

Corporate Parenting Panel

AGENDA

DATE: Wednesday 14 June 2017

TIME: 7.30 pm

VENUE: Committee Room 5 at Harrow Civic Centre

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 3)

Chair: Councillor Aneka Shah-Levy

Councillors:

Simon Brown
Mrs Christine Robson
Anne Whitehead

Christine Bednell
Janet Mote

Non-Voting Advisory Member:

Valerie Griffin

Reserve Members:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Sue Anderson | 1. Ameet Jogia |
| 2. Margaret Davine | 2. Lynda Seymour |
| 3. Ms Pamela Fitzpatrick | |
| 4. Kairul Kareema Marikar | |

Contact: Frankie Belloli, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 020 8424 1263 E-mail: frankie.belloli@harrow.gov.uk

Useful Information

Meeting details:

This meeting is open to the press and public.

Directions to the Civic Centre can be found at:
<http://www.harrow.gov.uk/site/scripts/location.php>.

Filming / recording of meetings

The Council will audio record Public and Councillor Questions. The audio recording will be placed on the Council's website.

Please note that proceedings at this meeting may be photographed, recorded or filmed. If you choose to attend, you will be deemed to have consented to being photographed, recorded and/or filmed.

When present in the meeting room, silent mode should be enabled for all mobile devices.

Meeting access / special requirements.

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An induction loop system for people with hearing difficulties is available. Please ask at the Security Desk on the Middlesex Floor.

Agenda publication date: Tuesday 6 June 2017

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. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

To consider the appointment of a Vice-Chair to the Panel for the Municipal Year 2017/18.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from:

- (a) all Members of the Panel;
- (b) all other Members present.

4. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 12)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2017 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS *

To receive any public questions received in accordance with Executive Procedure Rule 49 (Part 4D of the Constitution).

Questions will be asked in the order notice of them was received and there be a time limit of 15 minutes.

[The deadline for receipt of public questions is 3.00 pm on Friday, 9 June 2017. Questions should be sent to publicquestions@harrow.gov.uk

No person may submit more than one question].

6. PETITIONS

To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 47 (Part 4D of the Constitution).

7. DEPUTATIONS

To receive deputations (if any) under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 48 (Part 4D of the Constitution).

8. INFORMATION REPORT - HEALTH REPORT FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER IN HARROW (Pages 13 - 16)

Report of the Designated Nurse for Children Looked After in Harrow, CNWL Trust

9. INFORMATION REPORT - OFSTED REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF PROTECTION, LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS (Pages 17 - 70)

Report of the Corporate Director, People Services

10. INFORMATION REPORT - HOUSING FOR CARE LEAVERS (Pages 71 - 74)

Report of the Corporate Director, People Services

11. INFORMATION REPORT - ADOPTION AND FOSTERING REGIONAL INITIATIVES (Pages 75 - 78)

Report of the Corporate Director, People Services

12. INFORMATION REPORT - CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY (Pages 79 - 102)

Report of the Corporate Director, People Services

13. INFORMATION REPORT - ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE (Pages 103 - 126)

Report of the Corporate Director, People Services

14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

AGENDA - PART II - NIL

*** DATA PROTECTION ACT NOTICE**

The Council will audio record item 4 (Public Questions) and will place the audio recording on the Council's website, which will be accessible to all.

[**Note:** The questions and answers will not be reproduced in the minutes.]

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES

28 MARCH 2017

Vice-Chair in the Chair: * Councillor Christine Bednell

Councillors: * Simon Brown * Janet Mote
* Margaret Davine * Mrs Christine Robson
* Kairul Kareema Marikar

Non-Voting Advisory Member: * Valerie Griffin

* Denotes Member present

135. Membership

RESOLVED: To note that the appointment of Councillor Margaret Davine, with effect from 15 March 2017, as a Member of the Panel in place of Councillor Mitzi Green, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 1.5 and following notification on behalf of the Labour Group Leader.

136. Councillor Mitzi Green

The Panel stood for a minute's silence in memory of Councillor Mitzi Green, former Chair of the Panel, who had passed away in January.

137. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note that no Reserve Members had been nominated to attend the meeting.

138. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Kairul Kareema Marikar declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 8 on the agenda (Health Report for Children Looked After) in that she works for the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

139. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 10 January 2017 be taken and read and signed as a correct record, subject to the word “disciple” in Minute 130 (Corporate Parenting: Activity and Performance Report) being amended to read “discipline”.

140. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions, petitions or deputations had been received at this meeting.

RESOLVED ITEMS

141. INFORMATION REPORT - Health Report for Children Looked After in Harrow

Emma Hedley, Designated Nurse for Children Looked After (CLA), introduced the report. In terms of the performance on initial and review health assessments, targets had been met in all three months in the reporting period; while only 47% of initial assessments had been conducted within the 20-day timescale in January, and 86% of review assessments in February, there had been no repeat of the much lower rates which had occurred in previous periods. It was expected that health passports would be introduced for 16 and 17 year-olds by the end of June. Ms Hedley outlined contribution of the service to the Ofsted Inspection; this had included presentation of a case study, interviews with inspectors and providing information on specific cases on request. In terms of future priorities, the service was conscious of the continuing need to improve the timeliness of health assessments.

In response to Councillor Brown’s question about the factors behind the variation in the timeliness of the initial health assessments and the number of assessments being processed each month. Ms Hedley advised that about a dozen assessments were undertaken each month; given that it was more difficult to meet the 20-day target for children placed outside the Borough, the performance tended to dip when there was a high proportion of such cases. Efforts were being made to underline the importance of timely assessments, including training for a particular staff team and encouragement of managers involved. In reply to the Chair’s query about the contribution of Council staff, Ms Hedley reported that there were monthly commissioner meetings and Peter Tolley, the Head of Service, Corporate Parenting, and his staff were proactive in following up cases with social workers.

Councillor Robson asked whether the initial health assessment performance in January 2017 was an anomaly. Ms Hedley advised that this was not the case in the sense that there had previously been months in which performance had been as poor as 25%, but levels as low as this had not been experienced for some time now. Zoe Sargent, Head of Children's Services and Operations, CNWL, confirmed that the February performance was more typical of usual performance and that the Council's staff were working hard to facilitate timely assessments.

The Panel agreed that it would be helpful if the quarterly reports included a table showing performance trends over, say, the previous 12 months, as this would assist their scrutiny of this area of work. Ms Hedley agreed to provide this information in her reports.

In response to Councillor Marikar's questions, Mellina Williamson-Taylor, Head of the Virtual School, reported that about half of the children in care were educated in schools outside the Borough with no more than four or five in any particular school. A report elsewhere on the agenda gave further relevant information.

The Chair thanked Ms Sargent and Ms Hedley for their work on behalf of vulnerable children, including recent support for prospective adoptive parents, and for their contribution to the recent Ofsted inspection of children's social care in the Borough.

142. Ofsted Feedback and Next Steps - Oral Update

Paul Hewitt, Divisional Director, Children and Young People Services, informed that Panel that Ofsted's inspection report would be published on 31 March 2017, following which an action plan would be drafted. The Panel would, of course, receive a report at its next meeting focusing on the implications of the findings for services for children in care. Mr Hewitt explained the approach of the inspectors to assessing the performance of these services, including detailed analysis of ten Children Looked After cases. Informal feedback from the inspectors had been positive but had also indicated some areas for review which would be reflected in the action plan. Mr Hewitt thanked members of the Panel for their very helpful contributions to the inspection which had been commended by the inspectors.

It was noted that one of the comments of the inspectors had related to the Panel taking into account the views of children and young people in care. Members referred to the Panel's previous efforts to engage children and young people which had included visits to them away from the traditional Civic Centre environment (such as the event at the Harrow Weald centre) and also some brief informal sessions in the early evening immediately before Panel meetings. Val Griffin also mentioned the attendance of care leavers at some of the sessions for prospective foster carers. The Panel acknowledged that it was difficult to achieve meaningful engagement, but considered it important to continue these efforts; the action plan would address this point.

RESOLVED: That the oral report be noted and that the Panel receive a full report at its next meeting on 14 June 2017.

143. INFORMATION REPORT - Virtual School Mid-year Report

Mellina Williamson-Taylor, Head of the Virtual School, introduced her report which set out the progress and educational attainment of Children Looked After (CLAs) up to the end of January 2017. She pointed to the changed method of assessing education attainment which was now based on grade performance in the best eight subjects with the scoring system having been altered from letters, A (high) - G (low), to numbers, 9 (high) – 0 (low).

The Chair enquired about the factors likely to be behind the relatively poor attainment levels of Asian boys compared to previous periods. Ms Williamson-Taylor advised that this could relate to new arrivals from overseas who had not had experience of school in their previous countries of residence. This group numbered only a few children, so this trend might not be significant statistically; however, questions would be asked of neighbouring boroughs (eg. Brent) to see whether any particular factor could be identified. The largest group of low attainers continue to be White British boys and girls with as many as 45% judged as not making good progress. An intervention teacher had been employed to ask searching questions about lack of progress in such cases and to work with schools to identify appropriate responses which could include “tuition early” support. At present, there were a number of Year 6 and Year 11 children in the cohort of CLAs and it was therefore critical to ensure they were assisted in their studies.

In response to the Chair’s question, Ms Williamson-Taylor confirmed that schools were generally supportive of efforts to focus on the needs of CLAs, though these children could be more of a challenge, for example, in terms of less reliable school attendance.

Councillor Robson asked about whether there were any local issues related to obtaining Education and Healthcare Plans for CLAs. Ms Williamson-Taylor was not aware of any such issues, reporting that schools were quite good at referring children for assessment; the Council was able to use Pupil Premium funding to assist.

In response to Councillor Mote’s questions, Ms Williamson-Taylor made the following points:

- the specialist intervention teacher spent at least half her time supporting children in schools outside the Borough, including visits with social workers;
- the relative performance in securing Personal Education Plans (PEP) as between Borough schools and other schools, was quite even; information in the PEP audit would be scrutinised to identify any particular trends and suggestions made in the recent Ofsted Inspection would be also be picked up;

- a project with the Book Trust was supporting home reading, providing packages for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 incorporating puzzles, stationery and books;
- “Nimble” electronic textbooks were also available pre-loaded with revision guides, allowing, for example, Year 9 children discretely to catch up with work from earlier year groups without concerns about embarrassment; the software also provided for staff to monitor progress more easily.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

144. INFORMATION REPORT - LGA Sector Challenge: Placement Costs

Paul Hewitt, Divisional Director, Children and Young People Services, outlined the background to the report by People Too, commissioned in response to the increasing number of children in need and intended to examine the position in the Borough compared with other London authorities and statistical neighbours. He underlined the key findings which included the following:

- expenditure per child in Harrow was in the lowest quartile nationally;
- funding was amongst the lowest in London;
- 26 of the London Borough councils had overspent their children’s services budgets;
- Harrow children’s social workers had heavier caseloads than the national average, but outcomes were still good;
- there were increasing numbers of children in need in the six most deprived wards in the Borough, accounting of the majority of referrals.

The report made a number of recommendations, including:

- improvement in placement self-sufficiency and increasing the number of “in-house” foster carers;
- developing partnership arrangements with other London Boroughs;
- being more proactive about children returning from out-of-Borough placements.

Mr Hewitt referred to the vast amount of data and analysis in the report, now brought together into one document, which would assist the Council in improving services for the growing number of children in need.

In response to Councillor Mote’s query about the apparent decline in the timeliness of adoption approvals in 2016-17, Mr Hewitt advised that the absolute number of children involved was small and that People Too had

looked at the raw data, rather than taking into account the complexity of this area. In fact, timeliness in preparing cases for the courts was good, as compared with overall timescales.

Councillor Robson reported that, at a recent conference on children’s social care, she had observed the growing emphasis on regionalisation of adoption services. She underlined that informal feedback from the Ofsted inspectors had indicated their satisfaction with the Council’s adoption work. Mr Hewitt and Dipika Patel (Business Intelligence Partner, Performance-Targeted and Early Intervention) added that the People Too report’s information on the timeliness of adoption decisions related to a sibling group of three children where the court had sanctioned a delay due to the particular complexity of the case and in the interests of the children.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

145. Children Looked After - Performance and Activity Report

Dipika Patel, Business Intelligence Partner, Performance-Targeted and Early Intervention, introduced the report, explaining that there had been no significant variations since the January position. The number of CLAs (211) had reached a three-year high, but this reflected recent broader trends. The proportion of suitable accommodation placements was only at 73%, but there had been year-on-year improvement in this area. The figure for cases where there had been three or more moves had deteriorated since the previous year, reflecting some difficult cases in the period; however, performance was still at about the national average level. Ms Patel corrected the figure given for the percentage of CLAs with up-to-date health checks at February 2017 which should read 86.9% and not 56.9%.

In response to the Chair’s question about Special Guardianship Orders, Mr Hewitt advised that three children were due to be placed for adoption in April.

Councillor Mote commended staff for ensuring dental checks for children in care were up-to-date as dental care provision was an issue in the Borough.

Councillor Robson underlined the importance of work done to avoid a child moving from child protection status to being a CLA.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

146. Agenda Tracker

The Panel noted and agreed the following anticipated items at its next three scheduled meetings:

Meeting	Item
14 June 2017	Ofsted Inspection Action Plan Adoption and Fostering: Regional Initiative Housing for Children Looked After Corporate Parenting Strategy

31 October 2017	Care Leavers Participation (<i>including Leisure Activities and Hobbies</i>) Crime/YOT
9 January 2018	Independent Review Officers: Annual Report Health Needs of Children Looked After Safeguarding (<i>to include updates regarding Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Young People</i>)

147. Any Other Urgent Business

Mr Hewitt reported that Gerry Moore had been appointed as the new Chair of the Adoption and Permanency Panel.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.56 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE BEDNELL
Vice-Chair in the Chair

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Children Looked After Team

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18.05.17

Targets

All targets in March and April were met for initial health assessments and review health assessments from health.

The table below shows figures from April 2016 to April 2017

Month	Target For IHA's CNWL 100%	Target for RHA's CNWL 100%	Number seen in timescales
April 2016	100%	100%	72% IHA 93% RHA
May 2016	100%	100%	40% IHA 95% RHA
June 2016	100%	93%	68% IHA 73% RHA
July 2016	100%	100%	86% IHA 75% RHA
August 2016	100%	100%	86% IHA 100% RHA
September 2016	100%	100%	25% IHA 90% RHA
October 2016	100%	100%	77% IHA 71% RHA
November 2016	100%	100%	25% IHA 86% RHA
December 2016	100%	100%	91% IHA 100% RHA
January 2017	100%	100%	47% IHA 100% RHA
February 2017	100%	100%	88% IHA 86% RHA
March 2017	100%	100%	70% IHA 74% RHA
April 2017	100%	100%	71% IHA 80% RHA

Monitoring Meetings

Monthly monitoring meetings continue with the CCG and Harrow Council and monthly reports are produced.

Work Undertaken

Support to Social Workers on a weekly basis both face to face and via telephone.

Liaison with Independent Reviewing Officers.

Joint meeting with Paediatric Infectious Diseases Consultant and TB Registrar with the Northwick GP's to discuss the health needs of UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children), blood screening, TB screening and immunisations.

Attendance at Children at Risk meeting.

Monthly meetings with CAMHS YOT

Quarterly meeting with CAMHS and CLA team manager

Attended joint CLA health, education, and YOT meeting.

Attendance at joint adoption and fostering panel by Designated Nurse and Medical Advisor.

Designated Nurse attended Health Visitor team meeting to discuss the health needs of CLA and the role of the lead health professional.

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Telephone: 020 3214 5700 Fax: 020 3214 5701

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Designated Nurse delivered a teaching session about CLA and their health needs with an overview of our work in Harrow, to Health Visitors and School Nurses in training at Oxford Brooke's University. Positive feedback from students and a letter of thanks from the tutor received. Information regarding young offenders shared with Harrow Council for planning for future YOT OFSTED inspection.

Health Promotion

Continual liaison with GP's to obtain immunisation history for our CLA both in and out of the borough as well as to follow up medical conditions.

Continual liaison with School Nurses and Health Visitors.

Liaison with health services both in Harrow and out of borough and Harrow Council, for baby with complex health needs.

Young People Centred Health Assessments

Two siblings had refused to have their health assessments undertaken. 3 appointments had been made and they did not attend. They were placed out of borough and regularly went missing.

Liaison with their Social Worker, Carer, Birth Parent and the young people themselves resulted in them agreeing to complete a written health questionnaire about their health. We also asked for their feedback about the health questionnaire. Once the completed forms had been received the Specialist Nurse contacted the siblings about their forms and they both agreed to telephone health assessments. This has opened the way for a face to face assessment in the future.

Other Activity

Designated Nurse, GPwSI and Named Doctor for Safeguarding Harrow CCG, delivered joint training to GP's in training regarding safeguarding and Children Looked After. The session was well evaluated and positive feedback received.

Designated Nurse attended Foster Carer's award ceremony which was a lovely celebration.

OFSTED

In 2012 OFSTED rated the health of Children Looked After as 'inadequate'. In 2017 they have rated it as "Good". The recent OFSTED inspection in relation to health stated that:

'Children's health needs receive significant oversight and monitoring from the children looked after health service and as a result, their health outcomes continue to improve'.

The report highlighted strong partnership working, information sharing, effective tracking systems and communication as well as children's involvement being pivotal to this success. All of these areas were criticisms in the previous inspection.

Other areas of positive work include children's needs being identified quickly, active monitoring of the health needs of children placed out of the local authority, improvements in timescales for completion of initial and review health assessments, improvements in completion of SDQ's, attendance at strategy meetings and the development of health passports. All of these areas were again criticisms in the previous inspection.

A recommendation regarding health was made to 'ensure that children looked after receive timely therapeutic support when they need it.'

Future Plans

To continue to work in partnership with Harrow Council to improve timeliness of requests for IHA's and to introduce new system for requesting medical advice for adult health assessments.

To continue to gather health information about our Harrow CLA population.

Report by Emma Hedley – Designated Nurse For Children Looked After Harrow, CNWL.
18th May 2017

Appendix 1

Comments from UASC, CLA, Care Leavers, and Carers

The visit was quite helpful and it made my mind clear of so many questions and worries, good job

Today meeting was so helpful and so good and I was agreed for that meeting (UASC 14)

Gave good advice and was fun. Better than expected.

Very helpful! I am grateful for the time taken in order for the health assessment to follow through.

I think this health assessment was helpful and I learnt things that I didn't know before (UASC 17)

Helpful and encouraging (16)

It was what I expected. I found it helpful that I had someone to talk to

Good check up (13)

Everything went well, I was treated well. It was helpful (UASC 16)

I learnt many things today (17)

It was better as I have seen you before (15)

It was okay, not too bad, not as bad as I thought it would be. It was okay overall (13)

I was a bit apprehensive about the appointment but it turned out great. Very relaxed way of talking about my nephew and finding tips on how to help him. Was also recommended a website I intend on visiting (Carer)

I think it was a good appointment. The questions were clear and easy to answer. I learned a lot of things from the doctor about healthy food etc. The conduct of the interview and the behaviour of Dr Bina was excellent and I thank her very much (UASC 17)

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REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting: 14 June 2017

Subject: Ofsted Report on the Inspection of services for children in need of protection, looked after children and care leavers

Key Decision: No

Responsible Officer: Chris Spencer,
Corporate Director, People Services

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Christine Robson
Children, Schools and Young People

Exempt: No

Decision subject to Call-in: Yes

Wards affected: All

Enclosures: Appendix 1: Ofsted Report on Harrow published 31.03.17
https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/harrow/051_Single%20inspection%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20and%20review%20of%20th

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

The attached Ofsted report follows the recent statutory Inspection of services for children in need of protection, looked after children and care leavers, with the action plan required within 70 working days.

Recommendations:

to note the inspection report and approve the action plan.

Reason: (For recommendations)

- **Ofsted is the independent regulator of children's services.**
- **Addressing the recommendations in the inspection report is not optional.**
- **The Local Authority is required to provide an action plan to Ofsted within 70 working days of the published inspection report.**

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

This statutory inspection of Children’s Services supports delivery of the Council’s vision: **Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow**, and the Ambition Plan theme: **Protect the Most Vulnerable and Support Families**.

The related action plan identifies how the report recommendations will be implemented across Children’s Services to further support children, young people and their families in Harrow achieve positive life outcomes. The People Services Directorate is ambitious to ensure that good outcomes are embedded across the whole directorate and that future activity is focussed on achieving an outstanding service.

Background

1. The previous full inspection of children’s services was in May 2012, under a different Ofsted framework, with both safeguarding arrangements and services to children looked after judged to be ‘Adequate overall’, with some elements of Good. It is widely recognised that the current framework is a tougher test than the previous inspection framework.
2. Statutory inspection of local authority functions is carried out by Ofsted under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
3. Re-inspection was expected within a 3 year cycle under a revised Ofsted Framework introduced in 2013, which was expanded subsequently into a 5 year programme. The current Ofsted inspection Framework uses a grading system of: Inadequate; Requires Improvement; Good; Outstanding.
4. Harrow’s judgement outcome as ‘Good’ has achieved one grade higher than previously, and demonstrates the continuing journey of improvement being achieved.
This outcome places Harrow in the top performance quartile of local authorities nationally, while maintaining Harrow’s reputation for value for money, while demonstrating value for money as evidenced by local authority comparator data which places Harrow as spending lower per child than the average of its statistical neighbours.
5. The Single Inspection Framework [SIF] inspection considers the following:
 - children who need help and protection, including early help
 - children looked after, including: adoption, fostering, the use of residential care, children who return home, and achieving permanent homes and families for children and young people
 - young people leaving care or preparing to leave care
 - management and leadership

6. During the four week inspection, up to 11 inspectors focused on a wide range of issues:
 - the experiences of children and young people
 - the thresholds for providing help, care and protection to children and young people
 - evaluating the quality and impact of the help, care and protection given to children and young people and families
 - evaluating the quality and impact of the support to young people looked after, and routes out of the care system through adoption, and statutory care leavers provision
 - evaluating the quality and impact of leadership and governance arrangements
 - meeting with children, young people, parents and their carers
 - shadowing social workers in their daily activities
 - observing a wide range of meetings, including child protection conferences and looked after children reviews
7. Inspectors looked closely at the experiences of children and young people who have needed or still need help and/or protection, as well as children and young people who are looked after and those leaving care as young adults. They tracked in the region of 200 individual cases and spoke with many social work staff, several children and young people, parents/carers, foster carers and adoptive parents and other professionals involved such as Health and Police. They considered how well the local authority knows itself and the difference being made to the life chances of vulnerable children and young people resident in Harrow.
8. The local authority is required to prepare and publish a written statement of the action it intends to take in response to the report. It should send a copy of this statement to Ofsted at ProtectionOfChildren@ofsted.gov.uk within 70 working days of receiving the final report. [The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/462/contents/made]

Current situation

9. Harrow's short notice full inspection of Children's Service started 16 January 2017 and completed onsite 09 February 2017. The inspection team involved 11 inspectors. Ofsted published their combined Harrow Local Authority and Local Safeguarding Children Board report 31 March 2017.
10. Harrow Local Authority was judged 'Good' overall, with services well matched to the needs of children and young people and their families in Harrow, which effectively reduced risk and improve their life outcomes. Inspectors identified strong and effective leadership having a positive impact on service design, development and delivery. Harrow was judged to know itself well, with a clear understanding of strengths and areas for development.

11. At the time of inspection, Early Support Service transformation was in progress but still at an initial phase, following an extended consultation period. Inspectors acknowledged this and recognised the strong foundations underlying the restructure and relocation to community hubs, while identifying Early Support as a priority for continuing progress.

Early Support implementation continues to be rolled out, and during the inspection an Early Support Project Board was convened to oversee progress towards full operation from September 2017.

12. Inspectors recognised the investment made by the Council in creating additional social work posts to meet increasing demand. As a result, the report judged social work caseloads as manageable, enabling social workers to visit children regularly. Inspectors also recognised the positive impact of Harrow's 'joined-up approach' to recruitment, retention and development and the importance of a sufficient, skilled and stable workforce to drive improvement, with appropriate management time and focus.
13. Commitment to performance management and quality assurance activity was identified across the organisation, which had enabled improvements to be achieved and sustained. The proposed action plan will further embed strong performance and address areas for development identified thorough the inspection process.

Failure to address these areas for development effectively risks future inspection adverse impact.

14. Environmental Implications:

There are no environmental impact considerations in this report.

15. Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

Statutory inspections carry considerable reputational and financial risk implications for the Council. As a consequence this has been a significant element of the directorate risk register and senior management priorities. The outcome of this inspection demonstrates this was a well considered and proportionate response. The future inspection regime under the new ILACS (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) will continue to form a significant feature of senior manager risk management attention and corporate support across the whole council.

16. Legal Implications

This and future Ofsted inspection of Children's Services lay the regulatory foundations for meeting the statutory requirements for Harrow Council. No other specific legal implications flow from this inspection & report to Cabinet.

17. Financial Implications

The risk of failing an Ofsted inspection is recognised to have considerable financial implications to the council. However, this inspection found all

statutory requirements were met in full and the judgement on the Local Authority delivery of children’s services was ‘Good’. There are no additional implications arising from this inspection, as detailed in the published report.

18. Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

This report sets out the actions we are taking to secure further improvements, which when achieved will have a positive impact on all residents in Harrow.

18. Council Priorities

This statutory inspection of Children’s Services and the related action plan support delivery of the Council’s vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

and meets the Ambition Plan theme:

Protect the Most Vulnerable and Support Families.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 11 April 2017.....		
Name: Sarah Wilson.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 07 April 2017.....		

Ward Councillors notified:	NO, as it impacts on all Wards.
EqIA carried out:	NO No new or changed policy or service
EqIA cleared by:	Not applicable

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

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Background Papers:

- Ofsted Framework and Evaluation Schedule: children in need of help and protection and care leavers and Local Safeguarding Children Boards [Feb 2017]

NOTE: Aug 2016 was the current edition at the inspection.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/590899/Framework_and_evaluation_schedule_-_Inspection_of_local_authority_children_s_services.doc

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2017 London Borough of Harrow OFSTED Single Inspection Framework Action Plan

Report Recommendations	What will be done?	Who will do this and by when?	What will be different?	Progress
<p>1. Ensure that all children and families who need an early-help assessment and a package of support coordinated by a lead professional are able to receive this.</p> <p>25</p>	<p>LA in partnership with key agencies in the HSCB will fully implement an agreed Early Support Pathway following the re-organisation of Early Support Services.</p>	<p>Head of Service Early Support and Youth Offending.</p> <p>By 30.09.17</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Increase in targeted Early Support assessments for young people and their families ii) Increase in targeted Early Support packages for young people and their families iii) Suite of performance management data to track and evidence impact of effectiveness of Early Support services. 	
<p>2. Ensure that decision-making within the MASH is consistently timely, so that all children who are the subject of a referral receive assessment and support in a timely manner.</p>	<p>The performance management system in MASH will be revised in order to improve the timeliness of the Section 17 referral pathway to the First Response Team.</p>	<p>Head of Service Children's Access Service.</p> <p>By 30.09.17</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Performance management data will demonstrate that targets are achieved and maintained for referral and assessment timeliness 	
<p>3 Ensure that assessments and plans are consistently up to date, reflective of children's views and clear about what is expected of families.</p>	<p>Young people and their families receiving Section 17 child protection and looked after services will benefit from SMART plans that reflect their changing needs.</p>	<p>Head of Service Children in Need Service.</p> <p>By 30.09.17</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Data will demonstrate that assessments are updated in line with CIN, CP, & LAC Reviews. ii) Monitoring and audit analysis demonstrate that YP views actively contribute to revised assessments and that plans are SMART. 	

<p>4. Ensure that strategy discussions involve the full range of relevant agencies, so that the full range of relevant information informs assessment of risk.</p>	<p>The Local Authority in partnership with key agencies will increase multi-agency participation in child protection strategy discussions and during Section 47 investigations.</p>	<p>Head of Service Children's Access / Head of Service Children in Need Service. By 30.09.17</p>	<p>i) Section 47 strategy discussions will demonstrate improved contribution of relevant agencies, particularly Health.</p>	
<p>5. Ensure that children looked after receive timely therapeutic support when they need it.</p>	<p>All Children Looked After will receive appropriate and timely Tier 2/3 therapeutic services in line with their assessed needs.</p>	<p>Divisional Director Children and Young People Service By 30.09.17</p>	<p>i) The LA & Health partners performance data will demonstrate that targets are met and consistently achieved for the provision of therapeutic support and outcomes for CLA.</p>	
<p>26 6. Improve the quality of plans when children return to their families from care, so that there is clarity about what services will be provided, who will provide them, by when and what they are aimed at achieving.</p>	<p>Final CLA Review meetings for young people returning to the care of their parents will confirm the appropriate package of support services and that contingency arrangements are agreed.</p>	<p>Head of Service Children in Need Service / Head of Service Quality Assurance and Service Improvement. By 30.09.17</p>	<p>i) The LA performance data for CLA demonstrates effective delivery of care planning for young people to be reunited with their birth families.</p>	
<p>7. Ensure professionals consistently implement actions required between review meetings for children looked after.</p>	<p>Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers will ensure that all young people and their carers are prepared and supported to participate in CLA Review Meetings.</p>	<p>Head of Service Quality Assurance and Service Improvement. By 30.09.17</p>	<p>i) Supervising Social Workers will confirm foster carers have been adequately supported to contribute to Review meetings that are effective. ii) Monitoring and Dispute Resolution data demonstrate</p>	

	Social Worker line managers will ensure that agreed actions are progressed between Review meetings.		that care planning decisions are delivered in a timely manner.	
8. Ensure that the good support experienced by the vast majority of care leavers is extended to all care leavers, so that their needs are better met.	Effective pathway planning will ensure that all care leavers receive timely support for their emotional well-being, education, employment and training.	Head of Service Corporate Parenting. By 30.09.17	i) Data will demonstrate that targets are consistently met for care leavers in relation to their accommodation, education, employment and training status.	
9. Strengthen the quality of learning from audits through better involvement and use of feedback from children and their families. 27	The Local Authority Quality Assurance Framework will be revised to strengthen the voice and participation of young people and their families.	Head of Service Quality Assurance and Service Improvement. By 30.09.17	i) Audit processes will be specifically revised to include feedback from young people and their families. ii) Quality Assurance quarterly reporting will analyse the themes of feedback and participation of YP and their families through audit and review mechanisms.	
10. Improve the functioning of the overview and scrutiny panel, to ensure that it is more sharply focused on children and that its work has an impact on improving both services for children and the outcomes they achieve.	Overview and Scrutiny Panel activity in LA will ensure there is sufficient focus and challenge on strategic planning and delivery for the children and young people's population of Harrow.	Harrow Council CEO / Harrow Council DCS. By 31.03.18	i) Overview & Scrutiny Panel agenda items and recommendations demonstrate sufficient focus on the key strategic plans for the children and young people's population in Harrow.	

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London Borough of Harrow

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 dates: 16 January 2017 to 9 February 2017

Report published: 31 March 2017

Children's services in Harrow are good		
1. Children who need help and protection		Requires improvement
2. Children looked after and achieving permanence		Good
	2.1 Adoption performance	Good
	2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers	Good
3. Leadership, management and governance		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.

Executive summary

Children in Harrow receive services that are well matched to their needs, reduce risk and improve their outcomes. This is because senior leaders and elected members provide strong and effective leadership, which has a positive impact on the way that services are designed, developed and delivered. The director of children's services, divisional director and chief executive have a clear understanding of both strengths and areas for development. They make good use of performance information and learning from audits to address shortfalls and raise standards, for example in their ongoing focus on improving the functioning of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). They recognise that greater use of feedback from children is needed to strengthen audits further. The local authority's overview and scrutiny panel lacks sufficient focus on children and is not consistently effective.

Social workers see children regularly. They use good direct work to come to know them well and build relationships of trust with them. This helps to improve the outcomes that children achieve. Social workers are able to do this because they have manageable caseloads. A strong focus on, and investment in, recruiting sufficient social workers makes this possible. This is also having a positive impact on reducing both a reliance on agency staff and the staff turnover. The professional development of social workers is supported by a well-planned and resourced training offer.

When children are referred to the local authority with a presenting risk of significant harm, action is quickly taken to ensure their safety. Thresholds are well understood and consistently applied. When children's level of need is lower, the MASH does not always handle these referrals as quickly as it should. While inspectors did not see any examples of children suffering harm as a result of this, some children do experience delay in receiving further assessment and services. Child protection strategy discussions take place promptly, but do not routinely involve key agencies beyond the police and local authority. There are a number of well-established and effective targeted early-help services to support children in Harrow. However, the number of children with additional needs who could benefit from an assessment and coordinated early-help response and are receiving one are low. The local authority is aware of this. The steps that it has taken to restructure and relocate its early-help services into community hubs, such as youth centres and children's centres, are well considered, but are at too early a stage to have had an impact.

Services for children and young people who go missing and those at risk of sexual exploitation are good and improving. Help and protection is effective and well coordinated for these children and young people. There is an effective structure of both strategic and operational meetings to develop services and track performance, and to monitor and intervene in the cases of individual children. A specialist team, including a child sexual exploitation coordinator, missing person's worker and gang worker, helps to ensure a focused and joined-up service for children. This work, in common with that to tackle female genital mutilation and radicalisation, is well integrated into broader safeguarding work. Disabled children receive a good service that considers their needs and manages transitions to adult services effectively.

Assessments of children's circumstances are almost all completed to a timescale that matches the seriousness and urgency of their needs, and identifies key-risk and protective factors. However, assessments for children in need and those on child protection plans are not always updated to reflect children's current circumstances and some assessments lack sufficient analysis, for example in consideration of culture and ethnicity. This makes it more difficult to ensure that plans reflect children's current circumstances and can be used to drive and measure progress.

Decisions for children to become looked after are made quickly and in their best interests. Children only become looked after when it is absolutely necessary. When legal proceedings are needed to secure their safety, assessments and support to children and their families are good and the progress swift. When the plan is for children to return home, most do so successfully. However, a few experience delay and a lack of clarity in the delivery of services to support their return home.

Children looked after receive a good service from social workers, who have high aspirations for them. Social workers help young children to understand difficult and complicated decisions about their lives, and demonstrate a real commitment to engaging young people who have ongoing high-risk behaviours. Children participate well in their reviews, and this means that plans and decisions are rooted in their wishes and feelings. In a few cases, social workers and independent reviewing officers (IROs) need to be better prepared for reviews and make sure that agreed actions are always tracked between review meetings. The health needs of children looked after, including those living outside the borough, are generally well considered, with very timely initial and review health assessments. However, some children do not receive therapeutic or emotional health services quickly enough.

When children cannot return to their birth families, new permanent homes are found as quickly as possible. Social workers pay close attention to getting this right for older children, disabled children, children from particular ethnic groups, and those with brothers and sisters. Children needing a range of possible alternative permanent families benefit from early parallel planning, careful matching with carers or adopters and good support plans. Adoption work is very strong. Children's arrangements are secure, and placement and adoption breakdowns are rare.

A large majority of care leavers receive good support that helps them to achieve well in their education and career aspirations, and in developing the skills that they need to live independently. Many achieve well and make a successful transition to adulthood. However, for a small minority there are delays in providing the support that they need in key areas, such as their emotional well-being, education, employment and training.

Children looked after and care leavers have a good understanding of their entitlements. They also receive helpful and clear information about advocacy and the independent visitors scheme. Alongside unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, they benefit from an impressive range of creative and innovative participation and engagement opportunities and an active Children in Care Council, 'Beyond limits'.

Contents

Executive summary	2
The local authority	5
Information about this local authority area	5
Recommendations	8
Summary for children and young people	9
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	10
The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence	16
Leadership, management and governance	27
The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)	33
Executive summary	33
Recommendations	34
Inspection findings – the Local Safeguarding Children Board	34
Information about this inspection	40

The local authority

Information about this local authority area²

Previous Ofsted inspections

- The local authority operates one short-break children's residential home. It was judged to be outstanding at its most recent Ofsted inspection.
- The last inspection of the local authority's safeguarding arrangements was in May 2012. The local authority was judged to be adequate.
- The last inspection of the local authority's services for children looked after was in May 2012. The local authority was judged to be adequate.

Local leadership

- The director of children's services (DCS) has been in post since March 2014.
- The DCS is also responsible for adult services and public health services.
- The chief executive has been in post since November 2014.
- The chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has been in post since December 2016.

Children living in this area

- Approximately 57,000 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Harrow. This is 23% of the total population in the area.
- Approximately 15% of the local authority's children aged under 16 years are living in low-income families.
- The proportion of children entitled to free school meals:
 - in primary schools is 9% (the national average is 15%)
 - in secondary schools is 12% (the national average is 13%).
- Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 69% of all children living in the area, compared with 21% in the country as a whole.
- The largest minority ethnic groups of children and young people in the area are Indian and other Asian.
- The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language:
 - in primary schools is 66% (the national average is 20%)
 - in secondary schools is 60% (the national average is 16%).

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.

- 87% of the school population is classified as belonging to an ethnic group other than White British. The top five most recorded community languages spoken in the borough are English, Gujarati, Tamil, Romanian and Arabic.

Child protection in this area

- At 31 December 2016, 1,753 children had been identified through assessment as being formally in need of a specialist children's service. This is a reduction from 1,827 at 31 March 2016.
- At 31 December 2016, 228 children and young people were the subject of a child protection plan (a rate of 40 per 10,000 children). This is an increase from 195 (34 per 10,000 children) at 31 March 2016.
- At 31 March 2016, six children lived in a privately arranged fostering placement. This is a small increase from a low number at 31 March 2015.
- In the two years before inspection, three serious incident notifications have been submitted to Ofsted and two serious case reviews have been completed.
- No serious case reviews are currently ongoing.

Children looked after in this area

- At 31 December 2016, 200 children were being looked after by the local authority (a rate of 35 per 10,000 children). This is an increase from 180 (32 per 10,000 children) at 31 March 2016. Of this number:
 - 68 (34%) live outside the local authority area
 - 17 live in residential children's homes, all of whom live out of the authority area
 - a very small number live in residential special schools³ which are out of the authority area
 - 136 live with foster families, of whom 36% live out of the authority area
 - a very small number live with their parents in the authority area
 - 23 children are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- In the past 12 months:
 - there have been nine adoptions
 - 18 children became the subject of special guardianship orders
 - 144 children ceased to be looked after, of whom 6% subsequently returned to be looked after
 - 16 children and young people ceased to be looked after and moved on to independent living

³ These are residential special schools that look after children for 295 days or less per year.

- 53 children and young people ceased to be looked after and are now living in houses in multiple occupation. In all cases, providers who specialise in accommodation for young people supply this accommodation, and appropriate on-site or floating support is provided.

Recommendations

1. Ensure that all children and families who need an early-help assessment and a package of support coordinated by a lead professional are able to receive these.
2. Ensure that decision making within the multi-agency safeguarding hub is consistently timely, so that all children who are the subject of a referral receive assessment and support in a timely manner.
3. Ensure that assessments and plans are consistently up to date, reflective of children's views and clear about what is expected of families.
4. Ensure that strategy discussions involve the full range of relevant agencies, so that the full range of relevant information informs the assessment of risk.
5. Ensure that children looked after receive timely therapeutic support when they need it.
6. Improve the quality of plans when children return to their families from care, so that there is clarity about what services will be provided, who will provide them, by when and what they are aimed at achieving.
7. Ensure that professionals consistently implement actions required between review meetings for children looked after.
8. Ensure that the good support experienced by the vast majority of care leavers is extended to all care leavers, so that their needs are better met.
9. Strengthen the quality of learning from audits through better involvement and use of feedback from children and their families.
10. Improve the functioning of the overview and scrutiny panel to ensure that it is more sharply focused on children and that its work has an impact on improving both services for children and the outcomes that they achieve.

Summary for children and young people

- Services for children and young people in Harrow are good. Most children and young people have the support that they need when they need it.
- Social workers work hard to make sure that children and young people are safe. They visit children regularly and come to know them well. This helps them to know what type of support will be most helpful. There are plenty of different services that give good support to children and their families to help them to overcome their difficulties.
- There are some parts of the service that could do better. Managers and council leaders recognise this and are determined to improve services for children and families. Overall, they are doing a good job.
- When children are at immediate risk, social workers and other adults, such as police officers and teachers, work together well. They act quickly to protect children.
- Good support is provided to help to keep children and young people safe when they have been at risk of sexual exploitation or going missing, or have become involved with gangs.
- Sometimes, when children need help but are not at immediate risk, they do not have the assessments or help that they need quite as quickly as they could. The council knows this and is working hard to do better.
- Plans about how to make things better for children are not always as clear as they could be. It is important that everybody understands what has to change and what they are expected to do.
- Social workers work hard to find the right place for children to live if they cannot live with their own families. They want children looked after to be happy, to do well at school and to make successful moves into adulthood. They try hard to do this and to make sure that children's experiences of being looked after are positive.
- Foster carers and adopters are very positive about the support that they receive to help to make sure that children and young people are settled in their homes. Social workers pay good attention to things that may help children to settle in, like the religion of foster carers, the languages they speak and how near they live to children's schools.
- Young people leaving care receive a good service. Staff keep in touch with them and provide support to help them to keep healthy and be happy with where they live, and in education, training or a job. There is good support for those young people who choose to go to college or university, and they have practical and financial support to help them to succeed.
- There is a good range of different types of places to live that are available for young people who are ready to leave care. They have good help in learning how to live independently and manage their own lives.

<p>The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
<p>Summary</p> <p>When children in Harrow are at risk of significant harm, the local authority acts quickly and effectively to address their needs and reduce risk. The multi-agency safeguarding hub provides an effective single point of contact that transfers child protection concerns promptly to the first response team (FRT) for assessment and intervention. Thresholds are well understood and are consistently applied. The vast majority of strategy discussions are timely, but rarely involve agencies other than the police and children’s social care. This limited involvement from other key agencies, such as health, means that decisions are not always informed by the full range of relevant information available.</p> <p>Children with lower levels of need do not routinely receive such a prompt response. Most decisions to transfer children’s cases to the FRT for a child in need assessment or to early-help services take longer than 24 hours. This means that some children do not have their needs assessed or receive services as quickly as they could. Performance management systems in the multi-agency safeguarding hub do not provide enough information to accurately track the progress of children’s cases to ensure the timeliness of assessments and service provision.</p> <p>There are a number of well-established and effective targeted early-help services to support children in Harrow. However, the number of children with additional needs who could benefit from an assessment and a coordinated early-help response from the local authority and partner agencies, and who are receiving one, are low. At the time of the inspection, a substantial redesign and reorganisation of these services were in the process of implementation, but were at too early a stage to have had an impact.</p> <p>Social workers see children regularly and know them well. Good direct work with children is used to gain an understanding of their wishes and feelings. This is a real strength of the service. This good knowledge of children’s wishes and feelings is not always fully reflected in written assessments. Although assessments identify risk factors and strengths, some lack sufficient depth and analysis, for example in the consideration of culture and ethnicity. Some assessments do not accurately identify all concerns or take enough account of historic factors. Plans, following assessment, are of variable quality. Poorer examples are not always sufficiently specific or clear about the outcomes that they aim to achieve, or about what is expected of families. This makes it more difficult to use plans to drive and measure progress.</p> <p>Work to protect children and young people from the risks associated with going missing, sexual exploitation and related concerns, such as gang affiliation, is good</p>	

and improving. Most children and young people receive a service that is well coordinated between agencies and reduces risk.

Inspection findings

11. The local authority acts quickly and effectively to protect children when they are at risk of significant harm. The multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) provides an effective single point of contact that transfers child protection concerns promptly to the first response team (FRT). This team holds strategy discussions and undertakes child protection enquiries when this is appropriate. Thresholds of need are well understood and consistently applied. However, children with lower levels of need do not always receive such a prompt response. Decisions to transfer children's cases to the FRT for a child in need assessment or to early-help service are appropriate, but most take longer than 24 hours. This means that some children do not have their needs fully assessed or receive services as quickly as they could. Delays in progressing referrals promptly are a long-standing concern identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) case audits. Progress in improving this deficit is hampered by the existing performance systems in the MASH, as these do not give managers full or timely information to track the progress of children's cases accurately. (Recommendation)
12. Out of office hours, the emergency duty team provides an effective social work service. Timely and well-considered responses by this team ensure that children are kept safe. Effective on-call and management arrangements ensure that additional staffing can quickly be put in place to manage times of increased demand. Good communication with daytime teams ensures that children are quickly linked to services that match their needs.
13. Social workers visit children regularly and know them well. This means that children and their parents can build relationships of trust with social workers. This enables social workers to have a more accurate understanding of children's needs and to focus help appropriately, leading to improved outcomes for most children. Social workers have a strong focus on children, whose wishes and feelings are captured well through good direct work, observation and engagement in the majority of work with families. Children are sometimes taken out of lessons to facilitate direct work, despite feedback from children that they do not like it and that it has a negative impact on their relationships with friends and classmates. While there will be occasions on which this practice is unfortunately unavoidable, as standard practice it is unacceptable.
14. The number of children with additional needs who could benefit from an assessment and coordinated early-help response from the local authority and partner agencies and who are receiving this is low. It is of concern that no partner agencies, such as health organisations or schools, are undertaking the role of lead professional following those common assessment framework assessments that have been completed. Although early intervention workers

are quickly allocated to families and do undertake some good work, most assessments seen by inspectors were poor. Consequently, much early-help work lacks focus or a clear benchmark against which to measure progress. This means that help to some children and their families is not as effective as it could be. (Recommendation)

15. The local authority has carried out a detailed review of early-help services and is aware of these areas for development. At the time of the inspection, a substantial redesign and reorganisation of these services was in the process of implementation. The steps that the local authority has taken to restructure and relocate its early-help services into community hubs, such as youth centres and children's centres, are well considered, but at too early a stage to have had a measurable impact.
16. Although early-help services to children with multiple or more complex additional needs are not consistently well coordinated, the local authority does provide a number of well-established and successfully targeted early-help services. These include a domestic abuse group work programme for victims and their children, direct work with young people who are involved with gangs, and a volunteering scheme which increases young people's skills and confidence and enables them to mentor other young people. These services complement a strong children's centres offer and are leading to improved outcomes for children.
17. The threshold between children who could benefit from early-help services and those who need a statutory social work response is well understood and applied. This is also the case for the threshold between children who are in need and those at risk of significant harm who require a child protection response. However, the rationale for decision making is not always recorded clearly enough, particularly when strategy discussions lead to a decision not to proceed with child protection enquiries. Child protection strategy discussions are timely, but rarely involve agencies other than the police and the local authority. This limited involvement from other key agencies, such as health, means that decisions are not always informed by the full range of relevant information available. (Recommendation)
18. The quality of assessments is not consistently good. Although assessments routinely identify risk factors and strengths, many lack sufficient breadth of consideration and depth of analysis, for example in their consideration of the important role that culture and religion can play in children's sense of identity and belonging. Some do not accurately identify all concerns or take full account of historic factors. Chronologies are not consistently used to understand children's stories and the impact of patterns of risk. Although there is a new chronology template to support improved practice in this area, it is too new to have had an impact on all children's cases. (Recommendation)
19. While social workers have a strong focus on listening to children and understanding their wishes and feelings through strong direct work,

observation and engagement, messages from children do not always inform assessments and plans directly enough. When assessments are commissioned for children recently referred to the local authority, a sharp focus on timeliness is ensuring that almost all assessments are completed to a timescale that matches the seriousness and urgency of their needs. However, assessments for children in need and those on child protection plans are not always updated and so, in some cases, do not reflect children's current circumstances. This, in turn, means that plans do not always reflect their current needs. Plans are not always clear and specific enough. The outcomes that they are aimed at achieving are not always defined clearly enough, nor is it always clear what is expected of families. Most plans do not include contingency arrangements. (Recommendation)

20. Child in need meetings and child protection core groups are almost always held regularly, but discussions in these meetings do not always focus on agreed actions. As a consequence, plans are not used as well as they could be to either drive or measure progress. Good agency attendance at these meetings and social workers' sound knowledge of the families that they are working with help to limit the impact of these areas of weakness and ensure that, for most children, the involvement of the local authority in their lives is leading to improved outcomes.
21. Child protection conferences are well chaired. Although they are child centred and sensitive to families, they keep an appropriate focus on risk. Children have access to support from an advocate to attend these meetings, and inspectors saw evidence of this service being used to good effect. While the local authority has a systemic approach to monitoring children's attendance and engagement in conferences, it recognises that there are some children who are not benefiting from being as involved in their conferences as they could be. Child protection chairs add value, because of their ability to offer independent advice and improve practice. Multi-agency engagement in child protection conferences is a strength. When there has been poor attendance by any particular agency, this has been identified and escalated by chairs, leading to improved attendance.
22. Children in need and subject to child protection plans receive effective help from a range of targeted support services. Multi-agency engagement is strong and services work well together, particularly when responding to the impact on children of domestic abuse, drug and alcohol misuse and parental mental ill health. Pre-birth assessments of babies who may go on to be in need or at risk after they are born are good. This was an area for priority action identified at the time of Ofsted's last inspection, and continued to be an issue of concern identified by the 'Baby F' serious case review published in 2015. A sharpened focus on this work and the introduction of a pre-birth assessment toolkit have supported improved inter-agency communication, particularly with midwifery, and timelier and clearer assessments for these babies. A well-used 'neglect toolkit' has had a similar positive impact on improving the identification of risk when it stems from a chronic pattern of concern.

23. When children are at risk through living in homes where there is domestic abuse, drug or alcohol misuse or parental mental ill health, meetings designed to coordinate support services work well. The multi-agency public protection arrangements and multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) share information and coordinate services effectively. Good information sharing and engagement in the MARAC process by social workers is successfully reducing the risks to which children are exposed. Discussion between agencies at MARAC achieves tangible improvements to the lives of children who are exposed to domestic abuse.
24. Work to identify and to protect children and young people from the risk of sexual exploitation is good and improving. Most children and young people receive a service that is well coordinated between agencies, identifies the harm that they have suffered or are at risk of suffering and reduces risk. The multi-agency sexual exploitation panel is effective. A risk assessment tool is routinely well used to assess risks when they first come to light, but is not yet consistently used to reassess risk. This means that social workers are not always absolutely clear about how successful the actions taken have been in reducing risk. A specialist team, including a child sexual exploitation coordinator, a missing person's worker and a gangs worker, is important in ensuring a joined-up approach to these closely related areas of risk, and has been central to the improvements that have been achieved in the past six months, particularly with regard to the timeliness of return home interviews.
25. A children at risk meeting, chaired by the divisional director of children and young people services, is used effectively to track the circumstances and progress of those children who are currently missing or who have been missing in the previous week. Strategy meetings are held appropriately when risks escalate. Although over two thirds of children and young people receive a return home interview within 72 hours of being found, this means that nearly a third are waiting too long to have the opportunity for an interview. Copies of return home interviews are included in children's and young people's electronic case files, but the information that they contain is not used consistently enough to inform planning about how to keep them safe or to reduce the likelihood of them going missing again.
26. Effective work is undertaken to identify and track children missing education. An up-to-date list of children missing education is maintained by the children missing education officer. The children missing education policy and procedures provide clear guidance to professionals. Information sharing within the local authority and partners is effective. Staff have a sound overview of the welfare of children who are electively home educated. Good liaison with families and information sharing with schools, families and other services has contributed to a decrease in the number of families who are choosing home education when it may not be in the individual best interests of their children.
27. Disabled children receive a good service in Harrow. Experienced social workers consider the full range of children's needs, whether these relate to disability or

their broader welfare concerns. Transitions to adult services are well managed. When there are child protection concerns, these are addressed promptly and effectively.

28. Social workers in Harrow know their communities well. They make good use of interpreters when this is necessary, and have an understanding of the complex dynamics when there are concerns about abuse or neglect in a particular cultural context. This is apparent in a clear, effective and well-joined-up approach to the issue of female genital mutilation, in links with community resources such as an Asian women's resource centre and in positive work with families who have no recourse to public funds.
29. Work to tackle the risks to children and young people from radicalisation through Harrow's 'Prevent' partnership is well established. Counter-radicalisation work with children and young people is aligned with wider child protection, child in need and early-help work, so that children benefit from a broad consideration of their needs and a joined-up approach to meeting them. Awareness-raising and engagement work has successfully increased the understanding by professionals and the local community. An integrated response to children at risk of radicalisation, gang affiliation, going missing and child sexual exploitation has resulted in a stronger and more effective approach. Harrow's gangs worker operates at both a strategic and operational level, and his work is valued by young people. The carefully designed gangs direct work programme ensures that young people have the opportunity to think about their gang affiliations, to share their worries and fears in a safe environment, and to work towards making choices that will help to keep them safer. Young people value the individualised approach provided by the Harrow gangs worker.

<p>The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>Summary</p> <p>When children need to be looked after in Harrow, the response is swift and child centred. Children only become looked after when this is necessary and in their best interests. Social workers visit children looked after regularly, know them well and build strong relationships with them. They have high aspirations for them. Children receive a good service, and timely and effective decisions are made so that they move to permanent homes as quickly as possible. Social workers demonstrate a proactive approach and work hard to secure homes for children with brothers and sisters, older children and disabled children. When legal proceedings are necessary to secure children’s safety, assessments and support to children and their families are timely and appropriate. When the plan is for children to return home, most do so successfully. However, a few children experience delay and a lack of clarity in the delivery of services to support their return home.</p> <p>Good participation and engagement by children means that their views are used well to inform planning and decisions made about their care plans. Reviews are regular and are held within appropriate timescales. Improvements are needed in some children’s reviews, including better organisation and preparation by social workers and independent reviewing officers. Actions are not always progressed quickly enough between review meetings, causing delays in care planning for a few children. An effective and committed children looked after health service is improving health outcomes for children, including significant progress in the timeliness of initial and review health assessments. However, some children do not receive appropriate therapeutic and emotional health support services quickly enough. Children looked after benefit from an impressive range of creative and innovative participation and engagement opportunities, and an active Children in Care Council, ‘Beyond limits’.</p> <p>Children needing a range of alternative permanent families benefit from early parallel planning, careful matching with carers and adopters, and good support plans. Adoption work is very strong. Children’s arrangements are secure, and placement and adoption breakdowns are rare. ‘Together or apart’ assessments are mostly good, but some variation in the depth of analysis and the clarity with which children’s voices are recorded means that they do not always add the value that they could to the decision-making process.</p> <p>A large majority of care leavers receive good support that helps them to achieve well in their education and career aspirations, and in developing the skills that they need to live independently. Many achieve well and make a successful transition to adulthood. However, for a small minority, there are delays in providing support in key areas, such as their emotional well-being, education, employment and training.</p>	

Inspection findings

30. When children need to be looked after in Harrow, the response is swift and child-centred. When legal proceedings are necessary to secure children's safety, assessments and support to children and their families are timely and appropriate. Permanence, including through return to birth families, is considered at the earliest opportunity. Children are not looked after unnecessarily.
31. The Public Law Outline (PLO) process is used well to ensure that there is no drift or delay in planning for children, either within court proceedings or at the pre-proceedings stage. Regular management oversight and tracking systems help to prevent drift for children needing permanence. When delays are identified, reasons for this are clearly recorded in children's case files, and actions are quickly agreed and implemented to address them. Pre-proceedings letters are of high quality, so families understand exactly what is expected of them. They are encouraged to seek legal advice and are helped to access interpreting and translation support services, when needed. When children do need to be the subject of care proceedings, the local authority ensures that these are completed quickly to avoid delay and uncertainty for children.
32. The majority of children who return home do so successfully, with low numbers of children experiencing a subsequent looked-after episode. Appropriate decisions are made when children do need to become looked after for a second time or when their circumstances change. For some children returning home, there is a delay in the provision of the appropriate support services needed to reduce continued disruption to children's lives. Plans in place to support children who have returned home need to be implemented more quickly. Support for children on the edge of care is not consistently well targeted, coordinated or monitored. The local authority is aware of this deficit, but the plans to improve services through a 'reunification local offer' are at too early a stage to have had an impact on improving practice. (Recommendation)
33. The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service and social work teams, including the emergency duty service and independent reviewing officers (IROs), link together at an early stage to share information and consider viable permanence options for children. Strong professional relationships and the sharing of key information about risks to children support effective communication between partners and early identification of children's needs. This continues for children whose journey to permanence is through the PLO process. Low numbers of emergency and urgent care applications are indicative of good planning for children and early anticipation of their needs.
34. There is a strong commitment and expectation in Harrow that children live with their extended family and with their brothers and sisters when it is safe

and appropriate for them to do so. This is demonstrated by the 15% who left care due to special guardianship orders (SGOs) made during 2015–16, ensuring that children achieve early permanence while continuing to live with their families. There is a wide range of service provision and extensive support available to families undergoing SGO assessments. This includes effective use of family group conferences in identifying viable options for where children will live. Direct work with children prepares them well for permanent moves to special guardians, long-term foster carers or adopters.

35. Social workers develop strong, open relationships with children and their families, and have a good understanding of children's individual needs. Cultural heritage is well considered. Social workers know children well and talk about them positively, including those who find engagement difficult and experience challenges in managing their behaviour. Visits to see children are regular, and children are mostly seen alone. Inspectors saw evidence that social workers help young children to understand difficult and complicated decisions about their lives and demonstrate a real commitment to engaging older young people who have ongoing high-risk behaviours. Children told inspectors: 'my social worker is very helpful', 'she tells me what's going on' and 'my social worker helped me to stay with my gran.'
36. Assessments to decide applicants' suitability for fostering roles are almost always comprehensive, with careful analysis of issues relating to their life experiences, ethnicity, faith and values. For a small number of carers, discussion at fostering panel could be more searching about how their personal values may affect them in their fostering role. Supervising social workers visit foster carers regularly and record detailed discussions. Areas for development are explored alongside warm and positive feedback about the difference that carers have made for children. During these visits, fostering social workers explore missing from home incidents and check whether all important meetings and assessments have happened, such as personal education plans (PEPs) and health reviews. This supports children's progress. Foster carers' annual reviews are timely, clear and help them to reflect on their practice and develop their skills.
37. Foster carers told inspectors that, overall, they appreciate the quality of the training and support that they receive, including the advice and involvement of a play therapist. They say that they are well supported by the managers in the fostering service. One foster carer said, 'They definitely make you feel valued' and another 'They recognise that we have a challenging job and stand shoulder to shoulder with us, treating us like fellow professionals.' Some expressed frustration about too many changes in fostering and children's social workers, saying that this is unsettling for them and for the children in their care. They reported that they cannot always get through to social workers on the phone.
38. Children are generally well matched with foster carers, including in relation to cultural and ethnic factors. This is true for both short- and long-term foster

care arrangements. When this is not possible, consideration is given to the emotional impact and risks to children of moving to an alternative home. Decisions are made in children's best interests. Workers are proactive in their approaches to foster carers and, as a result, children with care plans for long-term fostering secure permanence quickly, reducing disruption and enabling them to maintain close relationships with carers.

39. An appropriate range of recruitment activity for foster carers takes place, including high-quality features in local publications with diverse and inclusive images. Despite this, the local authority has not met its own targets for the recruitment of foster carers. Eleven new carers have been approved since April 2016, but this is still seven short of the ambitious target set by the local authority. The local authority commissions placements from a range of independent providers to ensure that, despite this shortfall, it has a sufficient range of placements for children and young people. Short-term placement stability is in line with similar authorities, while long-term stability, although improving, continues to fluctuate and remains a challenge for the local authority. A small number of children continue to experience a high number of moves. For these children, the local authority has taken appropriate steps to find alternative homes that can best meet their highly complex needs. This particular sufficiency challenge is being addressed through a range of provision, both 'in-house' and commissioned through an independent framework agreement across the West London Alliance. A recent rise in the number of children living in foster homes is positive, but has not led to any reduction in the local authority's use of residential children's homes for teenagers with complex needs.
40. Strategy meetings held to plan responses to children and young people who go missing from care, and those who are at risk of sexual exploitation, are timely and are supported by good information sharing from partner agencies. This is helping to keep children and young people safe. The great majority of children receive timely return home interviews. While intelligence gathered is used to inform some children's risk assessments and decisions about where it is safe for them to live, the cumulative impact of repeat incidents is not always well understood or analysed to help to keep children safe. Workers and carers do make consistent attempts to engage with young people so that support plans can be progressed.
41. All children looked after attend registered provision, with a small number in alternative provision or missing education. While the majority of children and young people attend school regularly, a high proportion of children looked after have been persistently absent from school. Although this number has reduced recently, action to return children to education swiftly is not always effective, and a small minority of children continue to remain out of education for too long.
42. Managers have accurately identified the key improvements needed to better support the attainment and progress of children looked after. As a result, the

virtual school is taking steps to improve outcomes for children, and these are beginning to make a difference to them. The virtual school monitors the attendance and progress of children regularly. This enhances the oversight of those who experience disruption to their learning and those at risk of not achieving, including those children who are placed out of the area. This results in targeted actions that better support those children who are at risk of not succeeding. Often the virtual school team acts as an effective advocate for children and young people, and is persistent in offering support to them when they experience problems at school or at home.

43. The virtual school team has made good progress in improving the proportion of children with up-to-date PEPs, and staff have a good understanding of when further improvements are needed. Staff are working hard with schools and social workers to improve the quality of PEPs. However, too many PEPs are not fully completed. When this is the case, important information is missing, such as children's views and details of how the pupil premium grant is being used to address the specific needs of individual children.
44. Children looked after achieve at around the national rate for children looked after at key stages 1 and 2. Historically, attainment at key stage 4 has been comparatively poor, but, as a result of better targeting of practical support to pupils in key stage 4 last year, the attainment of these pupils improved to the national rate for children looked after. Data shows that this year, as a result of improved support, a greater proportion of pupils are on track to achieve well at key stage 4. However, the gap between the attainment of children looked after and their peers remains wide. The good support provided to young people by schools, the virtual school and partners ensures that a high proportion of young people, many of whom have few qualifications, remain in education, employment and training when they complete Year 11 through to Year 13.
45. Children's health needs receive significant oversight and monitoring from the children looked after health service and, as a result, their health outcomes continue to improve. Strong relationships between the service, social work teams and partners, complemented by effective tracking systems, help with effective communication and information sharing. As a consequence, children's health needs are identified quickly, and timescales for initial and review health assessments are improving rapidly. Children's involvement in and feedback of their experience are pivotal to this recent success and have helped to inform improvements to the service. A sharp focus on improving the completion rate of strengths and difficulties questionnaires by children looked after has seen the rate rise from only 41% during 2015–16 to 75% at the end of December 2016. This is positive, although further work is required to meet the 81% average figure for similar local authorities.
46. The health needs of children placed out of the local authority area are actively monitored. The children looked after health nurse challenges any delays effectively to ensure that children receive a timely service. A small number of

children were seen by inspectors to experience delays in receiving timely therapeutic support. Children needing specialist support from the child and adolescent mental health services often have to wait for help. This is also reported by children’s foster carers. (Recommendation)

47. Children benefit from an impressive range of creative and innovative participation and engagement opportunities. All children receive information about advocacy, the independent visitors scheme and their entitlements from the children’s pledge. Workers show a continuous commitment to attending engagement activities that help to gain children’s views and wishes. Workers have high aspirations for children and support them to try new experiences to develop their social, emotional and educational skills. Engagement activity includes unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and those who may not want to be actively involved in Harrow’s very active Children in Care Council, ‘Beyond limits’. A number of annual activities are arranged specifically to encourage the participation of children living outside of the local authority. The local authority does well in engaging local businesses and sports clubs to provide both work and wider social opportunities for children looked after. For example, the local authority involved Queens Park Rangers football club in a recent football development activity for children looked after.
48. Children benefit from regular, timely reviews, and have an opportunity to meet with their IRO prior to meetings. If children do not attend, their views and wishes are represented in a variety of formats and are used to inform appropriate decisions. When instability or significant changes occur in children’s lives, reviews are brought forward to make appropriate changes to their care plans. The IRO service is generally effective in identifying and challenging delays to ensure that children receive the right help. However, foster carers did share some frustrations with inspectors about a lack of consistency. These include some actions not being followed up between reviews, leading to delays in support for children, and that IROs and children’s social workers are, on occasion, insufficiently prepared for meetings (Recommendation).
49. Sixteen- and 17-year-olds who are homeless or in danger of homelessness are quickly and accurately assessed to decide whether they should become looked after by the local authority or if it is more appropriate to provide support in other ways. These young people are provided with support and accommodation that meets their needs. Bed and breakfast accommodation is not used, and careful attention is paid to their vulnerabilities.

The graded judgement for adoption performance is that it is good

50. In Harrow, all children are considered for adoption when they are unable to live within their birth family. Careful matching and good post-adoption support

have resulted in no children experiencing an adoption breakdown in recent years.

51. A combination of a drop in the number of placement orders being granted and decisions being moved away from adoption has led to a reduction in the number of children leaving care to be adopted, in Harrow. This has fallen from 10 children in 2015–16 to a projected six children being adopted by the end of March 2017. There are currently four children in adoptive families. Harrow has a lower rate of children looked after than similar areas, and fewer children in care aged under 10 years. Decisions which have been changed away from adoption are typically due to the availability of wider family members to care permanently for children. The number of children leaving care for special guardianship arrangements went up to 15% in 2015–16, with a similar rise seen in recent in-year figures. Evidence shows that this resulted in good outcomes for children, and disruptions to special guardianship arrangements are rare in Harrow. Therefore, the current rates of adoption appear appropriate in the context of the wider children looked after population.
52. Children's journeys to adoption are very timely for almost all children, with performance against national thresholds being well above the average in England. Local in-year data shows a very slight slowing down of performance, but it is still very timely for children. Managers know individual children well and can account for delays in a small number of complex cases.
53. Children's progress is closely monitored to avoid any unnecessary delay. Regular permanence planning meetings and legal planning meetings are attended by the adoption manager. A tracking manager is partly based with 'front-door' social work teams to ensure that all social workers 'think permanence' at the earliest opportunity. As a result, early parallel planning is well embedded and is particularly effective in securing adoption for very young children, allowing secure attachments to be made. Early family finding ahead of a placement order being granted means that some children can, at the appropriate point, move quickly to prospective adopters. However, this is slowed down for a few children by avoidable external causes, such as delays in police checks. In a very small number of cases, children's adoption could have been secured even sooner.
54. Children's permanence records are of a good standard. Social workers prepare life-story books for children. These give extensive information about their birth family and journey to their new family. Later-life letters are well written, giving young people a sensitive but straightforward account of their life story. However, social workers currently make limited use of learning from research. The profile of children being adopted, although small in number, has become more ethnically diverse than in previous years and there have been recent adoptions of children with disabilities and groups of brothers and sisters. 'Together or apart' assessments are mostly of a high standard. Variations in the depth of analysis and the clarity with which children's voices are recorded

mean that a minority do not add the full value that they could to the decision-making process.

55. Decisions made by the agency decision maker (ADM) are timely and detail a clear rationale for plans for adoption. The combined fostering and adoption panel is constituted of highly experienced and committed individuals who reflect the range and diversity of Harrow's community. Regular feedback to social workers has contributed to improvement in the quality of reports coming to panel. Feedback from adopters who have attended the panel is positive. Adopters value the face-to-face meeting with the panel's medical adviser, because it helps them to understand the current and future health needs of their child. However, links between the ADM and the panel chair have been limited, to date, and managers have already recognised this as an area for improvement.
56. Harrow's partnership arrangement with a voluntary adoption agency (VAA) gives access to a broad range of approved adopters across the country, as well as the national adoption register and local consortia. A diverse range of adopters have been matched to children, including single parents and same-sex couples. Children are carefully matched and many benefit from being adopted by families that reflect their own culture and ethnicity. Prospective adopter records completed by the VAA are very detailed, and reflect a thorough assessment process and clear analysis of the parenting capacity of the applicants.
57. Adopters are positive about their experiences of the assessment process, and preparation days have helped them to relate to their child's experience and the experience of the birth family. They receive detailed information about their child and value the support from social workers. As one said, 'Nothing is too much trouble.'
58. There has been just one foster for adoption placement, to date, in Harrow. However, foster for adoption and concurrent care are discussed with all prospective adopters during assessment and are promoted during preparation. A number of concurrent placements have meant that very young children have a minimal number of placement moves and attach at an early stage to their prospective adopters. Children are well prepared for moving in with their adoptive families. Foster carers are highly skilled in preparing children for adoption, and have completed specialist training.
59. Adoption support plans are sensitive and detailed. Contact arrangements are carefully considered for children moving to adoption, and a letterbox contact coordinator works within the adoption team. When it has been important for children to maintain some direct contact with key people, careful matching has secured adopters who understand and will support this contact.
60. Post-adoption support for families is a strength in Harrow. An experienced adoption team, including a play therapist, provides easy-to-access help when

it is needed. There are strong links with the virtual school, and this results in targeted support for children at risk of exclusion. Therapeutic support is frequently funded through the adoption support fund, with 13 children receiving grants since April 2016, and all applications to date have been successful. In addition, a commissioned service provides bespoke therapeutic work with birth families, adopters and their children. Many Harrow adopters use a variety of support groups provided by the partner VAA, such as groups for same-sex adopters. This means that families benefit from open-ended support through the VAA. As one adopter put it, 'knowing you can come back in one, two or 20 years is key' to choosing to adopt with Harrow.

The graded judgement about the experience and progress of care leavers is that it is good

61. Care leavers in Harrow receive good support which helps many to achieve good outcomes. These include making good progress in further and higher education, and living in safe and secure accommodation. They develop their skills to live independently well. However, the good support that the majority of those leaving care receive is not experienced by all. For a small minority, there are delays in receiving the support and help that they need in key areas of their lives, such as support for their education, training and employment, their mental health and in accessing sexual health services.
(Recommendation)
62. Social workers and social work assistants form positive and productive relationships with care leavers. They encourage them to aim high and achieve their goals. This leads to the good outcomes that the majority achieve. Staff and managers know care leavers well. They understand their needs and circumstances, and see them regularly. This includes those who are at risk of sexual exploitation, are parents themselves or are in custody. In the majority of cases, when care leavers' needs become more acute or their circumstances change, staff increase their contact and take effective action to mitigate the risks that they face, such as the breakdown of their tenancy.
63. When care leavers lose touch with the leaving care team, staff almost always take all reasonable steps to engage with them, including via text, phone, through family and known friends, and by unannounced visits. Care leavers told inspectors that they trust staff, whom they can readily turn to when they need help. One comment, 'he's like family', was typical of the high regard in which staff from the leaving care team are held.
64. Staff plan well to meet care leavers' needs, with many good examples of them receiving effective practical help that supports both their immediate and longer-term needs. Nearly all care leavers have an up-to-date pathway plan.

Typically, plans are clear, focus well on the needs of care leavers and capture their views effectively.

65. Managers and staff have high aspirations for all care leavers, including those who arrive in the United Kingdom as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. This is reflected in the very good support that they receive with regard to their accommodation, health, education and career aspirations. Many young people who have sought asylum have high aspirations for themselves, such as to become architects, lawyers, chefs or entrepreneurs. With very well-tailored individual support, many are making excellent progress towards these goals. The help that they receive enables them to settle well and engage with the wider community.
66. Managers ensure that there is an appropriate range of accommodation available to care leavers. There are a small number of care leavers who remain with their foster carers when they reach 18 years of age or live in supported lodgings. Most live in semi-independent accommodation. Staff and managers never use bed and breakfast accommodation as an option for care leavers, even in an emergency.
67. Care leavers receive good support from the leaving care team and housing providers to develop the skills that they need to live independently. All those who move into independent accommodation take a two-day course in preparation. Managers and staff make accurate assessments of care leavers' readiness to live independently and provide support accordingly. Such support ranges from such everyday matters, such as advice on managing a budget, up to help in saving for and securing a mortgage. As a result, over the past year all but one care leaver have successfully maintained their tenancy.
68. Care leavers receive good guidance from their social worker, social work assistant and the specialist careers adviser to help them to achieve well in their education. There are a good number of care leavers at university, many of whom are making excellent progress. While at university, care leavers receive additional funding that helps them successfully to complete their studies, for example through payment for accommodation during holiday periods.
69. The number of care leavers who are in education, training or employment is good. Published data for 19- to 21-year-olds shows that a higher proportion of care leavers are in education, training and employment than in similar local authorities and in England overall. More recent local data shows that approximately three quarters of all those supported by the leaving care team have an education, training or employment place, including a small number who are undertaking apprenticeships.
70. Staff provide good, practical assistance to maintain good health. Most care leavers register with their local doctor and dentist, and attend medical appointments that meet their specific health needs. Staff accompany

sometimes quite nervous care leavers to their appointments. Care leavers told inspectors how much they value the practical assistance that they receive. Additional health screening for tuberculosis for asylum-seeking young people meets their health needs well. Managers have recently introduced a health passport that brings together care leavers' health histories so that they are better placed to manage their own health as they gain greater independence.

71. Staff promote care leavers' entitlements effectively through, for example, a regular and very well-attended forum for care leavers and a widely circulated charter that outlines the local authority's commitment to them. As a result, care leavers know whom to turn to should they wish to complain about any aspect of the support that they are receiving. The leaving care team responds effectively when care leavers raise concerns about the help that they are receiving.

Leadership, management and governance	Good
<p>Summary</p> <p>A strong and energetic senior management team with a sense of direction, robust governance arrangements and clear lines of accountability is having a positive impact on the way in which services are designed, developed and delivered. This is helping children to achieve good outcomes.</p> <p>The local authority knows itself well. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of strengths and areas for development, and are making intelligent use of qualitative and quantitative data to address shortfalls and raise standards. Learning from audits is acted on and the quality of practice is improving. With greater use of feedback from children and families, the impact of audits would be further strengthened.</p> <p>A strong focus on and investment in social worker recruitment are having a positive impact on reducing both a reliance on agency staff and staff turnover. A low level of exit interviews limits the gathering of information in order to develop the recruitment and retention strategy further, and is an area of development in an otherwise thorough approach. Workforce development is a significant priority in Harrow, and social workers’ professional development is supported by a well-planned and resourced offer of training. Investment in staffing has ensured that social workers have manageable caseloads, and this means that they are able to visit children regularly to come to know them and their families well and build relationships of trust. This supports the achievement of improved outcomes for children.</p> <p>The local authority, through its corporate parenting panel, demonstrates a clear commitment to improving the life chances of children looked after. The sufficiency strategy is clear and coherent, with relevant priorities linked to present and future need. Appropriate commissioning arrangements are in place to ensure that there is a range of placements to meet the needs of children looked after.</p> <p>Services for children who go missing and those at risk of sexual exploitation are good and improving. Most receive effective and well-coordinated help and protection. There is an effective structure of both strategic and operational meetings to develop services and track performance, and to monitor and intervene in the cases of individual children. The timeliness of return home interviews has improved significantly, but remains a priority, given that almost a third take over 72 hours to complete.</p>	

The local authority's overview and scrutiny panel is not consistently effective. There is no stand-alone children's scrutiny committee and, while some important issues affecting children's outcomes have been discussed at the scrutiny committee, there is still insufficient focus or challenge on matters affecting children.

Inspection findings

72. The director of children's services and the divisional director for children and young people's services provide highly visible and strong leadership, with a clear focus on improving the quality of services for local children. Effective communication between senior officers and elected members, combined with clear governance arrangements, ensures that there is a sharp focus on improving outcomes for children. Regular face-to-face meetings between the chief executive, the director of children's services, the lead member and the chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) facilitate a shared understanding of the key challenges for children's social care. Senior leaders understand the scale of the challenges that they and their staff face, and are realistic about strengths and areas for development, such as the need to implement planned improvements to early-help services and to further improve the timeliness and quality of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).
73. The role of director of children's services also has a strategic statutory responsibility for adult social care services, children's social care and public health. Although this is a wide span of control, a clear line of sight to frontline practice is maintained. An appropriate statement of assurance has been undertaken to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to fulfil these roles.
74. There is a strong commitment to performance management at all levels of the organisation. Meetings involving elected members, including the leader, senior managers and the LSCB chair, ensure that a determined focus is kept on performance. The business analysis function collects a wide range of relevant up-to-date performance data, helping to create a culture in which performance is seen as everybody's business. This data enables all managers to drill down to individual, team and service performance, and provides a direct line of sight to what is happening at the frontline. Performance monitoring reports are routinely scrutinised, and information is used well to understand causes and identify possible solutions to any areas of poor performance. This grip on performance has enabled a focus on achieving and sustaining improvements in the timeliness of initial health assessments for children looked after and for single assessments, and continues to drive the development of the MASH.
75. The local authority makes good use of external reviews from relevant specialist bodies, such as the Local Government Association. This is reflective of a culture of openness to learning and improvement at all levels throughout

the organisation. A number of such reviews have been commissioned to help to evaluate the effectiveness of current provision. External audits of child sexual exploitation provision have helped to identify gaps, with the recommendations clearly acted upon. An external audit in December 2016 looked at placement provision for children looked after, and has made a number of recommendations to help Harrow to focus further on the sufficiency of placements.

76. Audits are used well to quality assure social work practice and gain an insight into how effectively services are improving the outcomes that children achieve. A clear audit programme, including senior leaders undertaking audits, is in place. Lessons learned from audits are used well to identify and address areas for improvement, including routine individual and team feedback. As part of this programme, observations of social work practice are undertaken to enhance the understanding of the service that children and families receive. The local authority recognises that more needs to be done to involve children and families, including seeking their views as part of the audit programme. However, this remains underdeveloped. (Recommendation)
77. Significant improvements have been made in the provision of services to children missing from home and care, and those at risk of sexual and gang exploitation. Most receive well-coordinated help and protection. Improvements in intelligence sharing, mapping of trends and disruption activity, along with more effective use of the multi-agency sexual exploitation meetings, have helped to keep Harrow children better protected. In particular, effective multi-agency mapping, coupled with proactive use of legislation, has been decisive in keeping some children safe. There is an effective structure of both strategic and operational meetings in place to develop services and track performance, and to monitor and intervene in the cases of individual children. The development of a specialist co-located team, including a child sexual exploitation coordinator, missing persons' worker and gang worker, has ensured a more focused and joined-up service for children.
78. While inspectors saw an improving picture, there is still further work to be done in ensuring the consistent use of the child sexual exploitation risk assessment tool. This is about ensuring that it is always used to assess risk, and is more particularly about ensuring that it is also used to assess how risk has reduced or increased over time and in response to the help provided. While the timeliness of return home interviews has improved significantly as a result of effective performance and contact management, almost a third of children and young people are still having to wait more than 72 hours to be seen.
79. A joined-up approach to recruitment, retention and development is having a positive impact in terms of making Harrow a more attractive place to work. Senior leaders have understood the importance of having a sufficient, skilled and stable workforce in order to drive improvement. They have invested both financially and in management time and focus to achieve this. Substantial

efforts are being made to recruit staff, such as the recruitment of qualified and appropriately experienced overseas workers and investing in the 'Step up' and 'Frontline' programmes. These are showing signs of fruition, with both the dependency on agency staff and the level of staff turnover reducing. A low level of exit interviews hampers the gathering of important information to further develop the social worker recruitment and retention strategy. The local authority's commitment to children's social work in Harrow is seen in the funding of extra social work provision in response to increasing demand in order to keep social work caseloads at a manageable level. This enables social workers to visit children regularly. (Recommendation)

80. The vast majority of social workers spoken to by inspectors were very positive about working for Harrow, and particularly mentioned visible and supportive leadership and management. The pod system of small groups of social workers, each supported by a skilled pod manager, is a strength which social workers almost universally report as supportive and which assists them in delivering a service to vulnerable children and families. Use of a systemic approach to practice is well embedded and adds value, enabling reflection and a holistic approach to the work with families. Most social workers are tenacious in their efforts to engage with children and families, and they speak with genuine warmth and knowledge about the children whom they are helping.
81. Managers pay careful attention to non-casework supervision areas, particularly training and development and workload management. In a small minority of cases, although both supervision and management oversight are regular, social workers do not receive clear enough direction to support fully effective practice with children. The vast majority of social workers have an up-to-date annual appraisal which clearly identifies their achievements and areas for development in the future. Social workers have access to a wide range of training and development opportunities, and are actively encouraged to participate.
82. The local authority's overview and scrutiny panel is not consistently effective. There is no stand-alone children's scrutiny committee and, while some important issues affecting children's outcomes have been discussed at the scrutiny committee, there is still insufficient focus and challenge on matters affecting children. For example, there has been little consideration of the effectiveness of services for children at risk of sexual exploitation. Recognition of the limitations of scrutiny prompted Harrow, in late 2016, to commission an external review focusing on how scrutiny can be better exercised. This review is ongoing, so is too recent to have had an impact. (Recommendation)
83. Elected members of the corporate parenting panel demonstrate a clear commitment to improving the life chances of children looked after. They have oversight of detailed performance information and analysis, with a range of professionals presenting reports. This helps them to clarify, challenge and question activity. Mandatory training enhances their understanding. The

corporate parenting strategy is detailed, and it sets clear priorities and the areas for improvement. There is an appropriate focus on monitoring action completion, but the lack of sufficient outcome information limits the ability to fully understand if completed actions have improved outcomes for children.

84. The Health and Wellbeing Board, chaired by the leader of the council, takes a 'whole life journey' approach to identifying priorities, and this includes a number relevant to the lives of children and young people. This 'high-level' vision is translated into a clear and well-focused commissioning plan by the multi-agency children's commissioning group. Through this group, the local authority, including public health, works closely and effectively with the clinical commissioning group and schools to ensure that there is an appropriate range of commissioned services to meet children's needs. Children and young people are being successfully involved in the design of service specifications and the commissioning process. Active contract management ensures an ongoing focus on the quality of services and, through this, the outcomes achieved by children. Children and young people are well involved in this process, leading to more sharply targeted services, including the development of sexual health services and the recent 'Future in mind' recommissioning of emotional well-being services for children and young people. Effective use of data and contract management is leading to the recommissioning of services, which are producing better outcomes. The cancellation of a previous contract to provide return home interviews led to the creation of a new in-house service, with subsequent improvements in timeliness of completion.
85. The sufficiency strategy 2015–17 is clear and coherent, with relevant priorities linked to present and future need. Appropriate commissioning arrangements are in place to ensure that there is a range of placements to meet the needs of children looked after. Steps are being taken to address gaps, such as the use of positive contracts through the West London Alliance, including innovative recommissioning of the framework for the provision of independent foster placements. The local authority has seen an increasing number of young people placed in private sector residential accommodation in the past year. The quality of such provision is overseen by the access to resources panel, which is chaired by the divisional director, and the use of such accommodation is continually reviewed to ensure that it is meeting need. For some young people, the decision to place outside of Harrow in such accommodation has been on the basis of well-evidenced assessments to address particular issues of risk.
86. The local authority responds to complaints in a well-organised and open way, with an increasing number being resolved at an early stage. When it identifies wider practice concerns, it takes steps to address and improve practice. Overall, numbers of complaints are reducing, and those that are made are being resolved increasingly quickly. However, the local authority's own audits from April to September 2016 show that in over half of children's case files audited there was no evidence of parents, carers or children being given information relating to access to records, complaints or advocacy. This means

that the local authority cannot be certain that it is actively seeking feedback from children and their families or making sure that they are aware of their entitlements.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

The Local Safeguarding Children Board requires improvement

Executive summary

The Local Safeguarding Children Board in Harrow fulfils all of its statutory functions, as defined in 'Working together to safeguard children' 2015, and has made considerable progress in work to safeguard vulnerable children. Following the appointment of an experienced and knowledgeable chair, it remains well positioned to enhance the effectiveness and coordination of local safeguarding arrangements further. Key partner agencies are represented, and the board benefits from two highly effective lay members who offer exceptional levels of knowledgeable support and challenge.

The board demonstrates open and candid challenge between board members, and this has been effective in some areas, such as improving safeguarding practice within the multi-agency safeguarding hub. However, the board is insufficiently informed about the quality of all frontline services and practice. As a result of limited performance information supplied by some partner agencies, the board's data set does not fully reflect the range of services responsible for safeguarding children in Harrow, and analysis is limited. This inhibits the board's ability to monitor and understand the overall effectiveness of services and to challenge agencies when they fall short.

The board has coordinated effective multi-agency arrangements for responding to young people at risk of child sexual exploitation at both operational and strategic levels. Some of this area of work is still in development, but overall the arrangements to tackle child sexual exploitation are robust. Some children and young people have benefited from schools providing awareness-raising sessions regarding female genital mutilation, including one primary school.

The board's annual report provides helpful information on a wide range of issues. For example, there is a commentary on the Home Office review in Harrow of gangs and youth violence. This noted the effective operational partnership work, but identified the need for an overarching strategy, now led by the Safer Harrow Partnership.

The influence and participation of children and young people in aiding understanding and informing board priorities and providing ongoing feedback are in their infancy. The board is not yet systematically evaluating the effectiveness of the newly formed early-help services.

The board has a comprehensive range of training events and e-learning courses that have increased the number of practitioners who have received training. The training events include lessons learned from serious case reviews, including a

nationally recognised and highly regarded 'cartoon' account of a young person's experience of living in a neglectful home environment.

Recommendations

87. Work with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB)'s constituent agencies to ensure that the board receives a sufficient breadth and quality of performance information to support rigorous monitoring, analysis and challenge of the full range of safeguarding work with children in Harrow.
88. Strengthen the board's scrutiny of the quality and impact of early-help services.
89. Review the capacity and functioning of the board's sub-groups to ensure that they are all as effective as the best.
90. Engage children and young people more effectively in contributing to and developing the board's work and priorities.
91. Continue work with schools to significantly improve their engagement with the section 11 audit process.
92. Update the LSCB threshold document so that it is fully compliant with statutory guidance, and is as effective a document as it can be to support decision making by those working with children and their families.

Inspection findings – the Local Safeguarding Children Board

93. Governance arrangements are well established. The newly appointed independent chair of the board intends to retain the existing pattern of regular meetings with the chief executive, director of children's services, leader of the council and lead member, as well as senior managers from partner agencies. The detailed minutes of these meetings evidence that key priorities and issues of concern for children are shared at the most senior level. The chair of the board attends the Health and Wellbeing Board, at which the Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB's) annual report is considered. The chair provides appropriate challenge to partners, ensuring that children's issues are prioritised. The board maintains a challenge log as a record of actions taken on a number of issues. In 2016, there were 15 challenges made. However, as the impact of these challenges is not recorded, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the board's challenge to agencies.
94. Key areas of the board's work are appropriately aligned with other relevant boards and multi-agency bodies. Work to prevent child sexual exploitation is

aligned with the Safer Harrow Partnership, and the board works in conjunction with the Harrow Safeguarding Adults Board to promote a 'think family approach' in relation to vulnerable adults. This ensures that the board has a pivotal role in coordinating work across the partnership to raise awareness of important issues. One example is work following a Home Office peer review initiative to end gang and youth violence, which resulted in a Harrow-specific preventative strategy on gangs, knife crime and violence.

95. The newly appointed chair has current, relevant experience. He is also the chair of another LSCB and contributes to work on pan-London LSCB work-streams. Further involvement in and work for a domestic abuse charity and as safeguarding adviser to the diocese of London give him an extensive understanding of board business and priorities. The board is financially sound, but is due to have a reduction in funding in the next budgetary year. The board plans to manage this by reducing the use of external auditors, and has confidence that there is the capacity in the partner organisations to complete more audits in-house. The board's auditing activity has been crucial in identifying practice weaknesses, for example within the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and in relation to section 47 processes. The board has the agreement of all partners that, in the event of any unforeseen expenses, such as serious case reviews (SCRs), all partners will share the cost.
96. The board has appropriate multi-agency membership and is attended by sufficiently senior officers from a wide variety of relevant agencies. Board members are committed to improving the life chances of children. The two lay members involved at board level contribute very effectively, including one acting as a vice-chair for one of the sub-groups and for the board itself. The relationship between the board and the lead member is strong and effective, despite the lead member being newly appointed.
97. In the past two years, the board has moved forward significantly in its commitment to driving up the standard of safeguarding services provided by partner agencies. The board has had success in raising practice standards, but the extent of this has been hampered by a lack of available performance information from partner agencies and a consequent lack of analysis. This means that the board does not have a full or accurate picture of the differences that agencies are making for children, or of gaps and shortfalls in service delivery. For example, the waiting times for child and adolescent mental health services often are not provided as part of the data set for the board, and the opportunity is missed for this to be an area of challenge to health partners. Weakness in data provision therefore reduces the board's influence on the planning and commissioning of services, as it cannot systematically monitor or evaluate quality. (Recommendation)
98. Data and performance information sharing works better within the board when partners are able to share concerns, develop a shared understanding and take action to improve service provision. For example, the identification of a lack of proactive antenatal and midwifery engagement with vulnerable

pregnant women led to practice changes which now ensure earlier targeted engagement with these mothers. This promotes better support and more effective relationship building with the most vulnerable at the earliest possible stage. The board has worked effectively to influence the staffing provision in the MASH and the location of the police interview suite, in order to support and improve the assessments of all children.

99. Early-help provision has been subject to a series of scrutiny exercises by the board, but as yet has not highlighted effectively the factors that have held back progress. The board has focused on linking the respective priorities of partner agencies, but this has not provided the necessary challenge and focus. The engagement of agencies in the common assessment framework process is weak, with no professionals from any agency other than the local authority currently undertaking the lead professional role with families. The LSCB has not sufficiently challenged partner agencies, such as health and schools, about this shortfall. (Recommendation)
100. The threshold document has been subject to two revisions in the past year following learning from the board's section 47 and MASH audits. It requires further modification, as it lacks sufficient clarity about key service pathways, such as those for children at risk of sexual exploitation, and does not provide guidance about the thresholds for voluntary accommodation or care proceedings, under sections 20 and 31 of the Children Act 1989, as required by statutory guidance. It also contains some language that is unclear or confusing for professionals using the document as a guide to decision making. (Recommendation)
101. The board has been effective in promoting awareness of child sexual exploitation among young people, having supported the delivery of 'Chelsea's Choice' across Harrow to 16 schools. The board has overseen and been influential in ensuring an appropriate local response to the 'Prevent' duty and female genital mutilation. This includes ensuring the provision of training and awareness raising, and supporting some innovative projects such as the 'Pants' video. This initiative is an example of good practice.
102. The LSCB undertakes annual section 11 audits of partners' effectiveness in carrying out their safeguarding responsibilities. These have been jointly completed with a neighbouring authority, enabling efficiencies. All statutory partners complete this audit, but less than 50% of schools do so. There is evidence that more schools are now engaging positively with the board following the setting up of a safeguarding in education termly seminar group, led by the board business manager. The seminar group has addressed such issues as bullying, female genital mutilation and the role of the MASH. To date, 55 out of a possible 60 schools and colleges are reported as attending this group, and teaching staff spoke positively regarding the initiative.
103. The board recognises that its current structure of six sub-groups requires revision. Not all sub-groups have sufficient capacity or the active engagement

of all partners, so cannot fully achieve their planned work. The minutes of some sub-groups do not provide a concise record of activity. This has been recognised. When sub-groups have been working effectively, such as the quality assurance sub-group, there are measurable improvements in practice. The multi-agency audits undertaken are focused on relevant issues of concern, and lead to clear action plans and evidence of improvement, for example the recent audit of services for disabled children. Positively, the practice of this sub-group is that audit activity continues until measurable improvements have been seen in practice. A good example is the audits carried out of the section 47 process, which led to tangible improvements in the quality and impact of practice with children at risk of significant harm. (Recommendation)

104. The child death overview panel (CDOP) is effective in analysing local information on child deaths, identifying patterns and trends. None of the small number of deaths during the past year were linked to safeguarding issues or concerns about professional practice, so were not referred to the board. There are plans in place to improve the CDOP annual report by linking findings to the wider population in order to improve the quality of the information provided. The CDOP has developed and rolled out good awareness-raising programmes linked to the use of baby slings, safer sleeping, smoking cessation and the availability of support for bereaved parents. Harrow has high rates of breastfeeding, and the CDOP challenged the council successfully when there was a proposed plan to cut funding to a successful peer breastfeeding programme.
105. Processes for making decisions about and undertaking SCRs or management reviews are clearly set out in the terms of reference of the SCR sub-group and are well established. This group also monitors and challenges the progress of SCR action plans. The board has been undertaking work relating to three SCRs in the past year, as well as multi-agency learning reviews of children's cases that do not meet the criteria for an SCR. A programme of training sessions ensures that lessons learned are cascaded out by all agencies quickly via e-bulletins, training events, sub-group members and the children's services management team. This sub-group holds agencies to account effectively in implementing recommendations.
106. The quality assurance sub-group is responsible for a wide range of tasks, including analysis of data sets and coordinating the six-monthly multi-agency case audits. These case audits are an effective mechanism for increasing understanding of the quality of frontline practice and identifying areas for improvement. This has enabled the board to identify a number of priorities and put action plans in place to further strengthen practice.
107. The child sexual exploitation sub-group has a wide work programme following the areas identified for improvement by the second child sexual exploitation review in spring 2016. There are some key improvements which the sub-group is progressing, such as awareness-raising activity with staff in sexual

health clinics. Areas for development include evidence of challenge. For example, there is lack of analysis of return home interviews. The return home interviews are frequently a verbatim account of the young person's words, instead of an analysis of the push and pull factors or the cumulative risk of multiple 'missing' episodes.

108. Social workers and foster carers who spoke to inspectors value the multi-agency training provided by the board. Training activity has increased significantly, with 1,702 sessions delivered in 2015–16 against 1,194 in 2014–15. The creation of 60 child sexual exploitation champions, who have been trained to cascade face-to-face courses within partnership agencies, has been effective. This means that all partner agencies are supported to share good practice within their workforce. Some training sessions for local GPs have been specifically designed and led by the general practitioner who sits on the board. All training is evaluated, but the low feedback response on individuals' practice three months after training hampers the evaluation in its effectiveness. Training is responsive to changing need, as it combines learning from the LSCB's own audits and SCRs, as well as nationally published SCRs and research findings, into current training programmes. A small community organisation is commissioned to deliver training to a large number of voluntary and faith organisations. This is ensuring that safeguarding issues are far better understood. An increasing number of the organisations that have attended these sessions have nominated a designated safeguarding lead for their organisation.
109. The board has an accessible and informative website with links to relevant good-quality information about a range of safeguarding issues. A focus group of children looked after was involved in its development and one young person was directly involved in the design. It includes helpful information on SCRs. The LSCB produced an 'outstandingly good' cartoon, in the words of a child living in a family of neglectful and abusive parents. This is used routinely in induction and other training. It has a useful site for young people that includes information on the NSPCC 'Pants' campaign, female genital mutilation, bullying, child sexual exploitation and 'what to do if you are worried'. The website also holds the pan-London LSCB policies and procedures, which the board has adopted.
110. Young people have recently been involved in presenting a session at the board's annual conference, and in a series of positive and effective sessions undertaken with other young people seeking their views on safety in Harrow. However, children and young people are not routinely or sufficiently engaged in the quality assurance and priority-setting work of the board (Recommendation)
111. The LSCB annual report 2015–16 is a comprehensive document. It is detailed as a record of performance, but it is not sufficiently rigorous in its analysis. It has helpful summary key findings and some suggestions on what needs to be focused on in the future. The business plan is linked to the annual report, but

it lacks a sharpness and a framework to measure impact. The business plan priorities are too broad and lack specificity, so cannot be readily achievable or measurable. As a result of this, the business plan is not a sufficiently effective tool for the board to understand whether it is making a positive difference for children and young people. Overall, there is a lack of alignment between the business plan, the challenge log and action plans. These all need to be kept up to date so that board members always have a clear understanding of the board's position, and can measure impact and ensure sufficient challenge.
(Recommendation)

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 eight of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one Social Care Regulatory Inspector from Ofsted.

The inspection team

Lead inspector: Dominic Stevens

Deputy lead inspector: Andy Whippey

Team inspectors: Alison Smale, Julie Knight, Brenda McInerney, Jon Bowman, Stephanie Murray, Linda Bond, Joy Howick

Senior data analyst: Patrick Thomson

Quality assurance manager: Sean Tarpey

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REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting:	14 June 2017
Subject:	Housing for Care leavers. Update Report.
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Chris Spencer Corporate Director, People Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Christine Robson, Children, Schools and Young People
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	Not applicable
Enclosures:	No

1.0 Summary and Recommendations

- This report seeks to update the Corporate Parenting Panel of the challenges and housing assistance available for care leavers.
- Housing will continue to offer a quota of 19 to Young People Leaving Care; this will mainly be studio flats.
- This quota has to be reviewed annually.

INFORMATION REPORT

Section 2.0

Introduction

Every year the planned distribution of permanent housing (i.e. quotas) for the following financial year are agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

Options Considered

2.1

These quotas are set following consideration of historic lettings data, future supply and demand data and assumptions. Care leavers are supported and prioritised under band A. for the leaving care quota. The number of care leavers anticipated to be ready for independent living, and therefore ready to leave care in the following financial year is also considered.

2.2

The Allocations Scheme was reviewed and amended from 1st December 2015 but Care Leavers continue to be able to access social housing through the quota.

2.3

For this year 2017/18 the quota has been set at 19. We have been able to maintain this quota at 19 since 15-16, in spite of considerable extra housing pressures.

2.4

In previous years there were predictions that the number of care leavers would exceed the quota, but this did not happen. The quota in 16-17 of 19 has been fully filled, but not exceeded.

2.5

There are now very serious pressures on social housing stock due to a significant rise in homelessness, pressure to downsize by tenants affected by welfare reform, and the need to move households temporarily to enable the estate regeneration programme to take place. The huge increase in incentives for council tenants to buy their homes under the right to buy is also affecting supply.

2.6

There are further changes to Housing Benefit regulations that will ultimately affect Young People being assisted. For tenancies that commenced after April 2016, HB for social housing will be capped at the same rent level as they would receive in the private rented sector. So for single people, rents will be capped at the shared room rate which is about £4 per week below a typical studio flat rent, and about £20 per week below a 1 bed flat rent. It is likely exemptions will be in place for Young People Leaving Care, but usually only up to age 21. So to avoid Young People running into rent arrears, generally only studio flats will be offered to single applicants under this quota.

2.7 Options to reduce the quota were considered, but not taken forward. Options to increase the quota were reviewed, but there are other competing demands and insufficient properties likely to be available for allocation in 17-18, so this was not possible.

Implications

If the quota turns out to be insufficient we can bring forward our proposals to offer accommodation in shared housing. This would probably be managed by the council, leased from a private landlord. We have agreed with the Housing Benefit Service the rent levels that could be charged (and covered by HB) which would largely cover the cost of leasing property. We consider small shared housing units for 3 care leavers to be the most suitable option, but we can agree the exact configuration if shared housing is needed. We would also need to put in place a Service Level Agreement to deal with support for the residents, arrears and excessive void periods. The Care Leaver and Housing Sub Group can finalise this. This option could be implemented within a few months of deciding it is needed, subject to agreement.

Performance Issues

Housing Service and Children & Families Service will continue to work in partnership through this sub group and actively manage and respond to care leavers' housing needs.

Environmental Impact

There is no specific environmental impact from the issues outlined in this report.

Risk Management Implications

There is no change from the report in 2016.

(All related risks are recorded in the Children's Services risk register. There is a significant reputational risk from a poor inspection of social care, where support to children looked after and young people leaving care are crucial to mitigate risks and demonstrate developing practice and procedure support to this cohort.)

Financial Implications

There is no financial implication as the quota is unchanged.

Legal Implications

The power to offer a quota to Care Leavers is included in the Council's Housing Allocations Policy October 2013 as amended December 2015.

Equalities implications

There is no change from the report in 2016

(CLA and care leavers are additionally vulnerable child in need. The 2009 statutory guidance "The Roles & Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services" highlights the

need for Local Authorities to work corporately to improve the well-being of looked after children and young people leaving care, to make their needs a priority and seek the same outcomes that any reasonable caring parent would want for their own children. CLA consistently fare worse than their peers across a range of indicators including health, education, training, employment, homelessness and offending.)

Corporate Priorities

CLA and care leavers are additionally vulnerable by virtue of the experiences that led them into Local Authority care and in respect of the poor outcomes that many CLA and care leavers experience when compared to their peers,

The Council's corporate priorities include:

- Making a difference for the vulnerable

3.0 Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost



on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 18th May 2017

Contact Details and Background Papers

Background Papers - NONE

Contact:

Jon Dalton, Head of Housing Needs , Community

Jon.Dalton@harrow.gov.uk

Tel: 0208 416 8647

**REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting
Panel**

Date of Meeting: 14 June 2017

Subject: **INFORMATION REPORT –
Adoption and Fostering
Regional initiatives**

Responsible Officer: Chris Spencer
Corporate Director, People Services

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder,
Children, Schools and Young People

Exempt: NO

Wards affected: All wards

Enclosures: **None**

Section 1 – Summary

This reports summarises two recent initiatives

- 1) Adoption regionalisation – and Harrow’s work with Coram Capitol
- 2) West London Shared Fostering

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

- 1) Harrow has recently celebrated its 10 year anniversary as part of an adoption partnership with Coram, a national leading voluntary adoption agency. As such it has been in a good position to positively respond the Governments adoption regionalisation programme which now requires local authorities to work together in regions with voluntary adoption agencies to improve the adoption outcomes for children. Coram Capital has been established with Coram working with Harrow and 4 other local authorities in London and the South East. Harrow has benefited from the adoption expertise of Coram and having access to their pool of adopters and extensive adoption support services. The Coram Capital model will develop this further and look at progressing our partnership which is already seen as being at the forefront of adoption regionalisation
- 2) Harrow has been part of a shared innovation bid with Hounslow, Brent and Ealing to develop a West London Shared Fostering Service with a view of exploring innovative and creative ways of increasing and improving the foster care provision across Wes London. Ideas being explored include shared specialist fostering provision and support services to placements and a joint approach to recruitment and assessment. Traditionally Local authorities have been competing against each other regarding foster care recruitment. This new model will focus on the benefits of collaboration and pooled knowledge, skills and resources. Recruiting and retaining local foster carers to meet the needs of Looked After Children is one of the local authorities greatest challenges. There is a national shortage of foster carers which impacts on the options available to children and their outcomes and also has financial implications for the local authority which has to use expensive residential placements to fill some of these shortages

The initial feedback from both of these proposals has been positive and we are working with partners and the Dfe to confirm the monitoring and tracking criteria and future funding streams.

Due to the General Election recent activity has been on hold but will resume again in July where further plans will be outlined in more detail

Section 3 – Further Information

Future updates will be presented to the Panel

Section 4 – Financial Implications

This is an information report. Both of these initiatives have value for money at their centre and offer potential savings on children's placement costs Both attract funding from central Government which is being monitored and tracked

Section 5 - Equalities implications

Both of these developments will offer greater choice of provision ensuring the diverse needs of Looked After children will be addressed

Section 6 – Council Priorities

The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

Please identify how the report incorporates the administration's priorities.

- Making a difference for the vulnerable
- Making a difference for communities
- Making a difference for local businesses
- Making a difference for families

Name:....Jo Frost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date:1/6/17.....		

Ward Councillors notified:	N/A
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Section 7 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Background Papers: None

Contact: Peter Tolley, Head of Service Corporate Parenting
Tel. 020 8736 6943

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REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting: 14 June 2017

Subject: Corporate Parenting Strategy

Key Decision: No

Responsible Officer: Chris Spencer,
Corporate Director, People Services

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder,
Children, Schools and Young People

Exempt: No

Decision subject to Call-in: No

Wards affected: All Wards

Enclosures: Corporate Parenting Strategy 2017 to 2019

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Recommendations: To note the strategy update and priorities

Reason: All councillors are Corporate Parents and need to be aware of how these responsibilities are being carried out.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

Looked After Children and Care Leavers are a vulnerable group. The Council has a responsibility to ensure those who have had a poor start to their lives and become Looked After are given high quality levels of care and support to ensure they are prepared for adulthood; and that good outcomes are achieved in their lives

The Strategy is attached and sets out the key priorities

Regular performance reports are submitted to the Corporate Parenting Panel alongside which the priorities outlined in the strategy can be measured

The strategy outlines how Children Looked After in Harrow are provided with stable and secure placements and given support to ensure they are healthy and receive good quality education

Ofsted looked at the strategy as part of its inspection in January 2017 and noted that the strategy is detailed and sets out clear priorities and areas for improvement

Options considered

None this is an information report

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

If Harrow does not fulfil its corporate parenting functions it would fail to meet the requirements of increased inspection and regulatory framework for delivering safe and secure services across our partnerships. There is also financial risk to the MTFS savings if placement sufficiency is not achieved as this could result in an increase in high cost placements.

Legal Implications

Once a child becomes looked after, the local authority has a number of duties towards him or her under the Children Act 1989 and associated legislation.

These include:

- (a) to safeguard and promote the child's welfare, including providing advice, assistance and befriending;
- (b) to provide services for the child in addition to accommodation;
- (c) to ascertain and give consideration to the wishes and feelings of the child and family members;
- (d) to provide a complaints procedure;
- (e) to keep a child's care plan under review.

The local authority also has duties to former looked after children.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

Children Looked After in Harrow come from diverse backgrounds and have a range of needs which reflects that of the wider community. The Corporate Parenting strategy outlines how foster carers and placements are recruited to ensure these needs are met and how a range of services are available to meet their diverse needs. It also notes that the staff involved in working with Children Looked After reflect the local community

Council Priorities

The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

Please identify how the report incorporates the administration's priorities.

- Making a difference for the vulnerable
- Making a difference for communities
- Making a difference for local businesses
- Making a difference for families

This update supports Harrow's Ambition plan and priority to protect the most vulnerable and support families; as well as being more business-like in commissioning and procurement to ensure best value in Children's placements

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost Frost.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the * Chief Financial Officer
Date:15 th May 2017.....		

Ward Councillors notified:	NO, as it impacts on all Wards
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EqIA carried out:

Not applicable

EqIA cleared by:

Update report

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Peter Tolley, Head of Service Corporate Parenting, Children and Young People Service Division, People Services Directorate
Peter.tolley@harrow.gov.uk 02087366943

Background Papers: None

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2017 to 2019

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Our Vision
3. Achievements to date and examples of good practice
4. Corporate parenting:-
 - 4.1 Corporate Parenting Panel
 - 4.2 Key reference documents
 - 4.3 Management performance reports
5. What makes a difference
 - 5.1. Education
 - 5.2. Placements
 - 5.3. Interests and talents
 - 5.4. Health
 - 5.5. Jobs, apprenticeships and work experience
 - 5.6. Offending
 - 5.7. Celebration of achievements
6. Key priorities
 - 6.1 Education, attainment and school attendance; narrow the gap
 - 6.2 Participation of young people in decision making
 - 6.3 LAC will be happy and healthy, safe and protected from harm and sexual exploitation; physical, emotional and social health and well-being
 - 6.4 Safe and stable placements; placement quality, choice and stability
 - 6.5 Identity; valued and respected and individual needs understood and met
 - 6.6 Smooth move to adulthood and independence; focussed support to narrow the gap

Appendix A The corporate parenting pledge

Appendix B Legal duties and responsibilities

Appendix C Detailed health outcomes

‘Elected Members of the Corporate Parenting panel demonstrate a clear commitment to improving the life chances of children looked after. They have oversight of detailed performance information and analysis, with a range of professionals presenting reports. This helps them to clarify, challenge and question activity. Mandatory training enhances their understanding. The corporate parenting strategy is detailed and it sets clear priorities and the areas for improvement’

1. “Introduction

Corporate parenting is the term used to describe the duties and responsibilities of a local authority in respect of the children looked after by the authority. Parental responsibility for looked after children is the responsibility of the whole council, not just children services.. In addition the local authority should enrol the support of its partner agencies in helping them to fulfil their obligations in respect of their corporate parenting responsibilities for the children looked after by the council.

Corporate parenting relates to all children looked after by the authority, wherever they are placed, including young people receiving after care services up to, in some circumstances, 25 years of age.

Corporate parenting is about offering at least the same standards of care as would a ‘reasonable parent’ in respect of the children looked after by the council. The outcomes for children who have been looked after can be poor with the reasons which brought them into care such as abuse, neglect, separation, loss and rejection significantly affecting their subsequent life experiences. As adults; they do less well educationally; they are over represented in the criminal justice system; have poorer health outcomes including an increased risk of suffering from mental health difficulties; have an increased likelihood of becoming homeless and experience economic and relationships difficulties in their own families.

It is important that being looked after responds effectively to this disadvantage.

The thrust of corporate parenting is about improving the life chances of children looked after – protecting their welfare, promoting their wellbeing, enhancing their lives and helping them reach their full potential. Everyone should have high aspirations for, and expectations of, children who are looked after

A key strand of corporate parenting is that it should be undertaken in consultation with children and young people who should have a say about how services for them are provided on both an individual and collective basis.

In addition to enrolling the support of all chief officers within the local authority and partner agencies such as police, probation, youth justice, connexions, health and schools, the local authority should harness the support and resources of local communities, sport and leisure facilities, business and faith groups.

The Looked After children population in Harrow has increased over the past 12 months from 180 32 per 10,000 children) at 31st March 2016 to 211 (37 per 10,000 children at 31st May 2017.

Harrow is also responsible for 176 Care Leavers between up to the age of 25

2. Our Vision

As corporate parents we are committed to ensuring that every child looked after has the best possible start in life, is given help to achieve their potential and experience safe and positive parenting.

- We want our children and young people to be happy and healthy, to be safe and protected from harm and sexual exploitation and be supported into adulthood.
- We want our children to have everything that good parents want for their children.
- We want our looked after children and young people to work with us, along with their parents and carers, in shaping how we manage and organise the planning, resources and services that support and care for them.
- We want them to achieve their potential especially in education, to make the most of the opportunities offered and to participate in the decisions affecting their care and their lives.
- We want our looked after children to be in placements that are as close as possible to their homes where they feel safe, happy and taken care of.
- We want our looked after children and young people to be supported in maintaining their culture, ethnicity and religion and to be supported to maximise the opportunities available to them.
- We want young people leaving care to be prepared for independent living, and supported to participate fully as active citizens into adulthood.

3. Achievements to date and examples of good practice

- Looked after children are offered, as a priority, places in their preferred schools in the borough
- Annual achievement celebration for looked after children, organised by children and young people, beyond educational attainment
- Annual foster carer celebration and awards evening
- All children are given extra tuition according to their need
- The Staying Put scheme enables care leavers to remain with their foster carers after their 18th birthday
- Care Leavers claim their entitlement to Housing Benefit appropriately
- A Care Leavers Charter developed with young people
- Full engagement with 2 year old, and 3 and 4 year old nursery offers
- Virtual School promotion of £1900 pupil premium funding use and monitoring for impact
- LINAB – “Language is not a Barrier” Club for Care Leavers continued and weekend activities developed
- Increase in the number of care leavers at university to 15
- Successful partnership with the CCG, and CNWL regarding the delivery of health service to Looked After Children
- New partnership with Barnados regarding the emotional and mental health needs of children to be formally launched on 3rd July

4. The Corporate Parenting Strategy

4.1 Corporate Parenting Panel

This strategy outlines our aspirations for looked after children and young people and sets out the actions we intend to take to achieve them.

Harrow Council is ambitious for looked after children and young people and as corporate parent for 213¹ children, our priority is to secure the very best care and opportunities for them. To achieve this we will work in partnership with children, young people, their families and partner agencies to ensure that children and young people enjoy their childhood and succeed in adult life. This commitment includes those care leavers for whom we have responsibility to support their transition into adulthood. This means that “children in care should be cared about, not just cared for”.

The Corporate Parenting Panel², a Council Committee, made up from elected members, provides strategic leadership to ensure the council is delivering its corporate parenting duties. It has responsibility to advise officers about action to improve outcomes and life chances for all its Looked After Children and Care Leavers and comment on reviewing and developing policy in key areas such as the review process. Agendas, reports and minutes are published on the council website.

All councillors hold a responsibility as corporate parents. Members’ induction is mandatory with training offered or all councillors at least annually.

4.2 Key reference documents used to hold officers and providers to account for CLA life outcomes include:

Management Performance reports

Quarterly performance activity reports
Children & Families Complaints Annual Report

Placement and planning – quality and timeliness:

Statement of Purpose for the Adoption Service – for annual CPP approval
Statement of Purpose for the Fostering Service – for annual CPP approval
Placement Sufficiency Strategy³
Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report –
Adoption and Fostering Panel Annual report
Case Tracking Annual Report

Education, employment and training specific – attainment and achievement of potential:

Virtual Head teacher Annual Report
Virtual School Development Plan
Not in employment, education or training [NEETs] Care Leavers - twice yearly reports

Health including dental checks

Regular Provider reports

Participation

Children and young people’s engagement and feedback – twice yearly reports

Crime: youth offending/re-offending

Housing and Childrens Services Protocol for homeless 16 to 17 year olds

4.3 Management performance information is required by the corporate parenting panel to enable robust scrutiny of performance, to inform priorities and determine what action needs to be taken.

¹ Snapshot data: 1/6/2017

² <http://www.harlow.gov.uk/www2/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=788> Purpose, role & membership

³ See priority 6.4

To inform the work of the corporate parenting board and to enable it to set priorities performance management information is necessary. This information relates to the life chances of children looked after, supported by research and evidence as to where activity can be directed which makes a difference. This focuses on the areas where children looked after historically do not do well and which, if improved, make a difference as to how they will fare as adults. This includes:-

- Improving their educational achievement, school attendance and attainment,
- Getting a job and living in a good standard of accommodation on becoming a care leaver
- Promoting their health (both physical and emotional),
- Having stable placements
- Supporting offenders to reintegrate into work, education and establish positive relationships
- Mitigating the negative impact of young people who go missing
- Supporting care leavers who are parents to successfully care for their children

5. What makes a difference?

The following are a range of activities which can act as protective factors and can help militate against some of the disadvantage which may have been experienced by looked after children. They are also actions undertaken by a good parent to give their children a good start in life. Because of their experiences, some children may need extra support to take advantage of opportunities offered.

5.1 Education

Education is probably the single most influential factor in ensuring that children fare well and are successful as adults. Things which support educational achievement and attainment of looked after children are that they are:-

- offered, as priority, places in the schools that are best for them
- not excluded from school
- provided with extra help and tuition, particularly at test and examination times
- encouraged and supported to go on to further and higher education

5.2 Placements

Harrow has developed a robust Placement Sufficiency Strategy which outlines the range of placement options and interventions. Including fostering, family and friends care, residential care and a range of semi-independent provisions

Harrow is also working with other boroughs within the West London Alliance to ensure greater placement choice and value for money across West London

5.3 Interests and talents

Having an interest or a talent is a very significant factor in improving children's life chances and hence when a child has an interest or a talent whatever this is it should be nurtured and developed improving self-esteem and achievement which often result in much better outcomes in adult life.

Supporting children's interests and talents can be achieved in the following ways, by:-

- Identifying a mentor within the Council who can coach, encourage and develop these skills and talents

- Making available resources to purchase any special equipment, clothing or materials to enable the child to participate on an equal footing with other children

5.4 Health

Improving children's health and wellbeing involves ensuring regular medical, dental checks and eye tests and being concerned and alert to children's wellbeing both physical and emotional and responding in a timely and appropriately manner.

Children Looked After are likely to have suffered from abuse and neglect and therefore need access to a range of responsive and effective health interventions to ensure they can meet the key developmental milestones

5.5 Jobs, apprenticeships and work experience

Harrow and its partner agencies are major employers in the borough and in respect of looked after children they are the 'family businesses'.

As 'family businesses' the following opportunities could be made available to looked after young people in when they leave school:-

- Work experience opportunities particularly in preparation for higher or further education
- Priority access to apprenticeships within the Council
- Priority access to employment with the LBH or its partner agencies
- Making available LBH employees to help prepare/equip young people for world of work, higher or further education

Employees could offer support and guidance to looked after young people and care leavers in respect of work experience, jobs, apprenticeships, further and higher education on both a professional and personal capacity, if appropriate.

5.6 Offending

Young people's lives can be blighted by offending behaviour. It affects their ability to obtain and keep jobs, maintain stable relationships and somewhere decent to live. Diverting young people from and reducing offending is critical to their life experiences as adults.

The Youth Offending Service has a key role in working with looked after children who offend.

5.7 Celebration of achievements

As well as focusing on activities to improve their life chances it is important to recognise and celebrate the achievements and successes of looked after children.

6. Key Priorities

6.1 Improve the education attainment and school attendance of looked after children; narrow the gap with other children

The role of Harrow Virtual School⁴ is to raise the attainment and outcomes of Harrow's Children Looked After ⁵(CLA). The Virtual School do this by challenging and supporting the schools, as well as providing a support service to a number of stakeholders in order to ensure that all Harrow CLA and Care Leavers receive a high standard of education and are

⁵.

involved in appropriate educational activities. The Virtual School focus their work on raising the aspirations of young people and relevant professionals so that they can reach their potential and move forward into further and higher education and gainful employment. The Virtual Headteacher Annual Report informs the corporate parenting agenda regarding CLA educational attainment, school attendance, employment and training, to accelerate progress to Narrow the Gap.

Designated Teachers network

Training and support is provided through the linked teachers from schools in Harrow. This has recently been combined with the group run by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, to enable more joined up work.

Alternative education provision

- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and Pathway plans more outcome focused and specific:95% up to date
- Raise attainment outcomes – target for each child or young person to match national standards
- Improve attendance % of all CLA and reduce exclusions
- Increase liaison and support to reduce time students are not registered at school, especially where placed out of borough and attending
- Further raise awareness and understanding of all placement staff and allocated social workers regarding the significance of PEPS and Pathway plans
- Evaluate and report the impact of the Pupil Premium for CLA.

6.2 Improve the involvement and participation of young people in all services for children looked after and care leavers

Participation

Children and young people looked after will be treated with respect by all who are involved with them, and have access to a range of activities to facilitate their participation in service development.

Ofsted January 2017 ‘Harrow Children looked after benefit from an impressive range of creative and innovative participation and engagement opportunities, and an active Children in Care Council, Beyond Limits’

Harrow’s **Participation Strategy**⁶ sets out our vision for involving children and young people in influencing the services which we provide. Their views will be listened to and they will be involved in making decisions about their lives. They will be involved in the planning, provision and evaluation of the services they need. They will know how to get information and support as well as how to raise a concern.

The child’s voice will be at the centre of all decision making and we will take time to talk to children on their own and can tell the child’s journey.

Our aim is that participation is a routine element of practice for all practitioners and managers, keeping the voice of the child at the heart of decision making :That there is a culture that changes things for children and young people and that we work together and we improve the quality of case work and managing risk to the child. We hold the child’s perspective and we develop effective systems that keep children safe using the ideas they offer us.

6

The Children in Care Council “Beyond Limits”⁷

The Beyond Limits group is for all children and young people who are looked after aged 11-25 years, separated into an older and younger group for age appropriate activities. Meeting monthly, currently around a core group of 6-8 young people, the group aims to listen to the opinions of children and young people and to be the voice for all children looked after. It liaises with a range of professionals to resolve the difficulties young people may encounter. Face to face: The group meets with the Corporate Parenting Panel every 4 months.

Child’s Voice Monthly newsletter

A monthly newsletter has been developed to promote the child’s voice, celebrate good practice and to encourage staff to listen to children and young people, taking action when appropriate. An editorial team, including children and young people, is being developed.

Pre LAC Review consultation

The Independent Reviewing Officer consults with children looked after two weeks prior to their statutory review. Young people are supported by their placements, carers, social worker, advocates or the Children’s Participation Co-ordinator if required. Online and printed feedback sheets are provided, and work to refresh the content and improve response rates is in progress.

Celebration of achievement awards – annual event

An annual event is held to celebrate the achievements and attainment of children and young people who are looked after. This event is organised in consultation with young people who co-host the event, and perform. The next event is on 25th October 2017

Leaving Care Charter –

The Leaving Care Charter was reviewed and re- launched, following consultation with young people.

Leaving Care Forum

The Leaving Care Forum meets quarterly, as a well attended forum which offers young people the opportunity to have direct contact with senior managers. Further work is being undertaken to enable young people to lead and develop the forum for themselves.

The young people have been very engaged in these sessions and offer valuable feedback and input into service development e.g. refreshing the charter, developing ‘what a good placement looks like’ highlighting what’s important to young people in placement matching and clarifying what support is required in order for us to ensure as many young care leavers as possible are able to go to the university of their choice.

6.3 Children looked after will be happy and healthy, safe and protected from harm and sexual exploitation: improve the physical, emotional and social health and wellbeing of children looked after and care leavers

Children Looked After are the responsibility of the local authority in the same way as we are responsible for our own children. We therefore require the same standard of health and wellbeing, but often these children enter the care system with worse levels of health due to poor parenting, chaotic lifestyles, poverty, neglect and abuse. Therefore it is the role and the responsibility of the Provider of these services, to ensure health and wellbeing needs are addressed and outcomes improve to the same standard as peers in Harrow.

Specific outcomes we are aiming for all Children Looked After to Achieve:

7

- Reach their developmental milestones at appropriate age
- Good physical health including attaining a healthy weight, taking regular exercise and eating a balanced and nutritious diet
- Improved levels of oral health and fewer dental cavities
- Immunised against preventable diseases
- A wider and more positive social and healthy lifestyle including strong self-esteem, positive image of self (including body image), free from bullying and free from violence and abuse
- Good mental, emotional and behavioural health and a strong sense of personal and emotional wellbeing.
- Harrow and the CCG have jointly commissioned the CLA Health service from CNWL which has seen a positive increase in the health outcomes for Looked After Childrens. This service has been extended for a further 2 years
- Harrow and the CCG have also commissioned Barnardos to provide services for the emotional needs of children and young people with Looked After children being a priority group. This service has already started taking referrals and is being formally launched in July
- Educational attainment and attendance improved as a result of better health and well-being
- Less harmful use of substances including alcohol, drugs and tobacco
- Healthy and appropriate relationships and awareness of good sexual health
- Reduction in the number of CLA becoming teenage parents
- CLA placements are stable as a result of having health and wider needs met
- CLA know where to go for health and wellbeing support, and are able to self-manage their health needs when they leave care (including physical health, sexual health, mental, emotional and behavioural health, oral health, diet, exercise, substances, sun safety, parenting skills, medicines and minor ailments, accident prevention, etc).

6.4 Safe and stable placements: provide a choice of good quality placements that provide security, stability, safety and high standards of care

As corporate parents it is imperative that we commission the right accommodation and supporting services available so that outcomes for each child and young person are the best possible. Harrow's Placement Sufficiency Strategy forms part of the commissioning strategy that we are in the process of developing for our Children Looked After.

Harrow Ofsted report January 2017 'The sufficiency Strategy is clear and coherent with relevant priorities linked to present and future need. Appropriate commissioning arrangements are in place to ensure that there is a range of placements to meet the needs of children looked after.'

In the strategy we set out the supporting legislation, needs of children looked after, and the resources at our disposal, and set out resulting actions for changing the internal and external market of services that we rely on.

Based on feedback from children and young people looked after, care leavers, and primary and secondary legislation, we have the following aims for our CLA services:

1. All children looked after are placed in appropriate placements with access to the support that they need, as identified in their care plan
2. Resources are available to respond to predicted demand for a range of needs and emergencies
3. Services are provided within the local authority area as far as possible or within the West London Alliance boundaries, except where this is not consistent with the

welfare of a child, or is a specialist placement that it is not possible to commission locally

4. Children and Housing services have robust joint working protocols to meet the needs of those who are at risk of becoming looked after at the age of 16 and 17 as a result of homelessness
5. A sufficient range of accommodation and support packages are available to care leavers to facilitate their pathway plans and to ensure all transitions are undertaken in a planned and supportive manner. This includes a clear staying put policy to enable care leavers to remain with their foster carers up to the age of 25 if desired and appropriate
6. Services are of a high quality and deliver the specific outcomes identified in the care plans of children looked after
7. A range of placement choices are developed to meet the needs of the diverse Looked after children population in Harrow
8. Systems are in place to ensure careful matching of placements and to prevent disruption and to ensure placement stability

Placement stability is an incredibly important indicator of performance, as stability can be linked to permanence and better outcomes. Stability is therefore a good proxy-indicator for the positive outcomes we want to achieve.

Access to Resources Team

We have established an Access to Resources Team which commissions external placements and we aim to use only those providers who have an OFSTED judgement of good or outstanding. We are members of the West London Alliance project looking at shared commissioning of placements for children who are looked after. The Access to Resources Team has a responsibility to ensure careful matching of the placement to best meet the assessed needs of the child or young person. Strengths and difficulties questionnaires are completed and help identify where additional support may be required.

Fostering

We recognise that children do best in local placements where they can remain close to family, friends and their community, We have a robust targeted recruitment strategy to ensure we have a diverse range of foster carers to meet the needs of children looked after. Foster carers have access to a comprehensive training programme to ensure they have the skills to meet the needs of the young people they care for, and they are supported by the fostering social worker through robust supervision.

Children and young people receive information about their placement in advance and are listened to if they have concerns at any time.

Residential Care

Harrow has low use of residential care and only considers this after alternatives have been tried or assessed as unviable. We aim to use only those providers who have an OFSTED judgement of good or outstanding.

The decision for a child or young person's placement is based on their need and tends to end with one of the following accommodation options and additional services for specific needs. Accommodation options include:

- Internal foster care
- External foster care
- Internal residential care
- External residential care
- Parent and child assessment
- Semi-independent and care leavers

Adoption

Harrow has invested in a domestic adoption partnership with Coram, a voluntary adoption agency. Three members of Coram staff are co-located with Children and Families social workers. This has enabled early identification and planning for adoption cases. The partnership with Harrow was established in 2006, and since that time there have been no disruptions of a Harrow child's placement, demonstrating the quality of preparation and support to adopters. Under the Harrow partnership agreement Coram also provides advice and consultation on permanence planning to Harrow Children and Families Directorate for children entering care. Following recent legislative and grant changes options for future provision are currently under consideration.

Special Guardianship

We have increased the number of children and young people who are subject to Special Guardianship Orders and able to leave the care system by living in permanent and stable families.

Family Group Conferences

In September 2016 Harrow set up an inhouse Family Group Conference service to maximise the opportunities to explore all options within a child's extended family and friends network, including placement and support options. A full report will be available in September 2017 outlining its achievements and the impact on children and families

6.5 Identity: looked after children know who they are and why they are looked after; feel valued and respected by others and their individual needs arising from gender, race, culture, disability, sexuality and religion are understood and met

Our staff and managers are committed to the following

- **Continue to recruit foster carers that reflect the diversity of the local community**
- **Ensure all young people permanently fostered and adopted have lifestory books and later life letters**
- **Young people develop a positive identity, emotional resilience and self esteem**
- **The work force reflects the diversity of the local community**

6.6 Smooth transition to adulthood and independence: ensure children looked after and care leavers receive focused support at key transition points in their lives

The Leaving Care and Unaccompanied Asylum Children Team are responsible for those young people leaving care. They have developed a range of opportunities with partner agencies to support young people as they make the transition to adulthood.

Lifeskills Workshop

The Lifeskills Workshop was introduced 6 years ago and has been running successfully with a group of 20 young people attending annually.

The Lifeskills Workshop brings together professionals from health looking at sexual health, drug and alcohol and mental health, housing and benefits and EET all providing information as well as young people undertaking practical skills such as cooking, budgeting, writing CV's and interview skills.

MyBank - Money works

MyBank is an independent training organisation focusing on money management. Mybank run a course for Harrow young people looked after. Twice a year the course runs over 2 days and the young people receive a Level 1 - Personal Money Management certificate. Money Works provides survival money management skills to young people in need.

Education, Employment and Training

The Leaving Care and Unaccompanied Asylum Children Team has a careers advisor based within the service. Their primary role is to work with those young people who are not in employment, education or training and to support other workers in engaging with this group of young people.

Not in Employment, Education or Training Panel [NEET]

The NEET Panel meets monthly and targets those young people not engaged in EET. It consists of a range of professionals from different disciplines to offer advice and guidance around engagement and access to a range of services. A robust action plan is then developed to actively engage with the young person.

Housing sub group

This has now run successfully for 12 months, to ensure maximum benefit for meeting quarterly, with representatives from Housing, LCT & UASC, Housing Benefit, Council Tax, and more recently Supporting People (Council Adults' Team). The housing department will continue to attend the Corporate Parenting Panel on a regular basis.

All young people that have been put forward have successfully claimed housing benefit and there have been no issues to date. This can be seen as an important improvement towards independence.

Leaving Care Charter

The Leaving Care Charter was recently re-launched and outlines the Local Authority's commitment to Care leavers and specific areas of support, financial, practical and emotional.

Clinic in a box

Working in partnership with the sexual health nurse we offer advice and information in respect of sexual health. There is a drop-in service and she attends the lifeskills course annually.

Leaving Care Forum (see 6.2 earlier)

Staying Put policy

Lead worker NEET

Increased Leaving Care grant made by the Council to support the transition

Priority Actions for 2017 to 2019

- To strengthen the Children in Care Council 'Beyond Limits' through increases participation of children looked after and care leavers
- Ensure that the Corporate Parenting Panel receives regular feedback from children looked after and takes any necessary action arising from that feedback
- Expand participation engagement with CLA placed out of borough
- Increase response rates through refreshed feedback options for CLA reviews and CP Conferences
- Advocacy and Independent Visitor Services are used by children and young people to ensure their voices are heard

- Ensure providers deliver 100% health assessments on time
- Care leavers have health passports
- CLA wellbeing improves

- Increase capacity and placement choice; increase numbers of in-house foster carers including specialist placements for the children with the most complex needs
- Further reduce the number of placement moves
- Reduce the length of time children wait for adoptive placement
- Continue to recruit foster carers that reflect the diversity of the local community
- Ensure all young people permanently fostered and adopted have lifestory books and later life letters
- Young people develop a positive identity, emotional resilience and self esteem

- Improve opportunities for care leavers to access education ,employment or specially trained apprenticeships

Appendix A: Corporate Parenting Pledge⁸ to Looked After Children

For a better future

Harrow Council provides care and support to those children and young people who, for whatever reason, cannot live with their birth family. For some this may be a short time and for others it may be longer. However long or whether you live with foster carers, residential care, adoptive parents or another member of your family we are committed to giving you the best start in life possible - helping you to be the best that you can be.

The Local Authority is your corporate parent - which simply means trying to do everything that a good parent does throughout your time in our care. Our commitment to you is made by the politicians, who represent the community in the running of the council, all directors and senior managers and our staff, who provide care and support for you.

Children and young people who are in our care or who have been in our care in the recent past have told us what kind of good care and support they need to be the best they can be. We have listened to this and the commitments we make in this children's pledge reflect this.

Our pledge

We pledge to work together to provide you the best possible care and support to help you be the best you can be in your life - now and in the future. To do this we will:

1. **Provide you with a safe home to live where you feel happy and taken care of.** This means that wherever possible you will have a choice about where you live and that you will not be moved from a settled home unless absolutely necessary, or if it is deemed to be in your best interests.
2. **Provide you with the support you need to do well in education.** This means that we will make sure you have the opportunity to go to a school where you can flourish, get the support outside of school to do well in exams and have access to college and university.
3. **Listen to you about things in your own life and about the care that you receive from us.** This means that we will always make sure that you are involved in decisions that are made about your own life and that we find ways to help you tell us your views if you find this difficult. We will also make sure that there are opportunities to tell us what you think about the care that you receive and that if you have a complaint you get the help to get heard.
4. **Be honest with you about things that have happened in your life and the decisions that are made about your care.** We know that at times it is difficult to understand what has happened to you and why certain decisions are made about your care. We can't promise that you will always agree with these decisions. But, we will always be honest with you about the reasons for these decisions and, where possible, what has happened in your life.
5. **Help you to develop good relationships with the people that you care for and the people in your life that are most important to you.** This means that, as far as possible, we will provide you with opportunities to see those people that are important to you in your life. We will help you to develop and maintain relationships and friendships with the people that provide care and support for you and other children and young people.
6. **Provide you with support and opportunities to enjoy your life and have interests and hobbies of your own.** This means that we will make sure you have information and access to opportunities and activities outside of education that you enjoy.
7. **Provide you with the support you need when you leave care to become independent and be the best you can be in adult life.** This means that we will make sure that you have choices about how and when you leave care and that we will make

⁸ http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/200161/children_look_after/487/harrow_pledge/2

sure we support you to be prepared for independence and have the help you will need to make independence work when you leave care.

We make these pledges to you and will do our best to always fulfil each one. There are many teams involved in helping make these pledges happen - from Children's Services to Housing and Health. We will make sure that we work together to do this.

Harrow Council - Corporate Parenting Panel

The Harrow Pledge is endorsed by the Corporate Parenting panel on behalf of the Council.

All policy and procedures relating to children looked after are overseen by the Corporate Parenting panel.

Members and senior officers from the Council meet to discuss the performance, service delivery and aspirations for the Council in respect of Children Looked After and young people leaving care. Beyond Limits representatives also attend the Corporate Parenting panel.

This panel is lead by members to challenge, scrutinise and support the services for children looked after.

Appendix B: Legal duties and responsibilities

The Children Act 1989 sets out the local authority's legal duties and responsibilities which underpin service provision for looked after children, young people and care leavers. Although the term corporate parenting is not specifically mentioned in the Children Act 1989 it is a term that has been widely adopted and is included in the recent guidance associated with the Act.

Subsequent legislation, regulations and government advice has extended and strengthened the obligations of local authorities towards looked after children, including:-

- 1998 letter from the Secretary of State for Health, Frank Dobson regarding councilors roles and responsibilities toward looked after children
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 - extended the types of service and upper age limit of young people the local authority are responsible for as a corporate parent
- Subsequent government guidance issued for councilors has reiterated the role that they should play in being an effective corporate parent for looked after children in their care. The "If this were my child" (DfES 2003) guidance posed the benchmark question to develop the necessary mind set for achieving high quality outcomes for looked after children. This established a clear expectation that once a child becomes looked after all councilors and officers of the council need to be concerned about them 'as if they were their own children'.
- Children Act 2004 - contains a statutory requirement for local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children and emphasizes the role of collaborative service agreements to achieve the right type of service provision
- Children & Young People Act 2008 - reinforced the message that all councils, and particularly elected members, hold responsibility for ensuring good outcomes for looked after children
- April 2011, further statutory guidance was introduced to clarify the local authority's responsibilities for looked after children. The revised statutory guidance is presented as a suite of documents as follows;
 - Care Planning, Placement & Care reviews
 - Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers
 - Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Handbook
 - Sufficiency - securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children
 - Short Breaks
- November 2011 Family Justice Review Panel report taken forward in the Children and Families Bill: the commitment to a 26 week time limit when courts consider a child should be taken into care; virtual school head in every local authority
- July 2013 revised statutory guidance on adoption published
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* April 2013
- From Sept 2013 all young people must remain in education or training until the end of the academic year they turn 17.

Appendix C: Detailed Health outcomes

The CLA health outcomes service shall be available to:

- Children within the children in need and child protection system who are accommodated on section 20 of the Children Act 1989
- Children Looked After who are accommodated under section 31 (Care Orders) and 38 (Interim Care Orders) of the Children Act 1989
- Children looked after who are in pre-adoption placements and transition planning for those moving to post adoption placements
- Children looked after with special guardianship orders
- Children who are unaccompanied asylum seeking minors and are in the care of the Local Authority
- Children placed in short term care
- Young people up to 25 years who are within the leaving care team plus transition planning
- All carers and professionals who relate to the above and are involved in their care planning
- Statutory and voluntary agencies who are involved in care planning.

Service scope includes the following:

- Responsibility for health and wellbeing outcomes for CLA
- Monitoring of health and wellbeing outcomes for CLA and tracking of assessments
- Identified health lead professional for each child which may be the Health Visitor, Community Children's Nurse or school nurse
- Assessment of CLA health including all initial and review health assessments except where already a key health worker has built a relationship with the child / young person – this would be assessed on an individual basis
- Health care plans and health passports for care leavers
- Advisory and signposting of support for CLA and care leavers
- Participation in professional meetings and identification of suitable care placements, including through attending fostering panels and adoption panels
- Provision of reports to panels and court proceedings
- Training for Council, NHS, Schools, carers, parents and other partners in support of the Designated Professional
- Sharing information and support to Council, NHS, Schools, carers, parents and other partners as appropriate
- Co-ordination of Council, NHS, School, other partner and Community resources to improve CLA health and wellbeing outcomes
- Supporting CLA and carers to access non-medical specialised services when needed through referral and care pathway routes
- Support to CQC, Ofsted and other inspections as and when required.

The same monitoring, outcome and quality requirements will apply regardless of geographical location of CLA. Arrangements with other providers of assessments and support will be approved by the Commissioner and Designated Nurse.

The CLA health outcomes service may also be requested to support Children Looked After who are placed within Harrow by other authorities. In the event that the service Provider chooses to provide services for non-Harrow CLA it must recharge the originating CCG accordingly, record this activity separately and report to the Commissioner and Designated

Nurse. The recharge to the originating CCG will be completed by the Designated Nurse for CLA once the details have been shared by the CLA Service.

Both initial and review health assessments shall:

- Identify the health needs of the child
- Ensure the voice of the child is recorded and the assessment is co-produced
- Establish health history and identify gaps in routine child health surveillance
- Request the health information from local health providers and specialist services to ensure a full and accurate overview of the child health needs
- Identify family health history
- Promote optimal health and address areas of unmet health needs
- Formulate a strategy and action plan for meeting health needs
- Address the needs of the child in the placement so that the carer is empowered and feels confident to provide for the support and health care needs of their child, at the same time as feeling that their own needs are also being supported.

The following are actions, to be undertaken, as a result of each high quality health assessment:

- Clear identification of the level of unidentified health needs and how to address these
- Agreement with the child on how, where and when and by whom professional support shall be provided
- Agreement with the child on how, when and by whom their development shall be monitored
- Identify gaps in service provision and escalate to Senior Managers and the Designated Nurse and Commissioner
- Identify key health issues and how these shall be addressed
- Liaise with partner agencies including CAMHS, substance misuse services, sexual health agencies, leisure services, schools to ensure needs are addressed
- A health care plan for every child in care including details of how progress shall be monitored.

The Provider working closely with social care is responsible for following up health assessments and health care plans with the child, and shall maintain contact with the child throughout the year to offer support and refer to other services as appropriate. Tracking of the child shall be at a level equivalent to their needs and requirements.

Plans will be co-produced with children, their carers and where appropriate parents to ensure all stakeholders are contributing to the health and wellbeing outcomes of the child.

Health plans shall address all health and wellbeing outcomes and include, as a minimum:

- Reflect the voice of the child
- Clear identification of overall objectives
- Named professional responsible for actions
- Timescales for delivery
- Clarify monitoring arrangements

We will support the development of Health passports working closely with the Local authority, GP's and Young People. Health passports shall address all health and wellbeing outcomes and where possible include:

- NHS number
- Blood group
- Birth information
- Growth Statistics and Percentiles
- Hearing Function Information
- Medical history
- Family Health History

- Regular medication
- Contact details for GP, dentist, optician and other health professionals,
- Immunisation records
- Eye Test Results / Prescriptions
- Information promoting healthy and active lifestyles
- Organ donation register information if deemed appropriate

Resources to engage include, but are not limited to:

- Children Looked After
- Carers and parents
- Community resources
- Health Visiting
- School Nursing
- Public Health
- GPs
- CAMHS
- Harrow Children & Families
- Virtual Heads
- Independent Visitors
- Dentistry
- Child Development teams
- Community Children's Nursing teams
- Secondary care providers
- Specialist / tertiary services e.g., paediatric, stoma, craniofacial or chronic skin disease
- Schools (including team around the school)
- Children's Centres
- Dietetics
- Sexual Health Services including GUM
- Local services to where children and young people are placed
- Early Intervention Service
- COMPASS and Each
- Police services
- Harrow Youth Offending Team
- Harrow CCG
- Voluntary and community organisations
- Children with Disabilities Team

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**REPORT FOR: CORPORATE
PARENTING PANEL**

Date:	14 June 2017
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – Activity and Performance
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Chris Spencer, Corporate Director, People Services
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder, Children, Schools and Young People
Wards affected:	All
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Enclosures:	CLA Performance Report

Section 1 –Summary and Recommendations

This is an information report which sets out activity for children looked after and care leavers at 31st March 2017 (where available) as well as provisional performance position at quarter four of 2016-17. National and comparator data is also included where appropriate for context.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

See the attachment which shows provisional outturn position at end of Q4 and an update of activity for children looked after (CLA) at the end of March where available.

Key Points:

- Numbers of CLA have remained stable since last quarter but do represent a 3 year high of 211. The numbers of CLA 1yr+ have also seen an increase from last quarter. The overall rate of CLA per 10,000 children (Harrow rate - 37) remains below the national (60) and statistical neighbour (41) average.
- There are no significant changes to the profile of the CLA cohort. However comparator data published for 2015-16 shows
 - (1) Harrow to have a higher proportion of CLA aged 16+ and a lower proportion in aged 10 – 15. 44 children will be turning 18 this year and eligible for leaving care services.
 - (2) Harrow has a higher percentage of males in care.
 - (3) CLA by ethnicity compared with statistical neighbour average show a very different picture due to the make-up of Harrow's population. More than two thirds of Harrow's CLA population is from BME groups and in line with the local population breakdown though Mixed, Black British and Other Ethnic Backgrounds are overrepresented.
 - (4) Harrow has a lower proportion of CLA in foster placements and a higher proportion in placements in the community (independent and semi- independent placements)
 - (5) A higher proportion of care leavers were in suitable accommodation and in employment .education and training at 31/03/2016 compared to statistical neighbour averages.
 - (6) Harrow have had a similar proportion of CLA who had a missing episode in the year compared to previous year whilst statistical neighbours' and England trend is an increase from previous year
- In-house foster placements remain the most common placement type accounting for 46.9% of all placements; this is followed by semi-independent placements and foster care (agency) who account for 14.5% each.
- 68% of school age CLA had a completed PEP in the spring term at 31st

March compared to 70.6% in the previous summer term.

- 23.8% of school age CLA are classified as persistent absentees, a figure which has remained stable from the previous report
- The percentage of CLA ceasing due to adoption has decreased to 3.8%, whilst CLA ceasing due to SGO has increased to 15.6%.
- The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation has increased since last quarter to 77.3%. Currently 27.3 % of care leavers are not in employment education or training (17 are not recorded). Work will be done at year end to ensure accurate recording of data ahead of returns. All efforts are made to help young people gain skills and training through Xcite and similar projects.
- The proportion of CLA 2+ placement moves risen above the annual 10% target and the statistical neighbour average (12%) to 13.3%. Placement moves are being closely monitored as there are 40 CLA with 2 moves which could potentially impact the indicator should another move occur.
- Long term stability of CLA placements remain under target with 57.1% of CLA looked after for 2.5 years being in the same placement for 2 years. There hasn't been any movement in this indicator since January.

Options considered

Not applicable as this is an information report.

Risk Management Implications

The Children's Services Risk Register has been updated to reflect the performance risks highlighted in this report.

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

Separate risk register in place? No

Legal Implications

Not applicable as this is an information report.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable as this is an information report.

Corporate Priorities

The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

Please identify how the report incorporates the administration's priorities.

- Making a difference for the vulnerable
- Making a difference for families

The report focuses on the qualitative and quantitative measures of service delivery to vulnerable children, young people and families. These measures help to inform & improve service planning.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost Date : 30/05/2017	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
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Ward Councillors notified:	NO, this is an information report only
EqIA carried out:	NO
EqIA cleared by:	N/A information report only

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Background Papers: None

Contact:

Dipika Patel, Partner- Business Intelligence Unit 020 8420 9258 dipika.patel@harrow.gov.uk	David Harrington Head of Business Intelligence 0208 420 9248 <u>David.harrington@harrow.gov.uk</u>
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Corporate Parenting Report

March 2017

Children Looked After

Activity to end of February 2016

Key Indicators to end of December 2016 (provisional outturns)

CONTENTS

PART A:	PERFORMANCE INFORMATION	3
A1)	<u>KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</u>	3
Part B:		
B1)	NUMBERS OF CLA OVER TIME	5
PART C:	CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA) DETAIL	6
C1)	<u>AGE GROUPS</u>	6
C2)	<u>GENDER</u>	7
C3)	<u>ETHNICITY</u>	8
C4)	<u>PLACEMENT TYPE</u>	9
C5)	<u>SCHOOL AGE CLA</u>	10
C6)	<u>CLA EDUCATION</u>	11
C7)	<u>CLA HEALTH</u>	12
C8)	<u>CLA STARTING & ENDING, DUAL REGISTERED CPP AND UASC</u>	13
C9)	<u>ADOPTIONS AND SGOs</u>	14
C10)	<u>CLA REVIEWS</u>	15
C10)	<u>CARE LEAVERS</u>	16
C11)	<u>CLA WHO GO MISSING</u>	17
C12)	<u>CLA PLACEMENT STABILITY</u>	18
C13)	<u>CLA PLACEMENTS OVER 20 MILES</u>	19

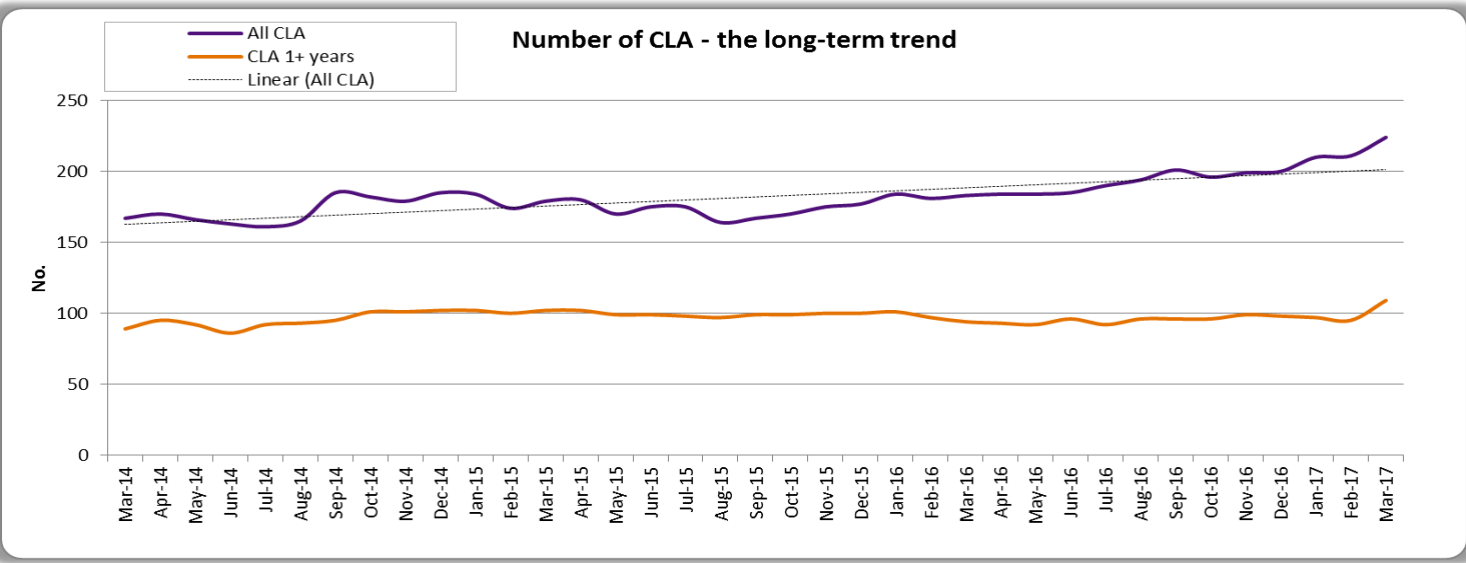
Part A – Key Performance Indicators for children looked after

PI Ref	PI Description	Statistical Neighbours Average 15/16	England average 15/16	Harrow 13/14	Harrow 14/15	Harrow 15/16 (provisional)	Harrow 16/17 Q1	Harrow 16/17 Q2	Harrow 16/17 Q3	Harrow 16/17 Q4
14	Rate of CLA per 10,000 population. Measured Quarterly. (snapshot)	41.0	60.0	30.0	29.0	32.3	32.7	35.5	35.3	37.0
15	% of New CLA who were previously adopted, had a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or residence order granted	Not published		0.7	0.00	0.7	3.2	1.2	0.8	0.5
16	CLA placement stability: number of moves (% with 2+ moves) Target - 11%	12.1*	10*	10.0	8.0	8.5	6.4	8.5	12	13.3
17	CLA placement stability: length of placement (%) Target - 71%	64.7*	68*	45.0	39.0	62.1	52.8	51.4	59	57.1
18	% of CLA placed more than 20 miles away from home (snapshot)	19.0	14.0	16.0	16.0	18.5	24.1	19.9	23	19.3
19	% of children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted	7.4	15.0	7.0	4.6	8.3	8.3	9.4	5.2	3.8
20	% of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (combined for 19, 20 and 21 year olds)	79.9	83.0	95.4	88.0	90.3	85.7	69.4	73	77.3
21	% of Care Leavers not in education, employment or training (combined for 19, 20 and 21 year olds)	28.2	37.9	29.0	30.0	31	50	32.3	33	27.3

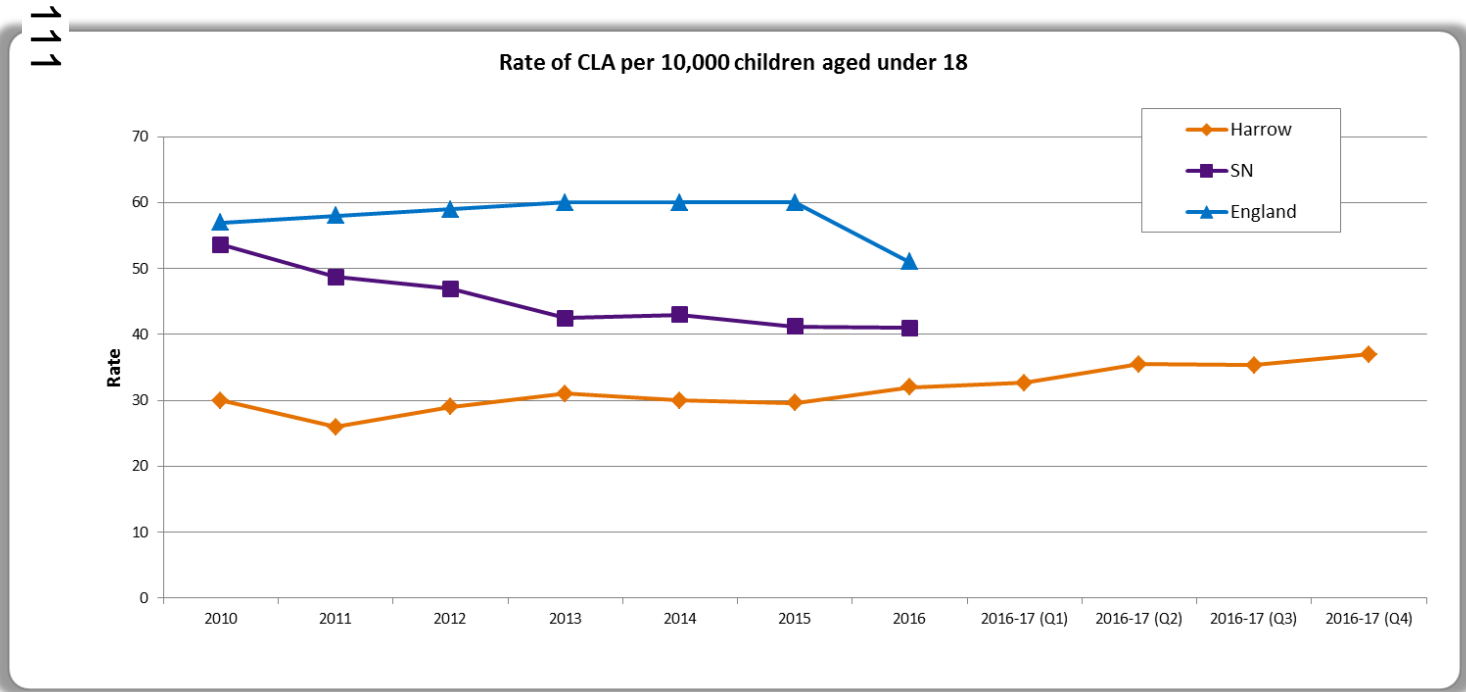
* 2014/15 benchmarking figures

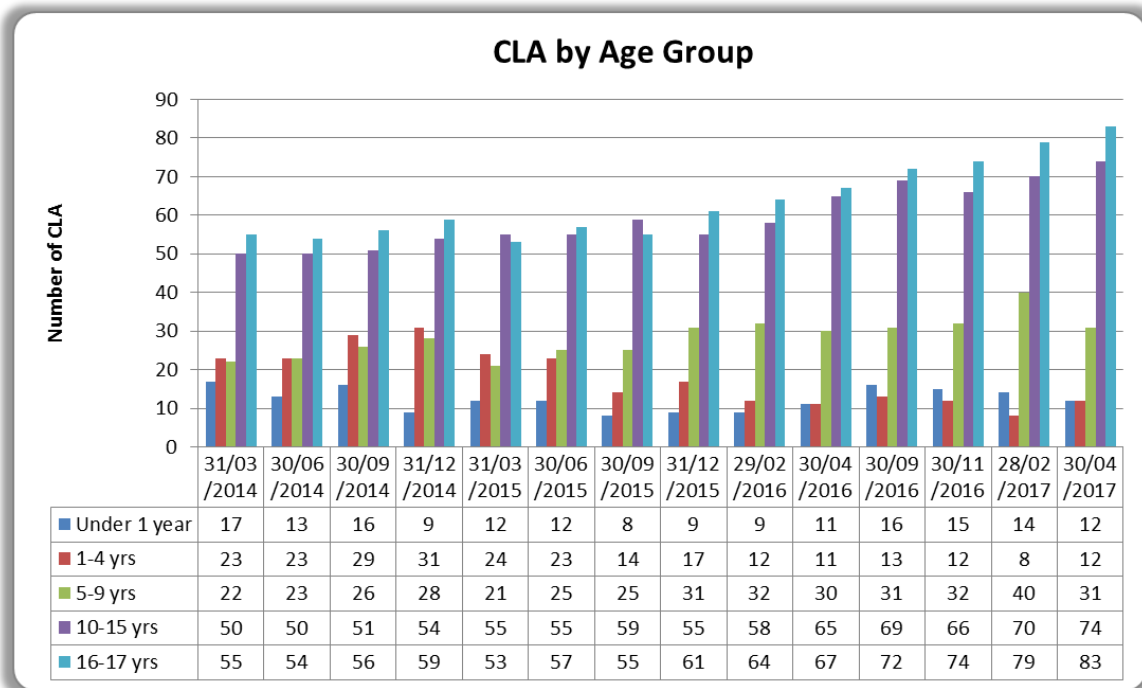
		Harrow 2013-14	England average	SN Average	Harrow 2014-15
23	Educational attainment of school aged Children (CLA)				
	Percentage of children looked After achieving at least level 4 at KS2 in Reading, writing and maths (Source DfE)	0	52.0	56.0	50.0
	Percentage of children Looked After who achieve 5+ A* -C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics.	0	18.3	26.7	0.0
24	Attendance at school of school aged Children in Need (CLA)				
	Percentage of sessions missed. (CLA 1 year+)	4.3	4.0	4.2	5.6
	Percentage classed as persistent absentees (CLA 1 year+)	supressed - low nos	4.9	4.8	supressed - low nos
25	Exclusion from school of school-aged Children in Need CLA				
	Percentage of children with at least one fixed exclusion. (CLA 1 year+)	11.4	10.25 (2013-14)	11.05 (2013-14)	17.9 (provisional)

Part B –Numbers of CLA over time



CLA numbers have continued to increase throughout the current year with overall numbers showing a gradual increase from 2012. The overall numbers of CLA and CLA 1yr+ have. The rate of CLA per 10,000 is increasing but continues to remain below the England and statistical neighbour averages.

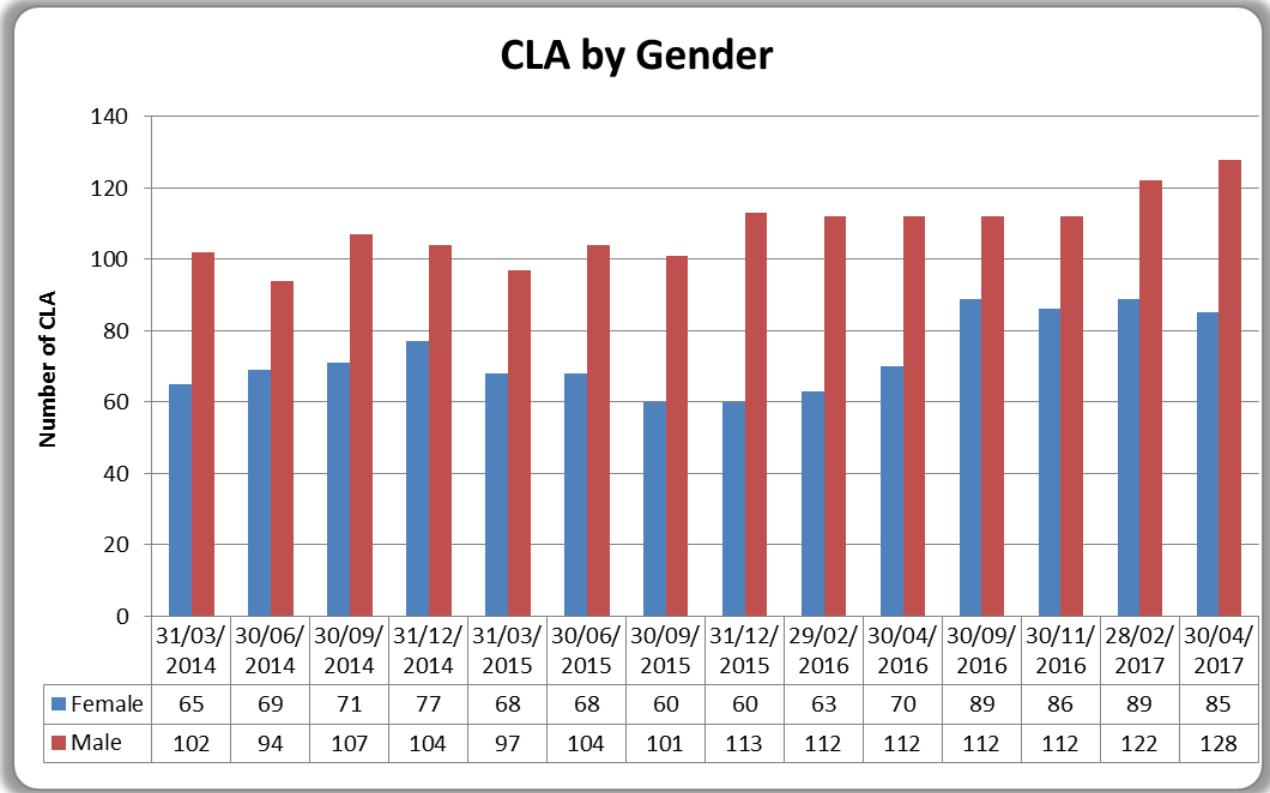




The overall numbers of CLA have increased slightly from the previous report. Comparator data has been published for 2015-16, this shows Harrow to have a higher proportion of CLA aged 16+ and a lower proportion in aged 10 – 15. Higher numbers of CLA aged 16+ will continue to have an impact on leaving care services. 44 children will be turning 18 this year.

Comparative data (%) year ending March 2016	Age				
	Under 1	1 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 15	16+
Harrow	5	6	18	33	39
Stat Neighbour	4	9	16	38	34
England	5	13	20	39	23

113

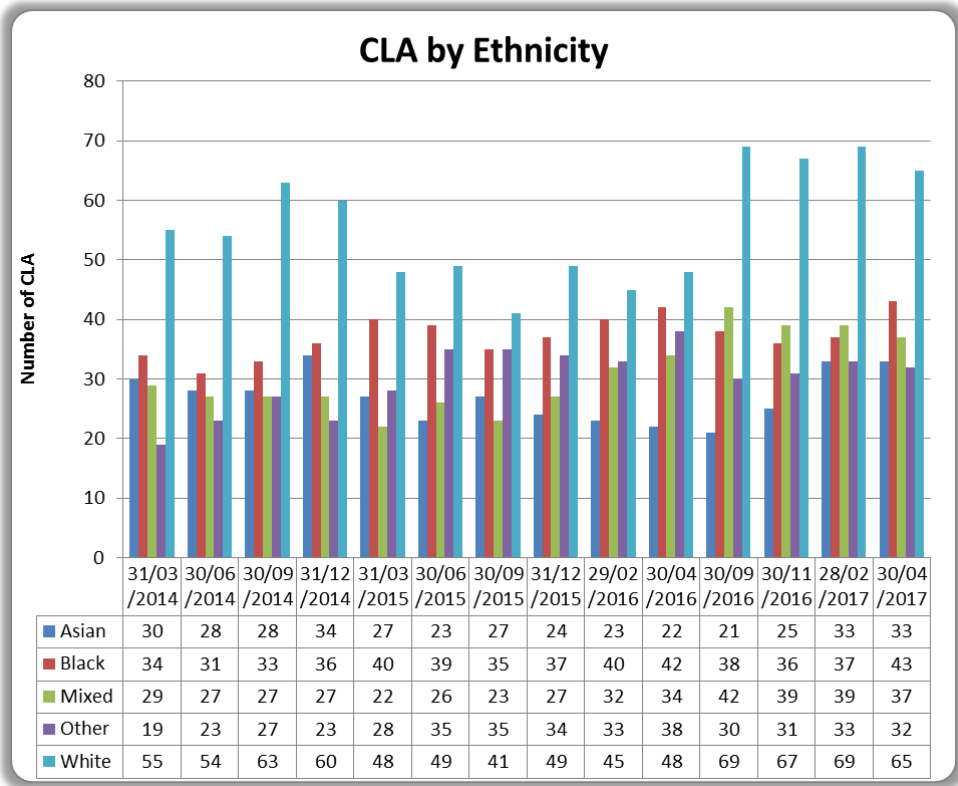


Comparator data shows Harrow has a higher percentage of males in care. This number has increased in the last 2 quarters to a peak of 128 ,whilst the number of females has remained moderately stable since September 2016.

Comparative data (%) year ending March 2016	Gender	
	Male	Female
Harrow	64	36
Stat Neighbour	59	41
England	56	44

C3 – Children looked after ethnicity. (Comparator info. source SSDA 903 March 2015)

114



In line with population projections, Harrow’s Black and Minority Ethnic groups are considerably higher than England and the statistical neighbour average.

Overall two thirds of Harrow’s children looked after population are from BME groups and more in line with the local population breakdown, Mixed, Black British and other ethnic backgrounds are overrepresented in the LAC cohort.

The main shift from the previous report is an increase in Black CLA with an additional 6 bringing the total to 43. The other ethnic groups have relatively stable.

Comparative data (%) year ending March 2016	Ethnicity				
	White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Other Ethnic Groups
Harrow	28	20	13	23	17
Stat Neighbour	47	17	12	18	7
England	75	9	4	7	3
Ethnic breakdown of young people aged under18, 2011	30.9	9.5	42.6	12.2	4.5

C4 – Children looked after placement type

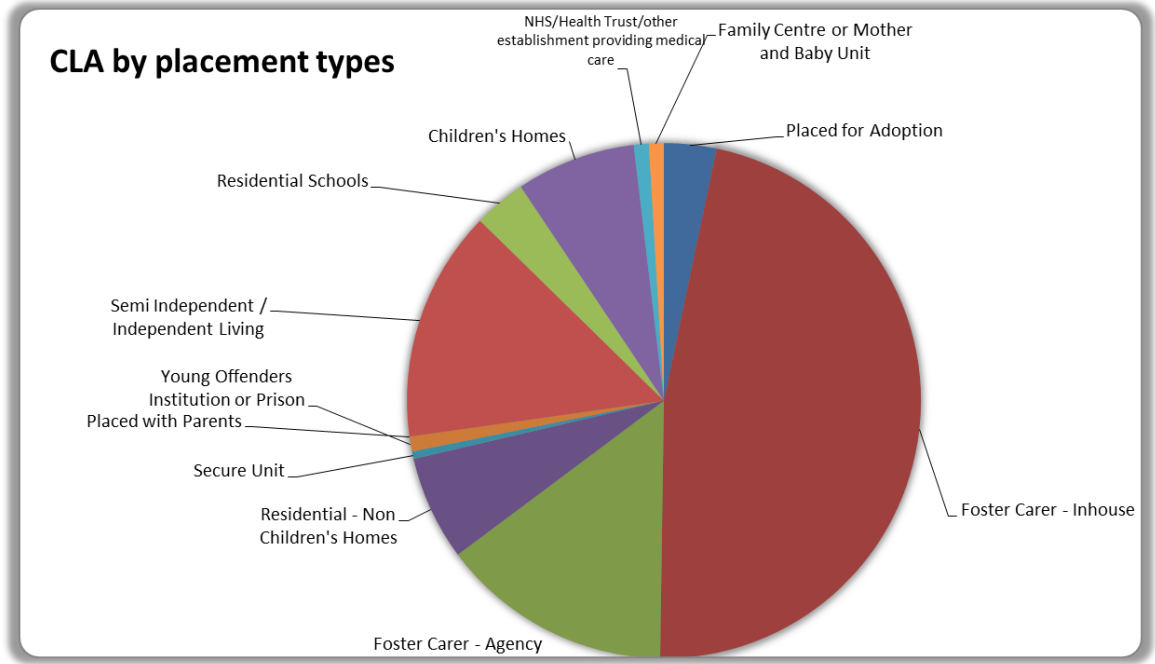
Placement Type	Sep-15	Dec-15	Feb-16	Apr-16	Sep-16	Nov-16	Feb-17	Apr-17
Placed for Adoption	7	10	9	6	4	5	6	7
Foster Carer - Inhouse	53	67	71	70	107	100	101	100
Foster Carer - Agency	30	23	20	29	25	26	32	31
Residential - Non Children's Homes	14	11	9	8	5	6	11	14
Secure Unit	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Young Offenders Institution or Prison	1	3	3	1	2	2	1	2
Placed with Parents	0	4	4	2	0	2	0	0
Semi Independent / Independent Living	13	21	24	25	31	33	33	31
Residential Schools	5	4	6	8	6	7	7	7
Children's Homes	13	17	16	16	13	10	13	16
NHS/Health Trust/other establishment providing medical care	1	0	0	0	4	4	3	2
Family Centre or Mother and Baby Unit	0	0	0	2	3	3	2	2
Temporary placement	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Grand Total	137	160	162	168	201	199	211	213

There are no significant changes to placement types. In house foster placements remain the most common placement type accounting for 46.9% of all placements. Slight increase in children in residential placements. Comparator data with statistical neighbours shows Harrow to have a lower proportion of CLA in foster placements and a higher proportion in placements in the community (independent and semi- independent placements)

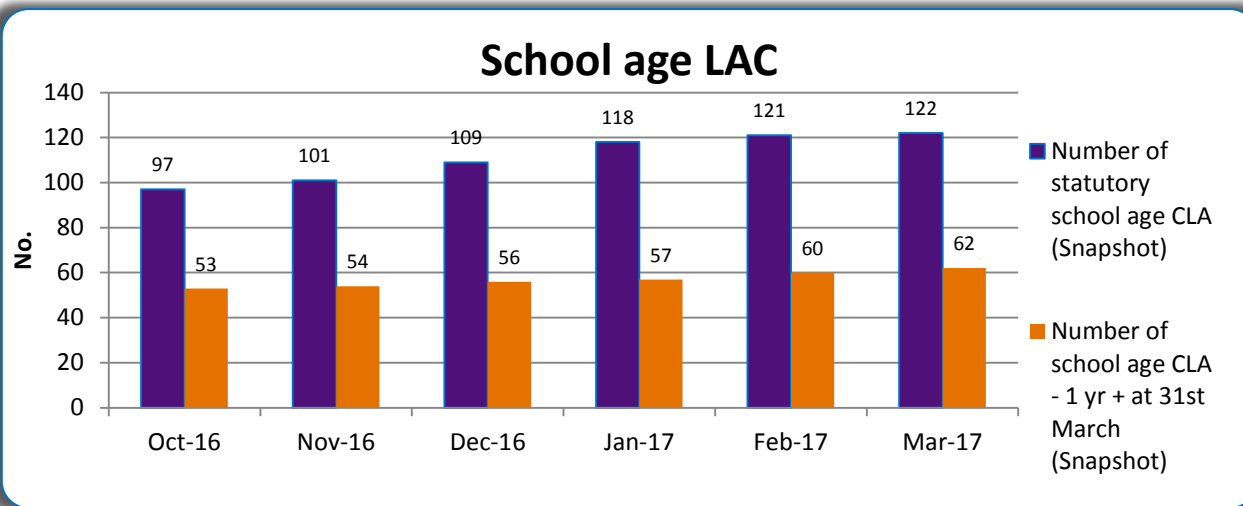
115

Comparative data % of children looked after by placement type as at 31st March 2016	HARROW	Stat Neighbour	England
Foster placements	59	71.2	74.0
Placed for adoption	4	2.4	4.0
Placement with parents	-	1.5	5.0
Other placement in the community	14	7.1	4.0
Secure units, children's homes and hostels	17	16.6	11.0
Other residential settings	3	5.7	1.0

Harrow Placement Details at 31st March 2017



C5 – school age LAC



Harrow monitors all school children and those looked after 1 year plus.

At the end of March, there were a total of 122 CLA of statutory school age being monitored by Welfare Call. There has been 1 permanent exclusion this academic year and 11 LAC had at least one fixed-term exclusion. 12.2% of sessions have been missed and 23.8% of LAC are classed as persistent absentees. Of the CLA cohort 62 have been looked after for over a year, the permanent exclusion is from this cohort. 6 have had at least one fixed-term exclusion. 10.4% of sessions have been missed by this cohort and 17.7% of LAC are classed as persistent absentees, The PEP indicator is updated at the end of each term, at the end of March 68% of CLA had a PEP.

116

PI Description	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17
% of school age CLA (all CLA) permanently excluded this year (Sept to date)	1	1	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8
% of school age CLA (1 yr + at 31st March) permanently excluded this year (Sept to date)	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.6
% of school age CLA (all CLA) with at least one fixed-term exclusion this year (Sept to date)	1	4	4.6	5.9	7.4	9
% of school age CLA (1 yr + at 31st March) with at least one fixed-term exclusion this year (Sept to date)	1	1	3.6	5.3	8.3	9.7
% CLA missing or absent from school for 25 days or more (Sept to date)	5.2	10.9	10.1	13.6	15.7	16.4
% absence from school (all CLA - % of sessions missed)	9.3	11	11.5	14	12.8	12.2
% absence from school (1 yr+, % of sessions missed)	10.6	9.4	9.5	9.7	10.1	10.4
% of CLA (all CLA) classified as persistent absentees	20.6	17.8	19.3	23.7	24	23.8
% of CLA (1 year+) classified as persistent absentees	12.4	8.9	16	15.8	16.7	17.7
% of CLA (all school age CLA) with up to date PEP	end of term only		70.6	end of term only		68

C6 – CLA Education Data-

CLA educational attainment trends - No update in this report

Calculations are based on eligible children in the cohort, not those who sat exams.

DfE indicators include only CLA who have been looked after for more than one year to measure outcomes. **Education data is updated annually**

CLA Looked after for over a year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total Children in KS2 cohort (1yr +)	2	2	3	1	6	0
Attained at least Level 4 in Maths at end of KS2	50%	0%	67%	100%	83%	-
Attained at least Level 4 in Reading at end of KS2	0%	0%	67%	100%	83%	-
Attained at least Level 4 in Writing at end of KS2	0%	0%	67%	0%	50%	-
Attained at least Level 4 in Reading, Writing and Maths at end of KS2	0%	0%	67%	0%	50%	-
Total young people in GCSE cohort (1 yr +)	19	13	12	9	11	14
GCSE: Attained at least 1 A*-G	47.4%	46.2%	33.3%	66.7%	36.4%	71.4%
GCSE: Attained 5 or more A*-G	31.6%	23.1%	16.7%	33.3%	36.4%	35.7%
GCSE: Attained 5 or more A*-C	5.30%	0%	8.30%	0%	0%	14.3%
GCSE: Attained 5 or more A*-C INC Eng and Maths	5.30%	0%	8.30%	0%	0%	14.3%

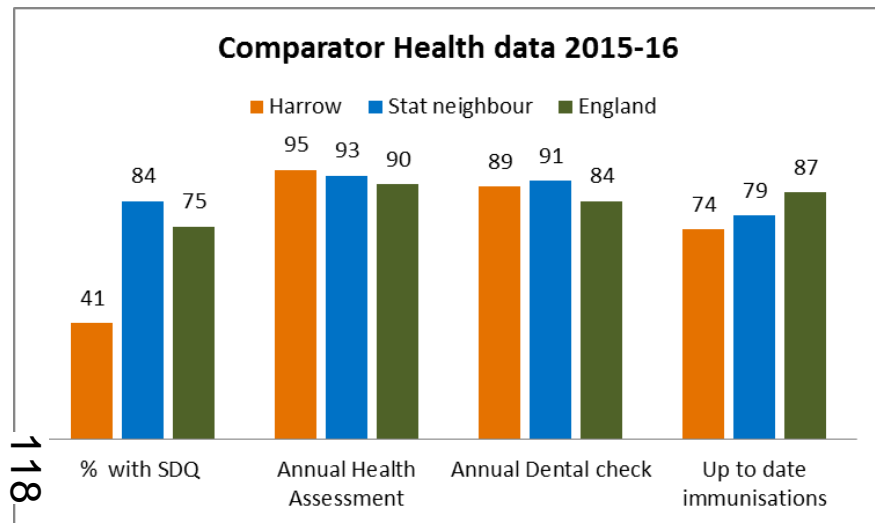
Detail for 2015-16 GCSEs

Ten of the 14 CLA for 1+ years sat GCSE exams. Five achieved five A*-G grades, and two achieved five A* to C including English and Maths.

	TOTAL IN COHORT	GCSE ONLY				
		Sat GCSE Exams?	1 A*-G	5 A*-G	5 A*-C	5* A-C inc Eng Math
All CLA	25	14	14	8	3	3
%	-	56%	56%	32%	12%	12%
CLA (1 YR+)	14	10	10	5	2	2
%	-	71.4%	71.4%	35.7%	14.3%	14.3%

C7 - CLA Health

Latest comparative information (from 2014-15) shows that Harrow has performed well at annual dental checks for children looked after and completing SDQs, and well at health surveillance checks for LAC aged under 5 years (both better than London, England and statistical neighbours). We have performed less well at annual health checks and immunisations.



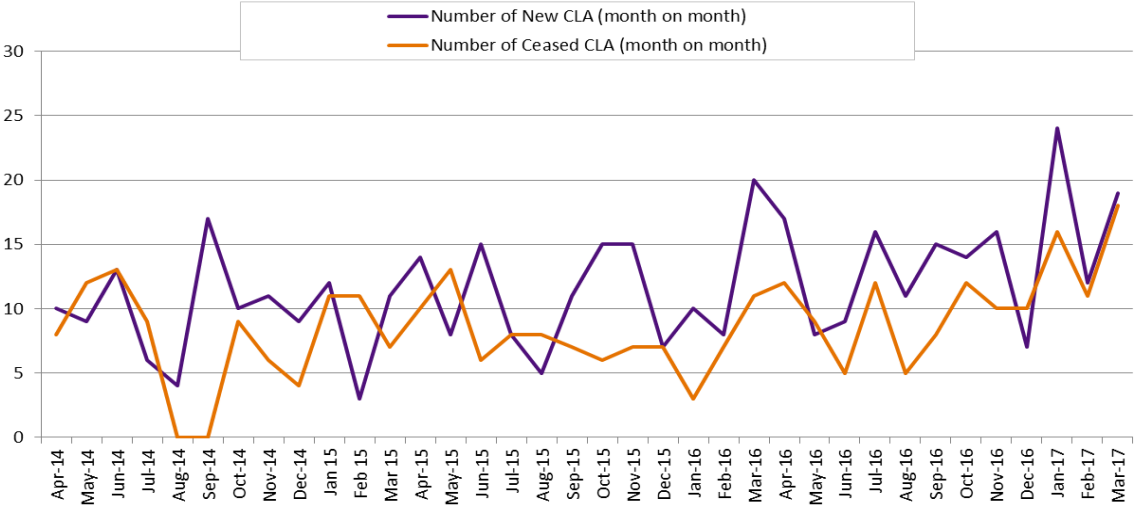
Comparative data (%) year ending March 2016	Completed SDQs and average scores for children looked after		Annual Health Assessment	Annual Dental check	Up to date immunisations
	% with SDQ	Av score per child			
Harrow	41	14.6	95	89	74
Stat neighbour	84	14	93	91	79
England	75	14	90	84	87

Note on SDQ scores: a score of under 14 is considered normal, 14-16 is borderline cause for concern and 17 or over is a cause for concern.

PI Description	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17
% of new CLA where health assessment has been completed within 28 calendar days YTD			33.3	40.0	40.0	37.8	40.3	40.9	43.2	44.4	49.1	49.2
% of CLA with up to date Dental Checks (CLA 1 yr +)	77.4	73.6	69.1	75.0	71.3	77.3	77.6	78.8	81.6	86.6	80.8	77.7
% of CLA with up to date Health Checks (CLA 1 yr +)	90.3	89.0	88.3	90.2	89.4	90.7	87.8	89.9	87.8	88.7	86.9	89.3
% of CLA (1 yr +) with immunisations up to date (calculated 1/4ly)			72.6						67.4			68.9
% of all CLA aged 4-16 who have an up to date strengths and difficulties (SDQ) score (calculated 1/4ly).			69.0			76.4			74.8			75.6

C8 – Number of new LAC, number of ceased LAC and number of children looked after who also have a child protection plan or are unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

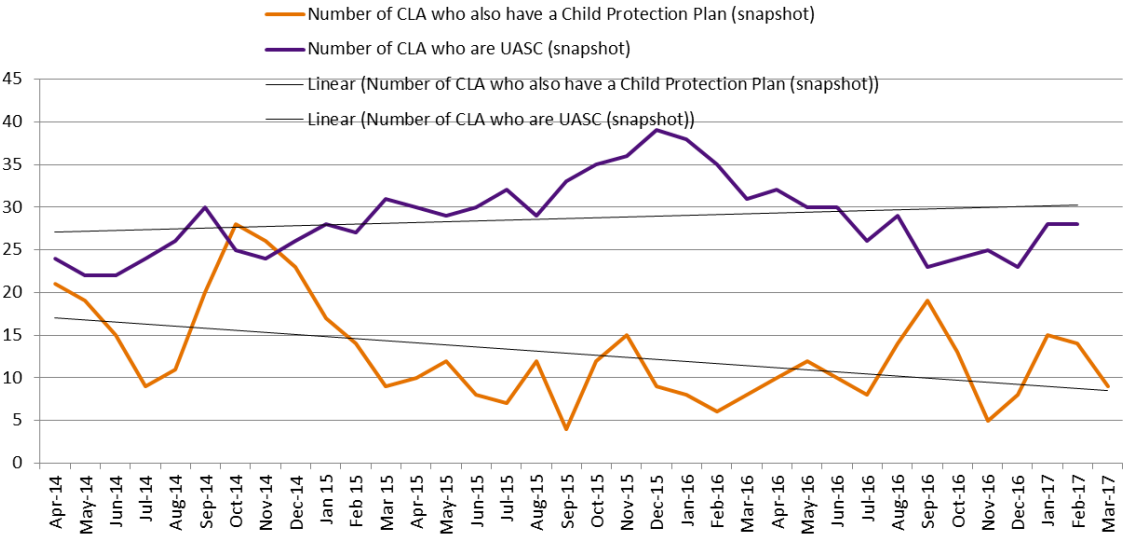
Number of LAC starting and ceasing



The number of new and ceased CLA continues to vary, the overall new CLA average has increased to 14 for 2016/17 compared to 11.3 the year before. Likewise the ceased CLA average has increased to 10.6 from 7.8 the year before

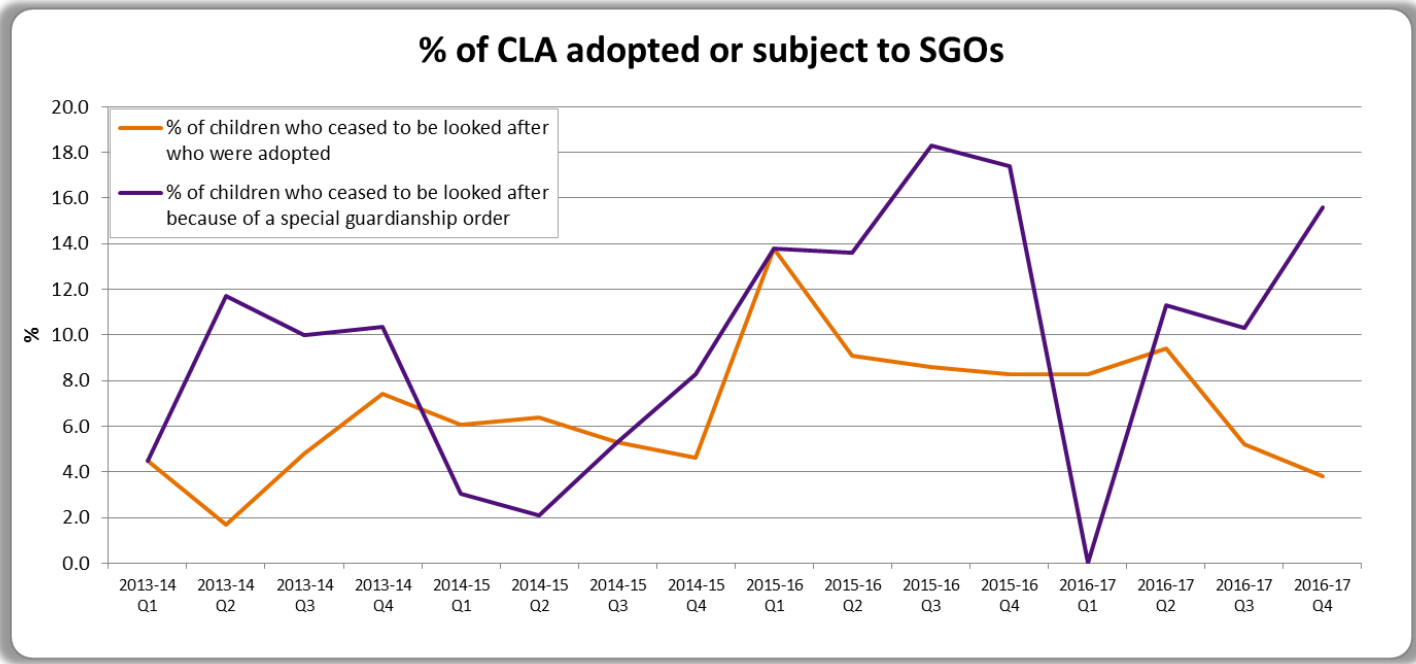
119

Number of LAC who are also CPP or UASC (snapshot)



The number of dual allocated CLA who also have a Child Protection Plan has decreased from the previous report. The number of CLA who are UASC has remained stable at 28.

C9 – Adoptions and Special Guardianship Orders of LAC

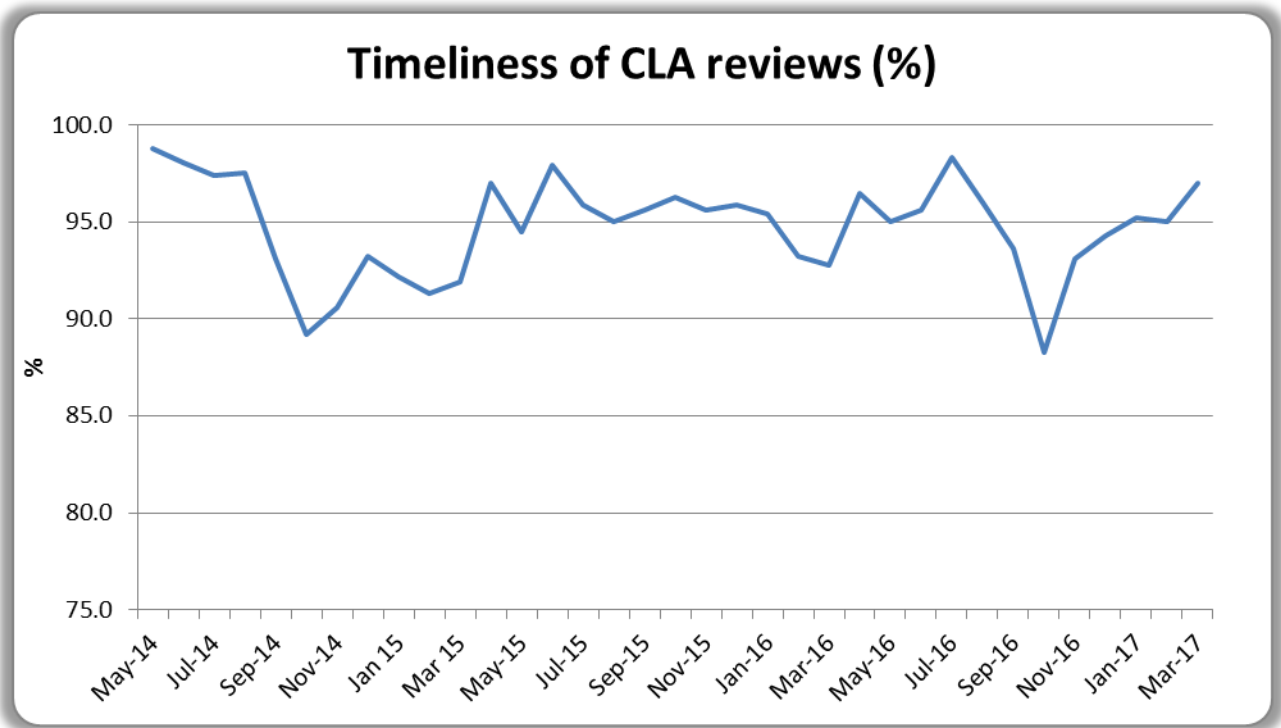


120

The percentage of ceased CLA who were adopted dropped from last quarter by 1.4%. Ceased CLA due to an SGO has increased from the previous quarter by 4.6%. The average days between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family has remained stable since last quarter.

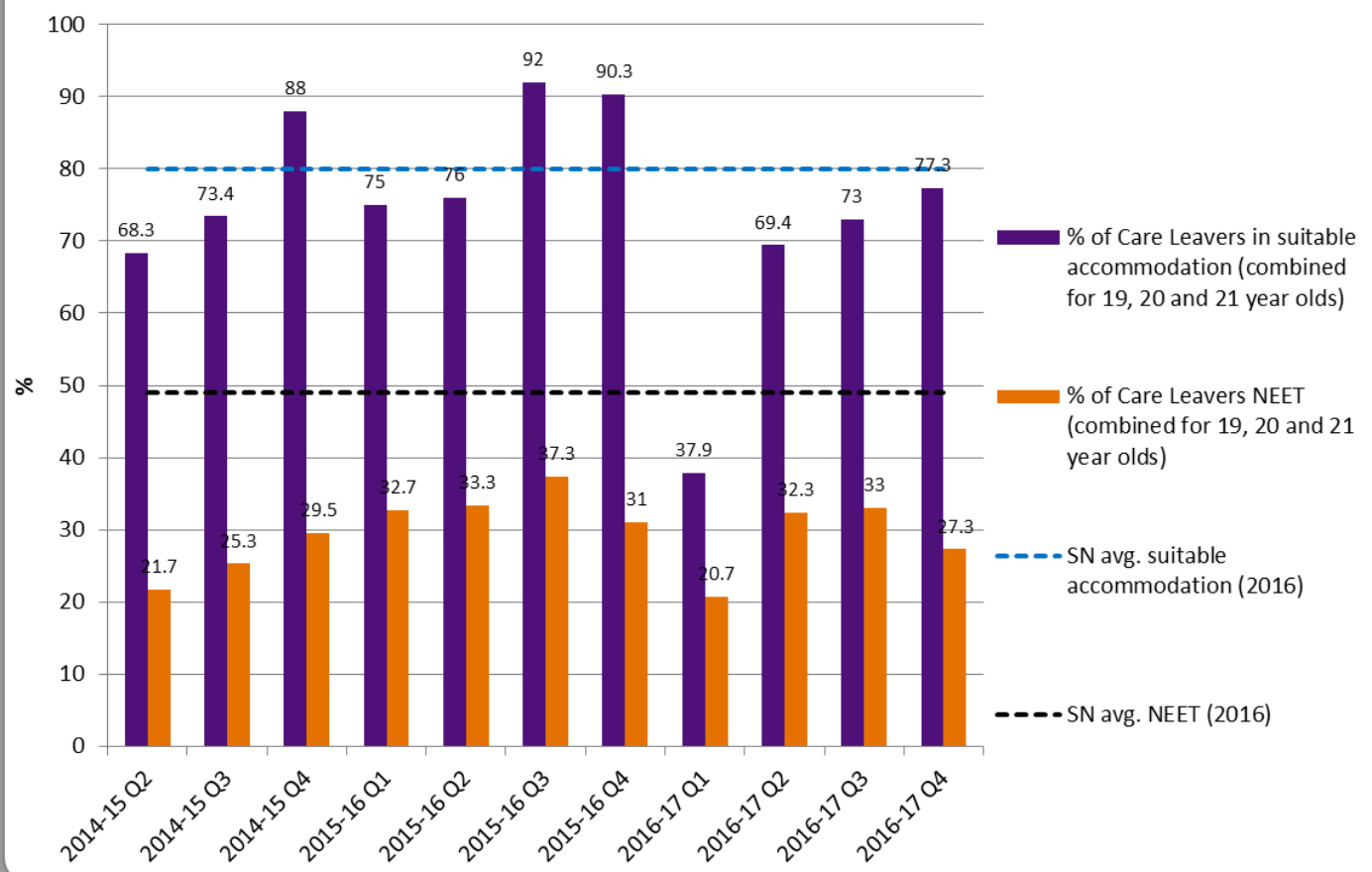
	Jun-14	Sep-14	Dec-14	Mar 15	Jun-15	Sep-15	Dec-15	Mar-16	Jun-16	Sep-16	Dec-16	Mar-17
The average time (days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted. Measured Quarterly (YTD).	651	434	352	336	713	647	695	595	297	426	390.5	390.5
The average time (days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family. Measured Quarterly (YTD).	134	132	115	115	340	315	356	283	72	189	167.0	167.0
Percentage of children who wait less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. Measured Quarterly. Note this indicator measured less than 20 months for 2011-14	100	100	100	100	42	53	61	61	55.6	80	83.0	83.0

121



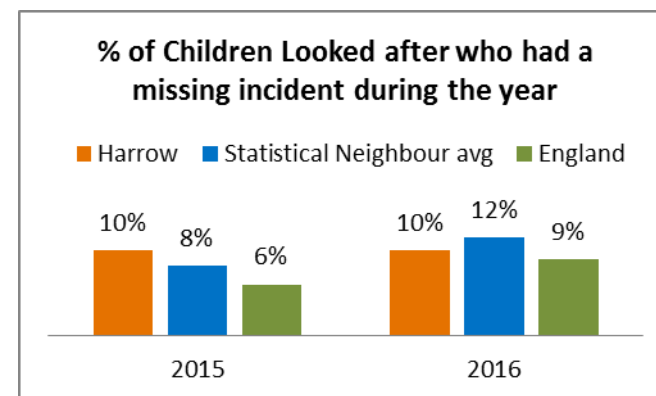
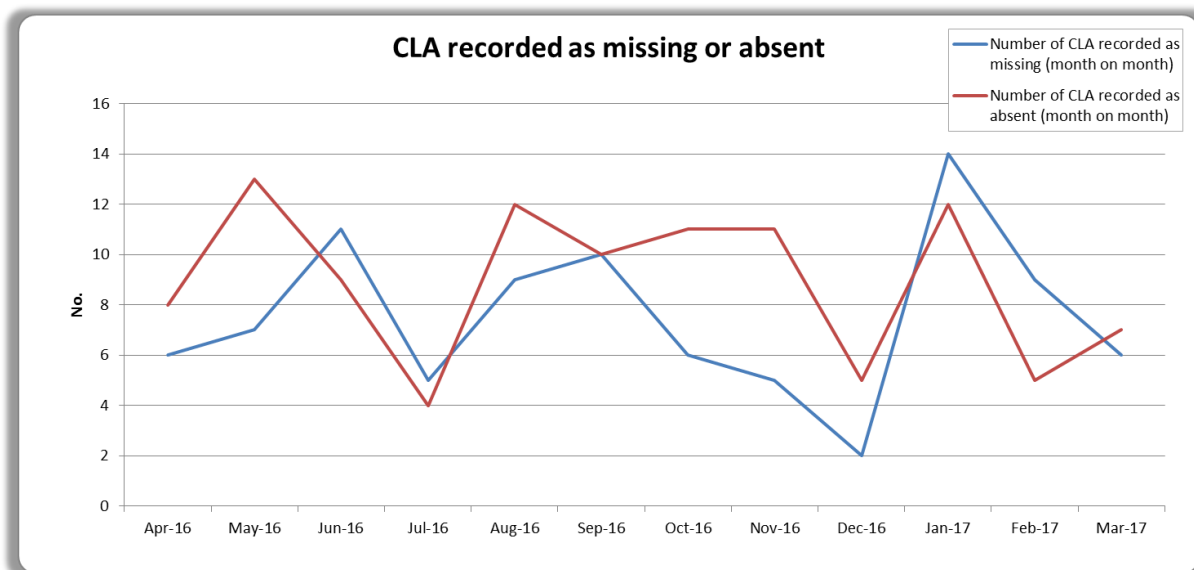
The timeliness of CLA reviews has increased slightly since last quarter. 195 out of 201 children have had **all** their reviews on time.

Care leavers suitable accommodation and NEET



Provisional figures show that the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation has increased from the previous quarter to 77.3% overall. The NEET percentage has improved and 27.3% of care leavers were NEET at 31st March. 2015-16 published data shows us above statistical neighbour averages for both these indicators, provisional figures show we have less NEET and slightly below for suitable accommodation.

C12 – children who go missing or are absent

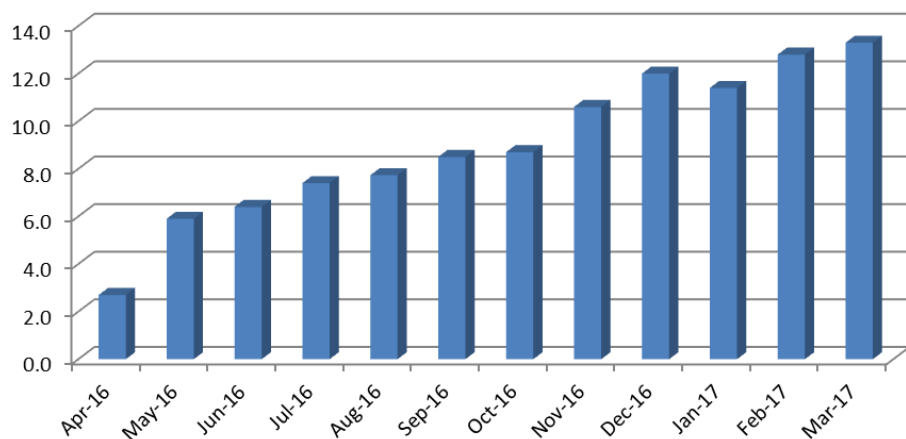


Overall numbers of missing and absent CLA have fluctuated throughout the year. Children reported missing continues to remain a focus. Profile of children missing from home or care as well as those missing from education are subject of multi-agency oversight. Runaways Worker also in post and undertakes return interviews with children who go missing. Published data for 2016 shows Harrow have had a similar proportion of CLA who had a missing episode in the year compared to previous year whilst statistical neighbours' and England trend is an increase from previous year

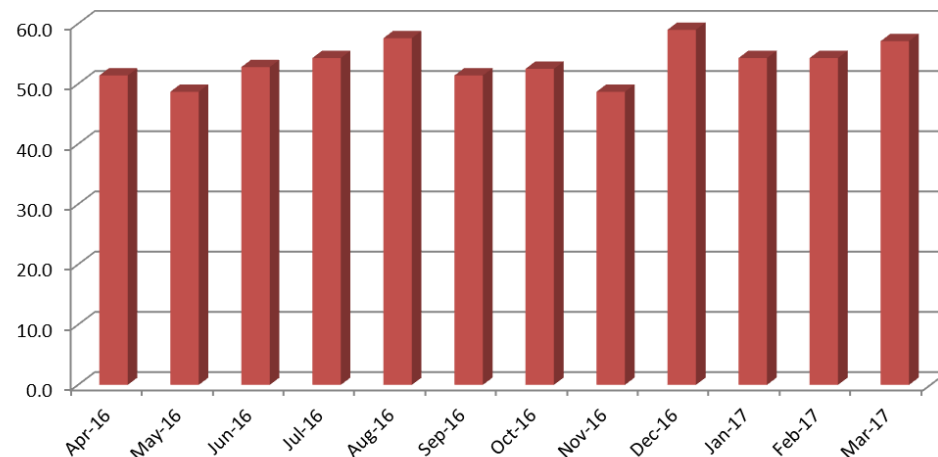
	2015/16				2016/17			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of children in care reported as missing from placement (whereabouts unknown)	61	47	35	48	24	24	13	51
Number of children in care reported as absent from placement without authorisation (whereabouts known)	21	15	31	35	30	26	27	52

C12 – CLA placement stability

% CLA with more than 2 placement moves in year



% CLA looked after for 2.5 years who have been in same placement for 2 years

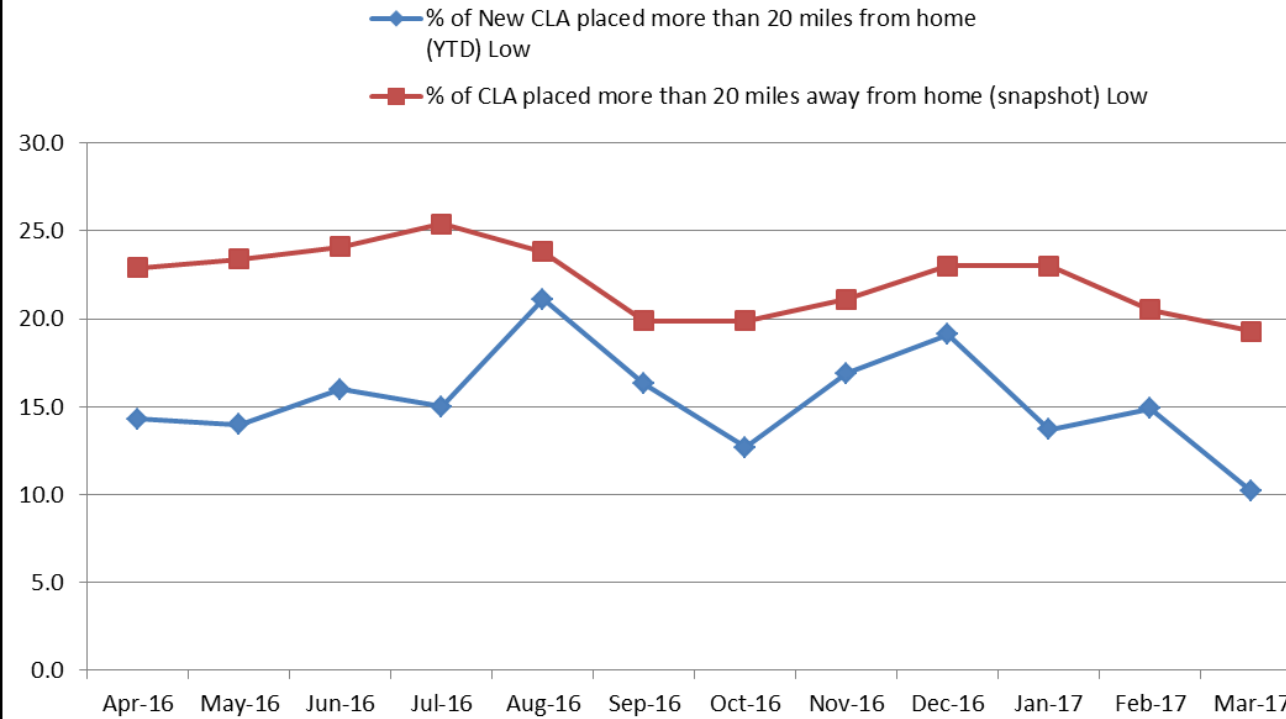


124

The percentage of CLA with more than 2 placement moves has continued to increase throughout the year and is currently at 13.3%. The percentage of children looked after for more than 2.5 years have been in the same placement for more than 2 years has fluctuated throughout the year due to the small cohort involved currently 57% of children have been in the same placement for at least 2 years.

C13 – CLA placed over 20 miles from home

% CLA placed more than 20 miles from home



125

The percentage of all new CLA in the current performance year has varied throughout the year, currently 10.2% of CLA who started in the year are placed more than 20 miles from home. The percentage of all CLA at the end of each month who are placed more than 20 miles from home has averaged around 22.2% throughout the year and is currently at 19.3%. In order to give a balanced view, these indicators exclude looked after children who are placed with parents, adopted or are unaccompanied asylum seekers.

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