

Corporate Parenting Panel Agenda

Date: Wednesday 7 October 2020

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting - Online

Membership (Quorum 3)

Chair: Councillor Angella Murphy-Strachan

Labour Councillors: Sue Anderson
Christine Robson
Chloe Smith

Conservative Councillors: Janet Mote
Lynda Seymour

Non-Voting Advisory Member: Valerie Griffin

Reserve Members:

Labour Reserve Members:

1. Simon Brown
2. Dean Gilligan
3. Rekha Shah
4. Maxine Henson

Conservative Reserve Members:

1. Dr Lesline Lewinson
2. Chetna Halai

Officers:

Contact: Mwim Chellah, Senior Democratic and Electoral Services Officer
Tel: 020 8420 9262 E-mail: mwimanji.chellah@harrow.gov.uk

Scan this code for the electronic agenda:



Useful Information

Meeting details

This meeting is open to the press and public and can be viewed on www.harrow.gov.uk/virtualmeeting

Filming / recording of meetings

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

The recording will be made available on the Council website following the meeting.

Agenda publication date: Monday 28 September 2020

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 appoint a Vice-Chair of the Corporate Parent Panel for the Municipal Year 2020-2021.

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 14 January 2020 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

5. Public Questions

To receive any public questions received in accordance with paragraph 16 of the Executive Procedure Rules.

Questions will be asked in the order in which they were received. There will be a time limit of 15 minutes for the asking and answering of public questions.

[The deadline for receipt of public questions is 3.00 pm, 2 October 2020. 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. Corporate Parenting Update Report (Pages 13 - 22)

9. **Harrow Ofsted Inspection Outcome and Report** (Pages 23 - 42)

10. **Harrow Virtual School Reports - Headteacher End of Year and Clinical Psychology Service Summary** (Pages 43 - 72)

11. **Activity and Performance Q1 2020-21** (Pages 73 - 100)

12. **Harrow Children Looked After Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2019-2024**
(Pages 101 - 134)

13. Any Other Urgent Business

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

AGENDA - PART II - NIL

*** Data Protection Act Notice**

The Council will video record item 4 (Public Questions) and will place the 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

14 JANUARY 2020

Chair:	* Councillor Angella Murphy-Strachan	
Councillors:	* Sue Anderson * Simon Brown (1) * Janet Mote	* Christine Robson * Lynda Seymour
Non-Voting Advisory Member:	* Valerie Griffin	Foster Carer
In attendance: (Officers)	Paul Hewitt	Corporate Director People
	Peter Tolley	Divisional Director, Children and Young People Service
	Jacinta Kane	Head of Corporate Parenting
	Mellina Williamson-Taylor	Head Teacher – Harrow Virtual School
	Sarah Moriarty	Assistant Head Teacher – Harrow Virtual School
	Kat Robinson	Post 16 Advisory Teacher – Harrow Virtual School
	Deborah Price – Williams	Consultant CLA, CNWL
	Christine Nichols	Named Nurse CLA, CNWL

- * Denotes Member present
- (1), (1) Denote category of Reserve Members
- † Denotes apologies received

69. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:

Ordinary Member

Councillor Chloe Smith

Reserve Member

Councillor Simon Brown

70. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interest made by Members.

71. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2019 be taken as read, and signed as a correct record.

72. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received.

73. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received.

74. Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 48 (Part 4D of the Constitution).

RESOLVED ITEMS

75. Children Looked After and Care Leavers - discussion

The Chair invited Jacinta Kane (Head of Corporate Parenting) to open the discussion. The Panel was joined by six young people and their social workers. They shared their experiences as care leavers from the Council's corporate parenting services. The Panel welcomed the young people's views,

particularly noting their aspirations for the future, as they ventured into work or future education.

One of the concerns raised by some of the young people was the long duration for the Home Office to decide on their asylum applications. Quicker resolutions of their cases would expedite their permanent stay in the UK, and as enable them seek work. It was advised that the Council would follow up on such cases. However, the decision remained under the remit of the Home Office. It was further advised that the young people could use the intervening period to acquire additional qualifications and apprenticeships within the Council.

Other young people who had their National Insurance Numbers processed would be proceeding to apply for work. They were looking forward to gaining relevant work experience.

The Panel noted that there had been stability in having long-term social workers – an improvement from the recent past. Furthermore, the young people were indebted to their foster carers, who had encouraged them to study as well as to remain sentient to their cultural or religious values.

The Panel thanked the young people and social workers for sharing their experiences and wished them well in their future endeavours.

RESOLVED: That the discussion be noted.

76. INFORMATION REPORT: Being a Corporate Parent - LGA Corporate Parenting Resource Pack

Peter Tolley (Divisional Director, Children and Young People Service) introduced the report, which aimed to assist local authorities in fulfilling their role of corporate parents as effectively as possible. The Panel was updated on its responsibility to ensure that Harrow Council was meeting its corporate parenting duties towards children in care and care leavers.

Following questions and the discussion that ensued, it was advised that:

- in November 2019, the Local Government Association (LGA) published the Corporate Parenting Resource Pack that outlined key lines of inquiry for all councillors;
- every councillor was, required to have training on their corporate parenting role when first elected as well as to consider how new plans and policies could affect children in care;
- the Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined, for the first time in law, the role of corporate parents, in addition to expanding and extending support to care leavers, as well as making personal advisers available to young people up to the age of 25;

- with the growth of child criminal exploitation and county lines, it was important for the Council to ensure that children under their care were not coerced into criminal activity. There were weekly meetings with the Police with discussions on effective prevention of criminalisation of the care leavers. Officers advised that Harrow's statistical experience was below the national (and neighbouring) averages; and
- the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019/21 would be presented to full Council on 16th January 2020. It was envisaged that strategies (and ideas) of more effective involvement by councillors would be presented.

RESOLVED:

- 1). That the report be noted; and
- 2). That officers consider adding a report on the link between youth justice and care leavers to the Council's Forward Plan.

77. INFORMATION REPORT: Harrow Children Looked After Health (CLA) Report

Christine Nichols (Named Nurse – Children Looked After Harrow, CNWL) and Zoe Sargent (Associate Director of Children's Services and Operations, CNWL) introduced the report, which set out the delivery of health services to Harrow's Children Looked After (CLA) for the period September - November 2019. The report also reviewed performance indicators and clinical work undertaken by the Children Looked After Health Team.

Following questions and the discussion that ensued, it was advised that:

- there was a 100% attainment to contractual conditions for initial health assessments and review health assessments. However, that excluded request and consents not made available within 3 days of the initial health assessment and within 3 months for review health assessments.
- there was requirement for consent for a health assessment, which were at times not forthcoming from some CLA;
- a lot of work had been undertaken including discussions with social workers and health actions taken, attendance at CLA Children's Awards, regular monitoring meeting, quarterly CAMHS meetings, a contingency plan to ensure RHS were completed within timescale, and peer review of Hillingdon 0-19 School Nursing Service undertaken by the Specialist Nurse for CLA; and
- a shared child record system would be launched to highlight priorities to ensure that feedback from assessments was approached in a holistic manner among all concerned parties.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted; and

- 2) That a report on CAMHS performance in relation to care leavers be added to the agenda for the next Panel meeting.

78. INFORMATION REPORT: Activity and Performance

Dipika Patel (Business Intelligence Partner) introduced the report, which set out activity for CLA and care leavers as well as provisional performance position at the second quarter (Q2) of 2019-20. National and comparator data was also included where appropriate for context. The Panel was being informed about activity performance in their role as Corporate Parents.

Following questions and the discussion that ensued, it was advised that:

- the performance indicators showed that Long Term Placement Stability remained below target but progress had been made compared to 2018-19, with the Q2 performance was just below statistical neighbours;
- the Health & Dental checks were “red and amber” - possibly due to a time lag in receiving data. Year-end comparator data showed Harrow above or in line with statistical neighbours and England averages;
- the increase in CLA placed 20 miles or more from Harrow, was mainly due to the increase in numbers of children looked after, as well as having a cohort of young people with complex needs and where there are safeguarding concerns requiring placements outside Harrow;
- Work around adolescent safeguarding ensured all children who had missing instances are monitored closely. The “other reasons” option was a Department for Education category added to cater for factors not provided for elsewhere;
- Harrow was working with other local authorities, through the London Councils Forum, to identify a city-wide strategy and approach to ensure consistency and fairness for the vulnerable cohort of young people;
- numbers of CLA who had a “missing or absent” instance was high in London. Additional training for managers had improved the accuracy of recording of missing episodes on Mosaic. Harrow had a small, but significant, cohort of young people with complex issues. Missing children were a priority for Harrow. There were robust safeguards and scrutiny in place for all missing children, including strategy meetings; return home interviews; weekly review at the Missing Children Panel with the Police and senior managers; and
- extended multiagency child exploitation panel arrangements were in place to review children at risk of criminal activity as well as sexual exploitation. There was a focus on developing relationships with missing children, through the independent return home interviews, sharing intelligence; peer mapping and disruption measures such as

Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs) to better understand and address risk.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

79. INFORMATION REPORT: Virtual School Headteacher's End of Academic Year Report 2018 - 2019

Mellina Williamson-Taylor (Headteacher, Harrow Virtual School for CLA, PLAC and Care Leavers), Sarah Moriarty (Assistant Headteacher, Harrow Virtual School for CLA, PLAC and Care Leavers) and Kat Robinson (Post-16 Advisory Teacher, Harrow Virtual School for CLA, PLAC and Care Leavers) introduced the report which provided the Panel with an overview of the Performance and Standards of Children Looked After (CLA) at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 4, with an analysis of attendance data, the work of the School and development priorities for the Virtual School for 2019-20. The Panel was also informed about the outcomes for CLA.

Following questions and the discussion that ensued, it was advised that:

- there was improved performance across Key Stage 4 in Attainment 8 and Progress 8;
- there was a 2% reduction in the number of pupils with a Fixed-Term Exclusion, with timely interventions by the VS Educational and Clinical Psychologist to support the educational, social, emotional and mental health needs of students;
- there was improved Personal Education Plan (PEP) returns from 92% to 100%, as well as increased support for pupils in Key Stage 5;
- 91% of CLA, regardless of where they lived, attended schools which were either 'good' or 'outstanding'. Nearly a half (46%) of CLA were educated outside of the Harrow Local Authority area;
- It was gratifying to witness the progress that students had made, with a specific example of one child, who had no education from the age of 10, obtaining five "strong" GCSEs in 2019;
- there was continuing work with various partners and stakeholders to encourage CLA to stay in education, through the support given to care leavers;
- areas for development were highlighted as being supported through enhancing creativity in training foster carers in phonics and maths to better support CLA. Furthermore, attainment would be improved by accessing services of CAMHS, Horizons, or the Harrow Clinical Psychologist for CLA with mental health issues; and

- there would be a need to draw on the experiences of other neighbouring teams to build on the performance of the School, whose work was commended.

The Panel acknowledged the positive aspects of the report.

RESOLVED: To note the performance of, and standards achieved by, Harrow's CLA, in particular the improvements of CLA at the end of Key Stage 4, and School attendance.

80. Any Other Urgent Business

Paul Hewitt (Corporate Director, People) gave a verbal update on the Annual OFSTED meeting on 2nd January 2020, which was described as "positive". The inspection was expected by April 2020. Currently, Harrow was rated "good". That would be tested during the inspection, which would also bring the role of the Corporate Parenting Panel into focus.

Consequent to Harrow's lead role on the regional adoption agency, the Corporate Director, People, with Peter Tolley (Divisional Director, Children and Young People) were scheduled to meet the Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families on 16th January 2020. They would update the Panel at the next meeting on the outcome of the meeting.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 7.42 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR ANGELLA MURPHY-STRACHAN
Chair



REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting:	7 th October 2020
Subject:	Corporate Parenting Update Report
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Paul Hewitt, Corporate Director of People
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Wards affected:	None - This is an Information report
Enclosures:	None.

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This paper provides a brief overview of the key developments within the Corporate Parenting Service during March to September 2020, particularly the response to Covid-19, Black Lives Matter and EU Settled Status and Nationality issues.

Future Challenges

- Meeting our statutory responsibilities while minimising risk of Covid-19.
- Having a much-reduced office space and increased use of virtual working while ensuring workers are supported and part of a team and have the opportunity to learn and support each other.
- Potential for further increases of children becoming looked after by Harrow, including an return to usual numbers of UASC.
- Additional costs and capacity pressures for the Local Authority if there is a significant increase in the number of children requiring care.
- Understanding and addressing inequality and disproportionality in relation to outcomes and opportunities for young people and workforce

RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted

Reason for Recommendation: To keep the Panel updated on key developments since March, as well as key challenges over the coming months.

Section 2 – Report

Corporate Parenting Update Report October 2020

Introduction

This paper provides a brief overview of the key developments within the Corporate Parenting Service during March to September 2020, particularly the response to Covid-19, Black Lives Matter and EU Settled Status and Nationality issues.

Response to Covid-19 across Corporate Parenting

Risk Assessments and virtual meetings

Across the Corporate Parenting Service and indeed all of Children's Services, risk assessments were completed on all children and young people open to Children's social care, and decisions about face-to-face visits or virtual visits are kept under review. A RAG (red, amber, green) rating system is in place regarding risk.

We have developed a new virtual model for a large number of meetings including, Child Protection Conferences and LAC reviews, and initial feedback regarding participation has been positive.

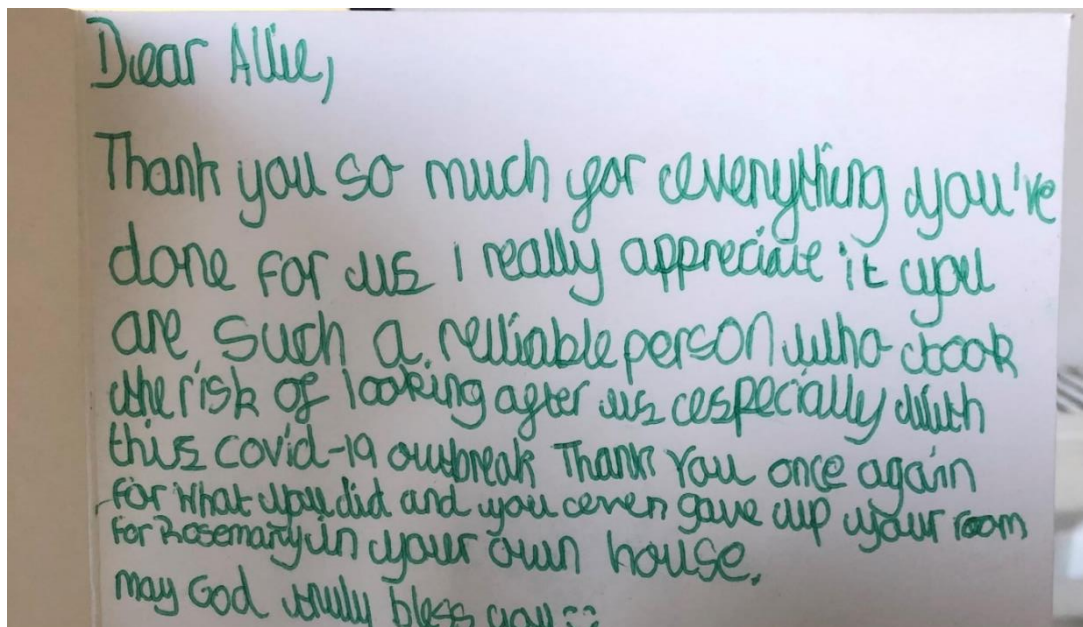
All staff have been issued with new IT devices to enable virtual working

Placements, Adoption and Fostering

Our placements, adoption and fostering teams are continuing to deliver an excellent service whilst working from home, and we are finding a range of placements for children and young people despite the challenges. A virtual Access to Resources Panel commenced in July 2020, ensuring that placement suitability and cost is kept under regular review and services meet the needs of children and young people. The virtual Fostering Panel has been a success, and to date 7 panels have taken place virtually, covering new approvals and re-approvals of foster carers and 2 new foster carer households have been approved. Assessments and approvals of special guardians and connected persons to care for Harrow children has continued to take place during this exceptional period, with PPE being utilised where appropriate and in addition to virtual visits.

Harrow's adoption services are now carried out by Coram-Ambitious for Adoption, the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). Harrow adopters and special guardianship carers have been able to access immediate therapeutic support, delivered virtually, via the Covid-19 Support fund.

Although placement sufficiency was a key risk at the beginning of lockdown, particularly due to the risks to foster carers caring for potentially unwell children, we have been able to provide placement options for children and young people requiring care. Foster carers were provided with PPE where this was required. We have had a number of Harrow foster carers demonstrate enormous commitment to Harrow children. Below is a snapshot of a thank you card written by a child to a Harrow foster carer who was looked after due to Covid-19. This illustrates how much good quality foster care means to children.



A key annual event recognising the contribution of Harrow foster carers, the Foster Carers Awards Ceremony, had to be cancelled this year due to Covid-19. Our gratitude to Harrow foster carers was instead acknowledge via a special awards newsletter, with contributions from the Mayor, Portfolio Holder and Corporate Director, among other key representatives.

Supervised Family Contact

After a period of suspending supervised family contact due to health risks, the contact service is back up and running at near pre-lockdown capacity. Each family is now able to have face-to-face supervised contact once per week, and where agreed, virtual family contact via telephone or zoom is also provided.

Children Looked After and Care Leavers

Children who are looked after and care leavers have continued to receive a high level of service from Children's services. Social workers and social care assistants have made good use of virtual communication, including whatsapp, skype and zoom to stay in contact with children and young people where face-to-face visits were not possible due to safety issues. A number of social workers and young people have reported that they have been able to have more contact through virtual communication, and this will continue to be utilised, as well as face to face visits. Work undertaken by the Virtual School ensured that all children who needed laptops for education had these provided. A number of reusable face masks have been purchased and provided for young people and care leavers so they are able to safely use public transport and access education.

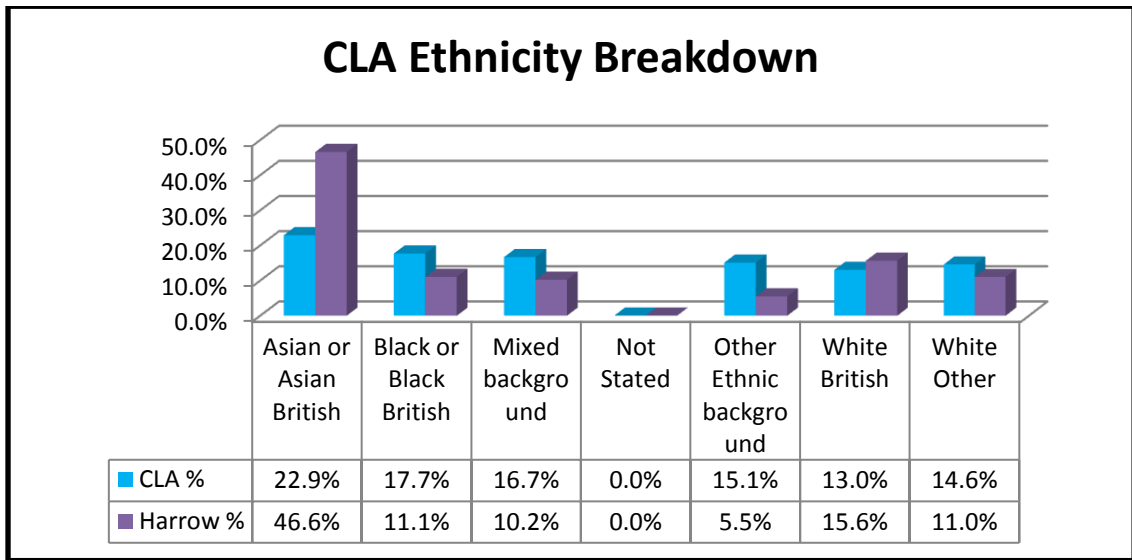
The proposed restructuring of the Children Looked After Team and the Leaving Care Team to ensure more consistency of worker and decision-making is being progressed.

There has been an increase in children becoming looked after during recent months, and this is being analysed to understand the reasons behind the increase in children requiring safe accommodation. There have been very few new unaccompanied asylum-seeking children presenting to Harrow since March 2020, and at the time of writing, only 2 new arrivals have been accommodated by Harrow during this time. The placements team have worked closely with providers to ensure we have a provision of isolation/quarantine placements for new arrivals in the future, so that unaccompanied children can be safely cared for during the first 2 weeks of being accommodated by Harrow.

Black Lives Matter

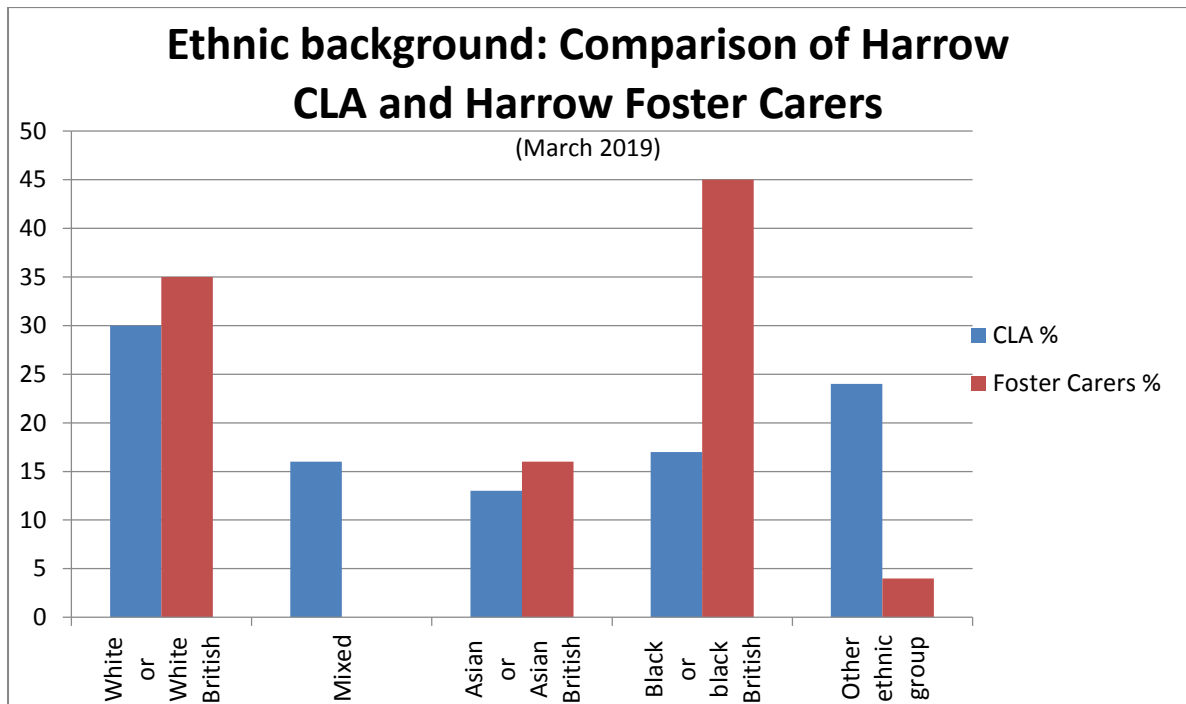
Across Harrow, Children's Services and Corporate Parenting, the issue of disproportionality, racism and the need to examine and improve practice has been brought to the forefront by the Black Lives Matter movement. There is a strong corporate and service level commitment to tackle racism and disproportionality in Harrow, and we are at the beginning of a longer journey in examining and improving our practice.

Since July 2020, Harrow Children's Services has included disproportionality toolkits and ethnicity data to examine and analyse our performance. The table below outlines the ethnicity breakdown of Children looked after in Harrow compared to the general Harrow population data. There is an overrepresentation of black or black British children, mixed background children, other ethnic background and white (not British) children in care compared to the local population. We are continuing to examine the reasons for this disproportionality across Children's services in order to address this issue effectively.



Within Corporate Parenting, the fostering team has been working for some time to ensure that foster carers are able to meet the needs of Harrow children, and aim to recruit foster carers from a wide range of backgrounds.

The table below highlights that Harrow has a strong base of foster carers from black or black British backgrounds, particularly in comparison to the percentage of black or black British children in care. The team has carried out and continues to carry out targeted recruitment of local communities to ensure we recruit a diverse range of families to meet the needs of children and young people.



EU Settled Status and Nationality Issues

Another key area of work in response to addressing racism and discrimination has been the work of the Nationality, EUSS (European Union Settled Status) and Passport Project for Harrow Children Looked After and Care Leavers. There is a national issue of some children and young people not having their citizenship status clarified and regularised by the time they leave care. This can have significant and disastrous consequences for young people, and can impact on their ability to access benefits, housing, education, voting, and can also result in being removed or deported from the UK.

The aim of the project is to ensure that all children who are looked after by Harrow have up to date nationality and citizenship information recorded on Mosaic, as well as passports and EUSS where relevant. There are currently 40 children looked after and care leavers who are being supported by their workers to apply for EUSS. Although we have until 30th June 2021 to apply for Settled Status, we have started this project early to ensure that we identify and address the status of all CLA and Care Leavers to ensure we are acting in their best interests.

Future Challenges

- Meeting our statutory responsibilities while minimising risk of Covid-19.
- Having a much-reduced office space and increased use of virtual working while ensuring workers are supported and part of a team and have the opportunity to learn and support each other.
- Potential for further increases of children becoming looked after by Harrow, including a return to usual numbers of UASC.
- Additional costs and capacity pressures for the Local Authority if there is a significant increase in the number of children requiring care.
- Understanding and addressing inequality and disproportionality in relation to outcomes and opportunities for young people and workforce

Options considered

Not applicable as this is an information report.

Risk Management Implications

The Children's Services Risk Register includes corporate parenting responsibilities.

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

Separate risk register in place? No

Legal Implications

The duties towards looked after children and care leavers remain unaffected by the Covid 19 pandemic. However, the Council has reviewed the way it delivers its services to ensure its staff and those it looks after are protected. This has included conducting some visits and review by virtual means and working with parents and carers to support children and young people to access education, including by virtual means where appropriate. Personal advisors have continued to support our care leavers throughout this period, including supporting them with applying for settled status. Contact with birth parents has been facilitated, however some adjustments have been made to take account of public health risks and reduction in availability of contact centre space.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

Officers regularly review the data of looked after children and care leavers to identify any groups who are disproportionately represented. The update report contains information on the breakdown of looked after children and care leavers by ethnic group and information about the next steps the council is planning to take to address the differences

Council Priorities

Supporting Those Most in Need

- Children and young people are given the opportunities to have the best start in life and families can thrive

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not applicable – for information only

Name: Jo Frost

on behalf of the*
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 23/09/2020

Name: Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 24/09/2020		

* Delete the words "on behalf of the" if the report is cleared directly by the Chief Financial Officer / Monitoring Officer.

Name: Paul Hewitt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Corporate Director
Date: 24.09.2020		

MANDATORY	
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

Contact:

Jacinta Kane Head of Service Corporate Parenting Tel - 020 8736 6617 Email - Jacinta.Kane@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

- N/A



**REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting
Panel**

Date of Meeting:	7 th October 2020
Subject:	Harrow Ofsted Inspection Outcome and Report
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Paul Hewitt, Corporate Director of People
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Wards affected:	None - This is an Information report
Enclosures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. February 2020 Harrow Ofsted Inspection of Children's Social Care Services Report2. Ofsted Improvement Action Plan

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Harrow Children’s Services was inspected by Ofsted Inspection from 10th to 14th February 2020. Ofsted judged Harrow as “Good” across all the inspection domains:

- The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families
- The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection
- The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers
- Overall effectiveness

This inspection outcome is an improvement from the 2017 Ofsted inspection. Ofsted found, that “when children come into care, they receive a very good service. Staff at all levels work tirelessly to help children in care and care leavers to achieve in life and protect them from further harm”. There are 4 identified areas for improvement which were set out by Ofsted and which are being addressed via an improvement plan across Children’s services.

RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted

Reason for Recommendation: To keep the Panel updated on the February 2020 Ofsted inspection and “Good” judgement across all inspection domains.

Section 2 – Report

See the attached Inspection report from Ofsted which is publicly available on their website.

Key Points:

The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers is “good”.

When children come into care, they receive a very good service. Staff at all levels work tirelessly to help children in care and care leavers to achieve in life and protect them from further harm. Children are matched carefully with carers who promote their needs and help them to achieve. Social workers and personal advisers (PAs) work steadfastly to advocate on behalf of care leavers to ensure that they receive the best support to move safely towards independence.

Permanence planning and stability for children in care is good. Long-term plans for all children are considered promptly at the monthly care planning group. Parallel planning for those children unable to live safely with their parents is

progressed speedily. Appropriate use of family group conferences and special guardians allows children to live with family members. Most children live in safe, stable, good-quality placements that meet their needs, with their brothers and sisters and extended family or carers, who provide them with emotional warmth and stability.

Social workers know their children in care well and are active and committed advocates for them. They demonstrate an understanding of key factors that contribute to children's stability in their placement and the impact of the child's unique experiences. A mainly permanent social work staff team means that most children are benefiting from consistent and established relationships with someone they know well. Visits are regular, including for those children living at a distance from Harrow. Children are visited according to their needs, with many examples of increased visits when they are worried or upset. Sensitive, thoughtful and creative life-story work is helping most children to understand their experiences, for instance the use of sensory tools, smell and touch, which engender memory and help children understand why they cannot live with their parents.

A sensitive approach taken to engage and support birth families to maintain contact with children has a positive impact on children's emotional needs. This also contributes to the stability of placements. Careful consideration is given to sustaining relationships with brothers and sisters in future permanence plans. Children are supported to participate in their reviews, with independent reviewing officers (IROs) providing effective oversight and challenge. Children in care are offered the opportunity for advocacy, as well as independent visitors.

Children's physical, emotional and mental health needs are closely monitored and supported throughout their placement. A dedicated clinical psychologist attached to the virtual school supports professionals and young people and carers. Children can also access support via the jointly commissioned early intervention treatment and support via Harrow Horizons project.

The well-established fostering service has been successful in recruiting and supporting a range of foster and connected carers to meet the diverse needs of the children in Harrow. Foster carers' passion about helping and protecting children is a real strength of the service. Experienced carers offer a range of specialist services, including life-story work, caring for teenagers and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. They provide outreach support and mentoring for families and for each other.

The local authority has smoothly transitioned its partnership arrangements with a voluntary adoption agency into a regional adoption agency. There are no children waiting for adoption because early permanency planning is effective, which is ensuring that children are placed in adoptive homes quickly. Adopters describe

positive experiences of their contact with the regional workers. They feel welcomed and valued. Adopters are offered a continued high-quality adoption support service in the region or via the adoption support fund for more specialist services.

The virtual school's philosophy is 'Achieving Excellence Together', with the child at the heart of the school's programmes. Education, training and employment outcomes for children in care and care leavers are good, and children achieve well across all key stages. Schools are complimentary about the support offered by the virtual school team (VST). They believe the team to be approachable and efficient. School leaders say that, often, the VST staff will go 'over and above' to support the pupils. Electronic personal education plans are detailed, focus on the key areas, and include pupil targets and the pupils' perspectives. A range of extra-curricular activities are available to support and enrich the lives of children in care.

The virtual school is proud of its achievements to date. Staff know that although attendance has improved, there is more to do. This is an area of priority. The virtual school carefully tracks the progress of all pupils and is quick to intercede should a child's attendance start to reduce. At the time of the inspection, there were six pupils with highly complex needs who, despite constant efforts by all agencies, were without a school place for several months without a resolution.

Most care leavers live in suitable accommodation. The local authority actively commissions good-quality supportive accommodation according to individual assessed need. Consequently, there are no young people in unregistered provision. Young people said that they feel safe and can readily access advice, support and guidance to help them to move towards managing their own tenancies. Comparatively high numbers of young people are engaged in purposeful education, employment and training (EET) activities. Tenacious efforts by genuinely concerned and caring staff help most young people 'stay in touch'. Social workers and personal advisers take pride in young people's achievements.

Senior leaders are aware that the transition from child in care to care leaver is not as smooth as it needs to be, and they have plans to integrate the existing separate teams. The quality and effectiveness of early pathway planning is variable. Some young people do not have an up-to-date pathway plan. Risks to most young people are well identified but not in all cases. They are not consistently reviewed to reflect changing risks and to inform planning. Care leavers told inspectors that they are not provided with their (emotional and physical) health histories.

What needs to improve

- The quality and impact of supervision so that child in need and protection plans address the specific needs of individual children.
- Care leavers need to have access to their (emotional and physical) health histories and pathway plans, which should be of consistently good quality.
- Quality assurance practice evaluation audits across all teams.
- Meeting the needs of pupils with complex needs who are not in mainstream school and who remain on reduced timetables for too long.

How we are going to improve

The attached Ofsted improvement action plan outlines the 4 target areas for improvement and what actions are being undertaken to address the individual areas. Due to the impact of Covid-19 on all aspects of Council business, some actions were delayed. Pathway plans are reviewed on a monthly basis via performance meetings. In addition, work is currently in progress to combine the Children Looked After (CLA) Team and the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children / Leaving Care Team (UASC/LCT) into a single service. The vision for this service is to build and strengthen capacity within Corporate Parenting, to minimise changes of workers for children and young people, to develop consistent decision-making and to improve pathway planning for young people leaving care

The work on developing “health passports” or health histories for care leavers is underway and a task and finish group involving Health and Children’s Services Team Managers will be developing a model to be shared with Care Leavers in the Autumn/Winter. Further progress will be shared with the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2021.

Options considered

Not applicable as this is an information report.

Risk Management Implications

The Children’s Services Risk Register includes corporate parenting responsibilities.

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

Separate risk register in place? No

Legal Implications

Local authorities have specific duties in respect of children under various legislation including the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004. They have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area and, if this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing services appropriate to the child's needs. They also have a duty to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing services appropriate to the child's needs, provided this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare. They should do this in partnership with parents, in a way that is sensitive to the child's race, religion, culture and language and that, where practicable, takes account of the child's wishes and feelings.

Local authorities also have specific duties in relation to looked after children and care leavers. For looked after children, the statutory virtual school head is responsible for ensuring that they receive appropriate education, working in partnership with allocated social workers to ensure each child has a personal education plan.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

The inspection report is complimentary in relation to services offered to children with special educational needs or a disability. Children's mental health is supported via access to the Harrow Horizons project. The report highlighted areas for improvement which are directly related to protected groups. Care leavers, being young people aged 18 to 25 years, were flagged as requiring access to health histories and pathway plans, which should be of consistently good quality. There were also identified a small number of children with complex needs who were not in mainstream schooling and remained on reduced timetables for too long.

Council Priorities

Supporting Those Most in Need

- Children and young people are given the opportunities to have the best start in life and families can thrive

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not applicable – for information only

Name: Jo Frost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 23/09/2020_		

Name: Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 24/09/2020		

* Delete the words “on behalf of the” if the report is cleared directly by the Chief Financial Officer / Monitoring Officer.

Name: Paul Hewitt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Corporate Director
Date: 24.09.2020		

MANDATORY	
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

Contact:

Jacinta Kane Head of Service Corporate Parenting Tel - 020 8736 6617 Email - Jacinta.Kane@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

- Attached paper – February 2020 Harrow Ofsted Inspection of Children's Social Care Services Report
- Attached paper – Ofsted Improvement Action Plan

LBH OFSTED ILACS INSPECTION ACTION PLAN 2020

Report Recommendations for improvement	What will be done?	Who is the lead officer and what is the timescale?	What will be different?	Progress
<p>1. The quality and impact of supervision so that child in need and protection plans address the specific needs of individual children</p> <p>31</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systemic supervision training to be rolled out across CYPS front line managers/CP Chairs 2. Signs of Safety workshops to be delivered across CYPS workforce 3. CP pathway to be reviewed in MOSAIC 4. Practice Evaluation theme built into annual timetable 5. Practice Learning set to be delivered to embed good practice 	<p>Head of Service Children In Need Service.</p> <p>By 31.03.21</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supervision conversation will develop SMART practice / plans for all children/young people of the household 2. SOS methodology to inform practice development for S17 and S47 plans 3. Practice Evaluations to be targeted on Key Lines of Enquiry 	<p>Systemic supervision training delayed owing to COVID lockdown. SOS embedded across FRT/CIN. MOSAIC review progressing, revision of CP pathway agreed.</p>
<p>2. Care leavers need to have access to their (emotional and physical) health histories and pathway plans, which should be of consistently good quality</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health passport review to be undertaken across Corporate Parenting Service 2. Monthly Pathway Planning panel to review practice across service 3. Practice Evaluation theme built into annual 	<p>Head of Service Corporate Parenting Service.</p> <p>By 31.03.21</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young People to consistently participate in Pathway Planning 2. "Organisational Memory" to inform young people so that their personal history is understood into adulthood 3. Pathway planning to be consistently implemented so that there is no 18 	<p>Health Passport review progressing. Monthly panel in place and improving practice. SMT performance reports consider Pathway Planning compliance.</p>

	<p>timetable</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Practice Learning set to be delivered to embed good practice Regular SMT reports to monitor Pathway Plan performance 		<p>year birthday “cliff edge” of care / decision making</p>	
<p>3 Quality Assurance practice evaluation audits across all teams</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Moderation Panel to be used to embed consistent practice Practice Evaluation workshops to be implemented for frontline managers Tracking system implemented to confirm practice evaluation recommendations implemented through supervision oversight Consideration for Practice Evaluation work step to be built in MOSAIC Practice Evaluation to be standard agenda item in SMT performance meetings 	<p>Head of Service Children Quality Assurance and Service Improvement</p> <p>By 31.03.21</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All practice managers to deliver a consistent approach to evaluating practice Practice Evaluation moderation panel to identify area’s for improvement for individual and directorate practice themes Improving timescale for remedial action where issues of practice development identified 	<p>Practice Evaluation Panel and workshops in progress. MOSAIC development delayed owing to COVID 19. Priority for practice development since March 2020 has been delivery and monitoring of COVID risk assessment for all children and young people receiving service across CYPS.</p>
<p>4. Meeting the needs of pupils with complex needs who are not in mainstream school and who remain on reduced timetables for too long</p>		<p>Divisional Director Education Services</p>		

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Harrow

Inspection of children’s social care services

Inspection dates: 10 to 14 February 2020

**Lead inspector: Brenda McLaughlin
Her Majesty’s Inspector**

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good

Services for children and young people in Harrow are good. This is an improvement since the 2017 single inspection, when services for help and protection required improvement. Children and families benefit from the work of experienced and skilled early help practitioners, as well as social workers, who persevere to help and support them with a wide range of complex and difficult issues. Most child in need and protection plans are good, but a small number are not specific enough to measure impact.

Strong, stable senior leadership and a closely aligned strategic partnership have brought an unrelenting focus and a shared responsibility to prioritising and building on and sustaining good and excellent practice effectively.

Highly ambitious and resolute professionals work extremely well together to help children in care and care leavers to remain safer and achieve well in life. Managers recognise that more work is needed to ensure that care leavers fully understand their health histories and are provided with consistently good pathway plans. Leaders have acted to strengthen practice evaluation audits so

that they measure the impact on children's experiences and not just compliance with processes. A small number of pupils who access alternative education remain on a reduced timetable for too long. Managers at all levels demonstrate an unwavering ambition to do the right thing.

What needs to improve

- The quality and impact of supervision so that child in need and protection plans address the specific needs of individual children.
- Care leavers need to have access to their (emotional and physical) health histories and pathway plans, which should be of consistently good quality.
- Quality assurance practice evaluation audits across all teams.
- Meeting the needs of pupils with complex needs who are not in mainstream school and who remain on reduced timetables for too long.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection: good

1. Well-established and appropriately targeted early help services, delivered across three hubs, provide vulnerable children and young people with locally accessible and timely help and protection. Sustained improvements since the previous inspection, when help and protection services required improvement, mean that children and their families are helped and protected sooner. Purposeful work led by the local authority and supported by a committed strategic safeguarding partnership is helping to provide a seamless service to Harrow's most vulnerable residents.
2. Thresholds between early help and social care are well understood, and are applied appropriately in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). The co-location of experienced and dedicated early help practitioners ensures that the pathway into early help is clear. Partner agencies are well represented, and communication with other professionals who are not co-located is effective. Consequently, children and families get the right level of help and protection at the right time. Experienced MASH social workers swiftly screen contacts. The issue of consent is carefully considered, and is overridden if required. Daily multi-agency meetings assess all police referrals, considering risks to children missing from home and care and those vulnerable to violence and exploitation, as well as children living with high parental conflict. Child-centred, clearly recorded decisions ensure that children's experiences are always central to the next steps that are needed to help and protect them from harm.
3. Appropriate action is taken to safeguard and protect children who are at immediate risk of significant harm. Strategy meetings are thorough and most involve a good range of agencies. This includes those meetings that are conducted out of hours by the highly experienced and effective emergency duty

team. Interventions are proportionate to risk, and, when children and young people need to be safeguarded, actions are taken promptly to ensure that children and young people are kept safe. Escalating or emerging risk, such as concerns about forced marriage, domestic abuse and abduction, are swiftly identified and effectively addressed via collaborative multi-agency work, including the application for court orders. Harm to homeless young people and those at risk of radicalisation is recognised at an early stage and responded to effectively.

4. Experienced social workers in the first response teams (FRT) and in the child in need (CIN) long-term service know their children well. Caseloads are high for some, particularly in FRT after a week on duty. Although social workers report that these are mostly manageable, leaders accept that good practice could be compromised unless capacity in these teams is strengthened.
5. Most visits to children are regular, purposeful and responsive to their circumstances. Children's views are diligently captured by skilled direct work and are used to inform planning and to assess improvements. Assessments are comprehensive, timely and of good quality. They are informed by previous history. The child's culture is reflected well and is fully considered. So, too, is the impact on children of poor parental mental health, domestic violence and substance misuse. Social workers demonstrate a good understanding of the impact of traumatic experiences on children's lives.
6. Committed social workers across all teams speak openly and authoritatively about the families they are working with, and they are proud of children's achievements. Practitioners are clear about the emotional impact on children when parents are unable to prioritise their needs. Together with competent early help staff and the 'keeping families together' team (edge of care), they see children alone to seek their views. They offer appropriate challenge to parents when required. This work clearly informs assessments and plans, and is making a real difference to help and protect children. The work by the recently appointed skilled PAMS (parenting assessment manual) workers adds value and reduces delays to children subject to public law outline (PLO) pre-proceedings assessments.
7. The judiciary spoke positively about the practice in Harrow, but there is some concern that applications to the family courts should have happened earlier for several children. This includes some children who have experienced neglect and have been known to a number of services over a prolonged period and wait too long.
8. Child protection conferences are mostly timely, and multi-agency core groups are held regularly, and are used effectively to review and update child protection plans. However, the quality of child in need and child protection plans is variable. Not all actions are clear. Where there are no timescales, it is difficult to measure progress for specific children. This leads to drift for some. Although supervision

is regular, a continuous evaluation of whether the child's experiences are understood and whether interventions are sustaining changes needs to be recorded.

9. Services for children and young people who go missing and those at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation and gangs are good and improving. Leaders, in collaboration with partners, have responded well to the outcome of a commissioned peer review on November 2019. They have enhanced the capacity of the multi-agency vulnerable to violence and exploitation team (VVE). The team now takes case responsibility for the high-risk children in need and child protection cases. The work of the VVE team has greatly improved multi-disciplinary communication and is enabling better coordination with other services, including learning from return home interviews and increased joint work with the community safety team.
10. Children with disabilities and their families benefit from a broad range of services that are delivered by passionate and committed workers. Risks and needs are very well identified, and are addressed in good plans. The co-location of the service with partners such as the special educational needs service is facilitating communication and planning, and this is reflected in strong partner agency involvement in plans and reviews. There is a good commitment to working constructively with parents and carers. Visits to children demonstrate sustained efforts by workers to elicit children and young people's views by a variety of communication methods.
11. Privately fostered children benefit from appropriate care that is meeting their needs. They are visited regularly, and their living arrangements are appropriately monitored and reviewed.
12. The management of allegations regarding adults in a position of trust is strong. Thresholds for referral are understood and applied consistently. Investigations are coordinated well to ensure that children are protected.
13. Most electively home educated children and those missing from school benefit from vigilant scrutiny by the local authority officers, who work successfully with other agencies to safeguard vulnerable children from harm. Some pupils with highly complex needs, who are not in mainstream school but are provided with alternative education, experience drift as they remain on a reduced timetable for too long.

The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers: good

14. When children come into care, they receive a very good service. Staff at all levels work tirelessly to help children in care and care leavers to achieve in life and protect them from further harm. Children are matched carefully with carers

who promote their needs and help them to achieve. Social workers and personal advisers (PAs) work steadfastly to advocate on behalf of care leavers to ensure that they receive the best support to move safely towards independence.

15. Permanence planning and stability for children in care is good. Long-term plans for all children are considered promptly at the monthly care planning group. Parallel planning for those children unable to live safely with their parents is progressed speedily. Appropriate use of family group conferences and special guardians allows children to live with family members. Most children live in safe, stable, good-quality placements that meet their needs, with their brothers and sisters and extended family or carers, who provide them with emotional warmth and stability.
16. Social workers know their children in care well and are active and committed advocates for them. They demonstrate an understanding of key factors that contribute to children's stability in their placement and the impact of the child's unique experiences. A mainly permanent social work staff team means that most children are benefiting from consistent and established relationships with someone they know well. Visits are regular, including for those children living at a distance from Harrow. Children are visited according to their needs, with many examples of increased visits when they are worried or upset. Sensitive, thoughtful and creative life-story work is helping most children to understand their experiences, for instance the use of sensory tools, smell and touch, which engender memory and help children understand why they cannot live with their parents.
17. A sensitive approach taken to engage and support birth families to maintain contact with children has a positive impact on children's emotional needs. This also contributes to the stability of placements. Careful consideration is given to sustaining relationships with brothers and sisters in future permanence plans. Children are supported to participate in their reviews, with independent reviewing officers (IROs) providing effective oversight and challenge. Children in care are offered the opportunity for advocacy, as well as independent visitors.
18. Children's physical, emotional and mental health needs are closely monitored and supported throughout their placement. A dedicated clinical psychologist attached to the virtual school supports professionals and young people and carers. Children can also access support via the jointly commissioned early intervention treatment and support via Harrow Horizons project.
19. The well-established fostering service has been successful in recruiting and supporting a range of foster and connected carers to meet the diverse needs of the children in Harrow. Foster carers' passion about helping and protecting children is a real strength of the service. Experienced carers offer a range of specialist services, including life-story work, caring for teenagers and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. They provide outreach support and mentoring for families and for each other.

20. The local authority has smoothly transitioned its partnership arrangements with a voluntary adoption agency into a regional adoption agency. There are no children waiting for adoption because early permanency planning is effective, which is ensuring that children are placed in adoptive homes quickly. Adopters describe positive experiences of their contact with the regional workers. They feel welcomed and valued. Adopters are offered a continued high-quality adoption support service in the region or via the adoption support fund for more specialist services.
21. The virtual school's philosophy is 'Achieving Excellence Together', with the child at the heart of the school's programmes. Education, training and employment outcomes for children in care and care leavers are good, and children achieve well across all key stages. Schools are complimentary about the support offered by the virtual school team (VST). They believe the team to be approachable and efficient. School leaders say that, often, the VST staff will go 'over and above' to support the pupils. Electronic personal education plans are detailed, focus on the key areas, and include pupil targets and the pupils' perspectives. A range of extra-curricular activities are available to support and enrich the lives of children in care.
22. The virtual school is proud of its achievements to date. Staff know that although attendance has improved, there is more to do. This is an area of priority. The virtual school carefully tracks the progress of all pupils and is quick to intercede should a child's attendance start to reduce. At the time of the inspection, there were six pupils with highly complex needs who, despite constant efforts by all agencies, were without a school place for several months without a resolution.
23. Most care leavers live in suitable accommodation. The local authority actively commissions good-quality supportive accommodation according to individual assessed need. Consequently, there are no young people in unregistered provision. Young people said that they feel safe and can readily access advice, support and guidance to help them to move towards managing their own tenancies. Comparatively high numbers of young people are engaged in purposeful education, employment and training (EET) activities. Tenacious efforts by genuinely concerned and caring staff help most young people 'stay in touch'. Social workers and personal advisers take pride in young people's achievements.
24. Senior leaders are aware that the transition from child in care to care leaver is not as smooth as it needs to be, and they have plans to integrate the existing separate teams. The quality and effectiveness of early pathway planning is variable. Some young people do not have an up-to-date pathway plan. Risks to most young people are well identified but not in all cases. They are not consistently reviewed to reflect changing risks and to inform planning. Care leavers told inspectors that they are not provided with their (emotional and physical) health histories.

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families: good

25. The local authority has a strong and sustained track record of well-established and effective strategic relationship with all relevant partners who are committed to working together to provide consistently high-quality services. They have a clear understanding and a well-aligned creative approach to prioritising the needs of children, young people and their families in Harrow. They work untiringly, driving development to meet the increasing levels of demand. Corporate leaders and elected members have tangible high aspirations, demonstrated by continuous financial support.
26. Since the Ofsted single inspection in 2017, strong, effective and stable senior leadership has led to sustained improvements in both the quality and impact of social work practice for children in need of help and protection, and those in care. Leaders have successfully created a culture of high support and professional accountability, but they are not complacent.
27. All core services are now good, and there are many examples of excellent child- and family-centred practice, for instance work with the Asian Woman's Network to support victims of domestic abuse. Recent action to improve the care leaver services is positive, but it is too soon to evaluate impact. Robust collaborative partnership arrangements effectively target and commission resources to meet local need. For example, good joint collaborative multi-agency practice protects exploited and missing children. Underpinning all the work in Harrow is the quiet determination by committed leaders and managers to do the right thing to help and protect their most vulnerable residents.
28. Senior leaders have a comprehensive knowledge of the strengths and areas for improvement and are quickly responsive to external challenge. Leaders describe a vision, shared by elected members, of strong and continually improving services. Leaders know and understand the diverse needs of their communities well. They have repeatedly taken the right steps to meet them by consolidating good performance and ensuring continued improvement. Leaders are very ambitious in developing and promoting cogent evidence-based and innovative pilot projects that are making a difference. This includes collaboration with universities to trial finger-print analysis with parents who are dependent on drugs and alcohol.
29. Strong governance arrangements and clear lines of accountability between the chief executive, the director of children services and elected members are in place. Key strengths and areas for development, identified in their self-assessment, are used to inform both management understanding of the quality of practice and individual staff development. A strengths-based performance framework supports the delivery of good services, leading to sustained improvement across most teams and services. Senior managers

recognise that they have more work to do to move to a culture of measuring impact and outcomes, rather than merely processes, particularly following practice evaluations.

30. Successful implementation of the revised workforce strategy has led to significant improvements in increasing the ratio of permanent staff across children's services. Effective planning, access to good-quality training and a strong focus on innovation have led to the local authority retaining a stable workforce of good, qualified, experienced social workers and early help practitioners.
31. A diverse workforce of practitioners and managers who reflect the local community is a real strength, leading to better engagement by young people and their parents. All recent workers recruited from overseas report positively on the support, assistance and training they have received to understand the cultural and legal context of working with children in England. Newly qualified social workers are supported well. This provides a sound basis for sustaining good work with families.
32. Staff consistently reported to inspectors that they feel very well supported in their work and professional development by highly visible, approachable and involved managers. Case work in most teams is manageable. Morale is good. Harrow is a good place to work, and vulnerable children and their families have the benefit of good-quality help and support.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

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**REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting
Panel**

Date of Meeting:	7 October 2020
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT Virtual School Headteacher's End of Academic Year Report 2019-2020
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Paul Hewitt Corporate Director People Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Christine Robson Schools and Young People
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	None

This report sets out:

- An overview of the Performance and Standards of Children Looked After (CLA) at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 4
- Development priorities for the Virtual School (VS) for 2020-21

Recommendations:

The Panel is requested to note the:

- Actions undertaken by the VS during the Covid-19 crisis.
- Rise in pupil numbers across the academic year.
- Ofsted Report
- Alex Timpson Attachment Award for Stanmore College.

Reasons for Recommendations:

So that Members are informed about the outcomes for CLA and can discharge their duties as appropriate.

Executive Summary

The Virtual School (VS) provides timely personalised support for all pupils in their charge. Working with our key stakeholders in education brings the very best outcomes for our children, particularly during this period of global change.

This academic year has seen a 40% rise in pupil numbers in the VS with 55% of children educated within the Local Authority. The school has a ratio of boys to girls of 3:2 respectively. School attendance was at 90.9% for the Autumn and Spring Terms.

Good quality recording in Personal Education Plans (PEPs) supported pupils across the school, and particularly in Key Stage 4 to meet their target GCSE grades. PEP returns remain excellent, at 100%.

During the disruption to schools, just over 50% of our statutory school aged (SSA) children were provided with a laptop from the Virtual School. Social care and the special educational needs (SEN) teams supported with laptops for Post-16 students.

The VS increased the tuition on offer for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) as this group was identified as being particularly vulnerable during the closure of schools.

Last November Stanmore College gained The Alex Timpson ARC Attachment Award (<https://the-arc.org.uk/attachment-award>) in the Post-16 category. Our February 2020 Ofsted inspection highlighted the positive work of the Virtual School and that of our partners.

Section 2 – Report

1. Introduction

This academic year has seen unprecedented change in the way in which we go about our daily lives and more pertinently the education of our children.

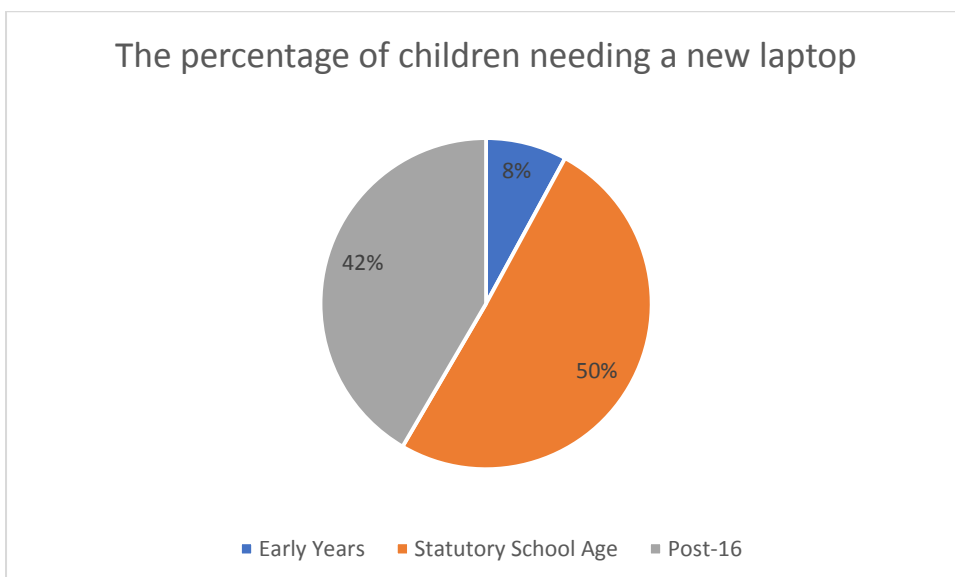
Following the Government's advice and recommendations to close schools except for vulnerable children from Monday 23rd March, the VS worked with their key partners to ensure children were supported and kept safe during this prolonged period of uncertainty during school closuresⁱ.

The VS throughout the lockdown continued to meet its statutory duties. This report sets out our immediate response to the pandemic, our continual monitoring of children's education and our priorities.

2. Response to School Closures

The VS took the following actions to ensure our CLA were not further disadvantaged by the closures of schools:

- Risk assessments, pertaining to school attendance, were conducted immediately with key partners. Across our Statutory School Aged (SSA) cohort only 25% of pupils could attend school. Nationally 20% of CLA were reported to be at school.
- An audit of laptop provision across the school was undertaken, as there became a pressing need for children to have a personal laptop for home learning.



- The VS website (www.harrow.gov.uk/virtualschool) was swiftly updated to include the following:
 - Advice for carers on supporting home learning
 - Enrichment and emotional well-being activities
 - A learning platform for students from Early Years to Key Stage 4
 - Post- 16 learning programmes
 - Specialist programmes for EAL students
 - Support for young people who are NEET
 - A link to the DfE Oak National Academy and BBC Bitesize

- Face -to- face tuition moved to online teaching. In addition to this we prioritised the following students for online 1:1 tuition:
 - English as an additional language (EAL)
 - Year 5 and Year 10
 - New to care
 - Children with learning, social and emotional difficulties

- Enhanced contact by the VS with carers and social workers was put in place. Pupils were encouraged to engage in work provided by their schools. Where this was not possible, carers were signposted to specific areas of learning on our online learning platform.

- Carers needing additional support, particularly in relation to managing children and young people at home for extended periods, were

contacted by our Clinical Psychologist (CP). The advice was welcomed by carers and this has subsequently, in a number of cases, supported with placement stability.

- Our CP continued to support our most vulnerable pupils via telephone and video conferencing. The pupils concerned have found this beneficial in managing the recent changes.

3. Virtual School Context

- At the end of the academic year 2019- 20 there were 114 pupils of Statutory School Age (SSA) on roll. 60% (68/114) of SSA children have been in care 12 months or longer.
- This is an increase of 33 pupils since September 2019. The Virtual School experienced increases in pupil numbers across all phases since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A Table Showing Increased Numbers across the academic year 2019-2020

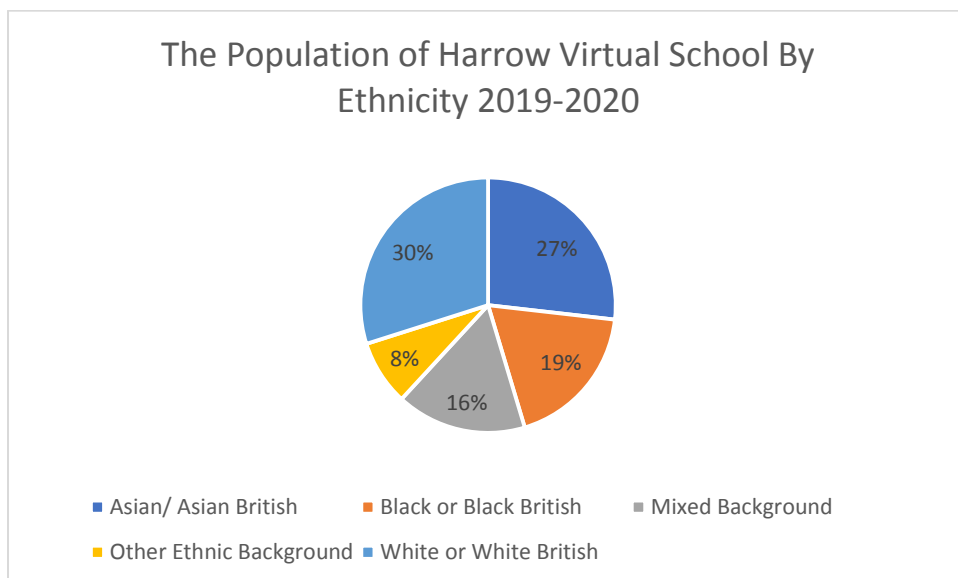
Year Group	Phase	September 2019	July 2020	Increase
11	Key Stage 4	23	33	+10
10				
9	Key Stage 3	36	45	+9
8				
7				
6	Key Stage 2	14	22	+8
5				
4				
3				
2	Key Stage 1	5	9	+4
1				
0 (Reception)	EYFS	3	5	+2
Total		81	114	33

CLA School Placements



- 45% (51/114) of Harrow's looked after students are educated outside of the Local Authority.
- 90% of Harrow CLA attend schools which are either 'good' or 'outstanding'. The map indicates the locations of Harrow's children in care.

Ethnicity



- Our largest groups are White 30%, closely followed by Asian 27%. The representation of ethnic groups has remained static over the past 2 years.

- Harrow VS continues to support our most vulnerable groups i.e. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (USAC), children who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- The following strategies are deployed to support these groups of learners
 - English proficiency assessments are undertaken by our school-based EAL consultants. These reports list a range of strategies for schools to support and accelerate learning.
 - Weekly online EAL tuition is used to supplement and reinforce learning at school.
 - Robust monitoring and tracking of pupils with both SEN and EAL.
 - The Virtual School is aware of the issues which may affect some groups because of their ethnic background and will continue to monitor and support all children facing any form of discrimination.
 - Schools will be encouraged to have anti-racism programmes (where they do not exist) embedded into their curriculum.

4. Attainment 2019 -2020

In the absence of public exams this academic year the VS used robust monitoring and tracking methods to ensure that our students met their predicted grades. The summer term PEP meeting recorded the student's current attainment. All our students achieved their expected grades.

All results are to be treated as provisional until published by the DfE in March 2021. Due to this year's unique circumstances this may change.

Key Stage 1

We had two eligible students in Year 2. Both children were working just below expected standards in the Autumn Term. Neither child met expected standards across Writing, Maths and Reading. The children were given work to complete at home which would have supported their progression, but both children found it difficult to engage, despite the support provided at home. Their teachers reported that the effects of the lockdown directly impacted on their end of Year results.

Key Stage 2 (KS2)

Key Stage 2 Attainment: SATs 2020

	Harrow	England Average	London
Reading	66.7 % (1 child working at a	49%	55%

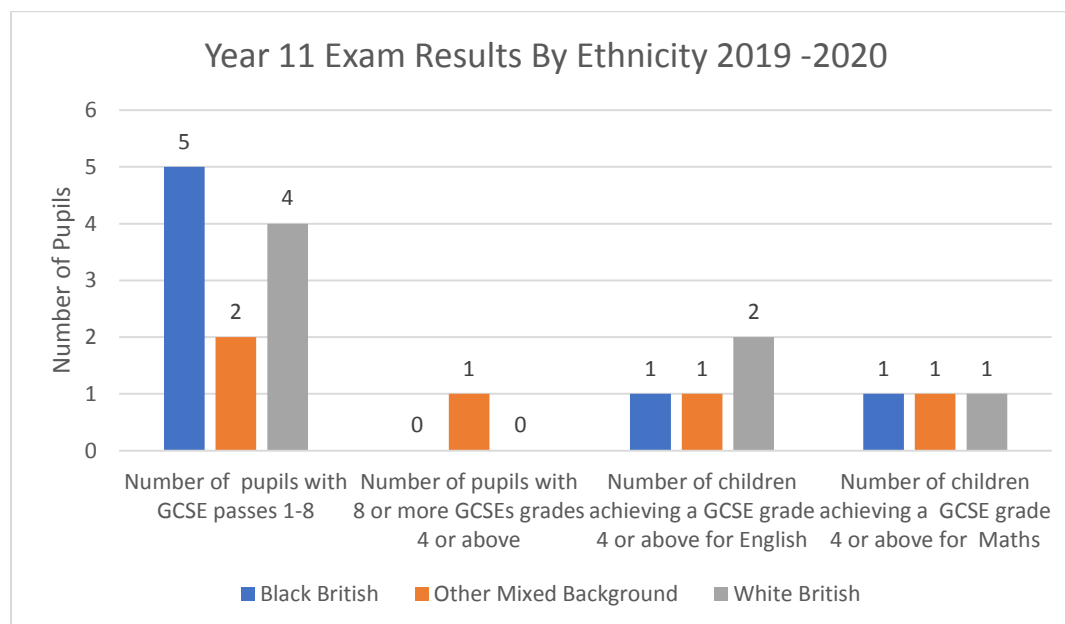
Writing	greater depth) 66.7 % 66.7 % (1 child working at a greater depth 66.7%	50%	54%
Maths		51%	57%
RWM		36%	43%

- There were 3 pupils eligible to sit the Key Stage 2 SATs in 2019.
- 1 child is working at 'greater depth' in both Reading and in Maths.
- Two children (67.7%) met expected standards across all three subjects (Writing, Reading and Maths). The England average for Reading, Writing and Maths combined is 36%. Harrow CLA (66.7%) are working well above both the England Average and the London Region (43%) for CLA for the combined subjects.

Key Stage 4 (Provisional)

In the academic year 2019-20 there were 15 students in Year 11 in care for 12 months or longer. 40% (6/15) have SEN and receive additional support at school, 20% (3/15) have an EHCP and they all attend a specialist school and 1 child has English as an Additional Language (EAL).

One student received 10 GCSEs (grades 4-8) and 2 students received 6 GCSEs (grades 4-8). All three students achieved a grade 4 or above in both English and Maths.



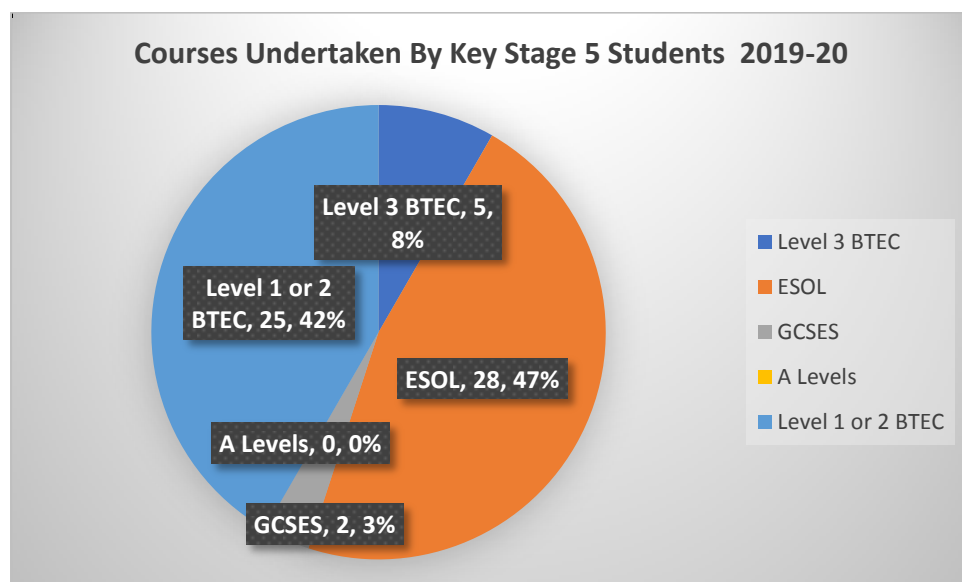
- The Other Mixed Background group achieved the highest number of good GCSE passes.
- Overall Black British (5 pupils) and White British (4 pupils) achieved the highest number of GCSE passes (grades 1-8)
- White British children performed better in terms of achieving grade 4 (or above) passes in English when compared to other groups.

It should be noted that because our cohort numbers are very small the data may show a skewed picture regarding performance against ethnicity.

Key Stage 5 (Years 12 and 13)

At the end of academic year 2019 -20 there were 89 students in Key Stage 4. This is an increase of 15 students from the previous year.

71% (63/89) of students were in Education, Employment and Training (EET) and 95% (60/63) of pupils that were EET were in education. Only 3 students were in employment.



- Only 1 Year 13 student is going on to university this year. A number of students in this year group are planning to attend university in September 2021 as they complete another year of study at college.
- ESOL learners are progressing through BTEC qualifications so they are ready to move to the next stage of their learning.
- There are no students in KS 5 taking A levels this academic year, 2019-2020.

- Many of our students are retaking GCSEs and other Level 2 qualifications. They will undertake higher learning when these are complete.

5. Personal Education Plans

- Since March 2020 all PEP meetings took place remotely. This has been very successful.
- The online meetings allowed the VS team to speak and see the children. Pupils' views were noted and responded to.
- A number of children reported that they missed seeing their teachers and friends. Schools kept in regular contact with our children who were learning at home.
- The VS continues to have PEP returns of 100% and all PEPs were of good or better quality.

6. Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

Reception -Year 11

- In 2020 12% (14/114) of Harrow CLA had an EHCP. This is a decrease of 6% from 2018-19. Harrow CLA remain below the England average (28%) for CLA with an EHCP.
- Four children were identified as needing an educational psychologist (EP) assessment during the closure of schools. Our link EP from the Educational Psychology Service will undertake assessments in the Autumn Term.

Key Stage 5

- There were 12 students in Key Stage 5 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). 58% (7/12) of students with an EHCP were EET.
- 2 students have had assessments from our CLA Educational Psychologist. The recommendations from these assessments have been beneficial in supporting their needs both at college and in their placements.
- Pupils who are CLA and with SEN remain a priority. Overall Harrow's performance is very good in this area.

7. Ofsted

The release of our Ofsted Report coincided with and was, sadly, overshadowed by the COVID-19 lockdown news. The overall judgements were good in all areas. Ofsted made the following comments regarding the work of the VS:

The virtual school's philosophy is 'Achieving Excellence Together', with the child at the heart of the school's programmes. Education, training and employment outcomes for children in care and care leavers are good, and children achieve well across all key stages. Schools are complimentary about the support offered by the virtual school team (VST). They believe the team to be approachable and efficient. School leaders say that, often, the VST staff will go 'over and above' to support the pupils. Electronic personal education plans are detailed, focus on the key areas, and include pupil targets and the pupils' perspectives. A range of extra-curricular activities are available to support and enrich the lives of children in care.

The virtual school is proud of its achievements to date. Staff know that although attendance has improved, there is more to do. This is an area of priority. The virtual school carefully tracks the progress of all pupils and is quick to intercede should a child's attendance start to reduce. At the time of the inspection, there were six pupils with highly complex needs who, despite constant efforts by all agencies, were without a school place for several months without a resolution. (Ofsted: Inspection of Children's Service, Harrow 2020).

The VS will continue to prioritise the work of our most vulnerable children to ensure that there is no drift and delay regarding the school enrolment process.

8. Stanmore College - The Alex Timpson ARC Attachment Award

- This award recognizes and celebrates best practice in attachment and trauma aware schools and settings.
- The VHT was invited to nominate a college or sixth form with good practice around CLA for the Post -16 category.
- Having reached the final round of the nomination, Stanmore College was granted the award.
- The college had also produced a video showcasing their support for CLA and Care Leavers.
- The ceremony was attended last November by the Deputy Principal of Stanmore College, our VS Advisory Teacher and the VHT.

9. Continued Professional Development

Foster Carers

- The VS now has an established foster carer network group which is attended by approximately 19 participants.
- The programme is participant lead and topics covered are based on the needs of group.

Designated Teachers (DTs)

Our annual training for DTs new to role took place in the Autumn Term. It was attended by 15 participants. The following areas were covered:

- The role of the DT
- CLA school audits
- Reporting to school governors
- Supporting the educational needs of previously looked after children
- Understanding the social and emotional needs of CLA
- Presentations by our CLA nurse, a foster carer, a DT and an IRO to highlight joint working regarding CLA

During COVID-19 we increased our online training offer for schools and started a DT forum. The first session took place in the Summer Term and will be continued in the new academic year.

10. Foster Carers

Throughout the period of the closure of schools where many of our children were then supported in their learning at home, our carers have had increased responsibilities in supporting education. Carers worked tirelessly to ensure that children were engaging with their learning and the following case studies highlights this:

Case Study 1. Reception Male.

X's carer has been a key person in supporting him to make progress in his learning and well-being. She has created a mini nursery setting in her home. For example, she has made a toy shop and set up different learning zones for him to utilise, as if he were at school. All learning is themed and she has dedicated 1:1 learning time with X so that he can practise his numbers and phonics. She has kept a daily record of his learning through pictures, so that this can be shared with the school, upon his return. Due to all of her creative ideas and close, consistent communication with the school, X is really progressing well.

Case Study 2. Year 11 Male.

X had missed lots of education prior to settling in this placement and at his current school. Since being in her care she has supported him to have excellent attendance, engage in Speech and Language Therapy Assessments and to apply for local colleges. He has made remarkable academic progress by attending tuition after school, which was encouraged by his carer. X is now at home engaging with online tuition sessions whilst social distancing. At the start of the lockdown she had frequent contact with his Designated Teacher to check that she understood the home learning tasks set by his teachers; she initiated fortnightly conference calls with his school and social worker to help put in place a plan around his education.

Case Study 3. Post-16 and Care Leavers.

Our key workers support many of our post-16 students in semi-independent placements. They have helped arrange college enrolments and support with setting up of the new laptops for UASC students who would otherwise not be able to progress their education. They continue to have regular communications with colleges and monitor the students' engagement with their online lessons.

11. Enrichment

Many of the planned enrichment activities due to take place during the Easter and Summer breaks had to be postponed due to COVID-19. The Virtual School recognised that enrichment was even more important for our students' well-being particularly during a period of sustained lockdown. By working with our providers and tweaking existing programmes our children were able to attend some of our tried and tested projects this year. Please see below:

Study and Enrichment Partnership with Harrow School

- This moved to 1:1 online tuition from May till July. There were 25, 40-minute sessions each week. Lessons also took place over half-term.
- Pupils in Years 9-12 participated in range of lessons to include English, Maths, Science and Art. One session was dedicated to career's advice.

'We Belong' by A New Direction (Virtual Afternoon Tea Feedback Session)

- This programme is targeted at Post -16 and care leavers. This was a joint venture with Harrow and Ealing Care Leavers.
- All young people brought a piece of cake or fruit and a hot drink to join in the fun
- The event highlighted some of the work the young people had taken part in over the course of the programme.
- Creativity and culture were at the heart of the activities and ranged from digital music, stop motion animation, lino drawing, fashion design and circus skills.
- The young people created a very poignant film, which expressed their views on how CLA are perceived. This valuable resource can potentially be shared for training purposes with schools and other key partners.

Exscitec - Discovery

This project focusses on Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Employability and Life Skills. It is targeted at pupils in Year 8 and above.

Last year our students attended Brunel University; this year it was moved due to COVID-19, to an online summer school.

- The summer school ran for 5 days during the summer holidays via Microsoft Teams.
- Resource boxes were posted to the young people beforehand at their home address.
- As a group the children made the following: Hovercrafts, BoeBots (moving robots programmed to 'dance' and move), paper bridges, slime, bath bombs, lip balms, colourful corrosives. All low concentration chemicals and protective equipment was provided.

Models made by children at home

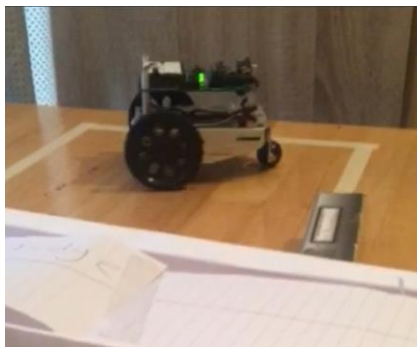


Figure 1: A BoeBot



Figure 2: A Hovercraft

Equine Summer Camp

This is our second year of attending this project which has supported our CLA with managing and regulating their emotions and behaviours. With COVID 19 safety measures in place, four students attended for a week during the summer holidays.

The feedback from the students from all the enrichment activities was positive; many are keen to take part in these or similar activities again.

12. Pupil Premium Plus (PPP)

The Department for Education (DfE) allocates to local authorities a provisional amount of £2345 per child looked after for at least one day, as recorded in the March children looked-after data return (SSDA903), and aged 4 to 15 at 31 August. The DfE updates and finalises this allocation in December based on the number of children looked after.

Harrow Virtual School (HVS) works to a 'child's needs driven' model which is monitored via the PEP process. The termly PEP reviews and provides evidence of PPP spend and how progress is monitored and measured. The PPP is 'top-sliced' and schools receive £1500 per child a year.

The remaining budget is used to support a range of activities and interventions to raise the attainment of CLA. This includes, but not exhaustive of the following:

- Enrichment activities for students
- Attendance monitoring
- e-PEP service
- Training for schools, social workers and carers
- 1:1 tuition
- 1:1 mentoring
- VS staffing
- Alternative Learning Provision (ALP) placements
- Pupil resources
- Top-up pupil premium of schools
- Educational Psychologist Support

13. Development Priorities.

For HVS to work effectively with schools and other key partners to raise the overall performance of CLA by closely tracking and monitoring the following groups.

Pupils:

- In Year 3 who did not meet expected standards in Writing, Maths and Reading at the end of Year 2.
- In Years 5, 6, 10 and 11 as they approach end of key stage crucial exams.
- Requiring an EP assessment so timely support and interventions are in place as soon as possible
- In Key Stage 5 as they prepare for university
- With poor attendance remains a priority for our Virtual School. Persistent Absence (9.1%) showed some improvement for the Autumn and Spring Terms.

14. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications as this report is for information purposes.

15. Financial Implications

The Virtual School is funded from a combination of general fund and Children Looked After Pupil Premium Grant. In 2019-20 the funding was as follows:

- General Fund budget £128k
- CLA Pupil Premium £274k
- Total funding £402k

16. Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

The weak performance of particular underachieving groups is a concern and the Local Authority through the Harrow School Standards and Effectiveness has established a 'Closing the Gap' strategy to ensure that all groups achieve in line with the high standards of achievement in Harrow. The strategy is focussed on supporting and challenging individual schools to improve the quality of their provision, so that all groups achieve well against their peers.

18. Council Priorities

This report provides information on the performance of underachieving groups, and as such is focused on making a difference for the vulnerable. Educational performance and standards are critical in making a difference to the life chances and aspirations of families and

communities. A well-educated and skilled workforce secured through quality educational provision in Harrow, contributes significantly to local businesses and industry, within and beyond Harrow.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief Financial Officer
Date: 9 th September 2020.		

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

Contact:

Mellina Williamson-Taylor	Headteacher, Harrow Virtual School for CLA, PLAC and Care Leavers. Mellina.williamson-taylor@harrow.gov.uk 020 8416 8852
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Background Papers: None

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

*(for completion by Democratic
Services staff only)*

~~YES/NO/~~ NOT APPLICABLE*

** Delete as appropriate
If No, set out why the decision is
urgent with reference to 4b - Rule
47 of the Constitution.*

ⁱ Schools remained open for vulnerable children and children of key workers.

**REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting
Panel**

Date of Meeting: 7 October 2020

Subject: **INFORMATION REPORT** Harrow Virtual School Clinical Psychology Service Summary Report, March 2020

Key Decision: No

Responsible Officer: Paul Hewitt
Corporate Director People Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Christine Robson
Schools and Young People

Exempt: No

Decision subject to Call-in: No

Wards affected: All

Enclosures: None

This report sets out:

- An overview of the new Harrow Virtual School Clinical Psychology Service
- An analysis of the children referred to the service and the support offered
- An overview of the strengths and challenges for the service
- Thoughts for the future direction of the service

Recommendations:

The Panel is requested to note that the addition of the clinical psychologist role within the Harrow Virtual School Team has been received positively by Harrow Council staff, educational professionals, carers, and young people, and has resulted in encouraging results regarding the emotional wellbeing of CLA.

Reasons for Recommendations:

So Members are aware of the social and emotional challenges faced by CLA and what is currently in place to support their emotional wellbeing, and what support is hoped to be offered going forwards.

Executive Summary

The HVS Clinical Psychology Service commenced in November 2018, aiming to provide further targeted mental health support for children looked after. Between November 2018 and February 2019, 50 young people were formally brought to the attention of the HVS Clinical Psychology, and received either direct or indirect clinical psychology support. The successes of the service and the challenges faced are discussed in detail, and the planned future direction of the service are discussed.

Please note that the current report was completed prior to the onset of the government lockdown and social distancing strategies put in place to combat COVID-19.

Section 2 – Report**Context**

Following the reported success of the Virtual School CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) Team in Lewisham, a joint venture between Lewisham CAMHS and Lewisham Virtual School (LVS), the Harrow Virtual School Team for Children Looked after and Previously Looked After (HVS) appointed a Clinical Psychologist within their team to help provide more targeted and flexible mental health support for looked after young people in Harrow. It was apparent that a high percentage of young people supported by the HVS suffered from mental health needs that often did not meet threshold for intervention from Harrow CAMHS and other local services, and so the mental health needs of these young people were too often unaddressed, and having a significant impact on their ability to engage and succeed in education. The following report aims to provide a summary of this role, it's effective thus far, and proposed further directions.

The Role

The writer, the HVS Clinical Psychologist, was appointed by the HVS Headteacher, in November 2018 to work within the team for two days per week. The writer had worked as a Clinical Psychologist across a number of different mental health settings in Australia and London since 2009, including child protection services, clinical research supporting families of children displaying challenging behaviour, children looked after and general CAMHS services, and prior to joining HVS, had been employed in the Conduct, Adoption, and Fostering Team (CAFT) within National and Specialist CAMHS at the Maudsley Hospital.

Initially the role was discussed as a predominantly remote service, consisting of direct mental health assessment with young people and completing the subsequent assessment reports from home. Referrals for assessments could

be completed by members of the HVS team, social workers, or schools. However, once the writer started in the role, it became apparent that direct assessment was not always the most efficient route for ensuring that the mental health needs for young people were supported. Through discussion with the HVS Headteacher and in response to the types of cases and queries raised, the role began to expand to include consultation with staff (both within and external to Harrow Council), providing training to schools and foster carers, running groups with young people, providing brief mental health intervention with young people and carers, supporting Harrow council staff with identifying appropriate mental health services and completing effective referrals, and liaising with CAMHS and other mental health services.

In order to ensure effective clinical practice and ongoing professional development, in addition to managerial supervision provided by the HVS Headteacher, the writer has been receiving clinical supervision from a Clinical Psychologist outside of the service with extensive supervisory and clinical experience with families and children looked after. This supervision occurred every three weeks to provide the writer with a reflective space to discuss her clinical work with families, and to discuss ideas for reviewing and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the role.

During the first few weeks in HVS, the writer sought to understand the local context, speaking with Harrow CAMHS (the local Tier 3 Mental Health Service) and Harrow Horizons (Harrow's Tier 2 mental health service), and researching additional local sources of mental health support. Meetings were also held with the HVS Headteacher, the Harrow CLA Team and CLA Nursing staff to discuss the role and to encourage requests for consults and referrals.

Outcomes for November 2018 to February 2020

Cases brought to the attention of HVS Clinical Psychology Service

Since November 2018, 50 young people have been formally brought to the attention of the HVS Clinical Psychology Service through consultation or referral. Initial cases were identified by HVS in relation to their particularly concerning school attendance. These cases were discussed further with HVS team members, the young people's social workers, and the CLA nurse, and through this process several young people were identified as having unmet mental health needs that warranted further investigation and/or support. At this time, the Clinical Psychology Service accepted referrals made via verbal consultation and written referral, although later as demand for the service increased, referrers were increasingly encouraged to submit written referrals (developed by the HVS team) to streamline the process. Questionnaire measures were also often provided to the children's social workers at the time of referral, to be completed by carers, young people, and/or teaching staff, in order to streamline the process further by providing as much information as quickly as possible so that an appropriate plan of action could be developed.

The writer also attended a team meeting for the CLA team to discuss the service and referral process, and provided the same information to Designated Teachers (DTs) at the HVS Safeguarding in Education quarterly meeting, and during training sessions with schools. HVS team members have also been instrumental in highlighting the use of the service to schools, social work staff, and carers to support referrals.

In order to keep track of referrals and consultations, the writer kept an electronic consultation log outlining details of the young people discussed, the dates and details of consultations, and agreed actions. This log was saved on the HVS secure team drive to ensure that this information was stored securely, but enabling the HVS team members to access the log and track progress of cases when the writer was not in the office.

Of the 50 young people brought to the attention of the Clinical Psychology Service between November 2018 and February 2020, 23 requested a specific type of intervention (as opposed to requesting a consultation to consider possible forms of intervention), 14 using the service referral form. The requested support included assessment (8 referrals), therapy (6 referrals), advice (1 referral), or a combination of support (8 referrals). 30 of these referrals were made by social workers, 13 by HVS, 1 by the CLA nurse, 2 by school staff, 1 by the young person's caregiver, and 3 jointly by social workers and other professionals.

Age of Young People Referred

Age	Number (Percentage of Overall Sample)
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2	2 (4%)
3	1 (2%)
4	2 (4%)
5	3 (6%)
6	2 (4%)
7	3 (6%)
8	1 (2%)
9	2 (4%)
10	2 (4%)
11	5 (10%)
12	4 (8%)
13	5 (10%)
14	5 (10%)
15	6 (12%)
16	2 (4%)
17	3 (6%)

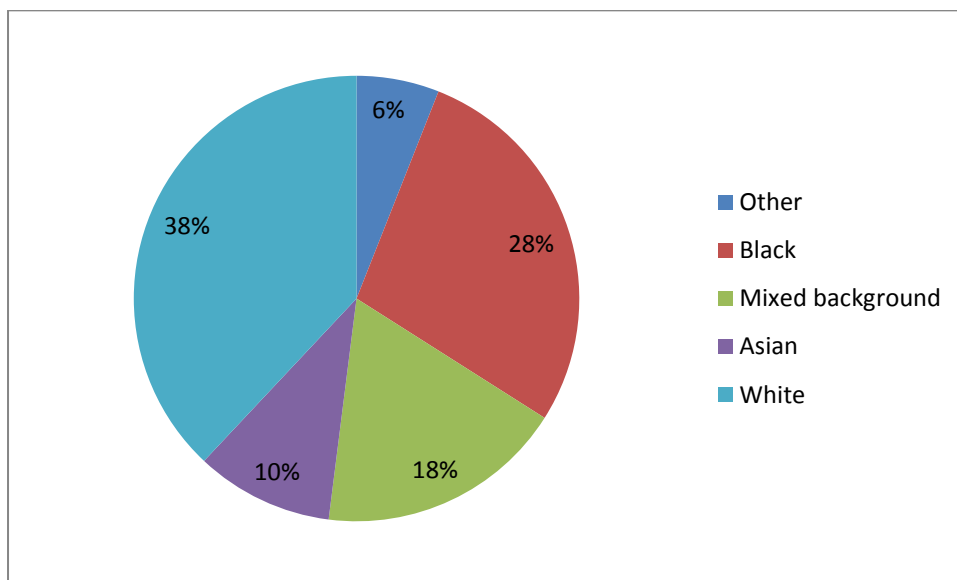
The age of young people referred for support ranged from 2 years to 17 years of age, and were spread relatively evenly across age groups.

Gender of Young People Referred

48% of young people referred for support were male, compared to 52% of referrals concerning female young people.

Ethnicity of Young People Referred

The distribution of different ethnic backgrounds represented by referrals is illustrated below. It is noted that the ethnicity of young people listed within the local authority system (Mosaic) differed with regard to the level of detail provided (for example, some children were simply listed as 'white', while others were listed as 'white British', 'white other background', etc) and so categories were collapsed to create more consistency. This appears to be a true representation of the ethnicity of the Harrow population, and there were no concerns raised about any ethnic group.



The support provided for each of the 50 children brought to the attention of the Clinical Psychology Service

Main Form of Support Provided	Number of YP
Formal mental health assessment	4
Brief assessment with young person	7
Direct intervention with young person	3
Support to foster carers/caregivers	3

Supported referral to another service	9
Attended professional meetings to provide advice	3
Consult with social worker only	14
Consult with VS only	6
Referral on hold (due to change of circumstances)	2

Note: Some cases involved multiple types of input, and so for the above table the main form of response/intervention was selected

Formal mental health assessments resulted in a written report in addition to verbal feedback to professionals and families as appropriate. Each of the four formal assessments completed focussed on a different issue and so the structures varied somewhat, but each contained subheadings outlining the reason for referral, results from standardised assessment measures (including the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire [SDQ], Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale [RCADS], Social Communication Questionnaire [SCQ], and the Conner's Questionnaire), summaries of information collected from direct assessment, observation, and/or interview with relevant parties, conclusions, and recommendations. Assessments sought to explore, respectively, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)/social communication concerns, a child's experience and behaviour at home and at school (in the context of neurodevelopmental concerns and early traumatic experiences), exploring a young person's symptoms of ASD and trauma to develop recommendations for supporting future independence, and assessing a young person for Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), described further below.

Brief assessments included meetings with the young person referred, in addition to discussions with their professional network (including social workers, school staff, counsellors, and youth workers) and caregivers, as appropriate. The information collected was summarised in a brief report that was shared directly with professionals, or a summary and clinical opinion was provided verbally. The focus of these assessments again varied but often focussed on young people who had disengaged from education and/or were struggling within their placements, and support was requested to try to understand their needs further.

Providing support to refer young people onto different services has taken different forms, including simply sitting with social workers to complete CAMHS referrals, ensuring that relevant information regarding risk is listed clearly. In addition, the writer supported several young people to gain access to play therapy by liaising with the provider and the children's social workers.

Case Examples

Formal Mental Health Assessment

X was a Year 9 boy living with his grandfather when he was referred for assessment by his social worker. X was removed from the care of his mother following significant concerns regarding her alcohol misuse, violence towards X, and unwillingness to engage with professionals 3 months prior to the referral, initially placed in foster care and then moving in with his grandparent at the time of the referral (who was being assessed as a potential long-term carer for X). X's social worker reported that there had been longstanding difficulties with X's behaviour at school. The writer therefore completed a formal assessment with X, completing interview and questionnaire measures with school staff, interview with X, and interview with his grandparent. The assessment highlighted that at the time of the assessment, X met criteria for Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), but his experiences of abuse and poor care were likely strong contributors to his behaviour difficulties and with appropriate and responsive care it was hoped that his behaviour would improve. He did not present with symptoms of anxiety or mood difficulties, or present as high risk. Specific strategies for both home and school to employ were outlined in the recommendations, in addition to the writer's concerns about X's grandparent's ability to provide such care. X's placement with his grandparent broke down prior to the finalisation of the report and the report and recommendations were used by his care team to identify an appropriate foster placement. X was reported to be thriving in his placement and showing significant improvements in his engagement and behaviour at school following the intervention.

Carer Support and Attending Professionals Meetings

Y was a Year 6 girl with physical health needs and a history of parental neglect and suspected sexual and physical abuse. She was residing in foster care but maintained frequent, problematic contact with her birth mother as care

proceedings were ongoing. Her social worker referred her for support after she disclosed suicidal thoughts and past attempts to self-harm, in addition to controlling and aggressive behaviours in her placement. The writer discussed the case with the social worker and CLA nurse and assisted with CAMHS referral, resulting in appointment offered immediately to assess concerns and complete risk assessment. In addition, the writer met with Y's foster carer to provide psychoeducation regarding Y's needs and practical strategies. A subsequently attended the HVS enrichment programme to support emotion regulation (Balance). The foster carer reported that the strategies were helpful and their relationship felt much stronger. Unfortunately, the foster carer then experienced a sudden devastating family loss and needed to terminate the placement. Y was placed with a family out of borough, and Y began showing similar behavioural behaviours at home and school. The writer and another HVS team member travelled to attend meetings with the foster carer, school, and other professionals and the writer was providing telephone support to the foster carer at the time of this report.

Joint Intervention with social work staff

The writer was approached by the social worker for four children (aged between 6 and 10 years) living with their grandparents under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) following concerns regarding their parents' alcohol misuse and violence, requesting support for the children to understand their life story. The writer met with each child with the social worker and it was determined that all four children would benefit from support in this area, but required this information presented differently. The children's social worker had developed strong, positive relationships with all the children but did not feel confident to undertake this work on her own, so it was agreed that the writer would support her to complete life story work with the eldest child as his needs were most pressing (presenting with low mood and taking a great deal of responsibility for his removal), and then the social worker would complete the work with the remaining children independently, with supervision from the writer as necessary. The work with the eldest child was ongoing at the time of this report, but he was responding positively and the writer felt that his social worker would be able to complete this work competently herself at the conclusion of this intervention.

Additional Impact

Group Programmes

Balance

In addition to providing individual intervention, in April 2019 (Easter break), The writer and the HVS Education Support Officer, developed and ran a half-day pilot programme aiming to support children's emotion regulation using fun and interactive activities involving the five senses. The session included:

- Mindful eating,
- Listening to different types of music and sounds and noticing how this impacts on their mood,
- Experiencing different soothing and invigorating smells,
- Making mindful glitter bottles

The young people left with their own personalised sensory preference list, hand-made glitter bottles, and bellies full of pizza from the provided lunch. Feedback from the young people involved and their foster carers were very positive and so the team plan to host further Balance sessions in April 2020.

Feedback from the foster carers of the young people in attendance:

'The strategies had been helpful... X is using some of the strategies introduced in the programme and her behaviour and ability to express herself were continuing to improve'(Foster Carer)

'X's behaviour had improved, and their relationship with one another felt much stronger'(Foster Carer)

Supporting Teens with Exam Stress

The writer and the HVS Advisory Teacher, are currently planning a session for young people approaching their GCSE exams to introduce practical strategies to manage exam stress and perform at their best. In addition, the team are developing handouts for students and carers to highlight useful strategies.

Professional Training

Designated Teacher Mental Health Training

On the 2nd and 9th of May 2019, the writer provided training to Designated Teachers (DTs) about mental health

difficulties in children looked after across two half-day sessions. The first session provided Information about common mental health difficulties and how they can present at school, and the second session discussed strategies for supporting young people to reach their full potential. In addition, a framework was introduced to support DTs to consider the needs behind the behaviour in young people, and to consider how best to encourage prosocial behaviour, improve self-esteem, and deter inappropriate or challenging behaviour. The DTs in attendance brought a wealth of knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to the sessions that really helped bring the group discussions and activities to life. The feedback received was very positive, with delegates describing the training as informative, interesting, and useful. An additional training session was provided to a new group of DTs in November 2019.

Foster Carer Mental Health Training

In November 2019, the writer also presented two half-day sessions to foster carers about mental health challenges and strategies to provide support in primary school aged children and teenagers, respectively. Foster carers in attendance responded well to the information presented and were active and engaged throughout. A further session examining attachment, trauma and resilience is planned to be presented in 2020.

Feedback from a foster carer in attendance:

'Just wanted to say what a really good and useful course this was this morning. We both really enjoyed it and thought it was worthwhile attending. All carers with teenagers should do it. Sara was lovely and presented it all really well, with lots of examples (anonymously of course).'

Creating Links

Further, the writer has been attending quarterly meetings with representatives from CAMHS, Harrow Horizons, the CLA Nurse, FCAMHS, and the Harrow CLA team to improve communication and efficiency. As a result of these meetings, the referral pathways and clinical thresholds for each service is much clearer and the writer has been better able to support Harrow social workers to make referrals for young people. CAMHS have also acknowledged the difficulties engaging children looked after and have since agreed to inform the young person's social worker prior to closing cases due to lack of response, in order to activate the network more effectively to help a child be seen by mental health professionals. In addition, CAMHS have now changed the way they respond to referrals to ensure that more young people are seen quickly through a triage service, before being accepted to their waiting list or referred on to a more appropriate service, which appears to be a very positive move and appears to better fit the support needed by all young people, particularly those seen by HVS. Further, through these meetings the group have begun to share information more effectively regarding which child has been seen by which service, so that social workers and HVS can be sure that young people are engaging with support when needed (and can identify gaps in treatment that need to be resolved). Future projects planned by this working group include completing an audit of how effectively the mental health needs of children looked after are being met in Harrow, and thinking about how better to support out of borough children looked after.

The writer has also attended open days for different mental health services to better understand the support available to young people in Harrow, and to develop links with these services. At 2019's Virtual School Conference, the writer also met with clinical and educational psychologists from other Virtual School teams and there are plans to meet further with this group to share ideas about supporting our services and to provide peer supervision. The writer also plans to meet with the Harrow Educational Psychology service in 2020.

Building an Alliance with HVS colleagues

In addition to attending professional meetings and more formal consults outlined above, the writer is often involved in day to day discussions regarding mental health with her HVS colleagues, and learning from them with regard to education procedures, working effectively with school staff, and supporting the network to keep the child at the centre of thinking and planning.

Conclusions

Over the past 15 months, the writer has worked to support the mental health of children involved with the HVS team in a variety of ways, including direct assessment, individual therapeutic support, group programmes, training, liaison, consultations, and building links with other services. As this is a new role within Harrow, there have been challenges and successes that the writer has sought to learn from in order to consider the best way forwards for this innovative role in Harrow Council.

Successes

Providing Consultation

Being available to professionals for psychological consultations regarding young people's mental health proved to be a very effective part of the role. It was noted that a brief conversation was often all that was required in order to support referrers to refer young people on to relevant services, help to develop plans to provide support, or simply to provide reassurance that the current plans in place were appropriate. Being available to provide such support to referrers, either in person or by phone, has become a crucial aspect of the role and has resulted in very positive gains for young people and improved working relationships between professionals.

Co-working Brief Interventions

Providing brief assessments or therapeutic interventions alongside social workers and/or HVS colleagues has also been very effective. For example, while completing the joint intervention detailed above, the pre-existing relationships developed by the social worker with the family helped the writer to quickly develop rapport with the family, and the social worker's support in holding onto therapeutic materials between sessions and managing any contact with the family outside of sessions really helped to streamline the intervention. In addition, the writer has been providing phone support to foster carers in cases where the HVS team already have an established relationship with the young person's network, resulting in the writer liaising with her colleagues in the HVS team and they in turn communicate with and support the young person's school. This has allowed the writer to focus on providing therapeutic support, and limiting time spent chasing other individuals in the network.

Attending Professional Meetings

Throughout the past 15 months, the writer has been invited to attend a number of professional meetings for young people, both for those well known to the service through assessments or other interventions, and to those known only through consultation. This has allowed the writer to better understand the systems around young people and meet professionals involved (which has been very helpful when professionals have sought consultation at a later time), and also allowed the writer to provide a psychological perspective to discussions and to ensure that young people's mental health needs are taken into account when developing support plans. The feedback from professionals has been very positive regarding this support. It is also noted that at times the writer has taken the role of summarising the different perspectives of members of a young person's network (including professionals and the young person themselves), and essentially provided some mediation between different parties. This was not an expected part of the role, but again has appeared effective and helpful during consultations and meetings.

Professional training

As highlighted, the writer has provided training covering different topics to foster carers and school staff, and there are plans to roll out further training sessions in 2020. The feedback from the delegates has been positive and the sessions have appeared to not only help to increase attendees' understanding of mental health issues in young people looked after, but also raised the profile of the HVS Clinical Psychology Service with school staff and foster carers, resulting in further consultations. Such training sessions therefore appear to be an effective and efficient way to build upon the already well-developed knowledge and skills of these groups (hopefully resulting in better outcomes for the young people they care for/teach) and to develop links with professionals.

Group Interventions

Again considering efficient ways to disseminate information and enact positive change, group programmes are also proving to be an effective way to reach and support multiple young people at once. This has been particularly effective when support has been provided by other members of the HVS team, or other involved professionals, to help with developing materials, inviting delegates, booking venues, and other important tasks. In addition, developing original group sessions, although enjoyable and worthwhile, is time-consuming. The writer believes that this could potentially be one of the most effective ways to engage young people directly within this role once more group programs have been trialled and refined so that they can be rolled out at regular intervals across the year with little preparation.

Mediation

As highlighted above, mediation between different parties within a young person's network has been an unexpectedly important part of the writer's role. Not only during professional meetings and consultations, but during all types of interventions the writer has focussed on supporting individuals to consider the views of others and to move away from who is 'right and wrong' in a given situation, and instead hold in mind that everyone's view is both valid and useful when developing formulations and action plans to support young people. This has seemed to improve communication in several cases and resulted in positive outcomes for young people.

Improving Links with External Services

Making connections with external mental health services through attending open days, telephoning services to clarify their referral criteria and approach to working, and attending formal meetings has been very useful to supporting HVS and social worker colleagues to determine the best source of support for young people and make appropriate referrals. Through regular meetings, the writer has gained a better understanding of how external services such as Harrow CAMHS, FCAMHS, and Harrow Horizons work and how to connect young people with the best available support, and has been able to begin enacting positive change both within these services and within Harrow Council to ensure that looked after young people's mental health needs are met.

The Clinical Psychology Service Log

Keeping an electronic log containing a brief summary of each young person's background history, dates and details of consultations with professionals, and agreed actions has been an effective way to keep track of cases. As highlighted, this log is kept on the HVS team drive to allow HVS colleagues to access this when needed, while keeping this sensitive information secure. As a result, when the writer has spoken to a referrer about a young person but no action is taken, the writer can easily access their information in the log and be reminded of the relevant information and past discussions.

Challenges within the Role

Formal (Large Scale) Mental Health Assessments

Although the feedback from social workers and carers regarding the benefits of larger scale, formal mental health assessments has been positive, such assessments have proven to be very time-consuming and difficult to complete by a single, part-time clinician. The four formal mental health assessments each took between five and seven months from initial referral to report completion. This was partly due to delays in receiving the necessary information from referrers in order to plan and begin an intervention, difficulties arranging appointments with young people and professionals, and finding the time required to formulate, score questionnaires, and write detailed reports while still attending to the additional duties of the role within two days per week. Such long delays in producing reports is not in the best interests of the young people at the centre of these assessments, and indeed it was noted that the situations of one young person had changed drastically by the conclusion of the assessment (see case example of X, outlined earlier in this report).

Intensive Interventions with Young People

Similarly, although the role was never intended to involve long-term therapeutic support, the writer initially hoped to take on a small case load of therapeutic clients for short to medium-term work but this proved to be very difficult given the preparation and travel time required. Instead the writer found it more effective to identify appropriate external services when young people required more intensive input, rather than providing this input herself.

Traveling to Appointments

The writer notes that being able to meet with young people in their homes and/or schools can be very useful in minimising disruption to their education and routine, showing the young person that we as professionals are willing to make efforts to connect with them and to understand their world, and also allows professionals to better appreciate the strengths and difficulties within their environment and understand contextual issues (for example, observing interactions between young people and their teachers, or observing how a young person has decorated their bedroom or interacts with their foster siblings or pets). In addition, being able to attend professional meetings off-site, including PEPS and meeting with CAMHS and other local services, has also been very useful to help support young people and create links with other professionals and services. However, attending off-site appointments can be quite time-consuming, with a single 1-hour appointment sometimes taking up several hours of the day. It is recognised that traveling to appointments is an important and necessary part of the role but, again, with one

clinician working two days per week, this has had an impact on overall productivity and ways to minimise this impact are currently being considered.

Completing Interventions without Sufficient Referrer/Network Support

Over the past 15 months, the writer has noted that the amount of practical support provided by referrers and other professionals has differed (such as offering support in contacting families or encouraging them to engage and providing relevant background information), and this has had a significant impact on the efficiency of interventions. It may be beneficial to make explicit at the time of referral that some support/involvement may be required from the referrer in order to ensure that interventions can be completed in a timely manner. In addition, as the HVS team expands, additional administration support has become available to support interventions which may also help to streamline processes in the future.

Requests for Immediate/Crisis Support

Being able to contribute to support plans for young people in times of crisis has been a positive part of the role. However, at times referrals have been submitted by referrers requesting immediate support for young people on the verge of exclusion or placement breakdown (or indeed when these crises have already occurred), or experiencing high risk mental health symptoms (such as suicidal thoughts, sexualised behaviour, or aggression). This is concerning as the HVS Clinical Psychology Service is not an emergency service and due to the part-time nature of the role and other commitments, there is often a wait to receive support. On these occasions, referrers have been signposted to CAMHS, Accident and Emergency Departments, or other services as needed. In addition, there have been several referrals that appear to have been made at times of crises and, several days later when the writer has been able to consider the referral and speak with the referrer, the crisis has been managed or another service has become involved and support is no longer required. Further support to referrers may be useful to clarify that they can seek a consultation at difficult times, but it is unlikely that the service can provide immediate, direct intervention with families and they should therefore consider other avenues of support. In addition, to try to avoid planning interventions that are no longer required, the writer now routinely checks in with referrers and other relevant involved professionals before beginning work.

Future Directions

In conclusion, it appears that the most effective way for the HVS Clinical Psychology Service to support the HVS team, and in turn help the young people they support, is to limit direct work with work people to brief assessments and interventions, and instead focus on:

- providing relevant training to professionals regarding mental health in children looked after;
- liaising with external services;
- providing psychological input to specific cases through consultations with social workers and school staff and by attending professional meetings;
- running group interventions with young people to support emotion regulation and wellbeing;
- and improving links with other services to ensure that our young people are seen promptly by the right services.

*Sara Dawson
Clinical Psychologist
HVS Clinical Psychology Service
6th March 2020*

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications as this report is for information purposes.

Financial Implications

The Virtual School is funded from a combination of general fund and Children Looked After Pupil Premium Grant. In 2019-20 the funding was as follows:

- General Fund budget £128k
- CLA Pupil Premium £274k
- Total funding £402k

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

The weak performance of particular underachieving groups is a concern and the Local Authority through the Harrow School Standards and Effectiveness a 'Closing the Gap' strategy to ensure that all groups achieve in line with the high standards of achievement in Harrow. The strategy is focussed on supporting and challenging individual schools to improve the quality of their provision, so that all groups achieve well against their peers.

Council Priorities

This report provides information on the performance of underachieving groups, and as such is focused on making a difference for the vulnerable. Educational performance and standards are critical in making a difference to the life chances and aspirations of families and communities. A well-educated and skilled workforce secured through quality educational provision in Harrow, contributes significantly to local businesses and industry, within and beyond Harrow.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Amarita Kalsi on behalf of Jo Frost Chief Financial Officer

Date: 24th September 2020.

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

Contact:

Sara Dawson	Clinical Psychologist, Harrow Virtual School for CLA, PLAC and Care Leavers. sara.dawson@harrow.gov.uk 07892 782 916
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Background Papers: None

<p>Call-In Waived by the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p><i>(for completion by Democratic Services staff only)</i></p>	<p>YES/NO/ NOT APPLICABLE*</p> <p><i>* Delete as appropriate If No, set out why the decision is urgent with reference to 4b - Rule 47 of the Constitution.</i></p>
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**REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting
Panel**

Date of Meeting:	7 th October 2020
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – Activity and Performance
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Paul Hewitt, Corporate Director of People
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Wards affected:	None - This is an Information report
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 as well as provisional performance position at Q1 2020-21. National and comparator data is also included where appropriate for context.

RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted

Reason for Recommendation: To keep the Panel informed about activity & performance for looked after children in their role as Corporate Parents.

Section 2 – Report

See the attachment which shows provisional key performance indicators position and an update of activity for children looked after (CLA) at the end of June where available.

Key Points:

1. Rate of CLA has been increasing since year on year since March 2018.
2. Review timeliness of CLA remains strong and ahead of our 95% target with 98.4% of CLA having been reviewed within timescales.
3. Placement indicators remain strong, coming in ahead of target and the statistical neighbour and England averages. 1% of CLA have had more than two placement moves in the year, 9 CLA have had 2 placements whereby another move would impact negatively on the indicator. The percentage of CLA looked after for 2.5 years who have been in the same placement for 2 years has increased to 78.1%
4. Care leaver indicators around those in settled accommodation and those who are NEET, whilst showing improvement, are outside of our targets and comparator data. The restrictions of these indicators are that the care leavers status can only be taken in the period 3 months before and 1 month after their birthday in year. Removing these constraints and looking at snapshot data the in EET indicator shows considerable improvement.
5. Overall CLA numbers have continued to increase along with our CLA rate per 10,000. We are currently at 195 CLA compared to 163 from the same quarter in the previous year. Despite the increase in CLA we still remain below comparator data.
6. There are no significant shifts in the age composition of our CLA cohort. The proportion of CLA aged 16 and 17 remains high compared to statistical neighbour and England averages as was the case in the 2018/19 benchmarking figures.
7. Just under three quarters of our CLA come from BME ethnicity groups which is higher than the statistical neighbour and England averages.

Proportionally we have a much higher percentage of CLA which class themselves from 'Other Ethnic Groups'

8. Education – due to the pandemic and the closing of academic institutions, education monitoring will resume in line with the starting of the new academic year when new education data is released.
9. There were no new adoptions or SGO's in Q1 2020/21.
10. While the percentage of all CLA with an absent episode remains low and on target at 1.4% the percentage of CLA with a missing episode remains above the 3% target at 6.1%. We have a small but significant cohort of young people who have complex issues and have come into care. Missing children are a priority for Harrow and we have robust safeguards and scrutiny in place for all missing children, including: weekly review of missing children at Missing Children Panel. Extended Multiagency child exploitation panel arrangements are in place to review children at risk of criminal as well as sexual exploitation.

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.

Council Priorities

Supporting Those Most in Need

- Children and young people are given the opportunities to have the best start in life and families can thrive

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

[Note: If the report is for information only, it is the author's responsibility to decide whether legal and/or financial clearances are necessary. If not, the report can be submitted without these consents.]

Name: Sharon Daniels	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 25/09/2020		
Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date:		

* Delete the words "on behalf of the" if the report is cleared directly by the Chief Financial Officer / Monitoring Officer.

Name: Paul Hewitt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Corporate Director
Date: 25/09/2020		

MANDATORY	
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

Contact:

Dipika Patel, Partner- Business Intelligence Unit 020 8420 9258 dipika.patel@harrow.gov.uk	David Harrington Head of Business Intelligence 0208 420 9248 David.harrington@harrow.gov.uk
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Background Papers:

- Source: Local data taken from Mosaic System
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2017-to-2018>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2015-to-2016>

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Corporate Parenting Report

7th October 2020

Children Looked After

Activity to end of June 2020

Key Indicators to end of June 2020 (provisional outturns)

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Part A –Performance Indicators for Children Looked After

Ref No	Indicator Description	Statistical Neighbour Average 2018/19	England average 2018/19	Harrow 2017-18	Harrow 2018-19	Harrow 2019-20	Harrow target 2020/21	Harrow actual Q1 2020-21
1	Rate of CLA per 10,000 children aged under 18	39.8	65.0	27.0	29.0	31.7		33.4
2	Timeliness of Reviews of Looked After Children	Not Published	Not Published	97.9	100.0	98.9	95%	98.4
3	% of CLA with 3 or more placements	11.1	10.0	13.0	10.7	13.5	Q1 - 2.5% Q2 - 5% Q3 - 7.5% Q4 - 10%	1.0
4	% of CLA looked after for 2.5+ years and in the same placement for 2 years	66.6	69.0	81.0	53.8	69.7	70%	78.1
5	% of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (19 - 21 year olds)	82.9	85.0	87.0	94.6	92.9	85%	72.5
6	% of Care Leavers not in education, employment or training (19 - 21 year olds)	32.1	39.0	24.0	31.5	29.1	35%	57.5
7	% of CLA who are looked after 1 yr + with up to date Dental Checks (rolling year)	84.6	85.0	91.2	89.9	94.0	90%	74.5
8	% of CLA who are looked after 1 yr + with up to date Health Checks (rolling year)	91.5	90.0	97.1	96.2	94.0	95%	91.5
9	% of children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted	5.6	12.0	7.0	5.3	3.1	Q1 - 2% Q2 - 4% Q3 - 6% Q4 - 8%	0.0
10	% of CLA placed more than 20 miles away from home (snapshot)	20.4	15.0	19.5	20.0	20.0	20%	23.7
11	% of all CLA (current and ceased) with at least 1 missing episode in year	13.5	11.0	11.0	11.8	12.8	Q1 - 3% Q2 - 6% Q3 - 9% Q4 - 12%	6.1
12	Percentage of all CLA (current and ceased) with at least one instance of being away from placement without authorisation	7.6	3.0	11.0	14.0	7.5	Q1 - 2.5% Q2 - 5% Q3 - 7.5% Q4 - 10%	1.4

Part A – Education Performance Indicators for children looked after

Educational Attainment at Key Stages	Harrow 2016-17	Harrow 2017-18	Harrow 2018-19	England average 2018-19	SN Average 2018-19	Harrow 2019-20
	Percentage of children looked After reaching the expected standard least level 4 at KS2 in Reading, Writing and Maths (Source DfE)	100*	45.5	33	37.0	Not published, London Avg 42%
Percentage of children Looked After (1+ years) achieving 9-4 pass in English and mathematics.	0	8.0	20	18.0	25.0	
Average Attainment 8 (1) Score for children Looked After (1+ years) at KS4	12.6	16.1	0	19.2	18.1	
Average Progress 8 (2) Score for children Looked After (1+ years) at KS4	-1.9	-1.9	x	-1.2	-1.3	
Absence Indicator						
Percentage of sessions missed. (CLA 1 year+)	6.9	5.9	5.6	4.7	4.7	full year data not available as schools closed due to pandemic
Percentage classed as persistent absentees (CLA 1 year+)	17.0	21.7	x	10.9	12.1	
Special educational needs						
Percentage of CLA with SEN but without a statement/EHCP	23.9	31.8	40	29	25.2	Routine monitoring under development
Percentage of CLA with SEN with a statement/EHCP	28.2	25.8	26.7	27.2	33.1	
Exclusions from school				England average 2018	SN Average 2018	
	2016	2017	2018			
Percentage of CLA with at least one fixed term exclusion	x	12.2	18.4	11.3	11.7	

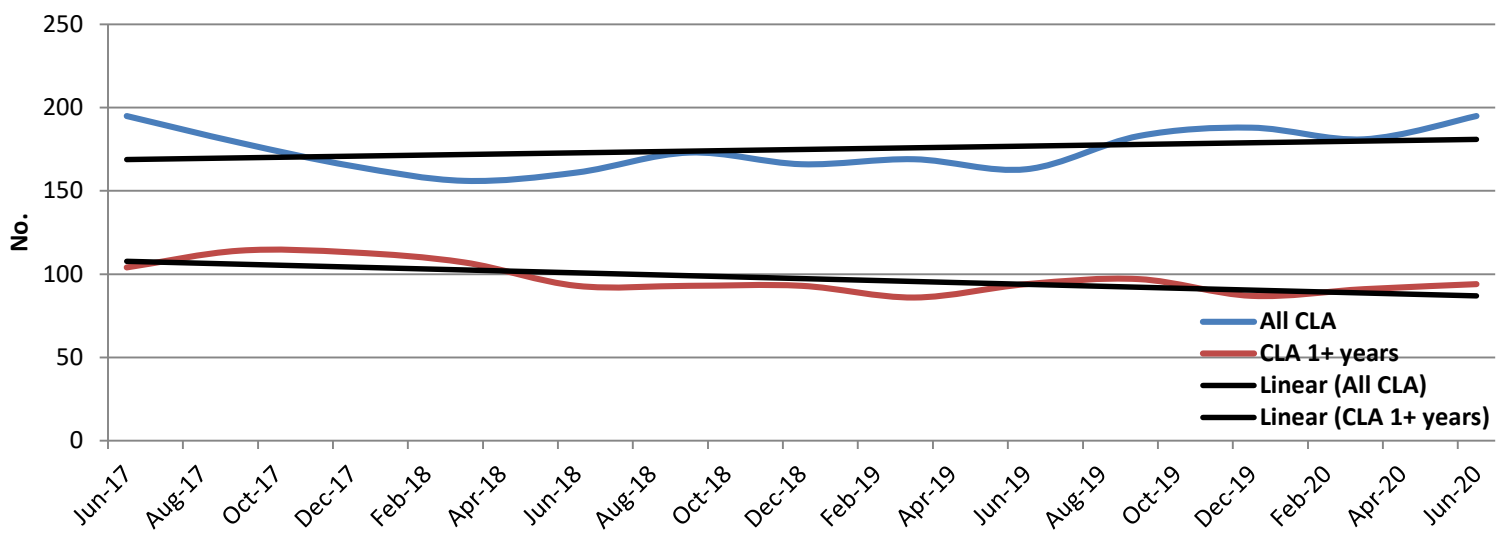
X - Figures suppressed in order to protect confidentiality due to small number

* - Only one child in the cohort.

82

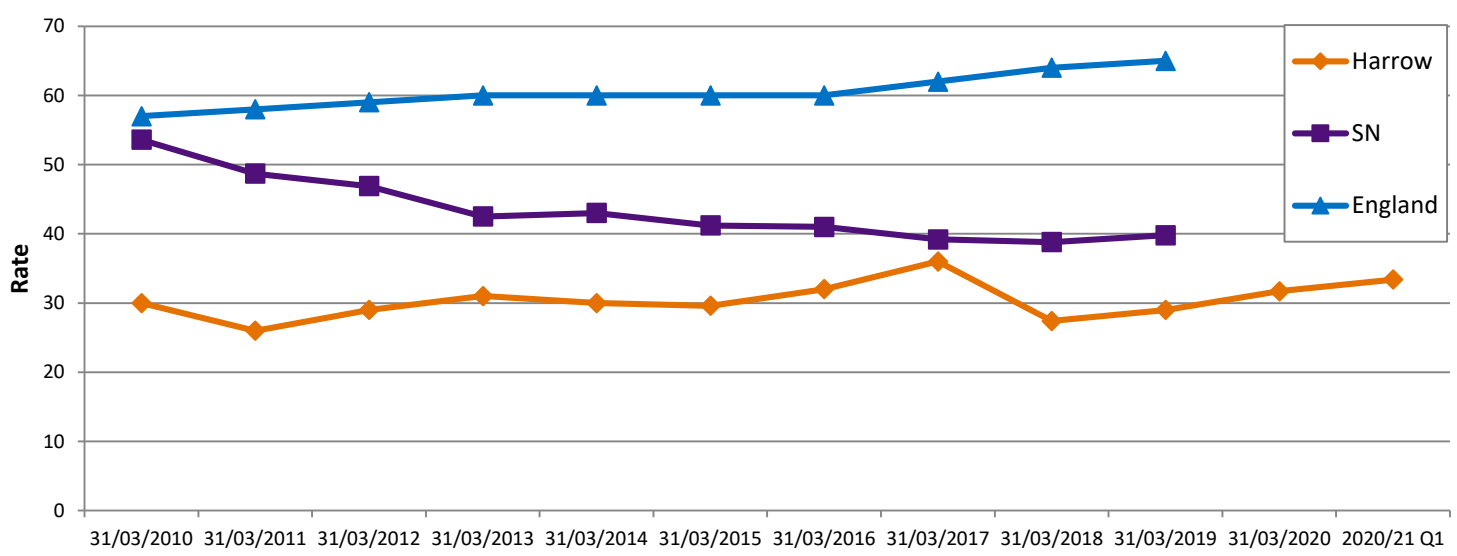
- (1) Attainment 8 - Attainment 8 measures the average achievement of pupils in up to 8 qualifications including English (double weighted if the combined English qualification, or both language and literature are taken), maths (double weighted), three further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and three further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list.
- (2) Progress 8 - Progress 8 aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of key stage 2 to the end of key stage 4. It compares pupils' achievement – their Attainment 8 score – with the average Attainment 8 score of all pupils nationally who had a similar starting point (or 'prior attainment'), calculated using assessment results from the end of primary school. Progress 8 is a relative measure, therefore the national average Progress 8 score for mainstream schools is zero. When including pupils at special schools the national average is not zero as Progress 8 scores for special schools are calculated using Attainment 8 estimates based on pupils in mainstream schools.

Number of CLA - the long-term trend



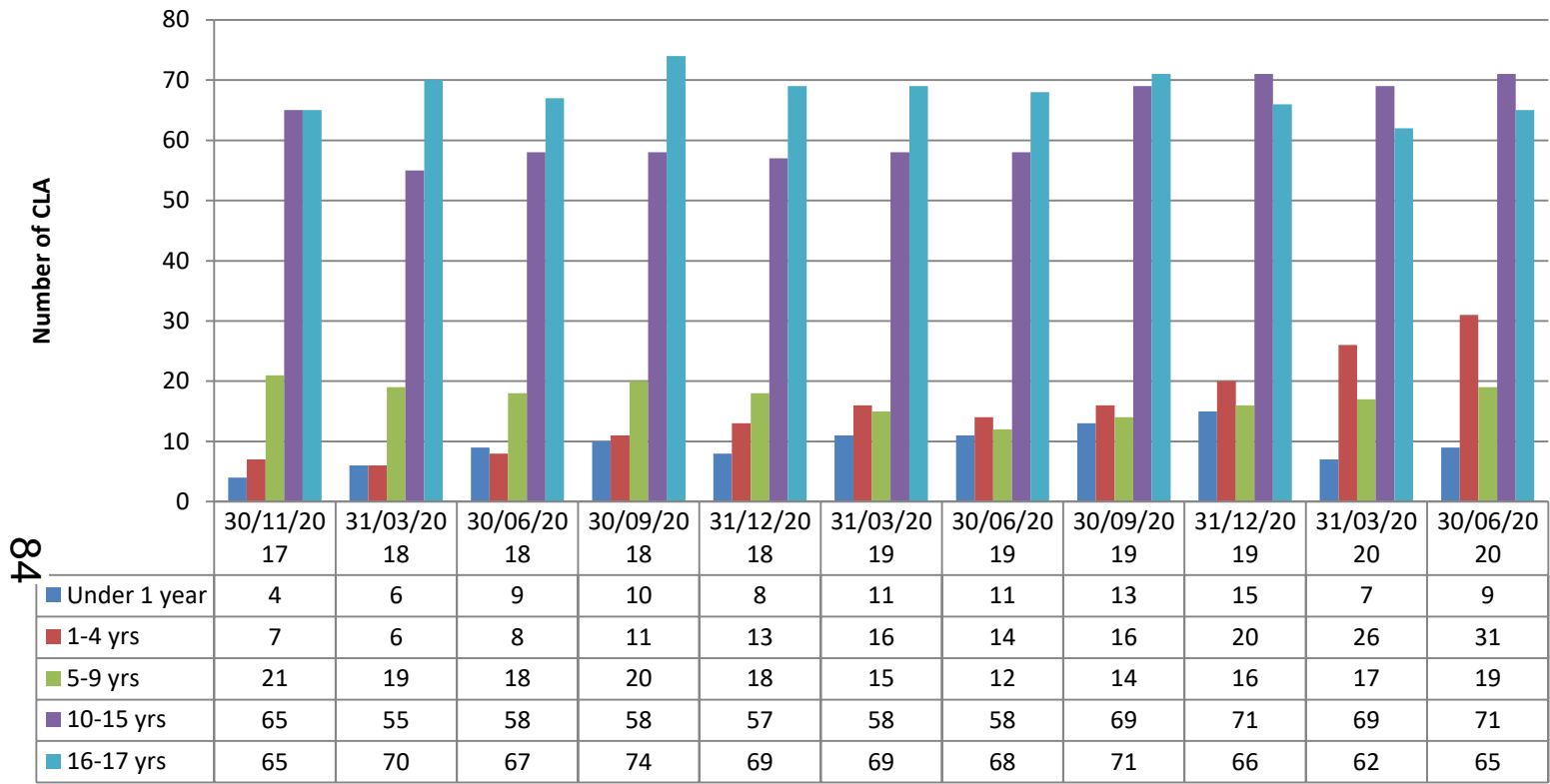
The number of all CLA has been increasing from the lower figures seen at the same time last year with CLA 1yr + also showing an increase. The 3 year trend shows an overall decrease in CLA numbers

Rate of CLA per 10,000 children aged under 18



The rate of CLA per 10,000 has increased in line with the cohort but we continue to remain below the 2019 statistical neighbour average and England rates per 10,000.

CLA by Age Group

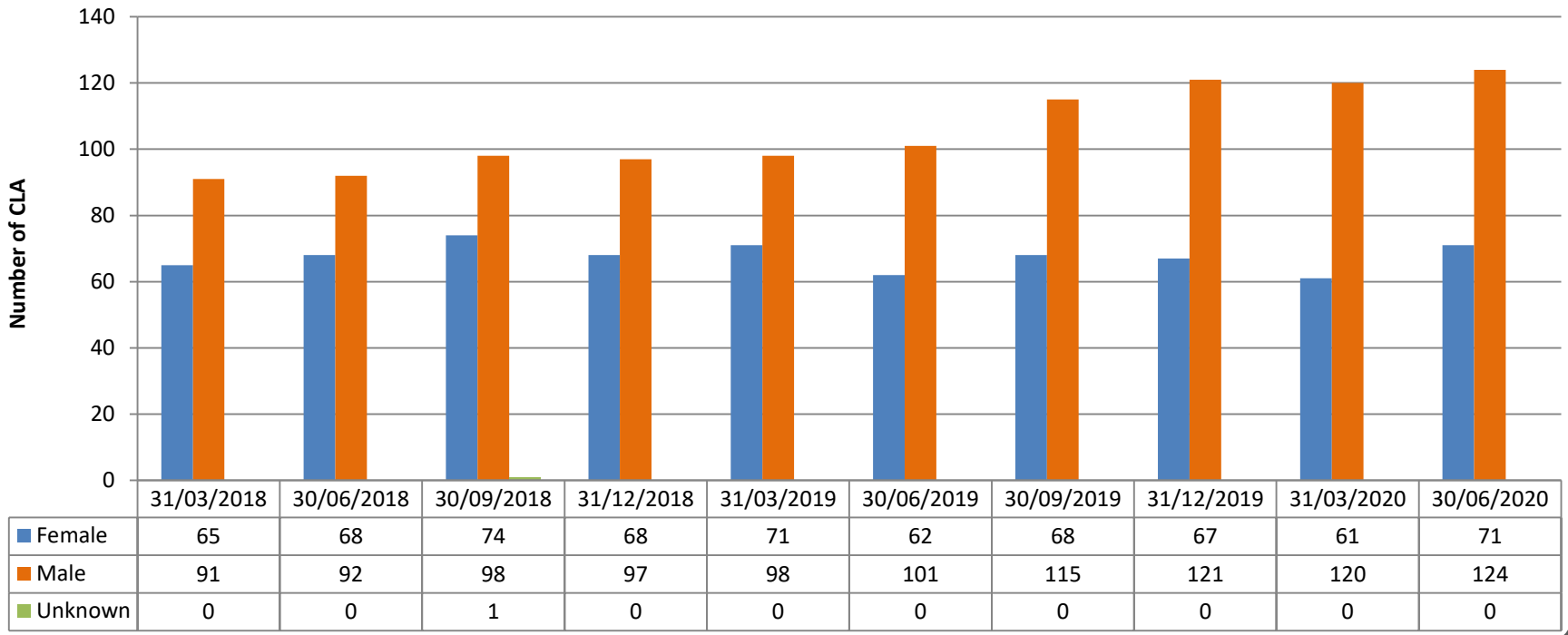


The main shift from the previous quarter has been an increase in the number of CLA between 1 and 4. Looking at annual figures the proportion of 16-17 year old CLA is high compared to the England and Statistical Neighbour averages. This is an additional pressure for leaving care services with two thirds of care leavers aged 16 to 18 ceasing to be looked after at age 18.

Comparator Info. for % of age of CLA at 31/03/2018 (Source: SSDA903)	Age at 31 March 2019 (years) (%)				
	Under 1	1 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 15	16 -17
<i>Harrow</i>	6.5%	8.9%	8.9%	34.9%	40.8%
<i>England</i>	5.2%	13.4%	18.5%	39.4%	23.5%
<i>Stat. neighbours avg.</i>	4.3%	8.1%	12.5%	37.2%	37.6%

85

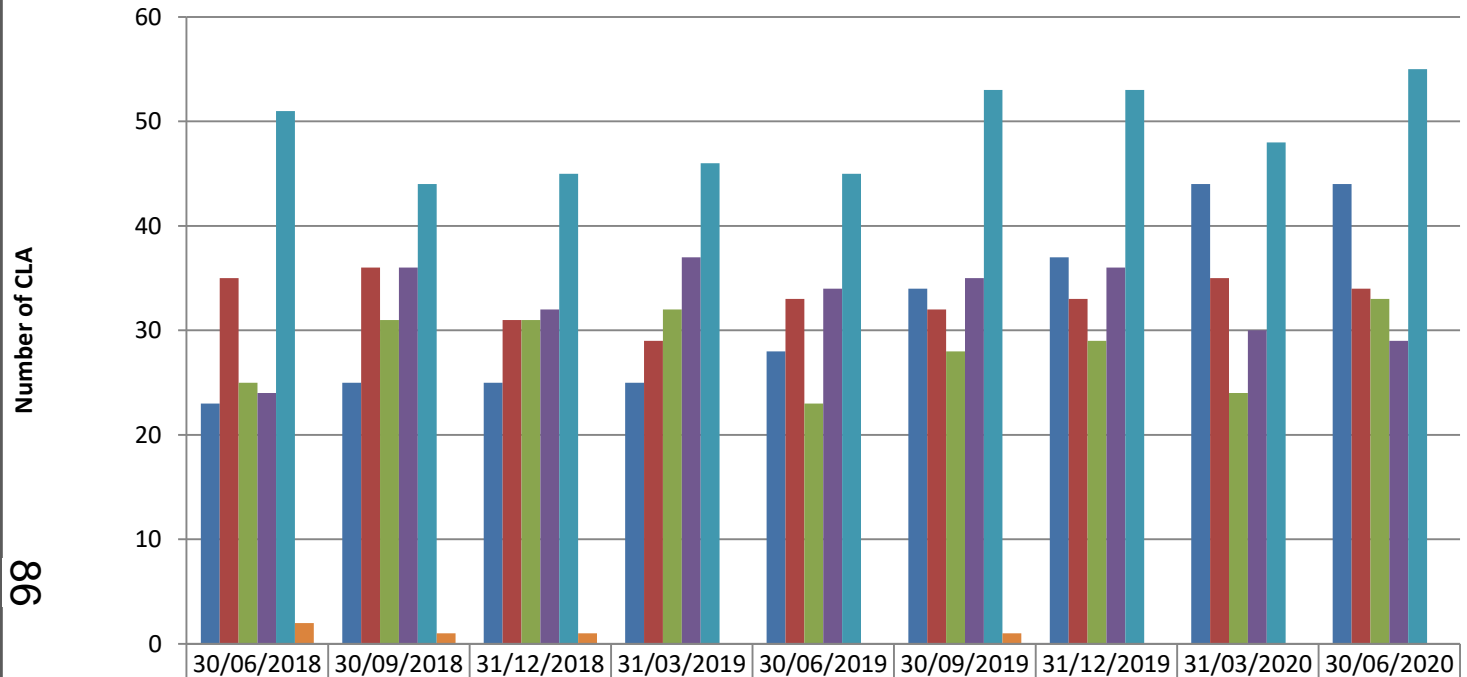
CLA by Gender



The looked after cohort is currently 63.6% Male and 36.4% Female, this is a higher proportion of males in relation to comparator figures

Comparator Info. for % of gender of CLA at 31/03/2019 (Source: SSSA903)	Gender (%)	
	Male	Female
Harrow	58.0%	42.0%
<i>England</i>	56.3%	43.7%
<i>Stat. neighbours avg.</i>	58.7%	41.3%

CLA by Ethnicity



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Just under three quarters of Harrow’s children looked after population are from BME groups which is significantly higher than the statistical neighbour average

This quarter the ethnicity which has shown the biggest movement is that of Mixed background with an increase of 9 CLA

Published data shows Harrow to have a higher proportion of CLA from Other Ethnic Groups.

Comparator Info. for % of ethnicity of CLA at 31/03/2019 (Source: SSSA903)	White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Other Ethnic Groups/ Other	Ethnicity Not Known
Harrow	30.2%	15.4%	13.6%	17.8%	22.5%	0.6%
<i>England</i>	73.9%	9.7%	4.5%	7.6%	3.6%	0.8%
<i>Stat. neighbours avg.</i>	40.6%	18.1%	10.4%	20.0%	7.2%	0.0%

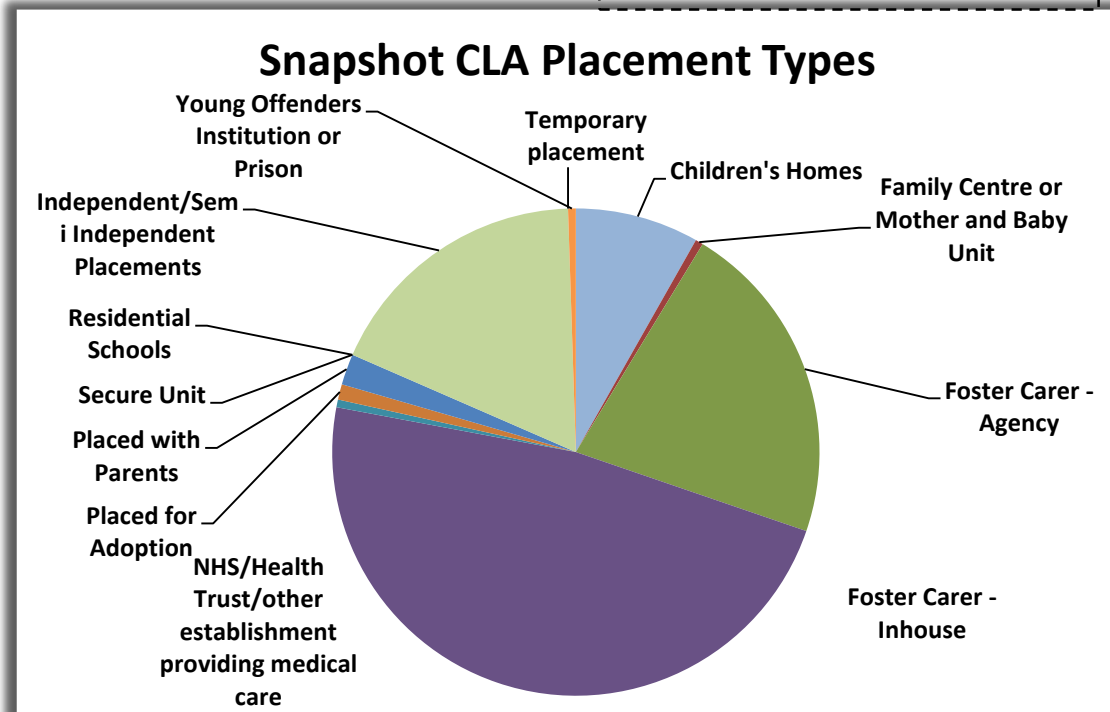
B5 – Children looked after placement type

Placement Type	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20
Children's Homes	11	8	11	8	9	11	13	14	13	16
Family Centre or Mother and Baby Unit	1	2	3	3	3	0	1	3	2	1
Foster Carer - Agency	23	21	23	27	34	35	39	41	40	42
Foster Carer - Inhouse	66	74	80	73	75	75	80	84	89	93
NHS/Health Trust/other establishment providing medical care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Placed for Adoption	4	3	3	2	2	1	2	3	2	2
Placed with Parents	4	5	7	6	4	2	1	4	3	4
Residential Schools	4	4	4	5	6	3	0	0	0	0
Secure Unit	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Independent/Semi Independent Placements	39	39	42	41	36	33	45	38	30	35
Temporary placement	2	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Young Offenders Institution or Prison	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1
Other	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	156	173	173	165	169	163	183	188	181	195

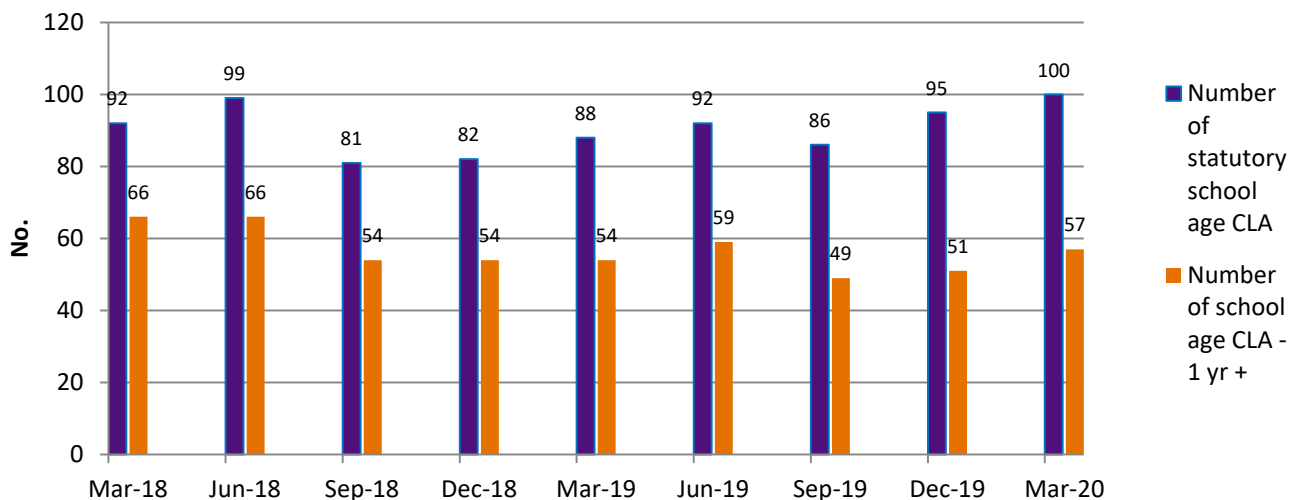
There are no significant changes to the proportion of placement types. Fostering remains the most common placement accounting for 69% of CLA followed by independent and semi independent placements accounting for 17.9%. Annual figures show us above the England and Statistical Neighbour average for the percentage of CLA in the secure units, children's homes and hostels category.

Comparator Info. for % of Main Placement Types of CLA at 31/03/2019 (Source: SSDA903)	Harrow	SN avg.	England
foster placements	63.9%	66.7%	71.9%
placed for adoption	1.8%	1.7%	2.8%
placed with parents	3.0%	1.3%	6.7%
other placements within the community	4.1%	6.8%	4.4%
secure units, children's homes and hostels	27.2%	19.0%	12.2%
other residential accommodation	0.0%	0.2%	1.5%
residential schools	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
other placements	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%

Published data shows Harrow has slightly less children in foster placements compared to SN average and more in community settings, this is mainly due to higher numbers of children aged 16+



School age CLA



Harrow monitors all school children and those looked after 1 year plus. At the end of March, 100 CLA are of statutory school age of whom 57 have been looked after more than a year. There has been no permanent exclusions this academic year with 2.3% of CLA having at least one fixed term exclusion. Overall session absence and persistent absence remains high and is significantly above the statistical neighbour average. PEP performance has continued to improve considerably with 100% of CLA having a PEP in the last academic term. **Due to the Covid pandemic and the closing of schools, education monitoring will resume when the next academic year starts in September 2020.**



PI Description	Jul-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20
% of school age CLA (all CLA) permanently excluded this year (Sept to date)	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
% of school age CLA (1 yr + at 31st March) permanently excluded this year (Sept to date)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
% of school age CLA (all CLA) with at least one fixed-term exclusion this year (Sept to date)	15.8	4.9	12.5	14.1	2.3	7.4	11.0
% of school age CLA (1 yr + at 31st March) with at least one fixed-term exclusion this year (Sept to date)	22.1	4.9	14.8	16.9	0.0	9.8	14.0
% absence from school (all CLA - % of sessions missed)	12.6	11.6	12.7	12.5	14.3	16.9	15.0
% absence from school (1 yr+, % of sessions missed)	12.3	10.6	10.7	9.4	8.7	10.8	12.2
% of CLA (all CLA) classified as persistent absentees	29.7	20.7	30.7	34.8	27.9	30.5	31.0
% of CLA (1 year+) classified as persistent absentees	29.4	22.2	20.4	20.3	18.4	19.6	21.1
% of CLA (all school age CLA) with up to date PEP	82.2	93.9	97.7	100.0	100.0	92.6	100.0

CLA educational attainment - No update, Final results are not yet available

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

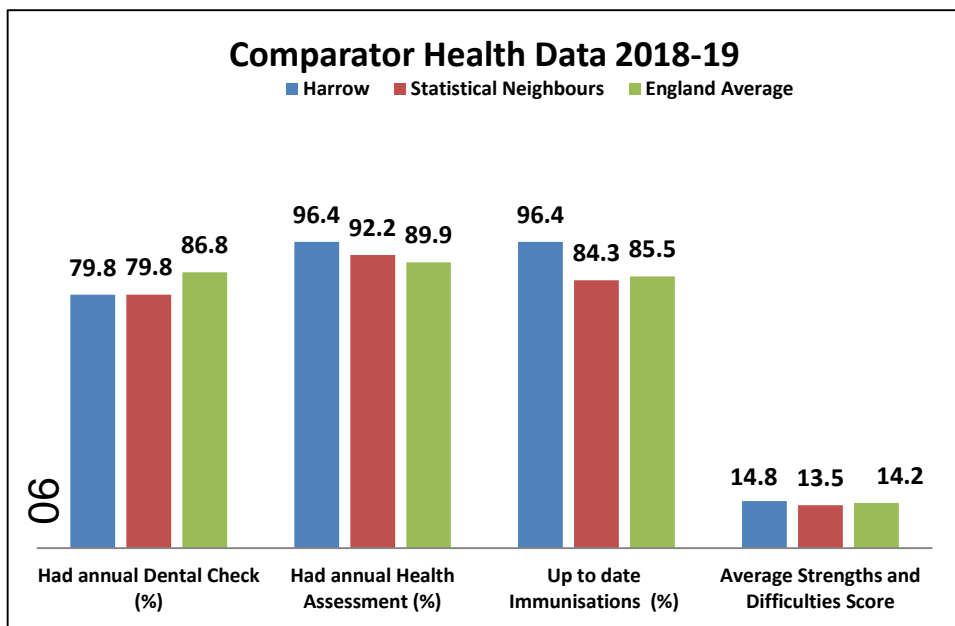
KS2 CLA Looked After for over a year	2019 SN Average	2019 England	2017	2018	2019
Number of CLA			1	11	3
KS2 % of CLA 1yr + reaching expected standard in reading, writing and maths	Not published, London Avg 42%	37%	0.0%	45.5%	33.3%
KS2 Average progress score in reading	1.33	-0.2	x	-1.3	1.12
KS2 Average progress score in writing	-0.61	-0.8	-2.4	x	-1.52
KS2 Average progress score in maths	-0.52	-1.0	-1.6	x	x

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KS4 CLA Looked After for over a year	2019 SN Average	2019 England	2017	2018	2019
Number of CLA			14	12	15
KS4 % of CLA 1 year + achieving 9-4 in English and Mathematics	25%	18%	x	8.0%	20%
KS4 % of CLA 1 year + achieving 9-5 in English and Mathematics	Local Indicator		14.3%	0.0%	6.7%
KS4 Average attainment 8 score	18.9	19.2	12.6	16.1	0.0
KS4 Average progress 8 score	-1.32	-1.23	-1.87	-1.9	x

B8 - CLA Health

Annual health checks have decreased but remain above the statistical neighbour average. Dental checks have decreased and are below the statistical neighbour average. Immunisations have decreased to 70.2% with CLA with up to date SDQ's has remaining stable, our average SDQ score was higher in 2018/19 than the statistical neighbour and England averages.



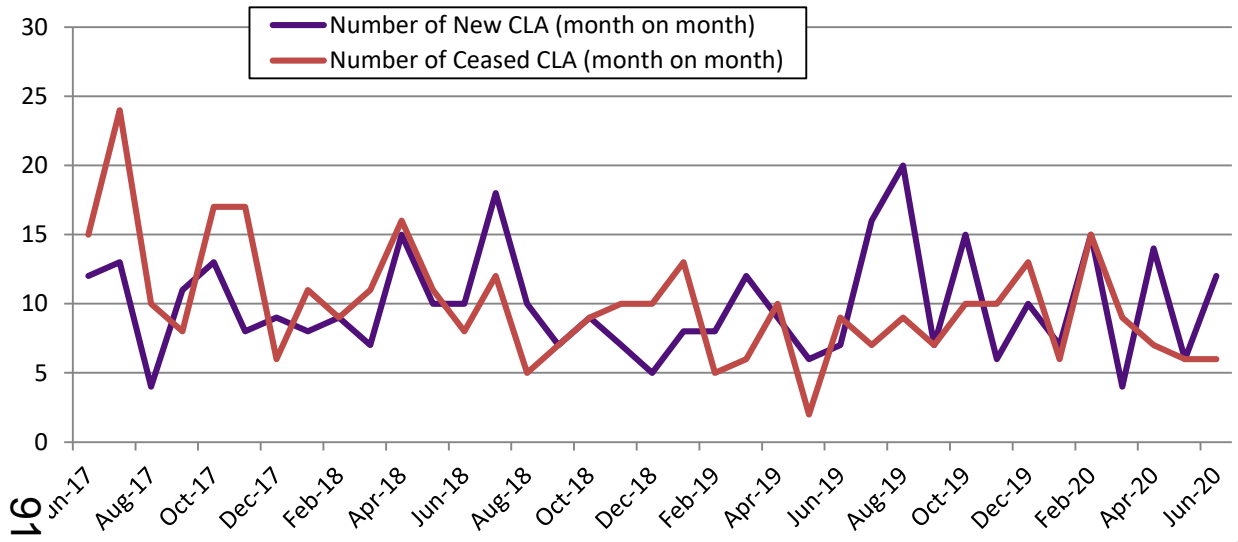
Comparative Data (%) year ending 2019	Had annual Dental Check (%)	Had annual Health Assessment (%)	Up to date Immunisations (%)	Average Strengths and Difficulties Score
Harrow	79.8	96.4	96.4	14.8
Statistical Neighbours	79.8	92.2	84.3	13.5
England Average	86.8	89.9	85.5	14.2

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.

Indicator Description	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20
% of all CLA aged 4-16 who have an up to date strengths and difficulties (SDQ) score	63.4	63.4	72.4	66.0	64.0	67.3	66.4	72.9	72.2
% of CLA (1 yr +) with immunisations up to date	69.3	57.5	61.7	77.2	63.8	67.0	68.0	81.9	70.2
% of CLA with up to date Dental Checks (CLA 1 yr +)	82.8	82.8	88.2	89.9	83.0	80.4	86.2	94.0	74.5
% of CLA with up to date Health Checks (CLA 1 yr +)	73.1	84.9	90.3	96.2	88.3	92.8	97.7	94.0	91.5
% of new CLA where health assessment has been completed within 28 calendar days YTD	38.1	22.8	36.9	41.9	33.3	51.9	62.2	59.8	64.7

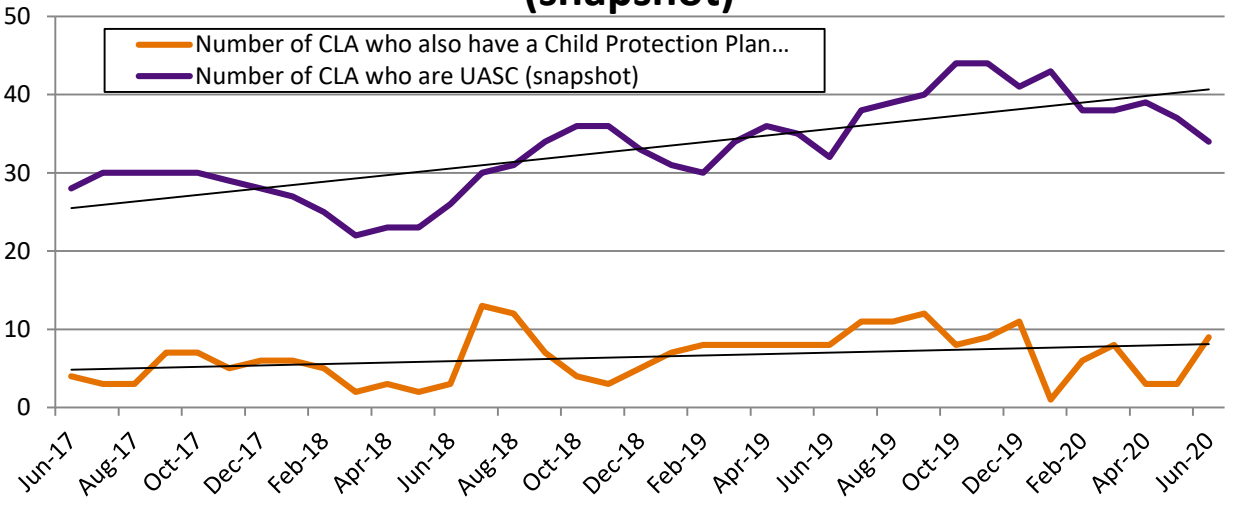
B9 – Number of new CLA, number of ceased CLA and number of children looked after who also have a child protection plan or are unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Number of CLA starting and ceasing



The number of new and ceased CLA continues to vary, month on month.

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



The number of CLA who are UASC has seen a steady decrease since the last report. The 3 year trend shows overall UASC figures increasing across the period. Looked after Children who have a Child Protection Plan has increased in the last quarter and continues to be monitored closely.

B10 – Reasons for entering and leaving care

When a 'Social Work Assessment' is carried out, the primary need is recorded in line with DfE categories. For children who are looked after at the end of Q1, most common primary need type is Abuse or Neglect (50.8%) followed by Absent Parenting (19%).

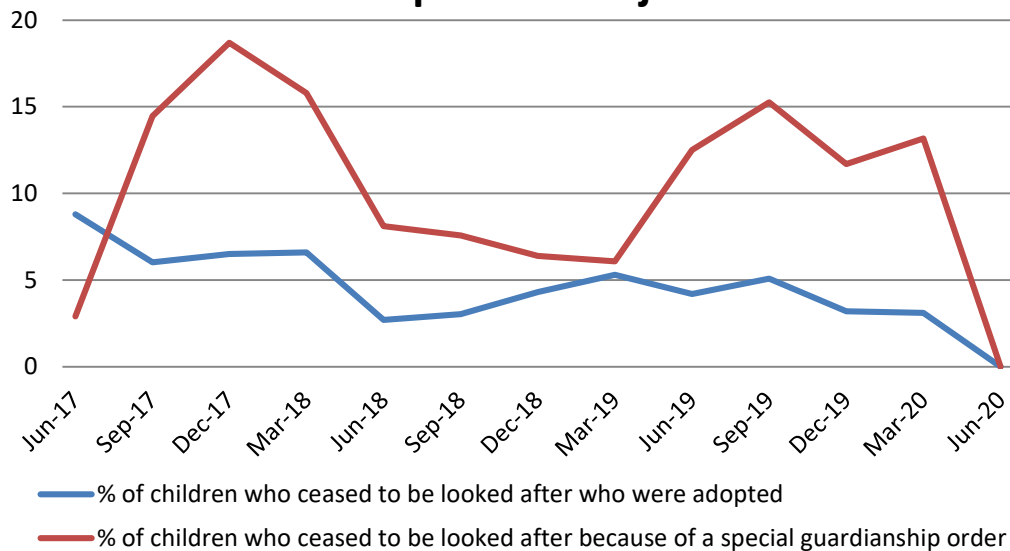
Primary Need	Count	%
Abuse or Neglect	101	51.8%
Absent parenting	37	19.0%
Parental illness or disability	13	6.7%
Family dysfunction	16	8.2%
Child Disability	10	5.1%
Family in acute stress	14	7.2%
Socially unacceptable behaviour	3	1.5%
Low income	0	0.0%
Cases other than Children in Need	1	0.5%
Not Stated	0	0.0%
Total	195	

Reason LAC Ceased YTD Description	Count	%
Child	0	0.0%
Care taken over by another LA	0	0.0%
Returned home to live with parents	4	22.2%
Moved into independent living	3	16.7%
Transferred to residential by ASC	0	0.0%
Period of LAC ceased for any other reason	11	61.1%
Sentenced to custody	0	0.0%
Left care to live with parents, relatives, or other	0	0.0%
Adopted	0	0.0%
Accommodation on remand ended	0	0.0%
Age assessment child is 18 or over	0	0.0%
Child moved abroad	0	0.0%
Residence order	0	0.0%
SGO	0	0.0%
Total	59	

Year to date of the 59 children who ceased to be looked after, 11 ceased for Other reasons accounting for 61.1% of the total with 4 LAC returning home to parents accounting for 22.2%

B11– Adoptions and Special Guardianship Orders of CLA

% of CLA adopted or subject to SGOs



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	LA	2013-16	2014-17	2015-18
Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (days)	Harrow	439.00	472.00	386.00
	Statistical Neighbours	603.30	593.00	468.00
	England Average	558.00	520.00	412.00

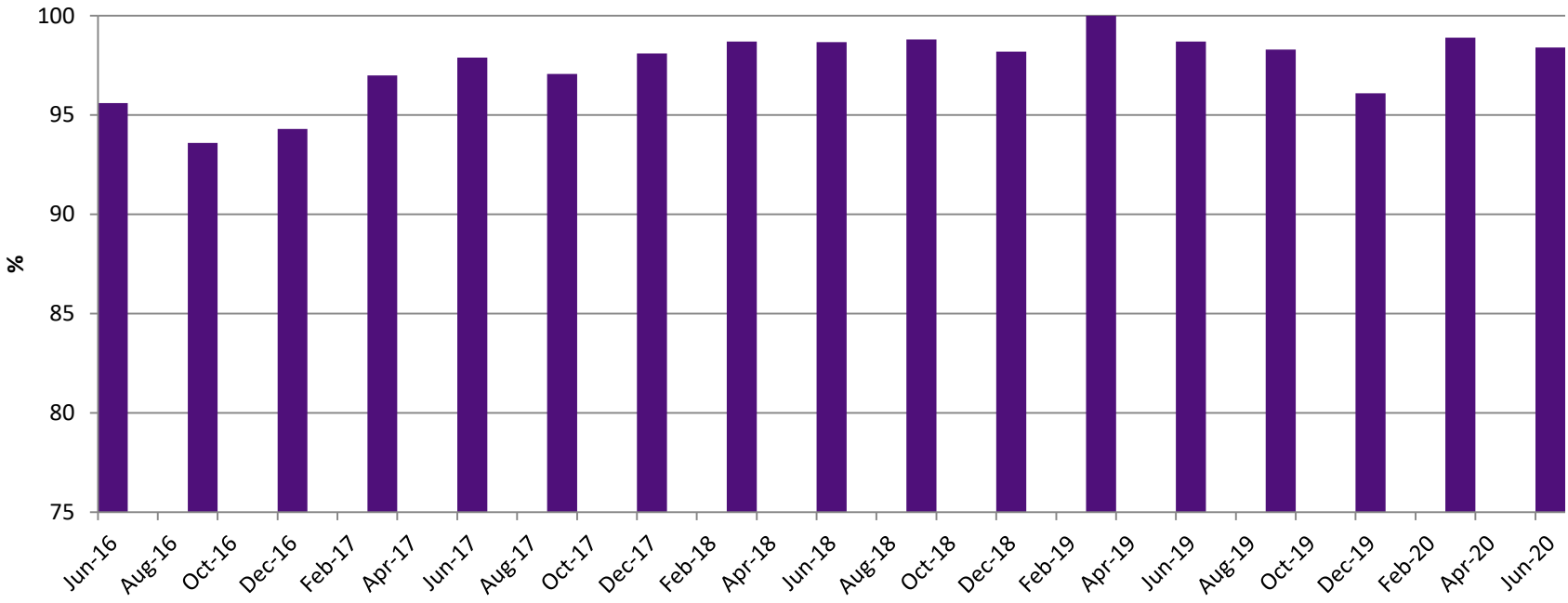
	LA	2013-16	2014-17	2015-18
Average time between a LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match	Harrow	154.00	173.00	153.00
	Statistical Neighbours	217.80	228.30	224.30
	England Average	226.00	220.00	201.00

There were no LAC who ceased due to adoptions or SGO's in Q1 2020/21, as such there are no scores populated for the adoption indicators for this quarter.

	Jun-17	Sep-17	Dec-17	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20
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).	543.0	506.6	380.3	333.0	286.0	437.5	332.2	278.2	340.0	214.7	214.7	226.3	-
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).	86.0	102.0	93.9	116.0	147.0	86.0	100.6	100.6	105.6	86.5	86.5	51.5	-
Percentage of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. Measured Quarterly.	0.0	20.0	50.0	83.3	100.0	50.0	83.0	86.0	100.0	80.0	100.0	100.0	-

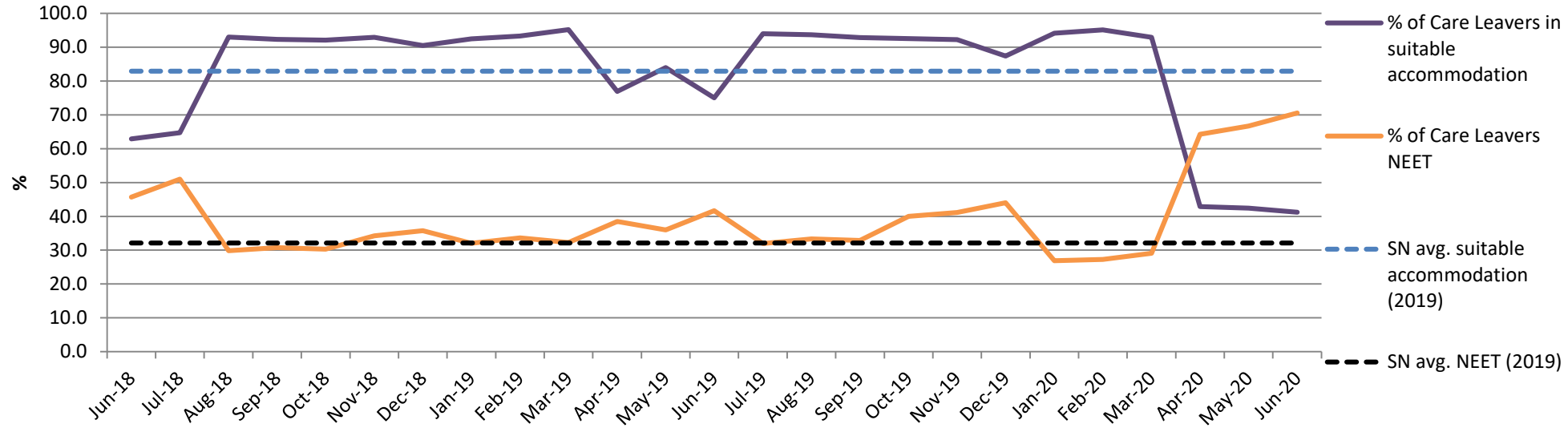
94

Timeliness of CLA reviews (%)



The timeliness of CLA reviews remains high at 98.4% and is above our target of 95% of LAC to have their reviews held in time.

Care leavers suitable accommodation and NEET



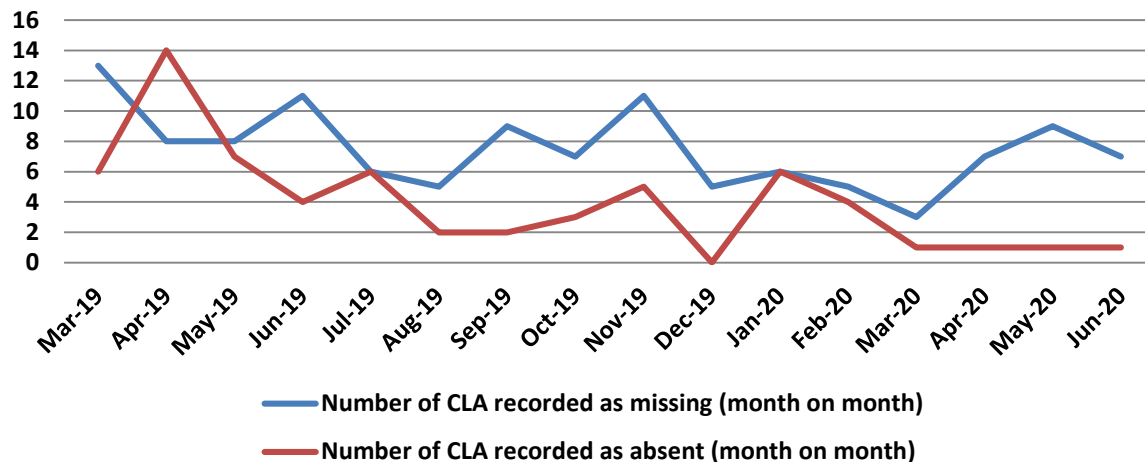
96

Care Leaver Snapshot NEET Status	Jun-20	%
NEET - due to Illness or Disability	2	1.0%
NEET - due to Pregnancy or Parenting	5	2.6%
NEET - Other Circumstances	36	18.6%
Unemployed	0	0.0%
Not Recorded	4	2.1%
Enrolled on Course - Not Yet Started	1	0.5%
F/T Higher Education (i.e. beyond A Level)	15	7.7%
F/T Training or Employment	19	9.8%
Full Time Education	2	1.0%
Other F/T Education	93	47.9%
Other P/T Education	6	3.1%
P/T Higher Education (i.e. beyond A Level)	0	0.0%
P/T Training or Employment	11	5.7%
Count:	194	

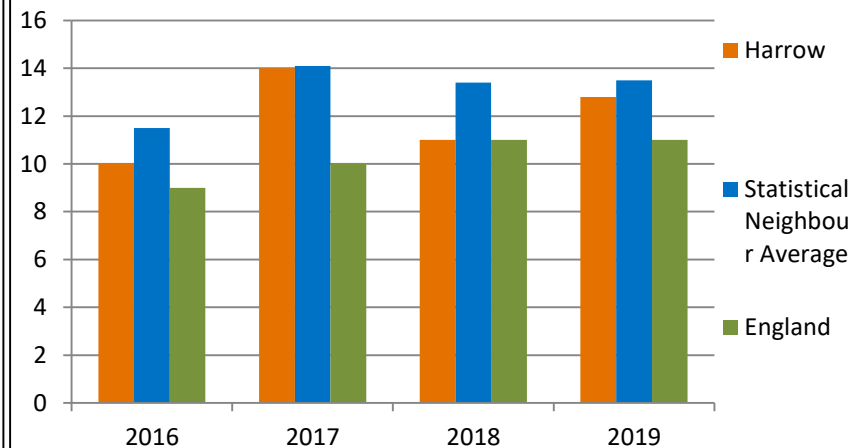
Currently care leavers in suitable accommodation and care leavers who are NEET have shifted outside of the statistical neighbour averages. Data recording processes are currently being reviewed, due to the nature of the indicator you can only look at activity in the period 3 months before and 1 month after the care leavers birthday in year. As such anything recorded outside of this period cannot be considered. Looking at current data excluding the constraints around birthday, 22.2% are NEET and 2.1% are not recorded.

B14 – Children who go missing or are absent

Number of CLA with a Missing and Absent without Authorisation instance .



% CLA who had a missing incident in the year

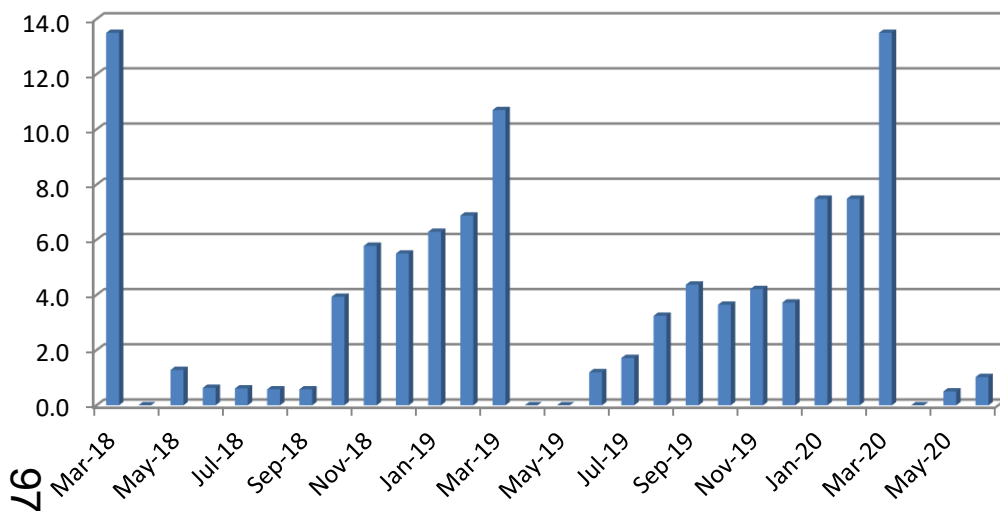


	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20
Number of CLA recorded as missing (month on month)	13	8	8	11	6	5	9	7	11	5	6	5	3	7	9	7
Number of CLA recorded as absent (month on month)	6	14	7	4	6	2	2	3	5	0	6	4	1	1	1	1

	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20
% of CLA who had at least one missing incident (year to date)	4.6	8.0	11.7	11.8	10.2	11.9	12.0	12.8	6.1
% of CLA away from placement without authorisation at least on one occasion (year to date)	4.6	7.6	8.6	14.0	8.6	8.5	9.1	7.5	1.4

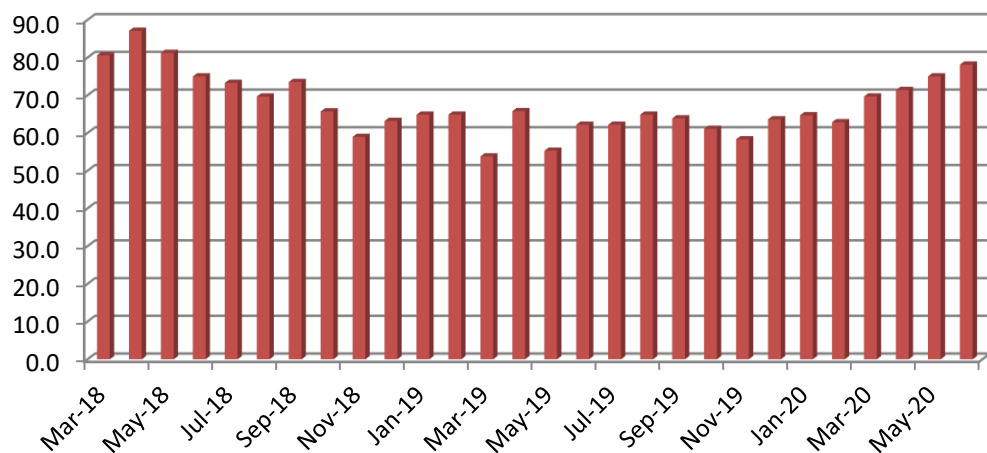
The percentage of CLA who've had a missing episode or absent episode during the year has decreased due to the new performance year starting. Missing and absent children continue to remain a focus for Children's services with weekly and monthly multiagency meetings focussing on repeat offenders. A Runaways Worker is also in post and undertakes return interviews with children who go missing.

% CLA with more than 2 placement moves in year



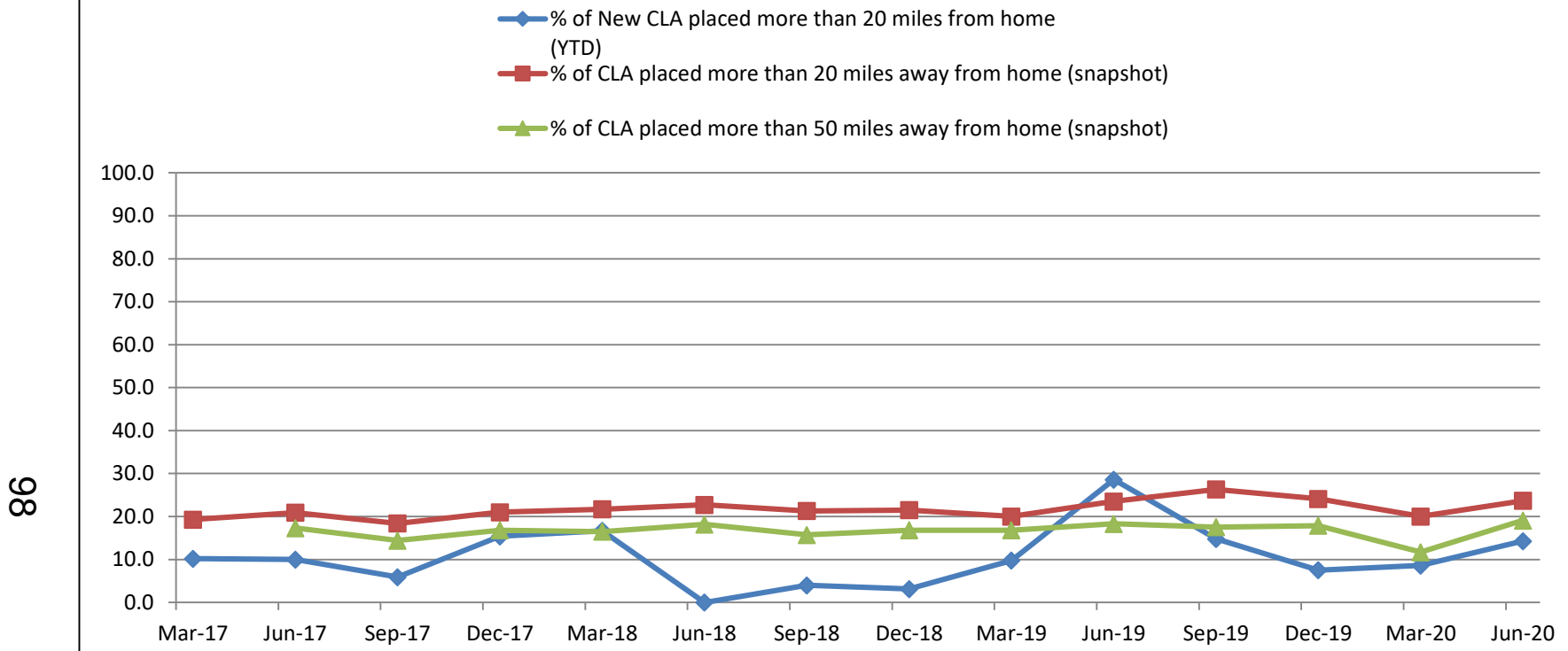
The placement stability of our CLA with respect to moves has increased to 1% with 2 of our CLA having had 3 or more placements during the year, we are on target and below the England and statistical neighbour averages. There are 9 CLA who have had 2 placement moves whereby another move in the year would have a negative impact on the indicator. The percentage of CLA looked after for 2.5 years who have been in the same placement for 2 years has increased to 78.1% with 25/32 CLA in placement for over 2 years, we are above the statistical neighbour average

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



B16– CLA placed over 20 miles from home

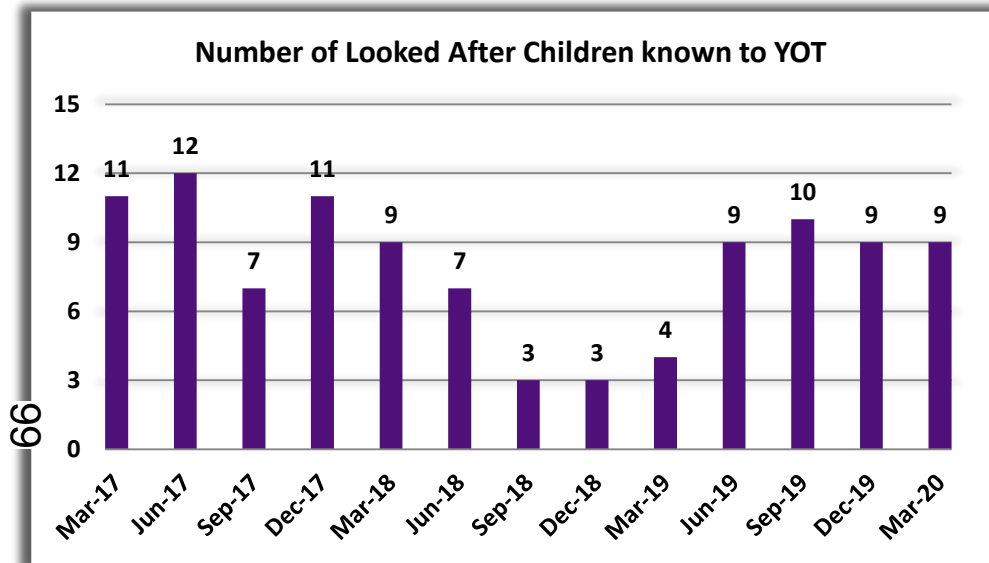
% CLA placed more than 20 miles from home



The percentage of all new CLA placed more than 20 miles from home has increased from the previous report to 14.3%. The percentage of all CLA at the end of each month who are placed more than 20 miles from home has increased slightly from the last quarter along with those placed more than 50 miles from home. In order to give a balanced view, these indicators exclude looked after children who are placed with parents, placed for adoption or are unaccompanied asylum seekers.

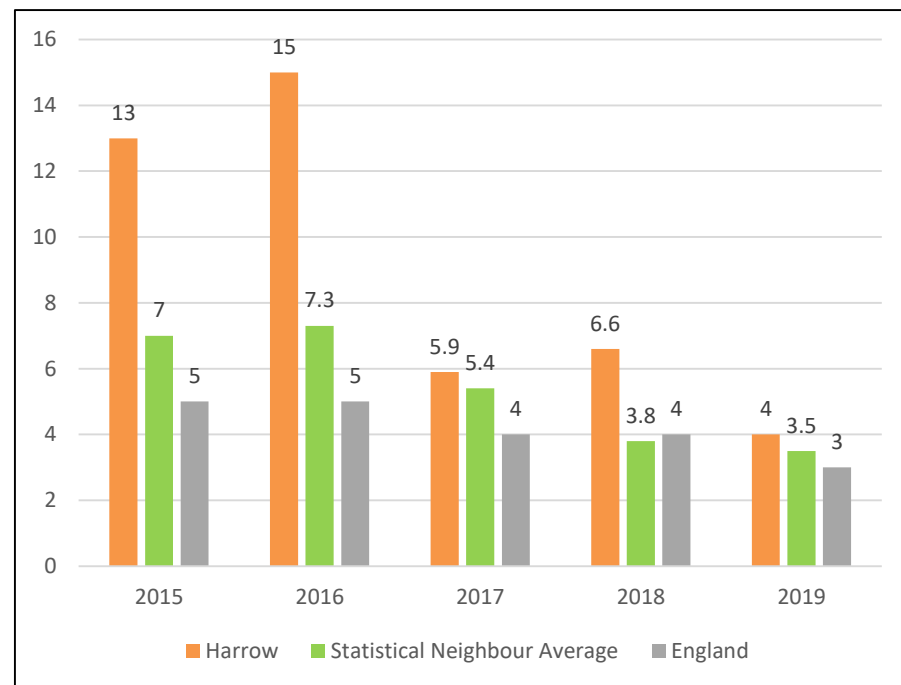
B17 – CLA Offending

Mar-17	Jun-17	Sep-17	Dec-17	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20
11	12	7	11	9	7	3	3	4	9	10	9	9



The number of Looked After Children known to YOT was 9 at end of March 2020. Harrow's CLA offending rate dropped in 2019 but remained slightly higher than comparators. 4 CLA looked after 1 year+ were subject to a conviction or a youth caution during 2019-20 which is similar to the previous year. Our higher rate may be due to the small numbers of looked after children, and a corresponding tendency towards higher levels of risk and vulnerability amongst this group.

% CLA 1yr+ subject to youth caution or convicted during the year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Harrow	13	15	5.9	6.6	4
Statistical Neighbour Average	7	7.3	5.4	3.8	3.5
England	5	5	4	4	3



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**REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting
Panel**

Date of Meeting:	7 th October 2020
Subject:	Harrow Children Looked After Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2019-2024
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Paul Hewitt, Corporate Director of People
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Wards affected:	None - This is an Information report
Enclosures:	1. Harrow Children Looked After Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2019-2024

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Summary

The 2019-2024 Sufficiency Strategy outlines our plan to meet the future needs of children on the edge of care, children who are looked after and young people who have recently left care. For children looked after, the sufficiency strategy covers internal services such as foster care, and external services such as residential placements, independent fostering placements, adoption and other support services.

RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted

Reason for Recommendation: To keep the Panel updated on the sufficiency of placements for children looked after and care leavers.

Section 2 – Report

Key Points

Harrow is committed to commissioning the right accommodation and support services to ensure the best possible outcomes for every child and young person. Our sufficiency strategy is based on the foundation of three core principles:

1. Children first
2. Keeping families together wherever possible
3. Early permanence and placement stability

Harrow has safely maintained a low rate of children who are looked after, and this is underpinned by a strong focus on delivering effective Early Support Services to children and their families. Where children are not able to safely live with their parents, other family members and friends are explored as Special Guardianship carers, and achieving early permanence and placement stability is a priority across Children's services.

Strong commissioning arrangements, utilising West London boroughs' combined purchasing power to deliver financial efficiencies and a diverse and quality assured market, with clear pricing frameworks and specifications is a cornerstone of Harrow's approach to ensuring placements are value for money.

Whilst there has been much progress in developing our range of internal and external services to ensure sufficiency of accommodation, we face the dual challenge of additional demand for services and increasing pressure on Council budgets.

Tight scrutiny of placements is maintained via a weekly "Access to Resources panel," monthly placement "Challenge panel", to review sufficiency, value for money and outcomes of placements and other care packages.

Options considered

Not applicable as this is an information report.

Risk Management Implications

The Children's Services Risk Register includes corporate parenting responsibilities.

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.

Council Priorities

Supporting Those Most in Need

- Children and young people are given the opportunities to have the best start in life and families can thrive

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not applicable – for information only

Name: Jo Frost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: <u>24/09/2020/</u>		
Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer

Date:

* Delete the words "on behalf of the" if the report is cleared directly by the Chief Financial Officer / Monitoring Officer.

Name: Paul Hewitt

Corporate Director

Date: 18.09.2020

MANDATORY

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

Contact:

Jacinta Kane
Head of Service
Corporate Parenting

Tel - 020 8736 6617

Email - Jacinta.Kane@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

1. Attached paper: Harrow Children Looked After Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2019-2024

Harrow Children Looked After

Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2019 - 2024

Introduction

This 2019-2024 Sufficiency Strategy outlines our plan to meet the future needs of children on the edge of care, children who are looked after and young people who have recently left care. For children looked after, the sufficiency strategy covers internal services such as foster care, and external services such as residential placements, independent fostering placements, adoption and other support services.

As corporate parents we are committed to commissioning the right accommodation and support services to ensure the best possible outcomes for every child and young person. Harrow aims to support children to remain safely within their families wherever possible. Our innovative Keeping Families Together Service offers targeted resources to prevent young people becoming the subject of an child protection plan by trialling new ways of addressing risk in adolescence is a cornerstone in our approach to achieving this. In 2019, we further strengthened our edge of care provisions with the Supporting Families Together team, which aims to prevent families requiring statutory social care and provides a step-down from social care. The team provides intensive support to vulnerable families with multiple, complex problems, where there is a strong possibility of a child or children otherwise requiring statutory social care.

This sufficiency strategy is underpinned by legislation and statutory guidance including:

- **Section 9 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008** which places a general duty on local authorities to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the local authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area.
- **Sufficiency Duty Statutory Guidance** (DfE 2010) which describes the accommodation required for a child looked after that: is near the child's home; does not disrupt his/her education or training; enables the child to live with an accommodated sibling; where the child is disabled, is suitable to meet the needs of that child; and is within the local authority's area, unless that is not reasonably practicable.
- **Commissioning standards** in the sufficiency duty statutory guidance are also important, emphasising: individual assessment and care planning; commissioning decision; strategic needs assessment; market management; collaboration; and securing services.

We have synthesised these elements with our assessment of the needs of children in care and potentially entering care, to develop a five year strategy to secure sufficiency of accommodation and other support services. We aim to be proactive in our plans to meet the placement needs of looked after children in Harrow and to complete holistic, outcome focussed assessments which achieve permanency swiftly and prioritise placement stability.

Peter Tolley

**Peter Tolley
Divisional Director
Children and Young People Services
Harrow Council**

December 2019

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1. Our ambition for children and care leavers

Harrow has high ambitions for children and care leavers. With consideration to feedback from children and young people in care and care leavers, as well the statutory framework, the following outlines our ambition for our Children Looked After (CLA) and Leaving Care services:

1. The views of children and young people are listened to and inform placement decisions. Young people are given detailed information about their placements, and where the placements are planned, young people are able to visit the placement prior to moving.
2. All children looked after are placed in appropriate placements with access to the support that they need, as identified in their care plan or pathway plan, and the services they receive are of high quality.
3. We will aim to minimise disruption to children's education when they come into care or move placement and we will provide additional resources where needed to achieve this.
4. Placements will be located 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 where a specialist placement is not able to be commissioned locally.
5. Children's services 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.
6. A sufficient range of accommodation and support packages are available to care leavers to support 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.
7. Resources are available to respond to predicted demand for a range of needs and emergencies and a range of placement choices are developed to meet the needs of the diverse CLA population in Harrow.
8. Systems are in place to ensure careful matching of placements and to prevent disruption and to ensure placement stability.
9. Placement providers support children and young people to share their views and inform decision making.

2. Understanding needs: Harrow demographics

Harrow is an area in North West London that is home to more than 250,000 people¹. It is a comparatively quiet and safe area by London standards, noted for good schools and plenty of green space, and a popular area for families and commuters. The population is one of the most diverse in England, with established Gujarati and Irish communities and more recently Other Asian, African and Eastern European communities. Harrow does not have a majority ethnic group. Community cohesion is strong and this is an important success to build on. Unemployment is low, and Harrow has one of the lowest rates of young people (aged 16-17 years) not in education, training or employment (NEET) in England, at 2.1%.²

Despite this positive picture, there are some significant challenges for local people. There is increasing deprivation, particularly affecting children and young families, and significant health inequality. Harrow has both high levels of affluence in such areas as Harrow-on-the-Hill, Pinner, and Stanmore and high levels of deprivation in Wealdstone and South Harrow. The percentage of children living in poverty is just slightly above the England average but lower than the London average.

The number of Harrow children with diagnosed learning disabilities (LD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and challenging behaviours has increased steadily since 2015. Harrow's schools have experienced a growth in demand for children with special education needs and disability (SEND) requiring support in an additionally resourced mainstream school or special school place. The number of statements, (now Education, Health and Care Plans (ECHPs)) has increased since 2007 and continues to rise. The percentage of the school population with SEND has remained stable at 2.6% (as at 2019). The highest category of primary need was speech, language and communication needs followed by moderate learning difficulties.

2.1 National Census

Harrow's population is continuing to grow and change. Harrow's population is now at the highest recorded level, based on records going back to 1901. Over the past decade (2008-2018) the borough's population has increased by around 9.0% (20,582). While this is lower than London's average growth

¹ ONS Mid-year estimates 2018

² The percentage of all NEET 16-19 year olds in England was 5.5%; London 4.8%; Source: DfE NEET 2019 Annual Scorecard.

of 14.0 % over the same period, it is higher than England’s population growth of 8.0%³.

The table below outlines the total population of Harrow from the census base population of 241,063 through five-year intervals to a projected 2041 population of 285,718.

Office of National Statistics Harrow Population Projections

Year	2016 Population Projections
2011	241,063
2016	248,945
2021	261,611
2026	266,389
2031	267,513
2036	275,913
2041	285,718

In addition, the 2011 Census showed that Harrow’s residents were born in approximately 200 different countries and the percentage of Harrow’s residents born in the UK is the 6th lowest ranking nationally. Harrow is ranked 7th nationally (and in London) for ethnic diversity and 2nd for religious diversity in London.

2.2 Growing numbers of children in Harrow

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) mid-year 2018 estimate for Harrow highlighted that 21.0% of Harrow’s residents are aged under 16 years (52,578). Both the number and percentage of 0 to 15 year olds have been increasing in the borough since 2001, when there were around 41,690 young residents in Harrow. **Since 2001 there has been a 26.1% increase (10,888) in the 0 to 15 year old age group. At 21.0%, Harrow’s proportion of under 16s is above both the London average of 20.6 % and the national average of 19.0 %.**⁴

Approximately 13.9 % (34,833) of all Harrow’s residents are of school age (5-15), 633 more than in 2017, when 13.7 % were of school age. Compared with London (13.7%) and England (13.1%), Harrow had a higher proportion of residents of school age in 2018.

³ Based on ONS 2008 mid year estimates, revised in the light of the 2011 Census

⁴ ONS Mid-year estimates 2018

Office of National Statistics Age projections for Harrow

Age Group	Population 2011	Population 2031	Change	Percentage change
0 to 3	13,449	12,580	-868	-6.5
4 to 10	20,398	22,779	2,381	11.7
11 to 15	14,892	16,679	1,787	12.0
16 to 17	6,587	6,920	333	5.1
18 to 64	151,851	157,089	5,238	3.4
65 and over	33,886	51,466	17,580	51.9

2.3 Impact of changing and growing population

Harrow's comparatively lower rate of CLA should also be considered in the context of our local population. Harrow is a relatively affluent London borough and its high levels of diversity reflect well established communities, particularly of South Asian origin. Strong extended family networks are common. At the same time, Harrow has significant areas of deprivation, and movement in to the borough coupled with high birth rates suggest that CLA rates could increase further. Even if Harrow is able to successfully maintain relatively low rates of CLA, the growth in base population numbers will result in an increased number of individual children becoming looked after by Harrow.

The table below illustrates possible future Harrow CLA numbers, based on the predicted child population in 2031, and is calculated for a range of CLA rates per 10,000 (including current statistical neighbour and England rates of CLA). This highlights how CLA numbers may increase based on an increase in the child population, as well as the significant increase in CLA numbers if our rate of CLA increased to that of our statistical neighbours or England averages.

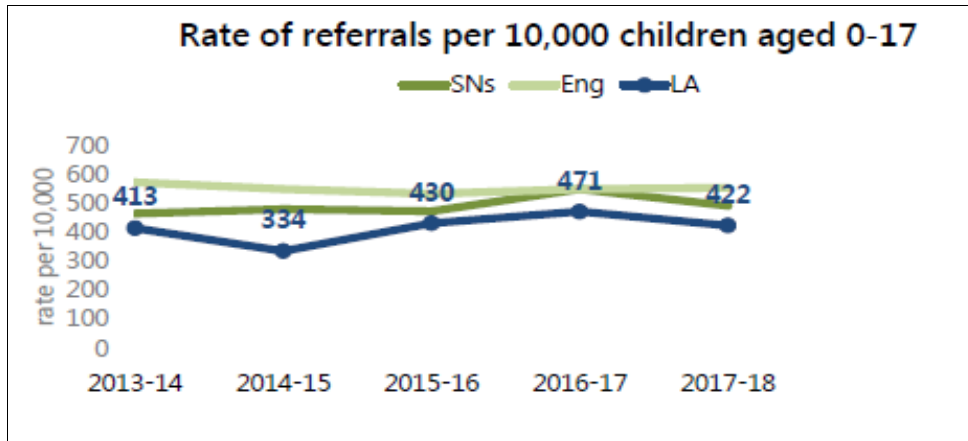
Possible future numbers of Harrow CLA

Year	Harrow Child Population	Rate of CLA per 10,000	Predicted number of CLA
2011	55, 326	26	140
2031	58, 958	29	170
2031	58, 958	50	294
2031	58, 958	65	383

3. Growing demand for services

The graph below illustrates the rate of referrals into children's services per 10,000 children. Harrow's referral rate has consistently remained lower

than our statistical neighbours and the England average over a 5 year period. Although our referral rates are comparatively low, population increases will result in an increase in individual referrals into children’s social care, which has resource implications for children’s services as a whole.



For example, the table “Contacts, Plans and CLA numbers” outlines the increased numbers of individual children who were referred in to Harrow children’s services between 2018-2019, including the increase in children subject to Child Protection Plans and those who were looked after. This reinforces the point that while our referral rates and rates of CLA are lower than our statistical neighbours and England, the growth in our population results in a overall increase in individual children and families requiring a service from social care.

Contacts, Plans and CLA numbers – comparison 2018-2019

	March 2018	March 2019	Increase
New contacts	495	879	78%
Child Protection Plans	223	279	25%
Children Looked After	159	169	6%
Total children allocated	1406	1601	14%

4. Needs Assessment

The following section compares Harrow’s CLA key demographic indicators – gender, age and ethnicity - to published population statistics for Harrow and England. It highlights the particular need for Harrow to develop and maintain a diverse range of placement options for children, particularly for children aged 10 and above.

4.1 Gender

Gender: Harrow CLA compared to published population statistics (Sept 2019) (note, as of 2019, the DfE only published and collected data on male or female children)				
	All CLA	% difference	Harrow Population	England Population
Male	63%	24% higher	51%	51%
Female	37%	25% lower	49%	49%

The table above highlights that **Harrow has an overrepresentation of male children in care by 24%**, when compared to general Harrow and England populations. A higher proportion of male unaccompanied children contributes to this overrepresentation. This demonstrates a need to recruit and identify appropriate foster carers and placements who are able to care for boys, particularly boys aged 16 and above.

4.2 Age

The next table outlines the age breakdown of Harrow's children looked after population in comparison to the general Harrow population and England-wide population. Of significance is the overrepresentation of children aged 10 and above, highlighting a need for placements for older children and adolescents. In particular, **there is a significant overrepresentation of children aged 16 and above who are looked after by Harrow**. This is partly due to the duty to accommodate unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) in care under s20 of the Children Act (1989). Published data from 2013-2019 suggests that UASC account for 15% - 20% of the Harrow children looked after population and the majority of UASC are aged 15 and above. This highlights the need for Harrow to develop and retain placements for older children, adolescents and asylum seeking children.

Age: Harrow CLA compared to published population statistics (Sept 2019)				
	All CLA	% difference	Harrow Population	England Population
Under 1	8%	23% higher	6%	5%
1 to 4	9%	65% lower	24%	23%
5 to 9	9%	70% lower	29%	29%
10 to 15	38%	22% higher	31%	32%
16 plus	38%	279% higher	10%	10%

4.3 Ethnicity

Harrow's population is one of the most diverse nationally. Diversity Indices rank Harrow seventh highest nationally for ethnic diversity and second for religious diversity⁵. The 2011 Census 69.1% of residents stated they are from minority ethnic groups, 31.9% of residents are White-British, 26.4% are of Indian origin, the largest minority ethnic group. Harrow is also home to the country's largest Sri Lankan born community⁶.

Ethnic background: Harrow CLA compared to published population statistics (Sept 2019)				
	All CLA	% difference	Harrow Population	England Population
White	30%	9% higher	28%	74%
Mixed	16%	84% higher	8%	6%
Asian or Asian British	13%	73% lower	48%	11%
Black or black British	17%	65% higher	10%	6%
Other ethnic group	24%	337% higher	6%	2%

The table above compares Harrow's children looked after population with all children in Harrow and all children in England. The **category of "other" ethnic group is significantly overrepresented in the CLA population, followed by "mixed", "black or black British", and there is a slight overrepresentation of "white" children.** "Asian or Asian British" children are significantly underrepresented in Harrow's CLA cohort compared to the general Harrow population. There is a need to ensure that foster carers and placement staff are recruited and reflect the diversity of our children looked after population and are supported to meet their identity needs.

4.4 Disability, SEND, Mental Health and other complex needs

While disability, SEND, mental health and other complex needs are not the reason for children to become looked after, a number of CLA and care leavers have complex and intersecting needs. Placement provisions which can meet the needs of children and young people with complex needs and support them to thrive are needed. Approximately 11% of the Harrow CLA population have a disability, accounting for 20 individual children (September 2019 data).

⁵ GLA 2011

⁶ National Census 2011

4.5 Children and Adolescent Mental Health

Harrow and the National Health Service (NHS)/Voluntary Sector partnership has embedded access and delivery of tier 2/3 therapeutic services for the children's population including CLA. The jointly commissioned Harrow Horizons service performance is performing well following the launch July 2017. Tier 3 and 4 delivery is embedded through tripartite funding arrangements. Specialist CLA nurses have maintained the provision of timely support with closer alignment with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) pathway.

4.6 Contextual Safeguarding

An emerging area of need for Harrow children and young people is contextual safeguarding, including safeguarding from extrafamilial abuse and exploitation, such as child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation.

*Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, **young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families**. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their **neighbourhoods, schools and online** can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of **extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships**. Therefore children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that **assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices**. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, **expands the objectives of child protection systems** in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts. (Firmin, 2016)*

Harrow is supportive of research carried out by the University of Bedfordshire Contextual Safeguarding Network, in particular, the development an evidence base regarding whether placement moves from unsafe contexts and areas increases or decreases risk, safety and well-being for young people. Contextual safeguarding factors are now considered when making placement decisions for children and young people, and this approach is expected to expand further as the evidence base develops.

4.7 Southwark Judgement and homeless 16 and 17 year olds

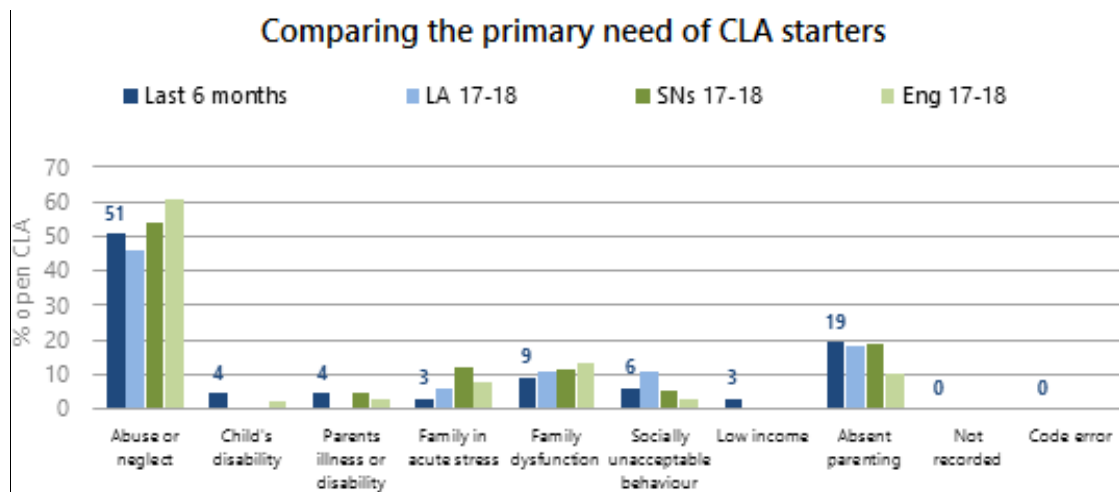
The Southwark Judgement 2009 confirmed local authorities' responsibility to assess the needs of a young person who presents as homeless and to

provide accommodation and support to homeless 16 and 17-year-olds under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 if the young person is assessed as a 'child in need'. Our aim, wherever possible, is to support older children and young people to remain at home within their families. The Children's and Families and Housing Services joint protocol lays out our approach across the Council for children and young people of this age group who cannot remain within their families

As we can see from previous analysis, entry into care in the 17 year age band has contributed to a significant number of the looked after population. This presents a significant challenge as placements for older young people are more difficult to identify, frequently more costly, and the local authority has a duty to continue providing services to children who have been looked after for 13 weeks or more (up to the age of 25 years old).

4.8 Presenting Needs of CLA

Data on the presenting primary need of children who become looked-after by Harrow (as at September 2019, and for the period 2017-2018) is outlined in the table below. The majority of children (51%) became looked after due to abuse or neglect. The next significant reason why children became looked after was due to absent parenting – this is the reporting category used primarily for UASC who arrive in England without family or a primary care giver.



5. Principles and framework

5.1 Children first

All placement decisions, including the decision to accommodate a child are based on the assessed need of the child. All placements of Harrow children are based on the following principles:

- Every child has an individual placement profile to support with matching their needs with the skills of carers
- Siblings are placed together wherever safe and possible to do so; if not placed together, then regular sibling contact is clearly outlined in their care plan
- The views, wishes and strengths of children are highlighted and supported
- Connections to family, community, school and friends are maintained wherever possible unless it has been assessed as not in the best interests of the child
- No child under 16 is placed in semi-independent or unregulated placements
- No child is placed in bed and breakfast accommodation
- The Divisional Director must give agreement to any children placed outside of the local area.

5.2 Keeping families together whenever possible

Harrow's approach to safeguarding children is based on the core principles of the Children Act (1989) – the welfare and best interests of children is paramount, and children are best looked after by their families wherever possible. We aim to maintain a low rate of children becoming looked-after, wherever this is safe to do so. In order to do this, we have commitment to an appropriately resourced Early Support service, excellent partnerships and use of community resources, safe management of risk on child protection plans, and special guardianship orders and placement with family and connected persons whenever this is in the best interests of children.

We are optimistic that the continued work of the Keeping Families Together Service, delivering new approaches to delivering services for teenagers on the edge of care will further impact the reduction of the numbers of young people coming into and remaining in care. Better targeting of systemic practitioners and our commitment to Early Support Services will also result in better outcomes for children and families and safely reduce the number of children in care.

5.3 Early Permanence and Placement Stability

Placement stability and achieving permanence is a priority for the service. Looked after children have six weekly permanency planning meetings. In addition to their own Looked After Reviews, children's progress is tracked and monitored through the Monthly Care Planning Panel, chaired by the Head of Service - Quality Assurance. All permanency plans, whether for long term fostering, Special Guardianship Orders or Adoption

are accompanied by robust support plans. These are presented, alongside the matching information, either to the RAA Adoption and Fostering Panel or the Local Authority Permanence Panel before being signed off by the Agency Decision Maker. All support plans are reviewed on an annual basis by the Adoption Support and Kinship Team.

There are signs of improvement in adoption timescales for the increased number of younger children coming into care with increasing numbers of children in adoption placements and increasing number of children with placement orders. We will continue our drive to improve in this area increasing the numbers of children being adopted out of the care system.

Timely implementation of care plans is progressed through the Care Planning Group meets monthly to review all:

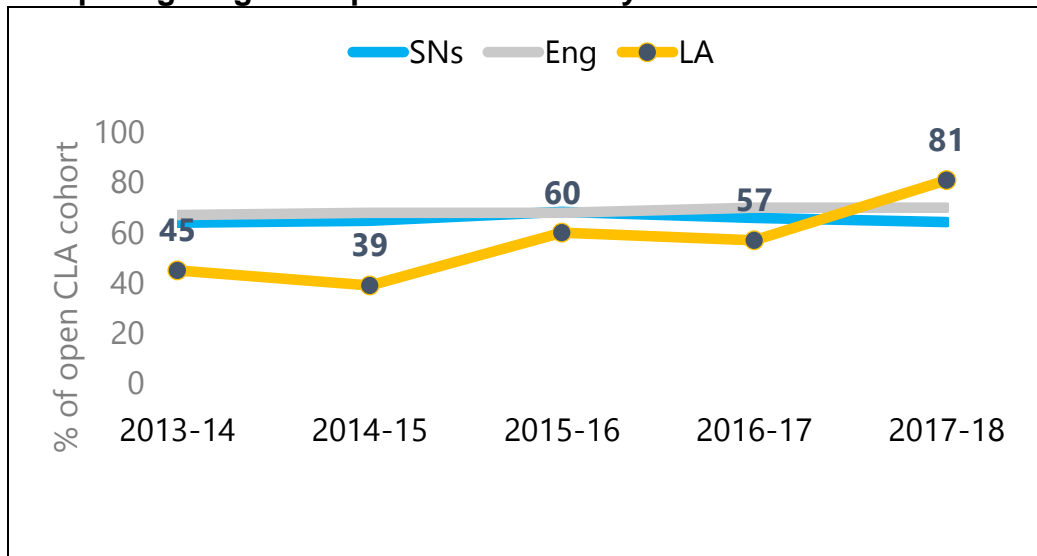
- Children subject to a legal planning meeting and the Public Law Outline pre proceedings process
- Children who are subject to on-going care proceedings
- Children who have a permanent plan of adoption
- Children who have a permanent plan of long term fostering

Individual Permanency Planning Meetings are held every six weeks on all these cases where the detailed implementation of the relevant care plans are discussed, developed and progressed. These complement the statutory review meetings which take place in accordance with the statutory review framework and ensure permanency is achieved in a timely manner.

Harrow has appointed a case manager to oversee and track all cases in proceedings to ensure cases are progressed in a timely manner and to avoid drift and delay and to comply with the requirements of the new Public Law Outline and Family Justice Review. We are also beginning to put in place permanence plans for all children entering care. These plans will be performance managed against, to ensure that internal or external providers are meeting the anticipated timescales to achieve the required outcomes and permanence.

Placement stability is a priority for Harrow and there is a well established link between placement stability and better outcomes for children. Placement stability is therefore a good proxy-indicator for the outcomes we want to children to achieve.

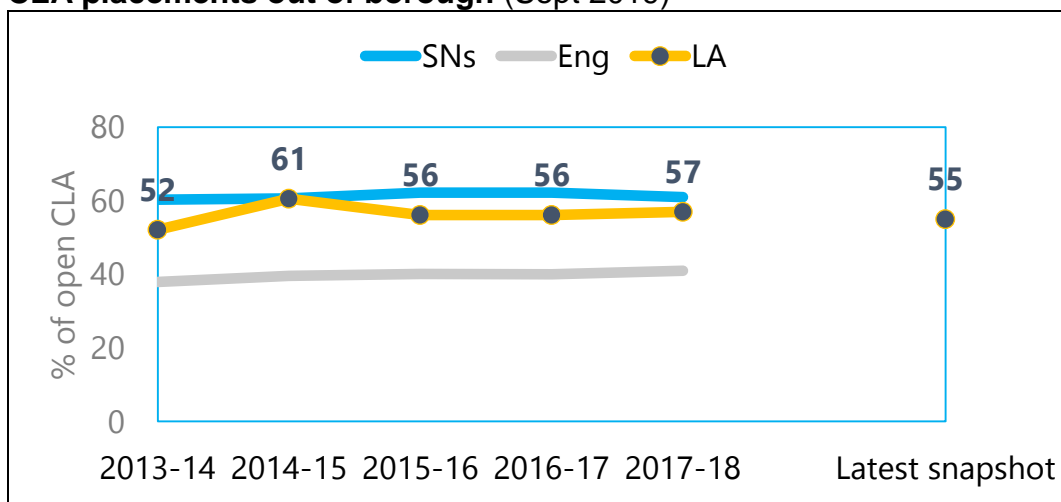
Comparing long-term placement stability



The above graph shows the placement stability for each current CLA aged under 16 who has been looked after for 2½ years or more. Harrow has made steady progress towards better placement stability for children, and in 2017-2018, Harrow performed better than our statistical neighbours and the England wide average.

An important element of placement stability and suitability is placing children close to their local area and connections whenever it is safe to do so. Placing children within borough is a particular challenge for London based local authorities due to the paucity of affordable housing. Despite this, Harrow performs better than our statistical neighbours when it comes to placing children in borough, and this is due to strong commissioning arrangements and active foster carer recruitment activity.

CLA placements out of borough (Sept 2019)



6. Services

This section contains an analysis of the services that we commission. The decision for a child or young person's placement is based on their assessed needs, and additional resources and support may be sought through the weekly Access to Resources Panel.

The WLA Dynamic Purchasing Vehicle for foster placements and children's homes was launched in April 2019. This has expanded our reach to other providers locally and nationally to better meet the needs of children and young people.

6.1 Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders

Harrow has an effective and longstanding adoption partnership with Coram. In 2019, Harrow became the lead local authority in the Coram Ambitious for Adoption Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). This is a unique model involving the commissioning of a leading Voluntary Adoption Agency to manage the adoption service across Harrow, Redbridge, Bromley, City of London, Waltham Forest, Hillingdon and a further 4 local authorities are in the pipeline to join (making a total of 10 LA in partnership with Coram). The RAA gives Harrow access to the pool of adopters recruited by Coram and as the LA are not all geographical neighbours, it gives scope for the children to be placed within the region. However, when this is not possible, to prevent drift and delay, interagency placements are sought.

Coram has taken the lead on all adoption work in the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), including adoption recruitment, assessment, family finding, post adoption support and letterbox contact. Recruitment to a Central Adoption Panel has been successful, and the Panel has been operational since July 2019. Since July the Harrow Adoption and Fostering Panel became the Permanence Panel with a single focus on Fostering and Permanency, including consideration of SGO assessments and support plans.

Coram staff are located alongside the social work teams in Harrow Civic Centre, which has facilitated a positive and close working relationship and supported permanency planning to begin at an early stage of the child's journey. This has included early permanence (EP) carers – i.e. concurrent carers and fostering to adopt carers.

Children in need of adoption support have a comprehensive assessment and have a wide range of services available. Harrow has made considerable use of the Adoption Support Fund to ensure all adopted children have access to appropriate therapeutic support.

Harrow has consistently performed better than our statistical neighbours on the adoption scorecard. Data for latest three year averages (2015-18) are as follows:

- The average time (days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted - Harrow - 454 days, SN average – 547
- 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 - Harrow - 153 days, SN average - 224
- Percentage of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family - Harrow - 58%, SN average – 49%⁷

6.2 Internal Foster Care

Harrow Council has a well established and supportive in-house fostering team. As of 31st March 2019, Harrow had 66 approved fostering households, with 83 individual children placed with in house foster carers. The benefits of placing children with in-house carers are many: it ensures children can maintain their local connections to schools, GPs and support networks; we know foster carers are receiving high quality support and training; and placement moves are minimised as supervising social workers complete minimum 4 weekly visits to in house carers. In 2019, Harrow placed a greater percentage (43%) of CLA in our own provision compared to our statistical neighbours (36%) and in-house fostering is the preferred option for children who are looked after, whenever this meets their assessed needs.

The Fostering Recruitment Plan sets out the plan to increase the numbers of foster carers to meet local demand. Harrow regularly reviews and monitors the fostering recruitment plan via the following mechanisms:

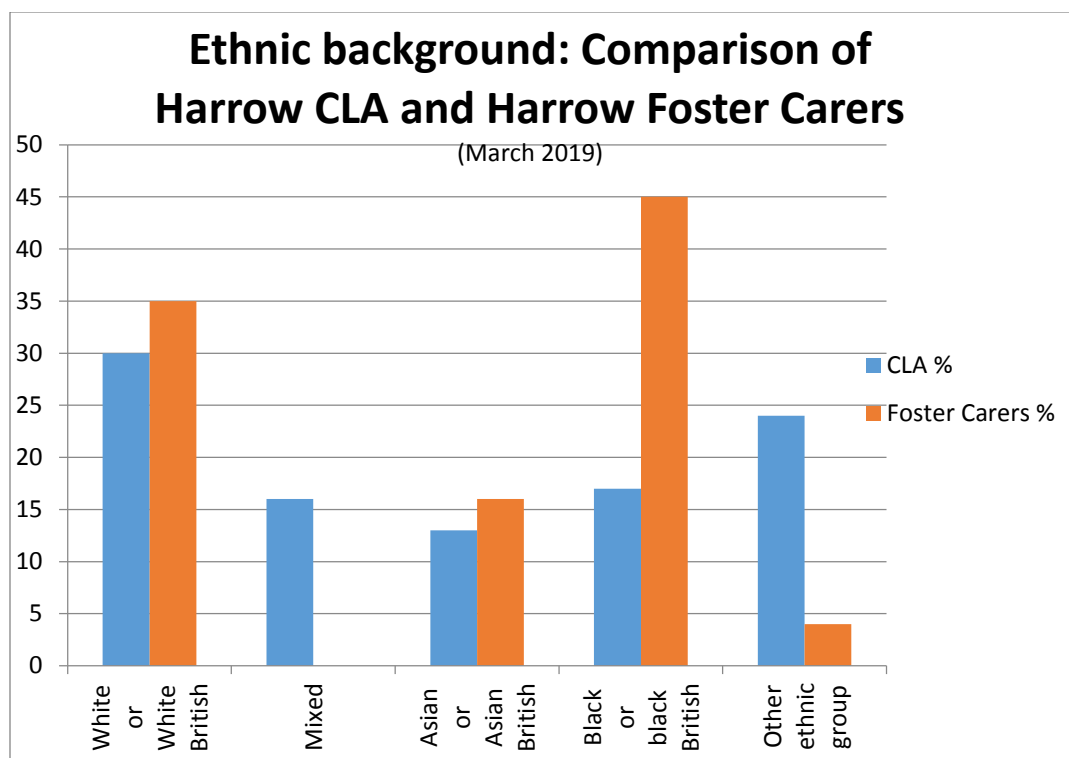
- Monthly performance reports on recruitment and assessment activity provided to Head of Service, Corporate Parenting
- Quarterly meetings between the Fostering Service and the Communications Team
- Quarterly reports to the Harrow Adoption and Fostering Panel
- Key fostering recruitment data reported at monthly Children's Services performance meetings
- Key fostering recruitment data reported to the Department for Education (DFE) and used to compare with statistical neighbours

⁷ Adoption scorecard data for 2018

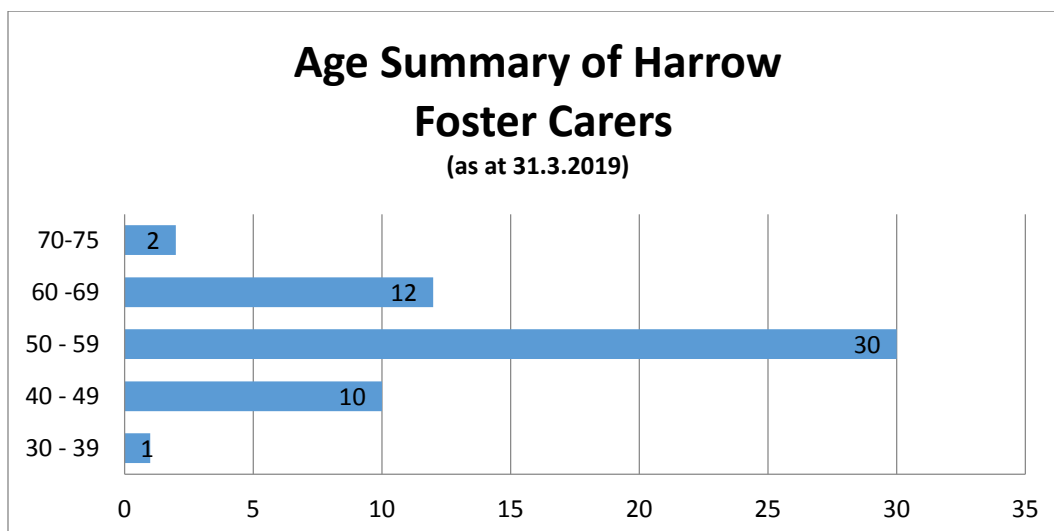
- In depth needs analysis carried out on quarterly basis by the Team Manager and Training and Development Officer to inform and update the recruitment strategy
- A target of approving 8 fostering households = an additional 10 placements for financial year 2019/2020.

6.3 Foster Carer Demographics

The graph below illustrates the ethnic background of Harrow foster carers, compared to the Harrow CLA population. Nearly 45% of Harrow foster carers identify as “black or black British”, followed by 35% of carers who identify as “white”. Approximately 16% of foster carers identify as “Asian of Asian British” and only 4% of carers identify as belonging to an “other” ethnic group. While there may be differences in recording and self-identification, there appears to be a need to recruit more foster carers of “mixed” ethnicity and “other ethnic” groups. In the meantime, foster carers have access to a diverse and supportive training package to support them to meet the identity (and other) needs of children placed in their care.



The majority of foster carers registered by Harrow Council Fostering Team are aged between 40 and 70 years. The majority of foster carers are currently aged in their 50s.



6.4 External Foster Care / Independent Fostering Agencies

A central project within the WLA programme has been to develop a framework agreement to deliver more efficient commissioning arrangements for looked after children placed with external Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs). The aim is to exploit the West London Boroughs' combined purchasing power to deliver financial efficiencies and a diverse and quality assured market, with clear pricing frameworks and specifications.

We have also sought to achieve the following benefits to improve accommodation:

- Sufficiency requirement – the framework has enabled Harrow Council to deliver its obligations and ensure a greater proportion of our foster placements are within a 20 mile radius of the borough.
- Market development – by awarding a framework contract for four years the West London boroughs will communicate a clear message of our joint intention to stimulate the growth of local capacity. This will be achieved by giving providers on the framework the confidence to increase their recruitment of local foster carers, resulting in more placement choice for commissioners and children and decreasing the likelihood of costly placement moves.
- Improvement in quality – by robustly specifying, tendering and monitoring Independent fostering placements within the framework IFA placements will be delivered to a better standard of quality and any underperformance will be subject to rigorous processes as set out in the Terms and Conditions of the IFA contract.

- Contract management – commercial contract management of the framework will be facilitated by the WLA in partnership with the boroughs ensuring robust quality performance management of providers.
- Placement searches/negotiation – having a framework of approved providers with tendered prices, discounts, specifications and referral processes will reduce officer time required for finding and arranging placements.

6.5 Children and Young Adults Disability Service (CYADS) and Internal Residential Care

The Children and Young Adults (0-25) Disabilities Service (CYADS) proactively supports children and families in a person centred way. This includes making sure the journey from childhood to adulthood is simplified in a 0-25 team of social workers. With a team manager dedicated to supporting disabled children 0-18 and a Transitions team manager based in the same service supporting young people into adulthood, the child and its family now have dedicated managers and Senior practitioners to work together and support the journey into adulthood.

Referrals, assessments, and planning are done jointly with SEND and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) services for the most complex and vulnerable children. This has improved the implementation of EHCPs and greater access to continuing healthcare funding for the most disabled and complex children. Tripartite panels (Health, Social care and Education) review and make funding decisions about children with the most complex needs. A Dynamic register of those children is maintained by the CCG and allows a multidisciplinary approach to supporting the most vulnerable disabled children and disadvantaged homes. Disabled children and young people and their families are able to access services such as short breaks, and social care packages where appropriate. In order to meet their assessed needs Harrow provides a comprehensive local offer, published on its website, that allows families to see what is available for their child and themselves as carers.

A crisis response pathway is well established as part of the CYAD service to provide a more rapid and joined up approach to escalations of behaviour and difficulty in the home. This is having a positive impact, and feedback from families has been overwhelmingly positive. This has helped successfully divert children with a learning disability and / or autism from crisis and Accident and Emergency (A&E) admission and helped them remain at home with their family. The *Harrow Joint Commissioning Strategy for people with learning disabilities and with autistic spectrum conditions 2015 – 2020* and the *Harrow SEND Strategy 2019-2024* further underpins the work in this area.

Harrow operates one short-break children's residential home. It was judged to be outstanding at its most recent Ofsted inspection in July 2019. This home has achieved outstanding in every inspection for the last 11 years. The Firs is a residential short breaks unit for children with disabilities offering short breaks for children with a high level of need and challenging behaviour. The unit offers short breaks to 30 children with disabilities.

6.6 External Residential Care

Harrow's Access to Resources team manage the placements of children in residential children's homes. Our practice is to only place children in homes which have been graded Good to Outstanding by Ofsted. If a children's home is downgraded while a Harrow child is placed there, then the risk will be assessed and managed in partnership with the allocated social worker and the placements team. The Head of Service and Divisional Director are notified of any children's homes which require improvement or are inadequate.

The Access to Resources team has a robust system regarding the commissioning and procurement of external placements. All external placements have appropriate contracts and Service Level Agreements in place and all arrangements are reviewed and monitored on a regular basis.

6.7 Parent and Child Assessment Placements (including mother and baby placements)

We have increased our number of in house foster carers to take parent and child placements and we also utilise a preferred list of providers for IFAs and Residential placements through WLA frameworks and agreements. An enhanced payments system for in house carers is also utilised on a needs led basis where there is evidence of additional complexity.

6.8 Semi-independent placements and Care Leavers

In 2019, unregulated semi-independent placements of children in care gained national media attention and much needed scrutiny. Harrow has a longstanding policy of not placing children under 16 years of age in semi-independent placements, alongside a robust commissioning and review framework of semi-independent placements in partnership with the WLA.

In December 2019, the Access to Resources team completed a review of semi-independent placements for young people under the age of 18. The review identified the following:

- 38 children (16-18 year olds) were placed in semi-independent Accommodation. This represents 20% of the CLA population.

- 23 of the 38 children (60%) were UASC, and of these, 21 were placed in specialist placements for UASC (others have been placed in other semi-independent provision to meet their specific needs)
- All 38 young people were placed in accommodation with 24:7 support provided
- Placement stability for this group was good with 89% (34 young people) having only 1 placement move within the last year

6.9 Partnership with Housing

Harrow is developing other local partnerships with local providers to ensure a sufficient range of appropriate semi-independent provision to meet the diverse needs of our looked after and care leavers population. Harrow Children and Families and Housing Directorates have jointly updated the CLA/ Housing protocol in relation to homeless 16 and 17 year olds to ensure processes and responsibilities are clear between the two departments.

A Leaving Care charter, developed with young people clarifying what support and accommodation they can expect from the local authority is in place. An Independent skills manual has also been developed to assist them to prepare for independence and progress their pathway plans. Harrow has also produced a Staying Put policy enabling Care leavers to remain living with their foster carers beyond their 18th birthday, providing appropriate support to those who need a longer transition to independence.

7. Commissioning

Harrow has a robust approach to commissioning placements. The majority of placements for young people aged 16+ are secured via the West London Alliance (WLA) Framework for Semi-Independent Accommodation.

The WLA Semi-Independent Framework expires in March 2020. As such the WLA, lead borough Hammersmith & Fulham with input from other WLA authorities are working on a replacement procurement vehicle (Semi-Independent Accommodation and Support Dynamic Purchasing Vehicle).

Harrow also commissions the following block contracts under the West London Alliance List Agreement for the provision of Semi-Independent Living Services

- 29 Semi-Independent placements with 24:7 support– West London YMCA (Roxeth Gate)

- 8 Semi-Independent placements in supported lodgings – West London YMCA
- Floating Support for care leavers moving into independent living – Centrepoint Soho

7.1 WLA Accreditation

With financial and officer support from local authorities, the WLA also introduced an accreditation scheme for unregulated 16+ services in August 2019.

Included in the scheme are semi-independent services, hostels, supported lodgings and floating support services. The scheme will support the oversight of quality of support services and provision of accommodation. This will also form part of the decision making when undertaking placement searches and considering responses – as to whether or not providers have meet the required standards for WLA accreditation. This will also be a key factor in the award of contracts under the new dynamic purchasing vehicle when it goes live in 2020.

7.2 Sufficiency

The WLA Framework and accredited providers have delivered a good sufficiency of placements for 16+. As such only a small number of non-framework providers are used. Several of these are established local providers including a previous in-house foster carer who has developed a semi-independent provision with a high level of support; placement stability is strong and feedback from social workers and young people is excellent. Harrow also continues to independently commission Gayton House, a specialist UASC provider for 30 young people based in Harrow.

7.3 Monitoring

The Placements Team undertake monitoring visits to providers. Monitoring frequency varies dependent on whether these are solely Harrow providers or also used by other boroughs. The team will particularly focus on those that are non-WLA providers or where there may have been any issues highlighted by social workers. Harrow commissioned provision is monitored quarterly with additional visits made as and when necessary. Information is also shared across the local authority partners, monitoring information can be uploaded to CarePlace and in the event of any concerns and joint work undertaken with WLA or via a lead LA to address these with providers.

7.4 After Placement / Safety

An individual placement agreement meeting is signed off by the provider and the local authority and this is reviewed if there are any concerns. Providers send monthly reports to the social workers to give written updates on the progress of children's development and well-being. Monitoring takes place annually (or quarterly if it is a Harrow-commissioned provision). If there are concerns with a provider regular meetings take place until issues are resolved. If serious issues occur – a placement move would be considered to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people.

7.5 Review of Placement via Panel

New placements are agreed /ratified at the weekly **Access to Resources Panel** at which point review timeframes are considered. **Monthly review panels** consider whether the young people are getting the best out of their placements and whether either the provider needs to be challenged, a new placement considered or additional support or input is required from the social worker or another professional. Cases are then reviewed again at a following panel to avoid drift and delay.

7.6 Tripartite Panel (Health, Education & Social Care)

Placements secured to meet the needs of children leaving Tier 4 specialist provisions (e.g. mental health) or which have an element of therapeutic support are presented at the monthly Tripartite Panel to seek joint funding. The Tripartite panel also reviews joint-funded cases and scrutinises whether placements provide evidence based services to meet the needs of the child /young person.

8. Conclusion

Harrow is committed to commissioning the right accommodation and support services to ensure the best possible outcomes for every child and young person. Our sufficiency strategy is based on the foundation of three core principles:

- Children first
- Keeping families together wherever possible
- Early permanence and placement stability

Harrow has safely maintained a low rate of children who are looked after, and this is underpinned by a strong focus on delivering effective Early

Support Services to children and their families. Where children are not able to safely live with their parents, other family members and friends are explored as Special Guardianship carers, and achieving early permanence and placement stability is a priority across Children's services.

Whilst there has been much progress in developing our range of internal and external services to ensure sufficiency of accommodation, we face the dual challenge of additional demand for services and increasing pressure on Council budgets. The actions set out in the attached action plan are designed to improve the quality of services for our most vulnerable children and young people, and improve how effectively we meet their needs and improve the outcomes that they achieve.

9. CLA Placement Sufficiency Action Plan: Dec 2019 - March 2021

Action	Owner	Deadline	Progress
1. Regularly review the Children's services Analysis Tool (ChAT) to understand the needs and profile of Harrow CLA and care leavers	HOS Corporate Parenting; TM Access to Resources Team; Snr Practitioner, Performance	Quarterly review	The ChAT tool is reviewed regularly during SMT and informs the service plan
2. Review and accreditation of semi-independent placements for children and care leavers	Access to Resources Team and WLA	July 2020	Draft framework has been circulated
3. In depth needs analysis of fostering provision to inform and update the recruitment strategy	Fostering Team Manager and Training and Development Officer	Quarterly review	Being reviewed in FY 2019/2020 Q4
4. Increase sufficiency of specialist placements for children with complex needs who are at risk of multiple placement breakdowns	Access to Resources Team and WLA	Quarterly review	Under review at tripartite panel
5. Access to resources panel and monthly challenge panel to review sufficiency, value for money and outcomes of placements and other care packages agreed at panel	HOS Corporate Parenting; TM Access to Resources Team; allocated SW and TMs	Weekly and monthly panels	Weekly and monthly placement review panels are embedded in the service and functioning well
6. Access to Resources team to carry out monitoring visits of a cross-section of commissioned placements to enhance quality assurance framework	Access to resources team	Monthly	Access to resources team have been focussing on reviewing out of borough semi-independent placements

Action	Owner	Deadline	Progress
7. Triangulate feedback from young people and social workers to inform review of placement commissioning.	Access to resources team; HOS Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer /HOS for Q&A	Annually.	

10. Appendix 1

Department for Education s.251 report for 2018-2019 – Children's Services expenditure snapshot.

	Sure Start Children's Centres and early years	Children looked after	Other children's and families services	Safeguarding children and young people's services	Family support services	Services for young people	Youth justice	Total spending by LA on children's and young people's services (including CERA)
								per head of 0-18 population
ENGLAND	£49	£405	£9	£202	£96	£33	£23	£819
LONDON	£66	£387	£27	£241	£102	£40	£24	£889
INNER LONDON	£111	£474	£33	£295	£134	£62	£35	£1,144
Camden	£269	£462	£99	£262	£179	£121	£37	£1,427
City of London	£1,150	£1,009	£464	£904	£131	£159	£0	£3,817
Hackney	£237	£390	£0	£399	£186	£79	£24	£1,315
Hammersmith and Fulham	£41	£522	£32	£380	£217	£24	£33	£1,249
Haringey	£62	£533	£0	£228	£88	£13	£17	£940
Islington	£337	£661	£0	£476	£132	£111	£37	£1,754
Kensington and Chelsea	£32	£383	£5	£284	£229	£151	£24	£1,109
Lambeth	£110	£522	£104	£314	£61	£11	£39	£1,161
Lewisham	£46	£530	£1	£293	£149	£77	£29	£1,125
Newham	£61	£371	£72	£237	£107	£17	£63	£931
Southwark	£31	£611	£62	£304	£121	£32	£46	£1,206
Tower Hamlets	£120	£385	£2	£240	£147	£69	£37	£999
Wandsworth	£82	£451	£0	£295	£126	£75	£24	£1,061
Westminster	£27	£374	£16	£195	£93	£107	£24	£836

OUTER LONDON	£40	£337	£24	£210	£83	£28	£18	£740
Barking and Dagenham	£18	£390	£0	£240	£52	£12	£22	£734
Barnet	£21	£302	£15	£184	£161	£28	£9	£720
Bexley	£20	£318	£7	£229	£70	£33	£15	£691
Brent	£67	£277	£0	£227	£102	£13	£26	£712
Bromley	£21	£329	£0	£228	£54	£14	£24	£672
Croydon	£65	£545	£160	£185	£104	£7	£14	£1,079
Ealing	£52	£342	£34	£200	£33	£35	£10	£706
Enfield	£14	£260	£4	£177	£121	£8	£44	£628
Greenwich	£78	£512	£30	£258	£74	£26	£23	£1,002
Harrow	£16	£210	£0	£208	£94	£34	£20	£582
Havering	£7	£319	£1	£268	£72	£38	£17	£722
Hillingdon	£63	£289	£24	£244	£60	£11	£16	£708
Hounslow	£47	£387	£3	£212	£70	£84	£29	£833
Kingston upon Thames	£30	£267	£18	£114	£88	£65	£3	£584
Merton	£48	£296	£32	£266	£97	£42	£29	£810
Redbridge	£30	£255	£22	£175	£46	£14	£19	£561
Richmond upon Thames	£39	£283	£12	£135	£81	£53	£3	£607
Sutton	£22	£376	£40	£215	£77	£10	£11	£753
Waltham Forest	£82	£352	£2	£212	£98	£42	£0	£788