Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE AGENDA

7.00 pm	**Thursday 17 September 2020**	**VIRTUAL MEETING**

Members 9: Quorum 3

COUNCILLORS:

Judith Holt (Chairman)	Tony Durdin	Dilip Patel
Robby Misir (Vice-Chair)	Tele Lawal	Carol Smith
Gillian Ford	Sally Miller	Reg Whitney

<u>CO-OPTED MEMBERS:</u>	**Statutory Members representing the Churches**	**Statutory Members representing parent governors**
	Lynne Bennett, Church of England Jack How, Roman Catholic Church	Julie Lamb, Special Schools Kathy Freeman, Primary Schools

Non-voting members representing local teacher unions and professional associations:
Ian Rusha (NEU)

For information about the meeting please contact:
Taiwo Adeoye - 01708 433079
taiwo.adeoye@onesource.co.uk.

Protocol for members of the public wishing to report on meetings of the London Borough of Havering

Members of the public are entitled to report on meetings of Council, Committees and Cabinet, except in circumstances where the public have been excluded as permitted by law.

Reporting means:-

- filming, photographing or making an audio recording of the proceedings of the meeting;
- using any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later; or
- reporting or providing commentary on proceedings at a meeting, orally or in writing, so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later if the person is not present.

Anyone present at a meeting as it takes place is not permitted to carry out an oral commentary or report. This is to prevent the business of the meeting being disrupted.

Anyone attending a meeting is asked to advise Democratic Services staff on 01708 433076 that they wish to report on the meeting and how they wish to do so. This is to enable employees to guide anyone choosing to report on proceedings to an appropriate place from which to be able to report effectively.

Members of the public are asked to remain seated throughout the meeting as standing up and walking around could distract from the business in hand.

What is Overview & Scrutiny?
Each local authority is required by law to establish an overview and scrutiny function to support and scrutinise the Council's executive arrangements. Each overview and scrutiny sub-committee has its own remit as set out in the terms of reference but they each meet to consider issues of local importance.

The sub-committees have a number of key roles:

1. Providing a critical friend challenge to policy and decision makers.

2. Driving improvement in public services.

3. Holding key local partners to account.

4. Enabling the voice and concerns to the public.

The sub-committees consider issues by receiving information from, and questioning, Cabinet Members, officers and external partners to develop an understanding of proposals, policy and practices. They can then develop recommendations that they believe will improve performance, or as a response to public consultations. These are considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and if approved, submitted for a response to Council, Cabinet and other relevant bodies.
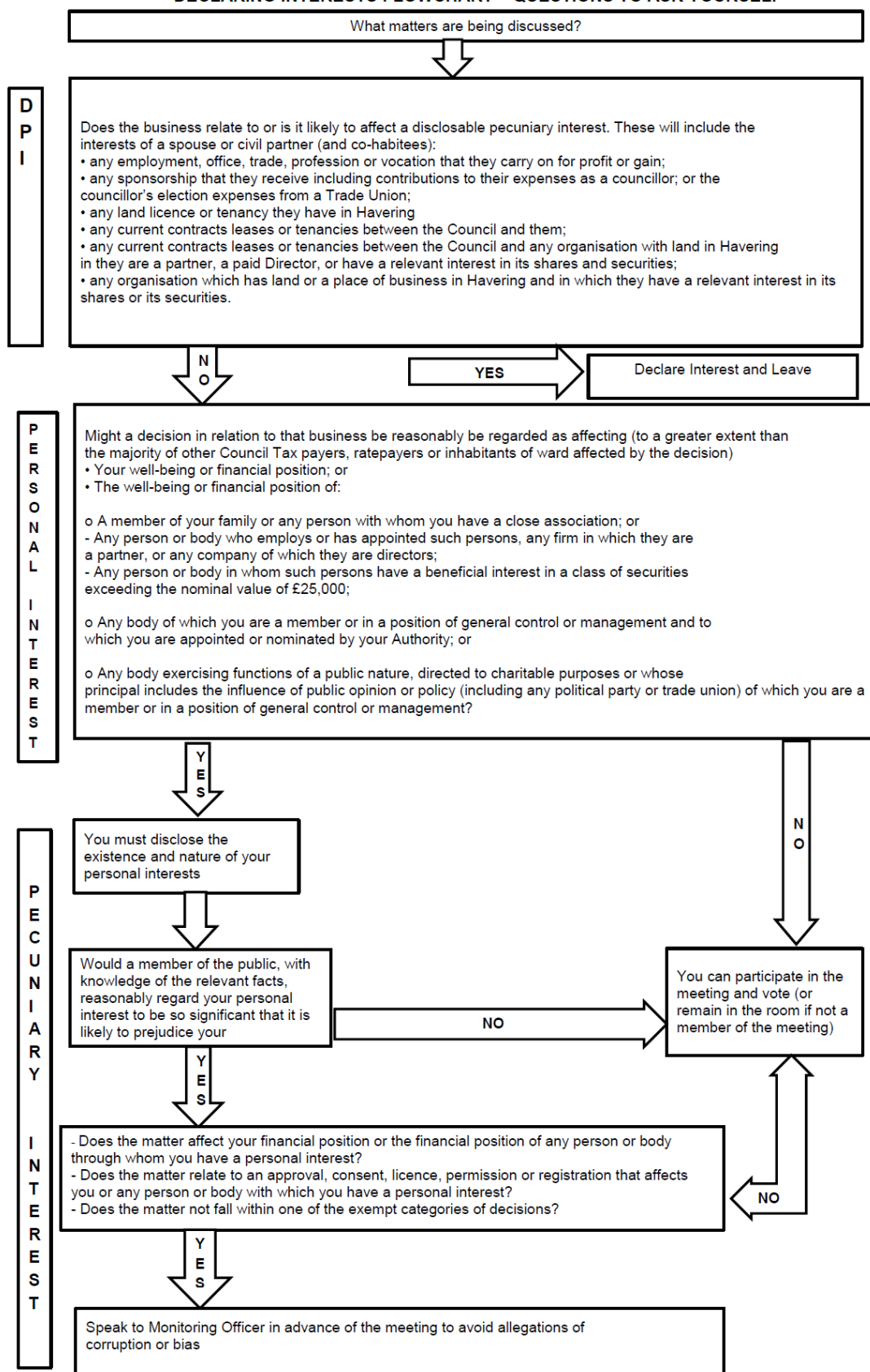
Sub-Committees will often establish Topic Groups to examine specific areas in much greater detail. These groups consist of a number of Members and the review period can last for anything from a few weeks to a year or more to allow the Members to comprehensively examine an issue through interviewing expert witnesses, conducting research or undertaking site visits. Once the topic group has finished its work it will send a report to the Sub-Committee that created it and will often suggest recommendations for the Overview and Scrutiny Board to pass to the Council's Executive.

Terms of Reference

The areas scrutinised by the Committee are:

- Pupil and Student Services (including the Youth Service)
- Children's Social Services
- Safeguarding
- Adult Education
- Councillor Calls for Action
- Social Inclusion

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

What matters are being discussed?

DPI

Does the business relate to or is it likely to affect a disclosable pecuniary interest. These will include the interests of a spouse or civil partner (and co-habitees):
• any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation that they carry on for profit or gain;
• any sponsorship that they receive including contributions to their expenses as a councillor; or the councillor's election expenses from a Trade Union;
• any land licence or tenancy they have in Havering
• any current contracts leases or tenancies between the Council and them;
• any current contracts leases or tenancies between the Council and any organisation with land in Havering in they are a partner, a paid Director, or have a relevant interest in its shares and securities;
• any organisation which has land or a place of business in Havering and in which they have a relevant interest in its shares or its securities.

NO

YES → Declare Interest and Leave

PERSONAL INTEREST

Might a decision in relation to that business be reasonably be regarded as affecting (to a greater extent than the majority of other Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of ward affected by the decision)
• Your well-being or financial position; or
• The well-being or financial position of:

o A member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association; or
- Any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;
- Any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000;

o Any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your Authority; or

o Any body exercising functions of a public nature, directed to charitable purposes or whose principal includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management?

YES

NO

PECUNIARY INTEREST

You must disclose the existence and nature of your personal interests

Would a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, reasonably regard your personal interest to be so significant that it is likely to prejudice your

NO → You can participate in the meeting and vote (or remain in the room if not a member of the meeting)

YES

- Does the matter affect your financial position or the financial position of any person or body through whom you have a personal interest?
- Does the matter relate to an approval, consent, licence, permission or registration that affects you or any person or body with which you have a personal interest?
- Does the matter not fall within one of the exempt categories of decisions?

NO

YES

Speak to Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting to avoid allegations of corruption or bias

AGENDA ITEMS

1   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

(if any) - receive.

2   PROTOCOL ON THE OPERATION OF CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB- COMMITTEE MEETINGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS (Pages 1 - 4)

Protocol attached – To be noted by the Sub-Committee.

3   CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman will announce details of the arrangements in case of fire or other events that might require the meeting room or building's evacuation.

4   DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members are invited to disclose any interests in any of the items on the agenda at this point of the meeting. Members may still declare an interest in an item at any time prior to the consideration of the matter.

5   MINUTES (Pages 5 - 14)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 13 February 2020 and authorise the Chairman to sign them.

6   PERFORMANCE REPORT UPDATE - QUARTER ONE (Pages 15 - 32)

Report and appendix attached.

7   ADOPT LONDON EAST - ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 33 - 72)

Report and appendices attached.

8   PRESENTATION ON THE INITIAL RESPONSE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES TO COVID-19

Presentation to be followed by a request to form a Topic Group.

9   FUTURE AGENDAS-WORK PROGRAMME

Further to communication from the Chairman, Committee Members are invited to indicate items within this Sub-Committee's terms of reference they would like to see discussed at a future meeting. Note: it is not considered appropriate for issues relating to individuals to be discussed under this provision.

10   URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any other item in respect of which the Chairman is of the opinion, by reason of special circumstances which shall be specified in the minutes, that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Andrew Beesley
Head of Democratic Services

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING

PROTOCOL ON THE OPERATION OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB- COMMITTEE MEETINGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS

1. Introduction

In accordance with the Local Authority and Police Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, all meetings of Overview & Scrutiny Sub- Committee held during the Covid-19 restrictions will take place in a 'virtual' format. This document aims to give details on how the meetings will take place and establish some rules of procedure to ensure that all parties find the meetings productive.

2. Notification of Meeting

Once the date for a meeting has been set, an electronic appointment will be sent to all relevant parties. This will include a link to access the virtual meeting as well as guidance on the use of the technology involved.

3. Format

For the duration of the Covid-19 restrictions period, Overview & Scrutiny Sub- Committee meetings will be delivered through video conference call, using Zoom software. Instructions sent with meeting appointments will cover how to use the software. Additional IT support will also be provided to any Member requesting this in advance of the meeting.

4. Structure of the Meeting

Although held in a virtual format, Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee Meeting will follow, as far as is possible, the standard procedure for these meetings, with the following principal stages:

- Chairnan's annoucnements
- Apologies for absence
- Disclosures of interest
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Presentation and consideration of reports

5. Technology Issues

Agendas setting out the items for the meeting will be issued in advance in the normal way, to all parties, in accordance with statutory timetables. The agenda will also be published on the Council's website – www.havering.gov.uk in the normal way. The guidance below explains how the meeting is to be conducted, including advice on what to do if participants cannot hear the speaker and etiquette of participants during the meeting.

Remote access for members of the public together with access for the Press will be provided via a webcast of the meeting at www.havering.gov.uk.

If the Chairman is made aware that the meeting is not accessible to the public through remote means, due to any technological or other failure of provision, then the Chairman shall temporarily adjourn the meeting immediately. If the provision of access through remote means cannot be restored within a reasonable period as determined by the Chairman in consultation with the Clerk, then the remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chairman. If he or she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

6.   Management of Remote Meetings for Members

The attendance of Members at the meeting will be recorded by the Democratic Services Officer clerking the meeting. The normal quorum requirements for meetings as set out in the Council's Constitution will also apply to a virtual meeting of Audit Committee.

Democratic Services Officers will monitor participant involvement during the virtual call to ensure that there are no drop outs. Members will be informed at the beginning of the meeting to use the chat function if they have missed part of the debate, and to requestfor the clerk or Chairman to recap briefly over what was said.

In the event that a Member's video feed has failed but he/she is able to hear what is being said then the Member should confirm as such using the chat function to the clerk.

In the event that a Member's audio and video feed has failed then the Chairman will invite the Committee to determine whether to proceed or adjourn the meeting to a later date.

7. Etiquette at the meeting

For some participants, this will be their first virtual meeting. In order to make the hearing productive for everyone, the following rules must be adhered to and etiquette observed:

- The meeting will be presided over by the Chairman who will invite participants to speak individually at appropriate points. All other participants must remain silent or muted until invited to speak by the Chairman;
- If invited to contribute, participants should make their statement, then wait until invited to speak again if required;
- If it is possible, participants should find a quiet location to participate in the Zoom meeting where they will not be disturbed as background noise can affect participants.
- If there are intermittent technological faults during the meeting then the Chairman will ask the speaker to repeat from the point where the disruption started. Whilst intermittent disruption is frustrating, it is important that all participants remain professional and courteous.
- The Committee Procedure Rules as shown in the Council's Constitution will apply to the meeting in the normal way, as far as is practicable.

8. Meeting Procedures

Democratic Services Officers will facilitate the meeting. Their role will be to control conferencing technology employed for remote access and attendance and to administer Member interaction, engagement and connections on the instruction of the Chairman.

The Council has put in place a technological solution that will enable Members participating in meetings remotely to indicate their wish to speak via this solution. This will be via the 'raise hand' function in the Participants field of the Zoom software used for the meeting.

The Chairman will follow the rules set out in the Council's Constitution when determining who may speak, as well as the order and priority of speakers and the content and length of speeches in the normal way.

The Chairman, at the beginning of the meeting, will make reference to the protocol for the meeting.

Members are asked to adhere to the following etiquette during remote attendance at the meeting:

- All Councillors and participating officers are asked to join the meeting no later than twenty minutes before the start to allow themselves and Democratic Services Officers the opportunity to test the equipment.
- Any camera (video-feed) should show a non-descript background or, where possible, a virtual background relating to Havering and Members should be careful to not allow any exempt or confidential papers to be seen in the video-feed.
- During general discussion, rather than raising one's hand or rising to be recognised or to speak, Members attending remotely should avail themselves of the remote process for requesting to be heard and use the 'raise hand' function in the participants field of the Zoom software.
- Members may only speak when invited to by the Chairman of the meeting.
- Only one person may speak at any one time.
- All speakers and attendees, both Councillors and members of the public, are welcome to remain on the Zoom call until the conclusion of the meeting. The meeting will also be webcast so that it can be viewed by non-participants.
- When referring to a specific report, agenda page, or slide, participants should mention the report, page number, or slide so that all Members have a clear understanding of what is being discussed at all times

Any voting will be conducted by the Clerk asking Members of their voting intentions The Democratic Services Officer will announce the result of the vote and the Chairman will then move on to the next agenda item.

A record of votes and how individual Members voted will be appended to the minutes, following the meeting.

Any Member participating in a remote meeting who declares a disclosable pecuniary interest, or other declarable interest, in any item of business that would normally require them to leave the room, must also leave the remote meeting. The Democratic Services Officer or meeting facilitator will move the Member to the Zoom waiting room until the item is complete, and then return them to the meeting.

9.   Public Access to Meeting Documentation following the Meeting

Members of the public may access minutes, decision notices and other relevant documents through the Council's website. www.havering.gov.uk

For any further information on the meeting, please contact taiwo.adeoye@onesource.co.uk, tel: 01708 433079

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
Committee Room 3A - Town Hall
13 February 2020 (7.00 - 8.25 pm)**

Present:
Councillors Judith Holt (Chairman), Christine Vickery (Vice-Chair), Sally Miller and +Timothy Ryan

Co-opted Members:
Julie Lamb

Church Representatives:
Lynne Bennett

Non-voting Member: Ian Rusha

Apologies:
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dilip Patel, Councillor Gillian Ford, Councillor Carol Smith, Councillor Reg Whitney, Councillor Tele Lawal, Jack How and Kathy Freeman

Absent:
Councillor Tony Durdin

+Councillor Tim Ryan substituted for Councillor Dilip Patel at the meeting.

The Chairman advised those present of action to be taken in the event of an emergency evacuation of the building becoming necessary.

28   **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

No interest was disclosed at the meeting.

29   **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 December 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30   **PERFORMANCE REPORT UPDATE - QUARTER THREE**

The Sub-Committee received the quarter three performance indicators (PIs) update. The PIs are the standards by which performance of services are

measured within the Council. The update provided an overview of performance against the eight performance indicators selected for monitoring by the Sub-Committee in 2019/20.

The report outlined that five of the indicators have been given a RAG status; one had a status of Green, one had Amber and three indicators have a Red.

The report provided the following highlights and potential areas for improvement:

1. The percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), or not known remained at 3.5%, which was lower than the same period last year The service was confident that the continued tracking and recording of Havering learners would improve the performance further.

   Areas for improvement:

2. The percentage of initial child protection conferences held within 15 days had improved during the third quarter but remains just outside of the accepted target tolerance. The figures are impacted by a slight increase in reconvened conferences due to the conference not being quorate. There have also been instances of late notification when an initial child protection conference was required. The service was now exploring ways in which Safeguarding Standards Unit (SSU) could be notified earlier via early alerts of section 47 investigations.

3. The percentage of looked-after children who ceased to be looked after as a result of permanency (Adoption and Special Guardianship Order) was behind target at 12.4%. It was outlined that the two component parts of the indicator were also measured and the percentage leaving care for adoption was within the agreed tolerance level of 8% (Q3 performance is 7.6%). The percentage leaving care due to Special Guardianship Order had been considerably lower this year than last year. The upward trajectory seen in the last quarter was anticipated to continue considering the children who were presently in the 'Family finding' process.

4. Foster carer recruitment across London and nationwide remains a challenge. Between April and December 2019, three new in-house foster carers were approved. There were five further foster carers awaiting final approval. The service had increased its advertising to the public to promote the opportunities. The service was also exploring a range of additional benefits in line with other LAs, which the Council might consider in order to retain and recruit foster carers.

5. The percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (EET) at the end of Quarter 3 was below target at 45%. The statutory DfE methodology includes care experienced young people who were not receiving services and whose EET status is therefore not known, which reduces the percentage considerably. It is important to note that the number of care experienced young adults requiring a service has doubled in the last 2 years with the extension of duties. EET performance based only on young people receiving services was higher at 60.2% and this figure compared well based on the latest available data for our Statistical Neighbours, Outer London and England.

6. The Sub-Committee noted from the report that there was no data available for the number of apprentices aged 16-18 and aged 19+ recruited in the borough. The report indicated that there was no long term direction of travel provided as the monthly data was not directly comparable to annual published data.

    The report informed that data on apprenticeships had been flagged up with the Department for Education and it was envisaged that data would be available for reporting in quarter 4.

    The Sub-Committee noted the report.

31   **ADOLESCENT SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY AND SERVICE UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received an update report on the adolescent safeguarding approach across a spectrum of 10-18 year olds (up to 25 with SEND) focussing on risk to children and young people outside of the familial context.

It was stated that as with many other London boroughs, Havering had increasingly seen the effects of serious youth violence and criminal gang activity impacting on Havering children and young people which had led the service and its partners have developed an "adolescent safeguarding" approach across a spectrum of 10-18 year olds (up to 25 with SEND) focussing on risk to children and young people outside of the familial context.

The borough's approach was preventive, multi-disciplinary and long term to better safeguard children and young people vulnerable to a range of exploitation factors. The strategy was to improve current interventions by bringing services together whilst seeking to plan and intervene earlier in the longer term.

It was noted that the two-fold approach was consistent with the Ofsted improvement plan and Community Safety partnership priorities.

The report informed that one of the key recommendations from the Ofsted inspection of June 2018 was to improve the response to children at risk outside of the home as the service had a statutory duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to produce an annual refreshed community safety plan.

The report provided an update on the developed strategy, via multi-agency workshops to ensure multi-disciplinary input. The strategy and workplan contained various priority areas.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the service continue to successfully engage with a diverse group of young people. In late 2019 the borough was represented at a discussion panel that focussed on knife crime hosted at Havering College. It was stated that engagement workshops would continue as the strategy was implemented.

In operational developments terms, early identification and increased support were identified as key to increased likelihood of prevention of violence and criminal exploitation. The service was coming to the end of a consultation process with staff and would shortly be recruiting specialist staff in addition to commissioning a training offer for the partnership.

The integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Service will come under a single management arrangement, comprising:

- Youth services, including targeted youth services
- Youth offending service
- New adolescent safeguarding team
- Child Exploitation coordination, working across this team and social care
- Clinical health posts
- Data analysis to enable earlier identification of children vulnerable to criminal exploitation.

The new structure, subject to consultation with staff and successful recruitment, is intended to be embedded by March 2020.

The Sub-Committee was informed that a multi-agency strategic partnership adolescent safeguarding strategy group was established chaired by the Director of Children's Services with engagement with community organisations, police and health representatives.

The Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy as outlined was launched at an event marking the next stage of implementation of the service approach to intensify safeguarding of adolescents in the borough.

The Sub-Committee noted the content of the report as an update on the borough's approach to multi-disciplinary adolescent safeguarding.

32   **HAVERING YOUTH SERVICE**

The Sub-Committee received an update report on the work of the Youth Services during 2019, and its focus upon targeted work and increasing need to develop a contextual safeguarding approach.

The report detailed that Havering Youth Service provides a wide range of opportunities for young people to grow and develop new and existing skills, make a positive contribution to their community and where relevant, reduce their involvement in risky, antisocial or criminal activities.

Havering Youth Service delivers an inclusive service that was available to all young people in Havering as well as providing targeted and preventative work in partnership with the wider Children's Services, Education and Housing.

The report outlined that youth work was an educational process that engaged with young people in a curriculum built from their lived experience and their personal beliefs and aspirations. The Youth Worker builds positive relationships with young people based on mutual respect.

It was noted that young people choose to attend a youth provision and engage with youth workers. The youth workers help young people learn about themselves, others and society, through informal educational activities which combine enjoyment, challenge and learning.

The Youth Service operated the facilities at MyPlace Centre and the Robert Beard/Olive facilities delivering 18 weekly projects/clubs and over 10 bespoke additional programmes.

The report provided the following impact and success of Services during 2019:

- The Service was engaged with over 1000 individual young people through club based and outreach projects. The predominant age is 13 to 19 (up to 25 with additional needs.

- The Youth Bus – During the summer, the bus visited 10 different areas and communities within Havering to engage in a range of projects – this included knife crime awareness, art activities, life skill consultations, sport projects, positive activities, group work and more. Over 200 young people have benefited. The project was also supported other activities such as Street Wheels.

- Knife Crime Summit – In November 2019, the Youth Service worked in partnership with Community Safety to put on a Knife Crime Summit. Young people were involved in this event.

- Go Girls, Goodfellas and Life Skills Projects – Go Girls: 36 Referrals – 26 attended in 2019 of which 5 LAC, 4 Early Intervention, 6 CIN Referrals came from Schools, CSE Panel, Social Workers and CAMHS.

- Goodfellas – 8 young people were referred to the programme scheduled for January 2020.

- Co-Producing a Life Skills Project – Currently taking place with Havering Youth Council and other young people from schools and clubs

- Central Park, Harold Hill Sport Engagement - The project was co-produced by a young person leaving care – where youth workers have engaged with up to 60 young people in Central Park Harold Hill.

- The Junior Transitions Project for young people transitioning from primary to secondary school. The programme looked at key themes such as developing skills & confidence for school and life transitions, overcoming fears, personal safety, 'friendships and relationships' and healthy life style.

- The increase in the use of bikes and bike projects have led to a new funded programme called the Bike Shed. (£10, 000 from Ground Work, with another £10,000 from Sport England). The project will enable young people to develop bike maintenance skills, provide peer education, and expand on bike and cycle projects within key targeted areas. Youth workers will also support young people to develop communication skills.

- Duke of Edinburgh (DofE): 60 young people participated and completed DofE awards. 4 SEND young people were part of the cohort.

- Outreach – Working in 12 different community areas with Youth Bus/Outreach Team.

- Summer Programme - 27 different weekly projects/events over the 6 week school summer holidays.

- Youth Bus engagement in Brittons Park to support Kelvedon/Ongar Way. Creation of Kicks Football project at Brittons School.

- Harold Hill Festival: hundreds of young people, and a range of members of the public (Some young people involved in local performances

- One to One Support – In the last year, 23 young people have been supported and mentored on a one to one basis. The impacts of the interventions have reduced the need for young people to access higher tiered services, and young people gaining resilience and independence.

The report informed the Sub-Committee that the next step for the service was to align service provision via the Integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy bringing together services to better to respond to the needs of children and young people at risk outside of the familial context.

The Sub-Committee noted the update report.

33   **ADOPT LONDON EAST - UPDATE REPORT**

At its request, the Sub-Committee received a report that provided background and update on the work of Havering hosted Adopt London East.

Adopt London East formed in response to a 2015 government directive to all Local Authorities to streamline adoption services through the development of regional arrangements by 2020.

Adopt London East provides adoption services for Havering, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham.

The report provided a summary of the development and functions of the agency and contained a brief progress report since the service became operational on 1st October 2019.

The report informed the sub-committee that statistical returns measure long-term trends but Adopt London East in-house statistical records provided clear evidence of early improvements in performance and activity since go-live.

Service transition

It was stated that the transition from four Local Authority teams to one integrated service had it complexity and challenges have been felt in respect of pre-transition performance; service staffing; casefile information transition and demand for adoption support services. It was noted that there have been substantial progress made in all areas.

The Sub-Committee was informed that only one team manager joined Adopt London East and the service had been able to recruit three further team managers from within the service. The service currently has 15 permanent staff in place and 3 interim social workers.

Performance

The quarterly Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB) report for all Local Authorities have been analysed to provide a service baseline. It indicated that performance have declined in all Local Authorities in the 6 months prior to Adopt London East go-live. Decline in performance was linked to a number of factors including: adoption service staff leaving; higher levels of sickness absence; caseload transitions and a delay in operational go-live.

Adoption performances are measured over one and three year cycles and improvements therefore take time to be fully captured in the data returns. Early indicators are however monitored closely within the service.

Performance in respect of child matches had improved considerably. Adopter approvals are predicted to decline further in Q3 and 4 due to the decline in adopters in early stages of approval. Early stage applications have though increased from month to month and improvements are predicted for 2020/21

Target	Previous full year	2019/20 Q1 and 2 All	2019/20 Q3 and 4 predicted All
Adopter approved	42	17	12
Child placed	57	11	24
Adopter support	Not available	60 support 14 contact 600 letterbox	112 support 50 contact 1000+ letterbox

The Sub-Committee noted that demand for adoption support services had increased considerably as has the number of children requiring a placement. In the last reporting year, a total of 57 children were placed. It was likely that less children would be placed this year due to the slowdown in quarters one and two but a total of 167 children were currently receiving a family finding service.

The demand for adoption support had shown a similar increase along with an improved support for our families would improve outcomes for our adoptive children and families.

The report outlined that the board would monitor an increase in demand closely so that savings made from an increase in the number of adopters available to accept a placement would be re-invested into service improvement to ensure the service was able to meet identified increased demands.

The Sub-Committee noted that content of the report.

Chairman

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CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE, 17 SEPTEMBER 2020

Subject Heading:	Quarter 1 performance information
SLT Lead:	Jane West, Chief Operating Officer
Report Author and contact details:	Lucy Goodfellow, Policy and Performance Business Partner (Children, Adults and Health) (x4492)
Policy context:	The report sets out Quarter 1 performance relevant to the Children and Learning Sub-Committee
Financial summary:	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However adverse performance against some performance indicators may have financial implications for the Council.

All service directorates are required to achieve their performance targets within approved budgets. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is actively monitoring and managing resources to remain within budgets, although several service areas continue to experience financial pressure from demand led services. |

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering   [X]
Places making Havering   []
Opportunities making Havering   [X]
Connections making Havering   []

This report supplements the presentation attached as **Appendix 1**, which sets out the Council's performance within the remit of the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Quarter 1 (April to June 2020).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee notes the contents of the report and presentation and makes any recommendations as appropriate.

- That the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee confirms whether it wishes to continue receiving the same performance indicators for the remainder of 2020/21, or select any new indicators.

REPORT DETAIL

1.   The report and attached presentation provide an overview of the Council's performance against the eight performance indicators that were selected for monitoring by the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee in 2019/20.

2.   The final meeting of the 2019/20 financial year was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, therefore the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee has not had the opportunity to consider which indicators it wishes to receive during 2020/21. For this reason, the same eight indicators reported in 2019/20 have been carried forward and the committee is asked to confirm whether it wishes to continue receiving these, or any alternative indicators. The presentation highlights areas of strong performance and potential areas for improvement.

3.   Tolerances around targets were agreed for 2019/20 performance reporting and have been carried forward for 2020/21. Performance against each performance indicator has therefore been classified as follows:

- **Red** = outside of the quarterly target and outside of the agreed target tolerance, or 'off track'

- **Amber** = outside of the quarterly target, but within the agreed target tolerance
- **Green** = on or better than the quarterly target, or 'on track'

4.   Where performance is rated as '**Red**', '**Corrective Action**' is included in the report. This highlights what action the Council will take to improve performance.

5.   Also included in the report are Direction of Travel (DoT) columns, which compare:

- Short-term performance – with the previous quarter (Quarter 4, 2019/20)
- Long-term performance – with the same time the previous year (Quarter 1, 2019/20)

6.   A green arrow (⬆) means performance is better and a red arrow (⬇) means performance is worse. An amber arrow (➡) means that performance has remained the same.

7.   In total, eight performance indicators were previously selected for the sub-committee to monitor and all eight are available for reporting this quarter. Seven indicators have been assigned a RAG status.

Quarter 1 indicators summary
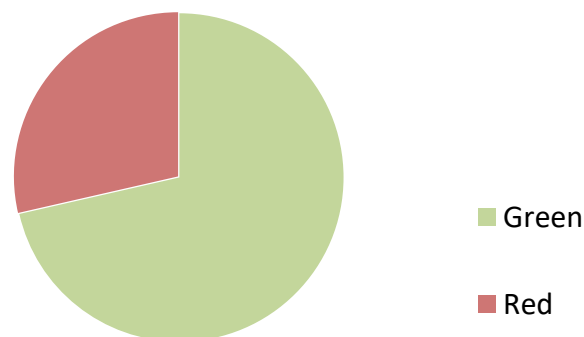
- Green
- Red

In summary, of the 7 indicators:

5 (71%) have a status of **Green**
0 (0%) have a status of **Amber**
2 (29%) have a status of **Red**

Financial implications and risks:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However adverse performance against some performance indicators may have financial implications for the Council.

All service directorates are required to achieve their performance targets within approved budgets. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is actively monitoring and managing resources to remain within budgets, although several service areas continue to experience significant financial pressures in relation to a number of demand led services, such as Children's Services. SLT officers are focused upon controlling expenditure within approved directorate budgets and within the total General Fund budget through delivery of savings plans and mitigation plans to address new pressures that are arising within the year.

Legal implications and risks:

Whilst reporting on performance is not a statutory requirement, it is considered best practice to regularly review the Council's progress.

Human Resources implications and risks:

There are no HR implications or risks arising from this report.

Equalities implications and risks:

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

(i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
(ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
(iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the

Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

Equality and social cohesion implications could potentially arise if performance against the following indicators currently rated as Red does not improve:

- Number of apprentices aged 16-18 recruited in the borough
- Percentage of looked-after children who ceased to be looked after as a result of permanency (Adoption and Special Guardianship Order)

The attached presentation provides further detail on steps that will be taken to improve performance and mitigate these potential inequalities.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

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Appendix 1: Quarter 1 Children and Learning Performance Presentation 2020/21

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Havering
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Quarter 1 Performance Report 2020/21

Children and Learning O&S Sub-Committee

17 September 2020

About the Children and Learning O&S Sub-Committee Performance Report

- Overview of the Council's performance against the indicators selected by the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- The report identifies where the Council is performing well (**Green**), within target tolerance (**Amber**) and not so well (**Red**).

- Where the RAG rating is '**Red**', '**Corrective Action**' is included in the presentation. This highlights what action the Council will take to improve performance.

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND LEARNING INDICATORS

- 8 Performance Indicators are reported to the Children and Learning Overview & Scrutiny sub-committee
- Performance data is available for all 8 indicators this quarter
- 7 of the indicators have been given a RAG status

Quarter 1 indicators summary
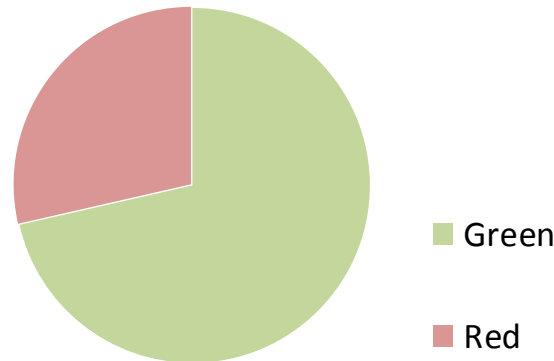
- Green
- Red

In summary, of the 7 indicators:
5 (71%) have a status of **Green**
0 (0%) have a status of **Amber**
2 (29%) have a status of **Red**

Page 24

Quarter 1 Performance – Learning and Achievement

Indicator and Description	Value	Tolerance	2020/21 Annual Target	2020/21 Q1 Target	2020/21 Q1 Performance	Short Term DOT against Q4 2019/20		Long Term DOT against Q1 2019/20	
Number of children missing from education at month end (average for the quarter)	Smaller is better	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	↑	2	↑	3
Percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), or not known	Smaller is better	+/-15%	3.5%	3.5%	3.1% (monthly data - June 2020)	-	2.9% (3 month average Dec 19 to Feb 20)	↑	3.3% (monthly data - June 2019)
Number of apprentices aged 16-18 recruited in the borough	Bigger is better	+/-10%	591 (August 2019 to July 2020)	N/A	380 (August 2019 to April 2020)	-	1,750 (August 2018 to July 2019)	–	460
Number of apprentices aged 19+ recruited in the borough	Bigger is better	+/-10%	990 (August 2019 to July 2020)	N/A	850 (August 2019 to April 2020	-		–	970

- *No short term direction of travel has been provided for the Percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or not known, as the monthly data is not directly comparable to the annual published (3 month average) data.*

- *The full year apprenticeships data for the academic year 2018/19 (shown in the Q4 2019/20 column) is not available broken down by age. The combined target for the two age groups was 1,776, meaning the annual target was missed by 26 starts.*

Quarter 1 Performance – Children's Services

Indicator and Description	Value	Tolerance	2020/21 Annual Target	2020/21 Q1 Target	2020/21 Q1 Performance	Short Term DOT against Q4 2019/20		Long Term DOT against Q1 2019/20	
Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences held within 15 days	Bigger is better	+/-5%	85%	N/A	95%	⬆	82.5%	⬆	73.3%
Percentage of looked-after children who ceased to be looked after as a result of permanency (Adoption and Special Guardianship Order)	Bigger is better	+/-10%	16%	16%	3.6%	⬇	11.1%	⬇	6.9%
Number of new in-house foster carers (cumulative)	Bigger is better	11	12	3	4	-	9	⬆	0
Percentage of care leavers (aged 19-21) in education, employment or training	Bigger is better	+/-5%	55%	N/A	55.7%	⬆	52.9%	⬆	43%

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Highlights

- The latest monthly performance for the **percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), or not known** is 3.1%, which is lower than this time last year (3.3%). Havering's annual performance of 2.9% for last year was also lower than the national figure of 5.5% and the regional performance of 4.2%.

- The number of **apprentices recruited in the borough** has dropped as at Quarter 1 (the academic year up to April 2020) but for the 19+ cohort, performance remains on track to achieve the target of 850 starts. Please note, the apprenticeship targets for this year have been reduced to in line with national performance for the previous academic year, in light of the challenges presented by Covid-19.

- The **percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences held within 15 days** has increased when compared to both the previous quarter and the same point last year. The main contributing factor has been close working between SSSU and the social work teams to ensure early notification of a conference needing to be convened, and reminding social workers and team managers of the purpose of initial and review strategy meetings in line with London Child Protection procedures. Remote working during the Covid-19 pandemic and the use of virtual conferences has also had the benefit of increasing the availability of Child Protection Conference Chairs, which has also contributed to the improved performance.

- Havering successfully approved four **new in-house foster carers** between April and June 2020 and anticipates a further 3 to 4 approvals within the next quarter, with approval rates currently improved and steady. At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic we saw a higher volume of enquiries from people who were at home but many of these were discounted by the service, or discounted themselves. June and July have seen a drop in enquiries and the service is now receiving fewer enquiries from existing foster carers at other agencies, raising the question of whether Havering's package is sufficiently lucrative. There has been a lack of marketing options and visibility in the community due to Covid-19; however we have an on-going presence on Facebook and Instagram and a local radio campaign taking place in August 2020.

Highlights (contd.)

- The **percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (EET)** at the end of Quarter 1 is just above target at 55.7%. The Leaving Care Team continues to support care experienced young people into education, employment and training, with specific actions including:
    - o liaising with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Havering Works for courses to upskill, and funding (e.g. for equipment);
    - o continuing to work with foster carers and placement providers in supporting young people to access apprenticeship opportunities;
    - o our Future Mentors programme - a group of local volunteers who will each work one-to-one with a care leaver to assist with job/college course searches, applications, and preparing for interviews (training for mentors will begin in August / September 2020); and
    - o we recently encouraged our young adults to attend a Zoom event (Uni Connect), hosted by 6 universities to discuss a care leaver's journey into higher education - covering UCAS applications, lecture tasters, Q&A's with undergraduate care leavers and more.

- COVID-19 has had an adverse effect on many of our young adults, especially those working in retail, hospitality, health and hair and beauty. Some have been furloughed, 'lost' their jobs, or those on zero hour contracts have had no work and, as lockdown eases, some are having to re-apply for their positions rather than automatically returning. The team continues to work closely with these individuals and are currently preparing The Cocoon for re-opening, with a dedicated EET area. Workshops are being planned with a focus on CV writing and interview skills and with guest speakers from local colleges, universities, Job Centre and local companies. Some of our future projects also include trips to universities and careers events, and we are in discussions with the Virtual School regarding delivering Functional Skills training at The Cocoon.

Page 28

Improvements Required

- The average **number of children missing from education** in Quarter 1 was higher than both the previous quarter and the same point last year. Performance in this area has, not surprisingly, been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, with more children identified as missing from education (CME) due to the situation. Admissions generally closed in all local authorities following the lockdown and therefore children who have moved were not being admitted to new schools, and were therefore counted as CME; however many parents have reported that they are just awaiting allocation of a school place.

- A number of families from outside the UK have returned home and experienced the same situation in their home country. The action Havering can take in these circumstances is limited as it is the family's right to return home and unless there are social care issues, the Police will not investigate further. Children's Social Care also closes cases if families move abroad unless there are exceptional issues, as they are unable to influence the outcomes; however, they will contact embassies in extenuating circumstances. The CME Officer makes extensive enquiries with the wider family and schools abroad as far as possible in order to establish the families' whereabouts and whether a school place has been secured.

- The team also continues to advise and liaise with schools and parents, and has been actively working to ensure both the safeguarding of children and the best outcomes for our pupils.

Improvements Required (contd.)

- We are behind target for the **number of apprentices aged 16 to 18 recruited in the borough.** The service continues to work with local employers and training providers to promote apprenticeship opportunities, and with Prospects (the commissioned targeted IAG services provider), to maintain high levels of participation. In light of Covid-19, the team is looking to secure external grant funding opportunities and develop a programme which targets 16-24 year olds in Havering seeking education, employment and apprenticeship opportunities. Other actions include:
  - Prospects have secured GLA funding to deliver a mentoring programme in Havering and will be working with local Alternative Providers and Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) settings to support Year 11 learners at risk of becoming NEET;
  - The Young People's Education and Skills Team is supporting DWP with the development of a Youth Hub in central Romford, which will bring together local services and charities to support Havering's young people into education, employment and apprenticeship outcomes. (These will include Prospects, Havering Works, Citizens Advice, Havering Adult College, Job Centre Plus and Havering Volunteer Centre); and
  - The service will continue to work with local partnership groups, with this year's 'Raising the Participation Age' (RPA) event due to be delivered digitally in October 2020.

- The **percentage of looked-after children who ceased to be looked after as a result of permanency (Adoption and Special Guardianship Order)** represents one child who was adopted in Quarter 1, with no children made subject of an SGO. This reflects a downturn in children placed for adoption in 2019/20. Adoption orders were also delayed as a result of court responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of children with placement orders and matched with adopters has increased in recent months and, over time, this will be reflected in the percentage of children adopted.

Page 30

Any questions?

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CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:	Adopt London East Annual Report
SLT Lead:	Robert South
Report Author and contact details:	Sue May; Head of Service Adopt London East. Sue.may@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	Attached is the Annual Report of Havering hosted Adopt London East for 2019/20. This builds on an update report presented in February 2020
Financial summary:	The service is financially self-sufficient and funded through joint arrangements with each partner Local Authority. There are no direct financial implications for consideration within this report

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering   x
Places making Havering   []
Opportunities making Havering   x
Connections making Havering   x

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SUMMARY

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Adopt London East has been formed in response to a 2015 government directive to all Local Authorities to streamline adoption services through the development of regional arrangements by 2020. Adopt London East is a regional adoption agency,

hosted by Havering; providing adoption services for Havering, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham. The agency works in close collaboration with Adopt London North, South and West. Together these agencies provide services for 23 London Local Authorities. The majority of the remaining London Authorities joined a regional agency hosted by Coram BAAF

The Annual Report provides a summary of the development and functions of the agency and contains performance information for 2019/20. Appendix 1 details Havering specific performance information

Statistical returns measure long-term trends but Adopt London East in-house statistical records provide clear evidence of early improvements in performance and activity since go-live.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sub-Committee is recommended to receive and note the report.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Background Information

All adoption agencies are required to provide an annual report to their governing bodies. Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA's) must provide a report to their partnership board and to elected members in all partnership Local Authorities.

The report is the first Annual Report of Adopt London East and provides information on service development and performance in 2019/20. The service went live on 1st October and the report therefore focusses on performance in quarter 3 and 4 of 2019/20. This follows an update report presented to the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-committee in February 2020.

Appendix 1 attached to the report provides information on adoption performance in Havering throughout 2019/20 based on the Adoption and Special Guardian Leadership Board (ASGLB) data returns.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

The service budget was approved by Havering Cabinet on 16th January 2019. The full budget and individual partner contributions were subsequently approved by all partner cabinets.

The partnership agreement signed by all Local Authorities includes the mechanism for annual and in-year review of the budget.

Review of the budget is undertaken on a quarterly basis through the partnership board and annually within the annual general meeting.

There are currently no identified risks in respect of this budget

Legal implications and risks:

There are no apparent legal implications in noting the content of the Report.

Human Resources implications and risks:

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce.

A full consultation exercise was undertaken under TUPE regulations between May 2019 and July 2019. All adoption staff eligible to transfer under TUPE regulations successfully transferred on 1st October.

Informal consultations with staff have continued and all challenges (for example responses to Covid 19) have been resolved in cooperation. Periodic meetings are held with TU representatives whenever requested.

No outstanding issues have been identified

Equalities implications and risks:

An Equalities and Health impact assessment was undertaken prior to the presentation of the Cabinet report as presented on 16th January 2019. This considered all equality dimensions. As Adopt London East has been developed to improve the service offered to our adoptive families and widen opportunities to adopt: the assessment was largely positive. Where any potential issues were identified measures were put in place.

The primary potential issue was in respect of distance from service delivery, which may impact on adoptive families less able to travel through differing ability, childcare or financial issues. This was resolved through an ongoing commitment to local delivery of services.

The Equality and Health impact assessment was presented to the Children's scrutiny sub-committee in February 2020

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Adopt London East Annual Report October 2019 to March 2020

Background information

The Department for Education (DfE) paper, Regionalising Adoption proposed the move to Regional Adoption Agencies [RAA] in order to:

- Speed up matching.
- Improve adopter recruitment and adoption support.
- Reduce costs.
- Improve the life chances of vulnerable children.

All Local Authorities must join a Regional Adoption Agency by April 2020. Feedback from Regional Adoption Agencies in operation for a year or more is positive. Adopters report on improved services and staff on improved job satisfaction. Ofsted reports on Local Authorities with adoption services delivered regionally have been universally positive.

The government continues to drive forward with the structural reform programme regarding regionalising adoption and all but a handful of authorities are either in a live Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) or in an RAA which will go live by October 2020. The government have noted the significant progress in cutting the time children wait to be placed with their adoptive parents and this is a positive outcome for children. However, both the number of registrations of interest and approved adopters nationally, regionally and locally within East London have fallen in recent years. An increase in expressions of interest has been sustained since the service went live last October and we anticipate this will increase the number of adopters approved in 2020/21

The adoption functions of Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham were delegated on the 1st October 2019 to the London Borough of Havering within terms drawn up in a detailed partnership agreement. Adopt London East (ALE) formally commenced operational activity on this date.

Adopt London East works in close collaboration with the 'Adopt London' adoption agencies who provide services for 23 Local Authorities in total. In this way we are able to develop a London wide profile, develop economies of scale and share best practice.

Outcomes

Adopt London East is committed to improving outcomes for children for whom the plan is adoption through:

- Increase in the percentage of children adopted from care
- Improved timescales for placing children with adoptive families
- Fewer adoption placement disruptions
- More children placed in an early permanence placement

- Reduction in the number of children for whom the permanence plan has changed from adoption
- Improved timescales for adopter assessments
- Higher conversion rate from enquiry to approval
- Fewer prospective adopter approvals rescinded
- More timely matching of approved adopters

Scope of service

Adopt London East has responsibility for all adoption led services:

- Recruitment and assessment of adopters.
- Family finding and matching
- Adoption support.

Responsibility for the child remains with the Local Authority. The Local Authority will therefore remain responsible for the child's progress through the court system and for final decisions in respect of care and adoption planning.

Adopt London East has a responsibility for support to Local Authority social workers including dissemination of information on regulation and best practice

Design Principles

The Board agreed the following design principles

- Local delivery - Responsive to the needs of the community
- Close relationships with children's social workers
- Economies of scale
- Cross local authority working
- Innovation and service improvement
- Evolving service design – one size may not fit all
- Provide value for money
- Service informed through the voice of adoptive families

Adopter Voice

Adopters in East London contribute to service development through an Adopter Advisory Board, chaired by an adopter and supported by Adoption UK. Key themes from the work to date include the importance of:

- A supportive social worker at all stages of the process
- Continuity of service delivery both pre and post adoption
- Early intervention and support from a known person
- Peer networks and safe places for adopters and adopted children to meet
- Support with family contact
- Schools informed about attachment and use their pupil premium well.

- Responsive and understanding health services
- All services working together well. A 'one stop shop' for service delivery

Service development post go-live

Governance

All service functions and relationships are detailed within the partnership agreement. The agreement includes:

- Governance
- Finances and Budget setting
- Data sharing agreement
- Dispute resolution
- Termination of agreement

The ALE Partnership board has met on 2 occasions since go-live. A planned meeting in early April was cancelled in the immediate aftermath of the Covid 19 lockdown. A Covid specific meeting of Service leads was held in order to ensure best use of delegated funds.

The Executive Board comprises of ADCS or their representatives with delegation of authority. These members have responsibility for all partnership decisions. A wider board membership considers operational developments and includes representatives from partner agencies as well as the chair of our adopter advisory board.

Service delivery

The central Head Office is in Havering but staff also have a local base in each Local Authority. In this way we aim to ensure that the existing close working and supportive relationships with children's social work staff and partner agencies remain absolutely central to our practice. All adoption records are being transferred to the new Havering Liquidlogic system. We also have agreements in place that locally based adoption staff will continue to be able to access LA systems. The practicalities of access have proven challenging but work is underway to resolve this.

Although services are delivered locally, we will also be able to work together to develop a more responsive service. This will help us to recruit more adopters, to meet our children's identified needs and to provide better support through a core offer delivered by the adoption support workers in partnership with local agencies.

Panel functions are currently retained in each Local Authority. One central ALE panel will be developed in phase 2 of go-live, we expect to be able to operate in-house panels by the end of May 2020. This panel will meet in a number of locations and will have a large central list but one chair. The panel will meet approximately every 2 weeks in order to support timeliness. The panel will make recommendations in respect of both adopter approval and child matches. Decisions in respect of child matches will continue to be made by the Agency Decision Maker in the LA with responsibility for the child.

Staffing

All staff who primarily worked in adoption within the four constituent Local Authorities TUPE transferred to Havering on 1st October 2019. The interim HOS remained in position. She has subsequently been offered and accepted a permanent contract. Only one team manager transferred. The three other team manager positions were filled by through promotion of skilled and experienced adoption social workers from within the service. This left a number of vacancies within the service. Currently one social worker position in adoption support is unfilled and a total of five agency workers cover vacant posts. Three have accepted permanent positions and the remaining two have expressed an interest in doing so.

Work has been undertaken with the senior leadership team, the management team and with all staff to establish the vision and values of Adopt London East.

Ongoing development work continues with all staff regarding the importance of relationships as we build the Adopt London East profile within all Local Authorities, working in a culture of high support and high challenge.

Working across East London with some staff working from local bases has assisted us to maintain positive links and close working relationships with social workers in Local Authority children's services. There has been a need for staff to come together for meetings to develop practice and to ensure that there is good communication between local authorities and the different parts of the service to provide a joined up approach.

Staff still meet in teams and as a service at least on day per week. This has supported service development and has resulted in a strong staff identity as Adopt London East workers.

Business and Service support

Adopt London East has three Business Support Officers (BSO's) who provide a dedicated service. The BSO's are line managed within Havering Business support teams.

ICT and systems development

All staff have use of a Havering supplied laptop and mobile phone. Laptops have Skype connectivity and mobile headsets.

Social work staff also need access to constituent Local Authority ICT systems in order to access information for the purposes of family finding and adoption support. This has proven to be challenging. Interim arrangements are in place in all LA's and more permanent solutions are in development.

The migration of casework data onto Liquid Logic (LL) was hampered by challenges in system development. Development work was complicated by an incomplete transfer from the development team to the permanent LL support team. Recruitment and Assessment files are completed and uploaded. Family finding files are in progress of uploading. Adoption support files will be uploaded as soon as the final development work in LL is completed. All files not on LL are stored in a secure drive. The process of uploading and checking files has been challenging for all and has placed additional demands on the team.

Service accessibility

Adopters, prospective adopters, birth families and professionals may access the service through the Adopt London website, by email or by telephone. The duty telephone is staffed by Business Support Officers (BSO's) between 9 and 5 each weekday. The BSO's have been trained in telephone response. Each team operates a duty response system and calls forwarded from BSO's are answered quickly. A nationwide RAA mystery shopping exercise commented positively on the response.

Adoption Panel

Adoption panels initially remained in Local Authority due to challenges in recruitment processes. This also allowed other aspects of the service to bed in prior to go-live of panels. Adopt London East panels will be operational from 27th May. All panel members will also attend webinar training prior to panel. This will include an overview of Adopt London East, updates on regulation and best practice and a welcome from the panel chairs.

Two panels will operate with a central list of panel members. Two highly experienced panel chairs have been recruited together with a central list of panel members. Panel member expertise includes adoption experienced social workers, adopters, care leavers and professionals from a range of backgrounds. Two panels will operate per month. Initial panels will be held virtually using Skype technology. Panel papers will be sent securely through egress.

Medical advisors will provide advice to panel on their own children either in writing or directly to panel in person or via Skype.

Legal advice will be provided by the Havering legal team.

Partnership work

The Head of Service and Adoption team manager meet on a quarterly basis with the Virtual School Post LAC group. Adopt London East funded a highly successful Cornerstone led virtual reality session for virtual schools and designated teaches on attachment disorder in children.

The Head of Service attended a CCG led meeting of Designated Doctors, LAC nursing leads and clinical commissioners aimed at improving medical advice for panel. This has resulted in a clearer service offer though challenges remain. The ALE region is not coterminous with the CCG regions and therefore must liaise with both NELFT and WELL in order to achieve improvements

We have commissioned Cornerstone, an adopter led organisation to provide a specialist virtual reality tool to assist in one to one support and training for our adopters.

We have also commissioned PAC-UK to provide a helpline and one to one counselling. This service is also available to birth families.

All Intercountry adoption assessments are undertaken by 'Inter Country Adoption'. This commissioned service provides specific expertise and value for money in provision of a highly complex area of adoption work

Partnership work with Adoption UK aims at assisting ALE to develop an adopter advisory board. Progress is slow but a board chair has been appointed and a number of adopters have engaged in consultation processes. We also work closely with We are Family, an adopter led support group providing support to families across London and New Family Social who support LGBTQ adopters

Adopt London HOS meet with the Voluntary sector stakeholder group on a quarterly basis. We also purchase bespoke therapeutic provision through use of the Adoption Support Fund. This work is commissioned from a range of registered adoption support providers.

Performance information

Comparator information

Publicly available comparator information is currently only available up to 2017/18. Regionalisation has changed the landscape of adoption since then and these figures are not relevant to the current climate.

In order to provide some comparison, the Adopt London RAA's worked together to provide some top line statistical information on adopter approvals and child matches.

Adopt London comparator data

Current National comparator data is not available. The Adopt London RAA's have worked closely together to develop some top-line data to assist in pan London service analysis.

Please note: the Adopt London RAA's vary in size

- ALS provides a service for 9 Local Authorities
- ALN provides a service for 6 Local Authorities
- ALW provides a service for 4 Local Authorities
- ALE provides a service for 4 Local Authorities

Other factors affect demand for adoption services and supply of adopters across the four regions.

number of children matched
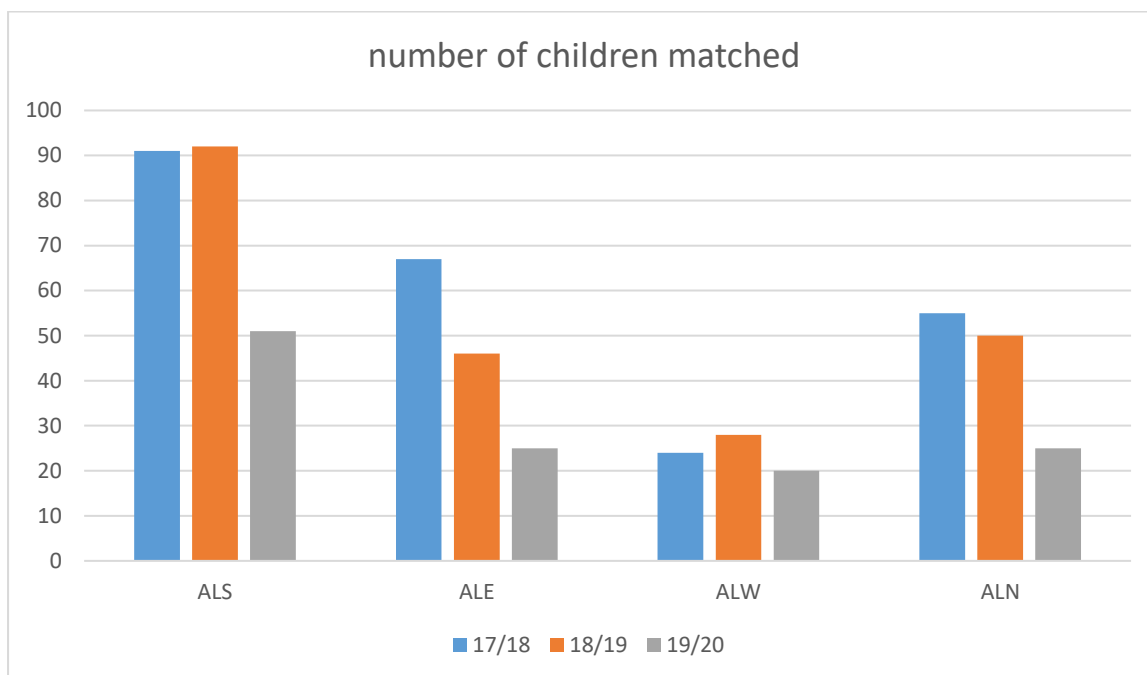
The number of children matched has been chosen as an indicator of child focussed activity as this is the first indicator of likely adoption orders and provides an earlier overview of trend information in adoption activity.

As can be seen, the trend in adoption matches from year to year varies. Two of the RAA's saw a slight increase between 2017/18 and 2018/19 and two saw a decline. The decline was most significant in ALE. All Adopt London RAA's saw a sharp decline in matches in 2019/20.

The decline between 18/19 and 19/20 was the smallest in ALW (28%) albeit from a lower initial baseline. All other RAA's saw a decline of between 50% (ALN) and 44% (ALS) with ALE declining at 46%.

There are a number of factors involved in the decline in matches in 2019/20:

- All regions noted a downturn in activity in Q1 and 2 prior to go-live due in some cases to vacancies created by social workers who did not wish to transition leaving adoption services.
- Transition of large amounts of case information was time consuming
- New working arrangements take time to embed.
- A background rate of declining numbers of adoption orders
- Evaluation of all RAA's post go-live shows a consistent downturn in activity over the first 12 months with an upturn thereafter.

Although not in the scope of this report, matches in ALE show a marked improvement in Q1 of 2020/21
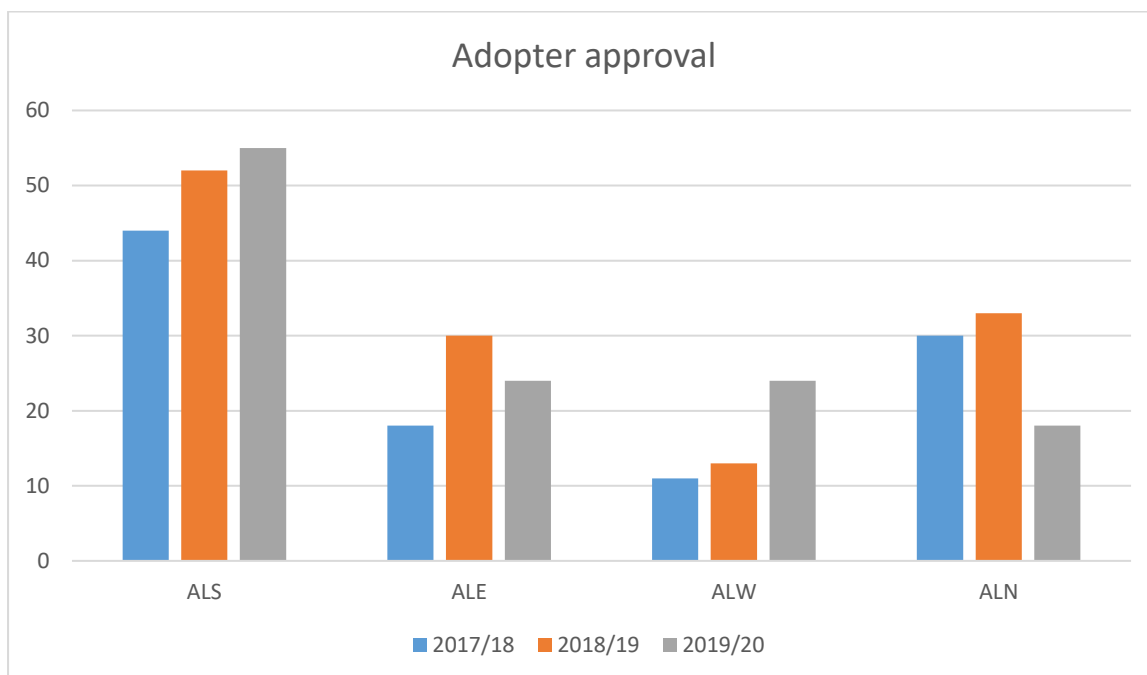
Adopter approval

Adopter approval trends vary across all RAA's. In all RAA's approval numbers increased from 2017/18 to 2018/19. ALS and ALW show a consistently improving figure in ALN, adopter approvals fell markedly in 2019/20 and in the Local Authorities who combined to form ALE approval numbers fell from 2018/19 figures but improved on 2017/18.

There are a number of factors involved in the decline in adopter approvals in 2019/20

- Activity in prospective adopter engagement declined in the 6 months prior to go-live. This led to fewer prospective adopters in the system with marked decline in early enquiries and stage 1 assessments
- There were 50% vacancies in the recruitment and assessment team on go-live
- 24 approved adopters were transferred awaiting a placement. This has led to successes in placing more children in-house but building relationships and matching adopters is time consuming. Some approved adopters may need to be counselled out
- Previously preparation groups were outsourced. This affected both the quality of the assessment and relationship with the adopters. The team developed an in-house preparation group and work book.
- Evaluation of RAA's nationally shows a pattern of initial decline in number of adopter approvals in year one with improvements thereafter

Although not within the scope of this report: the number of prospective adopters in assessment has continued to rise in Q1 of 2020/21

Analysis of Adopt London East: the approach

The performance information and analysis will consider three outcomes in detail:

- Outstanding adopters meet the needs of our children
- Timely matching of children with outstanding adopters

- Adoptive families are happy and achieve the best outcomes

Each outcome area includes an analysis of practice and an outline of the service plan

Outstanding adopters meet the needs of our children

Six adoptive families were approved in Q3 and 4 of 2019/20.

The downturn in approvals in Q 1 and 2 was most evident in enquiries and early stages of approval. The adopter approval process takes 6 months and it is therefore not surprising that this curve has been slow to turn.

Recruitment and assessment staff had to get to know adopters waiting for placement and provide an initial focus on placement of children with adopters waiting. Some had been waiting for over 2 years.

Staff also had to develop new preparation groups and adopter workbooks.

Challenges were exacerbated by staffing issues. Two managers were recruited from within the recruitment team and we have struggled to recruit to these posts. Agency staff have not proven to provide an effective resource.

A strong performance management process has been developed and we are confident the curve will begin to turn.

The chart below shows a steady increase in the average number of children matched to in-house adopters per month. This includes both ALE children and children from other Local Authorities. At the end of Q2; 24 adopters were awaiting placement. This has reduced to 19.

We are actively working with all adopters waiting.

Adopter approval and matches
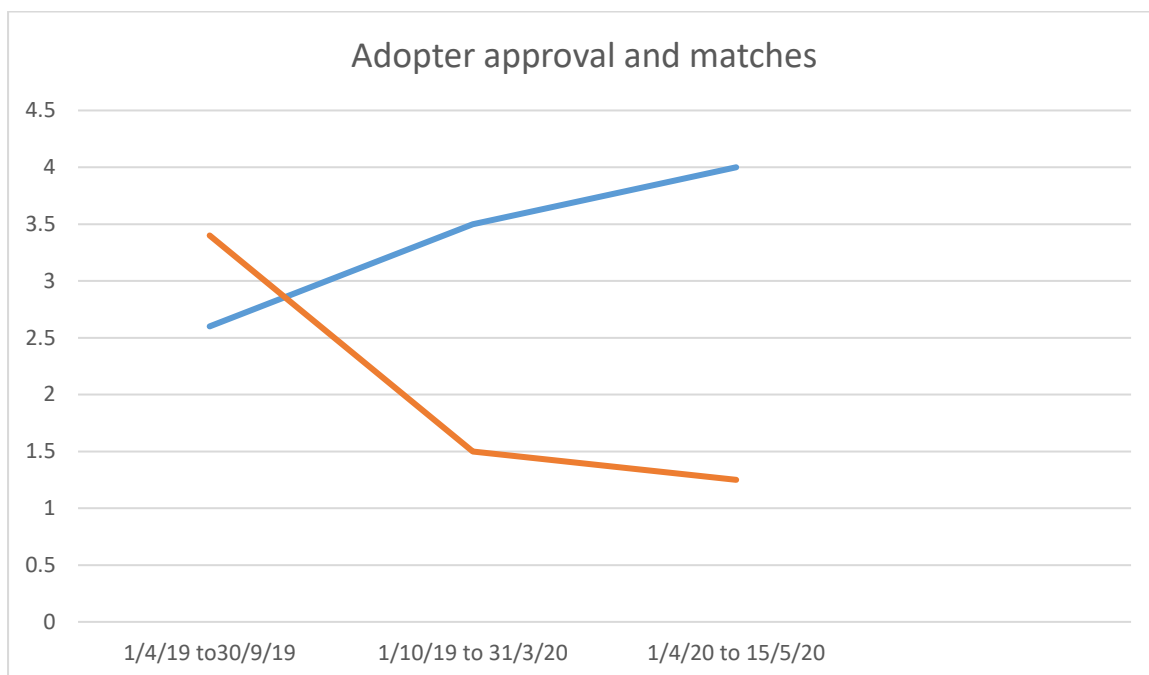
Adopter Approval Matches to approved adopters

Enquiries

Enquiries initially peaked in October following the launch then steadily climbed to January and February. The apparent small dip in February may be explained by the shorter month. All RAA's noted an initial dip in enquiries in the run up to lockdown and in the first few weeks of lockdown. Although not directly in the scope of this report, enquiries have begun to recover in April and May

Enquiries by month
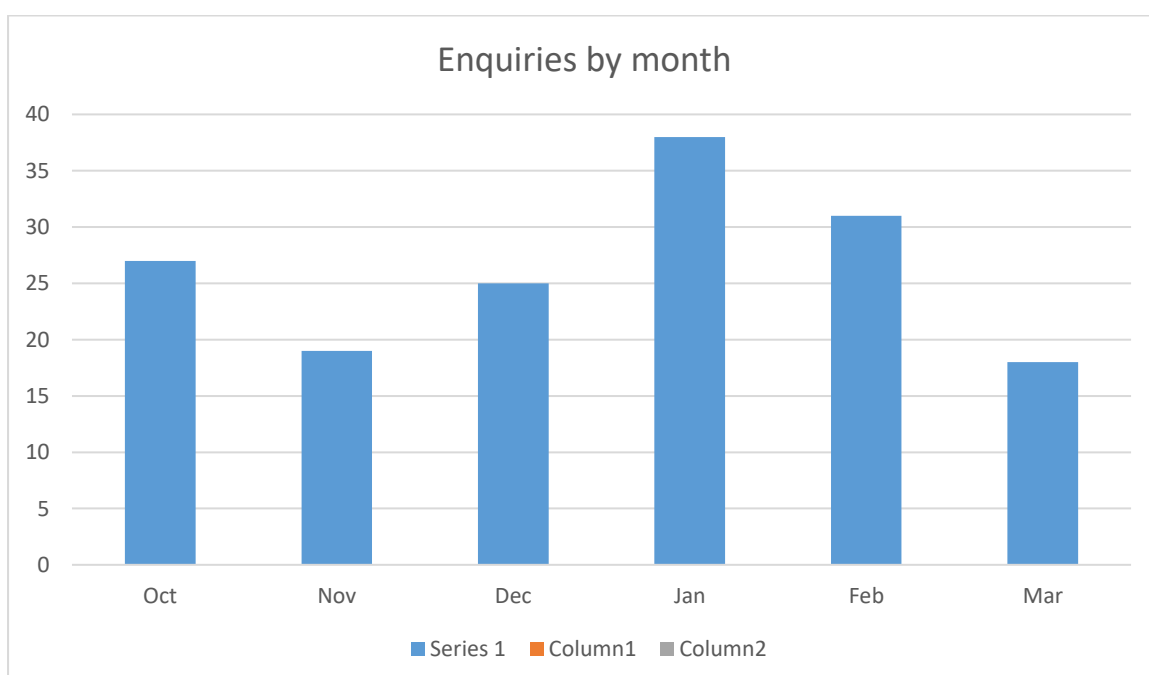
Workload analysis

The workload analysis evidenced improved throughput of adopters in assessment and increasing volume of work

Stage	Jan 20	March 20	Comment
Enquiry	40	21	Timeliness improving
Stage 1	14	17	Slight increase in throughput
Stage 2	5	9	Continued increase
Approved and awaiting placement	24	19	Reduction in numbers through active family finding
Child placed pre - order	19	18	
Adopter awaiting match	24	19	Reduction in waiting times – further review will be undertaken

Prospective adopter characteristics

The following charts consider characteristics of all applicants to identify which community groups we are reaching

Ethnicity

The vast majority of applicants are White British. A targeted community based campaign to recruit Black African and Caribbean adopters was due to be launched in March but has been delayed until September following the Covid lockdown.

Although a only small number of adopters from Asian communities come forward there is no national shortage of adopters from these groups

Ethnicity

Legend: ■ White British ■ Asian ■ Black African/Carribean ■ White Other
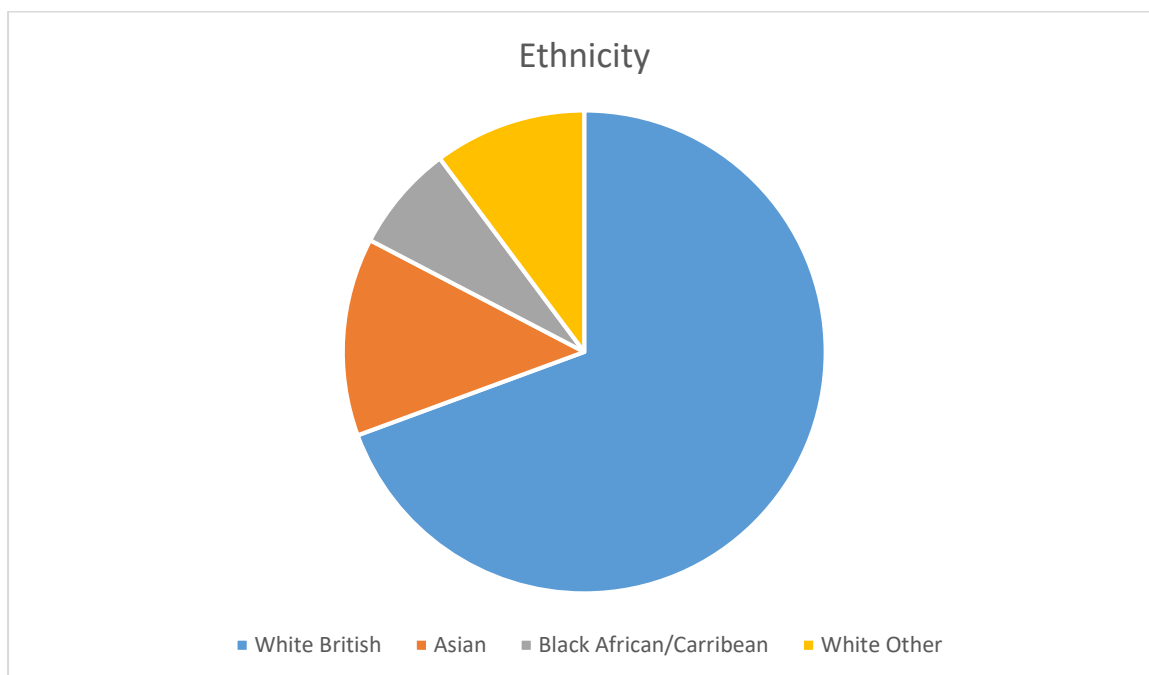
Sexuality

The vast majority of prospective adopters are heterosexual. Slightly more gay men than Lesbian women have applied to adopt. This may indicate an untapped resource. A specialist recruitment event attracted more gay and lesbian couples and further partnership work with New Family Social will be undertaken

Legend: ■ Heterosexual ■ Gay ■ Lesbian ■ 4th Qtr

Service plan

Development area	Action	Comment	Progress
Staffing	Recruitment of agency workers Recruitment of permanent workers Recruitment of Independent SW's to undertake additional assessments	Challenge of recruitment to 2 vacant posts	Agency workers recruited – high turnover In advert 3 ISW's recruited
Information evening	Develop positive presentation Recruit adopters to speak	Positive feedback from adopters 1 key speaker others to be recruited	Completed Transferred to web based
Prospective adopter Preparation	Develop preparation group	Developed and delivered by Jan 2020 Positive feedback	Completed now being reviewed for web based delivery
Statutory checks	Develop system and tightly monitor returns	Developed Robust monitoring required Further work with CCG re influence on GP's required	Completed
Assessments	Develop QA process for assessments	All assessments QA'd Mid-point progress review to be implemented	Completed – to review
Performance management	Develop timescales and monitoring tool		Completed Compliance monitored

Timely matching of children with outstanding adopters

Local Authorities were given permission to delay Q4 ASGLB reports figures folloiwng the Covid lockdown. This has meant that timeliness figures cannot currently be accurately reported.

Progress in placement of children can be reported.

A substantial drop in placement numbers was evident in 2019/20 Q2 (figures have been rounded up to full year equivalent for comparison on the chart below) This was primarily due to a number of adoption staff chosing to leave the service prior to regionalisation.

Adoption staff in ALE had to work hard to collate case file information, work within regional systems and develop new relationships. Progress was herefore slow in the first few months after go-live. Despite this the final year end figure is higher than predicted from Q2 reports.

Despite the impact of Covid, the curve continues to move upwards

The Q2 figure in the chart below reflects the annual position should placements have continued at the same rate.

Children placed
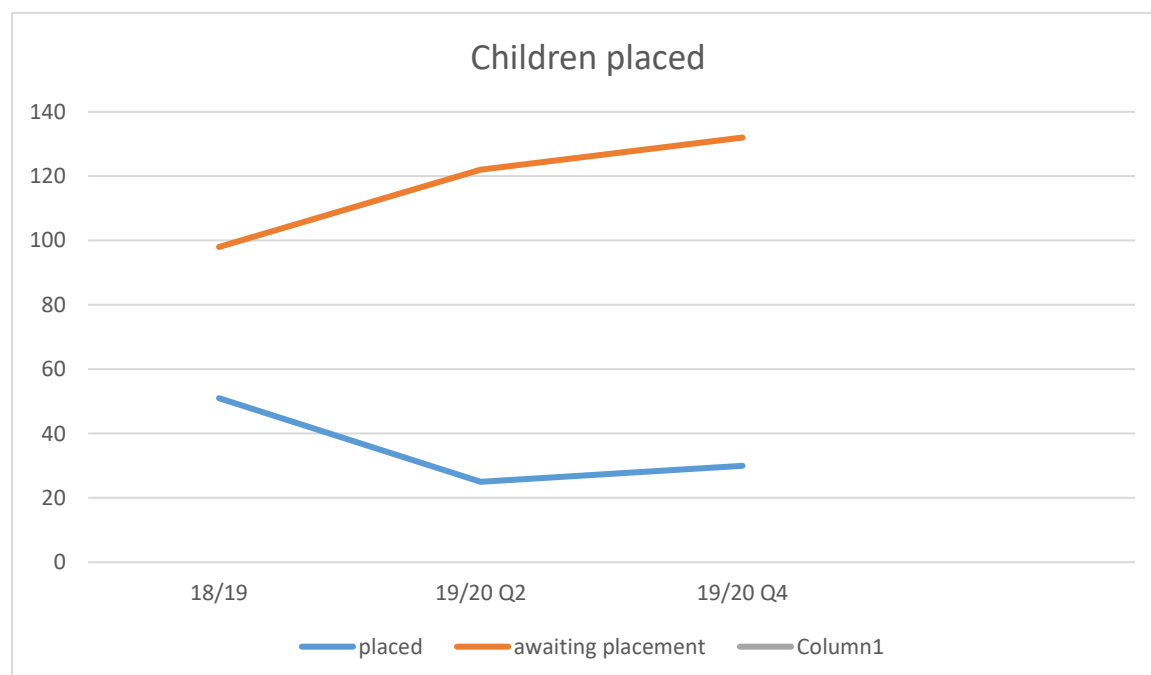
Adopt London East is currently working with 164 children at all stages in the family finding process. Demand is highest in Tower Hamlets with LBBD and Newham also having substantial demand on services

	Newham	LBBD	Havering	Tower Hamlets
Unborn baby	2			7
Early monitor	10	1		2
Parallel planning	1	17	2	21
ADM	1	1		
Family finding	6	8	4	19
Progress to match	4	4		6
Matched placed	14	21	6	1
Adoption no longer the plan	1		2	4
Total	**39**	**52**	**14**	**60**

Demand is highest in Tower Hamlets with LBBD and Newham also having substantial demand on services

All family finding

- Newham
- LBBD
- Havering
- Tower hamlets
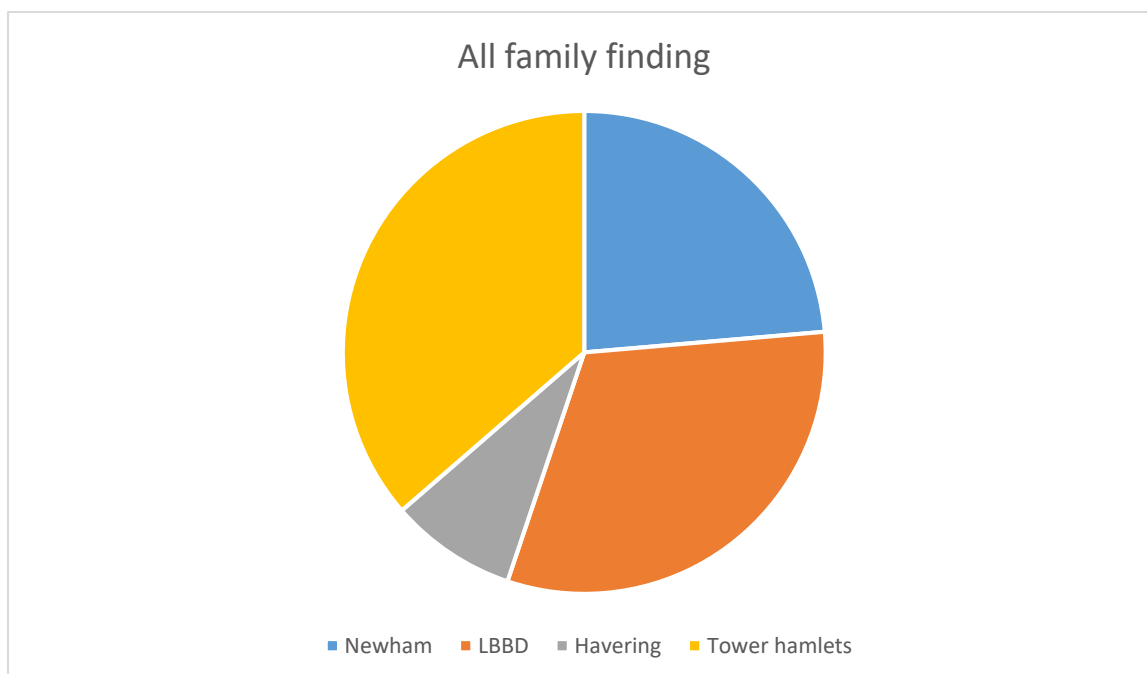
When the active phases of family finding are considered, demand is considerably higher in Tower Hamlets than elsewhere in the region

family finding

Legend: ■ Newham ■ LBBD ■ Havering ■ Tower Hamlets
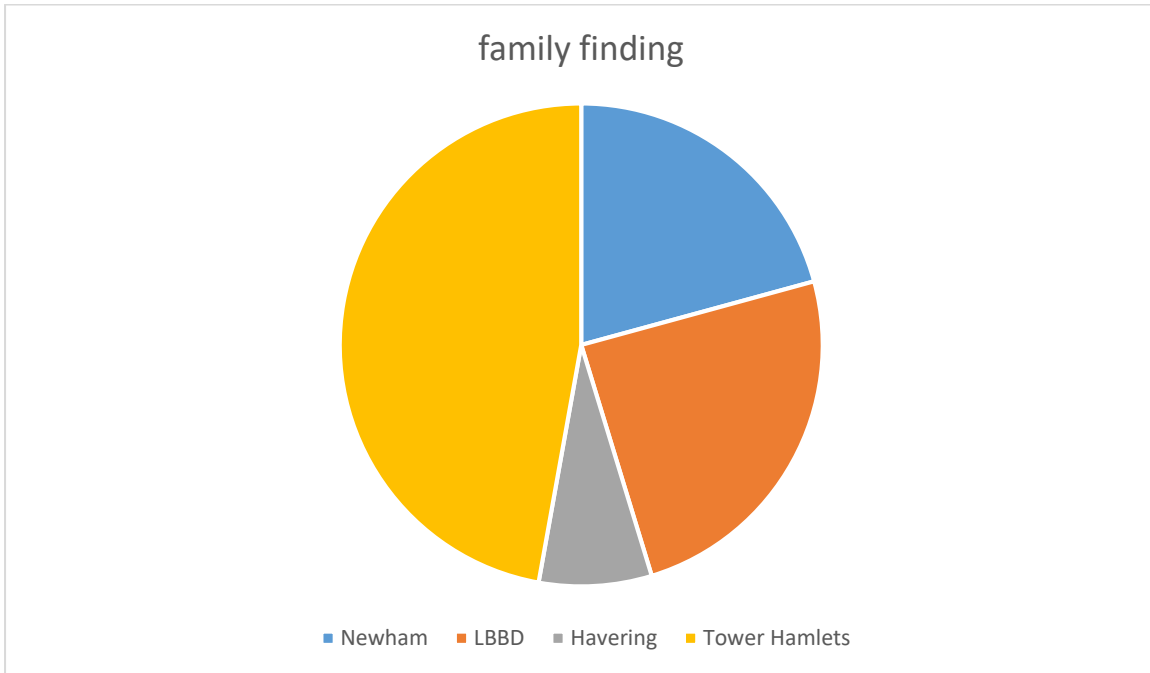
**Age of children in active family finding**

The age of children in active family finding was considered at this more accurately reflects the age of children moving towards placement. The majority of children are aged between 1 and 4 with a substantial number of children up to age 9. Improvements in early assessment and early permanence should bring the age range down.
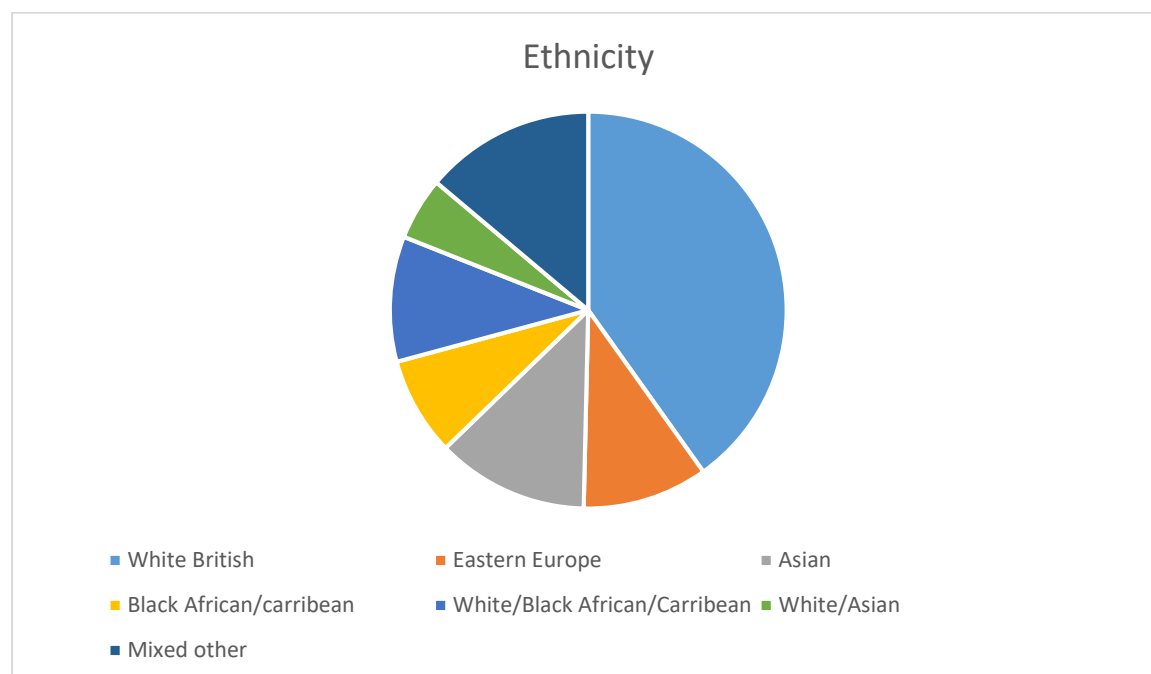
You have 2 collums for 3-4 below
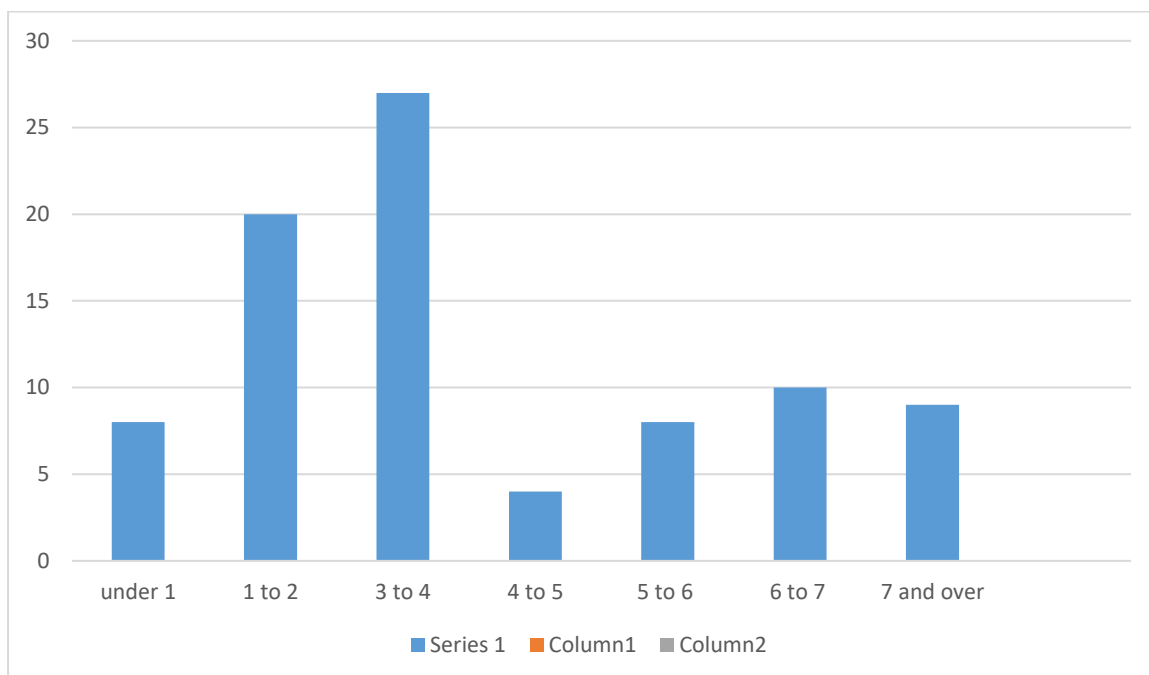
Sibling group

30 children require solo placements; 34 require a placement with a sibling (in 17 family groups) and 6 require a place with 2 siblings (in 2 family groups of three)
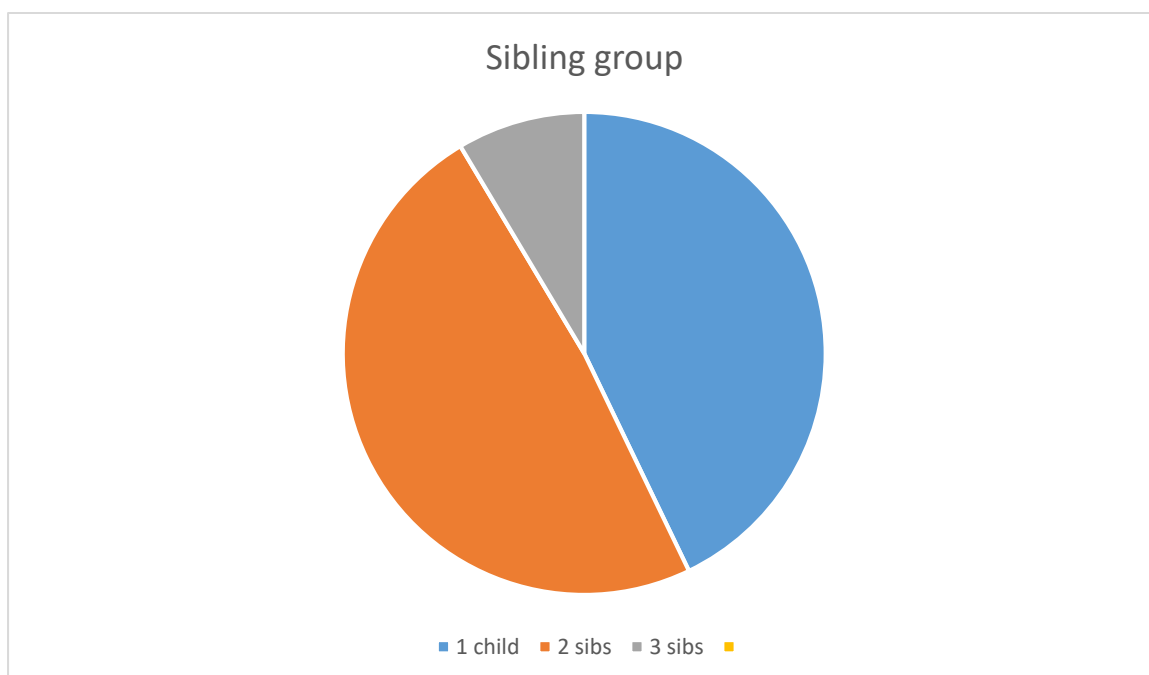
Ethnicity

Detailed information on each childs family heritage. For the purposes of analysis I have conflated several groups. The largest single group remains White British children with smaller percentages from Black African/Carribean and Asian populations. An increasing percentage is made up of Eastern European groups. Our diverse population is reflected in a large number of childre with parents with differing ethnicity.


Ethnicity

- White British
- Eastern Europe
- Asian
- Black African/carribean
- White/Black African/Carribean
- White/Asian
- Mixed other

Service Plan

Development area	Action	Comment	Progress
Staffing	Full staffing. Back fill for long term sick leave Staffing insufficient to meet demand	One staff member off sick to end March	Full staff in place On-going review of workload
LA relationships	Locally based staff Agree strategic and		Staff in place

	operational leads in all LA's Develop positive working relationships		
Access to LA records	Identify solutions to access LA records on read only basis to ensure information flow is seamless	This has proven difficult Further work ongoing	Access in place in 2 LA's and partial access in one other
Protocols	Protocols developed and shared with LA services	High staff turnover – to review and re-issue	Completed – under continuous review
Relinquished babies and Early permanence	AP to take lead role in development and delivery		
Tracker	Develop effective tracker ASGLB compliant	System glitches	Completed – to separate into 4 trackers due to local need and system glitches

Adoptive families are supported to achieve happiness and the best outcomes
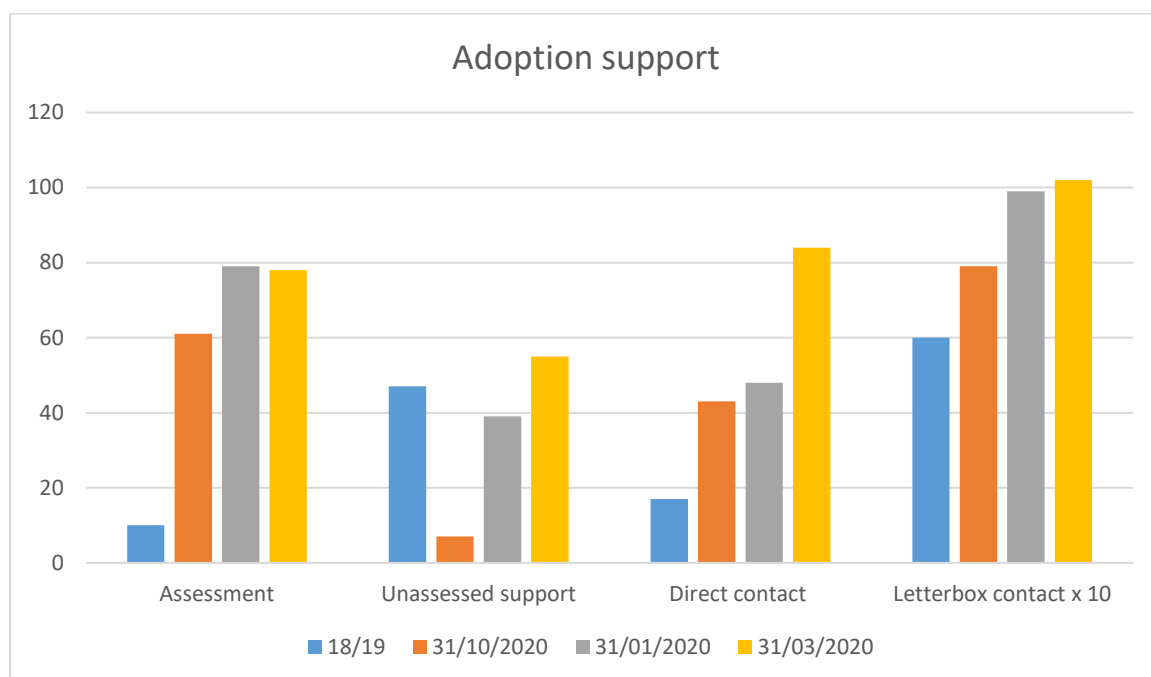
Adoption support

All 2018/19 figures were based on self reporting by each Local Authority. Adoption support was typically provided by one worker, services were responsive but often not subject to formal assessment. Numbers of adopters requiring adoption assessment were higher than initially reported and increased in the first three months following go-live.

Numbers in assessment have stablilised but the majority of cases in unassessed support require assessment and are receiving interim support whilst awaiting allocation for assessment.

Numbers in direct contact were higher than reported prior to go live and have continued to increase. This is partially due to increasing numbers of adoptions including direct support and primarily due to some cases not being passed over to ALE on go-live.

Numbers in letterbox contact are 40% higher than previously estimated and continue to increase slowly.

	Tower Hamlets		Havering		Newham		LBBD	
	Jan 20	Mar 20	Jan 20	Mar 20	Jan 20	Mar 20	Jan 20	Mar 20
Assessment	23	32	18	20	19	19	7	7
Unassessed support	0	11	17	19	0	8	5	15
Direct contact	15	22	0	1	21	28	22	33
Total	38	66	35	40	40	55	34	55

The total number of adoption support cases has increased by 32% in three months. Numbers of families in assessed work has increased by 14% however a number are being provided with interim support awaiting allocation.

Numbers of adoption support cases vary greatly between Local Authorities. The service will work towards consistency of offer and it is likely that this will show larger increases in those Local Authorities with a smaller local offer.

Not all Adopters living in a Local Authority area will have been approved by the Local Authority or have children placed from the Local Authority in which they live but most will have been eligible for services from the Local Authority in which they reside.
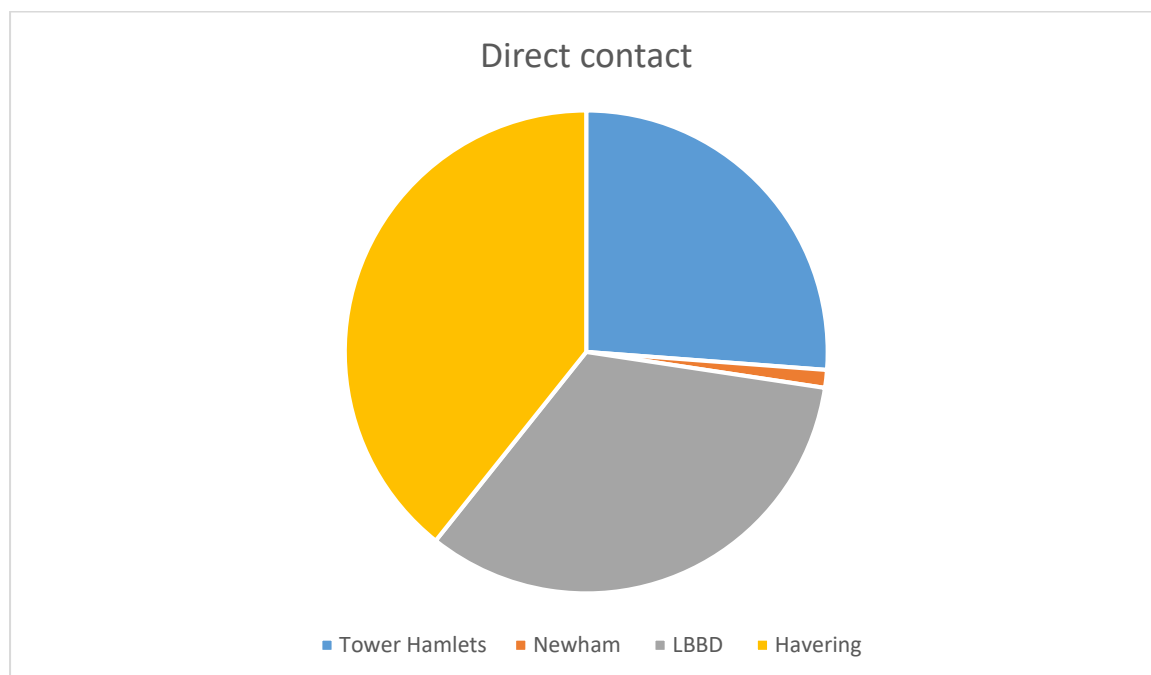
Number of cases in assessment

LBBD have a history of placing children in-house and of provision of direct therapeutic support. Many complex cases did not transfer at the point of go-live and continued to receive services from LBBD. Cases will close or transfer at an appropriate point and referrals from LBBD will increase as a result.

Tower Hamlets has the most adopters in assessment with Havering and Newham having roughly similar numbers. A larger number of adopters in Havering are awaiting assessment and numbers will increase in this area

■ Tower Hamlets   ■ Newham   ■ LBBD   ■ Havering
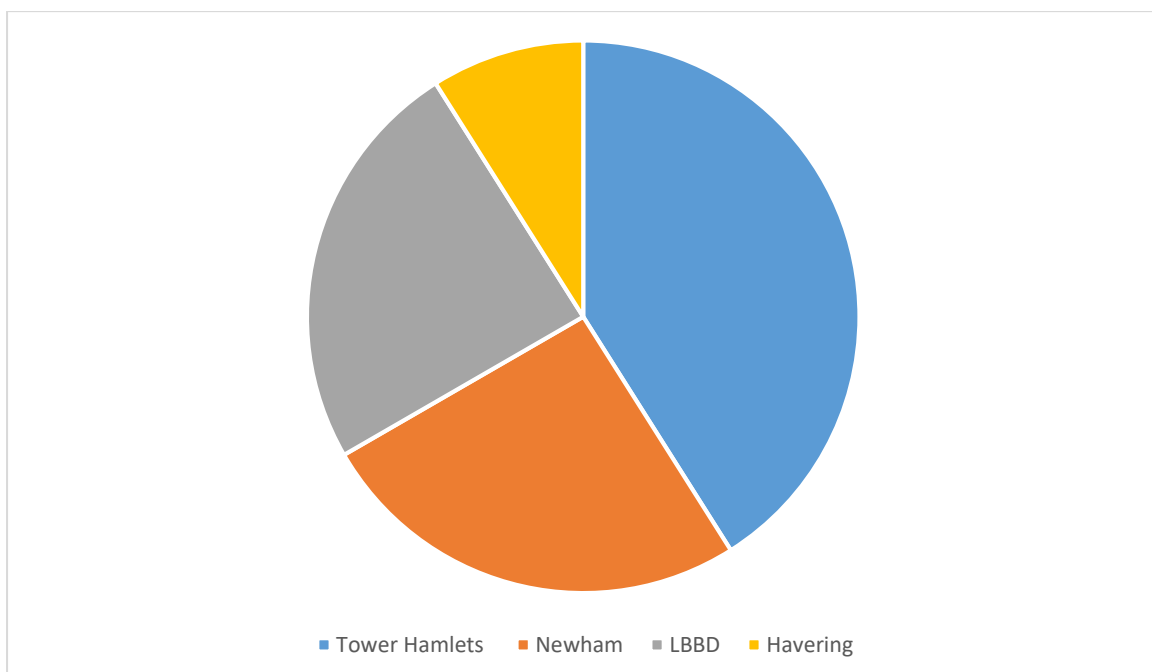
Number of cases with direct contact

Supported direct contact is relatively high in all Local Authorities except Havering. It is likely that promotion of direct contact will increase this area of work in Havering

Direct contact

Tower Hamlets ■ Newham ■ LBBD ■ Havering

Service plan

Development area	Action	Comment	Progress
Staffing	Recruit to vacant post	Advanced practitioner appointed to panel advisor post Usuccesful in appointing agency worker	Advert out
ASF	Register agency	Required for applications	Complete
Adopter led support	Liaise with existing peer support networks Work with Adoption UK on adopter advisory board	All networks visited – most in havering Formal consultation with adopters with representation on baord	Complete Chair appointed, small membership, first report and consultation
Develop core offer	80% direct work to be assessed Improve early offer to all adopters	Develop structure for planned interventions Some commissioned services offer direct access	Some delay in assessments due to staffing challenges

		Improved working with peer support networks	
Develop core adopted adult/birth family offer	Develop protocol for clarity of role Develop effective commissioned offer	This aspect of work has been delayed due to pressure on the adoption support offer Birth family support undertaken wherever possible	
Improve partnership offer	Develop effective working relationships with key partners Undertake joint delivery/programmes where apropriate	Challenge with health services due to differing CCG's	Termly joint meetings with virtual schools Training for LAC leads with Cornerstone
Review commisioned services	Review and develop effective commissioning strategy	Pan London approach wherever possible commencing with Adopted adult and birth family services	Y1 services re-commmissioned as previous year. Review ongoing

Adopter consultation

Adoption UK were commissioned in order to work with us to develop engagement with our adopters.

The model used was to recruit an advisory board chair and a number of advisory board members who would constitute our advisory board and develop adopter activities as part of an engagement programme.

There is not a strong history of adopter engagement in service development in East London and progress has been slow. We are now also working with We Are Family (WAF) a London wide peer support group to further develop our partnership and engagement strategy.

Two adopter events were held immediately before service go-live to engage with our adopters and seek their views on service provision.

These events were supported by Matt Simpson, the chair of our developing adopter advisory board. Matt produced a report summarised below:

Outside of education, post-adoption support was clearly the most pressing subject for the group of existing adopters. The general consensus was that access to far greater support was required and that adopters felt they were largely left to cope with many challenges of bringing up adopted children largely alone. This applied both to those who've adopted relatively recently but also to those 5+ years in.

One adopter said: "The most vital thing that all adopters want & need is a friendly, nice, kind warm voice at the end of the line. Someone supportive and non-judgmental who will talk them through whatever issues they are having. This is sadly lacking."

The conversation around support predominately focused on attachment, and the needs of adopters who are parenting children with attachment challenges. That support could relate to better training in the pre-adoption phase, access to counselling or other related support post-adoption and better access to a range of information and guidance. There was the view that the post-adoption support plans needed to be much more detailed.

A couple of adopters also spoke of valuing more support and practical guidance around contact: particularly in cases where contact is more complex (e.g. a number of birth siblings). Again, a feeling that adopters were largely left to their own devices in scenarios that are often complex.

There were also some voices of concern around life stories: examples of where adopters had been left for long periods without receiving the documents from the authorities, and even when they did materialise they were not fit for purpose. My personal experience here was exactly that: long delays and then ultimately a life story that had been mostly copy-and-pasted from the CPR and was entirely unsuitable for children.

Lack of formalised peer-to-peer support was also raised as an issue. In a number of cases, adopters had built their own support groups – e.g. coffee mornings for adopters – and expressed how important they were in terms of emotional and practical support. But that wasn't universal and there were adopters who didn't yet have the benefit of such groups. Better information and communication about where these and other organic peer-to-peer groups already exist would be of value, as would any opportunities to broaden the reach and number of peer-to-peer support groups with support from the RAA.

Prospective adopters pointed to the value of engaging with existing adopters so, again, any opportunities to broaden the scope of peer support during the approval and matching process would be valued.'

Matt also produced a series of recommendations for improvement work. All recommendations have informed our work in partnership

1 Facilitation and support of peer-to-peer support groups
It's clear that the peer-to-peer support groups (e.g. coffee mornings) that spring up organically are of great value to adopters. But not everyone is aware of or has access to such groups. The RAA could address this through a mapping exercise of existing groups and – with permission from the organisers – could then pro-actively promote these to adopters (e.g. through a dedicated page on the RAA website, links in newsletters, communication at training and events.)

Moreover, the groups themselves could be more pro-actively supported by the RAA – e.g. by delivering information about new services, developments in policy etc directly to the group organisers to disseminate through their networks. Could there also be an opportunity for groups to apply for small amounts of funding to put on their own events? Perhaps someone within the RAA could be assigned responsibility for the facilitation and support of peer-to-peer support groups so there is a "go-to" person for group organisers?

2 Life story quality, delivery and guidance
As detailed above there appeared to be frustration around the quality of life stories and the (lack of) speed at which they're delivered to adopters. Should there be an agreed deadline for these post-placement and the targets measured? In terms of the quality, while of course all life stories are different there should be enough similarities in the appropriate format / style / structure to have a consistent template that social workers can adapt as appropriate. I suspect this does already exist, but feedback from adopters suggest it isn't being applied consistently (recognising of course that often the life stories for East London adopters will be coming from other RAAs.)

Similarly, there are enough common themes (e.g. drug dependency, domestic violence, alcoholism, neglect) to create better guidelines for both social workers and adopters as to how to relate these in age-appropriate language. Could, for example, "best-in-class" life stories from adopters be anonymised and shared with new adopters?

3 Pro-active communication
There are some quick wins here. Adopters would value a simple email acknowledgement that documents or information has been received. They would value more pro-active communication, especially in the approval process, rather than feeling they have to chase for information. Could there be a process whereby social workers are encouraged to send an update every, say, fortnight to reassure prospective adopters things are moving forward? (And something similar for adopters in their first six months of placement?) Can there also be further focus on ensuring that all correspondence is logged and filed?

4 Consolidation of information and advice
As detailed above, there's no doubt there is more support, information and advice out there than perhaps most adopters realise. Awareness is an issue. Another quick win – particularly with the formation of the RAA – would be to consolidate all of this information into a central web portal accessible to adopters and heavily and repeatedly promoted. This should be become the first port of call for adopters in the region whenever they're searching for information. It can contain links to training, advice, counselling, social networks, resources, support services, events, peer-to-peer groups and – in particular – information regarding the education of adopted children. Could one person in the RAA be made responsible for ensuring this is always kept up to date?

5 Named key social worker

It is of course desirable that adopters keep the same social worker throughout the whole process. Could there be an additional focus on trying to ensure this? We acknowledge that that isn't always possible, but where it isn't could a process be implemented where whenever a social worker moves role or leaves the RAA, the adopters who fall under their remit are pro-actively contacted with the details of the social worker who'll take over responsibility for them? That should even apply when a social worker goes on holiday as that may coincide with a critical time during which an adopter requires support.

6 Attachment training

Could there be an even greater focus on attachment in the training for prospective adopters? In particular, could an experienced adopter lead a module specifically relating to their experiences of attachment issues and how they've dealt with them?

7 Post-adoption training

While we appreciate that this requires additional resource, there was a strong feeling that while the training in the approval process is valuable, the time when you perhaps most need guidance is in the early months after placement. Could a programme be put in place for post-adoption training for adopters in their first six months of placement?

Complaints and compliments

In the 6 months following operational go-live, the service has had one complaint regarding a late payment of an invoice for provision of a training course. The training course was delivered prior to go-live and the invoice initially sent to the lead LA in the ELPAC consortia in error. This was resolved at stage 2 through payment of this invoice and an apology.

The service has received numerous informal compliments and has logged numerous compliments from adopters, birth families and professionals.

Compliments include:

Adopters: thank you for all your support and help in creating our family

Parent: it was a relief to be able to discuss everything and not worry about judgement

Adult: I enjoyed meeting you today and was very happy with your sensitivity

Social Worker: I thank you for your support and continued good practice

LA Legal: Thank you v helpful, I have not received a service as good as this in 5 years.

Adopt London East Partnership Board Financial Outturn 2019/20

This provides the outturn expenditure and income for the financial year 2019/20.

Actual expenditure incurred in 2019/20 amounted to £897k of which the LBH contribution of £190,240 has been used to set budgets for the items of expenditure to be incurred for the ALE items below (excluding recharges). After offsetting DfE income carried-forward for 18/19 and partner contributions totalling £671k, this has resulting in an overspend position on the ALE budget of £8.4k for 2019/20.

Expenditure

Category of Expenditure	Budget 2019/20	Actual Expenditure 2019/20	Variance 2019/20
ALE Costs funded via LA contributions	652,950	0	-652,950
Staffing Costs	129,540	370,187	+240,647
Agency Staffing	0	159,499	+159,499
Interim HOS	0	103,125	+103,125
Other Staff Costs	22,090	22,958	+868
Travel/Transport	0	3,955	+3,955
Office Expenses	4,770	7,363	+2,593
Premises Related Costs	0	5,818	+5,818
Commissioned Services	26,060	190,200	+164,140
Communication/Publicity/Market Engagement	7,780	3,949	-3,831
Internal Recharges	27,157	29,861	+2,704

Total Expenditure	870,347	896,915	+26,568

Income

Category of Income	Budget 2019/20	Actual Income 2019/20	Variance 2019/20
DFE Income carried-forward from 18/19	0	-18,125	-18,125
LA Contributions:			
LB Barking &Dagenham		-235,597	
LB Newham	-652,950	-243,795	-1
LB Tower Hamlets		-173,557	
Total Income	**-652,950**	**-671,074**	**-18,126**

* Note LB Havering contribution £190,240 has been included as a budget in kind contribution in the expenditure figures

Net Expenditure 2019/20

	Budget 2019/20	Actual Income 2019/20	Variance 2019/20
Net Expenditure	**217,397**	**225,841**	**+8,442**

30

London Borough of Havering adoption performance analysis

The attached performance analysis has been prepared by Adopt London East following a review of information provided to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB)

The analysis relates to performance in 2019/20

Numbers of children adopted

Adopt London East became operational on 1st October 2020. Q 1 and 2 are therefore pre operational go-live and Q 3 and 4 post go-live. Most Regional Adoption Agencies experienced a dip in performance both pre and post go live, Child placements in Havering also declined on the previous year in terms of numbers of placements.

|		2019/20 Q1	2019/20 Q2	2019/20 Q3	2019/20 Q4	Total 2019/20
Number of...	Adoption orders	2	3	4	2	**11**
	Placements	2	1	0	1	**4**
	Matches	2	1	0	1	**4**
	Placement orders	1	0	0	1	**2**
	Best interest decisions	0	1	0	4	**5**
	Foster for adoption	0	0	0	0	**0**
	Changes of Plan	1	0	0	0	**1**

Adoption orders were granted on 11 children and a further 4 children were placed for adoption. The higher number of adoption orders reflects the higher number of placements made in 2018/19. The number of children placed was subject to a decline. This predominantly reflects a decline in the number of children with a decision that adoption is in their best interest. Forecasts indicate an increase in the number of placements in Q 1 and 2 of 2020/21

The chart below shows trend information in respect of numbers of adoption orders, placements and decisions that adoption is in the best interests of the child (BID).

In common with most Local Authorities the numbers of children in the adoption system are small and subject to a high level of fluctuation. The numbers of children about whom a best interest decision was made peaked in 2016/17 and 2018/19 followed by an increase in numbers placed in 2017/18 and 2018/19 this would have been expected as a higher number of children had been identified as needing a placement. The numbers with a BID decreased thereafter. The numbers placed decreased in 2019/20 following the peak in 2017/18. A decrease in numbers would have been expected as the numbers with a BID and therefore requiring an adoptive placement decreased. Although numbers of children with a BID remained low in 2019/20 4 of the 5 children received a best interest decision in January or February 2020 indicating an increase in numbers of children available for adoption

Although not contained within this review of 2019/20 adoption activity, the number of BID's and placements is predicted to rise in 2020/21

Adoption orders, placements and Best interest decisions
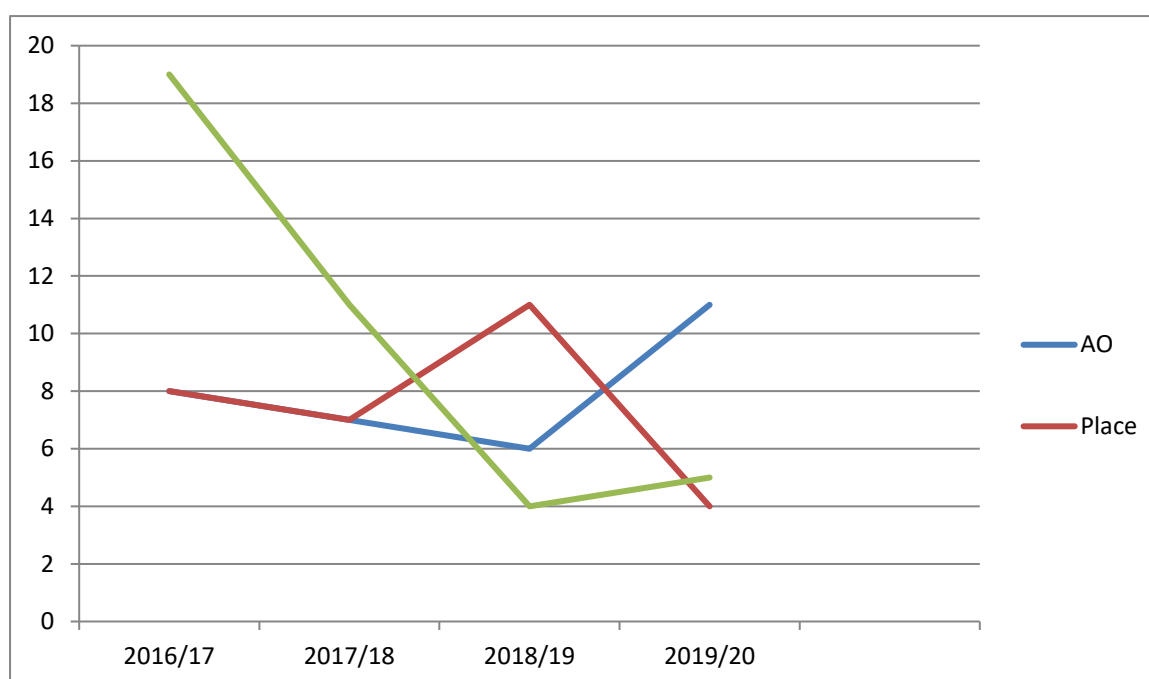
Timeliness of adoption

The average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family for children adopted increased in the last 12 months from a three year average of 516 days to 705 days. This remains above the nationally set target of 426 days. Havering has a commitment to adoption for all children for whom it is in their best interest and the high annual figure was strongly affected by the successful placement of an older boy from a BME background with developmental delay and behavioural difficulties. This child waited 1,944 days.

The average time between the LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family remained relatively stable with a three year average of 315 days

and 551 days over the last 12 months. This is above the nationally set target of 121 days and again was strongly affected by the placement of the child discussed above.

The percentage of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving with their adoptive family remained stable with a 41% 3 year average and 40% in the last 12 months. This indicates a continued commitment to timeliness despite the impact of a small number of children who wait longer due to their complex needs

| Indicator	2017 – 2020	Last 12 months
A1: Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family	516 days	705 days
A2: Average time between an LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match to an adoptive family	315 days	551 days
A3: Children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (number and %)	16 (41%)	8 (40%)

Breakdown of A1 and A2 indicators by year.

The scorecard indicator is calculated on a three year rolling average. The annual breakdown below shows the volatility of timeliness in adoptive placements. One placement which takes a long time will have a considerable impact on the overall figure due to the small numbers of children placed.

Social work system efficiencies are shown most clearly in the A1 indicator; average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family. Adoption system efficiencies are shown most clearly in the A2 indicator which plots the average time from receiving permission to place from the court and matching to an adoptive family, although placement times may also be affected disproportionately by a lengthy search for a harder to place child.

The flux in both indicators reflects complexities in individual cases. It is not possible to identify trend information due to the small number of children placed for adoption in Havering and the complex needs of many of the children.

Systems improvements have however been made. Case tracking is robust and ALE representatives attend all placement planning and tracking meetings. Children's social workers in Havering and in ALE work closely together to coordinate family finding and ensure any delay is kept to a minimum.
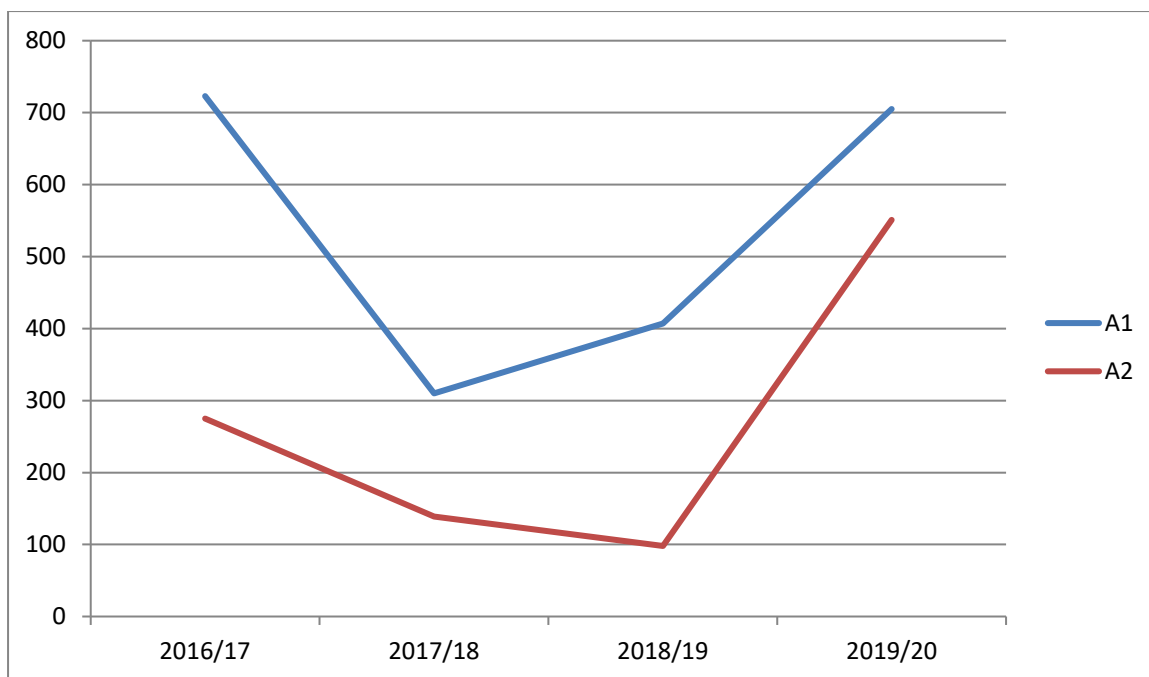
Characteristics of children

11 children were adopted in the last 12 months. Only 1 has a placement order and is waiting to be adopted. No child has been waiting for 18 months or over since becoming looked after.

Just under half of children adopted (5 of 11) were under 5. The one child waiting is under 5. Children over 5 are deemed to be harder to place. The proportion of children placed over 5 is higher in Havering than in other London Boroughs and this indicates a continued commitment to place children for adoption.

4 of 11 children adopted are female. The one child waiting to be adopted is female. Male children especially older male children are typically harder to place than female but Havering continues to have good success in placing male children.

The proportion of children who are classed as BME is low in comparison to other East London Boroughs, only 1 child adopted was classed as is the one child waiting. Children from BME backgrounds typically wait longer. No adopted or waiting child is categorised as disabled. 7 children have been adopted as part of a sibling group. Currently no children in sibling groups are waiting.

Harder to place children include children over 5, of BME heritage, disabled and requiring adoption in a sibling group. The majority of Havering's children are defined as harder to place. 8 of the 11 children placed were in a harder to place category. The child waiting is also in a harder to place category.

As harder to place children by definition wait longer Havering's performance in terms of timeliness is at least partially explained by the LA commitment to place all children who would benefit from adoption.

	Under 5	5 and over	female	male	BME	Disabled	Sibling group	Harder to place
Adopted last 12 months	5	6	4	7	1	0	7	8
Waiting with PO	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
Waiting at least 18 months since BLA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Sue May

Head of Service

Adopt London East

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