

London Borough of Havering
Starting Well Department
Children's Services Improvement Plan
Year Two
May 2025 – May 2026

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Introduction

As we start year two of our improvement plan, we have reflected on the progress we have achieved to date and the areas for further improvement supported by the feedback from the Ofsted Monitoring visit letters, Department for Education review and our quality assurance activity and improvement boards. Our focus within year one of our improvement journey, and the first iteration of our improvement plan, was on laying the foundations for high quality social work practice to thrive. We used staff and Ofsted feedback to overhaul the service structure of our statutory social work teams, introducing a corporate parenting service and separate safeguarding service. We also refocused the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer by creating a separate Child Protection Chair role, led by a separate Service Manager. This is part of our future proofing of services to set us in good stead for the Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams being introduced as part of the Families First Partnership Programme.

Alongside the restructure of the service, we also focused on stabilising our workforce with a view to creating consistency for children and families, and an environment where staff feel supported and encouraged. As with any major restructuring, this did take some time which slowed initial progress. However, it was important we invested this time to have the right building blocks. Over the first year of the improvement plan, our use of agency staff has reduced significantly, and our caseloads are now at more manageable levels across all service areas. This remains closely monitored through our Power BI dashboards and monthly performance reporting. We have also focused on ensuring there is a high level of scrutiny on the quality of practice across all service areas, through our revised quality assurance (QA) activity which has included practice oversight meetings, reflective action meetings and lunch and learn sessions in response to identified training needs. Going forward in year two we are focused on making our quality assurance processes more collaborative, both with staff and with families and young people, to ensure a holistic overview of the impact our practice is having and to learn from feedback. We acknowledge that the implementation and progress during our first year were influenced by various factors. However, our pace has significantly increased since the appointment of a new DfE advisor in September 2024, along with the implementation of new structures and the appointment of a permanent senior leadership team in October and November 2024. The majority of improvements have taken place over the past six months as we integrated practice developments within the newly established teams with the additional capacity. We are dedicated to accelerating this pace as we move into the second year of our improvement plan.

We are grateful for the ongoing support from colleagues in the Department for Education (DfE), and our funded work with Sector Led Improvement Partners (Centre for Systemic Social Work (CfSSW) and LB Islington) which commenced in year one; we anticipate seeing the impact of this work strengthen within 2025/26. Our workforce is our greatest asset, and we remain committed to providing the required training and support needed for our workforce to deliver their best practice. We are extremely proud that Ofsted during their latest monitoring visit noted how well our social workers know their children, as well as highlighting their dedication, passion and creativity being evident in the work they undertake. Throughout year two we will continue to build on these positives through our relational model of practice, our ongoing CfSSW programme of systemic training and through embedding support from our in-house team of systemic family therapists.

In year one we developed and launched several key strategies to help provide a framework for our practice, and our priority areas. These have included our Integrated Starting Well Plan (Happy Healthy Lives), our SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy, Sufficiency Strategy and our Quality Assurance Framework. In the coming year we will deliver our refreshed Corporate Parenting Strategy (co-produced with care experienced children and young people) and our updated Early Help Strategy.

Governance and Oversight of the Plan

Key to the success of our plan is strong oversight by leaders, managers, Child Protection Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers as well as having effective Quality Assurance processes, so that we can quickly identify areas for further development, escalating practice where necessary. As such the 'Impact of Leaders and Managers' has been moved as 'Theme one' of our plan.

Our Practice Improvement Board (PIB), with an independent chair, and our Practice Improvement Oversight Board (POIB) chaired by LB Havering Chief Executive were established in early 2024. These boards provide the mechanism for thematic oversight of practice and progress against the plan. Since autumn 2024, the PIB has moved to bi-

monthly meetings to enable time for improvements to embed and for impact to be evidenced. The quality and timeliness of reports to PIB have improved over the last year, with progress and challenges being identified and acted on. Our statutory safeguarding partners are well engaged in the governance and oversight of our improvement journey, alongside elected members and senior Council leaders. As part of our year two improvement plan, we are committed to enhancing the impact of scrutiny and challenge provided by our political and corporate leaders.

Financing Improvements

The delivery of improvements undertaken in 2024/25 was financed through increased investment by the Local Authority (c. £5m) and a DfE Improvement Grant (£352k). This primarily funded the service reorganisations and increase in capacity for practitioners and managers, as well as increasing capacity in our quality assurance service. There has also been work undertaken with Sector Led Improvement Partners (SLIP), funded by the DfE, which has focused on revitalising our model of practice with the Centre for Systemic Social Work and improving our LiquidLogic case management system with LB Islington.

In 2025/26 the DfE has allocated the borough a further £200k improvement grant and a further £3.8m has been specified for improvement work in the growth allocation for Starting Well. £2.4m of this fully funds the service structure enhancements across Children’s social care implemented last year (phase one). £1.1m is for the further enhancements (phase two), the consultation for which concluded in May 2025 and is due to be fully implemented by September 2025. In addition there has been significant budget increase (£11.9m) for Children’s Services (i.e. funding for care and placements and other support).

Monitoring Impact

As we progress into year two of our improvement plan, it is vital that we become more consistent in evaluating the impact of the actions we undertake. This is to enable understanding of what is working well to cascade good practice, and to further develop our approach in areas that are not evidencing positive impact. Throughout this coming year each section of the plan will be updated monthly (or quarterly if this is more appropriate) and a RAG rating will be recorded against each of the actions. We will also look to RAG rate the impact on practice and will monitor via the practice improvement board and give updates to the practice improvement oversight board.

Actions

Colour	Definition
Grey	Action not yet started, no risk to delivery identified
Red	Action not on track, risk to implementation
Amber	Action progressing; issues / delays encountered but resolutions identified and sufficient oversight is in place
Green	Action progressing; on track to completed by next review date, or action complete but ongoing monitoring required
Blue	Action completed, monitoring undertaken as service BAU including routine quality assurance

Our Plan on a Page

<p>Theme One</p> <p><i>Impact of Managers and Leaders</i></p> <p>Lead; Tara Geere Director of Starting Well</p>	<p>Theme Two</p> <p><i>Stable and Able Workforce</i></p> <p>Lead; Charmaine Malcolm, Assistant Director; Principal Social Worker</p>	<p>Theme Three</p> <p><i>Improving Practice</i></p> <p>Leads; Alex Kaitell, Assistant Director; Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting; Daniel Silva, Assistant Director; Early Help and Partnerships; Trevor Cook, Assistant Director Education Services</p>	<p>Theme Four</p> <p><i>Removing Barriers</i></p> <p>Lead; Lucy Goodfellow, Head of Innovation and Improvement</p>
<p>Supervision and Management Oversight is consistently high quality and directly impacts positive outcomes</p>	<p>There is effective, meaningful and transparent Two-Way Communication between leaders and staff with improved engagement</p>	<p>Children, Young People and Families have their Needs Accurately Assessed in a Timely Way, and appropriately responded to</p>	<p>AI tools and effective IT Equipment are deployed so all Staff are supported to enhance their Digital Skills and confidence</p>
<p>Our Quality Assurance processes are consistent and impactful</p>	<p>An ongoing Active Recruitment and Retention Programme is focused on permanence and stability</p>	<p>Plans, Processes and Reviews are purposeful, and child focused to improve outcomes</p>	<p>Our Case Management System is efficient and supports High Quality Case Recording</p>
<p>Starting Well Governance, Scrutiny and Oversight is reviewed to ensure it is purposeful and meaningful</p>	<p>Delivery of the Families First Partnership Programme, including implementation of the Phase Two Service Reorganisation</p>	<p>The Voices and Lived Experiences of Children, Families and Young People are heard, responded to and used to drive improvement</p>	<p>Children and Young People are able to live in a range of Safe, Stable, and Loving Homes through having sufficient placements and appropriate accommodation.</p>
<p>Services have Sufficient Financial Support to deliver necessary Service Improvements, including application and use of external grants</p>	<p>Training and Development programmes are delivered based on identified areas of improvement and focused on embedding our Systemic Model of Practice</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity and The Social Graces are understood and evidenced in all aspects of practice</p>	<p>Review of Tri.X and its content, to ensure it's up to date, relevant and includes all statutory policies and strategies</p>

Theme One; Impact of Leaders and Managers

A) Quality and Consistency of Supervision and Management Oversight

Section Lead	Charmaine Malcolm, Assistant Director; Principal Social Worker (PSW)
What Ofsted told us (During last inspection and most recently)	<p>March 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers do not receive regular, consistent supervision and direction. This lack of supervision means that care plans are not progressing as they should, and staff are not supported to understand technical and complex care-planning pathways. This is causing delays in some children achieving permanent care. • Due to inconsistent management oversight, social workers struggle to prioritise workloads and perform effective risk assessments. This affects their ability to make timely decisions and provide stable care for children. • Social workers spoke of managers being supportive and feeling loyal to their teams. • IRO oversight, while improving, is not consistently identifying or escalating drift or delay experienced by children. <p>December 2023 Poor management oversight and supervision across social work teams, coupled with a weak reviewing service, have led to widespread drift and delay for too many children.</p>
National Framework outcome or enabler	- Leaders drive conditions for effective practice

Ref	Action	Completion Date	Action Rating	Action Owner	Next Review Date
SM01	Roll out an ongoing programme of thematic training for managers and supervisors , focusing on team managers and the quality and impact of supervision and management oversight.	April 2026	April 2025	Principal Social Worker Practice Improvement Lead	July 2025
SMO2	Embed shared practices with regards to protecting time for supervision , and enable sufficient space for high quality support and challenge	September 2025	May 2025	Principal Social Worker	July 2025
SMO3	Embed use of Group Supervision and Systemic Clinical Surgery for thematic reflections and to address broader issues	December 2025	May 2025	Service Manager Principal Family Therapist	September 2025
SMO4		December 2025	May 2025		June 2025

	<p>Focused Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs training and development ensures effective and meaningful oversight of social work practice.</p>			<p>Independent Reviewing Officer Service Manager</p>	
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<p>How we will assess if we have improved in this area</p>	<p>The pace and impact of changes will be evaluated through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision completed within required timescales for all service areas • Targeted dip sampling • Feedback from social workers / managers during audits with regards to the quality and impact of supervision • The number and timeliness of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and Child Protection Chair (CPC) escalations where plans are not progressing or outcomes are not improving • Audits with effective IRO / CPC oversight and footprint • Audits with an overall rating of Requires Improvement or Good 	<p>What we will see when improvements have been made in this area</p>	<p>Supervision and Management Oversight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most practice audits show supervision is rated Good or Requires Improvement • Supervision is consistently timely across all service areas • Actions from supervision, audits, and Practice Overview Meetings are tracked and lead to improved outcomes • Management oversight is timely, robust, and includes clear rationale and contingency planning • Oversight is evident at key points: case transfers, 10-day reviews, and significant events • Managers authorise high-quality assessments and plans in a timely manner <p>Planning and Escalation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case files consistently show parallel and contingency planning • IRO and CPC involvement is clearly recorded • Timely, well-documented escalations by IROs and CPCs help address delays in children's plans • Children, young people, families, and IROs report positive experiences with plans progressing on time <p>Staff Experience</p> <p>Social workers and practitioners feel supported and receive clear, time-bound direction from managers</p>
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B) Consistency and Impact of Quality Assurance Process

Section Lead	Charmaine Malcolm, Principal Social Worker
What Ofsted told us (During last inspection and most recently)	<p>March 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality assurance framework includes collaborative auditing with practitioners, children, families, and carers, but this is not consistently implemented. Leaders rely heavily on moderation to identify and address shortfalls due to over-optimistic auditors. <p>December 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The independent reviewing officer (IRO) service does not offer an effective quality assurance role and does not sufficiently escalate concerns Strengthened performance information through the recently redeveloped quality assurance programme in Havering is translated into learning, which is used to target areas for service improvement and learning for individual social workers
What our children and families tell us	From July 2025 we will include a summary of feedback from families who have been contacted as part of our quality assurance processes
National Framework outcome or enabler	- Leaders drive conditions for effective practice

Ref	Action	Completion Date	Action Rating	Action Owner	Next Review Date
QA01	Ongoing programme of training and development for auditors	September 2025	May 2025	Head of Quality Assurance	July 2025
QA02	Ensure there is an effective quality assurance loop to ensure consistency of practice.	April 2025	May 2025	Head of Quality Assurance	July 2025
QA03	Development of a Thematic Multi-Agency audit schedule with partners, including refining audit tools and embedding lessons learnt across the partnership	September 2025	May 2025	Head of Quality Assurance HSCP Partnership and Learning Manager	August 2025
QA04	Ensure ' Closing the loop ' learning is shared between Education and Social Care	December 2025	May 2025	Assistant Director of Education	September 2025

<p>How we will assess if we have improved in this area</p>	<p>The pace and impact of changes will be evaluated through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit compliance and findings with regards to quality and impact of practice • Evidence of 'closing the loop' learning across Starting Well supporting identification of training needs, delivery of necessary support and then evidence of improving practice in Audit activity. • Tracking the number of repeat Inadequate audits 	<p>What we will see when improvements have been made in this area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of audit grades changing after moderation • Increase in the number of audits Good or Requires Improvement audits completed within required timescales with contributions from social workers or practitioners, families, and young people • Practitioners and managers regularly discuss and share their learning from quality assurance mechanisms, and this supports improvements for children and families • Increase of well targeted time bound actions from audits • Improved closing the loop to staff in relation to learning from compliments and complaints • Reduction in actions from audits and Practice Overview Meetings • Increased attendance at Lunch and Learn sessions and Stop, Pause and Reflect sessions • Children and young people will meet their full education potential
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C) Governance and Impact of Leaders including Securing Financial Support

Section Lead	Tara Geere, Director of Starting Well
What Ofsted told us (During last inspection and most recently)	<p>March 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Director of Children’s Services has, together with corporate and political leaders, secured substantial financial investment to address practice shortfalls The council has appreciated the need to establish sufficiency in children’s social work services to meet the demand for services The recently appointed permanent senior leadership team is beginning to show positive impact on the significant areas for improvement identified at the inspection. Leaders recognise that communication and relationships are maintained through a culture that prioritises regular and consistent review processes. There remains much to do as, for many children, social work practice is not yet responding to their care needs at sufficient pace. Most social workers in the service have reasonable caseloads. <p>December 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate and political leaders have worked together to understand the needs of children and have begun to invest in children’s services. However, significant further financial investment is needed to deliver core statutory services. Leaders recognise the scale of improvement needed, which now requires whole system change through comprehensive plans for restructuring and improvement.
National Framework outcome or enabler	- Leaders drive conditions for effective practice

Ref	Action	Completion Date	Action Rating	Action Owner	Review Date
GL01	Service wide governance review	September 2025	May 2025	Head of Innovation and Improvement	June 2025
GL02	Ensuring that political and corporate leaders continue to play a key role in challenging and supporting our progress , alongside our safeguarding partners	June 2025	May 2025	Director of Starting Well	June 2025
GL03	Developing collective ownership of Corporate Parenting across Council and wider partnership	September 2025	May 2025	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting	July 2025

GL04	Develop and implement social value clauses in contracts to support our corporate parenting offer	April 2026	May 2025	Assistant Director Education	June 2025
GL05	Ensuring sufficient financial investment is secured to enable necessary improvements to be made	April 2026	May 2025	Director of Starting Well	June 2025
GL06	Health services are commissioned based on the identified needs of children and young people, especially those who are care experienced or have additional needs	April 2026	May 2025	Director of Starting Well Assistant Director, Start Well, Integrated Team at Havering Place	September 2025

How we will assess if we have improved in this area	<p>The pace and impact of changes will be evaluated through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of young people accessing apprenticeships • Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) benchmarking of children’s costs • Evidence of political and corporate support and challenge in governance arrangements, including financial investment. • Tracking of the Corporate Parenting data set • Monitoring complaint volumes and timescales • Monitoring compliments 	What we will see when improvements have been made in this area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient resources to meet needs • Caseloads allow staff to work effectively with children and families to deliver sustained changes and improved outcomes to children • The Corporate Parenting data set and action log will reflect improving performance and feedback to children/young people • children and young people will feedback positively with regards to their access to opportunities and services that they have access to
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Theme Two; Stable and Able Workforce
A) Strengthening communication, recruitment, service delivery, and professional development to drive improvements and engagement.

Theme Lead	Charmaine Malcolm, Principal Social Worker
What Ofsted told us (During last inspection and most recently)	<p>March 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of practice, and pace of improvement, is impeded by frequent changes in workforce (particularly managers) Social workers recognise the authority's commitment to improving services for children and express loyalty to the borough Most social workers in the service have reasonable caseloads Some practitioners require training to improve their confidence and technical knowledge in detailed care planning, contingency planning, and understanding legal orders and statutory processes. <p>December 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social workers in Havering have complex and high caseloads, which affects their ability to manage effectively. There has been a high turnover of social workers, leading to inconsistencies in service delivery. Most social workers feel supported and guided through their work complexities Learning and development opportunities are encouraged and well-advertised. Workers know how to access learning and development and regularly do so, however, this is hampered by workers' capacity issues. This investment in them develops their skills and helps to keep them working for Havering.
National Framework outcome or enabler	- The workforce is equipped and effective

Ref	Action	Completion Date	Action Rating	Action Owner	Review Date
WF01	Routine monitoring of caseloads as part of monthly performance report, service level Power BI dashboards and PIB reports.	April 2025	May 2025	Principal Social Worker	July 2025
WF02	Ongoing programme of two-way communication / engagement with all staff groups , including staff conference, managers forum, director's drop-ins, to promote staff retention	April 2025	May 2025	Principal Social Worker Director of Starting Well	July 2025

WF03	Refresh of the workforce strategy and career pathway documents	December 2025	May 2025	Principal Social Worker	September 2025
WF04	Ensure an ongoing active recruitment and retention programme to promote the Havering offer and attract high calibre permanent staff to our borough	Ongoing	May 2025	Talent Manager (HR) Principal Social Worker	July 2025
WF05	Delivery of the Families First Partnership Programme through implementation of phase two service re-organisation, focused on Early Help and MASH, scoping of phase three and development of a delivery plan.	April 2026	May 2025	Assistant Director Early Help and Partnerships Head of Innovation and Improvement	July 2025
WF06	Training programme with clear priorities for specific roles and service areas in core areas of training and development e.g. assessments, analysis, risk management, permanency, child protection processes, chairing meetings, case recording and pathways for accessing specialist advice / training	Ongoing	May 2025	Head of Quality Assurance / Practice Improvement Team	September 2025
WF07	Delivery of systemic training to relevant Education staff	December 2025	May 2025	Assistant Director of Education	September 2025
WF08	Develop and roll out programme of training and activity that promotes and embeds Face to Face model of practice	May 2026	May 2025	Service Manager Principal Family Therapist	July 2025
WF09	Contribute to the development and delivery of the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) action plan.	May 2026	May 2025	Principal Social Worker	September 2025

How we will assess if we have improved in this area	<p>The pace and impact of changes will be evaluated through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on induction / data from exit interviews • Training feedback from staff via managers forum, staff conferences and Havering Social Care Academy • Average caseloads • Proportion of children in care with two or more changes of social worker within 12 months • Proportion of all children with three or more changes of social worker within 12 months • Rate of agency social workers / managers 	What we will see when improvements have been made in this area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased ratios of permanent social workers and practitioners across the service who have been appropriately inducted • Children and young people build good relationships with staff who remain their workers with minimal changes
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Theme Three; Improving Practice

A) Children, Young People and Families have their needs Accurately Assessed in Timely Way, and Appropriately Responded to

<p>Section Lead</p>	<p>Alex Kaitell, Assistant Director; Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting; Daniel Silva, Assistant Director; Early Help and Partnerships; Trevor Cook, Assistant Director Education Services</p>
<p>What Ofsted told us (During last inspection and most recently)</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of social workers has increased, reducing caseloads and is allowing more time for visits and assessments. This has led to better understanding and support for children's needs • There has been an improvement in the timeliness of visits to children and the holding of children in care reviews, although further progress is needed • Disabled children receive short breaks and respite provision, but support for parents is not always timely, affecting the overall risk reduction • Social work assessments identify children’s mental health needs and local arrangements are effectively sought to support children’s well-being and manage trauma experiences. • Children are supported with effective therapeutic interventions, although delays in them starting mean that some children’s needs are not met at the earliest opportunity <p>December 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some children wait too long for assessments and support, leaving them at risk or experiencing harm for extended periods. • Some assessments are not updated when children's circumstances change, hindering effective planning and safeguarding • While early help services are effective, a small number of children wait too long for support, leading to unnecessary statutory interventions. • The MASH is responsive and effective in identifying and addressing risks to children, but delays in strategy meetings for children already in statutory services are noted. • The operation of early help services is a good example of strategic partnerships enabling effective multi-agency help to vulnerable families.
<p>National Framework outcome or enabler</p>	<p>- Children and Young People are safe in and outside of their home</p>

Ref	Action	Completion Date	Action Rating	Action Owner	Review Date
IP01	Decision making at the front door is timely, recognises risk and reflects appropriate application of threshold	July 2025	May 2025	Assistant Director Early Help and Partnerships	July 2025
IP02	Public Law Outline (PLO) decision making (pre-proceedings and court proceedings) is improved, to ensure decision making is timely and drift and delay is minimised.	September 2025	May 2025	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting	August 2025
IP03	Ensuring assessments robustly identify individual child and family needs and outline an appropriate response, including to; -neglect -child sexual abuse -contextual safeguarding (missing / exploitation) -private fostering -domestic abuse -16/17-year-old homeless children	September 2025	May 2025	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Assistant Director Education Services Assistant Director Early Help and Partnerships	July 2025
IP04	Children at risk will have timely assessments and safety plans in place Our approach to harm outside the home will be developed.	September 2025	May 2025	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting	June 2025
IP05	Review of transfer pathways across all service areas considering new service structures, ensuring that transitions are effective and well managed	October 2025	May 2025	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Principal Social Worker	July 2025
IP06	Delivery of the Children with Disabilities Service Improvement Plan alongside the SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy, particularly focusing on the purpose and impact of the Designated Social Care Officer	April 2025	May 2025	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Head of SEND and Alternative Provision	July 2025
IP07	Strengthen the education offer to children open to a worker	December 2025	May 2025	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Assistant Director Education	September 2025

<p>How we will assess if we have improved in this area</p>	<p>The pace and impact of changes will be evaluated through;</p> <p><u>Health</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of Initial and Review Health Assessments completed within required timescales • Percentage of children in care with a current medical assessment <p><u>Education</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) rated Requires Improvement or Good (based on audit) • Percentage of school-age children in care with a current PEP • Percentage of Key Stage 4 care-experienced pupils achieving at least one GCSE • Average attendance of care-experienced pupils (primary and secondary) • Suspension rates for care-experienced pupils • Number of care-experienced pupils on reduced timetables or in alternative provision • Percentage of care-experienced pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan <p><u>Post-16 Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of care-experienced young people aged 17–18 in education, employment or training 	<p>What we will see when improvements have been made in this area</p>	<p>Our quality assurance process will provide evidence of;</p> <p>An increased number of audits reporting that the quality of plans and reviews is rated as Requires Improvement or better</p> <p>An increase in children, young people and families accessing services which support identified needs in a timely way, particularly those who are care experienced or have additional needs.</p> <p>An increase in the number of care experienced children and young people accessing education, employment or training</p> <p>Decision making in all areas of the service is effective and enables children and young people to thrive in a safe environment</p>
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B) Plans, Processes and Reviews are Purposeful and Child Focused

Section Lead	Alex Kaitell, Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting
What Ofsted told us (During last inspection and most recently)	<p>March 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In examples of better practice, social workers analyse children's diversity needs, to inform their risk assessments and create effective safety plans. - Information in placement plans is significantly underdeveloped, so carers are not always well informed about children's needs at the beginning of their placements. - Care planning for some children is not of sufficient quality to meet their timescales for permanence - The independent reviewing officer service is starting to add value for some children's reviews. <p>December 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The quality of social work assessments and plans is highly variable. - High caseloads and changes in social workers negatively impact the quality of assessments, planning, and interventions. - The quality of care planning and reviews for children in care is poor. Plans often lack clarity and timely implementation, leading to delays in establishing permanency for children. - Personal education plans (PEPs) have effective targets, which are reviewed appropriately. There is variability in the timeliness of completion of PEPs.
National Framework outcome or enabler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need - The workforce is equipped and effective

Ref	Action	Completion Date	Action Rating	Action Owner	Review Date
PR01	Delivery of core training to all staff on how to create and deliver high quality, SMART, well targeted plans for children that are purposeful and focused, in line with the practice model including; Child Protection Planning, Care Planning, Placement Planning, Pathway Planning, Safety Planning, Contingency / Concurrent Planning and Personal Education Plans	September 2025	May 2025	Havering Social Care Academy Practice Improvement Team	June 2025

PR02	Improve the effectiveness of Child Protection Chairs in delivering and progressing plans for children	August 2025	May 2025	Child Protection Chair Service Manager	June 2025
PR03	Independent Reviewing Officers to confidently oversee all child in care plans and understand how to support and oversee purposeful and effective permanency plans.	October 2025	May 2025	Independent Reviewing Officer Service Manager	August 2025
PR04	Embedding consistent practice with regards to early permanence and permanence planning alongside effective tracking and monitoring systems	December 2025	May 2025	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting	July 2025

How we will assess if we have improved in this area	<p>Evidence from quality assurance activity with regards to the quality, effectiveness of plans for children and young people;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of audits rating quality of plans as Requires Improvement or Good • Feedback from families and young people, via conferences, reviews, and audits with regards to how meaningful their plan is and what change it has affected. • Plans (all types) reviewed in specified timescales • Proportion of our children in care achieving permanence through special guardianship or adoption 	What we will see when improvements have been made in this area	<p>Evidence of IRO and CPC footprint on case files, and impact of escalations on ensuring plans progress in a timely way.</p> <p>Evidence of children achieving permanence in a timely manner</p>
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C) The Voices and Lived Experiences of Children, Families and Young People are Heard and Used to Drive Improvement

Section Lead	Daniel Silva, Assistant Director for Early Help and Partnerships
What Ofsted told us (During last inspection and most recently)	<p>March 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers record children's wishes and feelings, ensuring their voices are heard and recorded sensitively. • Social workers are committed advocates for children, understanding their care experiences and ensuring their voices are heard, including children who are non-verbal. • Children who do not regularly attend their reviews are unable to build meaningful relationships with their independent reviewing officers (IROs) and do not understand their advocacy role. • Children do not consistently receive written information along with the support of an advocate, to understand their rights and entitlements • Children said that they would like more timely feedback from the Corporate Parenting Panel when they provide their views to influence documents and strategies. <p>December 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent visitors are used to assist children in sharing their views and wishes about their living arrangements • Care leavers are consulted by the corporate parenting board, but there is a need for more involvement in shaping and improving services. • The virtual school ensures that education plans incorporate the views of children in care. • While there is a participation group for children in care, it is noted that children are not being effectively supported to help shape services.
National Framework outcome or enabler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need - Leaders drive conditions for effective practice - The workforce is equipped and effective

Ref	Action	Completion Date	Action Rating	Action Owner	Next Review Date
VC01	Children and young people are supported to attend their reviews and conferences , along with relevant partner agencies, with care experienced young people are empowered to chair their own reviews wherever possible	July 2025	May 2025	Independent Reviewing Officer Service Manager	June 2025

VC02	All children and young people understand how an advocate could help and support them, and their entitlement to one.	September 2025	May 2025	Independent Reviewing Officer Service Manager Participation Service Manager	July 2025
VC03	Effectiveness and Impact of Direct Work and Life Story Work	December 2025	May 2025	Head of Service Corporate Parenting Head of Service Safeguarding	July 2025
VC04	Increase use and impact of Mind of My Own within statutory social care services, building on success in Early Help	December 2025	May 2025	Service Manager for Participation and Youth Influence	July 2025
VC05	Increase the participation and influence of care experienced children and young people in service design and improvements, including UASC	September 2025	May 2025	Head of Service Corporate Parenting Head of the Virtual School	July 2025

How we will assess if we have improved in this area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly analysis of consultation forms completed prior to child in care reviews and annual foster carer reviews • Proportion of audits with evidence of voice of the child rated as requires improvement or good • Increasing evidence of Mind of My Own being used by children and young people to express their wishes and feelings measured by number of Mind of My Own statements received • Evidence of children in care contributing their views to a statutory review 	What we will see when improvements have been made in this area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of children in care participating in their reviews, as well as those chairing their own reviews • Proportion of children in care matched with an Independent Visitor • Increase use of Mind of My Own in statutory social work teams • Quality assurance evidencing increased effectiveness and quality of direct work / life story work
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Theme 4; Removing Barriers

A) Ensuring that systems, tools, and strategies are in place which enable practice to thrive

Theme Lead	Lucy Goodfellow, Head of Innovation and Improvement
What Ofsted told us (During last inspection and most recently)	<p>March 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most children's records are sensitively and compassionately written, reflecting an understanding of their early trauma experiences. However, for a small number of children, their personal circumstances are not sensitively written. Information about children's culture, religion and heritage is not always recorded well <p>December 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of children's and care leavers' case records is highly variable. Children's records are often sparse and difficult to follow. Children returning to read their records would not understand the reasons why they came into care or why decisions were made for them.
What our workforce tells us	Some staff lack confidence using tools like Co-Pilot and Magic Notes, highlighting a need for further training and guidance. Others demonstrate effective use and report clear benefits from AI tools.
National Framework outcome or enabler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders drive conditions for effective practice The workforce is equipped and effective

Ref	Action	Completion Date	Action Rating	Action Owner	Next Review Date
RB01	Roll out of AI tools and improving digital literacy to support administrative tasks, ensuring practitioners and managers are provided with effective equipment to undertake their roles.	March 2026	June 2025	Head of Innovation and Improvement	July 2025
RB02	Improving the efficiency of our case management system and the quality of case recording	May 2027 (based on one system developer)	June 2025	Head of Innovation and Improvement	July 2025
RB03	Review of Tri.X and its content, to ensure it is up to date and relevant including all statutory policies and strategies	September 2025	June 2025	Principal Social Worker	August 2025

RB04	Children and young people live in safe, stable, and loving homes through sufficient placements and appropriate accommodation, supported by effective panels and a review of sufficiency	May 2026	June 2025	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting	July 2025
RB05	Delivery of action plan associated with sufficiency strategy ,	April 2027	June 2025	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Assistant Director Start Well, Integrated Team at Havering Place	September 2025
RB06	Implement a second Mockingbird Constellation to support placement stability	May 2026	June 2025	Head of Service Corporate Parenting	July 2025
RB07	Review our rates and benefits for foster carers to ensure they are competitive and balanced	September 2025	May 2025	Head of Service Corporate Parenting	July 2025

How we will assess if we have improved in this area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from staff with regards to efficacy of tools in place to support practice • Data on the use of Magic Notes • Evidence from quality assurance activity with regards to quality of case recording • Placement stability performance indicators 	What we will see when improvements have been made in this area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved stability for children and young people in care and leaving care • Improved quality and consistency in case recording • Sufficiency of in-house foster carers to meet needs • Foster carers feeding back positively on the support and training they receive
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