

Children Looked After (CLA) Corporate Parenting Report **1.12.15 – 30.11.16: Missing Children and Young People**

Introduction:

CLA by the Local Authority

CLA include all children being looked after by a local authority; those subject to court orders and those looked after on a voluntary basis through an agreement with their parents.

Nationally, there are 60 looked after children per 10,000 children in the population. The rate in Harrow was fairly stable historically and was substantially lower than England, London and statistical neighbours.

The rate of children ceasing to be 'looked after' has been increasing over recent years. Strong extended family networks are common amongst the local communities which could explain a lower figure in Harrow, but the incoming populations tend to be from communities with a tendency towards higher levels of vulnerability and consequently rates for children 'looked after' could increase.

The London Borough (LB) of Harrow is committed to responding and supporting CLA, reducing vulnerabilities and risks associated with CLA that go missing both at a strategic and operational level.

Demographics in Harrow

Harrow is an Outer London borough in North West London covering 50 square kilometres. Around 243,500 people live in Harrow. Compared to the London average and young people in there is a greater proportion of older people and a lower proportion of those in their 20s and 30s.

Young people: Almost one in four of Harrow residents are aged 18 or less. 27% of children and young people in Harrow are from a White ethnic group. The largest ethnic group is Asian at 37%.

Harrow remains one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in the country. In 2011, 43% of the population were from an Asian/Asian British background, 42% from a White ethnic background and 8% from a Black/African/Caribbean/Black British ethnic background.

Harrow CLA Missing data (1.12.15 – 30.11.16)

Total Missing CLA & Non CLA in period

	Children Missing In Period	Missing Episodes in Period
Total	90	256
of which CLA	41 (45.6%)	160 (62.5%)
of which non CLA	49 (54.4%)	96 (37.5%)

Comments

- There were 90 children who had a total of 256 missing episodes in the period 1st Dec 2015 to 30th November 2016.
- 45.6% of children who had missing episodes were CLA while missing and 54.4% were non CLA.
- While fewer missing children were CLA, the CLA who were missing were responsible for the majority (62.5%) of missing episodes during the period. The average number of missing episodes was 3.9 for CLA compared to 1.7 for non CLA.
- The highest number of missing episodes for a single CLA during the period was a child with 19 episodes.

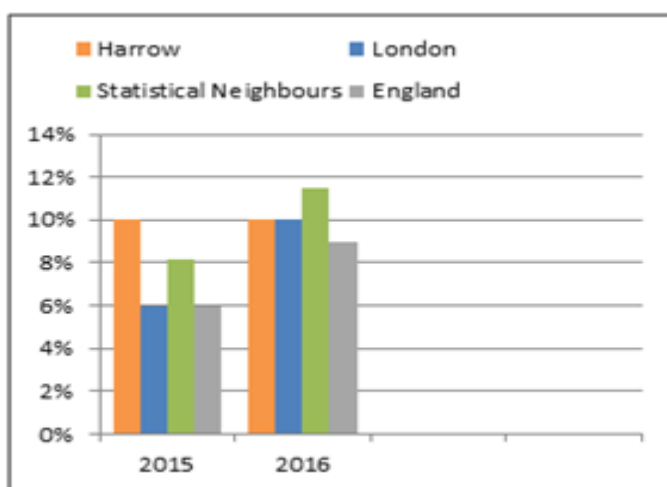
Total CLA missing period

	Count
Total CLA in period	319
of which had a missing episode	41
Percentage	12.90%

Comments:

- Although CLA had a high volume of episodes they only represent a small portion of overall looked after children. During the period there were 319 CLA in total of which only 12.90% had a missing episode.

CLA Comparative data - Percentage of CLA who had a missing incident during the year



Comments:

- Comparative CLA data between 2015 & 2016 highlights the following:
- Percentage of Harrow CLA who had a missing incident has remained at 10%
- London's CLA data highlights an increase from 6% to 10%.
- Statistical neighbours have shown an increase from 8% to 11.5%
- England has shown an increase from 6% to 9%.
- Overall, there is an increase in numbers across London, Statistical neighbours and England.
- Harrow remains at 10% below Statistical neighbours, on level with London but just above England.
- This is also in correlation with increasing Child Protection numbers in Harrow. Local Authorities response to CLA Missing. The training and awareness around CSE/ Missing and exploitation also ensures that there is a better method of referral pathways by carers to alert Police and Social Care when CLA are missing.

Harrow CLA Missing YP by gender

CLA Missing Gender	Missing CLA	Percentage	All CLA in period	Percentage	Difference
Male	23	56.10%	188	58.90%	2.80%
Female	18	43.90%	131	41.10%	-2.80%
Total	41		319		

Comments:

- With regards the demographic comparisons, looking at gender there's no real difference between the distribution of gender for CLA that went missing and the overall CLA population in the period.

Harrow CLA Missing YP by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Missing CLA	Percentage	All CLA in period	Percentage	Difference
Asian or Asian British	9	22%	49	15.4%	-6.64%
Black or Black British	12	29.30%	60	18.8%	-10.49%
Mixed background	7	17.10%	54	16.9%	-0.17%
Other Ethnic background	4	9.80%	57	17.9%	8.07%
White or White British	9	22%	99	31.0%	9.03%
Total	41		319		

Comments:

- With ethnicity, the majority of missing CLA is of Black/Black British ethnicity. Looking at the ratios, over 10% more of the missing CLA population are of black ethnicity compared to the overall population of CLA during the period. Also equally as interesting is 9% fewer of the missing CLA population are of white ethnicity compared to the overall population of CLA during the period.
- Black children are over-represented as missing in comparison with 8% Harrow population (see earlier Demographics).

Harrow CLA Missing YP by Age

Age Brackets	Missing CLA	Percentage	All CLA in period	Percentage	Difference
Under 1	1	2.40%	21	6.6%	4.18%
1 - 4	0		27	8.5%	8.46%
5 - 9	0		52	16.3%	16.30%
10 - 15	15	36.60%	95	29.8%	-6.82%
16+	25	61%	124	38.9%	-22.13%
Total	41		319		

Comments:

- With the age breakdown, a higher number of missing CLA are older in age compared to the total CLA population. In total, 22% more of the missing CLA population are aged 16+ compared to the total CLA population in the period.

Return Interviews on missing CLA children

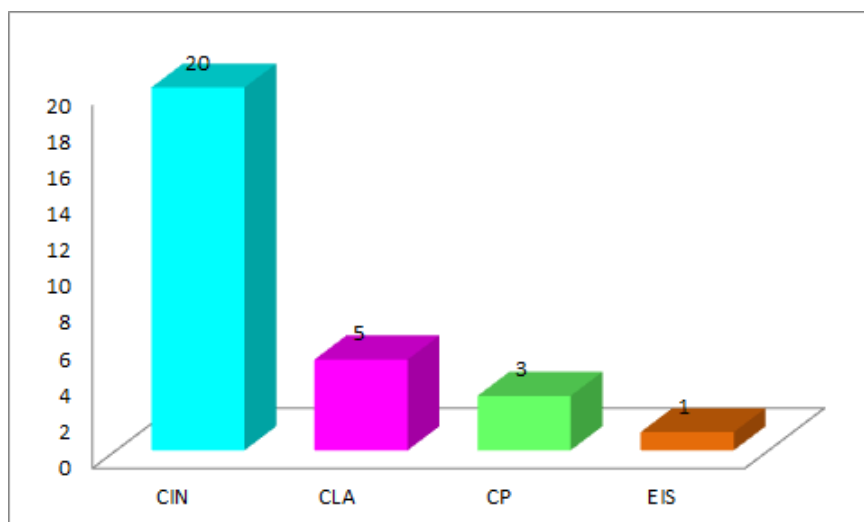
Return (RI) Missing episodes	RI completed within 72
256	203 (79.29%)

Comments:

- From the 256 CLA Missing children, 79.29% RI were completed within 72 hours.
- Where RI were not possible, this was due to CLA missing children with a number of episodes where they have not been in agreement for a RI and have been challenging to locate. The Children/Runaways Family Support Worker also commenced his role in January 2016 and has been successful in engaging children and building relationships with them which assists in communicating with them in instances where whereabouts are not always known. This correlates with the 16 plus who are more mobile and less likely to share key details of whereabouts.

CSE & CLA

Status	No. YP	%
CIN	20	69
CLA	5	17
CP	3	10
EIS	1	3



Status of CSE victims assessed at MASE between 1st September 2015 to 31st August 2016.

Comments:

- Total of 29 children were assessed at MASE for risk of CSE.
- 4 children (14%) were assessed as Low Risk and not made subject to MASE Review arrangements.
- 25 children (86%) were assessed as Medium Risk of CSE from the SAFEGUARD risk assessment and child protection strategy meeting where there were indicators of being a victim of CSE.
- 5 children were CLA.

- 24 (96%) children were subject to MASE Review arrangements lasting between 1- 3 months, before CSE risk was reduced.
- 1 Medium Risk child was subject to MASE Review arrangements for 5 months. Initially this child was made subject to a Child Protection Plan, then subject to CLA Care Plan and placed in a specialist CSE placement out of borough, where nil new CSE concerns have been highlighted.
- Overall the escalation to a CLA Plan is undertaken as a protective measure to safeguard children.
- The current care plans for MASE assessed children incorporate one to one direct work with the young person / parent/carer around healthy and safe relationships, and signs of exploitative mechanisms a perpetrator would use.
- CSE links to and YP going Missing (often known as a Missing 'episode'): initial analysis at the time of MASE referral highlights some links: 4 children were reported Missing between 1-2 occasions; a further 16 children had 3 or more occasions of being reported Missing.
- After exiting MASE there has been a 95% reduction in Missing episodes for those 20 YP where Missing episodes had been identified as vulnerability and thus a CSE indicator: just 1 child continues to have on-going reported Missing episodes, and is currently under a CLA Plan.
- Given the crossover with Missing episodes and CSE, the Missing Children/Runaways Family Support Worker ensures that MASE assessed children social care records have risk assessed Grab packs available to Police and Missing episodes are routinely reported by parents and carers. One to one safety work is also undertaken as part of the Return Home Interview for every missing child.

Youth Violence /Gang & CLA

Comments:

- 16 out of the 29 children have suspicions pertaining, gangs/criminality or youth violence. The profile of this individual is as follows:
- 16 years of age, black and on a CLA care plan.
- 25% of those young people at least one missing period exceeding 5 days or more

Case Study of a positive outcome for CLA missing child

- Child A is a CLA, 15 years of age. She was placed outside of London in a specialist CSE Placement. Her previous background was parental domestic violence resulting in being in LA care with shared parental responsibility under a Full Care order.
- Child A She was targeted by a male peer within the community who was 2 years older than her. He was a lone perpetrator and was also targeting other female peers known to Child A. She experienced a number of missing episodes, involvement with the Police, substance use, deteriorating school attendance and low self-esteem and isolation from her protective network. Using the SAFEGUARD CSE risk assessment she was assessed at MASE due to CSE. This resulted in a Police investigation led by the CSE Police. Child A's insight was limited as a victim of CSE and missing episodes were escalating.

- Child A was placed in a specialist CSE Placement and supported the Police investigation. She has now returned to the Harrow area accessing education, improved self-esteem and confidence with no evidence of the CSE indicators including missing episodes.

Prevention & Developments

- Since September 2014 Harrow's MASE Panel has been co-chaired between the South Harrow Police Detective Inspector responsible for CSE / Missing children in the borough alongside the designated Head of Service for Children's Social Care.
- The CSE Co-ordinator role was established in April 2015, based in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 'front door' which also involved assessing and developing an understanding of Missing children, given this can be one of the indicators of CSE.
- In December 2015 the Local Authority, supported by the Harrow Safeguarding Children's Board (HSCB) trained and developed 60 CSE Champions across the Harrow partnership. The training was delivered by Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE). A CSE Champion would act as a conduit within their respective team/ agency as key CSE lead. The CSE Champion would also be expected to deliver training within their own team/agency to raise awareness around CSE and missing procedures. The CLA Team currently has a CSE Champion who continues to support children, colleagues, professionals and raise awareness with partners.
- CSE Training by PACE was also delivered to all Harrow Foster Carers to assist them in identifying CSE and responding confidently. An on-line course has also been set up to widen accessibility to CSE training.
- In January 2016 Children/Runaways Family Support Worker was appointed to the Harrow Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to engage with Missing children and complete Return Interviews (RI) and ensure they have an up to date Grab Pack with Police colleagues that can be used to locate them when missing. Children reported missing remains a priority focus. The profile of these children is subject of multi-agency oversight through daily operational monitoring and monthly overview meetings.
- In April 2016 the Violence Vulnerability and Exploitation (VVE) Team was formed as part of the MASH to incorporate the Local Authority Missing Children/Runaways Family Support Worker and the Gangs Co-ordinator posts alongside the CSE Co-ordinator role. This has reinforced the Local Authority's role in responding and supporting CLA children that go missing and reducing their vulnerabilities.
- The VVE team's primary focus is to ensure collaborative working across these key areas, which research shows are often inter-related and that any overlap is identified as early as possible. This also serves to develop key themes and trends, improve collective response through an informed understanding of the problem profile in respect of young people that go missing and experiencing harm.
- Daily reports from the Local Authority's performance data team ensures that the information regarding Missing children can be picked up and responded to in a timely manner. This is also further reinforced by daily Police notification reports of Missing

children and weekly Missing meetings with Heads of Service to scrutinise responses to missing children, including CLA.

- The VVE Team will also attend the following panels where Missing CLA children may be discussed:

Missing Children's Panel – Weekly

Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel (MASE) – Monthly

Children at Risk Monthly meeting – Monthly

Risk Vulnerability Management Panel (RVMP) – Monthly

Gang's Panel – Monthly

Prevent – Monthly

Serious Incidence Group (SIG) – Monthly

This ensures that all respective panels and partners are not working in silos in respect of CLA missing children. This also supports the gathering of soft intelligence & mapping of children by the VVE Team.

Summary

- Harrow CLA children had less missing episodes than Non CLA children. However, CLA children had more reported missing episodes, which would increase the risk to the child. These are usually indicators for a child that they are likely being pulled away from their placement. Although CLA had a high volume of episodes they only represent a small portion of overall looked after children. During the period there were 319 CLA in total of which only 12.90% had a missing episode which in comparison demonstrates this is statistically low in context with total number of CLA children.
- There is an increase in comparative missing CLA data with numbers across London, Statistical neighbours and England. Harrow remains at 10% below Statistical neighbours, on level with London but just above England. This is also in correlation with increasing Child Protection numbers in Harrow. The training and awareness around CSE/ Missing and exploitation also ensures that there is a better method of referral pathways by carers to alert Police and Social Care when CLA are missing.
- Demographic comparisons, gender there's no significant difference between the distribution of gender for CLA that went missing and the overall CLA population in the period. With ethnicity, the majority of missing CLA is of Black/Black British ethnicity. Black children are over-represented as missing in comparison with 8% Harrow population. In terms of age, more of the missing CLA population are aged 16+ compared to the total CLA population in the period. This is likely due to more agency and peer associations. The transition from adolescence to adulthood is also a key stage of transition and independence.
- A missing child can be a significant indicator of CSE. Looking at the children presented at MASE in the year period, CLA children do not have a significant representation. Children that have been CIN/CP have been escalated in care plans to CLA as a protective measure to reduce missing episodes in specialist placements. In terms of what works for missing children, this would be a risk assessed placement, primarily where the child has CSE vulnerabilities as they may well be targeted by other children in placement. Peer on peer

exploitation exists and this needs to be fully considered when a placement is being sought for a child. Partners a Closure order was obtained from the court, meaning that only named individuals could enter the property. This has acted as a form of disruption for the child to visit these premises which was a positive outcome.

- In terms of Locations or 'Hot spots' – a number of missing children including a CLA child was frequently found at one known address within Harrow. Following actions supported by Multi- Agency partners.
- There are CLA children, primarily male that have associations with gangs and involved in youth violence and criminal behaviour. This will generally form the cohort of repeat missing episodes where it will make locating the child challenging. This also makes it very difficult in completing RI when the child is not in agreement to meet with professionals or disclose whereabouts.
- The VVE Team works closely with all teams and key partners, not to simply reduce missing episodes for CLA children but also to analyse and establish contextual risk analysis that better informs safety planning for children.

Recommendations

- Risk Assessment of proposed placements to avoid placing at risk children together and increase risk
- Specialist CSE Placements - Noticeable impact of CSE Placements – reduction in missing episodes
- On-going Mapping of Missing CLA children
- On-going support and analysis by the VVE Team on missing children and key themes.
- Annual training for Foster carers around VVE.
- Limitations – 3 team members, so it creates challenges in terms of geography with relation to looked after children outside of borough to conduct all interviews with a 72 hour period.
- Review of care plans where children are returning to parents/friend/family members in repeat missing episodes.
- Continue to incorporate views of children in RI and into care plans.

Glossary

CIN Child in need

CP Child Protection

CLA Child Looked After

CSE Child Sexual Exploitation

EIS Early Intervention Service

Grab Pack - The Metropolitan Police developed a 'Grab Pack' for use by themselves and Local Authorities to help gather essential information when trying to identify and locate missing children and young people. The HSCB adapted the pack for multi-agency use, so that any agency, school or voluntary sector service could contribute quickly to the process of describing and locating the child/young person. This can be used when it is anticipated that a child/young person might go missing or in response to an unexpected missing or absent episode.

HSCB Harrow Safeguarding Children's Board

MASE Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel

PACE Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation

VVE - Violence Vulnerability & Exploitation

CSE SAFEGUARD TOOL – This is a CSE Risk Assessment tool adapted from the CSE Metropolitan Police Protocol. This has been adapted by the HSCB and CSE Co-ordinator for professionals and colleagues to use across Harrow in detecting CSE but also developing a risk assessment on children where there are CSE concerns.

- Sexual health and behaviour
- Absent from school or repeatedly running away
- Familial abuse and/or problems at home
- Emotional and physical condition
- Gangs, older age groups and involvement in crime
- Use of technology and sexual bullying
- Alcohol and drug misuse
- Receipt of unexplained gifts or money
- Distrust of authority figures