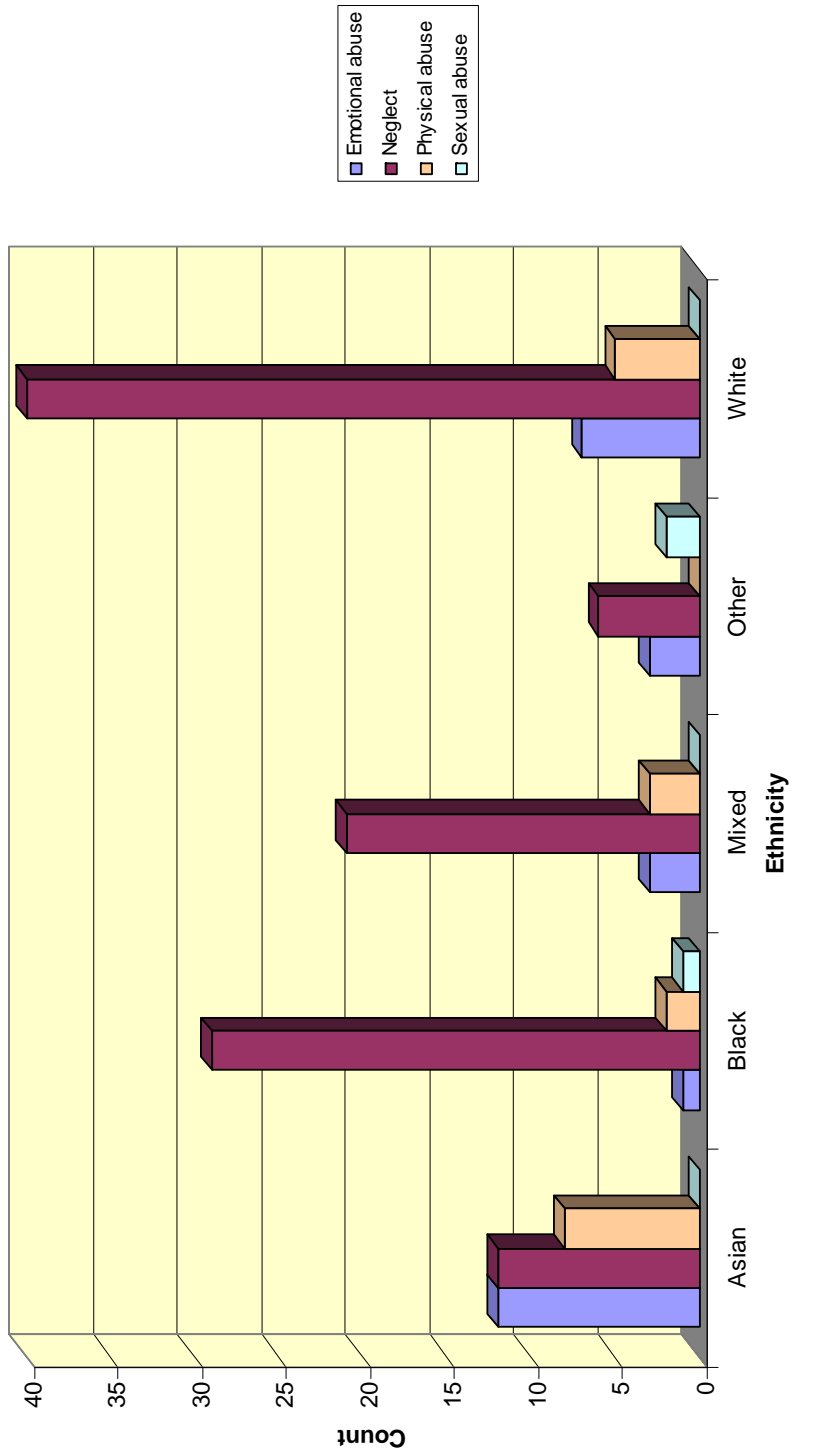
Category Of Abuse	Count
Emotional abuse	26
Neglect	108
Physical abuse	18
Sexual abuse	3
Grand Total	155



9.a) Category of Abuse by Ethnicity Breakdown

Category of Abuse	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	White
Emotional abuse	12	1	3	3	7
Neglect	12	29	21	6	40
Physical abuse	8	2	3	0	5
Sexual abuse	0	1	0	2	0
Total	32	33	27	11	52

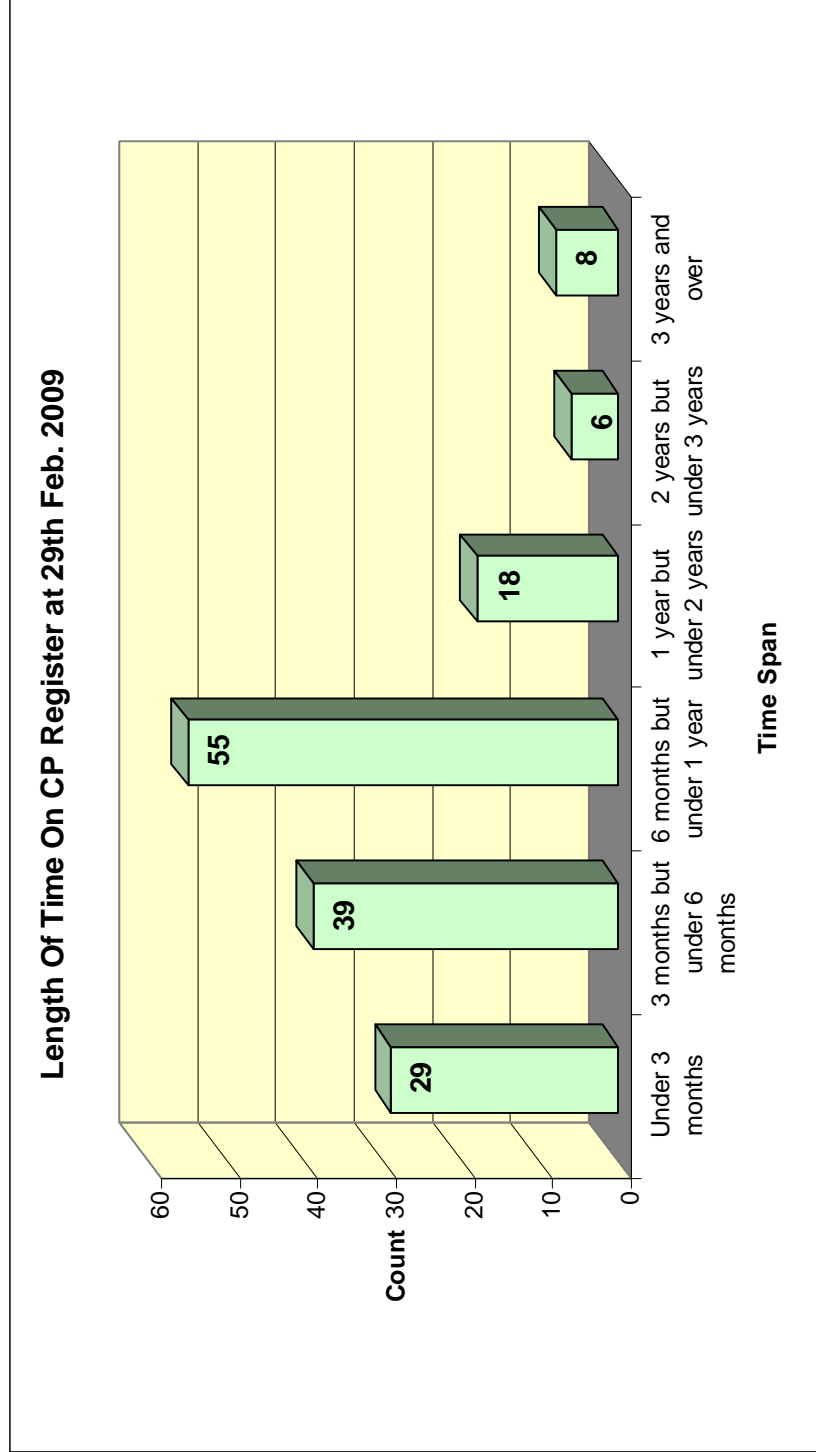
Category of Abuse by Ethnicity at 28th Feb. 2009



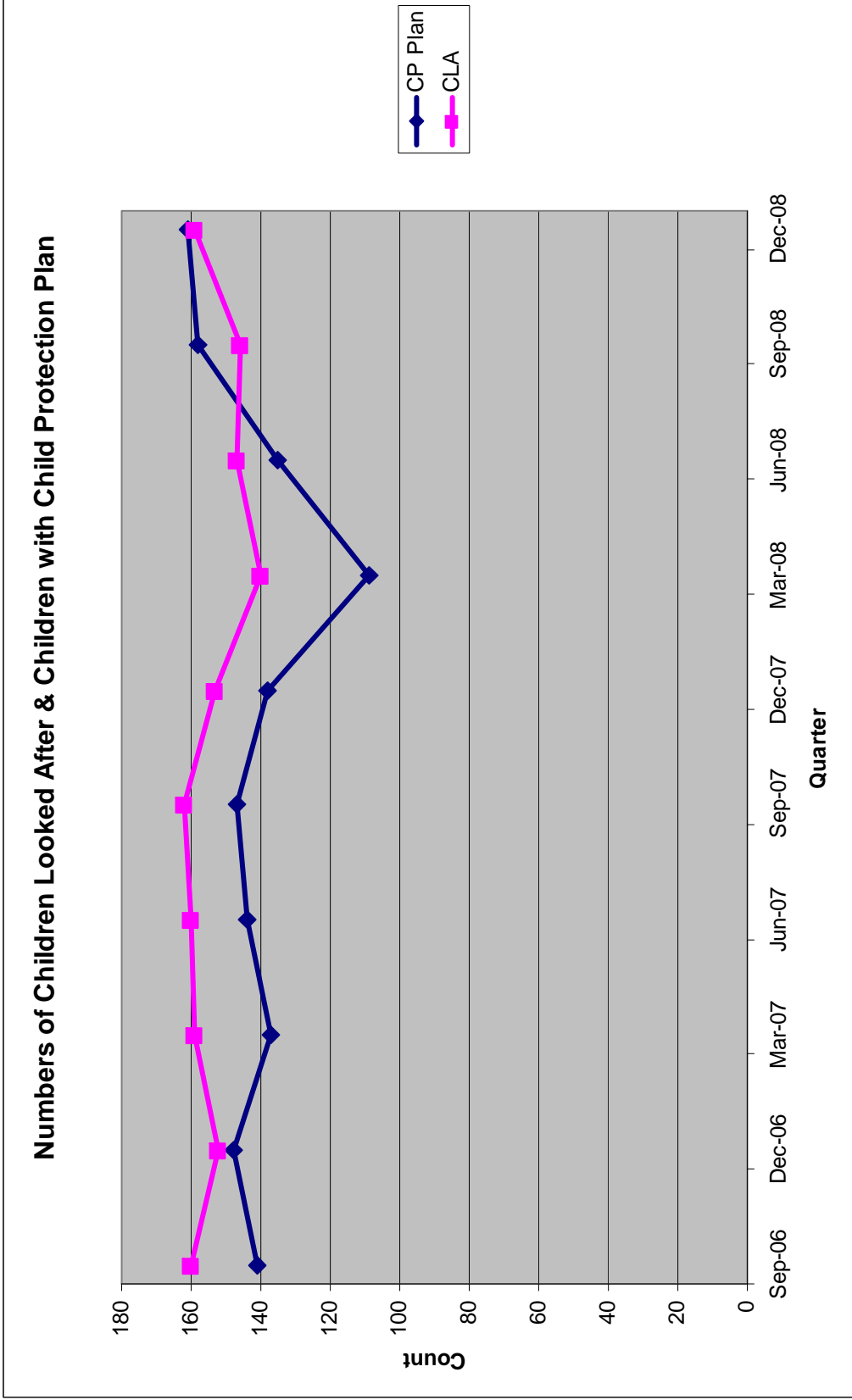
10) Duration of Child Protection Plans

This graph shows the number of children with a child protection plan at 30th November 2008 and the length of time since plan was created.

Length Of Time On CP Register	Count
Under 3 months	29
3 months but under 6 months	39
6 months but under 1 year	55
1 year but under 2 years	18
2 years but under 3 years	6
3 years and over	8
Total	155



12) Numbers of Children Looked After & Children with Child Protection Plan By Quarters since Sept. 2006



11) Key Performance Indicators for the end of February 2009

Domain	PAF	BVPI	Indicator	2007	2008	Comments	Stat neighbour comparator 2006/7 (latest available)	Target 2008/9	Performance at end of February 2009
A. Being Healthy	C19		Health of children looked after - The average of the percentages of children looked after continuously for at least 12 months, and who had a dental check and a medical assessment during the previous 12 months.	88%	95%	Ongoing close work with CLA Nurse & SW teams to meet target.	84%	95%	90.2%
B. Staying safe	A3		Re-registrations on the Child Protection Register - The percentage of children registered during the year on the Child Protection Register who had been previously registered.	11%	14%	Measures are in place to ensure that children have adequate monitoring and support in place following de-registration.	12%	13%	11.95%
	C24		Children looked after absent from school - The percentage of children who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months and were of school age, who missed a total of at least 25 days of schooling for any reason during the previous school year.	14%	14%	Education welfare team is being strengthened with CLA specialist, which should help address issue of out of borough children.	10%	10%	10.46%
	C20	162	Reviews of child protection cases (KT) - The percentage of child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed.	96%	98%	Good performance.	99%	100%	100%
	C21		Duration on the Child Protection Register - The percentage of children deregistered from the Child Protection Register during the year who had been on the Register continuously for two years or more.	22%	13%	Measures are now in place to ensure that a minimum of children are registered for more than 2 years such as monthly meetings of Team Managers with CP Co-ordinators to ensure CP plans are progressed without delay.	6%	10%	8.85%

	PAF	BVPI	Indicator	2007	2008	Comments	Stat neighbour comparator 2006/7 (latest available)	Target 2008/9	Performance at end of November 2008
B. Staying safe	C23	163	Adoptions of children looked after (KT) - The number of looked after children adopted during the year as a percentage of the number of children looked after (excluding unaccompanied asylum seekers) who had been looked after for 6 months or more.	3%	14%	Target Exceeded.	6%	14%	19.58%
	C64		Timing of core assessments - The percentage of Core Assessments that were completed within 35 working days of their commencement.	60%	77%	Performance is being monitored and the drop in performance is being addressed.	72%	80%	75.57%
	C68		Timeliness of reviews of Children looked after - The percentage of children looked after cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed during the year.	93%	90%	Good performance – this is estimated, currently we are addressing issues of uncompleted work which may effect this indicator.	91%	92%	97.2%
	A1	49	Stability of placements of children looked after (KT) - The percentage of children looked after with three or more placement moves in the year.	14%	10%	Very good performance	13%	10%	6.0%
	D78		Long-term stability of CLA (2.5 years) - The percentage of children aged under 16 who had been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years, who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption.	59%	58%	This indicator is currently unbanded. Long-term stability is an LAA target and we have agreed a target of 62% with central government.	67%	62%	64.29%
	B79		Children aged 10-15 in foster placements or placed for adoption - Of children aged at least 10 and under 16 looked after (excluding those placed with parents) the percentage who were in foster placements or placed for adoption.	64%	70%	This indicator is currently unbanded. Action is being taken to maximise stable placements which should take us steadily towards the statistical neighbour average.	82%	75%	65%

Domain	PAF	BVPI	Indicator	2007	2008	Comments	Stat neighbour comparator 2006/7 (latest available)	Target 2008/9	Performance at end of November 2008
D. Make a Positive Contribution	C18		Final warnings/reprimands and convictions of CLA - The percentage of children aged 10 or over who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months, who were given a final warning/reprimand or convicted during the year for an offence committed whilst they were looked after, expressed as a ratio of the percentage of all children aged 10 or over given a final warning/reprimand or convicted for an offence in the police force area.	3	tbc	Convictions and final warnings for CLA are high.	1	1	2.76
	C63		Participation of looked after children in reviews - The number of children and young people who communicated their views for each of their statutory reviews in the year as a percentage of the number of children and young people who were looked after during the year for more than four weeks.	90%	97%	The new system, View Point, and efforts of teams involved have greatly enhanced performance however, there are data quality issues which are being addressed. We are aware of only 2 children who have not participated in their reviews.	93%	95%	Data not available due to technical error with the reports

Guide to Key Performance Indicator bandings



CF/A1	Stability of placements of CLA					0 < 16.01			16.01 < 20	20 < = 100	
CF/A3	Re-registrations on the CPR		0 < 3	3 < 6	6 < 8	8 < 10	10 < 15	15 < 17.21	17.21 < 20	20 < 24	24 < = 100
CF/B79	CLA - roster/placed for adoption NEW		unbanded for 2005-06								
CF/C18	Final warnings/reprimands and convictions of CLA		0 < 1	1 < 3						3 +	
CF/C19	Health of children looked after		0 < 50	50 < 60	60 < 70	70 < 80	80 < = 100				
CF/C20	Reviews of child protection cases		0 < 92.5	92.5 < 95	95 < 97.5	97.5 < 100	100				
CF/C21	Duration on the CPR		0 < 3	3 < 6	6 < 7	7 < 8	8 < 25	0 < 10	10 < 15	15 < 20	20 < = 100
CF/C23	Adoptions of children looked after									25 < = 100	
CF/C24	Children looked after absent from school						0 < 5	5 < 10	10 < 15	15 < 20	20 +
CF/C64	Timing of core assessments		0 < 60	60 < 70	70 < 75	75 < 80	80 < = 100				
CF/C68	Timeliness of reviews for LAC		0 < 80	80 < 85	85 < 90	90 < 95	95 < = 100				
Corporate Planning	Stability of CLA NEW		unbanded for 2005-06								

Created by Performance Team
Data to February 2009

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Committee:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	7 April 2009
Subject:	Update on the development of the “Children in Care Council” in line with the London Pledge
Responsible Officer:	Corporate Director of Children’s Services - Paul Clark
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services - Councillor Christine Bednell
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary

FOR INFORMATION

- 1.1 This reports sets out to give an update in the progress made to develop a “Children in Care Council” which will support the Corporate Parenting Panel in their deliberations, in line with the London Pledge.

Section 2 – Report

- 2.1 “Young Voices” group which is a forum for Looked after children from the age of 11yrs to 18yrs, has been re-launched from November 2008.

- 2.2 The “Young Voices” group has been meeting regularly to consult, collate and plan.
- 2.3 The “Young Voices” has recently begun their training to develop themselves into a Children in Care Council. This is made up of a diverse group of children and young people looked after from; foster care, unaccompanied young people seeking asylum and Care leavers.
- 2.4 It has also linked into national programmes such as Foster Care Network and getting their input as well.
- 2.5 This group has recently been on a residential trip to “Woodrow High House” in Amersham, to be trained further in skills like;
- How to hold and attend meetings
 - How to communicate better.
 - How to make decisions.
- 2.6 This group will meet on an agreed date with the Corporate Parents to give a presentation of all their achievement so far.
- 2.7 It is proposed that the group will then draft a terms of reference together with the Corporate Parenting Panel. This will include lines of communication, and the status of the group.

Section 3 – Further Information

3.1 The progress of developing a “Children in Care Council” is for Panel to consider and to provide direction

Section 4 – Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report

<p>Name: Emma Stabler</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer</p>
<p>Date: 25 March 2009</p>		

Section 5 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

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Committee:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	7 April 2009
Subject:	Information Report – Progress on the implementation of the London Pledge for Children Looked After
Responsible Officer:	Corporate Director of Children’s Services - Paul Clark
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services - Councillor Christine Bednell
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary

FOR INFORMATION

- 1.1. Implementation report on the London Pledge, which aims to ensure that children and young people in care across London have equal access to the same range of key services

Section 2 – Report

2.1 The London Pledge was signed off on behalf of the Local Authority at a London wide launch on 25th November 2008.

2.2 The Life Chances Forum has taken on the responsibility for ensuring that the London Pledge is implemented at a Local Level. This has been on a number of levels.

2.3 The Life Chances Forum has asked that the Virtual Children Looked After Virtual Team project manage the implementation with particular reference to:

- Producing a guide for staff as to how every relevant child looked after has his or her own pledge. This will inevitably require a framework as to when, how, and who will provide particular aspects of the pledge
- Identifying how the progress of each pledge can be tracked on Frameworki
- Considering any outstanding financial commitments
- Considering how the pledge may merge with the Care Leavers charter

2.4 We have, by way of the Life Chances Forum, considered how we will meet the financial costs inherent in the pledge. The previous report to Corporate Parenting highlighted an approximation of the cost to implement the pledge and that a grant has been provided by way of Care Matters.

2.5 The Life Chances Forum has agreed that the following costs, which were identified by the previous report to the Corporate Parenting Panel, will be financed by way of grants.

- The cost of ensuring that children looked after receive information about their rights and expectations of the Council, both in hard copy and online.
- Laptops for CLA will be covered by a successful bid for IT monies from the Department of Children, Schools and Families. A manager has been identified to manage this process.

2.6 We are awaiting the outcome of the work undertaken by the CLA Virtual Team meeting to decide how we:

- Allocate free leisure passes
- Allocate bicycles and the criteria to use

2.7 Officers will endeavor to meet the demands of the pledge and as already stated the Life Chances Forum will lead in mapping out what will be required.

2.8 We take the view that the London Pledge should not be used as a tick box of what we provide to CLA. Rather, like our own children, the individual pledge will consider with each child/young person what he or she needs now, in the near future and in the distant future. The pledge will be reviewed at each Child Care Review with the expectation that it be amended with the changing circumstances of the child/young person.

Section 3 – Further Information

3.1 This report is for Panel to consider and to provide direction

Section 4 – Financial Implications

4.1 This report is for information only. The next Life Changes Forum will review and firm up the items to be provided under the pledge and will identify the budgets available in 2009/10 to fund the pledge. The package of support will have to be contained within existing 2009/10 budgets. The Corporate Parenting Panel will be advised of the outcomes.

Name: Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 26 March 2009		

Section 5- Contact Details and Background Papers

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Committee:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	7 April 2009
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT - Adoption Services provided by Harrow Council Children's Services
Responsible Officer:	Corporate Director of Children's Services – Paul Clark
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services - Councillor Christine Bednell
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	APPENDIX A - Adoption Comparisons APPENDIX B – Adoption Trends

Section 1 – Summary

This report outlines the Adoption Services provided by Harrow Council Children's Services.

REPORT FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Section 2 – Report

Statement of Purpose for the Adoption Service is as follows:

Aims

1. To ensure that the needs, wishes, welfare and safety of the child are at the centre of the adoption process
2. To ensure that where it is not possible for Looked After Children to be reunited with their birth families they are provided with a permanent, stable alternative family
3. To ensure that people who are interested in becoming adoptive parents (including those wishing to adopt a child from overseas) are welcomed without prejudice, responded to promptly and given clear information.
4. To ensure that birth families are treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process and have access to adoption services

Objectives

- 1) To ensure that all Looked After Children have permanency plans in place by their second Statutory Review
 - 2) To ensure permanency plans are robustly monitored and implemented in line with legislation and National Standards
 - 3) To work with our partner agency "Coram Family" to ensure all Looked After Children, where the plan is adoption, are matched with suitable adopters within an appropriate timeframe
 - 4) To develop a range of adoption support services including practical, financial and therapeutic services, in partnership with other agencies
 - 5) To ensure that Harrow Adoption Service employs staff with appropriate and sufficient skills, knowledge and experience to deliver the adoption service
-
- 1) The needs, rights and welfare of children are our paramount concern
 - 2) Every child is entitled to a permanent family throughout their childhood, which should meet all their needs in terms of religion, ethnicity, language, physical, social and emotional development and that promotes a supportive lifelong relationship.
 - 3) We recognise the lifelong implications of adoption for all parties and, in partnership with other agencies, offer comprehensive support services to adopters, carers and adopted children and adults
 - 4) We understand the importance of birth parents and relatives of the children we place. We promote a practice where children grow up with the knowledge and understanding of their birth family so as to have a complete sense of their identity. Unless there are serious safeguarding issues we support direct and indirect contact with birth relatives and provide them with support to enable this to take place.

Legal Framework

The Legal Framework governing the Local Authority's responsibilities to provide adoption services is the Adoption and Children Act 2002. The Cabinet Office introduced this following a complete review of adoption in February 2000. A Government White Paper "Adoption – a new approach" was published in December 2000. This outlined a commitment to modernise the adoption system, make it work more consistently and promote greater use of adoption where appropriate. It replaced all previous adoption legislation

The key principles of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 are as follows:

- 1) The needs and welfare of children must be at the centre of the adoption process.
- 2) The need to avoid undue delay in planning for permanence and adoption when children cannot be cared for by their own birth family
- 3) The Act widens the options for permanence by extending Residence Orders to 18 years and by introducing a new permanence option called Special Guardianship Orders
- 4) The Act widens the range of people who can be considered as prospective adopters by allowing unmarried couples to adopt jointly and also places a duty on local authorities to ensure that the support and financial assistance needed is available to people affected by adoption
- 5) The Act also states that local authorities have to take a life long view of adoption and sets out clear responsibilities regarding post adoption support and the release of sensitive and identifying information held in adoption records

Permanency Planning

All Looked After Children are required to have a permanency plan by their second CLA Review i.e. 4 months after becoming looked after. This is to ensure that there is minimal delay in decision-making and to enable children to develop appropriate attachments to their carers and a sense of security, stability and identity

Permanent options include the following;

- 1) Reunification home with birth family
- 2) Adoption
- 3) Special Guardianship
- 4) Residence Order
- 5) Long term Fostering

Parental Responsibility

Adoption, Special Guardianship and Residence Orders are legal orders granted by the Court and these give the carers/guardians parental responsibility (PR).

An Adoption Order gives absolute and exclusive parental responsibility which would mean the birth parents would lose their PR whereby the adopters become the legal parents

With Special Guardianship Orders and Residence Orders the carers gain PR but this is not totally exclusive to them as birth parents retain nominal PR.

Adoption is a life long arrangement whereas Special Guardianship Orders and Residence Orders expire when a child is 18 years old.

Long term fostering is an arrangement where a child remains looked after by the local authority. The identified foster carers continue to care for the child on a long term basis. In this situation the local authority may have acquired PR as a result of a Care Order or may continue to work in partnership with the birth parents who retain their PR.

The Harrow - Coram Adoption Partnership

Harrow has entered into a unique partnership with Coram Family (a voluntary adoption agency) regarding the provision of domestic adoption services. The partnership began on 1st March 2007 following a successful pilot phase, which began on 1st September 2006

Coram provide a Team Manager, a Senior Practitioner and a administrator who work together with Harrow socialcare staff.

The terms of the service specification of the partnership are as follows;

- 1) Residents of Harrow Council who wish to adopt children in the UK are referred to Coram. They will be counselled and given information about adoption and the children available for adoption through Coram (including Looked After Children in Harrow for whom adopters are sought). Where appropriate they will then offer preparation, training and assessment via Coram.
- 2) Coram are responsible for family finding for Harrow's Looked After Children in respect of whom a 'should be placed for adoption' decision has been taken. This will involve working closely with the child's social worker in Harrow to ensure that the child is prepared, necessary work with the birth parents and other relatives has been undertaken and all assessments are up to date and complete
- 3) Matches with adoptive families will be first sought among the families

- approved by Coram adoption teams which cover a wide geographic area and which recruit adopters from a range of ethnic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds. Where necessary, matches will be sought via interagency placements using the West London Adoption Consortium, the National Adoption Register and focussed advertising and family finding.
- 4) The Coram Team Manager will be closely involved in the permanence planning process for children looked after by Harrow where there is a possibility of an adoption plan being made. She will chair all Permanency Planning Meetings in respect of these children and monitor the progress of assessments and counselling of birth parents, relatives and the children concerned. These meetings occur on a six weekly basis. She will also attend Harrow's monthly Care Proceedings & Permanency Tracking Panel to which she will provide written up-dated reports on all the children Coram are working with.
 - 5) Harrow's Placement Service Manager will chair all selection meetings where adoption is the plan and Coram will provide clear reports and will attend alongside the child's social worker to help determine the selection where more than one family is being considered for a child
 - 6) The selected family will be presented for a match with the child (ren) concerned to Harrow's Adoption and Permanency Panel where a formal recommendation will be made to Harrow's Agency decision maker who is Paul Clark, Corporate Director - Children's Services.
 - 7) Support during introductions, and once children are placed, should be clearly documented in the Adoption Support Plan which is presented to the Adoption & Permanency Panel alongside the matching report. Coram will provide a range of post adoption support services to their adopters. Harrow retains responsibility for providing financial support and for provision of education and health resources. Harrow also retains responsibility for providing adoption support services to residents of the borough who need an adoption support service but where Coram were not involved in making the placement.

Concurrent Planning

Harrow also has access to Coram's Concurrent Planning Project which enables babies to be placed with a foster carer who may become the child's eventual adoptive parent if reunification is not possible. Concurrent carers are approved as both foster carers and adopters so as to enable babies to be placed early and to remain with their carers.

Evaluation

The contract with Coram Family is initially for three years with provision for a review after two years. Service Managers from both agencies meet regularly to monitor the partnership and to address any practice issues as they arise.

This is a unique partnership, which has attracted national interest. The DCSF has funded a research project into the partnership. Julie Selwyn from the Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies at University of Bristol, has recently published her evaluation report about the Harrow - Corama Adoption Partnership which is very positive. This is likely to be used by other local authorities considering a similar partnership arrangement.

The Adoption Support and Kinship Care Team

Harrow Council also has its own in house Adoption Support and Kinship Care Team (ASK Team). The ASK Team consists of one Team Manager, four Social Workers and one Life Story and Letterbox Coordinator.

The ASK team are responsible for the following areas of work

1) Intercountry Adoption

The ASK Team Manager is responsible for coordinating all enquiries, preparation training and assessments regarding Intercountry adoption. If the team have capacity to undertake the assessments they will allocate within the team. If not they will be allocated to a sessional worker. All assessments will be managed by the ASK Team Manager. All intercountry adopters attend the preparation group facilitated by the Intercountry Adoption Centre. The financial arrangements for intercountry adoption are agreed with the West London Adoption Consortium

2) Kinship Care

The ASK Team is responsible for all kinship assessments for Looked After children and for taking these assessments to the appropriate panels for approval. All permanent arrangements, Adoption, Special Guardianship and Long Term Fostering need to be presented to the Adoption and Permanency Panel

3) Special Guardianship Order Assessments

The ASK Team is responsible for all SGO assessments whether Kinship or non kinship and for completing the reports for Panel and Court.

4) Relinquished Babies

The ASK Team have case responsibility for relinquished babies and the counselling work with birth mothers and family. They are also responsible for liaising with CAF/CASS, so that formal consent to adoption can be obtained, and for completing all the appropriate reports so a 'should be placed for adoption' decision can be obtained. Once the Duty and Assessment Team have identified that there is a relinquished baby for adoption they transfer the case to the ASK Team who take over responsibility for the aforementioned casework

5) Post Adoption Support Assessments

All requests for post adoption support assessments are managed by the ASK Team Manager who allocates them within her team. These include requests from approved adopters who live in Harrow and those who have had children placed by Harrow within the last three years.

6) Long Term Fostering Assessments

All assessments of Long-Term Foster Carers are undertaken by the ASK Team and are taken to the Adoption and Permanency Panel for approval. The ASK Team are also responsible for all the family finding for children where long term fostering is the plan. The ASK Team Manager will chair regular Permanency Planning Meetings for all children awaiting long term fostering.

7) Support to Birth Families & Birth Relatives

The ASK Team are responsible for offering support to birth parents or birth relatives affected by adoption. We may also use the expertise of other agencies, such as After Adoption or the Post Adoption Centre, where necessary and appropriate.

8) Birth Record Counselling

The ASK Team are responsible for undertaking all Section 51 counselling and all work regarding birth record counselling

9) Coordination of Contact

Within the ASK Team there is a specialist Contact Coordinator who coordinates all post adoption contact arrangements. They liaise with all parties to ensure all forms of contact, direct and indirect, are managed appropriately and are in the best interests of the child. Following the refurbishment of the ground floor of the former Silverdale Children's Residential Unit, we now have an in-house Contact Centre. This provides a family friendly environment with experienced contact supervisors.

This centre is being further developed to become a Children's Centre, in partnership with Early Years and Extended Community Services, to provide specific and targeted services for children in Harrow. Additional services will be provided at the centre following the refurbishment of the first floor of the building.

10)Advice to Other Professionals

The ASK Team provide advice, support and training to other professionals in all aspects of adoption and permanency planning and promote robust and timely care planning.

The Adoption and Permanency Panel

The Adoption and Permanency Panel is constituted to meet the requirements of both the Adoption and Fostering Regulations so as to consider all forms of permanency ,adoption, special guardianship, residence orders and long term fostering

The Panel will consider the following;

- Recommendations for children to be placed for adoption
- Approval of adopters
- Matching children where the plan is adoption with approved adopters
- Recommendations regarding other forms of permanency – Special Guardianship, Residence orders and Long term fostering
- Significant changes to a child's adoption/ permanence decision eg from adoption to long term fostering

The Panel can also give advice regarding care planning and permanency

The Panel membership consists of an independent Chair and both independent and agency members. An elected member is also on the panel

The Care Proceedings and Permanency Tracking Panel

This Panel monitors the progress of all care proceedings and tracks each looked after child requiring adoption, or other forms of permanency, to monitor the progress of their plans and to avoid drift and delay. The Panel considers legal issues, care & permanency planning casework arrangements and resource/placement management issues. The Panel identifies through an early alert system children who may become subject to care proceedings, those that are subject to care proceedings and those where a final care hearing has taken place and where the Care Plan for adoption and permanency needs to be implemented.

The West London Adoption Consortium

Harrow are members of the West London Adoption Consortium along with Ealing, Hillingdon, Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Hounslow. The Consortium meets six times a year to discuss shared areas of development and exchange ideas and good practice. There is a rotating chair of the Consortium and Harrow are currently chairing.

Ofsted's Adoption Inspection

All adoption agencies have regular inspections by Ofsted. These occur every three years. The last inspection in Harrow was in September 2008. The service was judged to be satisfactory with the management and organisation being up-graded and judged as good.

It was noted that all the previous inspection recommendations and requirements had been addressed. We have an action plan in place for the requirements and recommendations from the September '08 inspection

There were two new statutory requirements following the inspection. These were as follows;

- 1) That all sessional staff are subject to the same robust recruitment procedures as permanent staff. This is now in place
- 2) That staff who prepare reports on adopters are suitably experienced in adoption work. We have since appointed a Senior Practitioner in the ASK Team who is supervising all this work. This requirement is now met

We had ten recommendations as follows;

- 1) That all assessments are rigorous and analytical. All members of the ASK Team have been on assessment training and all assessments are supervised by the Senior Practitioner or Team Manager to ensure standards are maintained. We have also appointed a Training and Development Officer in the Fostering and Adoption Service.
- 2) Develop the Health and Safety questionnaire to cover weapons, poisonous plants and hanging cords. This has been completed
- 3) To implement the system for renewal of CRB checks. This has now been agreed with Shared Services
- 4) Implement a strategic approach to adoption support. The new Senior Practitioner is developing these services. We now have an Adoption Support Group and an Adoption Newsletter for distribution to adopters. We also have membership of the Post Adoption Centre
- 5) Implement a more effective service for birth parents, which addresses the need for support independent of the child's social worker. The Post Adoption Centre offers this service and we have ensured that this service

- is offered to all parents whose children have a plan of adoption
- 6) Ensure that all children have a high quality life storybook, which clearly explains the reasons for their adoption. This is now in place and is addressed through the Permanency Planning Meetings and the Lifestory and Letterbox Coordinator
 - 7) Implement a more strategic approach to the support and services offered to birth relatives and adopted adults. We now have a clear system regarding these services which is managed by the ASK Team Manager.
 - 8) Ensure our policies and procedures are updated in line with our current practice. These are currently being reviewed and updated
 - 9) Ensure the nominated manager has a suitable management qualification. This is in place for April 2009
 - 10) Ensure files on sessional workers contain all the required information. These have all been updated

Harrow's Performance - Successful Outcomes for Children

The partnership with Coram Family, the success of the Panels and the benefits of having a permanent staff group has led to significant progress in our adoption performance.

Our Key performance indicator relates to the percentage of Looked After Children who become adopted, or who were made subject to a Special Guardianship Order. The following illustrates the significant progress made over the last 3 reporting years;

- In 2006/07 Harrow's performance was 2.73%
- In 2007/08 Harrow's performance was 14%
- In 2008/09 Harrow's performance was 20%

The 2008/09 performance is now one of the highest in the country and has meant that Looked After Children in Harrow are having permanency secured for them within reasonable timeframes and benefitting from the opportunity to develop lifelong attachments and a sense of security and identity which are prerequisites for fulfilling their potential.

We have also developed our post adoption services for young people, adopters and birth parents to ensure that everyone involved in adoption will receive reasonable assistance and support

Section 3 – Further Information

None provided

Section 4 – Financial Implications

The Harrow - Coram Adoption Partnership is funded via the existing Placement Service budget. Effective management and robust financial monitoring of the contract have ensured value and no overspend year on year. The 2009/10 allocated budget for the Harrow – Coram Adoption Partnership is £265,000.

Name: **Emma Stabler**



on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: **26 March 2009**

Section 5 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Gail Hancock,
Head of Service - Safeguarding, Family Placment & Support

Peter Tolley,
Placement Service Manager

Background Papers:

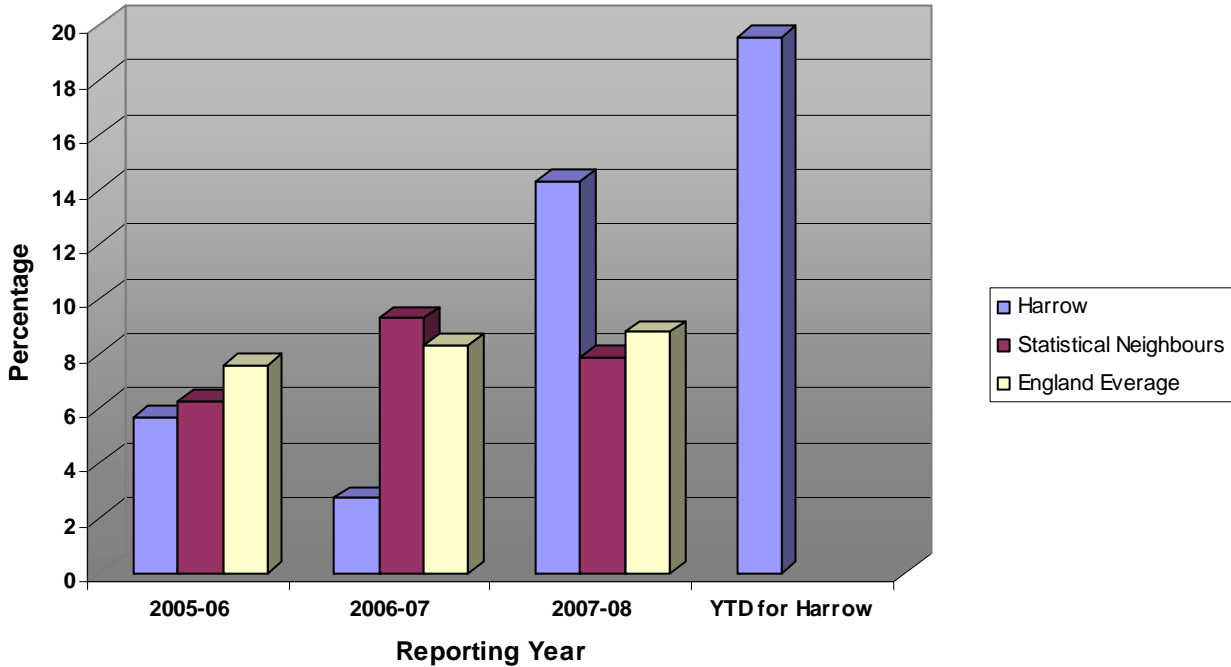
Executive Summary of Evaluation of the Harrow - Copram Adoption Partnership undertaken by the Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies at Bristol University (2009) funded by DCSF

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APPENDIX A - Adoption Comparisons

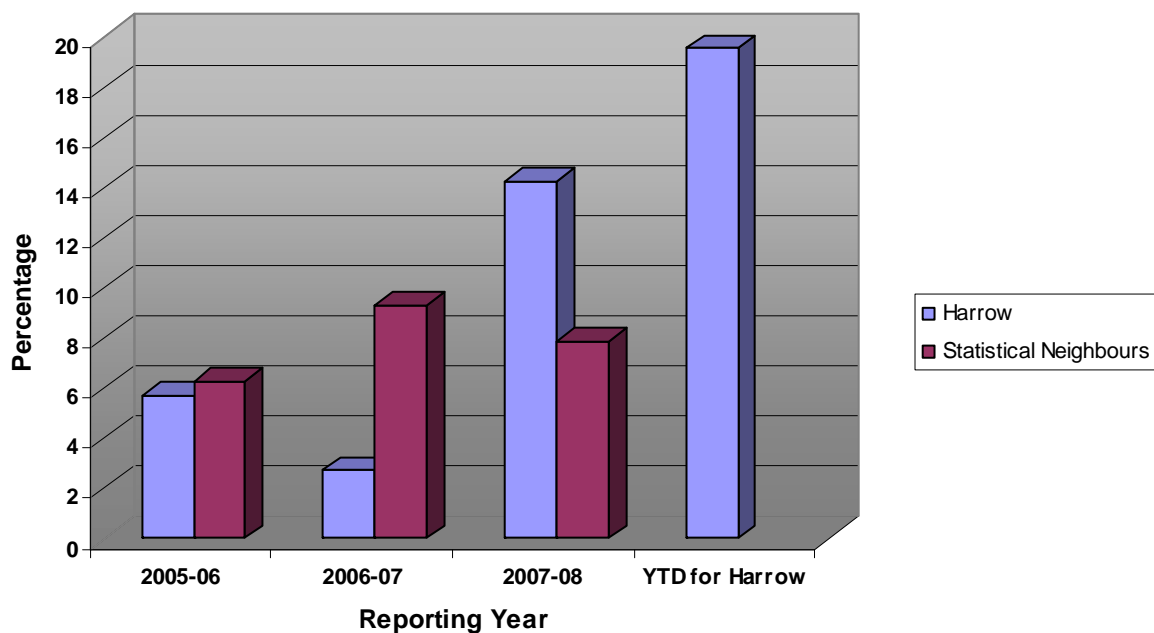
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	YTD for Harrow
Harrow	5.7	2.73	14.3	19.58
Statistical Neighbours	6.3	9.3	7.9	
England Everage	7.6	8.3	8.8	

Adoption Performance comparison over 3 years



	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	YTD for Harrow
Harrow	5.7	2.73	14.3	19.58
Statistical Neighbours	6.3	9.3	7.9	

Adoption Performance comparison over 3 years with Statistical Neighbours

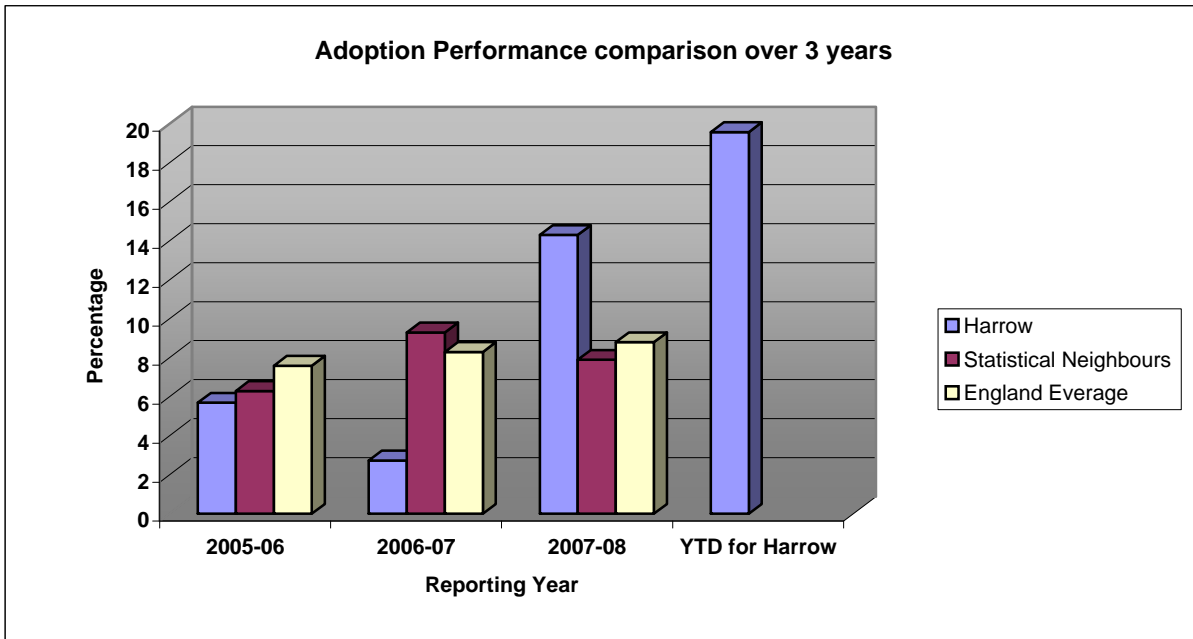


Bandings

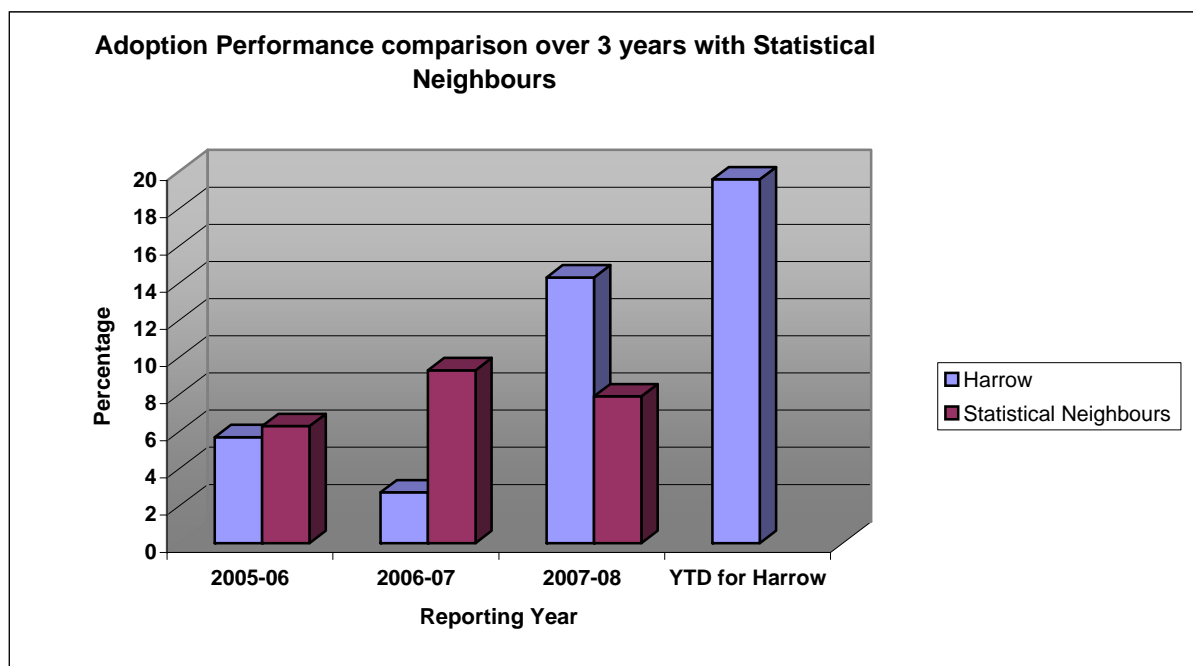
CF/C23 Adoptions of children looked after 

APPENDIX B

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	YTD for Harrow
Harrow	5.7	2.73	14.3	19.58
Statistical Neighbours	6.3	9.3	7.9	
England Everage	7.6	8.3	8.8	



	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	YTD for Harrow
Harrow	5.7	2.73	14.3	19.58
Statistical Neighbours	6.3	9.3	7.9	



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