



**London Borough of Havering**

**Children's Services**

**Sufficiency Needs**

**Assessment & Strategy**

**September 2024 to August 2027**

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# Document Control

## Document details

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## **Cabinet Member for Children and Young People Introduction**

As the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and the proud Corporate Parent to over 500 children, I am pleased to introduce our Sufficiency Strategy. The strategy outlines how we will ensure high-quality services and support for the children in our care and our care experienced young people, enabling them to flourish in inclusive and nurturing environments.

Fundamentally it sets out how we aim to provide good “homes” for children in our care that meet their needs. It reflects on our wider service priorities and vision of creating a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment for children and young people in Havering. It also details our strategic aims, the steps we will take, and the actions we will implement to ensure the best possible outcomes.

We acknowledge that based on our current insights locally and nationally, our key areas of focus to ensure sufficiency of homes for our children for the next few years is to drive the following ambitions;

- Our Children in care live within the borough
- Our Children in care have access to experienced, skilled foster carers
- Our Children with additional and complex needs have access to services and support that is proportionate to their individual needs
- Our Children in care are supported to reach their educational potential

This strategy aligns with our vision for children, our wider service priorities and [our Pledge](#) to children in care, ensuring that our promises as corporate parents meet their expectations.

Our children are at the heart of everything we do, and this strategy will enable us to make a significant difference in their lives. I am immensely proud of our commitment, dedicated officers, and the work we have accomplished so far as we continue to work diligently to provide them with the opportunities they deserve, ensuring their well-being, safety, and access to a nurturing and enriching environment. We will continue to strive for excellence, create pathways for success for all the children in Havering, and ensure their bright futures.

Councillor Oscar Ford

**Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

## **Executive Summary**

The London Borough of Havering is ambitious for all our children. As set out in our Corporate Parenting Strategy, we want our children in care and care leavers to lead happy, healthy lives.

As such we are committed to providing children and young people with high quality parenting, care and the right support, to enable them to aspire, achieve and be successful.

This Sufficiency Strategy sets out the commissioning priorities which will enable the council to deliver its ambitions.

The strategy focuses upon understanding the needs of children now and over the next 5 years, giving an understanding of the services that will be required to meet future need. The strategy will consider the best methods to meet the needs including the method of commissioning internal and external high-quality services.

Our strategy will need to be able to adapt to the changing number of children who are in care, both increasing and decreasing, and to be agile to respond quickly to any changing need. Research has shown that there is no optimal number of children in care, and that social workers and their managers make the best decisions based on available information and a robust assessment. Therefore, this strategy is the starting point for the future service provision required to meet Havering's changing requirements.

The strategy describes how Havering will continue to meet its Sufficiency Duty which is a statutory requirement set out in Section 22G of the Children's Act 1989.

Havering is committed to ensuring all children have the skills and attributes to grow into their full potential.

## **1. Havering's Priorities**

The Corporate Parenting Strategy has identified the following six priorities for Havering's children in care;

- We want every child and young person to feel safe in their homes, schools and public spaces.
- We will hear the voice of children and young people more, to better develop our services and the care they receive.
- We want every child to have a caring home.
- We want to provide aspiration, an excellent education and opportunities for employment and learning for life.
- We want to understand and be able to give clear picture of our service.
- We want excellent health outcomes for our children, explicitly on their emotional wellbeing and mental health.

## **2. Key Actions**

The information in the following paragraphs will lead us to identify and focus the key commissioning activity we must undertake to deliver the priorities set out above.

Acting in our roles as corporate parents we will;

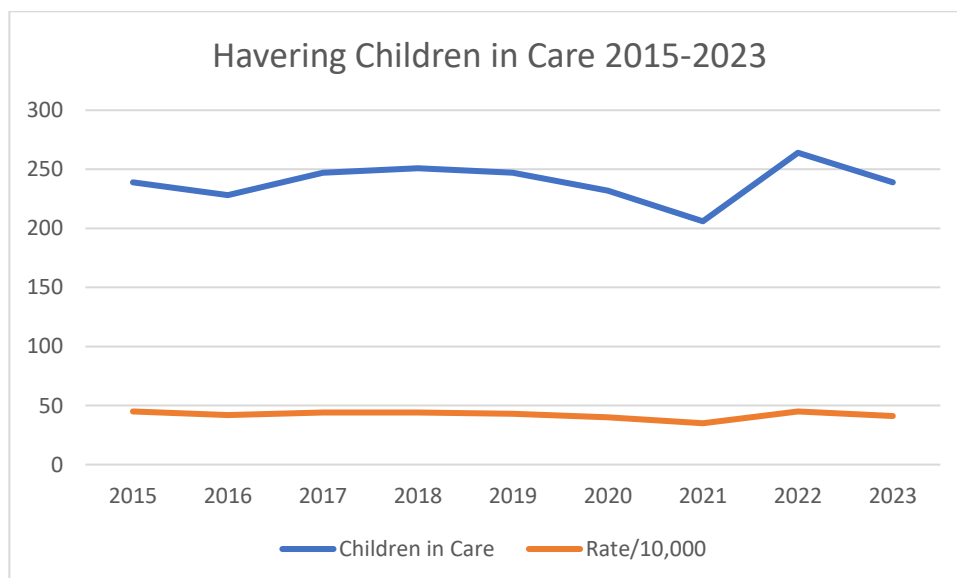
- Ensure children achieve permanency within a family at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure more children in care live within the borough by;
  - Increasing the number of approved foster carers;
  - Developing commercial relationships with fostering, children's home providers and supported accommodation providers;
  - Creating new children's homes;
  - Increasing after care accommodation pathways including Staying Put within foster carers, Staying Close near children's homes and their own housing options through supported tenancies.
- Ensure children have access to well-trained foster parents by;
  - Developing a robust recruitment and training offer for staff and foster carers;
  - Expanding and embedding a specialist emotional wellbeing support service, based upon trauma informed practice into fostering;
  - Ensuring foster carers receiving continuous professional development through enhanced supervision;
  - Contracting with care providers who share Havering's aspirations.
- Ensure children who have additional special and complex needs have the right services to meet their needs by;
  - Providing sufficient short breaks;
  - Ensuring children's additional needs are fully understood by their carer's, who are able to support the child's development whilst in their care.

- Ensure children in care receive the support to reach their educational potential by
  - Enabling the Virtual School to engage with care providers to describe the additional support required to promote the importance of school attendance.

### 3. Children in Care- The Local and National Context

- 3.1 Nationally there has been a rise in the number of children in care, with an increase of 9% from 75,360 in 2018 to 82,170 in 2022.
- 3.2 Graph 1 below shows the population of children in care at the end of March 2023, this was the same as it was in March 2015, but has fluctuated between a low of 206 and a high of 264 in care. However, the rate per 10,000 population has remained stable with a small reduction of 4 children per 10,000 population since 2015, meaning in real terms Havering has seen a reduction of our children in care.

**Graph 1 Havering’s Children in Care Population**

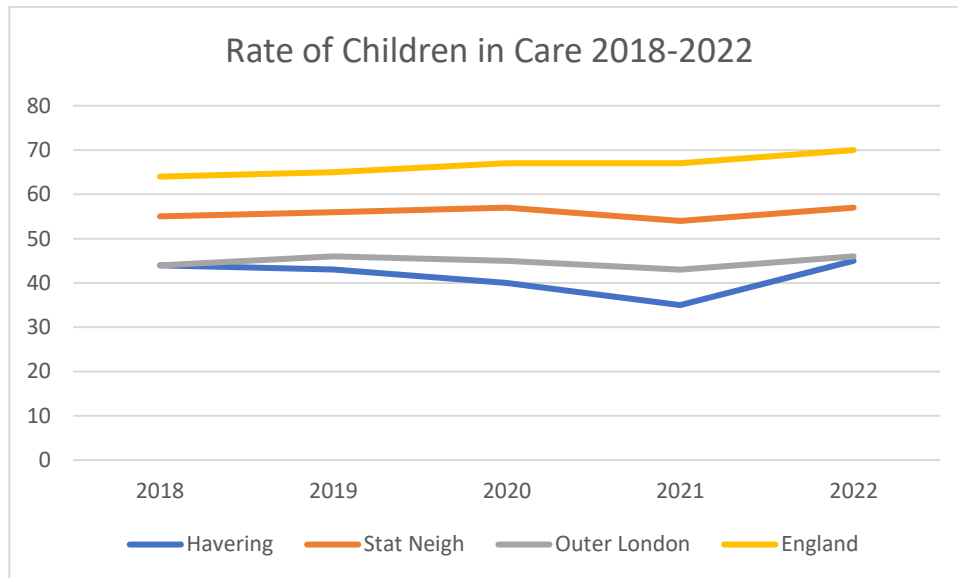


- 3.3 To understand Havering’s performance, it is important for us to measure and benchmark against other councils who are considered similar to us, such as our Department for Education nominated statistical neighbours.
- 3.4 Havering’s statistical neighbours are Essex, Lancashire, Thurrock, Southend, Kent, Bexley, Medway, Swindon and Bury. In 2022 West Northamptonshire was created and added to the statistical neighbours group, however, as this is a new local authority there is no historical data.
- 3.5 Havering is also part of a cohort of Outer London local authorities of which there are 18 other London Boroughs that we can benchmark our performance against.



3.6 Graph 2 below shows the rate per 10,000 of children in care measuring Havering against our statistical neighbours, Outer London councils and England.

**Graph 2 Benchmarking the Rate/10,000 Children in Care**

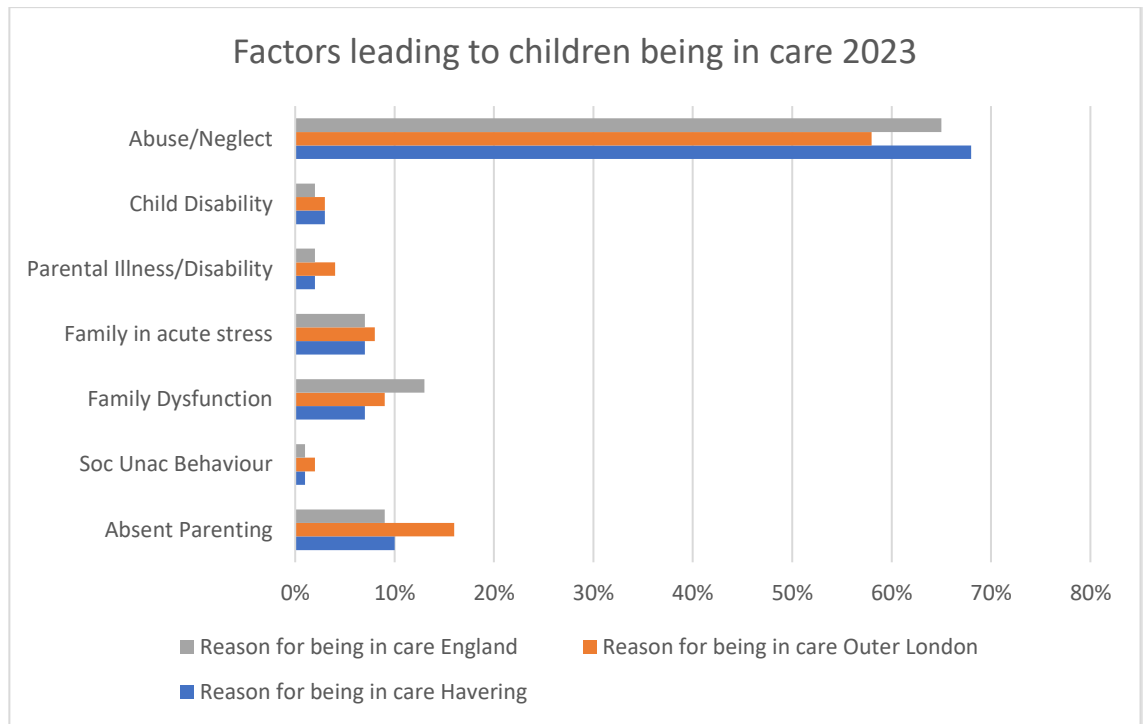


3.7 Graph 2 shows that children from Havering are less likely to be in care than compared to children who live within our statistical neighbours. There is minimal difference between Havering and the Outer London council's performance. It also shows that Havering has far more in common with the Outer London councils rather than its statistical neighbours when it comes to the numbers of, and rate of children in care.

3.8 It is important to understand why children come into care. There are multiple factors and reasons for this to happen including parental abuse through to child's disability or parent ill-health.

3.9 Annual Government data relating to the causes of why children enter care has shown a consistent pattern over many years. The following table shows the relevant proportions benchmarking Havering against the national picture in March 2022;

**Graph 3 Why are children in care?**



3.10 Graph 3 above identifies the proportions of children who enter care and the primary reason for that happening. Havering has recorded a greater proportion of children who have experienced abuse or neglect but a lower proportion of family dysfunction as the primary reason for entering care.

3.11 Wilkinson and Bowyer’s (2017) literature review identified several parental vulnerabilities - which are often combined with poverty - that can have an adverse effect on parenting and can lead to children entering care.

3.12 These factors include:

- parents’ exposure to adverse experiences during childhood (e.g. parental domestic violence, substance misuse, mental health issues)
- domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, drug and alcohol misuse (combined or singly)
- a history of crime (especially for violence and sexual offences)
- patterns of multiple consecutive partners
- acrimonious separation
- parental learning disability
- intergenerational cycles of child maltreatment

## **Actions**

**Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO'S) need to understand the backgrounds of children in care and any trauma they may have experienced.**

**Social workers and IROs need to reflect the child's needs in their support plans.**

**Supervising Social Workers need to be proactive in the support they offer their foster carers linked to the reality of the child's lived experience.**

### **4. Who are the children in care?**

4.1 In order to provide the most suitable care provision and to develop effective support systems we need to understand who our children in care are, their ages, gender, race and religious backgrounds.

4.2 On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 the demographic background of children in care was as follows;

**Table 1 Ages of children in care**

| <b>Age Range</b>        | <b>0-4</b> | <b>5-10</b> | <b>11-15</b> | <b>16 &amp;17</b> |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|
| <b>No. of Children</b>  | 42         | 37          | 81           | 79                |
| <b>Prop of Care Pop</b> | 18%        | 15%         | 34%          | 33%               |

4.3 Table 1 shows that Havering has a lower proportion of infants in care, with 67% being aged over 10 years of age, and by the end of 2024, 79 young people will have turned 18 and will have left care.

4.4 Table 2, below, shows the ages of children who entered and left care in 2022-23. The greatest number of children were those aged under five, which is primarily linked to safeguarding issues and the vulnerability of the child.

4.5 Although at 69, the greatest number of children entering care were aged over 11, there was only a net gain of 1 as 52 young people left as they became 18 and aged into the leaving care service.

**Table 2      Ages of children entering and leaving care**

| <b>Age Range</b> | <b>0-4</b> | <b>5-10</b> | <b>11-15</b> | <b>16 &amp; 17</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Entered Care     | 32         | 21          | 34           | 35                 | <b>122</b>   |
| Left Care        | 18         | 26          | 18           | 87                 | <b>149</b>   |
| Difference       | +14        | -5          | +16          | -52                |              |

- 4.6 It should be noted that whilst children leave care at 18, Havering is responsible for care leavers up to the age of 25yrs, in line with leaving care legislation.
- 4.7 Over the past 5 years the gender of Havering’s children in care has averaged 56% male and 44% female, which is the same as the national data but slightly lower than our Outer London neighbours which averaged 59% and 41%.
- 4.8 The ethnicity of children in our care has also fluctuated over time, with the main group being children from a White British descent, which accounted for 66% in 2018, 55% in 2020 and 66% in 2023. Children from an Asian background have been consistent at 5%. However, there has been a gradual reduction of children from black backgrounds from 20% in 2019 to 10% in 2023. The ethnicity which has significantly grown as a proportion is children with mixed heritage, which rose from 8% in 2018 to 17% in 2023.
- 4.9 This information is important for the fostering service so they can target their recruitment strategy to provide foster carers to enable better matching with children’s individual demographics. Over 74% of our foster carers are from a White British background.

**Table 3 Ethnicity of Children in care**

|                                      | Percentage of Care Population | Percentage Foster Care Population |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Asian/Asian British                  | 4%                            | 6%                                |
| Black/Caribbean/Black British        | 10%                           | 17%                               |
| Mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds | 17%                           | 3%                                |
| White                                | 66%                           | 74%                               |
| Other/Not Available                  | 3%                            | 0%                                |

**Action:**

**Recruitment of foster carers and approvals needs to align with the ages of children entering care and their ethnicities.**

**5. Where Children Live**

5.1 On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 Havering's children in care were living in a range of settings as shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4 Homes where children live**

| Care Type                    | Number of Children |  |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Fostering- Havering approved | 77                 | 183 in family-based care (77%)             |
| Fostering- Connected Person  | 36                 |  |
| Fostering- IFA               | 53                 |  |
| Placed with Parents          | 17                 |  |
| Children's Homes             | 31                 | 56 in group care or supported living (23%) |
| Supported Living             | 23                 |  |
| Other                        | 2                  |  |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>239</b>         |  |

- 5.2 201 (84%) of Havering's children in care, live in Havering or within 20 miles of their home address. The 38 children who live further than 20 miles from their home address are placed further away as they need to access specialist services or their family members, who are their carers, live further away.
- 5.3 The proportion of children in care living with Havering based carers is shown below. Table 5 below shows the number of children in care and the proportion placed with carers who live within the borough.

**Table 5 Proportion of Havering children living in Havering provision**

|  | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021  | 2022  | 2023  |
|--|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Children living with Havering based Carers   | 119  | 112  | 116  | 102   | 131   | 123   |
| Total In Care                                | 251  | 247  | 232  | 206   | 264   | 239   |
| Proportion living with Havering based carers | 47%  | 45%  | 50%  | 49.5% | 49.6% | 51.5% |

- 5.4 Most of Havering's children in care (183), are living within a family care setting but the number of children living in a children's home has, as a proportion of children in care increased year on year since 2018 as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6 Proportion of children living in a children's home**

|   | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021  | 2022  | 2023  |
|---|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Children living in children's homes                       | 19   | 22   | 23   | 23    | 32    | 31    |
| Total number of children in care                          | 251  | 247  | 232  | 206   | 264   | 239   |
| Proportion of children in care living in children's homes | 7.6% | 8.9% | 9.9% | 11.2% | 11.4% | 13.5% |

- 5.5 As demonstrated above Havering has a high proportion of children living in children's homes.

### **Actions**

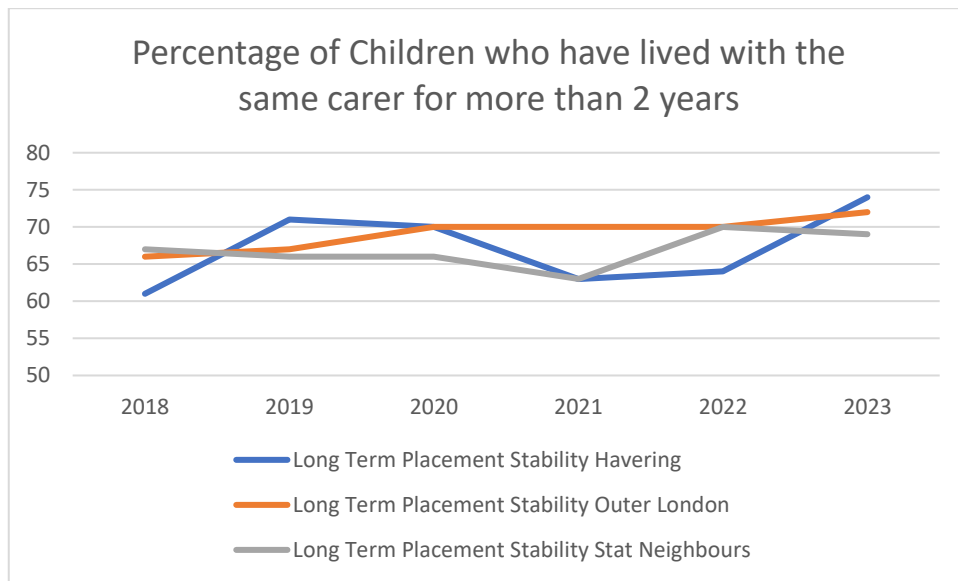
**Undertake an audit of children living in children's homes to understand their needs and how they could be managed within a family setting**

**Develop specialist family-based care to meet the identified needs following the audit.**

**6. Stability of Children in Care**

- 6.1 There are two measures of stability for children in care;
  - a. Long-term stability- Children who have been in care for at least 2.5 years who have been in the same arrangement for at least 2 years, and
  - b. Short-term stability- Children who have had 3 or more arrangements in the previous 12 months.
- 6.2 When measuring long-term stability, the bigger the number the more stable children are.
- 6.3 Havering’s performance when benchmarked against statistical neighbours and outer London councils is shown in Graph 4. It shows that from a poor position in 2018, there was a dramatic improvement during 2018/19 but there has been a reduction in more recent years until 2022/23 where performance was its best in recent history. The outer London councils have maintained a reasonable performance over the last three years, but all councils in this measure are under performing and councils should be aiming to maintain stability around the 75% level.

**Graph 4 Long-term placement stability**

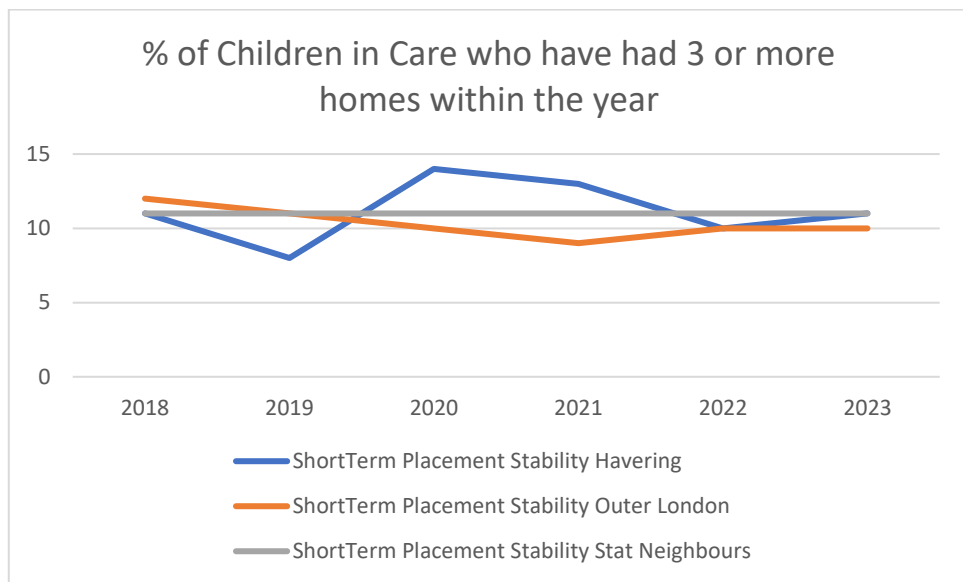


- 6.4 Our review of performance of short-term stability shows a fluctuating

trend as set out in Graph 5 below. During early 2022 new protocols were put in place to only allow moves to be agreed by the Assistant Director for Children’s Social Care and Havering’s performance improved to be in line with the other outer London councils.

6.5 When measuring short-term stability, councils aim to have fewer children moving homes, so the lower the % the better the performance. During 2020 – 2021 our performance on short term stability was the worst in London. However, since the changes made and the introduction of the Havering Access to Resources panel (HARP), Havering has improved significantly short –term stability and has maintained performance at around the 10% level for the past two years.

**Graph 5 Short term placement stability**



## **ACTION**

**We need to support children and their carers earlier to ensure children do not move placement unnecessarily**

### **7. Forecasting Future Demand**

7.1 Understanding and forecasting placement demand for children in care is not an exact science. There are a number of complex variables which need to be considered. These factors include positive preventative services such as;

- receiving good parenting as a child,
- engagement in education,



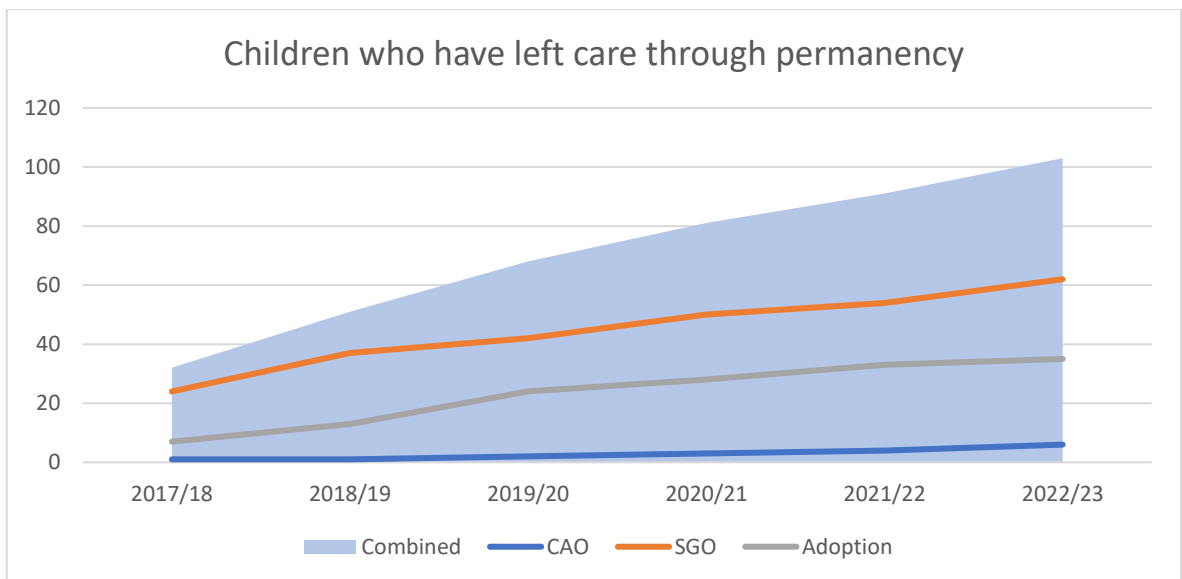
- positive supportive networks as young people become adults,
- early help in the community when a person becomes a parent, and
- responsive statutory services when help is required.

These services can mitigate risks linked to isolation, parental mental health, confidence, and skills etc. However, alongside these protective factors there are an equal number of risk factors that in some cases are difficult for children’s services alone to mitigate against. These include severe mental health difficulties, drug misuse, learning disabilities and harmful behaviours and most significantly poverty which we know is increasing in our communities.

7.2 There is a positive history of securing permanency for children in care through adoption and special guardianship orders.

7.3 The chart below shows the impact of this on the numbers of children who would otherwise have been in care. The accumulative effect of alternative orders has significantly reduced the number of children in care. Over 100 children have left care since 2018 to live with permanent families.

**Graph 6 Children who have secured permanence in families.**

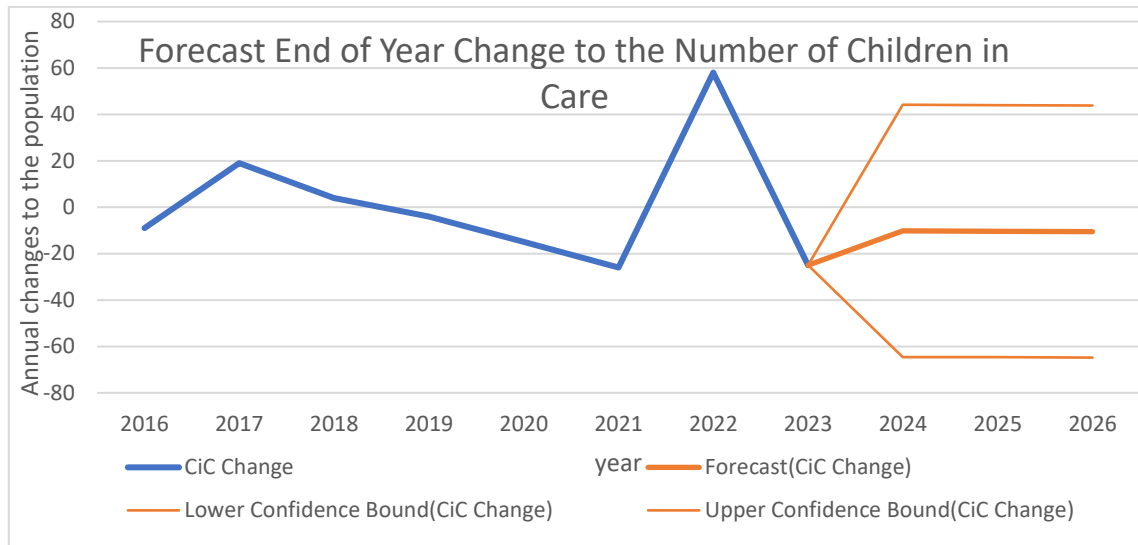


7.4 Therefore, when attempting to forecast future demand there must be an estimate of the effectiveness of the preventative services alongside the previous demand data.

7.5 As reported in Section 3.2 the care population at the end of March 2023 was the same as it was in March 2015, but in the intervening years it has fluctuated.

7.6 The forecast provided in Graph 7 is based upon the numerical differences at the end of each year since 2016.

## Graph 7 Estimating Havering's Future Children in Care Population



7.7 Graph 7 above shows that there is a possibility that with the right interventions we could see over the next 3 years, a reduction of 10 children per year, leading to a potential care population at the end of March 2026 of 209 children. However, as there is significant annual variation, it is also possible the population may rise to 283.

7.8 Alongside local children entering care, all councils are required to provide homes for children who are unaccompanied asylum seekers under the national transfer scheme. In 2022 the Government raised the proportion of UASCs each council would be responsible for to 0.1% of its children's population. For Havering this should be 58 asylum seeking children, currently Havering looks after 24.

7.9 As this is a new requirement the additional young people have not yet been factored into the growth forecast. However, it should be assumed that there will be an expected additional 34 asylum seeking children, and once the council reaches its expected number it should remain stable unless there is a growth in the population of children within the borough.

7.10 The next chapters will describe the types of care required, which in turn will help us to take a view on provision that we will require in future years.

**Action - To review and further develop the existing permanency planning process to ensure that plans for children enable them to achieve their long-term goals as within their timescales.**

## 8 Type of homes children in care live in

8.1 As at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 the type of family-based carers and the number of Havering children they were caring for is set out in Table 7 below.

**Table 7 Havering children in foster homes**

| Type of Foster Carer           | No. of Carers | No. of Children Placed |
|--------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Connected Person Foster Carer  | 30            | 36                     |
| Havering Approved Foster Carer | 74            | 77                     |
| IFA Carer                      | 35            | 49                     |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>139</b>    | <b>162</b>             |

8.2 The annual national report of fostering in England provides a snapshot of fostering activity. The table below shows the number of approved fostering households for the Outer London region, with the maximum capacity of children they are approved for, alongside the number of children in care at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

8.3 Approved fostering households does not include connected/kinship carers.

8.4 The table shows the capability of councils to provide the required fostering provision for its children in care population. Havering's performance is the median of 44% for the region, with the maximum capacity of 115 children.

8.5 Although the table shows that Havering can offer homes to a maximum of 115 children, the reality is 77 children are currently within these fostering households. Further understanding of the Havering fostering offer is required in order to maximise utilisation.

**Table 8 Fostering in Outer London Councils March 2022**

| Council            | No. of Council Approved Fostering Households | Max. Capacity of Children | Children In Care | Max. Proportion of demand |
|--------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Hounslow           | 95   | 165                       | 296              | 58%                       |
| Ealing             | 85   | 145                       | 328              | 44%                       |
| Hillingdon         | 50   | 100                       | 408              | 25%                       |
| Bi-Borough         | 65   | 105                       | 262              | 40%                       |
| Merton             | 65   | 125                       | 122              | 102%                      |
| Harrow             | 50   | 110                       | 188              | 56%                       |
| Barnet             | 85   | 140                       | 333              | 42%                       |
| Barking & Dagenham | 130  | 290                       | 413              | 70%                       |
| <b>Havering</b>    | <b>70</b>                                    | <b>115</b>                | <b>264</b>       | <b>44%</b>                |
| Redbridge          | 55   | 95                        | 287              | 33%                       |
| Bexley             | 75   | 155                       | 234              | 66%                       |
| Bromley            | 100  | 180                       | 328              | 55%                       |
| Croydon            | 165  | 300                       | 550              | 55%                       |
| Greenwich          | 90   | 170                       | 459              | 37%                       |
| Enfield            | 120  | 205                       | 386              | 53%                       |
| Sutton             | 45   | 75                        | 236              | 32%                       |
| Brent              | 65   | 100                       | 341              | 29%                       |
| Waltham Forest     | 80   | 115                       | 329              | 35%                       |

8.6 Havering purchases foster care for 49 children from Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). These arrangements are currently necessary to meet the demand placed on our children's services to identify family-based care. Of these 49 children and young people, 33 are living outside of Havering with a total of 19 foster carers. There appears to be very little difference in the level of need or complexity, of the children placed with Independent Fostering Agencies and our own foster carers.

8.7 Analysis of the local independent fostering sector undertaken in July

2023 shows that 16 IFAs have a presence within the borough. There are 49 IFA fostering households. These families are approved to look after a maximum of 97 children. Havering has 16 children living with these carers, therefore, the council is utilising only 16.5% of the available local IFA capacity.

- 8.8 The combined total of approved foster carers in Havering is 153.
- 8.9 The council was formerly part of the London Councils' contract for fostering. This informal contracting process ceased to operate on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. It is assumed that previous contracting relationships continue as a legacy contract. Since 1<sup>st</sup> April the council has contracted foster care using the terms and conditions of the provider, and all children are placed on a spot contract.
- 8.10 Havering's neighbouring council, Newham, has created a dynamic purchasing system for fostering and children's home provision. This system allows other councils to participate and benefit under the framework.

**Actions:**

**Undertake an analysis of Havering's foster carers to understand capacity and develop an internal performance management process for utilisation.**

**Create strategic partnerships with local IFAs so more children can be placed within the borough.**

**Join Newham Council's Dynamic Purchasing System**

**9. Children's Homes**

- 9.1 Havering currently does not operate any children's homes.
- 9.2 Havering is the lead council for the North East London residential project.
- 9.3 The North-East London Commissioning Partnership (NELCP) is a strategic partnership between seven London boroughs and two independent children's homes providers.
- 9.4 The partnership began work on co-producing a model of local residential care for children in 2017/18. Department for Education (DfE) funding from the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme supported the project through to the procurement stage.
- 9.5 At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, 7 Havering children were living in this project.
- 9.6 There were another 22 children living in 20 separate residential children's homes, operated by 16 different companies.
- 9.7 There are 8 private children's homes operating in Havering, offering a

maximum of 39 children a home. These 8 homes are operated by 7 different companies.

- 9.8 On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 Havering was utilising 2 of these places.
- 9.9 Apart from the NELCP contract the council does not have a formal contract for children's home purchasing. As with fostering, the council was formerly part of the London Councils' contract. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 any children who have lived in a children's home has done so on a spot contract basis under the terms and conditions of the provider.

**Actions:**

**The council needs to develop commercial relationships with local children's home providers to create local capacity.**

**The council needs to consider developing its own children's home provision. This includes identifying a cohort of children the service will be designed for.**

**Join Newham's Dynamic Purchasing System for children's homes.**

## **10. Supported Accommodation for Care Leavers**

- 10.1 As the young people growing up within our care get older, the focus of the care and support given by carers is for our young people to be prepared to move into more independent living in our communities. For most of our young people this will take place in their fostering and/ or family living settings. Where appropriate, our social work and fostering team will work to support young people remain within their fostering family setting through Staying-Put arrangements.
- 10.2 For a relatively small number of our young people they will leave their children's home or fostering arrangement after they are 16 and will live within supported accommodation. We currently support this through commissioning supported accommodation from the independent sector.
- 10.3 The council does not currently have a framework for contracting supported accommodation. However, it is in the process of developing a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) which will allow for better management of the market. We have several local providers we have been working with for a number of years.
- 10.4 In November 2023, new regulations for supported accommodation were introduced. Within Havering there are 30 OFSTED registered supported accommodation addresses, with 10 offering single occupancy accommodation, and 20 offering shared living. In total

there is a capacity for 113 young people.

**Actions:**

**Finalise the Havering Supported Accommodation DPS.**

**11. Services for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

11.1 Most children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can have their needs met through local mainstream education and universal services. However, some children and their families need additional assistance. Havering has published its Local Offer for children and young people up to the age of 25, in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2014.

11.2 Universal services include children's centres, nurseries, play services, after school clubs, sports and leisure and youth services.

11.3 However, when children and their families require more support Havering has created a range of short breaks provision, which enable children to have fun and develop independence, and provide their families with an opportunity to have a break from caring and spend more time with other family members.

11.4 To be eligible for a short break the child needs to be aged under 18, be a resident of Havering and have a diagnosed disability or impairment that would define them as a disabled person under the Equality Act 2010 including a physical or sensory impairment, learning disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, challenging behaviour as a result of a disability, complex health needs and those with palliative, life-limiting or life threatening conditions

11.5 During 2023/24 865 children have received short break support. Of these 411 have received a Direct Payment, 187 children have participated in FIG, which is a weekend and holiday short break scheme and 28 children accessed a total of 937 nights of overnight short breaks. Some of the overnight short breaks takes place within the family home, with carers providing overnight support. A small number of children receive overnight support outside of the family home.

**12. Commercial Relationships with Care Providers**

12.1 The council purchases care for 102 children from 46 different companies. Table 9 below shows the number of providers by care type.

**Table 9 Children in Care and Providers**

| Care Type               | Number of Children | Number of Companies |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| IFAs                    | 49                 | 20                  |
| Children's Homes        | 29                 | 17                  |
| Supported Accommodation | 24                 | 10                  |
| Total                   | 102                | 47                  |

12.2 Apart from the block contract relationship with Woodford, the council has no meaningful commercial relationship with any individual provider. For instance, with regard to fostering, the maximum spend with one provider is £370k annually out of a total spend of £3m. Over 50% of the IFAs which we use, the expenditure is less than £50k per year.

12.3 The NELCP provides the majority of children's home provision for Havering with an annual spend of approximately £1.7m.

12.4 For the remaining children there is a similar picture for children's homes as there is with fostering. There is one provider who we spend £1.7m with annually and 12 others that we spend £4.3m. For the 12 providers there is no commercial relationship, and they are not dependent upon the council for their income.

12.5 As identified in Sections 7 and 8, there is significant provision within the borough, which is not used by the council. This means that Havering's children are required to live outside of their home area and access services provided by others. It also means that Havering is home to a significant number of children from other council areas.

12.6 On March 31<sup>st</sup> 2022 there were 221 children from other councils living in Havering, at the same time we needed to place 133 children in other council areas. There is sufficient care provision within Havering to reduce the need to place children further away if we create commercial relationships with these providers.

**Actions:**

**Create strategic partnerships with local care providers.**

**Increase the number of children who are living in homes in Havering by creating commercial relationships with local providers.**

**To host Provider Events so the council can describe to the market**



the needs of children and young people.

### 13. Expenditure and Unit Cost of Care

13.1 The council is responsible for the care of over 400 children per year, and they live in a variety of internal and externally provided homes. The Table 10 shows the expenditure by care type over the past two years.

**Table 10 The Cost of Care**

| Care Type                | 2021/22            | 2022/23            |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Havering Foster Carers   | £2,172,347         | £2,656,460         |
| Connected Carers         | £717,400           | £897,815           |
| IFAs                     | £2,326,710         | £2,700,304         |
| Private Children's Homes | £4,603,571         | £6,028,749         |
| Supported Accommodation  | £2,039,054         | £2,142,347         |
| <b>Total Spend</b>       | <b>£11,859,082</b> | <b>£14,425,675</b> |

13.2 To understand the expenditure it is important to understand the actual number of services we have purchased. Table 11 shows the number of bed nights which were used in 2021/22 and 2022/23. This data comes from recording on LCS. This may lead to slight errors when measured against what is spent, as sometimes children can move home during notice periods.

**Table 11 Bed Utilisation Night Data**

| Care Type              | 2021/22 | FTE of Children | 2022/23 | FTE of Children |
|------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|
| Havering Foster Carers | 26,561  | 73              | 28,836  | 79              |
| Connected Carers       | 12,450  | 34              | 14,930  | 41              |
| IFAs                   | 21,031  | 58              | 20,881  | 57              |
| Other LA Fostering     | 367     | 1               | 65      | 0.2             |

|                          |               |            |               |            |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Private Children's Homes | 9,510         | 26         | 10,111        | 28         |
| Supported Accommodation  | 12,149        | 33         | 9,974         | 27         |
| <b>Total Bed Nights</b>  | <b>82,068</b> | <b>225</b> | <b>84,797</b> | <b>232</b> |

13.3 Table 11 above only includes children where there are payments for their care. There may be children who are subject to care orders who have been placed with their parents under Placement with Parents regulations where there would be no payment).

13.4 Table 11 shows a small increase in the number of children the council is responsible for, a total growth of 7 children. There was a real terms reduction of children living with private sector foster carers and supported accommodation providers in this period.

13.5 The importance of understanding the two tables above is to calculate the unit cost of care. Table 12 below shows the unit cost of each care type during 2022/23. The Havering fostering and connected carers unit cost is linked to payments, not the cost to provide the service.

Table 12 Unit Cost of Care 2022/23

| Care Type                | Bed Nights Used | Total Cost         | Unit Cost/Week   |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Havering Foster Carers   | 28,836          | £2,656,460         | £644.86          |
| Connected Carers         | 14,930          | £897,815           | £420.94          |
| IFAs                     | 20,881          | £2,700,304         | £905.23          |
| Private Children's Homes | 10,111          | £6,028,749         | £4,173.80        |
| Supported Accommodation  | 9,974           | £2,142,347         | £1,503.55        |
|                          | <b>84,797</b>   | <b>£14,425,675</b> | <b>£1,190.84</b> |

13.6 The unit cost for children's home accommodation increased dramatically from £3,400 per week to £4,174. This reflects the



## Sufficiency Strategy Action Plan

| Action   | What will it deliver  | Who is responsible                      | Comp Date     |
|--|---|---|---------------|
| Social Workers IROs and Foster Carers have trauma informed training, and we can reflect this in children's plans | Everyone better understands the needs of children and there are fewer placement breakdowns.   | Social Care Academy                     | April 2025    |
| A greater number of foster carers are recruited from Global Majority backgrounds                                 | More children can live with families with similar ethnic backgrounds and children can remain within the borough in matched placements | Fostering Recruitment Manager           | April 2025    |
| Undertake an audit of all fostering capacity within the council  | Maximisation of the number of children able to live within Havering foster homes  | Joint Commissioning / Fostering Manager | March 2024    |
| Undertake an audit of children living in children's homes to understand their needs                              | To identify the opportunity to develop a higher skills level fostering option, to keep children within families                       | Joint Commissioning                     | December 2023 |
| Develop strategic partnerships with local fostering agencies and children's homes                                | To provide more local homes for children to live in and negotiate better unit costs   | Joint Commissioning                     | April 2024    |
| Join Newham's DPS for all care provision   | To provide the council with contract security and reduce the current risk of breaching procurement regulations                        | Joint Commissioning                     | April 2024    |
| Review of the permanency   | Children leave care through long term arrangements such   | Head of Service Corporate               | December 2023 |

|   |   |                     |            |
|---|---|---------------------|------------|
| planning process  | as adoption or SGO  | Parenting           |            |
| To host quarterly Provider Forums   | The council is able to communicate with the market effectively in order to meet the needs of children | Joint Commissioning | April 2024 |
| Develop an options appraisal for Havering developing its own children's homes | Children requiring residential care can remain in Havering  | Joint Commissioning | April 2024 |