



Safeguarding & Special Educational Needs Sub (Community & Children's Services) Committee

Date: TUESDAY, 1 JULY 2025

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: COMMITTEE ROOMS, 2ND FLOOR, WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members: Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP Sushil Saluja
(Chairman) Stuart Thompson
Deputy Anne Corbett Steve Goodman OBE
Deputy Ceri Wilkins

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Ian Thomas CBE
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

3. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

To elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 26 (6).

For Decision

4. **MINUTES**

To agree the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting held on 14th November 2024.

For Decision
(Pages 7 - 14)

5. **SAFEGUARDING ADULTS WHO ARE ROUGH SLEEPING OR HOMELESS**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 15 - 30)

6. **HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 31 - 40)

7. **ADULT SOCIAL CARE SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25 (Q1 – Q4)**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 41 - 44)

8. **FAMILIES IN THE CITY UPDATE**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 45 - 56)

9. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE PERFORMANCE – MONTH 12 2024/25
(MARCH 2025)**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 57 - 64)

10. **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND FAMILY HELP SERVICE DEVELOPMENT
PLAN 2025–26**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 65 - 72)

11. **EDUCATION AND EARLY YEARS SERVICE SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 73 - 82)

12. **CITY OF LONDON, QUALITY ASSURANCE OF CARE PROVIDERS, ANNUAL
REPORT 2024–25**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 83 - 94)

13. **CITY OF LONDON VIRTUAL SCHOOL**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 95 - 116)

14. **CITY OF LONDON SAFEGUARDING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE, 2024–25
PARTICIPATION ANNUAL REPORT**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 117 - 138)

15. **CITY OF LONDON, DCCS, 2024–2025 LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 139 - 154)

16. **CITY OF LONDON, CHILDREN'S SERVICES PRACTICE AND IMPACT REVIEW SUMMARY, AIDHOUR SCRUTINY SEPTEMBER 2024 – FEBRUARY 2025**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 155 - 170)

17. **CITY OF LONDON, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES, 2024–25 PRIVATE FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 171 - 182)

18. **QUESTIONS OF MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

19. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

20. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION, that – under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

For Decision

Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

21. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

To agree the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on 14th November 2024.

For Decision
(Pages 183 - 184)

22. **NON-PUBLIC APPENDICES**

For Information

- a) Non-Public Appendix to be received in conjunction with item 7 (Pages 185 - 196)
- b) Non-Public Appendix to be received in conjunction with item 9 (Pages 197 - 230)

23. **INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO), ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023–2024**

Report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 231 - 262)

24. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

25. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB-COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

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SAFEGUARDING SUB (COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14 November 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Safeguarding Sub (Community & Children's Services) Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Ruby Sayed (Chairman)
Helen Fentimen OBE JP (Deputy
Chairman)
Anne Corbett

Deputy Ceri Wilkins
Jacqui Webster

Officers:

Shohel Ahmed	- City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board Manager
Laura Demetriades	- Community & Children's Services Department
Hannah Dobbin	- Community & Children's Services Department
Kirstie Hilton	- Community & Children's Services Department
Mandy Horsburgh	- City of London Police
Greg Knight	- Community & Children's Services Department
Rory McCallum	- Senior Professional Advisor, CHSCP
Chris Pelham	- Community & Children's Services Department
Debby Rigby	- Community & Children's Services Department
Marta Thlon	- Senior Nurse for School Nursing and Looked after Children
Ellie Ward	- Community & Children's Services Department

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That public and non-public summary of the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

4. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE SELF-EVALUATION 2024

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning the Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) assessment of the quality and impact of its services.

It was noted that the report detailed the current state of safeguarding services for children across all age groups and categories. It was submitted to Ofsted as part of an inspection in September, and the service received an outstanding grading.

Key highlights from the self-evaluation included:

- The strength of the early help service, which provides practical support for families, such as income maximisation and parenting support.
- The effectiveness of spotting special educational needs (SEND) early.
- The strong care leaver offer.

A Member asked officers to provide more details on the care leaver offer. It was noted that the care leaver offer was highlighted as being particularly strong, providing comprehensive support to young people transitioning out of care. Additionally, a Members asked how the early help service support families. Officers noted that the early help service offers practical support such as income maximisation, bedtime routines, and parenting play modelling.

5. VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning an overview of the role and impact of The City of London Virtual School for Children with a Social Worker for the academic year 2023/2024.

Members noted the report covered the work that took place between September 2023 and August 2024. It highlighted the growth of the virtual school's remit, now covering all children with a social worker, including care leavers up to 25 and beyond, not just children in care.

Key highlights from the report included:

- The service is strong and well-resourced, providing a flexible offer for an ever-changing cohort.
- Increasing the offer in P/E and sport, as many young people are interested in fitness and team games.
- Collaboration with the Music Service to increase music instrumental lessons for interested young people.
- Partnerships with King's College and Teddy University to offer degree-level engineering courses.
- The successful onboarding of four apprentices for the City of London during the last academic year.

In response to questions raised by Members, officers noted that the award ceremony held earlier this week was a lovely event showcasing the achievements of young people. It was suggested that more Members of the Committee be invited to future events to meet the young people. Members were informed that ideas for residential trips come from various sources, including recommendations from the Children in Care Council network and suggestions from young people.

6. **CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning the City of London Corporation role as a corporate parent, and the outcomes that have been achieved for the children in care during the period April 2023 to March 2024.

Officers introduced the report which sets out the achievements and work done in the past year, as well as the strengthening of processes around the corporate parenting role.

Key highlights included:

- The recognition of three City of London young people as shining stars at a Pan London awards ceremony.
- The agreement by the Court of Common Council to secure the experience of carers being akin to a protected characteristic.
- The review and launch of a revised children in care pledge last November.

In response to questions raised by Members, officers noted that the new policy recognising care experience as akin to a protected characteristic has been signed off by the Grand Committee (Community & Children's Services Committee), which has been helpful in working with other departments, such as housing, to provide more opportunities for care leavers.

Officers noted that although only 86% of health assessments are carried out within the timescale, some assessments were delayed by a couple of days due to clinic capacity or interpreter availability, but these delays did not have a material impact on the children. It was suggested that the corporate parenting report should be sent to a full Common Council meeting for information to impress upon Members the importance of their statutory responsibility.

Members were informed that corporate parenting training has been delivered, but there is a challenge in widening the interest among the broader Council membership, with some resistance to making training mandatory. The suggestion of creating an online training package for members who cannot attend meetings was found helpful, and there are plans to investigate this.

7. **SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS 2024-27**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning the Department's Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers 2024-27.

Officers outlined the department's approach to ensuring its statutory duty to provide suitable placements for children in care and care leavers. The strategy details the approach to sourcing, contracting, and quality assurance, along with an action plan for 2024-2027.

Key highlights from the discussion included:

- The strategy was provided to Ofsted as part of the recent inspection, and members of the commissioning team were interviewed. The conclusions were that there are robust arrangements regarding commissioning, sourcing, and quality assurance of placements.

A Member enquired if there were there any gaps identified in the strategy that need to be addressed. Officers said that generally, no gaps were identified. The arrangements are robust, with access to placements across London through a commissioning alliance framework. Officers additionally informed Members that there are additional resources available that can be called upon as needed, ensuring that the needs are met without any identified gaps.

8. **2023–24 PRIVATE FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning how the City of London has complied with its duties regarding private fostering and details the activities undertaken to promote awareness of the notification requirements.

Members were provided with an introduction to the private fostering annual report. It was noted that there were no private fostering notifications in the last year. The report highlighted the issue of underreporting in private fostering and the ongoing efforts to raise awareness.

Key highlights from the discussion included:

- The comparison with Hackney, which tends to have between 11 and 50 young people in private fostering.
- The continuous efforts to raise awareness through standard safeguarding training, the private fostering app, and updated leaflets and posters.

A Member asked how the City of London Corporation can reach out to informal fostering arrangements within families. It was suggested to use different parts of the services within the corporation, such as newsletters, to get information directly to families. The voluntary sector was also mentioned as a good vehicle for capturing data and reaching out to families. In response to a question raised by a Member, officers noted that there are systems in place to respond to any private fostering notifications and provide the appropriate support to the child and private foster carers.

9. **CICC SAILING TRIP FEEDBACK 2024**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning feedback from a sailing trip undertaken in 2024.

Members were provided with an introduction to the feedback from the Children in Care Council (CICC) sailing trip. The trip was described as a unique and well-received experience for the young people involved. The feedback highlighted the positive impact of the trip on the participants, including the strengthening of relationships and increased confidence.

Key highlights from the discussion included:

- The trip was a unique experience that involved a 3:30 AM shift for the young people, which they managed well.
- The relationships built during the trip were evident at the celebration event, showcasing the positive impact on the young people's confidence.

A Member asked how the ideas for the residential trips are generated. Officers noted that ideas for residential trips come from various sources, including recommendations from the Children in Care Council network and suggestions from young people.

10. **EDUCATION AND EARLY YEARS SERVICE SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning highlights developments and progress in several key areas.

Members were provided with an update on the education team's efforts in fulfilling its safeguarding responsibilities. A key highlight was the new statutory obligation to work closely with schools under the "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" guidance. This closer collaboration with schools has led to a better understanding of the factors behind non-attendance and has facilitated joint efforts to address these issues.

Key highlights from the discussion included:

- Efforts to identify patterns and trends concerning children and young people with special educational needs (SEND), who represent one of the most vulnerable groups.
- Emphasis on addressing disproportionality within schools and the rise in the number of children experiencing social, emotional, or mental health needs.
- Awareness of the delay in diagnosing girls with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) until secondary school age.
- Concerns regarding the vulnerabilities of children using the internet and social media platforms, as well as the development of artificial intelligence.

Members noted that the education team is addressing the vulnerabilities of children using the internet and social media platforms by partnering with INEQE to offer training to schools on their monitoring and filtering processes. This ensures that digital and technological standards align with the "Keeping Children Safe in Education" guidance for 2023. Officers added, to support children transitioning from primary to secondary school, the virtual school conducted a transition project in the summer term with The Aldgate School to prepare young people in year six for secondary transition. The impact of this project would be measured throughout the term.

It was noted that the team is also considering any correlation between these transitions and exclusions, particularly how school policies can support or not support children who find certain environments challenging. Additionally, the team is in conversation with SAC about potentially rolling out a trauma-informed training program across the corporation.

11. CITY OF LONDON POLICE VULNERABILITY REPORT 2024

The Sub-Committee received a report of the City of London Police concerning details how the City of London Police (CoLP) identifies, supports, and safeguards vulnerable people.

Members were presented with the City of London Police Vulnerability Reports for 2024. The report covered a wide range of responsibilities in the vulnerability area, including updates on data sets and various initiatives.

Key highlights from the discussion included:

- The importance of gathering anonymised data from the voluntary sector working with women and children, particularly in relation to honour-based abuse.
- The need to collect information from academies on child exploitation and child abuse.
- The use of heat maps to link data on sexual offences to ward maps, which could be useful for the new Destination City Advisory Board and licensing.

In response to questions raised by Members, officers noted that they would need to look into whether any information is being gathered from the voluntary sector working with women and children regarding honour-based abuse, as they were not aware of any such data being collected at that time. They added that while they have good links with academies, they have not received any actionable information on child exploitation and child abuse at this stage.

Officers also agreed to speak to the analyst about linking the heat map on sexual offences to a ward map, as it should be possible to do so. Regarding work with hotels and massage parlours around vulnerable young women, Officers explained that they engage regularly with hotels through the Licensing Forum and provide updates on identifying different crime types. They also run Operation Make Safe to combat child sexual exploitation and act on signs of exploitation in massage parlours through various measures.

12. CITY AND HACKNEY SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Independent Chair of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board concerning an annual report detailing its achievements in adult safeguarding over the past year.

The CHSAB Manager, presented the annual report, highlighting key achievements, priorities for the upcoming year, and performance data. Key achievements included commissioning eight safeguarding courses attended by over 150 professionals, hosting webinars on various topics during Safeguarding Adults Week, and developing the Adult Partnership Assessment Tool Kit.

Officers noted that priorities for 2024/25 include improving the quality of mental capacity assessments, engaging more with people with lived experience, responding to the needs of vulnerable groups, supporting frontline practitioners,

and delivering recommendations from safeguarding adult reviews. Members noted that performance data showed that 49 safeguarding concerns were raised, with 25 leading to a Section 42 inquiry. The most prevalent types of abuse were self-neglect and financial or material abuse.

13. THE CITY & HACKNEY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP (CHSCP) ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Sub-Committee received a report of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) concerning an annual report for 2023/24 outlining the statutory safeguarding arrangements in the City of London and Hackney.

Members were provided with an introduction to the CHSCP Annual Report 2023/24. The report highlighted the key achievements and priorities of the partnership over the past year. It emphasised the importance of safeguarding children and the collaborative efforts made by various agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of children in the City and Hackney.

Key highlights from the discussion included:

- The report detailed the work done to improve safeguarding practices and the positive outcomes achieved through multi-agency collaboration.
- The importance of continuous improvement and the need to address emerging challenges in safeguarding children.

A Member asked what the key achievements of the CHSCP over the past year were. Officers highlighted the key achievements include improved safeguarding practices, positive outcomes through multi-agency collaboration, and addressing emerging challenges in safeguarding children.

The Sub-Committee asked what the priorities for the CHSCP for the upcoming year are. Members were informed that the priorities include continuing to improve safeguarding practices, addressing emerging challenges, and ensuring the safety and well-being of children through collaborative efforts.

14. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE PERFORMANCE - MONTH 3 2024/25 (JUNE 2024)

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning updates Members on service performance across the Children and Families Service.

15. ADULT SOCIAL CARE SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 2024/25

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning safeguarding performance across the Adult Social Care Service during Q1 of Year 2024/25.

16. QUESTIONS OF MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
There was no urgent business.
18. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**
RESOLVED, that – under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.
19. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**
RESOLVED – That, the non-public minutes of the meeting held on the 2 July be agreed as a correct record.
20. **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE- PROVIDER ANNUAL REPORT 2023- 2024**
The Sub-Committee received a report of the Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation.
21. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**
There were no non-public questions.
22. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB-COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**
There was no urgent business to be considered in non-public.

The meeting closed at 12.23 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Blair Stringman
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City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – For Information Safeguarding and SEND Sub-committee – For Information	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: Safeguarding Adults who are Rough Sleeping or Homeless	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties 	Providing Excellent Services Care Act 2014, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Mental Health Act 1983
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services
Report author:	Ian Tweedie, Head of Service, Adult Social Care

Summary

A report has been completed (Appendix 1) to provide an overview from an Adult Social Care (ASC) perspective of the work being done in the City of London (CoL) to safeguard adults with care and support needs who are experiencing Rough Sleeping and Homelessness. It specifically focuses on those areas where ASC interfaces with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping service (HRS).

The report demonstrates that ASC and the HRS service have developed structures, systems and practices designed to support closer working in managing risk and safeguarding adults who are homeless and who rough sleep. Care Act needs assessments are carried out by the HRS social worker, with 52% leading to support being put in place. There are multi-agency high-risk panels in place to monitor and safeguard adults who are rough sleeping. An ASC Quality Assurance Framework is in place complete with an annual audit schedule across all ASC services. A specific audit on homelessness and rough sleeping practice is scheduled for later this year, and will be reported to Members.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The CoL has duties and powers regarding the assessment, support and safeguarding of adults with care and support needs under the Care Act 2014. CoL has additional and related duties and powers under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Mental Health Act 1983. Applying this legislation to the homeless and rough sleeping population brings with it a complexity that necessitates close working between the HRS and ASC services.
2. The Care Act requires every local authority to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) for its area. The City and Hackney SAB operates at a strategic level, helping and protecting adults in its area who are at risk of, or experiencing abuse and neglect. The SAB ensures that there are multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and practices within the local authority area. The SAB has a specific CoL sub-committee attended by heads of service from ASC and HRS.

Current Position

3. Both the HRS and ASC services sit within the People's Directorate of the Department of Community and Children's services. The heads of each service work together as part of the People's Senior Management team led by Assistant Director Chris Pelham.
4. A specific social worker post within the HRS service has been in place since 2021, jointly funded with ASC. While embedded within HRS, the post has professional supervision and management support from ASC for statutory casework.
5. As a local authority, the CoL has a duty to undertake an assessment, under the Care Act 2014, where an adult has the appearance of care and support needs. However, this does not apply if the adult refuses the assessment.
6. The HRS social worker undertakes the majority of assessments for adults who are homeless or rough sleeping. There are a number of challenges in assessing the needs of rough sleepers, including refusal to engage and being unable to locate the individual. Approximately 52% of all assessments led to support being put in place. The number of assessments per year has fallen from a high of 20 in 2021/22 to 11 in 2024/25. The impact of the pandemic and the temporary accommodation at Carter Lane may have accounted for the high figure in 2021/22. The more recent figures may have been impacted by the changes in the assessment centre, its systems, locations, and personnel. Other factors may include changes in the rough sleeping cohort, with the more transient adults

already connected with and assessed by other local authorities, or those for whom social care is not a primary need.

7. The ASC service provides long-term support to adults with care and support needs who have experienced homelessness and rough sleeping. There are currently 20 adults from this cohort in supported living placements, accounting for 50% of all ASC supported living placements. There are an additional 10 adults from this cohort in residential care, accounting for approximately 38% of all residential care placements.
8. An average of 10 formal Safeguarding Concerns are raised to ASC each year regarding adults who were rough sleeping or homeless, with approximately 40% leading to Safeguarding Enquiries. Self-neglect is the most prevalent type of abuse in the Safeguarding Enquiries.
9. Prevention is a key principle of adult safeguarding following the premise that it is better to prevent harm before it occurs. Approximately 50% of the HRS social worker caseload is aimed at engaging through a preventative lens with those who may not meet the criteria for ASC support. In addition, HRS and ASC have joint funded a strengths-based practitioner role which has led to consistent engagement with 13 adults to prevent a return to rough sleeping by supporting these individuals to manage their health, money, living space, time, and safety.
10. Multi-Agency Risk Panels are based on the principle that shared ownership and decision-making is the most effective, transparent and safe way to manage risk in complex or high-risk situations. There are several relevant high-risk panels operating within the city, each with their own specific purpose.
11. There is a Quality Assurance Framework in place across all ASC practice. The audit schedule includes a specific HRS audit every two years. The next will be later this year and the findings of the audit will be reported to Members.

Options

12. N/A

Proposals

13. N/A

Key Data

14. N/A

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Corporate Plan 2024-2029

15. This links directly to **Providing Excellent Services:** Supporting people to live healthy, independent lives and achieve their ambitions is dependent on excellent

services. Vital to that continued pursuit is enabling access to effective adult and children's social care, outstanding education, lifelong learning, quality housing, and combatting homelessness.

- Financial implications – None
- Resource implications – None
- Legal implications – None
- Risk implications – None
- Equalities implications – The report provides a level of assurance around safeguarding work across all protected characteristics for individuals who rough sleep.
- Climate implications – None
- Security implications – None

Conclusion

16. Work to support and safeguard adults with care and support needs who are rough sleeping or homeless is a challenging and complex area of work. There are systems in place which foster close working between HRA and ASC in managing risk, and there is evidence of adults being supported through appropriate pathways. There are systems for oversight, and quality assurance in place to monitor and improve services.

Appendices

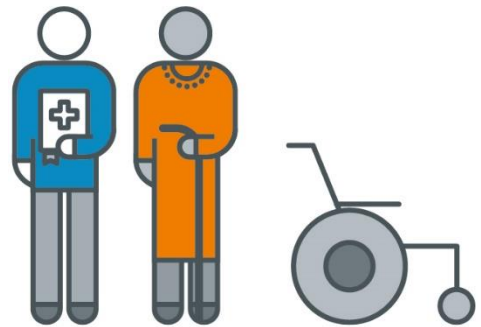
- Appendix 1 – An overview of arrangements to Safeguard Adults with Care and Support needs who are Rough Sleeping or Homeless in the City of London

Ian Tweedie

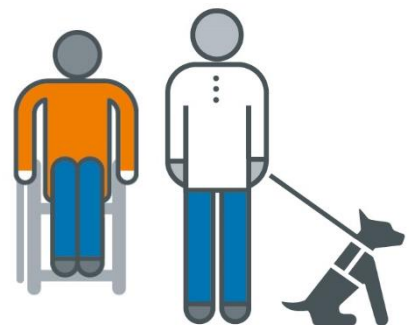
Head of Adult Social Care, Department of Community and Children's Services

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**An overview of arrangements Safeguard
Adults with Care and Support needs who
are Rough Sleeping or Homeless in the
City of London**



CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

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Introduction

This report is intended to provide an overview from an Adult Social Care perspective of the work being done in the City of London (CoL) to safeguard those who are experiencing Rough Sleeping and Homelessness. It specifically focusses on those areas where Adult Social Care (ASC) interfaces with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping service (HRS).

ASC and the HRS service have developed structures, systems and practices designed to support closer working in managing risk and safeguarding adults who are homeless and who rough sleep.

The structure of the People Directorate enables Heads of both services to work closely together as part of the Adults Senior Management team under the Assistant Director for People.

A specific Social Worker post within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping service which is joint funded with Adult Social Care has been in place since 2021. While embedded within HRS the post has professional supervision and management support from ASC for statutory casework.

As a local authority the City of London has safeguarding duties under section 42 of the Care Act 2014 towards adults with care and support needs.

While the report will go into some detail around formal legislative safeguarding arrangements, it also covers wider arrangements in place to provide support to meet the ongoing needs of adults who have experienced homelessness or rough sleeping.

Assessing and meeting the needs of adults who are Rough Sleeping or Homeless.

As a Local Authority the City of London has a duty to undertake an assessment, under the Care Act 2014, where an adult has the appearance of care and support needs. However, this does not apply if the adult refuses the assessment.

Since the introduction of the role in 2021 assessments are carried out by HRS social worker, although there are social workers within ASC who are experienced in this area and will also undertake assessments where required.

The following table shows the number of assessments undertaken since April 2021 and in how many of these the adult was found to meet the Care Act eligibility criteria.

Year	Total Assessments	Eligible	Not Eligible	Unable to complete
2021/22	20	14	6	
2022/23	18	11	5	2
2023/24	11	7	4	
2024 Apr to Dec	5 *	3	2	

*An additional 5 assessments currently allocated.

An overview of arrangements Safeguard Adults with Care and Support needs who are Rough Sleeping or Homeless in the City of London

The above data shows a higher number of assessments in the initial 2 year post pandemic time period. Along with the impact of the pandemic itself, the high figures could also be attributed to the establishment of the temporary assessment centre at Carter Lane and the introduction of the HRS social worker post.

There is a significant drop off in the number of assessments since that period which could have been impacted by the changes in the assessment centre, its systems, locations, and personnel, as well as the lessening impact of the pandemic. Other factors may include changes in the rough sleeping cohort with the more transient adults already connected with and assessed by other local authorities, or for whom social care is not a primary need.

Additionally, there are a number of challenges in assessing the needs of rough sleepers, refusal of assessment or to engage is common and often requires a longer-term approach of relationship-based interactions to build trust with the adult. Having a dedicated social worker embedded within HRS can help facilitate this. Locating the adult can also be problematic given the transient nature of many rough sleepers and can lead to being unable to undertake to complete assessments.

The below table shows the outcomes immediately following the assessments,

Year	Total Assessments	Care and Support Plan/immediate Services	Services offered but declined	Referral to other agency	No further Action/case closure
2021/2022	20	12	2	3	3
2022/2023	18	7	1	4	6
2023/2024	11	6	0	3	2
2024 Apr to Dec	5	3	0	0	2

Approximately 52% of all assessments led to support being put in place, only in 2022/23 did this figure drop below 50%. An additional 3 adults over the whole period were offered but declined services. Of the remaining 23 adults 10 agreed to be referred on to other agencies which included,

- Drug and alcohol support
- Other Local Authorities
- Mental Health services
- Accommodation Services
- Asylum Seeker Support Services
- Migrants Organise, charity that supports those seeking asylum.
- Learning, training, and employment support

Long Term ASC support

ASC provide long term support for adults who have experienced rough sleeping and homelessness. The majority of these adults are in accommodation-based support such as supported living schemes and residential care.

An overview of arrangements Safeguard Adults with Care and Support needs who are Rough Sleeping or Homeless in the City of London

Supported Living

Supported living is housing with individual tenancies where support and/or care services are provided. The accommodation is normally funded via housing benefit with ASC funding the support elements, however, in some circumstances ASC also funds the accommodation.

City of London ASC service spot purchases supported living scheme placements to provide accommodation-based support for people to attain or retain their independence.

The following shows the total number of supported living placements funded by ASC breaking down the figures to show the numbers who have experienced homelessness or rough sleeping.

Total number Supported living placements across all ASC	20
Former Rough Sleepers	10
Previously homeless but not rough sleeping	1
No history of homelessness	9

The above table shows that over 50% of all ASC funded supported living placements are for people who have experienced homelessness or rough sleeping. This appears to be indicative of the City of London's disproportionately high levels of rough sleeping in comparison to its housed population, along with the systems and appetite to meet the needs of this cohort.

Residential Care

Residential care means long-term care and support provided in a care home. It's for people who need substantial help with their personal care and can also include nursing homes for those with higher medical needs.

As of 31 December 2024, there were 26 permanent residential care placements open to ASC, 10 (38%) of which were for adults who previously experienced rough sleeping or homelessness.

A Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard is in place for 4 of these adults under the Mental Capacity Act. This is because they have been independently assessed to lack the capacity to consent to their care and that the restrictions in place have been assessed to be in their best interests.

The following table shows a breakdown of these 10 adults in terms of the type of residential care.

Residential Category	Number of Adults
Adult Alcohol Misuse - Residential	2
Adult with MH Needs - Residential	1
Older People - Residential	5
Adult-Mental Health-Nursing Home	2

An overview of arrangements Safeguard Adults with Care and Support needs who are Rough Sleeping or Homeless in the City of London

It is worth noting that the above data is a snapshot and does not take into account admission rates which are much higher in the CoL housed residential population who tend to enter residential care at a later stage and for shorter duration. Those who have experienced homelessness or rough sleeping generally enter residential accommodation at an earlier age and remain there for a longer period. This could be viewed as suggestive of greater needs at an earlier point in their life and the positive impact of residential care on their life expectancy.

Safeguarding Concerns and Enquiries

ASC receives between 50 to 60 safeguarding concerns in total each year, with approximately 50% of those leading to safeguarding enquiry.

The Care Act criteria for a safeguarding enquiry is that an adult in the local authority area (whether or not ordinarily resident there),

(a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),

(b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and

(c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

If this criterion is met then the local authority must make (or cause to be made) whatever enquiries it thinks necessary to enable it to decide whether any action should be taken in the adult's case and, if so, what and by whom.

The following table shows the number of safeguarding concerns raised regarding adults who were rough sleeping or homeless and how many of these progressed to a safeguarding enquiry.

Year	Concerns	Enquiries
2021/22	9	4
2022/23	11	4
2023/24	10	4
2024 Apr to Dec	9	4

The data shows that overall, 41% of concerns progressed to a safeguarding enquiry which around 8% is lower than for ASC as a whole. Reasons why concerns are not progressed to enquiries include,

- the adult does not meet one or more of the criteria, e.g. they do not have care and support needs.
- the adult cannot be located.
- The adult does not wish to proceed with an enquiry and there is no basis for overriding their wishes.

Safeguarding Enquiries by Types of abuse

Year	Types of abuse
2021/22	Self-neglect (2) Neglect and acts of omission (1) Sexual (1)
2022/23	Self-neglect (4)
2023/24	Self-neglect (4)
2024 Apr to Dec	Self-neglect (1) Neglect and acts of omission (1) Physical (1) Financial (1)

Prevention

Prevention is a key principle of adult safeguarding following the premise that it is better to prevent harm before it occurs. The joint funding of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Social Worker role enables the capacity and expertise to undertake work with adults at the 'edge of care' as well as those meeting the statutory criteria for support under the Car Act. HRS social worker operates with a caseload in the region of 18 adults, half of which are likely to be with the preventative cohort, although numbers may vary with demand.

In 2022 Adult Social Care realigned its service to enable a stronger emphasis on a strengths-based approach. The objective of the strengths-based approach is to protect the individual's independence, resilience, ability to make choices and wellbeing. Supporting the person's strengths can help address needs (whether they are eligible or not) for support in a way that allows the person to lead, and be in control of, an ordinary and independent day-to-day life as much as possible. It may also help delay the development of further needs.

Part of this approach was to create an innovative strengths-based practitioner role in the service to provide short term support to adults to achieve their goals, improve their wellbeing in order to prevent, reduce and delay their needs for care.

Following on from this, a similar strengths-based practitioner role has been introduced to the HRS service to work alongside the HRS social worker. This has led to consistent engagement with 13 adults to prevent a return to rough sleeping by supporting them to manage their health, money, living space, time, and safety.

City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board

The Care Act requires every Local Authority to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) for its area. The SAB operates at a strategic level, helping and protecting adults in its area who are at risk of, or experiencing abuse and neglect by assuring itself of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and practices within the local authority area.

An overview of arrangements Safeguard Adults with Care and Support needs who are Rough Sleeping or Homeless in the City of London

One of the core functions of the SAB is to conduct Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) in accordance with Section 44 of the Care Act 2014, identifying lessons to be learnt from serious safeguarding cases and using them to improve how partner agencies work together to safeguard adults.

The City and Hackney SAB has to date published fourteen SARs in total, which includes both those meeting the mandatory legislative threshold, and those which have been carried out under discretionary powers within the Care Act. Three of these SARs are regarding adults who had been rough sleeping, including one discretionary SAR regarding the death of a man who had been rough sleeping in the City of London. There has been engagement at all stages by HRS and ASC staff in the SAR process to ensure learning within the organisation and its partners.

In May 2024, a ministerial letter was sent to Directors of Housing and Adult Social Care, and Safeguarding Adults Board Chairs, outlining recommendations for Safeguarding Adults Boards regarding individuals rough sleeping. The City of London reviewed the recommendations and provided a response to the City and Hackney SAB providing assurance that a mature system is already in place to meet recommendations and additional measures being taken to strengthen it further. A separate report of this has previously been presented at the HRS subcommittee.

In addition to the CHSAB there is a separate City of London Adults Safeguarding Board Sub Committee, attended by both the Assistant Director for People, the Head of Adult Social Care and the Head of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.

High Risk Panels and multi-agency approaches

Multi-Agency Risk Panels are based on the principle that shared ownership and decision making is the most effective, transparent, and safe way to manage risk in complex or high-risk situations.

There are several relevant high-risk panels operating within the city, each with their own specific purpose as outlined below.

Task And Action

This is a monthly meeting to ensure a multi-agency approach to supporting the most vulnerable individuals who rough sleep is embedded in the City of London's Rough Sleeping approach.

One of its stated roles is to address the immediate safeguarding needs of individual rough sleepers and to consider whether there is a need for referrals for statutory assessments including Housing assessment, Care Act assessment, Safeguarding or Mental Health Act assessment.

Challenge Group

To receive referrals directly from providers and/or City officers, or as an escalation route from the above Task and Action group. To analyse, discuss and challenge the blockages in supporting long term entrenched rough sleepers away from the streets in accordance with the CoL's strategic priorities to tackle rough sleeping and associated street activities.

An overview of arrangements Safeguard Adults with Care and Support needs who are Rough Sleeping or Homeless in the City of London

Complex needs Panel

An ASC funding panel to discuss and authorise all high cost, high risk, or complex needs interventions. It provides oversight, guidance, challenge, and scrutiny for all ASC admissions to accommodation-based support.

Safeguarding Meeting

This meeting can be called on any individual case where a formal safeguarding process is taking place. The purpose of this meeting is to share information, identify and manage risk, plan how to safeguard the person and review actions. Its status as a statutory meeting enables the potential to call to account partners or agencies who are not be engaging with the process, and if necessary, escalate to the CHSAB.

Community MARAC

The City of London Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Multi-Agency Panel (the Panel) provides a forum through the City Community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (CCM) for professionals to share information to more effectively address criminal and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the City of London. The Panel is responsible for considering individual complex and high-risk cases referred by core agencies/partners to reduce and prevent crime and disorder, and to reduce the risk of individuals to themselves and others, where the referral to the Panel is justified as being necessary and proportionate and in the overriding public interest.

Mental Health

Severe mental illness is common amongst the rough sleeping population and can present a significant barrier to engagement with services. The City of London works in partnership with the East London Foundation Trust's Rough Sleeping and Mental Health Programme (RAMHP) who provide expertise and support improving access to mental health services for people sleeping rough.

Mental Act Duties

Separate to RAMPH, the City of London commissions certain duties under the Mental Health Act 1983 from East London Foundation Trust in order to ensure that adults benefit from a robust service with in-depth expertise.

Specifically, the following duties are commissioned in this regard,

- Mental Health Act Assessments
- Mental Health Tribunal Reports
- Responsibilities under the Community Mental Health framework

Additionally, out of hours Mental Health Act Assessments are commissioned from London Borough of Hackney.

Regular contract monitoring is in place to ensure oversight of the provision of legal functions on behalf of the City.

The Mental Capacity Act

Understanding and applying the Mental Capacity Act to those who are homeless or sleeping rough can be complex and challenging. All social workers across ASC and HRS are trained in the Mental Capacity Act and have access to in depth legal literacy training. The below table shows the number of mental capacity assessments undertaken by social workers on the City HRS cohort.

Year	Mental Capacity Assessments	Number of adults assessed.
2021/22	5 (1)	4 (1)
2022/23	3 (5)	1 (3)
2023/24	4 (2)	4 (2)
2024 Apr to Dec	2 (2) 1 in progress	2

As mental capacity act assessments are decision and time specific, more than one assessment may be completed on each individual. Therefore, the table is split into 2 columns, one showing the number of assessments and the other the number of adults assessed.

The first figure indicates those who were either homeless or rough sleeping at that point, while the figure in brackets indicates the number of assessments for former homeless adults in settled accommodation who are open to ASC.

The above figures do not include Independent Mental Capacity Assessments carried out for the purposes of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, mentioned in the above section on Residential Care.

Quality Assurance

Adult Social Care has a Quality Assurance Framework in place to ensure the delivery of high-quality services to adults at risk in need of support. This includes governance of the quality assurance process and an agreed annual schedule of audits/feedback.

Audit Schedule

As part of the QA framework ASC have an audit schedule in place to provide assurance, accountability, and improvement across practice. The following table is taken from the schedule to show the audit areas and frequency most relevant to Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.

Audit	Comments
Safeguarding	An annual audit of ASC statutory safeguarding practice.
Care Act Duties and Assessment	An annual audit of ASC practice regarding the implementation of Care Act duties, including the assessment of adults with care and support needs
Management Oversight Annually	An annual audit looking at the management oversight of ASC practice across
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (specific)	A specifically themed Homelessness and Rough Sleeping audit taking place every 2 years

The last specific HRS audit was completed in 2023 and focussed on safeguarding decision-making, auditing concerns that did not reach the criteria for a safeguarding Enquiry under the Care Act 2014. The audit was undertaken by the City of London Principal Social Worker for Adults, who provided assurance to the CHSAB that *'Safeguarding Adults Managers in the City of London make good decisions and maintain appropriate records around the requirements of s.42 of The Care Act 2014.'*

In line with the 2 year-cycle an HRS specific audit will be undertaken later in 2025. Findings of the audit will be reported to Members.

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City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee – For information	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: Housing Assistance Policy	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes. • provides statutory duties. 	Providing Excellent Services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services
Report author:	Ian Tweedie, Head of Service, Adult Social Care

Summary

As part of its local authority function the City of London (CoL) is allocated an annual Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for the purpose of home adaptations to support residents with disabilities to maintain their independence.

Applicants for the grant are means tested and, depending on the financial circumstances of the household, may have to contribute towards the recommended adaptation cost.

The CoL has introduced a Housing Assistance Policy (HAP) to improve outcomes for residents by streamlining the process and reducing delays. This includes the CoL funding up to the first £12,000 of any agreed DFG application without means testing.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The DFG aims to help eligible older and disabled people to make changes to their home so they can access and use all essential facilities. Central Government funding for the DFG is allocated to the City Corporation through the Better Care Fund (BCF) on an annual basis.
2. In England, disabled adults and children can receive a capital grant of up to £30,000 per application, (relating to one particular purpose). The DFG is open to eligible owner-occupiers, tenants (including council tenants) and landlords. It is means tested, and the applicant might have to contribute to the costs of the work. The grant could pay for adaptations such as widening doors and installing ramps or grab rails, improving access to essential facilities around the home, such as with a stairlift or level-access shower, or adapting heating and lighting controls to make them easier to use.
3. The Department of Community and Children's Services reviewed the DFG as part of the wider BCF plans, and identified an action to improve awareness and increase the number of residents benefiting from the DFG by introducing a HAP. This aligns with:
 - BCF policy objectives to enable people to stay well, safe, and independent at home for longer and providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time
 - a key commitment in the Adult Social Care Strategy; Helping individuals meet their own needs and aspirations in a safe and supportive way.
4. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) provides general powers for local housing authorities to provide assistance for housing renewal, including home adaptations. Local authorities can publish a HAP under the RRO.
5. Government guidance (2022) states that HAPs can be used to 'streamline the application process for home adaptations' and 'may include a brief application form, limiting the situations where the means test applies and varying the requirements around contractors'. It states that providing a Home Improvement Agency 'to help and support with making a valid application is also likely to improve take up of the grant and ensure that adaptations are fit for purpose'.

Current Position

6. Central Government funding for the DFG is allocated to the City Corporation through the BCF on an annual basis. The local BCF is managed by the City Corporation, with reporting requirements to the Health and Wellbeing Board and NHS England.

7. A Housing Assistance Policy (Appendix 1) was agreed by the Department of Community and Children's Services Departmental Leadership Team and has been implemented in the CoL from 1 February 2025.
8. The HAP has the following aims:
 - Increase transparency around how people can access funding and what discretionary funding is on offer so that residents know what is available to meet their needs.
 - Added accountability around DFG timescales to ensure that the City Corporation is following best practice and providing best service to residents.
 - Create a consistent approach across staff and support audit processes.
 - More flexibility for CoL to use the DFG and increase the number of grants awarded.
 - Ultimately, more flexibility would result in more home adaptations for disabled children and adults, helping them to be independent for longer.
9. Under this policy, to ensure that there are no delays and to support all those in need, the City Corporation will contribute the first £12,000 towards any recommended works, without means testing the applicant.
10. All adaptation recommendations must be assessed and approved by Occupational Therapy staff from the Adult Social Care (ASC) Service.
11. The CoL DFG funding is only available to residents within the CoL. All requests are subject to the availability of grant funding, and ASC will work alongside other statutory services to ensure that all funding options are explored and considered. The current allocation for 2025/26 is £40,457.
12. A Home Improvement Agency is being used to facilitate and guide residents through the process of project management of adaptations for a fee using DFG funding on a trial basis.

Options

13. N/A

Proposals

14. N/A

Key Data

15. On average there are two to three DFG applications each year in the CoL. Examples of usage include,
 - level access shower
 - walk-in shower
 - over bath shower
 - stair lift

- ceiling track hoist
- specialist toilet.

16. At the end of 2024/25 there were four DFG applications and/or works currently in progress. The cost for these works has been forecast at approximately £44,000 which will be offset against a carry-over of £70,838.88, with the remainder of the carry-over added to the 2025/26 grant allocation.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. Strategic implications – There is a direct link with the Corporate Plan 2024–2029, Providing Excellent Services: Supporting people to live healthy, independent lives and achieve their ambitions is dependent on excellent services. Vital to that continued pursuit is enabling access to effective adult and children’s social care, outstanding education, lifelong learning, quality housing, and combatting homelessness.

- Financial implications – Under the HAP, the City Corporation reserves the right to amend or suspend the discretionary elements of this policy if demand for discretionary grants exceeds the available budget.
- Resource implications – None
- Legal implications – None
- Risk implications – None
- Equalities implications – The Equality Act 2010 includes a definition of disabled to determine eligibility for assistance under this HAP. The definition states that a person is ‘disabled’ if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.
- Climate implications – None
- Security implications – None

Conclusion

18. To improve outcomes for older and disabled residents, the CoL has introduced a HAP. This will enable a streamlined approach for DFG applications to make adaptations to the homes of disabled residents, which improve their independence and quality of life. ASC will oversee the implementation of the HAP.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Housing Assistance Policy, February 2025

Ian Tweedie

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City of London Corporation Housing Assistance Policy February 2025



Introduction

The City of London Corporation's (the City Corporation) Housing Assistance Policy sets out the financial assistance available for residents of the City of London to enable people to remain living as independently as possible in safe and healthy homes by way of aids and adaptations to the home environment.

There are two main elements to this policy:

1. mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) funding through the Better Care Fund
2. how the City Corporation intends to implement their powers under the Regulatory Reform Order

This policy aims to assist disabled people to live safely and independently in their own home and sets out how this will be done in line with the legislation, good practice guidance, the Better Care Fund plan and through offering excellent value for money.

This policy has been developed by the City Corporation which will work with the following key partners to deliver it:

- providers and commissioners of primary and acute services
- Public Health
- neighbouring authorities
- registered providers
- private landlords
- home owners leaseholders and freeholders where applicable
- tenants of private landlords and registered providers
- local contractors and specialist equipment providers
- Better Care Fund leads
- Home Improvement Agency

Legislative context

Housing Assistance is offered in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 with the underlying legislation governing the provision of mandatory DFG covered by the 1996 Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act. This enables the council to use its discretionary powers to make better use of its limited resources.

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Part 1 as amended by the Disabled Facilities Grant Order 2008 states that the local authority has a statutory duty to provide adaptations to homes for disabled people. Funding for these adaptations is provided through the DFG.

The Equality Act 2010 includes a definition of disabled to determine eligibility for assistance under this policy. The definition states that a person is 'disabled' if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

The Care Act 2014 states that local authorities must provide or arrange services, resources or facilities that maximise independence.

The DFG Guidance 2022 states that where the social care authority determines that a need has been established it is their duty to assist, even where the housing authority is unable to approve or to fully fund an application. So, for example, where an applicant for DFG has difficulty in meeting their assessed contribution from the DFG means test or the work will cost more than the upper limit, the social care authority can step in to provide financial assistance. Or if a disabled person is assessed as needing an adaptation which is outside the scope of the statutory DFG duty, then the social care authority can provide it.

Strategic alignment with aims and priorities

The City Corporation Corporate Plan 2024-29 sets out the City Corporation's overarching strategic direction. Outcomes include 'providing excellent services' that 'support people to live healthy, independent lives and achieve their ambitions.'

The City Corporation's Children and Young People Plan 2022-25 aims to keep children and young people safe at home and ensure that they are happy and healthy.

Alignment is also found with the City Corporation's Housing Management Strategy and Carers Strategy. The Adult Social Care Strategy is currently being developed. There is also alignment with the City and Hackney Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The City Corporation's Better Care Fund Plan 2023-25 includes DFG funding and focuses on keeping people out of hospital, living well at home. This policy will enable the City Corporation to use its DFG funding more effectively.

This policy will ensure that resources are targeted at children, young people and adults who need adaptations, repairs or improvements and help them stay independent and feel safe and healthy in their own homes. It will also support a strengths-based approach and is part of a preventative approach helping reduce falls and hospital admissions at a local level. Nationally, it will relieve some of the pressure on the NHS.

Funding

Central Government funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is allocated to the City Corporation through the Better Care Fund (BCF) on an annual basis. The funding for other forms of discretionary assistance is met locally by the City Corporation through its capital programme.

The local BCF is managed by the City Corporation with reporting requirements to the Health and Wellbeing Board and NHS England.

All requests are subject to the availability of annual funding and we will work alongside other statutory services to ensure that all funding options are explored and considered.

The City Corporation reserves the right to amend or suspend the discretionary elements of this policy if demand for discretionary grants exceeds the available budget.

Financial assessment

People in receipt of certain means-tested benefits are 'passported' to a full grant and will not be required to make a contribution towards the cost of work. These 'passporting' benefits are:

- Universal Credit.
- Income Support.
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) (not contribution-based ESA).
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) (not contribution-based JSA).
- Guarantee Pension Credit (not Savings Pension Credit alone).
- Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit (where your annual income for the purposes of the tax credits assessment was below £15,050).
- Housing Benefit.

There is an online means test calculator on the [Foundations website](#).

Summary of assistance

A maximum grant of £30,000 is available.

i Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

The DFG is subject to a means test which will consider the income and capital of the disabled person and their spouse or partner. The applicant's assessed financial contribution (if any) will be deducted from the approved grant and contribution towards the cost of work will be liable to be paid by the applicant. In the City of London, to ensure there are no delays and to support all those in need, the City Corporation will contribute the first £12,000 towards any recommended works, without means testing the applicant.

To apply for assistance an applicant should be the:

- property owner-occupier, leaseholder or private tenant. A Registered Social Landlord (RSL) or private landlord can apply on behalf of the tenant which will mean the tenant is not means tested
- a disabled member of the household who needs the home to be adapted to meet their needs is living in the property and the works will enable them to continue living there

- anyone of any age, who has a disability, (registered or not), and who lives in private housing

A means test is not required when the application is for a disabled child or young person under the age of 18.

Council tenants can apply, however in the City of London, the Occupational Therapy service will put forward agreed recommendations to the local Housing office to have the work carried out through the City Corporation's own adaptations programme. If the City Corporation does the work, tenants will not have to make any financial contribution and the City Corporation will be responsible for maintaining and repairing the adaptation.

Applicants must confirm that they intend the adapted property to be their main or only residence for at least five years after the work is completed. In the case of tenants, their landlords must also state that they intend to allow the disabled person to live in the adapted property for at least five years. Documentation to confirm this will be required, signed by appropriate parties.

ii. DFG top-up grant

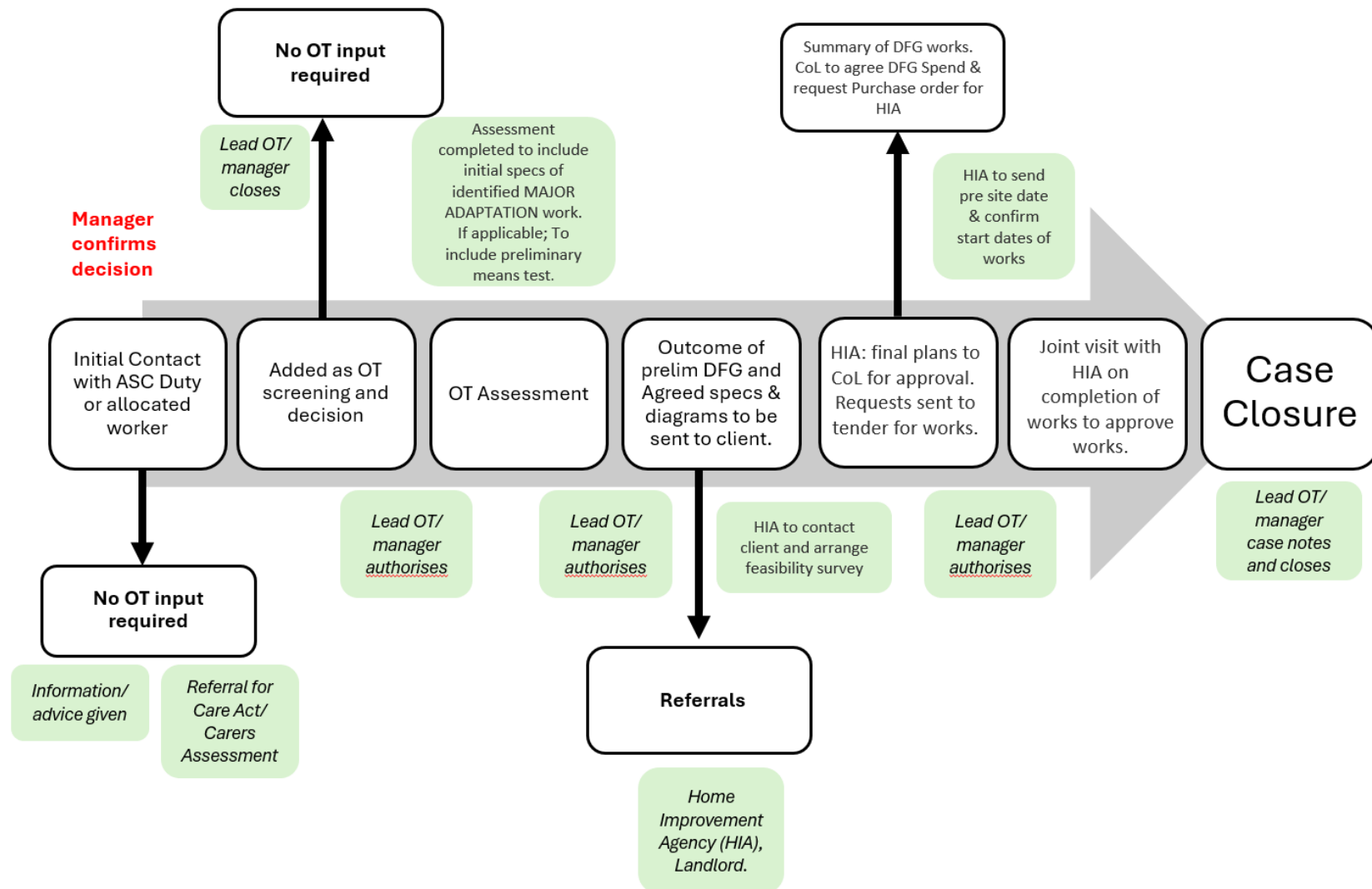
Provides assistance for adaptations which exceed the mandatory DFG limit of £30,000, for adaptations that are necessary, appropriate, reasonable and practical to meet the needs of a disabled person or to support the carer to support the disabled person. This will be considered on a case-by-case need by a panel.

iii. Minor adaptation grant

Minor adaptations are generally works costing up to £1,000. Examples of these works include galvanised handrails, concrete steps and widening doorways. If the minor adaptation is completed in an owner occupier/leaseholder property the adaptation belongs to the individual and therefore they will need to maintain it. If the property is private rented, the owner will be responsible for maintenance.

A means test will not be required as works under £12,000 will be completed without means testing, therefore minor adaptations will come under this threshold.

DFG process



Complaints and appeals about decisions

Information on the complaints procedure is available on the City of London Corporation website - <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/assets/Services-DCCS/how-to-make-complaints-and-suggestions.pdf>

Appeals about how the policy is operated in individual cases, for example where assistance is refused, will be considered by an Appeals Panel. The Panel's terms of reference are available on request.

Please contact adultsduty@cityoflondon.gov.uk to the appeals process.

Implementation plan

- The policy start date is 1 February 2025.
- The policy will be reviewed after one year with the option of reviewing earlier if circumstances require this.
- The Assistant Director (People) is responsible for the policy.

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Safeguarding and SEND Sub Committee	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: Adult Social Care Safeguarding Performance Report 2024/25 (Q1 – Q4)	Public Appendix 1 (Non-public)
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • Provides statutory duties 	Providing excellent services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services
Report author:	Gonzalo Reategui, Performance Analyst

Summary

This report updates Members on safeguarding performance across the Adult Social Care Service during the Year 2024/25 (Q1 – Q4).

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Adult Social Care Service at the City of London Corporation provides a range of services, including safeguarding.
2. The service collects and monitors a range of performance information to ensure that statutory duties are being met, and that services are delivering the best possible outcomes for people.

3. Appendix 1 presents the safeguarding performance dashboard for the year 2024/25 (Q1 – Q4). It provides a range of detailed information in different areas of safeguarding, accompanied by narrative to help contextualise the data.

Current Position

4. Overall, performance across the service is good, meeting a range of statutory requirements and local targets.
5. It should be noted that, due to small numbers in cohorts in the City of London Corporation, there can sometimes be significant variance in out-turns. These are noted where this is an issue.
6. Appendix 1 includes a summary and some of the headlines from the data.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

7. Strategic Implications – The Adult Social Care Service provides a range of statutory services and also a range of early intervention and prevention services. These all contribute to meeting outcome 5 “Providing Excellent Services” of the Corporate Plan.
8. Financial implications – N/A
9. Resource implications – N/A
10. Legal implications – N/A
11. Risk implications – N/A
12. Equalities implications – Monitoring intelligence on all of our social care processes and associated demographics allows us to assess and then investigate if there are any unintended impacts of any processes or practices.
13. Climate implications – N/A
14. Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

15. This report provides a summary of performance data from the Adult Social Care Service in relation to safeguarding for 2024/25, comparing it to performance from the previous quarter or year, and other benchmarks, where appropriate.
16. It demonstrates strong performance across this area of the service.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Adult Social Care Safeguarding Performance Dashboard 2024/25 (Q1 – Q4) (Non-public)

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City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committees: Community and Children's Services – For information Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee – For information	Dated: 19/06/2025 01/07/2025
Subject: Families in the City update	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties 	Diverse engaged communities Providing excellent services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services
Report author:	Rachel Talmage – Head of Children's Social Care and Early Help – Families in the City Programme Lead Hannah Dobbin – Families in the City Programme Manager

Summary

This report introduces the Families in the City programme and provides Members with an update on progress. Families in the City is the Department for Community and Children's Services (DCCS) and partners' response to national government reform and changes in delivery of our services for 0–5-year-olds in the City of London. The programme will run in its current form until December 2025.

Since March 2025, a dedicated Families in the City team has been created, and the necessary infrastructure and governance to support the programme has been established. In addition, Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been started and workstream leads are making progress on their action plans.

Recommendations

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. National Government reforms are driving transformational change in service delivery for children, young people and families. The Department for Education's (DfE's) Families First Partnership programme sets out expectations for local authorities to create an integrated system to 'support more children to stay safely with their families, and see better outcomes'. It requires local authorities to review and design a system that merges Tiers 2 and 3.
2. The current Children's Social Care and Early Help services are managed within the People Directorate and delivered by a team of social workers and Early Help practitioners. Services for children and families in the City of London are delivered across four levels of need: universal needs (Tier 1); additional needs (Tier 2); complex needs (Tier 3); and acute needs (Tier 4). These services cater to children and young people from 0–18 years and up to 25 years for care leavers and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
3. There is also a national policy drive towards family hubs which are expected to deliver services for children and young people aged 0–19 and to 25 for young people with SEND. We use the term 'family hub' to reflect national and local terminology. Services delivered as part of the family hub will need to align with the Families First model.
4. Some local areas received funding from the DfE to make the change to family hubs. The City of London Corporation (City Corporation) was not one of those to receive funding.
5. Nationally there is a drive to deliver Start for Life services. The DfE considers these services to support families with 0–2-year-olds, however, in the City of London, these refer to services for 0–5-year-olds and their families.
6. Locally, the Community and Children's Services (CCS) Committee has been informed and made decisions on the review and development of children's services in the City of London. Previous CCS Committee papers are noted in the background papers section at the end of this paper.
7. Members decided that the City of London's children's services that are part of the Start for Life programme and currently managed by The Aldgate School, will come in-house to the DCCS from 1 September 2025.
8. In March 2025, the DCCS established a new work programme called Families in the City. This aims to establish a comprehensive, multi-agency service offer that meets the needs of all children and young people aged 0–25 years in the City of

London. This is a unique opportunity to redesign and transform services shaped by the voices of City of London children, young people and their families.

9. Families in the City does not cover the consultation and development of a 0–2 childcare policy for the City of London. This is being led by the Education and Early Years Team and a separate paper has been submitted to CCS Committee (19 June 2025).

Current Position

10. A Families in the City programme team has been set up including the Assistant Director People as Programme Sponsor, the Head of Children's Social Care and Early Help as the Programme Lead, and a dedicated Programme Manager.

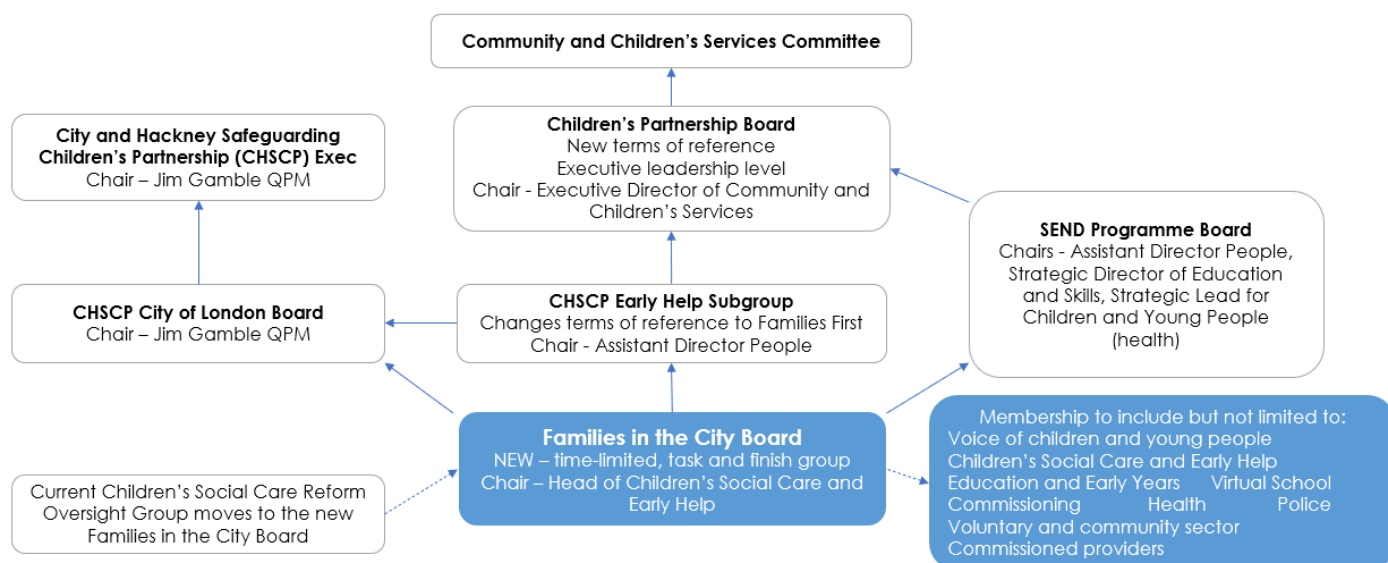
11. Three connected workstreams have been identified, each with their own workstream lead:

- Families First Partnership redesign – to respond to the DfE's reforms
- Start for Life development – to continue to develop our offer for 0–5s and their families and bring it into the extended 0–25-year-olds offer
- family hub development – to respond to DfE's drive to establish a centralised location for a range of services for families with children aged 0–25

12. Cross-cutting themes include:

- resident involvement
- equity, equalities, diversity and inclusion
- commissioning and partnerships
- performance and data systems
- HR
- finance.

13. The governance structure around Families in the City has been created (see figure below). A new Families in the City Board is driving the programme within the context of existing City of London governance arrangements. The chart below sets out these arrangements.



14. In terms of workstream progress, the Families First Partnership redesigned workstream is in the insight gathering and learning phase. The workstream lead has attended several DfE webinars and has an overview of the most up-to-date DfE guidance.
15. There is complexity in applying national guidance to our unique City of London context, so exploring this with partners will continue over the coming months. The DfE recognises that there is already continuity in support for families across Tiers 2 and 3, and conversations will continue with the DfE to ensure that the City of London is meeting national requirements, building on our existing arrangements.
16. The Start for Life workstream continues to bring the oversight and management of services for 0–5s and their families into the DCCS. No services will be lost as part of this process but changes to delivery, such as location, may be seen in some services. The focus throughout has and will remain on providing high-quality services to support improved outcomes for families with young children.
17. National government reform is shifting support for families into a family hub model. Family hubs aim to provide a central access point for support and services for children and young people from conception to age 19, or up to 25 for young people with SEND, and their families. The family hubs bring together services from local authorities and partners including Health and Public Health.
18. Family hubs look different across local authorities. They can be a physical building or a virtual access point. A family hub could be co-located with other services or provide service at delivery sites (sometimes described as ‘spokes’ of the hub).
19. As part of Families in the City, the family hub development workstream is underway. The family hub in the City of London will develop over the coming months so the planning and delivery has been split into phases.

20. Phase one of the family hub development is due to finish on 1 September 2025 to align with Start for Life services being overseen by the DCCS. This process is underway with a clear, structured plan being implemented.
21. From 1 September, a virtual access point for the family hub will be provided via the Families Information Service website. Information is currently being gathered on what support and services are available for families and how they can access them – for example, the referral mechanism - to inform the website content. Options for a temporary physical presence to support the virtual information offer are being explored.
22. Services will be delivered in person at various sites across the City of London. Partners, including Health and Public Health, are working together to explore what this will look like, and to ensure that residents still have access to the support and services they need.
23. The family hub provides an opportunity to strengthen relationships with the voluntary and community sector. Positive conversations are underway with the Shoreditch Trust. The Trust's We Connect in the City programme of co-designed and co-delivered creative and wellbeing activities – integrated with its broader programme of health and wellbeing support and signposting for City of London adults and young families – will take place at the Aldgate Centre. The programme is funded by a Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund grant over two years, with local commissions and additional grant funding. Opportunities for joining up are being explored to avoid duplication and ensure a co-ordinated offer for families.
24. A long-term vision for a family hub building, which some families have told us they would like to see, requires further consideration and analysis to determine need and viability. Exploration and thinking around this are in the very initial stages and will continue into phase two of the developments after September 2025.
25. Full EIAs are being developed for the Families First Partnership and family hub development workstreams. The Start for Life workstream will be integrated into the family hub development EIA. These will remain as a live documents to be considered at Families in the City Board meetings and at other appropriate involvement opportunities.
26. The voices of children, young people, parents and carers are central to Families in the City. Existing insight and feedback are being collated and will inform developments. To provide a co-ordinated approach to involvement specifically for Families in the City, a Family Design Lab will be launched.
27. The design lab is due to launch on 2 June 2025. Young people, parents and carers who live in the City of London or access services for 0–25-year-olds and their families will be invited to join the design lab and give consent to be contacted about involvement opportunities as they emerge throughout the duration of the programme.

28. The design lab aims to bring the point of engagement forward in the development process so that, as the programme moves at pace, ideas can be tested with an engaged group of young people, parents and carers. A project brief and summary plan for the design lab is provided in Appendix 1. This is a live document so captures progress at the time of writing.

29. Involvement opportunities will also be explored for families who are not members of the design lab to ensure that wider engagement is offered and feedback and ideas are captured.

Options

30. There are no options for the Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee to consider.

Proposals

31. There are no proposals for the Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee to consider.

Key Data

32. There is no key data for the Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee to consider.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- **Strategic implications** – Families in the City aligns with objectives within the Corporate Plan 2024–2029 to deliver excellent services and a diverse, engaged community. It will align with the vision of the Children and Young People’s Plan. The Early Help Strategy is due to be revised in 2026, this will be done taking Families in the City developments into account.
- **Financial implications** – Families in the City is using a DfE grant to fund the Programme Manager until December 2025. There is no additional funding available for the programme at this point. Financial implications will remain monitored, and additional funding will need to be sought if necessary.
- **Resource implications** – these are still being assessed.
- **Legal implications** – developments will need to ensure that the City Corporation continues to deliver all statutory functions and requirements.
- **Risk implications** – a risk and issues log has been set up for the programme and will be reviewed at Families in the City Board meetings.
- **Equalities implications** – EIAs are being developed and will remain as live documents for the duration of the programme.
- **Climate implications** – none.

- **Security implications** – none.

Conclusion

33. Families in the City provides the City of London with an opportunity to transform services for children, young people and families. It builds on our outstanding children's services (as rated by Ofsted inspection September 2024) and delivery that already exists. Work will continue at pace to drive forward change in the City of London. The voices of children, young people and their families will remain central to developments through a range of involvement activities. Partners are on board and will continue to work together with the shared aim of delivering the best possible services and support for families.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Family Design Lab project brief and summary plan.

Background Papers

- 5 May 2023 – public paper asking Members to note that an independent City of London Children's Centre Services Review would take place
- 13 December 2023 – non-public paper on the City of London Children's Centre Services and Family Hub Development
- 11 March 2024 – non-public paper on the City of London Children's Centre Services Review
- 11 November 2024 - non-public paper providing an update on the City of London Children's Centre Services.

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Appendix 1

Family Design Lab project brief and summary plan

May-December 2025

Context

National government reforms are driving transformational change in service delivery for children, young people and families, namely the Families First Partnership Programme and the move to family hubs. The 'Families in the City' programme is the City of London Corporation's (City Corporation) response to these reforms which also incorporates the shift from children's centre services to start for life provision in the City of London.

We want the voices of children, young people and families to be central from the beginning of Families in the City. We also want to work closely with colleagues and professional partners to inform developments. We are launching a Family Design Lab to deliver a co-ordinated approach to this involvement activity

Family Design Lab

Aim: provide a co-ordinated range of involvement activities to ensure the voices of children, young people, parents, carers and professionals are central to informing developments as part of the Families in the City programme.

Objectives:

- launch the design lab in June 2025 through a range of accessible communications
- base the design lab on the Family Information Service website (other web presences or comms to link to this base page)
- run the design lab in the first instance until December 2025 aligned with the delivery timeline of the Families in the City programme
- at least 15 parents or carers join the design lab
- use the lab to deliver a range of involvement activities that enable children, young people, parents, carers and professionals have their voice heard and that their views inform developments within the Families in the City programme
- adhere to data protection legislation and policies
- implement the DCCS reward and recognition for involvement policy (incoming)
- evaluate the design lab and take learnings into future DCCS involvement activities

Stakeholders

Stakeholders include but are not limited to:

- children and young people (including those with special educational needs and disabilities [SEND]), parents and carers in the City of London.
 - Start for Life Children's Voice Group - to merge into the Lab
- City Youth Forum
- Society Links
- Prospect
- City Parent Carer Forum (CPCF)
- Families in the City professional stakeholders

Communications will go out through:

- FIS website
- FIS social media
- City Corporation website
- City Corporation social media tbc
- Resident newsletters
- Stakeholders listed above
- Posters in our three libraries, Golden Lane and Portsoken community centres and Neaman GP practice

We will discuss options to reach young people with colleagues:

- CPCF
- SEND team for children and young people with EHCPs
- participation team for Prospects, Children in Care Council and City Youth Forum
- commissioned youth provider – Society Links

Budget

The Lab will require City Corporation DCCS staff time to set it up and run the activities within it.

The incoming DCCS reward and recognition for involvement policy will be followed for activity with City of London residents and service users under the design lab banner.

The policy sets out levels of activity and levels of reward so some budget will be required if level 3 activities are carried out. The cost of vouchers will be factored in when planning the activities.

The use of a mobile phone to communicate with parents and carers who are members of the design lab will be considered. This will incur a financial cost.

Risk log

Risk	Mitigation
Communications about the design lab cause confusion and anxiety around the changes.	Start with a Families in the City page which explains our evolving programme of work and how the design lab fits in with it. Narrative to include agreed key messages to be checked by Programme Lead.
No residents sign-up to the design lab.	Ensure comms around the design lab is disseminated through all appropriate resident comms channels, including use of Corporate comms. Assess take-up after one week and do another comms push if necessary.
Residents would like financial rewards for their time.	The design lab will follow the incoming DCCS reward and recognition for involvement policy which recognises financial reward for co-production level activity.

Summary action plan

Deadline	Action	Lead	Completed?
13 May	Draft all web and promotional content	HD	Yes
16 May	Edit/proof all text for accessibility and target audience	JK	Yes
21 May	Sign-off text and comms	ID/RT	
23 May	Ensure compliant with data protection protocols and policies	HD	
27 May	Comms to partners and Members to prep them for the launch	HD	
29 May	Set up FIS webpages and get sign-off	PR	
29 May	Agree schedule for FIS social media content	PR	
2 June	Families in the City page goes live	PR	
2 June	Share comms through: FIS website Start for Life group CPCF Residents and Healthwatch newsletters Community centres and libraries	PR ID HD HD HD	
w/c 2 June	Check sign-ups to Lab and reply	HD	
2 June onwards	Plan and deliver range of involvement opportunities through the design lab		

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City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Safeguarding and SEND Sub Committee	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: Children and Families Service Performance – Month 12 2024/25 (March 2025)	Public – For information Appendix 1 (Non-public) Appendix 2 (Public)
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties 	Providing excellent services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of:	Judith Finlay Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services
Report author:	Gonzalo Reategui, Performance Analyst

Summary

This report updates Members on service performance across the Children and Families Service. It demonstrates where performance meets our statutory obligations and targets and identifies where action was taken for improvement in specific areas.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Children and Families Service at the City of London Corporation provides a range of services including Early Help, Child Protection, and Supporting Care Leavers.

2. The service collects and monitors a range of performance information to ensure that statutory duties are being met, and that services are delivering the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families.
3. Appendix 1 presents the performance dashboard from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 (month 12). It provides an overall summary of performance in each of the service areas and more detailed information in each area.
4. Appendix 2 provides a glossary of some of the terms used in the performance dashboard.

Current Position

5. Overall, performance across the service is good, meeting a range of statutory requirements and local targets, and comparing well with regional or national benchmarks.
6. It should be noted that, due to small numbers in children's services cohorts in the City of London Corporation, there can sometimes be significant variance in out-turns. These are noted where this is an issue.

Key Data

7. Demand continues to be high. In 2024/25, there were 709 contacts. This is lower to last year when there were 807, and is similar to the total number for 2022/23, which was 707.
8. Overall, the number of Children in Need has reduced over this year from 11 in April 2024 to 6 at the end of March 2025.
9. The number of Children in Care by the City of London Corporation has decreased during the year from 7 in April 2024 to 5 at the end of March 2025. This follows a trend in recent years of decreasing numbers of CLA.
10. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) recorded 16 contacts in the year 2024/25 (2% of referrals). This total number of MASH contacts is lower to the number in 2023/24 which was 21.
11. There were 24 Early Help referrals in year 2024/25. This total number higher than 2023/24 (16 referrals) but lower than the years 2021/22 and 2022/23 which saw a particularly high number of referrals reflecting the support provided to families as part of the Afghan Resettlement Programme.
12. Overall, during the year 2024/25, an average 63% of assessments were completed within 45 days. This figure includes three assessments related to a single family that took 48 days to complete. This is lower than the 83% average of 2023/24 and the 90% average in 2022/23.
13. This performance represents a decline compared to previous years, with 83% completed on time in 2023/24 and 90% in 2022/23. The decrease highlights a need for further analysis and potential action to address delays and improve timeliness moving forward.

14. As of the end of March 2025, 49 care leavers were being supported. This represents a gradual decrease from 59 in March 2023 and 55 in March 2024.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

15. Strategic implications – This report represents a picture of the Children and Families Service which includes both statutory requirements and early intervention and prevention work (known as Early Help). The work of the service helps meet outcome 5 “Providing Excellent Services” of the Corporate Plan.

16. Financial implications – N/A

17. Resource implications – N/A

18. Legal implications – N/A

19. Risk implications – N/A

20. Equalities implications – Monitoring intelligence on all of our social care processes and associated demographics allows us to assess and then investigate if there are any unintended impacts of any processes or practices.

21. Climate implications – N/A

22. Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

23. This report provides a summary of performance data from the Children and Families Service from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, comparing it to performance from the previous month, quarter or year, and other benchmarks where appropriate.

24. It demonstrates strong performance across the service, with some specific areas where some action was taken for improvement. These areas are all now back on a positive trajectory.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Children and Families Service Performance Dashboard 2024/25 March (Non-Public)
- Appendix 2 – Glossary for Performance Dashboard (Public)

Gonzalo Reategui

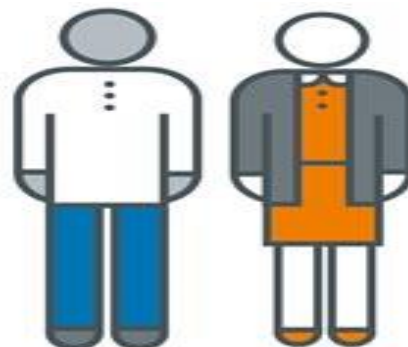
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Glossary

Children Social Care



CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

C&FA	Child and Family Assessment – single assessment undertaken by Children Social Care
CAF	Common Assessment Framework (part of Early Help)
CAFCASS	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CHSCP	City and Hackney Children's Safeguarding Partnership
CIC	Child/ren in Care
CICC	Children in Care Council
CIN	Child In Need
CL	Care Leaver
CLA	Children Looked After
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSC	Children's Social Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CYP	Child and/or Young Person (up to 18 th birthday)
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
DV	Domestic Violence
EDT	Emergency Duty Team (out of hours duty provided by Hackney)
EET	Education, Employment and Training
EH	Early Help
FE	Further Education

HMO	House of Multiple Occupancy
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
IFA	Independent Fostering Agency
IHA	Initial Health Assessment
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
LA Services	Local Authority Services
LAC	Looked after child / ren
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LASC	London Asylum Seekers Consortium
MACP	Multi-Agency Child Protection
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MARF	Multi Agency Referral Form
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NFA	No Further Action
QSW	Qualified Social Worker
RCPC	Review Child Protection Conference
RHI	Return Home Interview
S47	Section 47 Enquiry, part of Child Protection investigation (the outcome may be that the subject is escalated to an ICPC)
SCR	Serious Case Review
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
TAC	Team Around the Child meeting (Early Help measure)

TAF Team Around the Family (Early Help measure)

UASC Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child (up to 18th birthday)

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committees: Achieving Excellence Board – For Information Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee – For Information	Dated: 11/06/2025 01/07/2025
Subject: Children’s Social Care and Family Help Service Development Plan 2025–26	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024–29 outcomes • provides statutory duties 	Diverse Engaged Communities Dynamic Economic Growth Providing Excellent Services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	n/a
Report of: Executive Director Community and Children Services	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services
Report author: Head of Service Children Social Care and Family Help	Rachel Talmage, Head of Children’s Social Care and Family Help

Summary

This report introduces the new Children’s Social Care and Family Help Service Development Plan for April 2025 to March 2026. The report draws on learning from children and their families, national research, views of practitioners, independent Ofsted findings, and external and internal audit.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Service Development Plan has been renamed the Children's Social Care and Family Help Service Development Plan in alignment with changes in the national agenda. The new Children's Social Care and Family Help Service Development Plan 2025–26 (see Appendix 1) sets out objectives to improve outcomes for children and their families. These are drawn from listening to children and families, from staff, audit, the Achieving Excellence Board, Serious Case Reviews, performance information, Ofsted inspection, and work from the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance. The Children's Social Care and Family Help Service Development Plan sets out how we will achieve excellent outcomes for every child and young person, and is in alignment with our annual self-evaluation.
2. In their Inspection of Children's Social Care Services in September 2024, Ofsted found our services to be 'Outstanding'. They made two recommendations for further improvement: the impact for children living in circumstances where there is domestic abuse; and the response to children who experience exploitation and youth violence.¹ This work has been further developed, and the areas are on the new Children's Social Care and Family Help Service Development Plan to ensure consistency of impact and maintain oversight. An update on our actions on this area has been provided to Ofsted in report form, along with a six-month update on our Self Evaluation. This was followed up with an engagement meeting between senior leaders in the Corporation and Ofsted, which went well. The inspection provided useful rigorous scrutiny on the work under the previous Service Development Plan 2024–25.
3. Key pieces of work completed in 2024–25 include the publishing and fulfilment of our Care Leaver offer, the socialisation of this with young people, training and use of non-verbal ways of working with those who do not use verbal language, the effective preparation of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who moved out of the City via the National Transfer Scheme (good use of infectious disease screening, health screening, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes), delivery of holiday programmes for children open to our service, including those with disabilities.
4. Further achievements include our fulfilling the 'just one thing' commitment of the Trailblazer Project. This joint project between the 12 local authorities that use the Central Family Court aims to reduce the length of care proceedings for children and their families. The main reason for delay in this area is court availability; other factors include the use of external experts such as psychiatrists and psychologists who often file reports late, affecting the court timetable. As a collective group it was agreed to focus on just one thing within our control – filing social work evidence on time. This has been achieved in the City of London, even

¹ [50260648](#) Ofsted: Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services published 5 November 2024

where external assessment has been very late and would likely have derailed the court timetable.

Current Position

5. The new Children's Social Care and Family Help Service Development Plan sets out our ambitions for the financial year April 2025-March 2026, considering learning from children and families, learning from within our staff group and partnership groups, and national strategy. The plan is a live document and learning from the recent annual survey will be included once a final report is received.
6. Work by Families in the City led by the Head of Children's Social Care and Family Help has its own detailed action plan and will be referenced, but not duplicated, here. This is one of the key areas of action this financial year.

Care leavers

7. Further significant actions include behaviour improvement. The service has noticed that the behaviour of some care leavers has worsened since granting of limited leave to remain, and again on award of tenancy. This has included racist behaviour to staff, which is unacceptable. This is an area that needs to improve. An anti-racist and trauma-informed approach needs to be taken. Staff must be believed and supported, and behaviour needs to be addressed. This is a key area to be strengthened this year. Staff support in relation to experiences of racism from service users is being reviewed at senior management level in terms of service response.
8. There will be better earlier support for tenancy planning, to be good neighbours and tenants. A mandatory programme is being considered, which must be completed before an individual is put forward for a tenancy.
9. Staff development/training will be procured to focus on the Care Leaver Covenant and Compact, to deepen the London-wide and national direction of travel.
10. Improving access to employment will be a continued focus, as many of our care leavers remain in low-paying work often on zero hours contracts. This access will be in line with recovery from harm and trauma informed.

Domestic Abuse

11. All staff have undertaken training for reducing parental conflict. Our service has worked with our newly commissioned partner, Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS) to support a family living with violence and emotional harm. Group supervision and joint learning with the police in this area is a key action to support this work.

Contextual Safeguarding

12. The Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel has been reviewed and refreshed, and development work continues as part of this plan. The panel, along with the Heads of Quality Assurance and Children's Services joined the Metropolitan Police at their recent conference entitled County Lines & Child Criminal Exploitation, and tools to identify and respond to harm.

Options

13. There are no options for Members to consider.

Proposals

14. There is no proposal for Members to consider.

Key Data

15. Performance data will be brought to the Achieving Excellence Board and the Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee. Key data shows the increase in children accessing short breaks – our long-term Children with a Disability offer. The data shows a reduction of children with disabilities supported via a Child in Need Plan. This is due to the additional support to families via the Short Breaks offer – families can seek support from the Short Breaks practitioner – it is in line with what families want and does not necessitate full assessments, plans or visits. Rather, it is proportionate and responsive. The data for short breaks should be viewed in this context.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. **Strategic implications** – Diverse engaged communities; National Government reforms are driving transformational change in service delivery for children, young people and families.
17. **Providing excellent services** – Ofsted found our services to children and families to be 'Outstanding'. The Children's Social Care and Family Help Service Development Plan aims to develop our offer further with our community and voluntary sector partners for a cohesive, safe and enriching offer.
18. **Financial implications** – No additional funds are sought.
19. **Resource implications** – Venues are sought within the City of London Corporation to run an in-person family hub. This is in the exploration stage and is not requested in this report.
20. **Legal implications** – The change in immigration rules around citizenship are to be added to the Care Leaver offer, as well as any amendments around cessation of service in the very rare circumstance where staff safety is at risk.

21. **Risk implications** – there is a risk to children and their families if services are not responsive and of high standard.
22. **Equalities implications** – Care leavers receive support akin to protected characteristics – recovery, trauma and geography and movement are considered when looking at responding to behaviour. Staff emotional and physical safety are considered in respect of racist harm from service users. The Care Leaver post-25 offer reflects good lifelong parenting by the City of London Corporation – this will be tested and refined as needed.
23. **Climate implications** – none.
24. **Security implications** – none.

Conclusion

25. The new Children's Social Care and Family Help Service Development Plan sets out the development of the Children's Social Care and Family Help service for the financial year 2025–26. It is ambitious for children and families. Together with the Families in the City programme, the plan sets out change in line with national requirements that will work in our unique context.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Children's Social Care and Family Help Service Development Plan 2025-26

Rachel Talmage

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Appendix 1: Service Development Plan 2025-26							
Children's Social Care & Family Help							
Author: Rachel Talmage							
Date of plan: April 2025	Date of review: End June 2025						
This plan aligns with the SEF dated September 2024 - with the six month update.							
Progress will be updated as this is a live document, and also captured in the September 2026 Self Evaluation							
Actions arising from Monthly audit cycle findings are overseen via the Quality Assurance Case and Service tracker. Overall Service actions are included here.							
The two recommendations from our Ofsted inspection in September 2024 are included to continue sustained progress							
The Families in the City Action Plan provides very detailed actions that sit alongside this plan.							
Why?	Who?	Does what?	By when?	How will we know it has been done?	What will be the experience of children?	RAG rated progress	Comments on progress
Staff have undertaken Video Interactive Guidance training (to help parents develop their skills further) and want to use it in practice	RT	Finds and implements a VIG supervisor so that staff can use the technique	25-Aug	contract in place	their experience at home will improve	Amber	Raised by HOS at People Senior Management Meeting.
Action needed to address poor behaviour including racist abuse of staff	RT/KN	Updates care leaver policy around behaviour expectations. Clear policy across People Department	Aug-25	People Department Policy in Place	children and families will not use racist/abusive behaviour to staff. This will help access to services and	Amber	
Some care leavers are not engaging with housing officers/support before housing	RT/SC	Creates contract for young people and tenancy support & keyworkers	May-25	Contract to CSMT	Young people will be able to confidently manage their tenancies and be good neighbours	Green	Contract agreed. It now needs to be used and reviewed with young people and the impact considered.
national directive to have family hubs	RT/KN	Works with partners to create a family hub in the City	Dec-25	Offer published on website	Somewhere good locally to go with parent/care giver that is friendly and supportive	Amber	An online family hub will go live in September 2025, supported by physical hub spaces. A Friday hub has begun following CoL funding to a charity. Food is central to this offer in Portsoken.
Enhance Family Therapy Clinic Offer	RT/SC	Implement automatic referrals, conduct quarterly monitoring, present impact report	Jun-25	Impact report to Contract Mointoring Review	Improved access to therapy services, better mental health and family relationships	Green	This term clinic is fully used- with half of the families referred via children in need and half via early help. This is an improvement from the previous term & reflects the work with the clinic by our service. Impact report reviewed at contract monitoring session held in May. We note delay by provider in providing the report.
Review Thresholds and MASH Application	RT/SC	Conduct retrospective review, update protocols	Aug-25	Updated protocols	More accurate identification and timely support	Amber	Threshold document and accompanying guidance and forms being reviewed as part of the Families in the City work

Why?	Who?	Does what?	By when?	How will we know it has been done?	What will be the experience of children?	RAG rated progress	Comments on progress
Deliver Managing Parental Conflict Training	KN	Provide refresher training, report impact	end April 2025	Report to CSMT & Workforce Development Board	Safer and more stable home environments	Green	Completed. All practitioners and managers attended the training. Report on training and impact taken to CSMT.
Strengthen Partnership Working	RT/KN	Collaborate with partners, appoint project lead	Dec-25	Enhanced outcomes through collaboration	More comprehensive support that is easy to access. Activities are clearly available.	Green	Families in City established, project lead for Family Hub appointed and working with statutory and voluntary sectors. Well linked with the MAPF
Support for Care Leavers Who Are Fathers	Team Manager	Review interventions, present proposals	Aug-25	Review report of work with care leaver fathers to go to CSMT	Better parenting and healthier family dynamics	Amber	Fathers are offered online and in person parenting programmes, and are supported re: children's centres local to where they live. A short report needs to go to CSMT with any recommendations for development.
Review and Adapt Risk Assessment Tools	RT	Evaluate tools, finalize adapted tools	May 2025	Finalized tools presented to MACE	Better protection and support	Amber	Evaluation in progress
Review and Strengthen MACE Arrangements	RT/LD	Conduct full review, present recommendations	Feb-Jul 2025	Recommendations presented to Safeguarding Sub Committee	Coordinated support	Amber	Review in progress
Promote Use of Adolescent Safeguarding Handbook	RT	Promote consistent use of handbook	Ongoing	Consistent use of handbook	No child at risk of exploitation missed	Green	Consistent use promoted
Appoint Exploitation and Youth Violence Project Lead	RT/LD	Invite experts, promote use of tools	6-month period	Experts invited, tools promoted	children are not exploited and adults understand exploitation and can help reduce risk	Green	Experts invited
Issues identified following complaint investigation	RT	Implement learning from complaints: update practice guidance on transparent professionals meetings and clear simple communication with parents	Dec-25	Complaint action tracker updated	children and their families have the best possible service, risk is shared and understood and reduced	Amber	Learning implemented
LIIA The adolescent safeguarding programme	RT	Work with Safeguarding Adoles	2025	Protocols launched	children safe in community	Green	Protocols launched
New legislation around immigration and citizenship. Profiling the risk to our young people	RT	Profile risks, update protocols	Ongoing	Care leaver offer updated	children clear about legal stay and citizenship	Amber	
Care Proceedings Trailblazer - just one thing - to reduce delays	RT	Reduce delays in processes	Ongoing	Reduced delays	children and young people have certainty over their long term home life	Green	CoL has complied with just one thing. Retained to ensure focus.

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committees: Safeguarding and SEND Sub Committee	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: Education and Early Years Service Safeguarding Update	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties • provides business enabling functions 	Providing Excellent Services: Supporting people to live healthy, independent lives and achieve their ambitions is dependent on excellent services. Vital to that continued pursuit is enabling access to effective adult and children's social care, outstanding education, lifelong learning, quality housing, and combatting homelessness Engaged Communities: Across our residents, workers, businesses, and visitors, everyone should feel that they belong. Connecting people of all ages and backgrounds will help build diverse, engaged communities that are involved in co-creating great services and outcomes.
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	The Dedicated Schools Grant
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Yes
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services
Report author:	Kirstie Hilton, Head of Education and Early Years Service

Summary

The Safeguarding Sub Committee is regularly updated on the work that the Education and Early Years Service delivers to improve the safety and welfare of City-resident children being educated in the City of London (CoL) and other boroughs, as well as non-resident children attending schools within the CoL.

This report provides an update on developments and progress in the following areas:

- 1) The City of London School tracker and identification of children on Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support
- 2) The *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* Statutory Guidance
- 3) Children at risk of missing education
- 4) Electively home-educated children
- 5) Performance licences and work permits

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The CoL has a unique educational landscape, with only one maintained primary school and no maintained secondary schools within its locality. There are four independent schools and one independent college (David Game College); most children attending these schools are non-City residents. Most CoL primary-age children and all secondary-age children are educated either in the independent sector or outside the CoL altogether. Consequently, this puts them outside the standard reporting and/or legal framework that governs the CoL's statutory responsibilities.
2. Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 imposes a legal duty on local authorities to provide a suitable education for children of compulsory school age who are out of school because of exclusion, illness, or other reasons and who would not receive suitable education without such provision. With only one maintained primary school located in the CoL, most children attending school in the state sector attend schools located in other localities. The CoLC remains committed to promoting high educational standards locally and collaborates with schools and local authorities attended by our children to ensure fair access to education and safeguard the interests of the most vulnerable pupils.
3. The Department for Education (DfE) published new guidance in May 2022 for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* came into effect as statutory guidance from August 2024. All CoL schools, including the independent schools are successfully implementing the statutory guidance and have updated relevant policies in response to the legislation. The purpose of the guidance is to help

maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities to work collaboratively to improve attendance, by addressing the issues that underpin attendance concerns and thus to maintain high levels of attendance.

4. The CoL is responsible for regulating all children and young people either performing or working within the City's boundaries. National child employment guidance, which oversees the administration of child work permits, the issue of performance licences, Body of Persons Approvals (BOPAs) and chaperone licences, is available to all local authorities through the National Network for Children in Employment and Entertainment (NNCEE). Although the City of London has its own local policies, local guidance specific to other individual local authorities is less well known. There are laws to help safeguard children of statutory school age while they are performing or working part time. The relevant primary legislation is Part II of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, and Part II of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963. The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014 came into effect on 6 February 2015. The law applies to all children from birth until they reach compulsory school-leaving age. The children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024 looks to be amending the 1933 Act.

Current Position

The City of London School tracker and identification of children on SEN Support

5. To provide children who are out of school with a suitable education, the Education and Early Years Service has developed a system to identify CoL children of statutory school age and monitor their school attendance. The CoL maintains this record by using primary and secondary transition data, along with the 'No Show Report' commissioned through Islington. This report is generated at the start of each academic year to confirm that all children transitioning to primary and secondary schools are actively attending. The school tracker is updated and reviewed annually during a census, documenting the names of all CoL resident children.
6. This work offers several key benefits, such as enhancing our understanding of where City-resident children are enrolled in school. Establishing these relationships improves communication with schools, making them more likely to notify our service if there are concerns about a child.
7. Currently, our records show that there are 333 CoL resident children of statutory school age. Of those:
 - children and young people attend 69 schools
 - children attend 20 different local authority areas
 - there are 44 pupils on SEN Support (attending 16 different schools).

8. It is crucial for the CoLC to have a comprehensive overview of the attendance and outcomes of all children and young people residing in the CoL who are enrolled out of the area, including those receiving SEN Support. Anticipating need is vital when designing and planning services for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND). All 14 schools that serve children on SEN Support have been contacted during the autumn term to gather more detailed information about: the reasons for low attendance; attainment levels and suspensions data; and use of Alternative Provision. This will enable us to begin monitoring the outcomes for these children. By providing referrals and signposting as needed, including offering a free copy of our *SEND Ranges* document (which outlines how the CoL applies its graduated approach to supporting children with SEND), we can gain a better understanding of how children in out-of-borough schools are being supported. City resident children enrolled at The Aldgate School have their attendance available for routine checking through the *Working Together To Improve School Attendance* statutory guidance.

The *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* Statutory Guidance

9. The Education Act 1996 entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school (the alternative being Elective Home Education), they have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of permissible circumstances, such as being too ill to attend, or being given permission in advance by the school for an absence.
10. In August 2024, the Department for Education published new statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities on *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*. The purpose of the statutory guidance is to help all schools and local authorities work together to maintain high levels of attendance whilst ensuring that a 'support first' approach is applied before legal intervention is considered.
11. Where barriers to attendance for a pupil or family are complex, and signposting to services is not sufficient, the CoLC, schools and other services will continue to work together to provide more intensive whole family support to address those barriers. All multi-disciplinary support will be co-ordinated using existing Early Help structures. For children resident in the CoL and with parental consent a referral will be made to the CoL Early Help team. For children attending schools in the CoL but residing in other areas, the School Attendance Support Team will work with schools and families to ensure that persistent absence is addressed, and that support takes place. Regular reviews and continued monitoring of school attendance also takes place to ensure improvements are sustained.
12. Over the course of the current academic year, the School Attendance Support Team has issued seven Notice to Improve warnings to parents with children attending its maintained primary school. Primarily, the reason for issuing warning

letters is currently unauthorised term time leave. The City of London Penalty Notice Code of Conduct Policy (dated August 2024) as updated in line with the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' statutory guidance. Although the CoLC Code of Conduct does stipulate that penalty notices may be issued for unauthorised absence, the School Attendance Support Team, where appropriate, issue a Notice to Improve in the first instance, allowing parents to make positive improvements and ensure that future term time leave is taken outside of school time. Meetings with families are also held, when necessary, to discuss poor attendance, strategies to improve attendance and what impact not attending school has on their children's education. A supportive approach is always adopted prior to an enforcement approach.

13. During the last academic year (2023/24), the School Attendance Support Team successfully received attendance data from all CoL schools and continue to receive this data termly, creating a platform that the Education Welfare Manager is able to use to discuss pupils with concerning levels of attendance and to assess the overall effectiveness of the support offered by and to schools. Attendance data for the CoL maintained school can be retrieved via Wonde and persistently and severely absent pupils can be identified through this method. Visits to the City based schools took place at least every term (more frequently for The Aldgate School, given it is the only maintained school within the CoL local authority). All visits are welcomed by the schools, with dedicated safeguarding leads and attendance officers continuing to engage well with the Education Welfare Manager, in addressing attendance concerns. Visits may consist of a combination of whole school/individual attendance discussions and parental meetings, based on the needs of the schools. Some CoL schools have been open to more regular visits and meetings with parents and students from the Education Welfare Manager. This has had a positive impact on the attendance of pupils who experience barriers preventing good school attendance.
14. All CoL schools attend the Safeguarding Education Forum (SEF) on a termly basis. The SEF provides an opportunity for the CoL schools to meet to share and consider policy, practice and procedural issues relating to safeguarding arrangements in school settings in the CoL. The Education Welfare Manager has also established a School Attendance Network meeting, specifically targeted at the designated safeguarding leads and attendance officers, to discuss more operational matters. The Education Welfare Manager has hosted two termly School Attendance Network meetings since the autumn term and these have been well attended. DfE Advisor, Victoria Franklin introduced the new School Attendance Network Meetings by emphasising statutory responsibilities for both independent and maintained schools. Feedback from these meetings is used to shape future network meetings and ensure that the meetings are purposeful for CoL schools.

Children at risk of missing education (and those under Section 19)

15. We maintain an accurate record of children known to us who are at risk of, or who are missing education, either as a result of medical reasons, not being enrolled with a school, being educated otherwise, or due to exclusion. This record is accessible to the key people within the service who have knowledge of, or who are working with those families. For any children known to the Children's Social Care, with an EHCP, Early Help and Short Breaks services, notes relating to individual children are recorded on the MOSAIC management information system. Children recorded by the service as either missing, or at risk of missing education are monitored regularly. A termly report is produced and discussed with directors for strategic guidance.
16. The Attendance Improvement Group (previously known as the Vulnerable Children Group), has oversight of a list of all children at risk of missing education. The group has continued to monitor attendance and circumstances of our most vulnerable children and young people. The group draws together the key support services to ensure sharing of information, actions for improvement, and the prevention of 'drift' in service provision.
17. An important part of ensuring that children are safe is to make sure that they are receiving an education. The Attendance Improvement Group also monitors young care experienced people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) and electively home-educated children where there are concerns about the suitability of education being delivered. It is acknowledged that children with medical needs may present as persistently or severely absent for long or numerous periods and therefore the Group has agreed to still monitor these vulnerable children but understand that improvements in attendance may be difficult to achieve.
18. The Group provides an opportunity for key officers to share what actions are being taken to support these children. There are currently 12 children and young people on the list. Many of these children are already known to services, including:
- Children in Care
 - Children on a Child Protection Plan
 - Children in Need
 - Children known to the Early Help team
 - Children with an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plan
 - Children missing education (or at risk of missing education)
 - Children in the Early Years who are transitioning into primary school in the next academic year, and where there may be concerns about attendance.
 - Care leavers
 - Children who are Electively Home Educated

Children in alternative provision

19. Alternative provision (AP) provides specialist places and support for those children and young people who need to spend time away from their current school, or who present with such needs that cannot be met in mainstream or special school environments. CoLC is committed to ensuring that all of its resident children and young people attending AP have access to suitable and high-quality provision.
20. While the CoL does not have any alternative providers within its area, children and young people are sometimes referred to AP through collective commissioning arrangements with the local authority where they attend school or receive support from tutor agencies. In response to this, the Education and Early Years Service, in collaboration with the Commissioning team, has developed a quality assurance checklist to evaluate providers based on safeguarding, health and safety, quality of education, personal development and behaviour, leadership and management, as well as student entitlement and post-16 engagement. Where appropriate, recommendations and references are also sought from neighbouring local authorities.
21. Quality assurance is crucial when arranging AP (including tuition) for children who require it, to ensure effective and safe learning experiences. The City of London Corporation maintains an approved list of alternative providers that are registered with DfE and rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted. It also keeps a list of tuition services that have been quality assured and use the quality assurance checklist before services are commissioned. Prior to any placement, we request the provider's most recent quality assurance framework to confirm that they can meet the individual needs of the pupil, including health and safety, quality of education, and suitability. Further assurances are obtained through a visit to the provider to complete the quality assurance checklist. When commissioning an out-of-borough placement for AP, this checklist is completed and presented to the SEND and AP Panel. The Education Welfare Manager will lead on the completion of each checklist when a placement is needed.

Electively home-educated children

22. **Section 7:** Places a **legal duty on parents** to ensure their children receive a **full-time education** suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs (SEN), either by attendance at school or otherwise (e.g., home education). While our goal in the CoLC is to collaborate with parents to support their children's learning and development, parents have the right to decline engagement for their children to educational services.
23. The CoL has established a thorough process to ensure that all children who are electively home educated receive an appropriate level of education. Although the number of CoL children being electively home educated is small (currently under five), the Education team proactively reaches out to families, collaborates with key professionals, and completes referrals as needed. Families are also guided towards available services, with information shared about resources in and around the CoL. MOSAIC is also used to facilitate effective information sharing. The Education team conducts home visits to electively home-educated children

twice a year. Updates on family engagement are reported termly to the Departmental Leadership Team. Any concerns are promptly communicated to the Children's Social Care and Early Help services.

24. The CoL's Elective Home Education Guidance is regularly reviewed and updated in line with DfE guidance and local decision-making. The current guidance was reviewed and agreed in April 2023.

Performance licences and work permits

25. Children and young people of compulsory school age who work for an organisation or company, in paid or voluntary work, must have a valid work permit. The CoLC is responsible for issuing child work permits to all organisations and companies located within the CoL. The Education team continues to ensure that all employers carry out a health and safety risk assessment in the workplace. They also make sure that, at the point of application, all children are given adequate breaks, work no longer than they are legally permitted, have appropriate insurance cover, and do not carry out dangerous or risky tasks. Over the last year, the service has issued four work permits.
26. There are also specific rules covering children working in entertainment. It is essential that local authorities recognise this statutory duty and fulfil their safeguarding responsibility towards children taking part in performances, paid sport, and modelling. All children of compulsory school age require a performance licence to take part in any performance. There are also strict rules regarding the conditions under which children and young people can perform, including when children are taken out of school to either rehearse or perform.
27. The Education team has established and maintains excellent working relationships with key individuals working in venues located in the CoL, such as the Barbican Centre. This helps to ensure that the service is informed of all productions and performances involving children within the CoL, so that support and advice can be offered on the relevant rules and requirements. Inspections are carried out to ensure that children involved in performances are safe and happy and are not being exploited.
28. Due to the relatively complex nature of issuing performance licences and Body of Persons Approvals (BOPAs), the service has local guidance on:
- a. BOPAs
 - b. individual performance licences
 - c. issuing of work permits
 - d. chaperone licences.
29. Over the last year, the service has issued 12 BOPAs and visited 3 performances. All visits are followed up with an outcome report, including any recommendations following any concerns raised during the visit. The Education team has issued no new chaperone licences recently, however, has a rigorous process in place to

ensure that new applicants attend training and interview processes as well as provide detailed references and enhanced DBS checks.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

30. **Strategic implications** – Corporate outcome: **Providing Excellent Services** – Supporting people to live healthy, independent lives, and achieve their ambitions, is dependent on excellent services. Vital to that continued pursuit is enabling access to effective adult and children's social care, outstanding education, lifelong learning, and quality housing, and combatting homelessness. **Diverse Engaged Communities:** Across our residents, workers, businesses, and visitors, everyone should feel that they belong. Connecting people of all ages and backgrounds will help build diverse, engaged communities that are involved in co-creating great services and outcomes.
31. **Financial implications** – Support must be offered to schools free of charge. There is no additional funding available from DfE.
32. **Resource implications** – There is a dedicated Education team that manages the work detailed in this report.
33. **Legal implications** – There are a number of relevant statutory duties on the Corporation in relation to children. These include duties in relation to school attendance, provision of education, performance licenses and special educational needs. The areas of work outlined in this report help the Corporation comply with statutory requirements.
34. **Risk implications** – There is a reputational and potentially a legal risk if the CoL does not comply with any statutory guidance.
Equalities implications – Children in UK schools are protected by the **Equality Act 2010**, which ensures they are not discriminated against based on characteristics like **disability, race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation**. Schools must: **Treat all pupils fairly** and equally; Make **reasonable adjustments** for disabled children; Provide **inclusive education** for those with special needs; Ensure **equal access** to learning and activities; Promote **diversity and positive relationships** between different groups. They also have a **legal duty** to remove barriers, advance equality, and foster inclusion in all aspects of school life.
35. **Climate implications** – n/a
36. **Security implications** – n/a

Conclusion

37. Over the past year, a primary focus of the Education and Early Years Service has been to safeguard the wellbeing of children residing in the CoL who are accessing education, both within and outside the CoL. We remain committed to enhancing our efforts to keep children safe in their employment and to improve our understanding of where our children and young people are being educated, and the support they require.

38. In collaboration with CoL schools, we will keep identifying children at risk of missing education and provide support for attendance-related issues. We plan to strengthen School Attendance Network Meetings to equip schools with the skills and knowledge they need to raise school attendance. The effectiveness of the Attendance Improvement Group will also be reviewed when required to ensure that both operations play a crucial role in fulfilling our educational responsibilities.
39. We will monitor, review, and maintain our policies and processes to keep children safe. We will ensure that children and young people receive a suitable level of education, and that those performing in film, television, and the theatre, are safeguarded.

Appendices

- None

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City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee – For Information	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: City of London, Quality Assurance of Care Providers, Annual Report 2024–25	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes 	Providing Excellent Services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services
Report author:	Laura Demetriades, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Department of Community and Children’s Services

Summary

The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service within the People’s Directorate oversees the Quality Assurance of the operational Children’s Social Care and Early Help Service. This activity is undertaken within an agreed framework involving commissioned external agencies and internal activity. The process seeks to elicit feedback from children, young people and families who directly experience our services, as well as multi-agency partners, allocated workers, and line managers.

This integrated approach enables the triangulation of information, experience, expectations, and perceptions of outcomes. It also enables service development plans to be made, and actions taken to resolve any barriers or blockages to service improvement.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. To continually develop and improve our services and outcomes for children, young people and families, we must be able to accurately assess where we are performing well, and where improvements could be made. The needs of our service users are continually evolving and therefore our learning and development process must also be continuous.
2. This year we have established a process for robust scrutiny of our independently commissioning accommodation and care arrangements. This involves in-person visits by Senior Leaders to care providers, meeting with children and young people and hearing their views. Alongside regular Commissioning Review meetings which focus on compliance and also on quality of care, knowledge of individual young people and their needs, and responses to safeguarding concerns.

Current Position

3. During the last year, we have undertaken six in-person visits to care providers across the country. These care providers are supporting approximately 22 children and young people from the City of London, which is 39% of the children in care and care leavers who we support.
4. Recognising that children with additional needs have specific vulnerabilities and often require a high level of skilled care, we have chosen to ensure that the children in care who have an Education, Health, and Care Plan are visited as part of this work. Given the specific needs of these children, they are often living at some distance from their family homes, which could lead to them being more isolated from their families and services.
5. The Quality Assurance visits have brought senior leaders closer to the daily experience of children in care and care leavers. The process has provided opportunities to make direct improvements to the lives of children and young people as well as service-level changes which support ongoing improvement. Children and young people also have direct access to senior leaders during these visits. They are also able to share direct feedback that they otherwise might not have the opportunity to do.
6. In general, visits have reinforced the strength of the provision and the benefits this has for our children and young people, providing them with bespoke support that meets their individual needs and recognises their unique talents and interests.
7. These visits have been supported by consistent Commissioning Review Meetings with Care Providers. These meetings focus on the outcomes of the children and young people living with the care provider. The meetings give them an

opportunity to share their knowledge of the children and young people they support, any concerns they have, and also to celebrate their successes. Attendance from the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance means that feedback from practice reviews, the Children in Care Council, and quality assurance visits can inform this discussion.

Options

8. Senior Leader Quality Assurance Visits and Commissioning Review Meetings will continue, as it is felt that they have added value and provide robust scrutiny of commissioned services. While we had originally envisaged monthly visits, this was not practical or achievable in terms of coordinating diaries between senior managers and care providers. Given the number of children and young people, we do not use a large range of care providers. However, on reflection, six visits within the year has felt proportionate and reasonable.

Proposals

9. The above arrangements continue with support from the Commissioning Service and the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service.

Key Data

10. There is no data related to this report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.

- Financial implications – N/A
- Resource implications – N/A
- Legal implications – N/A
- Risk implications – N/A
- Equalities implications – N/A
- Climate implications – N/A
- Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

12. Senior Leaders have appreciated the opportunity to be more closely connected to the experiences of our children in care and care leavers. Care providers have been supportive of the visits and recommendations made.
13. The visits have fed into the Commissioning Review, and meetings have informed further visits, leading to a joined-up approach that provides a holistic overview of the care and accommodation provided to our children and young people. This is triangulated with feedback directly from children and young people and their social workers. It demonstrates to care providers that there are robust processes in place to test the services being delivered.

Appendices

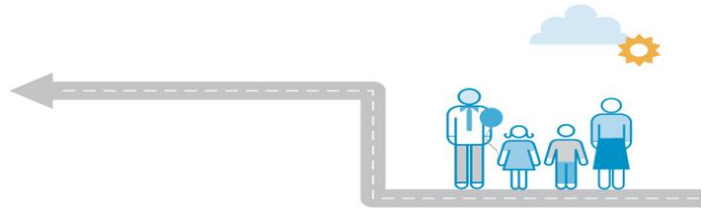
- Appendix 1 – Quality Assurance of Care Providers Annual Report 2024-25

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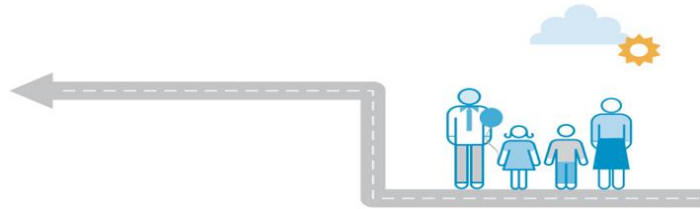
Quality Assurance of Care Providers Annual Report 2024-25

Author: Laura Demetriades,
Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance



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Introduction

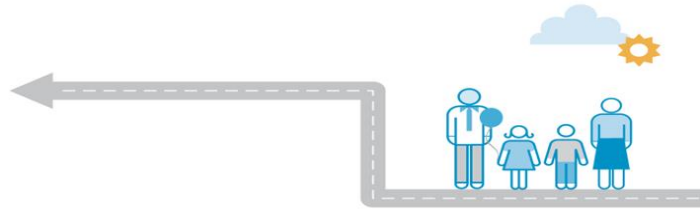
In March 2024 it was agreed that in order to strengthen the quality assurance of the care provided to our children in care and care leavers that senior leaders would undertake in person visits to care providers to experience firsthand the day to day lives of our children and young people and speak with them about their experiences. Due to the unique nature of the City of London in terms of the small geographical size and therefore limited residential population, it is not feasible to run an in-house fostering service and therefore all our care arrangements are commissioned through external providers. This means that many children in care and care leavers do not live within the City boundaries. As a strong Corporate Parent, we have a duty to ensure that the care arrangements that are commissioned are high quality, supportive, adaptable to meet the individual needs of our children and young people, safe, caring, and compassionate.

It was envisaged that visit would take place monthly and would be supported by Young Inspectors. This would be alongside the standard Commissioning Review meetings on a quarterly, half-yearly or annual basis (dependent upon placement volume), social work visits and feedback, and IRO oversight where applicable. Each visit would be written up the agree template (Appendix A) and shared with the Care Provider for their comments and action if needed, placed on the child or young persons Mosaic record, and shared with Commissioning to monitor the progress of recommendations made via the Commissioning Review meetings, or more immediately if required.

Quality Assurance Visits

Visits started in April 2024, Care Providers were chosen based on the number of young people they care for, those who are caring for particularly vulnerable children e.g. those with special educational needs or disabilities, provider who may be newer to working with the City, or where concerns have been raised by young people of their social workers, and those that are high cost. Over the year 6 visits have been completed to care providers supporting approximately 22 children and young people from the City of London, which is 39% of the children in care and care leavers we support.

On the 23rd April My Life were visited by Assistant Director for People's Services, Chris Pelham, this was a stand alone flat where one care leaver was residing, the care leaver and the service manager were met with and spoken to at the visit. My Life support anywhere between 10-15 young people from the City of London generally in stand alone properties with outreach keywork support as needed. No concerns about the accommodation or support provided were raised and the young person stated that they were happy with the accommodation and amenities and felt safe in the area in which they lived. However, they shared concerns about their housing application, immigration status and general stability for the future once they turned 25. Several recommendations were made in terms of strengthening management oversight of commissioning arrangements and stable care leavers plans, as well as sharing information and supporting the young person to feel more secure about their future.



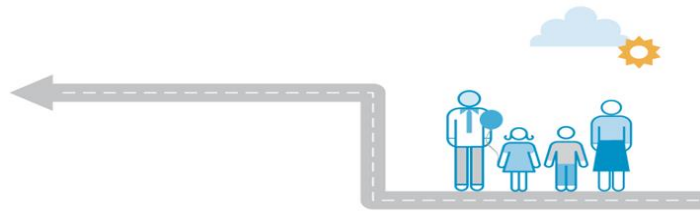
The second visit was undertaken on 26th June by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Laura Demetriades. This visit was to Growhaus in Harrow where they support 5 City of London young people in independent studio flats which are part of a converted office block called Kap House. 2 young people were met with one the day and one occupied flat and one empty flat seen, and the manager was also met with who provided a tour of the building. Overall, the visit was positive both young people said they felt well support by Growhaus, they liked where they lived although both were looking forward to getting a permanent tenancy and hopefully a larger property. Both young people and the care provider manager cited difficulties regarding the wider maintenance of the block and security, which had been addressed prior to the visit, and a recommendation was made to monitor this no other recommendations were identified.

A third visit was conducted on 9th August by the Executive Director, Judith Finlay, to Pathfinders. 2 young people were living in the semi-independent support terrace property that could accommodate up to 4 people. Both were spoken to, and the Director and 3 members of staff were met with. There were no concerns identified within the visit, both young people reported being happy with their living arrangements and the support they received.

A fourth visit was completed on 18th December by the Head of Children's Social Care and Early Help, Rachel Talmage. This was to a residential semi-independent property where one City young person was living several other young people from various Boroughs. This care provider was chosen as it had been identified by the Emergency Duty worker and is a provider that we have previously chosen not to use. Whilst there were no serious concerns about the property there were concerns about the approach of the staff, how the actions in young people's Care Plans were being progressed, and the feedback from our young person was not positive about his experiences. However, another young person from a different Local Authority reported positive experiences about living in the home. Several clear recommendations were made to the care provider to immediately improve the experience of our young person, alongside other wider recommendations.

The fifth visit was completed on 11th February by the Strategic Director of Education, Deborah Bell. This was to a high-cost specialist residential school where one child who has a range of complex needs lives full time. The child was support by known and trusted staff members to engage in the visit, despite his limited communication and was observed to be at ease and confident in his surroundings and relationships with others. The visit was very positive in terms of the facilities of the school, the skill and knowledge of the staff team, and how well the needs of the child are understood and attended too. No recommendations were made.

The final visit of the year was conducted on 19th March by the Head of the Virtual School, Debby Rigby. This was to a high-cost specialist residential school where one child who has a range of complex behaviours and recently diagnosed additional needs lives full time. Whilst the child can struggle to identify positives about his home when others point these out he does agree that there are positives. The home is well maintained and staffed by committed and well-trained professionals. One safety issue regarding an external fence was noted but action is already in place to address this.



Commissioning Review Meetings

Alongside the Quality Assurance Visits this year has seen more consistent establishment of Commissioning Review meetings with care providers on a quarterly, half-yearly or annual basis, dependent upon the number of children and young people living with each provider. These are led by the Commissioning Team supported by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance with feedback from social workers and the Independent Reviewing Officer.

These meetings focus initially on the outcomes of the children and young people living with the care provider, giving them an opportunity to share their knowledge of the children and young people they support, any concerns they have and celebrate their successes. Attendance from the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance means that feedback from practice reviews, Children in Care Council feedback, and quality assurance visits can inform this discussion.

The meeting also covers contractual compliance such as staff recruitment, retention, training and payment, safeguarding notifications, LADO referrals, complaints, coproduction and acting upon feedback, and social value. The meeting is also a forum for care providers to give feedback about the City of London to improve working relationships and outcomes for children and young people. As the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance is also the LADO and lead for Workforce Development this knowledge informs the discussion and questions asked of care providers to ensure that their processes are robust, and staff are supported to work professionally, effectively and positively with our children and young people.

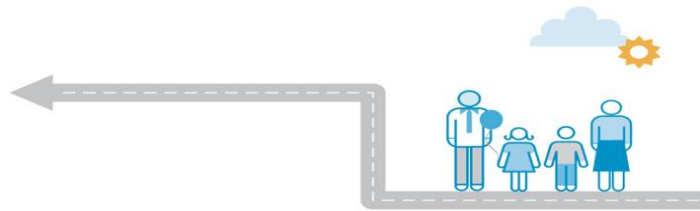
Notes from the meetings are recorded on children and young people's Mosaic records and where action is required this is flagged with social worker to take forward.

Impact and Outcomes

The Quality Assurance visits have brought senior leaders closer to the daily experience of children in care and care leavers and provided opportunities to make direct improvements to the lives of children and young people as well as service level changes which support ongoing improvement. Children and young people also have direct access to senior leaders during these visits and are able to share direct feedback which otherwise they may not have the opportunity to do.

In relation to direct impact for children and young people one visit was able to escalate a young person's housing position and ensure that a move to permanent accommodation took place prior to their 25th birthday. Agreed actions on a child's care plan were able to progress following delay in this and a plan made to move him to more suitable care arrangement post his 18th birthday.

More widely with one care provider we have been monitoring the facilities management of the building which recently has deteriorated, and we are now in discussion with them about relocating out young people, recognising that the support provided by the agency is strong and we want this to continue. In another case we made a service wide decision to not use a care provider again as we did not feel that the services provided were child focused, empathetic or considerate enough for our children and young people. The care provider acknowledged and



responded to our feedback and observations and provided an action plan to address our concerns.

Other visits have reinforced the strength of the provision and benefits this has for our children and young people, providing them with bespoke support that meets their individual needs and recognises their unique talents and interests.

The visits have fed into the commissioning review meeting and vice versa leading to a joined up approach which provides a holistic overview of the care and accommodation provided to our children and young people. This is triangulated with feedback directly from children and young people and their social workers. It demonstrates to care providers that there is robust processes in place to test the services being delivered.

Feedback from care providers has also resulted in internal service delivery changes ensuring Pathway Plans are provided in a timely manner, sharing of the Care Leaver Offer, this being online and translated so that keyworkers can support young people in their care to access and understand their entitlements. Ensuring senior management oversight on transition plans for care leavers about to turn 25 and leave the service. Plus the embedding of consistent Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance in commissioning arrangements.

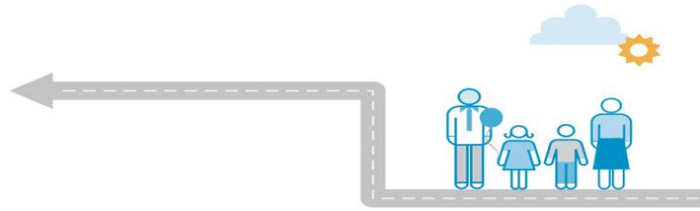
Social workers are now fully aware of the Quality Assurance Visits and Commissioning Review Meetings and without prompt contact the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance if they have concerns about a care provider that they feel needs to be escalated and addressed. This has led to meetings being held outside of the above frameworks to address urgent issues as they arise, which provides a supportive system for children and young people, social workers and care providers to ensure issues do not escalate and lead to increased concerns or worse harm to children or young people, or staff members.

Focus on children with Special Educational Needs

Recognising that children with additional needs have specific vulnerabilities and often require a high level of skilled care, we have chosen to ensure that the children in care who have an Education, Health, and Care Plan are visited as part of this work. Also given the specific needs of these children they are often living at some distance from their family homes which could lead to them being more isolated from their families and services.

Of the two children in care with and EHCP both were visited in their specialist residential school home by Senior Leaders who also have an education background. Both are supported to have regular time with their families and receive frequent visits from professionals. The visits were both very positive in terms of the education provision and care being received by these children. Whilst one was less enthused about his living arrangements he was able to identify aspects of his home that he enjoyed, and feedback from the school and other professionals does validate the progress he has made since living at the school home.

Future work will continue to ensure that children with additional needs are prioritised for quality assurance visits, so that their direct feedback and observations of their daily lives can be ascertained and their safety and positive progress verified.



Learning

Whilst we had originally envisaged monthly visits this was not practical or achievable in terms of coordinating diaries between senior managers and care providers, plus given the number of children and young people we do not use a great range of care providers. A break had always been planned in August and given our Ofsted Inspection in September there was a break in visits. However, on reflection 6 visits within the year has felt proportionate and reasonable.

During this year we have not managed to add Young Inspectors visits into the timetable this is for various reasons including capacity in the participation officer role, interest and understanding of young people in the Young Inspectors programme and competing priorities.

Overall, the accommodation and support being provided to children and young people is of a high standard which meets their needs well. Where this has not been the case immediate and longer-term action has been taken.

Senior Leaders have appreciated the opportunity to be more closely connected to the experiences of our children in care and care leavers. Care providers have been supportive of the visits and recommendations made.

Future Plans

- Quality Assurance visits will continue at a similar rate of 6 per year, this can be increased as needed. A visit is already in place for April 2025 to a new care provider.
- Commissioning Reviews will take place regularly with all care providers with input from both commissioning and the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. Meetings are in the diary for 2025-26.
- The Young Inspectors Programme will be revisited and if viable included in future plans in relation to Quality Assurance Visits to commissioned services.

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City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee - for Information	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: City of London Virtual School	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes 	Diverse Engaged Communities Leading Sustainable Environment Providing Excellent Services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services
Report author:	Debby Rigby Headteacher of Virtual School for Children with a Social Worker Department of Community and Children's Services

Summary

This report provides Members with information about the developmental work taking place for children and young people through the City of London Virtual School. The Virtual School Development Plan, attached as Appendix 1, provides detailed information about current activity, successes, challenges and plans.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report and Virtual School Development Plan, attached as Appendix 1.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Virtual School promotes and supports the education of all children in care, those who have been previously looked after and those living in kinship care arrangements. As part of its extended duties, the school also supports children who have a social worker or who have had a social worker in the past – known as Children with a Social Worker Ever 6. This includes Care Leavers until they are aged 25 years. Of current young people aged 18 to 25 years, 95% arrived in the UK as refugees or asylum seekers and spoke little or no English on arrival. All unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people have had a disrupted educational journey, with almost all receiving very little formal education after the age of 12. Bespoke planning ensures access to needs-led learning, including English speaking, reading and writing.

Current Position

2. Over the past 12 months, children and families, in receipt of Early Help services also access the school for support and advice. This is part of an evolving programme that aims to support children and their families at the very earliest opportunity.
3. Various Virtual School projects take place throughout the year to enhance and enrich the education of children and young people in all Virtual School cohorts. The school provides educational resources, technology and additional tuition to help raise attainment.
4. Of the current 20 children and young people aged up to 18, who have a social worker, seven have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and one receives support for special educational needs and Disability (SEND). One of our young people, aged 18+ has an EHCP, and another two young people receive special needs support. A small group of our 18+ young people have emotional and mental health conditions that impact severely on their ability to engage in formal learning and/or work. The number currently on roll in all cohorts is 87, plus Children with a Social Worker Ever 6 and children who were previously looked after. Cohorts change as children move away from the City or no longer require the Virtual School, but approximately 90 children and young people are supported at any one time.
5. The Virtual School acts as a conduit between Education and Social Care teams and works with partners inside and outside The City of London Corporation, to support children, young people and their families. The Virtual School team work to ensure smooth educational transitions, provide additional tuition and play therapy, and have supported families with applications for EHCPs.
6. The Virtual School collects and monitors school and college attendance and educational progress and success. The school collects daily attendance of its cohorts through ASSET (Advanced Statistical System Evaluation Tool). This

system has been extended this academic year, to also include all City children with SEND who have an EHCP, so that attendance can be monitored, and support provided immediately, by the Education Welfare and SEND teams.

7. The Virtual School provides information, advice and guidance regarding schools, colleges, universities, apprenticeships, training and employment. The Virtual School works with education providers, social workers, key workers, parents and carers to support applications and engagement. The impact of this is to keep the numbers for those not in education, employment and training to a minimum and to encourage and support young people to realise their ambitions into further and higher education and/or the world of work.
8. Working with the Early Help team during the school holidays, Virtual School staff have delivered activity programmes, including sport, resilience, wellbeing, cookery, art and drama classes. Children with SEND and those with social workers, have been encouraged to attend the holiday activities, with additional staff engaged to increase pupil/staff ratios, so that activities can be fully inclusive. These sessions have been well received by families, and all feedback has been positive, with many families asking for sessions in every school holiday.
9. The Virtual School works in partnership with health services, particularly the Looked After Children (LAC) Nurse and Health Spot (a health service for young people), so that young people can access services swiftly and avoid lengthy absences from education, training and employment. As part of its engagement and healthy schools programme, the Virtual School has a football team that meets in Shoreditch, with a City staff/student tournament planned for 3 July 2025. The school football kit has been sponsored by a local tuition company.
10. The Virtual School works with City Open Spaces to provide forest school education to children and young people and with The City of London Boys School to provide enrichment opportunities for young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers and/or care experienced. The school runs trips to the theatre and university open days and accompanies young people to careers fairs. The school finds and funds a wide variety of courses and training that lead to employment, and works with schools, that City children attend, to reduce exclusion. The school endeavours to increase school staff understanding of the challenges faced by children and young people who have, or who have had, social care involvement in their lives.
11. The Virtual School is currently funding a year of training for all staff working at The Aldgate School, to increase knowledge and understanding of how trauma can affect learning and behaviour. This course promotes inclusivity, and staff feedback to date, has been positive. A full evaluation of impact will take place in July 2025. Additional schools, where City children attend, have been invited to receive training from September 2025.
12. The Virtual School runs an apprenticeship project with Partnership for Young London and currently has four apprentices studying Business Administration

and Youth Work. One of the apprentices is a City care leaver and a fifth apprentice will start in July 2025.

13. The Virtual School celebrates the achievements of its pupils in two ceremonies per year. One for all City young people in the Autumn, and in July, The City of London Virtual School hosts a Pan London Shining Stars Ceremony, where two young people from each London borough are chosen for exceptional educational achievement and are presented with certificates, prizes and trophies.

14. Current priorities as set out in the School Development Plan are to:

- work effectively with an increasing number of partners and services
- reduce the number of care experienced young people who are NEET
- embed all extended duties and include a new cohort of children in kinship care
- increase access to the arts and sport
- provide successful education and enrichment projects for identified groups of children and young people

15. Future priorities include:

- restructure of Virtual School staffing to move from a school term time service with overtime to a 52 week permanent service
- School Development Plan 2025/2026 – young people, families and all partners' views are being sought for next year's plan
- Families in the City – the headteacher sits on the development board to ensure that Virtual School cohorts of young people are promoted and considered within any further developments, particularly the Family Hub
- Universal Youth and Play Steering Group – the Virtual School is represented on this group, to look at contracted services and how they meet the future needs of children and young people in The City of London, this will ensure that Virtual School cohorts are provided with services that promote their educational opportunities
- Mentoring Project – the headteacher has sat on the mentoring project steering group to help shape a Pan London mentoring service for care experienced young people and young people with SEND. Once in place, this service will increase support for care experienced children and young people

Options

16. The Virtual School has embedded the extended duties of its work and has a temporary working arrangement that ensures that support is available for young people and partner services throughout the year. This will continue until the school is restructured and moves from a permanent school term time only service to a 52 week service.

Proposals

17. The Virtual School will continue to promote the educational achievement and attainment of all of its children and young people. An independent school improvement partner will continue to meet with Virtual School staff six times a year, to quality assure the work taking place and chair the Virtual School Advisory Partnership, a group that meets termly, to provide support and challenge.

Key Data

18. There is no data related to this report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

19. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.

- Financial implications – N/A
- Resource implications – N/A
- Legal implications – N/A
- Risk implications – N/A
- Equalities implications – N/A
- Climate implications – N/A
- Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

20. The City of London Virtual School continues to meet its statutory duties by promoting the educational achievement of care experienced young people. The City of London Virtual School has embraced the additional duties agenda and supports all children and young people with a social worker, including those who have had a social worker in the past six years.

21. The School Development Plan provides detailed information about the work of the school and the impact of activities. An Annual Report is produced at the end of every academic year, providing information about cohorts, school attendance, academic progress, courses completed, and qualifications achieved.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Virtual School Development Plan

Debby Rigby

Headteacher of Virtual School for Children with a Social Worker
Department of Community and Children's Services

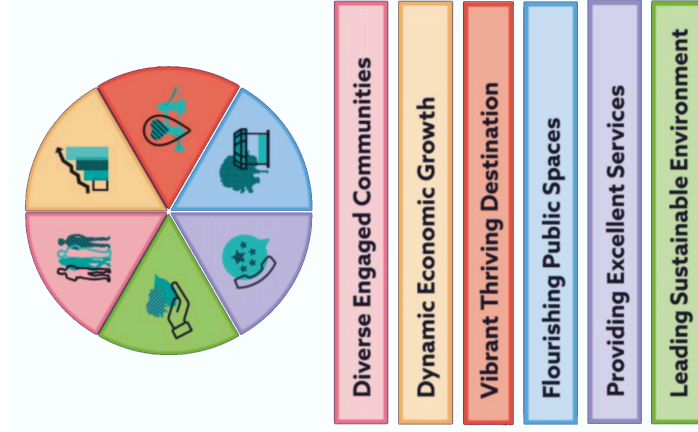
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City of London Virtual School School Development Plan

2024-2025 June 2025



Introduction

This School Development Plan sets out the planned developments of the City of London Virtual School over the next twelve months. The plan promotes high expectations of attendance, attainment and achievement for all pupils and students from 0-25 years. The plan builds on the work of the previous year and brings forward any activities not completed in the previous academic year. The plan identifies success criteria, where possible, that are both specific and measurable in terms of success. The plan reflects the school's priorities for development and how they are to be monitored and evaluated. The plan is updated termly and reported on at Senior Management Team meetings throughout the year.

Related Documentation and Supporting Evidence

Evidence to support the content and judgements within the School Development Plan can be found in a variety of documents held by the City of London Corporation.

- Ofsted Self-Evaluation Documentation
- Children and Young People's Plan
- Meeting reports and minutes
- Case notes and studies
- Personal Education Plans
- Asset Information System

Virtual School Key Functions are to:

- Monitor and promote the educational progress and achievement of Children in Care and Care Leavers
- Ensure that Personal Education Plans are current, relevant and effective
- Promote and advise on the use of the Pupil Premium Plus Grant
- Support schools and Designated Teachers to develop effective strategies and support for looked-after children and previously looked-after children
- Provide advice and guidance for social workers, parents and carers on issues relating to the education, employment and training of Children in Care, previously looked-after children and Care Leavers
- Commission or fund additional resources to support education of Children in Care and Care Leavers
- Provide information, advice and guidance to looked-after children and care leavers about education, employment and training

Additional Duties for Children with a Social Worker, funded until March 2025

- Identify, monitor and promote the educational progress and achievement of all children with a social worker or who have had a social worker in the past six years
- Enhance partnerships between education settings and social care, promoting high expectations of all children with a social worker or who have had a social worker
- Provide information, advice, education and guidance for schools, social workers, parents and carers, including kinship cares, on possible barriers to learning and issues relating to education, employment and training of all children with a social worker or who have had a social worker
- Commission or fund additional resources to support the education of all children with a social worker or who have had a social worker

Priorities and RAG Rating System

These are the priorities which will form the basis of the school improvement this academic year. Each section has its own action plan. Each priority is RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated to indicate progress being made towards the success criteria. This rating is updated every academic term.

- Red indicates that work is unlikely to be met within the timescales.
- Amber indicates that some of the success criteria is likely to be met within timescales.
- Green indicates that all the success criteria is on track to be met within timescales.

		Priorities for Improvement	RAG Rating		
			R	A	G
Priority 1	To work effectively with an increasing number of partners and services				
1.1	Review the effectiveness and impact of the Virtual School Advisory Partnership				
1.2	Increase links with health services, to reduce the risk of poor health impacting on educational opportunities				
1.3	Manage and support four new apprentices, in association with Partnership for Young London				
1.4	Access neighbourhood funding, through service provider bids, to increase provision for Children in receipt of Early Help Services, Children with a Social Worker, Children in Care and Care Leavers				
1.5	Increase early identification of children and young people with special educational needs, within the Virtual School cohort				
Priority 2	To reduce the number of care experienced young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)				
2.1	To ensure there are SMART education sections in pathway plans, for all NEET young people				
2.2	To provide immediate access to online ESOL learning for new UASC arrivals and those who are or become NEET				
2.3	To increase the number of care experienced young people on apprenticeship programmes and entering higher education				
Priority 3	To embed all extended duties and include new cohort of children in kinship care				
3.1	To increase staff awareness of potential barriers to learning for CWSW in social care teams, schools and colleges				
3.2	To monitor the progress of CWSW and provide information, advice and support to parents, carers and professionals				
3.3	To provide information, advice and support to parents and carers of previously looked after children and those in kinship care				
Priority 4	To increase access to the arts and sport				
4.1	To increase the cultural capital of CWSW by providing increased access to arts education, including music, dance, drama and art				
4.2	To provide opportunities for all CWSW to have access to high quality physical education and sport				
4.3	To provide activities targeted at specific groups including preventative activities for children in receipt of Early Help				
Priority 5	To provide successful education and enrichment projects for identified groups of children and young people				
5.1	To provide Forest School, outdoor and adventure and enrichment activities for Children in Care and Care Leavers Pan London				
5.2	To provide educational resources and books to CWSW and those in receipt of Early Help services				
5.3	To provide a reading project for CWSW and CWSW Ever 6 that increases engagement in reading and provides increased access to stories and books				
5.4	To value and celebrate the achievements of all Children and Young People supported by the Virtual School				

Action Plan for Priority 1

To work effectively with an increasing number of partners and services

Supporting Evidence				
Asset Information System Dashboards				
Reports – Achieving Excellence Board (AEB) and Safeguarding Sub-Committee				
Annual Report, Ofsted 2024 report				
Mosaic				
Personal Education Plans				
Minutes of Meetings including VSAP				
Ref	Target	Actions	Success Criteria	Who
1.1	Review the effectiveness and impact of the Virtual School Advisory Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion to take place at the September VSAP meeting Tony to meet volunteer partners to review impact and effectiveness in more detail Tony to produce a report for CSMT Decisions made regarding continuation past pilot year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VSAP meeting minutes record the discussion and views of partners Report from Tony, following meetings with a selection of partners Partners report positive impacts of shared partnership working Decision made to continue Virtual School Advisory Partnership 	Tony Debby Chris Ariel
1.2	Increase links with health services, to reduce the risk of poor health impacting on educational opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact health for another rep on the Virtual School Advisory Partnership Virtual Head attendance at health-related meetings Virtual School Involvement in City and Hackney health project Regular meeting schedule agreed with Looked After Children (LAC) nurse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health input into Virtual School developments Virtual School staff confident to signpost young people to health support Decrease in sickness absence at school and college reported at PEP meetings Specific health related funds accessed by young people to support with health matters, particularly dentistry, to increase confidence at college and work 	Debby Ismael Rachel
1.3	Manage and support four new apprentices, in association with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete new starter procedures Support with induction process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction process completed Training programme set up and started 	Debby Ismael Sharon
				September 2024 – August 2025

	Partnership for Young London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up apprentices with City training and college apprenticeship courses Provide opportunities to complete projects within the training Manage workstream throughout the year Provide monthly supervision and ongoing support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workstream of managed to prevent under and overloading Good reports from college tutors Apprentices report feeling fulfilled and supported 			
1.4	Access neighbourhood funding, through service provider bids, to increase provision for Children in receipt of Early Help Services, Children with a Social Worker, Children in Care and Care Leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with Neighbourhood Team to find out what can be funded and how to navigate the funding application process Invite team to speak to all at CSMT and PSMT so that other teams can have the opportunity to access funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music project funded Well-being project funded Sports project funded to increase access to a variety of activities Students report positively on projects and lessons Attendance by Neighbourhood Team at PSMT 	Debby Ariel	Time	January 2025
1.5	Increase early identification of children and young people with special educational needs, within the Virtual School cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree regular meeting schedule with Head of Education to discuss upcoming cases Meet with The Aldgate School SENDCo termly to discuss SEND cases on the Virtual School register Check SEND of City of London CWSW or in Kinship Care and consider patterns Work with Early Help to ensure there is equality of access to advice, services and SEND support for all groups of pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong links with City SEND team ensuring minimal drift and delay Regular meetings set up to discuss cases SEND included in register of all CWSW/Kinship Care Increased work with Early Help team to provide preventative support and early identification and intervention to vulnerable groups, to prevent escalation to CIN and CP Action plan to address any inequalities identified 	Debby Ismael Keisha Kirstie SEND team	Time	March 2025
Ongoing evaluation and impact						
Autumn		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of the Virtual School Advisory Partnership took place in November, led by the School Improvement Partner, Tony Gallagher. He interviewed six partners and collated views about the group's 		Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular contact made with SEND colleagues to discuss cases and support provided where needed,

<p>impact and effectiveness, The review report was presented at the December meeting and decision made to continue with the partnership and increase membership to include additional health and City of London partners. These partners will be approached in the Spring Term. There will also be some associate members to be invited for specific items including commissioned services, members and Virtual School Heads from other LAs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of VSAP to date includes new support for young people with job and university applications, four apprentices being appointed, increased Guildhall based and online ESOL courses for UASC, SEND developments including EHCPs and specialist education support, targeted sessions held at London careers festival, increased knowledge of national kinship agenda, reading project funding providing books to all cohorts, outstanding Ofsted report. • Links have been made with City and Hackney Health Trust and a placement secured for a Virtual School apprentice to complete training within their setting, working on encouraging more access to health services for young people. This has increased knowledge of services available and allowed school staff to signpost young people effectively to health services, so time is not spent away from education and work. <p>Links have been made with the youth service, Society Links, and six-week placements have been arranged for two apprentices to broaden their experience of working with the young people who access the Portsoken Community Centre. This will increase staff knowledge of services available, so that they can be advertised to young people and will allow apprentices to experience and support the delivery of the national youth service curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher has attended numerous health meetings and with the Head of Children's Social Care raised health issues including dentistry, to increase access to treatment and improved confidence leading to increased access to education and work. A previously unknown funding pot is now available to access by CSC. • Induction programme for apprentices has taken place and all are enrolled on college courses and working on a range of projects to support the Virtual School, Partnership for Young London and their own personal learning and development. Literacy and Numeracy assessments are complete and further study arranged for those that 	<p>commissioning, Open Spaces and the apprenticeship team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health funding of £5,000 allocated to support young people with orthodontist work to increase confidence. • Virtual School staff confident to signpost young people to health support, including named people. • Apprentice completed health spot placement. • Apprentice completed school office placement. • Decrease in sickness absence in all but one young person with a social worker. • Overall attendance of CIC high except one student, who's status changed mid-term. • Overall attendance of children with child in need and child protection plans high except two students, who are now being supported with additional, specialist tuition. • On going meetings and regular discussions with staff in the SEND team ensuring support is consistent and timely. • SEND team represented at every meeting of Virtual School Advisory partnership • Success at a variety of specialist courses including security, stadium support and driving – two driving tests passed. • BSL courses secured both online and in person. • Assessment funded for young person. • Play therapy for two children delivered with excellent impact, increased attendance and attitude to learning. • Trauma informed learning course continued at The Aldgate School for all staff – feedback good. • Training delivered to social care colleagues on ASSET and barriers to learning. Education and joint training deferred to summer term. 	<p>including school searches and attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College tutors report excellent work by apprentices and all on target to pass academic work, some support given to young person for whom English is not their first language. • Music project bid re-submitted to neighbourhood fund. • Assessment provided for young person 18+ with special educational needs that were not immediately apparent on arrival in the UK. Now enrolled on college course that can meet his needs. • Ongoing work to restructure the Virtual School to meet service needs continues to take place – all documentation has been passed to HR and Ambition 25 to work towards a resolution – in the meantime an overtime system is in place to ensure service delivery is suitable and meets statutory duties. • Interim Deputy Head's contract extended until December 2025. • Trauma informed course continues at The Aldgate School with an evaluation of effectiveness and changes put in place due by July 2025. • Two further schools have come forward for training from September 2025.
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<p>require an uplift to Level 2. Good reports have been received from college tutors and apprentices report being well supported and fulfilled. Apprentices have increased capacity within the Virtual School allowing increased contact with care leavers, sorting education challenges more quickly e.g. course changes, educational equipment required, application completion for work and college, this has stabilised and started to reduce numbers of long-term NEET.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music bid has been developed, written and submitted – there is a delay on a decision until April due to financial timescales of the delivery company. Headteacher will meet prospective provider to ensure momentum is maintained and new bid submitted. • Identification of SEND of all CIN, CP and CIC, recorded on dashboard. Increased contact with SEND and EH teams to ensure joined up, effective working, especially in complex cases. Some Early Help case support to avoid drift and delay and prevent exclusion. • Joint education/social care/Virtual School training planned for January and April 2025 to cover the new Education Strategy, SEND, new education and social care duties and effective, supportive team working. <p>HAF funding secured to deliver a Christmas holiday well-being project with EH team targeting primary aged children aged 4-11 in receipt of free school meals alongside those on EH, CIN, CP and CIC registers. 32 children attended – 28+ each day. Parents and children reported that their children benefitted from the sessions, really enjoyed them and have requested more sessions in the next school holidays.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training provided online to designated teachers on PEPs, pupil premium and potential barriers to learning. • Headteacher and Deputy attended NAVSH conference including all workshops and DfE and Ofsted briefings. • Families in the City - the Virtual School is sitting on the development board to ensure Virtual School cohorts of young people are promoted and considered within any further developments. • Universal Youth and Play Steering Group – the Virtual School is represented on this group to look at contracted services and how they meet the future needs of children and young people in The City of London • The headteacher has been sitting on the mentoring project steering group to help shape a Pan London mentoring service for care experienced young people and young people with SEND. • HAF funded Easter holiday project for children and young people aged 4-18 years. Virtual School and Early Help Team delivering alongside contracted provider of KABs. Cookery, art and drama lessons for young people 11-18.
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Action Plan for Priority 2		
To reduce the number of care experienced young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)		
Targets		Supporting Evidence
2.1 To ensure there are SMART education sections in pathway plans, for all NEET young people		Pledge to Children and Young People
2.2 To provide immediate access to online ESOL learning for new UASC arrivals and those who are or become NEET		Asset Information System
2.3 To increase the number of care experienced young people on apprenticeship programmes and entering higher education		Mosaic Education Information Personal Education Plans Pathway Plans

Care Leaver Offer and Pledge Ofsted Report 2024						
Ref	Target	Actions	Success Criteria	Who	Cost	When
2.1	To ensure there are SMART education sections in pathway plans, for all NEET young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Look through a cross section of pathway plans and collate information containedProvide training for social workers on education and the importance of all being in education, employment and trainingProvide creative, alternative learning solutions to re-engage young people who have been NEET for some timeIncrease Virtual School footprint on mosaic systems to increase information sharing to support SMART targets in pathway plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Audit of pathway plans completed and collation of current information withinAdditional educational information in pathway plans to prevent young people becoming or staying NEETTraining session on education and prevention of young people becoming NEETProgrammes in place to support young people as they transfer between education, training and workActivity tracked between teams to reduce NEET by 50%	Debby Rachel Social Workers Joshua	Business Admin by apprentices Additional Virtual School time to share information between systems	November 2024 audit July 2025 NEET reduction
2.2	To provide immediate access to online ESOL learning for new UASC arrivals and those who are or become NEET	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Work with TLC Live to provide online learning for all new arrivals within the first five days of arrivalWork with TLC Live to provide engaging sessions to re-engage long term NEET young peopleProvide assessments for new arrivals and re-engagers through Guildhall onsite college	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All young people provided with laptops and online tuition within five days of arrivalReengagement tuition available through TLC Live to help bring long term NEET young people back into the world of education, training and employmentAssessments for new arrivals available within ten days of arrival.Positive feedback from young people and carers on tuition provided	Ismail Rahil Yahya Emilia	£5,000 plus pupil premium funding for children and young people up to 18	September 2024
2.3	To increase the number of care-experienced young people on apprenticeship programmes and entering higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Work with a variety of partners to ensure care experienced young people can access apprenticeship opportunitiesCollate a variety of apprenticeship options for young people and advertise these widely to increase awareness and participationPartner with TEDI London and King's University to provide pre-entry courses that allow young people to show their talent and potential to study at university	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Secure four partners working with The City Virtual School to provide apprenticeship opportunities for care experienced young peopleRun apprenticeship day, for at least twelve City young people, within the City of London careers festival, to increase awareness and increase participationAttendance by at least four City care experienced young people on TEDI pre-university programme	Debby Ismail Matilda Barbara Melody King's Uni TEDI Joshua Yahya Support from Prospects	£4,000 Apprenticeship days and TEDI project Business Admin by Apprentices £3,000 Driving Tuition	July 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide driving tuition for young people to enable them to access more work and training opportunities	Adviser Matilda	
Ongoing evaluation and impact			
Autumn <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An increased focus on NEET, prevention and early identification has meant that young people are NEET for shorter periods of time and helped young people back into employment and education more quickly.• New NEET form to collate activity with young people who are NEET to show efforts and actions of officers being completed by social workers.• Increased mosaic footprint of Virtual School and its activities.• All spreadsheets updated with qualifications and destinations.• Caring Life passwords received to improve storage of educational information, certificates and photographs.• All young people provided with laptops and online tuition within five days of arrival into care – 80% within three days.• 100% of Personal Education Plans completed within statutory timescale.• Increased online tuition used to re-engage long term NEET and encourage back into learning, three long term NEET now learning online.• TEDI university day held on Wednesday 30th October, with all apprentices and an additional four care experienced young people, taking part.• Two young people funded and supported to complete the Security Industry Authority (SIA) license providing them with employment opportunities in the security industry.• Six young people funded and supported to complete the Highfield Level 2 in Spectator Safety providing them with employment opportunities at events at the London Stadium.• Twelve care experienced young people places have been booked for careers festival on Tuesday 4th February 2025.	Spring <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New arrivals received support within hours of arrival, resources, online learning, assessments, PEPs, followed by smooth transitions on national transfer scheme to welcoming local authorities.• All PEPs completed within timeframes.• Increased focus on NEET by social care and education colleagues, has led to earlier alerts to the Virtual School when young people move outside of education, employment and training, leading to more timely interventions.• Additional work with Shaw Trust has provided UCAS support, visits to job centres and access to courses and employment for three young people.• Positive feedback from young people regarding online and face to face tuition provided by the school.• Four young people attended TEDI open day events along with all apprentices.• Careers Festival offered specific sessions for care experienced young people on a variety of careers and apprenticeship opportunities.• Additional youth worker apprentice position secured, and interviews held.• John Lewis partnership work led to three young people coming forward for work experience and interview possibilities.	Summer <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NEET has increased due to a change in college mid-year admissions and some health issues of individual students. Support has been given to all to re-engage with education, work and training.• Additional tuition offered at all PEP meetings and to all children sitting exams in all cohorts.• PEPs taking place in time with clear SMART, costed targets and actions, no time is lost in setting up educational packages that meet the needs of the young people.• New arrivals set up with education online within three days – new laptops ordered, and additional tuition company called Remedy Tutors quality assured and being used to complement existing provision delivered by TLC Live.• Introduced BSL tuition online and face to face for student with hearing impairment.• Fifth apprentice due to start in July 2025 to increase youth work support. This will increase capacity to make contact with young people more regularly.• Pathway plans selected and audited with report to Children’s Social Care Manager noting good practice in pathway plans and any areas to make educational outcomes even better.• School, college and university searches for individual families and young people took	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More work to be undertaken with data team and social workers to ensure recording of NEET is accurate and timely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bespoke courses secured for young people, railway engineering, motor mechanics, beauty. 	place, allowing wider choice of schools and courses.
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Action Plan for Priority 3					
To embed all extended duties and include new cohort of children in kinship care					
Targets		Supporting Evidence			
		Attendance Strategy			
		Asset Information System			
		Mosaic Education Information Website			
		Family Information Service			
		Minutes of Meetings including VSAP			
Ref	Target	Actions	Success Criteria	Who	Cost
When					
3.1	To increase staff awareness of potential barriers to learning for CWSW in social care teams, schools and colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and deliver training to social care teams, school and college staff on barriers to learning and how these can start to be overcome Produce and distribute leaflets to raise awareness, providing information and signposts Produce and display pull up notice boards to increase awareness amongst City of London staff To bring over from last year – to continue to update school policies and share these with partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training attended by social work, school and college staff Leaflets described as helpful and informative by services Contacts made to Virtual School from advertising services and support All Virtual School policies updated and shared 	Debby Ismail Joshua	£2,000 training
3.2	To monitor the progress of CWSW and provide information, advice and support to parents, carers and professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect progress information of CWSW from social workers, parents, carers and schools Advertise advice and support to parents, carers and professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data base complete of all CWSW of progress in specific subjects Virtual School approached for advice and support from schools, colleges, parents, carers, young people and professionals 	Debby Ismail	£4,000 ASSET system
3.3	To provide information, advice and support to parents and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all CWSW Ever 6 and those in Kinship Care and provide information to parents and carers about education support and advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohort information updated Leaflets sent to all cohorts 	Debby Ismail	£2,000

of previously looked after children and those in kinship care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise support for Post Looked After Children to parents and carers • Respond to requests for support and advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources provided including additional tuition, if required 		
Ongoing evaluation and impact				
Autumn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training set up with KCA to be delivered to all staff at The Aldgate School over this academic year to increase knowledge and understanding of trauma informed learning and neuro diversity. First sessions were well received, and more are planned for the Spring term with a full review of impact in July 2025. • All policies updated and approved by School Improvement Partner and Ofsted. • Prior Western approached the Virtual School for advice and support regarding a child in need of support – this has led to Early Help Services being involved and therapeutic support being provided. The Aldgate School have approached the Virtual School for support regarding trauma informed learning and support for Post LAC adoption cases. Post LAC funding has been transferred to the school and is providing additional tuition, resources and activities for children who have secured permanency through adoption. • Training sessions booked for the year. • Thursday 16th January 2025 Social care and education shared training 2pm-3.30pm • Wednesday 5th February 2025 Designated Teacher for CIC training 4pm-5pm online • Thursday 24th April 2025 Social care and education shared training 2pm-3.30pm 	Spring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies updated and risk assessments prepared for activity days. • Virtual School approached for advice 15 plus times per week by various partners, including young people. • Additional tuition provided to all cohorts for those between courses, those requiring extra support and for those preparing for formal examinations. • Progress and exam information updated on ASSET system providing evidence of ongoing progress and success. • NEET recorded on mosaic and updated following monthly meetings has led to more timely, accurate data. • Virtual School QA visit in March to a residential special school with recommendations suggested for improvements. • Restructure of Virtual School continues with contract extended for interim Deputy Head. 	Summer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and support sought from colleagues in health, social care and education, schools, colleges and universities. Also, from young people directly and families. • Kinship Carers offered additional tuition to support with exam success. • Resources provided to all cohorts through the Virtual School shop on the fifth floor of The Guildhall, PEP system or through supportive partners and/or Virtual School budgets. Support ranges from specialised course fees to laptops, books, school trips and vouchers. 		

Action Plan for Priority 4

To increase access to the arts and sport

Targets				Supporting Evidence		
4.1 To increase the cultural capital of CWSW by providing increased access to arts education, including music, dance, drama and art 4.2 To provide opportunities for all CWSW to have access to high quality physical education and sport 4.3 To provide activities targeted at specific groups including preventative activities for children in receipt of Early Help				Asset Information System	Cost	When
				Mosaic Education Information		
				Newsletters		
				Minutes of Meetings including VSAP		
Ref	Target	Actions	Success Criteria	Who	Cost	When
4.1	To increase the cultural capital of Children with a Social Worker by providing increased access to arts education, including music, dance, drama and art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Lyceum Music at The Barbican to offer musical instruments and music tuition to all Virtual School cohorts and families in receipt of Early Help services Plan drama event with Freemans School and City of London Boys School to increase confidence and communication skills Plan dance event for cohorts within Virtual School Provide art enrichment events for children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lyceum music funded by Neighbourhood Fund to deliver music tuition and provide instruments Drama event held in The City with high attendance, more than 20 young people from Pan London, reporting increase confidence and communication Dance event planned for children and young people in Virtual School cohort Art activities taking place in Epping in Forest School Days and at City of London Boys School 	Debby Ismail Ariel	£2,000	April 2025
4.2	To provide opportunities for all Children with a Social Worker to have access to increased physical education and sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate database of sporting interests Collate current activity and plan according to interest Work with agency to place young people in clubs and societies across London Provide KABs activities to cohorts within the Virtual School Set up regular football team practice for Virtual School and play against City staff in a summer tournament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Database complete showing interest and current activity Agency secured and young people engaging in interested sporting activities Football team meeting monthly with high attendance – at least five Summer football tournament with young people playing against City staff Crickets trip to Lords for all interested young people in the Virtual School and City of London enrichment project 	Debby Ismail Apprentices	£2,000	April 2025
4.3	To provide activities targeted at specific vulnerable groups including preventative activities for children in receipt of Early Help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring over from last year's plan a well-being project targeted specifically for women and girls, decided upon by this small group, within the Virtual School cohort Provide arts and sport-based project during the Christmas holidays for children with a social worker and those in receipt of Early Help services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects take place and are attended by over 50% of specific group cohorts 	Debby Ismail Keisha Apprentices	£9,000 Holiday Activity Fund (HAF)	December 2024

Ongoing evaluation and impact

Autumn	Spring	Summer
<p>• Lyceum Music bid was discussed, planned, written and submitted. A decision was delayed until April due to financial accounts being required by the company for a set amount of time. New bid submission planned for March/April 2025.</p> <p>• Art activities took place in Epping Forest on 11th October and a piece of work is now displayed on the fifth floor of The Guildhall.</p> <p>• A Christmas HAF funded Education Holiday Club was planned and delivered in partnership with the Early Help Team on 30th/31st December and 2/3 January for children attending The Aldgate School on FSM and primary children in receipt of EH, in Care or on CIN or CP plans. High attendance with children returning for sessions in high numbers and reporting that the club was 'fun' 'exciting' 'friendly' and 'lovely!' Parents expressed thanks to staff for a 'great' week. Some said how grateful they were for the support provided regarding childcare, others were pleased that their children were being offered fun activities and lunch and many asked if something similar could be provided at half term and Easter.</p> <p>Football team has been formed and met on 21st November for the first training session. This was popular, with nine young people attending. More sessions planned in Spring term with a staff/student tournament at the end of the football season.</p> <p>• Link made with Access to Sport, who hold and provide information of all sporting clubs available across London, so that young people can be linked easily and access sports that interest them.</p> <p>• A school trip to The Lyceum Theatre was held on 19th December to see The Lion King. Seven staff and twenty-two young people attended and thoroughly enjoyed the performance. 'Amazing' 'unbelievable' 'fantastic' 'brilliant' were some of the words used to describe the performance by the young people.</p> <p>• All female care leavers were invited to a well-being nail session run by one of the care leavers as part of her course. As only a young female apprentice attended, other female staff joined the session to act as models for the care leavers' coursework. Following up with the non-attenders revealed that the time and date clashed with other activities and another date will be diarised in the Spring term.</p>	<p>• Freemans School and City of London Virtual School planning for Drama event to be held in the Summer Term.</p> <p>• Lyceum music bid ongoing – needs further follow up in May.</p> <p>• Care2Dance applying for neighbourhood funding with delivery to start in September 2025.</p> <p>• Sponsorship for football kit secured – funded by TLC Live.</p> <p>• Football kit designed, led by apprentice and co-produced with young people.</p> <p>• Football Tournament planned and booked in Shoreditch, for Thursday 3rd July. Participants invited including Town Clerk.</p> <p>• Summer cricket trip planned.</p> <p>• Easter holiday school drama, art and cookery activities for 11–18-year-olds.</p> <p>• Springtime in Epping Forest booked for 25th April, watercolour art and bluebells.</p> <p>• Enrichment project days booked and planned at City of London boys' school – this year pan London UASC invited. Dates 30th April and 11th June.</p> <p>• Headteacher attends Pan London working groups for Post Looked After Children (PLAC) and Kinship Care, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) and Children with a social worker (CWSW). These feed into the DfE and help to define future service delivery across London.</p>	<p>• Art activities took place in Epping Forest allowing young people to be creative in an outdoor setting, all reported increased well-being and were pleased to be offered the opportunity. Art to be used by performance team.</p> <p>• Care2Dance funding bid successful – plans now being made for delivery.</p> <p>• Successful Easter holiday school with arts and cookery activities for secondary aged pupils and well-being and team provider brought in for primary aged children.</p> <p>• Success demonstrated in evaluation of holiday project – families and children asked for more projects, suggesting some new activities and all said how beneficial the sessions were to children and families.</p> <p>• Headteacher attended Trailblazer project meetings to increase work opportunities for care experienced young people – drama project being planned to increase oracy skills, interview technique and confidence when applying for work.</p>

Action Plan for Priority 5

To provide successful education and enrichment projects for identified groups of children and young people

Targets			Supporting Evidence			
5.1 To provide Forest School, outdoor and adventure and enrichment activities for Children in Care and Care Leavers Pan London			Project Case Studies Photographs Asset Information System Mosaic Education Information Newsletters Minutes of Meetings including VSAP			
5.2 To provide educational resources and books to CWSW and those in receipt of Early Help services						
5.3 To provide a reading project for CWSW and CWSW Ever 6 that increases engagement in reading and provides increased access to stories and books						
5.4 To value and celebrate the achievements of all CWSW						
Ref	Target	Actions	Success Criteria	Who	Cost	When
5.1	To provide Forest School, outdoor and adventure and enrichment activities for Children in Care and Care Leavers Pan London	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan an annual programme of forest school days in each of the four seasonsPlan activities to include music, art and drama as well as campfires, walks, kite flying and nature-based activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Young people from City of London Virtual School and other London boroughs attending forest school activitiesYoung people provide positive feedback on activities	Debby Ismail Yahya Emilia	£1,200 Business Admin by apprentices	Four times 2024-2025
5.2			<ul style="list-style-type: none">Selection of books and educational resources freely available to social workers to deliver to children and young peopleSocial Workers actively taking resources out to children and young people on visitsChildren in Early Years provided with educational toys and resources	Debby Ismail Yahya Emilia	£2,000	December 2025
5.3			<ul style="list-style-type: none">Storytime magazine being delivered to all primary aged children in Virtual School cohortBook tokens sent to young peopleMagazine subscriptions set up for young people to encourage interest and knowledge	Debby Ismail Yahya Emilia	£3,000 Project funded by Education Strategy Team	July 2025

5.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To value and celebrate the achievements of all CWSW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify all successes, exam results, course qualifications and special awards from previous year • Plan and deliver a celebration event for all young people in the Virtual School • Plan and deliver a Pan London event where two care experienced young people from each Local Authority (LA) are recognised for extraordinary achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of all results and successes recorded in database • Celebration event attended by young people, carers and City officers • Shining Stars event hosted by The City of London with increased number of LAs attending – more than 24 • Excellent feedback from both celebration events 	Debby Ismail Yahya Emilia Ariel Joshua	£5,000 City Celebration £10,000 Shining Stars plus TLC Live to fund prizes and decorations	July 2025
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Ongoing evaluation and impact

Autumn	Spring	Summer
<p>Autumn in the Forest Day held in Epping on Friday 11th October – eight young people attended with the HT and DHT, a ranger from Open Spaces and an Epping Forest volunteer. The session focused on the collection of natural materials to create artwork inspired by Andy Goldsworthy. A natural mandala was created and photographed and is now on display on the fifth floor. The young people who attended reported an increased sense of well-being, an increased knowledge of artists who create with natural materials and three young people said they appreciated the opportunity to speak to education staff in the Virtual School about their college courses and future education plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storytime are now providing monthly storybooks for all primary aged children in receipt of Early Help, in care or on child in need or child protection plans. • An additional class set of Storytime magazines have been sent to The Aldgate School monthly. These have been given out to individuals and classes that the SENDCo felt would benefit. He has been especially targeting CWSW from other LAs attending the school. He has reported that children love the magazines and look forward to new ones arriving. • A shop has been set up on the fifth floor with educational equipment and storybooks for social workers to take on visits to children and young people. This has increased access to stories, books and resources for CWSW. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest School day held on January 17th with 12 young people attending. Focus on nature, seasonal changes and the migration of birds, positive feedback from young people and teachers from other Virtual Schools. • School shop constantly updated with resources for young people so that social workers can deliver on visits. • Books and book vouchers distributed to young people to support school and college work. • Storytime magazine monthly subscription to be renewed in late April, following positive reports from school and young people. • Two children in Early Years provided with educational resources to meet needs, one with SEND. • One care experienced young parent linked with charity support. • Planning for Shining Stars event, lanyards, food, venue, entertainment, invitations out to all London's Virtual Schools, minister contacted, mayor's office, DfE officers, senior leaders from across The City Corporation – acceptance from all. Photographer still to be sourced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storytime project reviewed and evaluated – very positive response from individual children in receipt of Early Help and on social care plans and by the children from other LAs attending The Aldgate School. Project will now continue for the next financial year for primary aged children in all cohorts to increase reading material at home and encourage a love of reading. • Shining Stars Ceremony booked for Monday 14th July – 15 LAs have already signed up, a singer, saxophonist and photographer are booked, and the Virtual School apprentices are organising black and gold decorations for the tables. A buffet will be available on arrival from 5pm with the ceremony starting at 6pm. • The 32 London Virtual Heads will be hosted by The City for their Summer term meeting at The Guildhall. Colleagues from Ofsted and the DfE have been invited so that new national developments can be explored and reviewed. • Book tokens have been provided to young people to encourage reading and a book evening is being set up in Daunts in The City for 10th July, so that our young people can choose a

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Maths set has been delivered to a young person on a maths course, enabling him to continue with his college course. • Book tokens and All 4 One vouchers have been provided to young people to purchase school equipment and books and all have thanked the Virtual School for the resources. • A selection of language dictionaries has been purchased and passed to young people on arrival in the UK. • All examination and test results for 2023/2024 have been collected and collated and destinations for 2024/2025 have been recorded. • A Celebration Event was held on Monday 11th November in the Livery Hall. 28 children and young people were awarded trophies and £50 vouchers. Young people were asked for their views on the event, and all replied positively, saying that the venue was wonderful, the increased value of the vouchers was appreciated (£25 to £50) and that it was good to have so many staff attending that they could talk to in person. They also reported that the food and drink was delicious and much better than last year! Ian Thomas and Helen Fentiman presented the prizes and Ian offered to fund a professional photographer for the next Celebration events. Shining Stars is booked for Pan London Virtual Schools for Monday 14th July 2025. 32 Virtual Schools have been invited. The Virtual Schools Summer Term Headteacher meeting will be held in The Guildhall during the day of 14th July in corporate rooms, to allow the sharing of good practice, the preparation of a joint response to the DfE of increased statutory duties and strategic planning for the next academic year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October celebration booked for City young people. • Ongoing collection of mid-year results and new storage collection system on ASSET to show progress over time. • Use of Caring Life and mosaic to store examination certificates so that young people can access them in the future. • Photograph permission forms agreed to be circulated to allow for images to be used for celebration of the work of young people and advertisement of activities. 	<p>book at the end of term, to read during the summer holidays.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in Early Years have been offered and some have received educational toys and resources. Families have welcomed this. • Magazines delivered, if requested, to Children in Care to increase reading for enjoyment – Supercars has been popular! • Ongoing collection of results, particularly of short courses. • Plans made for collection of end of term courses, GCSEs and A Levels involving social workers, key workers and Virtual School staff.
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City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: City of London Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, 2024–25 Participation Annual Report	Public report: (with photos removed) For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties 	Providing Excellent Services, Diverse and engaged communities The 2007 Care Matters: Time for Change White Paper
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services
Report author:	Laura Demetriades, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Department of Community and Children's Services

Summary

The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service within the People's Directorate oversees the participation offer to children in care and care leavers. It is a statutory expectation that all local authorities must provide the opportunity for children in care and care leavers to share their experiences through a Children in Care Council. However, to support young people to do this, the participation offer goes beyond formal meetings and consultation events, providing opportunities for children and young people to develop friendships with each other; foster relationships with senior leaders; and try new activities and cultural experiences which provide a sense of collective belonging and identity. It also serves as a conduit to share information with young people in an informal environment, signpost to services and professionals who can help, and act as bridge to support the engagement and interaction with new services and workers.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. To deliver services that meet the needs of our children in care and care leavers, it is fundamental that we receive their honest and individual feedback about what is done well and what can be improved. While there are the usual mechanisms for doing this, such as surveys and forms, it is nationally recognised that this isn't always the most helpful way for young people to share their views. Therefore, the Children in Care Council offers a space that is centred around the young person, and which is supported by workers not directly involved in operational social work practice and decision-making. This enables young people to come together to share their experiences and views in a safe, supportive and facilitated way.
2. We need to ensure that we are being proactive, sensitively persistent, and creative in the ways we communicate our offer and the activities that are available. We also need to demonstrate the impact that young people can have on service development and the support they receive.

Current Position

3. This year we have focused on creating more informal spaces for young people to come together and share their views and any worries, rather than formal meetings and consultations. With a range of online, drop-in, and in-person opportunities to meet different styles of engagement.
4. We have built on our inclusive practice and used the skills of a new apprentice to support translation of videos and documents. We continue to be mindful that events that are organised are cognisant of religious observances within the group: meals need to be halal, timings of events need to respect prayer times or provide space for these to be observed, periods of fasting need to be considered for timing of events and the impact that fasting may have on energy levels.
5. We have developed consistent monthly events, including an online information session with expert speakers, and a supper club. These have proved successful and have regular attendance, and young people are aware that these spaces are always available to them, as needed.
6. We held another successful summer residential trip, alongside varied holiday time activities. While young people can often be busy revising, working, or taking time to rest during academic breaks, we endeavour to offer activities that would interest them and provide a space to come together.

7. We continue to ensure that we have a consistent and comprehensive communication strategy, and that we have up-to-date contact details for all young people. We use a private WhatsApp group, group emails, and direct phone calls. We have also developed a communication email group with key workers and carers to ensure that they are consistently receiving information about opportunities available so they can promote these with our young people and support them to attend if needed. Social workers continue to be proactive in promoting and attending events to support their young people.
8. We recognise that our cohort of care leavers are getting older and often have busy lives with jobs, social networks, and children of their own. They don't necessarily have time or need to attend the events and activities that we provide. However, we continue to ensure that these opportunities are shared with them, so they know there are options available to them at those times.

Options

9. The participation work continues to provide a pre-planned calendar of Children in Care Council sessions and events throughout the year, which are shared in quarterly newsletters. The Council also links with partners that are also working in this space – such as the Virtual School, Prospects, and Partnership for Young London – to offer a wide range of opportunities that meet the variety of needs for our children and young people. See the appendices for more details about participation.

Proposals

10. The above arrangements continue through the Participation Officer who reports to the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance within the People's Directorate. There will be a review to consider the remit of the role and where additional value could be added.

Key Data

11. There is no data related to this report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

12. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.

- Strategic implications – N/A
- Financial implications – N/A
- Resource implications – N/A
- Legal implications – N/A
- Risk implications – N/A
- Equalities implications – N/A
- Climate implications – N/A
- Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

13. The participation offer is continually developing to respond to the needs and interests for our children in care and care leavers. Those who access the offer provide positive feedback about their experiences and the opportunities provided, and so we will continue communication of the offer and promote attendance.

Appendices

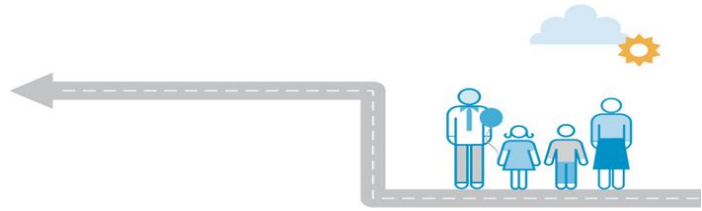
- Appendix 1 – 2024–25 Participation Annual Report Non-Public
- Appendix 2 – 2024–25 Participation Annual Report Public

Laura Demetriades

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City of London

Department of Community and Children's Services

Participation Annual Report 2024-25



Author: Laura Demetriades,
Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

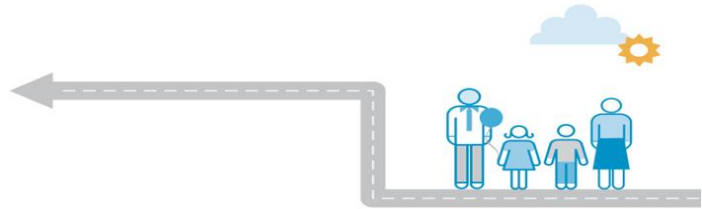


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1. Introduction

The 2007 Care Matters: Time for Change White Paper set out the then government's intention for all local authorities to establish a Children in Care Council to provide children and young people, in and leaving care, with additional opportunities to voice their views and experiences of the care system and increase their ability to influence and improve the services they receive from their local authority corporate parents.

The City of London has an established Children in Care Council which is coordinated by a Participation Officer, who sits within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service. The remit of the participation worker is wider than coordinating the Children in Care Council meetings and holiday programmes and extends to supporting engagement in all opportunities and services available to children in care and care leavers, including supporting the Virtual School programme of activities.

The participation programme recognises that children and young people's views and experiences are central to service development, and that no policy or service which impacts children and young people should be developed or created without their input. Therefore, the participation offer seeks to engage children and young people in sharing their experiences and views to consult and codesign service delivery.

2. What is the Children in Care Council?

The City of London Children in Care Council (CiCC) is a group for all children and young people who are currently in care or have previously been in the care of the City of London.

It meets throughout the year to hear the views of children and young people on the services they receive, to receive suggestions to make services better, and to get involved in making changes and improvements. The voice of children and young people matter, and it is important the City of London know what they need and want from our services, so we can give them the best opportunities in life as their Corporate Parent.

Previously we have held meetings every half term to seek the views of children and young people and where needed consulted on specific pieces of policy and procedure. Attendance at these meetings was variable and where there was not a specific topic or issue to be reviewed some young people were not clear of the purpose of the meeting. Therefore, this year we have moved to a more informal model of engagement ensuring that there are regular spaces and times when young people know they can turn up meet other young people and members of staff and share how things are going for them. Through this we continue to receive regular feedback from children and young people and get a real sense of their day to day lives and where any challenges or barriers might be that we need to address.

Events are a mix of in person and online. In person sessions might be held at the Guildhall in the City of London or out in the community. We provide support for people to travel to attend and also make sure that we provide food and drinks, so young people don't need to worry about



missing any meals. We try and hold meetings at times that suit most people, generally early evening after school, college, or work.

Some young people don't necessarily want to attend an in person or online session, but we would still like to hear their views so will send out surveys or ask young people to try out new systems. We have a participation email address and WhatsApp group so young people can share their views and any thoughts they have on things that are important to them at any time.

We recognise that young people's time and contributions are valuable, and that sharing their experiences with us and hopes for the future isn't always easy. Therefore, when young people attend a more formal meeting, take part in a consultation event, or specific piece of work, we will recognise and thank them for this by providing a £20 online voucher.

Through the Children in Care Council children and young people also get opportunities to be part of bigger networks and groups such as the London Children in Care Council, and the Youth Parliament if they wish.

Participating with the Children in Care Council is more than just meetings and sharing views. Throughout the year we run lots of activities that are about having fun, getting to know new people, or keeping in touch with those they've met before, trying new things, learning new skills, and having different experiences. We have done many different activities across London and outside and are always keen to try exploring new things based on feedback from the group.

3. Membership and Inclusion

The group is open to anyone who is in care or has been in care previously with the City of London. We work hard to make sure that everyone who meets these criteria is aware of the activities and opportunities available to them. We email those with an active email address, invite young people to join our Whatsapp group, ask social workers to promote events to young people they are working with, notify care and accommodation providers of activities taking place, and have a website to share information.

Given our numbers of children in care this year have been relatively low, and some of those live at a distance due to their specific needs, the main attendees of the Children in Care Council events have been care leavers. The majority of our care leavers are unaccompanied asylum seekers, so English is a second language so additional time needs to be factored into supporting conversation, and preparation needs to support consideration of inclusion especially for those who may have recently arrived in the country.

This year we have been supported by an Apprentice within the organisation to translate information and explanatory videos into Arabic, as this is the most widely spoken language within our cohort. This has been incredibly helpful to support understanding and promote inclusion with the group. However, the group is also a good space for young people to practice their English in an informal, friendly, and supportive environment.



Events that are organised also need to be mindful of religious observances within the group, meals need to be Halal, timings of events need to respect prayer times or provide space for these to be observed, periods of fasting need to be considered in respect of when to hold events and impact fasting may have on energy levels. We also ensure that young people are provided with plenty of time to arrive for events, given clear instructions of how to find locations, give google map locations, travel advice of nearest tube/bus stops etc, are given multiple reminders of events, and have contact details of the participation officer in case they have any problems.

We recognise that our cohort of care leavers are getting older and often have busy lives with jobs, social networks, and children of their own, so don't necessarily have time or need to attend the events and activities we put on. However, we continue to ensure that these opportunities are shared with them so they know there are options available to them at any time.

4. Summary of Activity

The participation programme aims to offer a range of spaces and activities across the year to engage children and young people in contributing their views, but also in developing a network of support from other young people, and in building confidence in trying new things and having different experiences.

Online Information Sessions

This year we have offered nine online information sessions. These are a space every 2nd Tuesday of the month from 4-5pm where the participation officer, Head of Service for Children's Social Care and Early Help are available online with a subject expert guest speaker to share information about a relevant topic and answer any questions or queries that young people may have. Topics have included; housing, free bus pass scheme, health, substances, money management, apprenticeships and employment, independent advocacy and independent visitor services, identity and relationships, and our new Caring Lie system.

Information is shared in advance about the topic, which are based on things which young people might have raised in other forums, or that social workers have expressed that young people are asking about or struggling with. Attendees can dip in and out of the session as they wish, ask questions about the topic or any other issue that they may need help with. Any query that can't be addressed in the session will be taken away by the participation officer and, or Head of Service and followed up and responded to outside of the online session.

These have been a well utilised space, which provide flexibility and a consistent space, which will continue to be delivered across the next year.

Supper Club

The formation of the supper club was based on feedback from the 2023-24 Annual Survey where some young people spoke about social isolation and not having a network to share celebrations or concerns with. Therefore, we developed a space where young people can come together each month and enjoy a meal. There is no expectation around attendance and young people are encouraged to suggest cuisines and ideas for future meals. Where possible we have



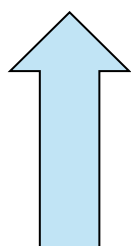
also tied this into celebratory events such as Eid and Christmas so that young people have a network to mark special occasions. We may also join it to an event such as the football team practice or theatre trips, young people are welcome to come to both or just one of the activities.

We have held 11 supper clubs in the last year in a range of locations; central London, Shoreditch, Harrow, Hammersmith, Brick Lane. These make different meals more accessible to those who live in different locations across London and are not centred specifically around City as none of our children in care or care leavers live in the City. Young people have suggested a wide range of cuisines including; Italian, Thai, Lebanese, Steakhouse, Mexican, Caribbean, and Malaysian.

The supper club has been well attended throughout the year. There was a decline in attendance during the winter months, which when the nights are dark earlier and the weather is cold can be expected. However, we continue to hold the space as it is important for young people to know it is consistently available to them when they need it. Social workers have also enjoyed attending the supper club so that they can spend more time with young people and enjoy group activities together.

Residential Trip

From the 15th to the 18th July we took 7 young people on a sailing trip, this was supported by the Virtual School and Education Team. Over the 4 days the group sailed The Blue Mermaid ([Sea-Change Sailing Trust](#)) from Ramsgate to St Katherine's Dock in London. Learning lots of new skills, working together as a team, building confidence, developing their communication, and making lasting memories. Our group had an amazing and unique experience.



80% said that they were highly likely to sail again after their experience

60% felt that their confidence had increased after the trip

100% had more belief that they could do things for themselves

100% felt more confident in sailing

80% felt that they were better at listening to others

80% felt that they were better at sticking with things and finishing tasks

Holiday Activities

During education half terms and extended holidays we try to offer a range of extra-curricular activities to promote social inclusion and opportunities to try new and different experiences. This year activities have included theatre trips, Go Karting, IFLY, F1 arcade, and a craft session. Whilst young people can often be busy revising, working, or taking time to rest during academic breaks we endeavour to offer activities that would interest them and provide a space to come together.



5. Impact and Achievements

This year we have continued to build upon consistent communication methods with young people to ensure all are made aware of the events and opportunities available to them. We have a regularly updated email distribution list so we can share information directly with young people, a private WhatsApp group which young people can request access to, so they receive information, and follow up phone calls from the participation officer to encourage and support attendance.

We have also developed a communication email group with keyworkers and carers to ensure that they are consistently receiving information about opportunities available so they can promote these with our young people and where needed support them to attend. Social workers continue to be proactive in promoting events and attending to support their young people.

Commissioning Review Meetings are being used to promote the participation offer and ensure that care providers and staff are aware of the offer and are encouraging and supporting young people to attend. We also continue to develop the Child in Care Council webpage based on feedback from young people and updating where new services are available. [Children in Care Council \(CiCC\) - City of London Family Information Service](#).

The introduction leaflet to explain the Children in Care Council and participation is part of the welcome to care bags that children receive when they first come into care.

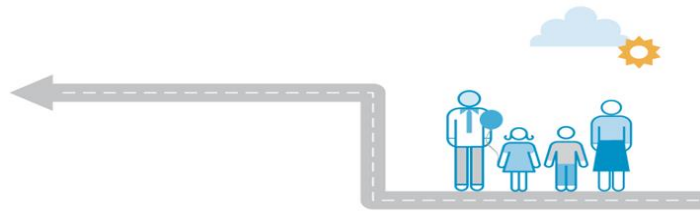
However, it is the feedback from children and young people that provide the best evidence as to whether the participation offer is effective and meaningful to children and young people. Throughout the year we have had over 123 attendances at Children in Care Council events, which given we have an average cohort of approximately 55 children in care and care leavers is promising.

Your dedication and energy have been super inspiring, and it's been amazing to see the difference you've made. I especially loved the City CiCC super club, the info sessions, as well as the whole range of other activities and entertainment you organised for us to enjoy throughout the last a few years.

I have enjoyed everything, especially how I could have lovely conversations with people.

The CiCC is always there for us, from day one of coming into care. You help us and take us out to do fun things. I would really miss it if it wasn't there. We have nice memories with you





6. Update on 2024-25 Priorities

Young Inspectors – we would like to train and support young people to get involved in the quality assurance of services provided to our children in care and care leavers. **This remains an outstanding area for development. There has been progress in terms of developing process around the offer and expectation, but greater consideration needs to be given to how young people are supported to understand the idea, trained to complete inspections, and provided with feedback from their work.**

Supper Club – to support links and relationships between our young people we are looking to establish a monthly supper club starting in April. **As outlined above this has been achieved and is being successful in its aims.**

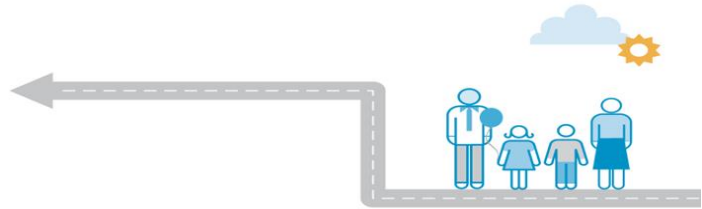
Communication Strategy – we want to build on the progress of this year in terms of consistent communication to our children in care and care leavers. **As outlined above this has also been achieved and will continue to be maintained.**

7. Priorities for 2025-26

Review of the Participation Officer Role – At the end of this year the permanent participation officer left the role and currently there are interim cover arrangements in place. This provides an opportunity to review the remit of the role and consider where additional value could be added. There are currently small, commissioned services which could potentially sit under this role. Regardless of any changes to the role permanent recruitment will need to take place over the next year to provide stability and consistency going forward.

Develop Online Resources for children and young people – We would like to work on building a bank of videos and online resources to support the understanding of children when they come into care and reassuring them about the process and support available to them. This would be directed by young people based on their experiences on what they feel would have been helpful to know.

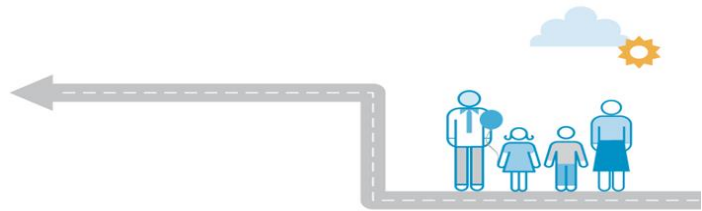
Continue to develop and maintain the participation programme – Ensure that the participation programme continues to meet the needs of children in care and care leavers, that it is responsive to changing need but maintains consistency and is accessible to all young people that need it. This includes ongoing work around the Young Inspectors programme.



8. Gallery



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City of London

Department of Community and Children's Services

Participation Annual Report 2024-25



Author: Laura Demetriades,
Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

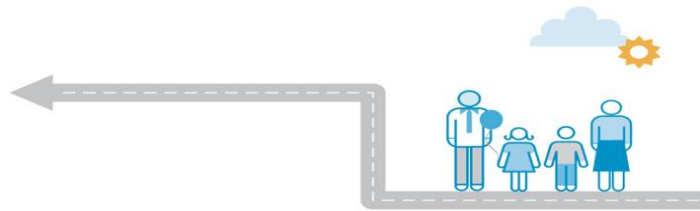
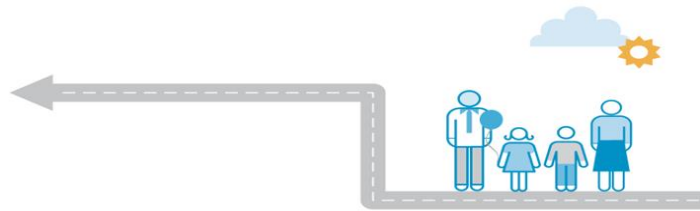


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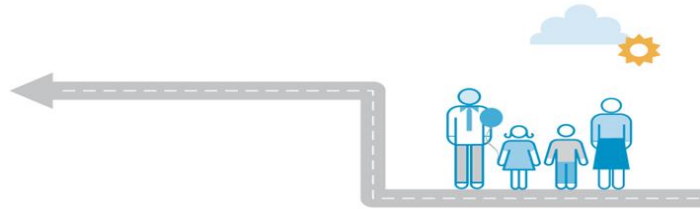
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The group is open to anyone who is in care or has been in care previously with the City of London. We work hard to make sure that everyone who meets these criteria is aware of the activities and opportunities available to them. We email those with an active email address, invite young people to join our Whatsapp group, ask social workers to promote events to young people they are working with, notify care and accommodation providers of activities taking place, and have a website to share information.

Given our numbers of children in care this year have been relatively low, and some of those live at a distance due to their specific needs, the main attendees of the Children in Care Council events have been care leavers. The majority of our care leavers are unaccompanied asylum seekers, so English is a second language so additional time needs to be factored into supporting conversation, and preparation needs to support consideration of inclusion especially for those who may have recently arrived in the country.

This year we have been supported by an Apprentice within the organisation to translate information and explanatory videos into Arabic, as this is the most widely spoken language within our cohort. This has been incredibly helpful to support understanding and promote inclusion with the group. However, the group is also a good space for young people to practice their English in an informal, friendly, and supportive environment.



Events that are organised also need to be mindful of religious observances within the group, meals need to be Halal, timings of events need to respect prayer times or provide space for these to be observed, periods of fasting need to be considered in respect of when to hold events and impact fasting may have on energy levels. We also ensure that young people are provided with plenty of time to arrive for events, given clear instructions of how to find locations, give google map locations, travel advice of nearest tube/bus stops etc, are given multiple reminders of events, and have contact details of the participation officer in case they have any problems.

We recognise that our cohort of care leavers are getting older and often have busy lives with jobs, social networks, and children of their own, so don't necessarily have time or need to attend the events and activities we put on. However, we continue to ensure that these opportunities are shared with them so they know there are options available to them at any time.

4. Summary of Activity

The participation programme aims to offer a range of spaces and activities across the year to engage children and young people in contributing their views, but also in developing a network of support from other young people, and in building confidence in trying new things and having different experiences.

Online Information Sessions

This year we have offered nine online information sessions. These are a space every 2nd Tuesday of the month from 4-5pm where the participation officer, Head of Service for Children's Social Care and Early Help are available online with an subject expert guest speaker to share information about a relevant topic and answer any questions or queries that young people may have. Topics have included; housing, free bus pass scheme, health, substances, money management, apprenticeships and employment, independent advocacy and independent visitor services, identity and relationships, and our new Caring Lie system.

Information is shared in advance about the topic, which are based on things which young people might have raised in other forums, or that social workers have expressed that young people are asking about or struggling with. Attendees can dip in and out of the session as they wish, ask questions about the topic or any other issue that they may need help with. Any query that can't be addressed in the session will be taken away by the participation officer and, or Head of Service and followed up and responded to outside of the online session.

These have been a well utilised space, which provide flexibility and a consistent space, which will continue to be delivered across the next year.

Supper Club

The formation of the supper club was based on feedback from the 2023-24 Annual Survey where some young people spoke about social isolation and not having a network to share celebrations or concerns with. Therefore, we developed a space where young people can come together each month and enjoy a meal. There is no expectation around attendance and young people are encouraged to suggest cuisines and ideas for future meals. Where possible we have



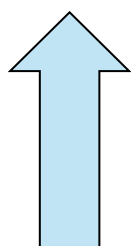
also tied this into celebratory events such as Eid and Christmas so that young people have a network to mark special occasions. We may also join it to an event such as the football team practice or theatre trips, young people are welcome to come to both or just one of the activities.

We have held 11 supper clubs in the last year in a range of locations; central London, Shoreditch, Harrow, Hammersmith, Brick Lane. These make different meals more accessible to those who live in different locations across London and are not centred specifically around City as none of our children in care or care leavers live in the City. Young people have suggested a wide range of cuisines including; Italian, Thai, Lebanese, Steakhouse, Mexican, Caribbean, and Malaysian.

The supper club has been well attended throughout the year. There was a decline in attendance during the winter months, which when the nights are dark earlier and the weather is cold can be expected. However, we continue to hold the space as it is important for young people to know it is consistently available to them when they need it. Social workers have also enjoyed attending the supper club so that they can spend more time with young people and enjoy group activities together.

Residential Trip

From the 15th to the 18th July we took 7 young people on a sailing trip, this was supported by the Virtual School and Education Team. Over the 4 days the group sailed The Blue Mermaid ([Sea-Change Sailing Trust](#)) from Ramsgate to St Katherine's Dock in London. Learning lots of new skills, working together as a team, building confidence, developing their communication, and making lasting memories. Our group had an amazing and unique experience.



80% said that they were highly likely to sail again after their experience
60% felt that their confidence had increased after the trip
100% had more belief that they could do things for themselves
100% felt more confident in sailing
80% felt that they were better at listening to others
80% felt that they were better at sticking with things and finishing tasks

Holiday Activities

During education half terms and extended holidays we try to offer a range of extra-curricular activities to promote social inclusion and opportunities to try new and different experiences. This year activities have included theatre trips, Go Karting, IFLY, F1 arcade, and a craft session. Whilst young people can often be busy revising, working, or taking time to rest during academic breaks we endeavour to offer activities that would interest them and provide a space to come together.



5. Impact and Achievements

This year we have continued to build upon consistent communication methods with young people to ensure all are made aware of the events and opportunities available to them. We have a regularly updated email distribution list so we can share information directly with young people, a private WhatsApp group which young people can request access to, so they receive information, and follow up phone calls from the participation officer to encourage and support attendance.

We have also developed a communication email group with keyworkers and carers to ensure that they are consistently receiving information about opportunities available so they can promote these with our young people and where needed support them to attend. Social workers continue to be proactive in promoting events and attending to support their young people.

Commissioning Review Meetings are being used to promote the participation offer and ensure that care providers and staff are aware of the offer and are encouraging and supporting young people to attend. We also continue to develop the Child in Care Council webpage based on feedback from young people and updating where new services are available. [Children in Care Council \(CiCC\) - City of London Family Information Service](#).

The introduction leaflet to explain the Children in Care Council and participation is part of the welcome to care bags that children receive when they first come into care.

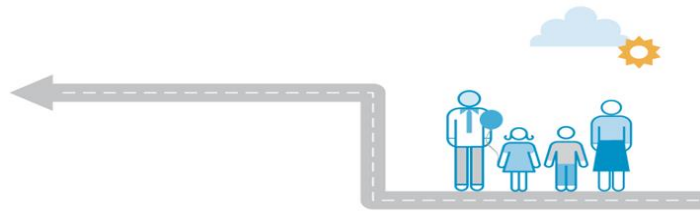
However, it is the feedback from children and young people that provide the best evidence as to whether the participation offer is effective and meaningful to children and young people. Throughout the year we have had over 123 attendances at Children in Care Council events, which given we have an average cohort of approximately 55 children in care and care leavers is promising.

Your dedication and energy have been super inspiring, and it's been amazing to see the difference you've made. I especially loved the City CiCC super club, the info sessions, as well as the whole range of other activities and entertainment you organised for us to enjoy throughout the last a few years.

I have enjoyed everything, especially how I could have lovely conversations with people.

The CiCC is always there for us, from day one of coming into care. You help us and take us out to do fun things. I would really miss it if it wasn't there. We have nice memories with you





6. Update on 2024-25 Priorities

Young Inspectors – we would like to train and support young people to get involved in the quality assurance of services provided to our children in care and care leavers. **This remains an outstanding area for development. There has been progress in terms of developing process around the offer and expectation, but greater consideration needs to be given to how young people are supported to understand the idea, trained to complete inspections, and provided with feedback from their work.**

Supper Club – to support links and relationships between our young people we are looking to establish a monthly supper club starting in April. **As outlined above this has been achieved and is being successful in its aims.**

Communication Strategy – we want to build on the progress of this year in terms of consistent communication to our children in care and care leavers. **As outlined above this has also been achieved and will continue to be maintained.**

7. Priorities for 2025-26

Review of the Participation Officer Role – At the end of this year the permanent participation officer left the role and currently there are interim cover arrangements in place. This provides an opportunity to review the remit of the role and consider where additional value could be added. There are currently small, commissioned services which could potentially sit under this role. Regardless of any changes to the role permanent recruitment will need to take place over the next year to provide stability and consistency going forward.

Develop Online Resources for children and young people – We would like to work on building a bank of videos and online resources to support the understanding of children when they come into care and reassuring them about the process and support available to them. This would be directed by young people based on their experiences on what they feel would have been helpful to know.

Continue to develop and maintain the participation programme – Ensure that the participation programme continues to meet the needs of children in care and care leavers, that it is responsive to changing need but maintains consistency and is accessible to all young people that need it. This includes ongoing work around the Young Inspectors programme.

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: City of London, DCCS, 2024–2025 LADO Annual Report	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties 	Providing Excellent Services The Children Act 2004, <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> (updated 2024), and the London Safeguarding Children Procedures 7th edition (updated April 2024), Chapter 7
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services
Report author:	Laura Demetriades, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Department of Community and Children's Services

Summary

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) role sits under the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service within the People's Directorate. It is a statutory expectation that all local authorities must have a LADO. If allegations are made against staff (including volunteers) that call into question their suitability to work with or be in a position of trust with children – whether made about events in their private or professional life – they need to be formally reported to the LADO. The LADO has the responsibility to manage and have oversight of allegations. The Annual Report (see Appendix 1) outlines the activity of the LADO from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, the impact on safety for children, and effect on learning for individuals and organisations.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The responsibility of the LADO is set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (updated 2024), and the London Safeguarding Children Procedures 7th edition (updated April 2024), Chapter 7.¹
2. In the City of London, the LADO's work is carried out by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance who reports directly to the Assistant Director of People's Services.
3. Alongside the set criteria for reporting to the LADO, the role also provides wider safeguarding advice on low-level concerns, professional conduct issues, safer recruitment processes, or policy and procedure.

Current Position

4. During the last year, 122 contacts were made to the LADO Service, which is a 65% increase of contacts to the service from the previous year. The vast majority of these, in line with London and national trends, do not meet the LADO threshold, but are queries that require guidance and advice. Those instances where a consultation took place often resulted in further action by the employer, such as an internal investigation with oversight from the LADO, rather than requiring an Allegation Against Staff and Volunteers (ASV) meeting.
5. During the year, there were 10 contacts that met the LADO threshold:
 - Three were transferred to other local authorities as this is where the employer was based.
 - Three referrals were taken to ASV meetings: two resulted in a substantiated outcome; and one in an unsubstantiated outcome. Where there was a substantiated outcome, actions were made to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service, which is a legal duty for employers. In one case, the statutory body was notified and there were ongoing internal HR processes that followed. In all cases individuals have been removed from their work with children in a timely way.
 - Two resulted in no further action due to additional information being provided which reduced the initial risk assessment
 - Two remained open at the end of the year as further information is being sought from Police and the employer.
6. Given the size of the City, there is often crossover with other local authorities in terms of where responsibility may fall. Often the City is involved because employment head offices are based here, rather than the risk to children necessarily being within the City boundaries, or in relation to City children.
7. There remains a consistent LADO training programme in place through the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP), with sessions taking

¹ https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/alleg_staff.html

place regularly. Bespoke training sessions have also been offered and taken up with individual organisations, including City of London Police.

Options

8. The LADO role is a statutory function and will continue to operate as part of the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service. Awareness-raising will continue through the delivery of training sessions and bespoke support. Service development will continue to ensure that there is clear recording of contacts and advice given. This work is supporting a healthy children's workforce across the City to safeguard children and promote positive outcomes.

Proposals

9. The above arrangements continue through the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance within the People's Directorate.

Key Data

10. There is no data related to this report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.
 - Financial implications – N/A
 - Resource implications – N/A
 - Legal implications – N/A
 - Risk implications – N/A
 - Equalities implications – N/A
 - Climate implications – N/A
 - Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

12. Contacts to the LADO Service have increased this year, which is positive as it demonstrates that processes are known and understood by a wide range of partners, and awareness-raising has been impactful. The LADO Service has been well used this year by a wide range of agencies. There remain strong working relationships with partners, and a robust training programme in place through the CHSCP with the Hackney LADO. Internal recording processes continue to be refined to support reporting to ensure accountability for decision-making processes and the advice and oversight offered. They provide evidence that children are safer because of action taken by the LADO and partners.

Appendices

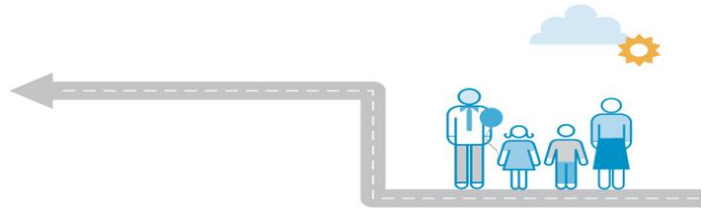
- Appendix 1 – 2024-25 LADO Annual Report

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City of London

Department of Community and Children's Services

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Annual Report 2024-25

Author: Laura Demetriades,
Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

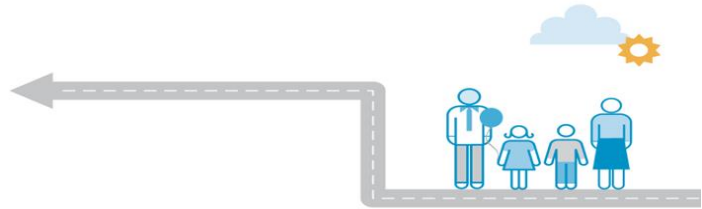
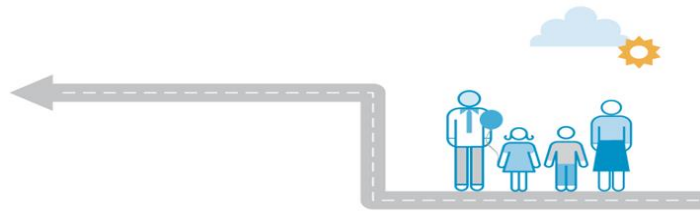


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1. Introduction

The LADO role forms part of the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service which sits within the People's Directorate, within the Department for Community and Children's Services. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the investigations and enquiries that have been made to the LADO service in the City of London for the period of 1st April 2024 through to 31st March 2025. An analysis of the data collected during this period will be set out in the report with reflections on themes and observations.

2. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Role

The responsibility of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (updated 2024), and the London Child Protection Procedures 7th edition (amended March 2025), Chapter 7. All allegations made against staff, including volunteers, that call into question their suitability to work with or be in a position of trust with children, whether made about events in their private or professional life, need to be formally reported to the LADO.

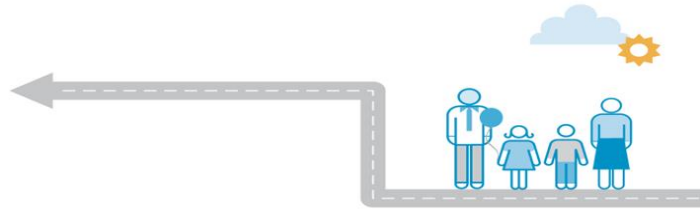
As set out in the London Safeguarding Children Procedures (7th Ed.; updated 31st March 2025) organisations where employees and volunteers work with children (including foster carers and prospective adopters) should have clear and accessible policies and procedures to manage occasions when allegations are made against staff or volunteers. As part of that, organisations must appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to whom the allegations are reported, who would then report it to the LADO who has the responsibility to manage and have oversight of allegations.

Upon receipt of referrals and enquiries being made to the LADO, a threshold is applied as determined by the criteria set out in the London Safeguarding Children Procedures (paragraph 2.1)¹ when an allegation had been made against a person who works with children or in connection with their employment or voluntary activity that they have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- Behaves in a manner that discriminates against a child on the basis of one or more of their protected characteristics [1].

[1] as defined by the [Equalities Act 2010](#)

¹ Please see Chapter 7 of the London Safeguarding Children Procedures
https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/alleg_staff.html



Further criteria (paragraph 2.2.) relates to allegations that can be made in relation to physical chastisement and restraint but can also relate to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children or young people, for example:

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 if in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if consensual (see s16-19 Sexual Offences Act 2003).
- 'Grooming', i.e. meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence (see s15 Sexual Offences Act 2003).
- Other 'grooming' behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature e.g. inappropriate text/e-mail messages or images, gifts, socialising etc.
- Possession of indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of children.

In paragraph 2.3 it lists incidents where the procedures should be applied when there is an allegation that any person who works with children:

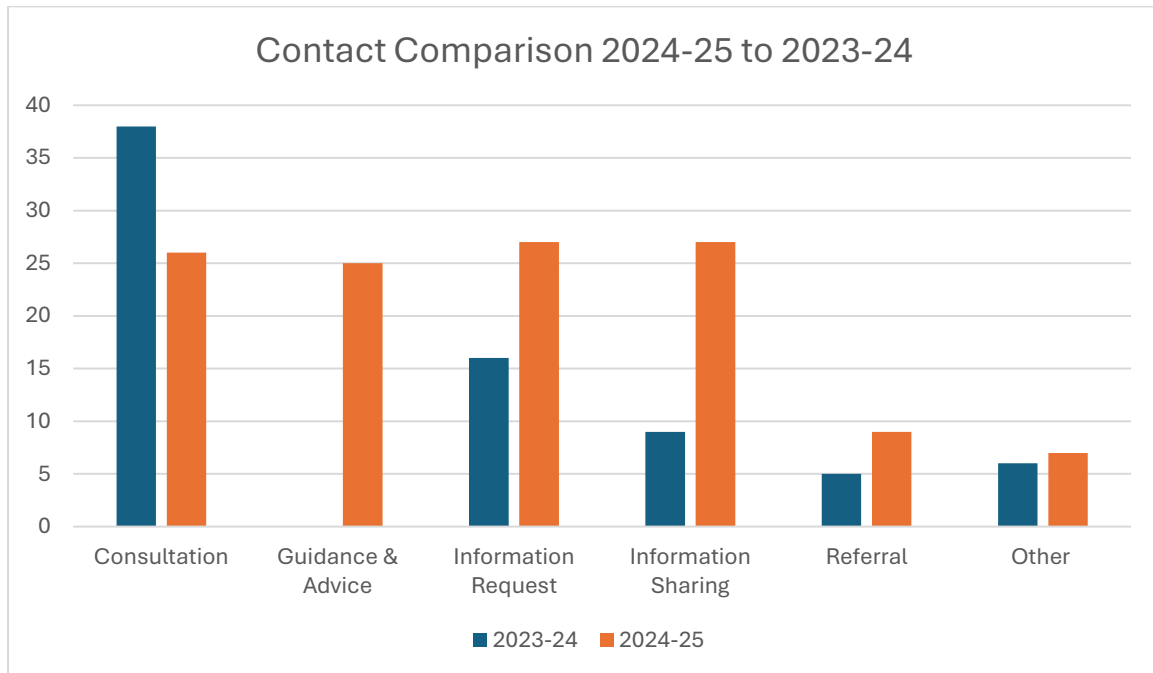
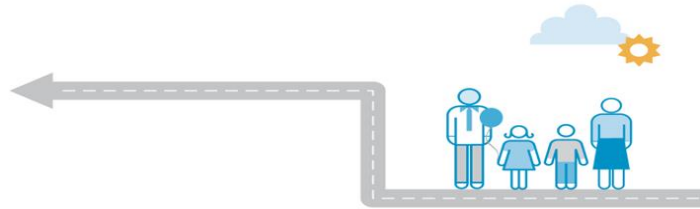
- Has behaved in a way in their personal life that raises safeguarding concerns. These concerns do not have to directly relate to a child but could, for example, include arrest for possession of a weapon.
- As a parent or carer, has become subject to child protection procedures.
- Is closely associated with someone in their personal lives (e.g. partner, member of the family or other household member) who may present a risk of harm to child/ren for whom the member of staff is responsible in their employment/volunteering.

In the City of London, the LADO work is carried out by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance who reports directly to the Assistant Director of People's Services.

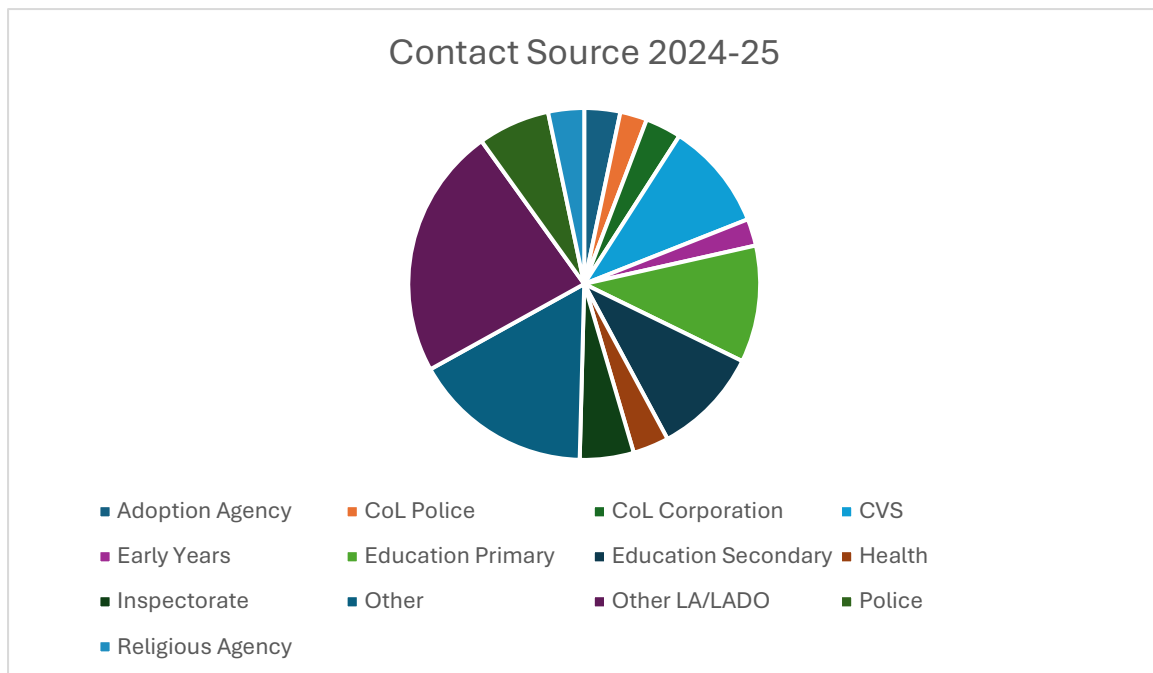
3. Contacts

This year there have been 122 contacts to the LADO Service, this is an increase of 48 from the previous reporting year, which is a 65% increase of contacts to the service. The increase in contacts is in line with London and National trends as is the fact that the vast majority of these, do not meet the LADO threshold. The increase in numbers is also attributable to improved recording methods.

There has also been a change to the categories of contacts recorded to include guidance and advice. Contacts recorded as consultations generally require a one-off conversation to ensure that all aspects of the situation have been considered, and that appropriate action is taken to reduce any risk and improve conduct. Those instances where guidance and advice is provided often results in further action by the employer, such as an internal investigation with oversight from the LADO, rather than requiring an Allegation against Staff and Volunteers Meeting which would be recorded as a referral.



The source of the contact for last year is as outlined below.



There continues to be a wide range of agencies contacting the LADO, which demonstrates that the process is known and understood across a broad range of partners which is positive. The sectors with the highest level of contacts are 'Other LA/LADO' (23%) which given the size of the City there is often cross over with multiple Local Authorities in terms of where jurisdiction and responsibility may fall. This is also particularly prevalent for the City as there are several Head



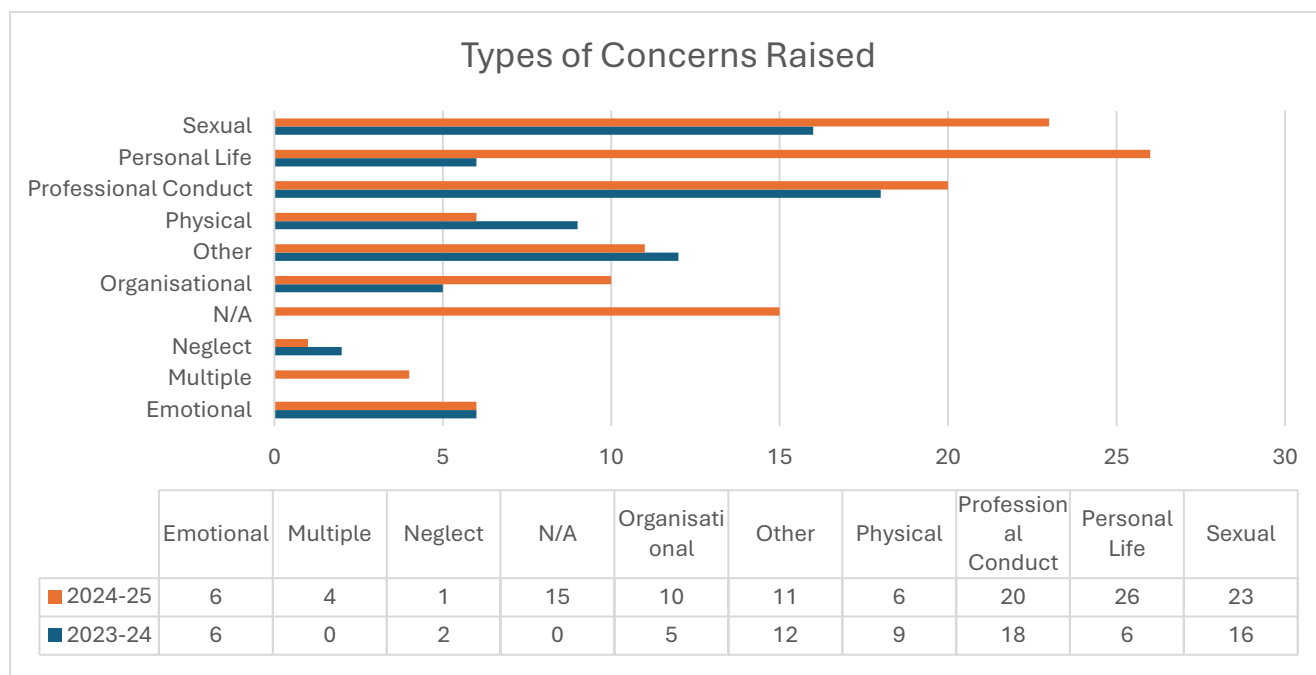
Offices of agencies so whilst professionals may not work in the City their agency employer by virtue of location of the Head Office is in the City. These have been managed in a timely and effective manner, to ensure risk is managed by the appropriate area.

The next highest category is 'Other' (16%), which often comprises contact from members of the public, parents, or employees themselves. Members of the public cannot refer directly to the LADO this should be done through the employer. Nor does the LADO communicate directly with any individual who is the subject of an allegation this is the responsibility of the employer. Following this education, both primary (11%) and higher (10%), are constantly high contactors of the LADO which is not necessarily surprising given how much time children spend at school and the range of needs presenting.

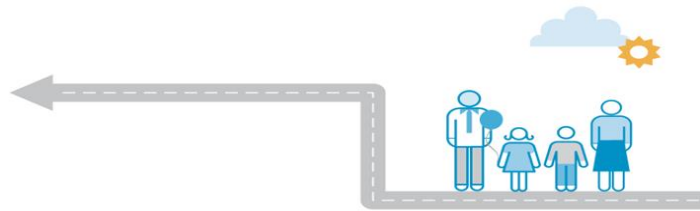
It is positive to continue to see a good level of contact from the Police and LADO, demonstrating that awareness raising and national action in prompting the need to notify of LADO of concerns relating to officers, as well as those who are being investigated who work with children, is having an impact.

In relation to the types of concerns being reported to the LADO Service, the four categories of harm as per child protection procedures are used alongside types of concerns relating to a person's personal life that could present transferable risk factors to their employment or work with children. The categories are recorded as per the presenting issue during the initial contact with the LADO.

For last year these were as follows.



This year a 'multiple' concerns category has been added when a range of allegations are being made about an individual's behaviour or conduct. Additionally, the 'Non-Applicable' category



has been used where contact is made but it quickly becomes apparent it needs to be directed to another LADO, details of the allegation are not sought as there is no reason for the City LADO to have this information, signposting to the correct agency instead.

The 'other' category is used to cover contacts relating to checks for individuals, request for advice around policy/procedure etc. Organisational concerns are logged when an issue has been raised that doesn't necessarily relate to an individual worker, but more a culture or overarching response from an organisation in relation to safeguarding concerns which is considered problematic. These issues do not sit with the LADO role to review but may require initiating a Whistleblowing procedure or notification to a governing body etc.

There continues to be a high level of reporting in relation to concerns of a sexual nature. This is positive and continues to demonstrate the impact of several high-profile sexual abuse prosecutions and 'Me Too' movement. This is a mix on non-recent and recent incidences and online offences.

4. Referrals

Of the 10 contacts that met LADO threshold and were classified as referrals two remain open at the end of the reporting year as further information is being sought from Police and the employer. Three were transferred to other Local Authorities as this is where the employer was based.

Three referrals were taken to Allegations against Staff and Volunteers (ASV) Meetings, two resulted in a substantiated outcome and one in an unsubstantiated outcome. A substantiated outcome means "there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation that a child has been harmed or there is a risk of harm" whilst unsubstantiated means "there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence"². Two were for sexual concerns whilst the third was physical. Where there was a substantiated outcome actions were made to refer to DBS, which is a legal duty for employers. In one case the statutory body was notified and there were ongoing internal HR processes that followed. In all cases individuals have been removed from their work with children in a timely way.

In a further case due to a significant delay in the Local Authority referring to the LADO the window (Section 47/significant harm threshold) to share information with the employer without the individual's agreement and hold an ASV Meeting had been missed, this was escalated with the Head of Safeguarding in the home Local Authority. Efforts were made to ensure that the individual had self-disclosed the issues in their personal life which may have transferable risk to their employment, and they indicated that they had.

In another case whilst the initial information appeared to indicate high and significant harm in the individual's personal life, once further information was shared by the investigating Police Force a very different picture of the circumstances were shared. Based on the updated

² Section 7 [CP7. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers \(People in Positions of Trust\), who Work with Children](#)



information received it was concluded that no further LADO action was required, that disclosure to the employer would be disproportionate, and the referral was closed with no further action.

5. Raising Awareness

LADO training continues to be provided through the CHSCP facilitated jointly by the Hackney LADO and the City LADO. This year the below training has been facilitated.

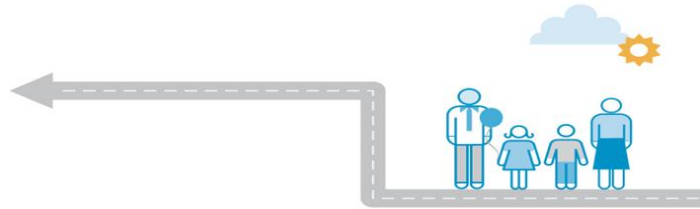
Date	Focus	Facilitator
17/04/2024	LADO Training for Faith Group Leaders	City LADO & Hackney LADO
03/05/2024	Reporting Low Level Concerns – David Game College	City LADO
19/06/2024	LADO Training – Completing Internal Investigations	City LADO & Hackney LADO
05/11/2024	LADO Overview Training	City LADO & Hackney LADO
27/01/2025	LADO Training – Completed Risk Assessments	City LADO & Hackney LADO
28/01/2025	LADO Overview Training – City of London Public Protection Unit	City LADO

Training continues to be well attended with positive feedback. Bespoke training requests for specific settings or teams can be provided as needed. The LADO also attends and contributes to the Safeguarding in Education Forum on a quarterly basis.

The overview of the LADO continues to be part of bi-annual People's Directorate Inductions which last took place on 15/11/2024. A LADO podcast has also been recorded for Early Years workers who often struggle to attend day time training sessions, this can be found on the Family Information Service website; [Training, forums and continued professional development - City of London Family Information Service](#).

This year there has been continued focus on developing support tools to aid consistency and clarity in relation to LADO and employment processes. A LADO Referral Form has been developed and now sits on the CHSCP website³ as well as the finalisation of "A guide for parents/carers who are considering engaging a private tutor or similar". An overview LADO leaflet has been updated and distributed. Also in train is the development of some guidance for employers around making referrals to the DBS, this is being produced in conjunction with the DBS Regional Outreach Advisor for London.

³ Please see [Allegations against Staff & Volunteers | chscp](#)



6. Emerging Themes and Trends

This year there has been a change in relation to the highest reported concern which has been personal life (21%) matters where there may be potential transferable risk to employment or voluntary roles. In line with last year's report sexual concerns (19%) and those in relation to professional conduct (16%) remained high. As outlined earlier City is somewhat unique in terms of LADO work due to the number of Head Offices located in the City. Therefore, individuals may not live or work within the City but the risks in relation to their employment is managed by the City LADO due to the Head Office being based in the area.

London wide there has been an increase in relation to personal life concerns being raised which may demonstrate better understanding of individuals and services to notify employers. Also, we continue to live with the post COVID impact and ongoing physical and mental issues associated with this, a cost-of-living crisis, increased worldwide political instability and extremism, a more digital and online world and accessible content, all of which potentially impact individuals' emotional resilience and ability to respond empathetically to more challenging behaviour in both their personal and professional lives.

Whilst the LADO is not a public facing service parents and individuals are more aware of it and increasing making contact to directly to raise concerns, seek information, or share dissatisfaction with the outcome of a complaint dealt with by an employer. In these instances, they are directed back to the employer to gain information or follow their complaint/escalation process.

7. Multi-Agency Working

The data shows a good spread of contact from a wide range of agencies which is reassuring that the LADO role is well known in the City and understood. The central LADO email address provides consistency of contact and means the service is not dependent on a single individual being available. There remain some challenges when individuals are self-employed so there is no overarching employer or regulatory body to act. However, this is an issue for all LADO's and not unique to the City.

Police have been an engaged partner in ASV Meetings as required and employers have been responsive to any requests to notify regulatory bodies, or complete DBS Referrals. Given the number of consultations and requests for guidance and advice it appears that organisations in the City are comfortable in contacting the LADO and confident in the responses given, which will help develop strong working relationships going forward.

Given the unique position of the City, contact is often made by agencies who believe an individual works or volunteers 'in London' every effort is made to try and support agencies to direct their concerns to the most appropriate LADO. Often there is limited information on which to work but signposting is made to try and support the identification of the employer.



8. Oversight

London LADO Network

The City LADO is a member of the London LADO Network which is a subgroup of the London Safeguarding Children Partnership. This network meets quarterly and is a good sounding board for any complex LADO cases, to share intelligence about emerging issues, and to map any patterns across the capital. It also provides individual peer support, builds good cross Borough LADO relationships, and gives a stronger collective voice to raise any concerns with partner agencies or to champion changes to policy or procedure. This year we have recently developed subgroups within London to provide additional peer support and strengthen working relationships across local areas.

CHSCP Quality Assurance and Training, Learning and Development Subgroups and Safeguarding Partnership Board

The LADO Annual Report is taken to the CHSCP Quality Assurance Subgroup and Partnership Board Meeting for review. Any themes or emerging trends are raised at the Quarterly Subgroups as required, specifically any learning needs being identified through LADO cases.

Safeguarding Sub-Committee

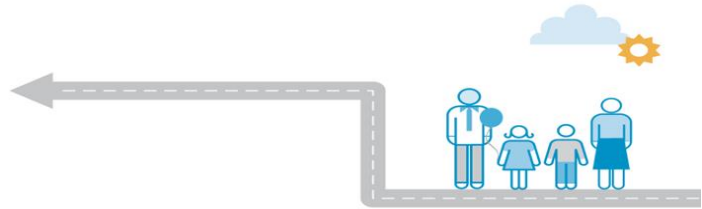
The LADO Report is taken to the Safeguarding Sub-Committee for consideration of Members, to ensure that there is a safe and effective workforce providing services to children and families in the City.

9. Update of 2024-25 Priorities

1. **Continue to develop the LADO training offer available through the CHSCP** – this is in place there has been a comprehensive package offered in the last year and dates are in place for next year
2. **Implement a LADO referral form to improve consistency of initial information received and recording** – this has been completed, and the Referral Form is now in place and sent to those wishing to make a referral.
3. **Review and update LADO information and guidance available for employers** – the LADO overview leaflet was updated and is accessible.
4. **Review internal recording procedures to ensure consistent and effective reporting of LADO data** – some refinements have been made this year to the LADO recording processes which support analysis of the data and performance.

10 Priorities for 2025-26

1. Continue to refine and develop the LADO training offer to ensure a diverse range of opportunities to engage a wide variety of professionals.
2. Review and update website information in relation to LADO to ensure this is accurate and easily accessible.
3. Continue to refine and develop recording systems to ensure that data and performance can be easily analysed and extrapolated.



4. Concerted efforts to be made to reach out to religious institutions in the City to raise awareness of LADO and when to contact, training available, and to offer bespoke sessions as needed.

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City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee – For Information	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: City of London, Children’s Services Practice and Impact Review Summary, Aidhour Scrutiny September 2024 – February 2025	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes 	Providing Excellent Services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services
Report author:	Laura Demetriades, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Department of Community and Children’s Services

Summary

The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service within the People’s Directorate oversees the Quality Assurance of the operational Children’s Social Care and Early Help Service. This activity is undertaken within an agreed framework involving commissioned external agencies and internal activity. The process seeks to elicit feedback from children, young people and families who directly experience our services, as well as multi-agency partners, allocated workers, and line managers.

This integrated approach enables the triangulation of information, experience, expectations, and perceptions of outcomes. It also enables service development plans to be made, and actions taken to resolve any barriers or blockages to service improvement.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. To continually develop and improve our services and outcomes for children, young people and families, we must be able to accurately assess where we are performing well, and where improvements could be made. The needs of our service users are continually evolving and therefore our learning and development process must also be continuous.
2. We continue to use the services of independent practice reviewers to ensure that there is robust challenge and an independent lens on the quality of internal practice and the outcomes for our children and young people.
3. This year we have moved from a model of undertaking a batch of practice reviews every six months to a couple of reviews each month. This ensures that work being reviewed is current and recommendations can be made in real time.

Current Position

4. During the six months from September 2024 to February 2025, Aidhour conducted eight Practice and Impact Reviews, and two have been completed by City of London staff – an Independent Reviewing Officer and the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance respectively.
5. Social Work Practice was judged to be Good (20%) or Outstanding (80%) in all 10 reviews. This led to outcomes for children and young people being rated as Outstanding in two-thirds (6/10) and good for 20% (2/10); while 20% (2/10) were graded as Requires Improvement, despite the best efforts of the social work team.
6. No alerts or areas of significant concern were identified in the 10 reviews.
7. A revised template has been developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the social work practice and how this impacts on outcomes for the child, young person and their family. In keeping with Ofsted criteria and best practice, attention is also paid to the contribution from partner agencies and how well the network collaborated to improve outcomes for children. Emphasis is also placed on anti-racist practice and the need to assess the impact of issues arising from identity, diversity, and intersectionality in the Social GRACES (gender, race, age, class, culture, employment status, education, sexual orientation, spirituality).
8. Practitioners and managers welcomed and constructively engaged in reflection and the evaluation of their practice and the outcomes they had achieved. An emphasis is made on a transparent audit process including direct conversations with practitioners, their managers, and users of the services about their experience of service delivery.

9. A moderation process has been embedded which involves the practice reviews initially being commented on by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. A moderation meeting is then held with the Independent Reviewer, Assistant Director for People, Head of Children's Social Care and Early Help and the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. This meeting is to agree gradings and evidence provided, and the recommendations made.

Options

10. The Quality Assurance Framework and model of independently completed practice reviews, alongside some internal reviews will continue. The process feels well embedded and is supporting the continuation of strong social work practice and positive outcomes for children and young people. It enables us to accurately assess our operational practice and makes changes to strengthen this where needed.

Proposals

11. The above arrangements continue with support from the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service and Commissioned Services.

Key Data

12. There is no data related to this report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

13. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.
- Financial implications – N/A
 - Resource implications – N/A
 - Legal implications – N/A
 - Risk implications – N/A
 - Equalities implications – N/A
 - Climate implications – N/A
 - Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

14. Social workers, managers, and children, young people and families have welcomed being more involved in the practice review process. The triangulation of their feedback alongside the independent scrutiny of the work has provided rich and valuable feedback about service delivery, which translates into action as required (see Appendix 1 for more detail).
15. The practice reviews provide strong quality assurance of the services being delivered and the impact and outcomes for children and young people, which are generally of a high standard.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Aidhour Scrutiny Report September 2024 – February 2025

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City of London Corporation

Children's Services Practice and Impact Review Summary

Aidhour Scrutiny September 2024 – February 2025

1. Introduction and Methodology

1.1. The City of London is committed to providing excellent services to children and their families. A Practice and Impact Review process has been designed to focus not only on compliance and provision of services, but the impact of services on the lived experience of the child. Reviewers focus on the last 6 months of practice when reviewing files, speaking with workers and children, young people and families. However, there may be wider findings from interactions predating the last 6 months which are relevant to comment upon in relation to current service delivery and service user experience. Grading indicators in relation to practice and outcomes are taken directly from the Ofsted framework and evaluation criteria for the inspections of local authority children's services (ILACS) Ofsted Evaluation Criteria & Grading Descriptors.

1.2. In July 2024, a total of 14 children and young people were selected by the City of London senior leadership team to inform this independent review by Aidhour Associates as part of their Practice Assurance Fortnight that took place between 1st and 12th July 2024. Whilst Aidhour Associates completed 12 of the audits, two were also undertaken by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance from the City of London.

1.3. From September 2024, it was agreed that a smaller cohort of Practice and Impact Reviews would be undertaken each month by Aidhour Associates as well as appropriate City of London staff. This was to embed and systematise the process while keeping independent scrutiny as a key component. A bi-monthly moderation meeting with senior managers has also been developed. This meeting enables an overview both of findings and the review process, but also to embed learning and ensure impactful quality assurance activity regarding recommendations made for improvement. The meeting provides an opportunity for transparency, and feedback and dialogue that mirrors the engagement with those who use services, practitioners, and their managers during the Practice and Impact Review.

1.4. 10 Practice and Impact Reviews have been undertaken over the last 6 months. 8 of these have been undertaken by the independent Aidhour Associate. The other 2 have been completed by City of London staff – an Independent Reviewing Officer and the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance respectively.

1.5. The findings from these reviews are outlined in this report. An overview of the findings and the cohort will be presented first before more detail is provided.

2. Overview

2.1. Overview of Findings

2.1.1. Social Work Practice was judged to be Good (20%) or Outstanding (80%) in all 10 reviews. This led to outcomes for children and young people being rated as Outstanding in two thirds (6/10) and good for 20% (2/10); while 20% (2/10) were graded as Requires Improvement despite the best efforts of the social work team.

2.1.2. The distinction between Outstanding practice and outcomes that Required Improvement was a point for reflection both within the review process and at the Moderation meeting.

2.1.3. No alerts or areas of significant concern were identified in this cohort of 10 reviews.

2.1.4. A revised template has been developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the social work practice and how this impacts on outcomes for the child, young person and their family. In keeping with Ofsted criteria and best practice, attention is also paid to the contribution from partner agencies and how well the network collaborated to improve outcomes for children. Emphasis is also placed on anti-racist practice and the need to assess the impact of issues arising from identity, diversity, and intersectionality in the Social Graces.

2.1.5. Practitioners and managers welcomed and constructively engaged in reflection and the evaluation of their practice and the outcomes they had achieved. An emphasis is made on a transparent and audit process including direct conversations with practitioners, their managers, and users of the services about their experience of service delivery or delivering the service.

2.1.6. Recommendations for improvements in practice or action needed to ensure practice standards were met are identified at a child level and service level for monitoring by the Head of Service for Quality Assurance and the management team.

2.2 Overview of the cohort - Demographics

2.2.1. A mixed cohort was identified for these 10 Practice and Impact Reviews. No specific themes were identified for review.

2.2.2. The 10 reviews are as below:

Initials	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Status	Social Worker	Supervisor
VB	M	2 months	British	Child in Care	RL	BA
NO-A	M	20	Arabic	Care Leaver	PA	SC
RK	F	3	British	Early Help	AB	KN
MA	M	21	Iraqi (Kurd)	Care Leaver	BS	BA

AS-S	M	21	Sudanese	Care Leaver	AM	SC
MW	M	21	Eritrean	Care leaver	BS	BA
HMH	M	21	Syrian (Kurd)	Care leaver	NN	SC
SY	M	16	Eritrean	Child in Care	RL	BA
AM	M	20	Sudanese	Care Leaver	LC	SC
AR-P	F	5	Mixed Black and White	Early Help	MD (student)	KN

2.2.3. Legal or practice framework for cases reviewed:

Category:	Number:
Early Help	2
Child in Need	0
Child Protection	0
Looked After Children	3
Care Experienced / Care Leavers	5

2.2.4. 8 out of 10 reviews related to children and young people identified as male. This compares to 13 out of 14 reviews in the July 2024 Cohort.

2.2.5. As in July 2024 most reviews concerned young people aged over 18 who are care leavers/care experienced – this time 5 out of 10 (50%) compared to 9 out of 14 (64%). 4 out of 10 (40%) of the young people were aged over 21 at the time of the review compared to 36% in the July cohort. Both of these cohorts were originally unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. This is reflective of the overall caseload for the City Of London.

2.2.6. The youngest child (2 months) was looked after by the City of London, before case responsibility was delegated to another Local Authority through Court Proceedings.

3. Overall Gradings and Summary of Findings

3.1. As noted above, Social Work Practice and outcomes for the child or young person are graded separately.

3.2. Of the 10 Practice Impact and Review findings the judgement for the Social Work Practice Grading was Outstanding for 8 and Good in 2 of the reviews. This compares to 6 for Outstanding, Good for 6, and 2 that Required Improvement in July 2024. 86% of the reviews rated social work practice as Good or above in July 2024 compared to 100% in this cohort.

3.3. In terms of the 10 Practice Impact and Review findings, the Outcomes for the child grading was Outstanding for 5, Good for 3 and 2 Required Improvement. 80% were rated Good or above compared to 93% in the July 2024 cohort.

3.4. 6 of the 10 reviews had findings that had Outstanding gradings both for social work practice and outcomes for the child. This compares to 5 of the 14 reviews in the July cohort. Despite 2

reviews having a grading of Requires Improvement for the outcomes for the child, social work practice was graded as Good and Outstanding, nonetheless.

3.5. Reviewers are asked to comment on the below Practice Standards

- Basic Details are up to date on the system
- Visits are undertaken in expected/statutory timescales
- Child(ren) are seen alone where required
- Is the recording updated on the file in line with Practice Standards
- Supervision is provided in line with expected frequency
- There is evidence of management oversight and supervision driving positive outcomes for children
- There is an up to date (within the last 3 months) Chronology on file
- Where required are key legal documents on file e.g. Signed Section 20 Agreement/Care Order

These Practice Standards were found to be met on most of the case records reviewed. Case Summaries and Chronologies are up to date on case records. Visits and supervision are undertaken within required timescales. Where there were deficits, these were promptly and appropriately addressed and accounted for. For example, the religion of the child or young person had to be updated on one case records, compared to two in the July 2024 cohort. This is perhaps an area that needs further reinforcement in the service.

3.6. Reviewers are asked to review practice and impact regarding the following areas and this summary report is structured accordingly in terms of strengths and areas for development or improvement.

- Journey of the Child
- Identification of needs, provision of support, and outcomes
- Management oversight, influence, and direction
- Understanding of Identity and impact on practice
- Impact and quality of multi-agency work, involvement of partners and community services

4. Areas of Strength in practice

Overall, social work practice and outcomes for children and young people were found to be mostly good or outstanding in the cases reviewed (80%). Practice Standards were consistently met.

4.1. The Journey of the Child

It was clear from these reviews how children, young people and their families came to be offered social care support by the City of London. The status of children and young people was apparent in all the reviews, as was the type and nature of the support being offered. For example, it was clear how two children came to be looked after as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, or how five formerly looked after asylum seeking children were now supported as care leavers.

The reviews indicated that where appropriate, children, young people and their families were

offered help when needs and/or concerns were first identified. Early Help support was being provided to two children and their families after appropriate threshold decision making, for example. For one of these children, decision making and the subsequent assessment was informed by an understanding of both the history of past engagement as well as parental experiences of trauma. This promoted effective engagement that was child focused. For the other, concerns were raised by the dentist of the child and appropriately responded to through an Early Help Assessment.

While there was a possible delay in the initial referral regarding an unborn child being responded too, timely and proportionate action was undertaken when risk became evident, and the pregnancy was confirmed. This led to appropriate safeguarding activity to protect the unborn then newborn child and support his parents, which continued through a pre-birth Child Protection process and subsequently Court Proceedings in accordance with the public law outline. This action ensured responsibility was designated to the relevant Local Authority and appropriate support was in place to mitigate risk in the meantime. The reviewer saw that this child became looked after in a timely manner, and that this was in the care of his parents, while their parenting capacity and motivation was assessed. This decision was based on a clear, effective, comprehensive and risk-based assessment, and followed effective use of the Child Protection process, although a pre-proceedings process could potentially have been considered. Nonetheless, Care Proceedings were appropriately issued.

It was evident to the reviewers from the cohort reviewed, that the practitioners and their managers involved knew the children, young people, and the families that they worked with, well. This was evident both from the case records and feedback discussions with practitioners and their managers. This was also apparent on those occasions when feedback was elicited from service users who also noted that they felt well supported either as a parent or as a care leaver, for example.

On most case records, recording is up to date and of high quality. Reviewers saw evidence of consent being obtained and examples of good and helpful cross-referencing between case notes and documents. Detailed and contemporaneous Case Summaries were apparent on the case records reviewed. These helped with understanding the journey of the child or young person. This was reinforced by up-to-date Chronologies outlining the family or child's journey with the City of London seen by the reviewers. Recent photographs are included in the records which help give a sense of the child or young person. The reviewers saw that records are clear and provide a comprehensive record of important life events including for Care Leavers, when that information is available. Social workers made efforts to understand the history, journey and context of the country of origin for these young people. Children and young people have access to the CaringLife application where important records can be stored virtually.

A focus on Corporate Parenting, acting as a good parent would, was a strength noted in these reviews. This supported young people on their journey to and through adulthood. Reviewers saw evidence that most care leavers in this cohort are encouraged and supported to maintain consistent and trusting relationships with people who are important to them, and in particular their social worker. This relationship remains consistent into adulthood so young people have networks of support from tenancy support officers, the Virtual School and keyworkers, that they can rely on when they need support that keep them from experiencing loneliness and isolation.

Often the young people did not have any or regular contact with their family, so this consistency of relationships was particularly important. One young person fed back how they felt well supported by their social worker and referred to his social worker as acting “like a big sister” and that she was there for him when he needed her. Care Experienced young people, were overall seen to have long term, positive, trusting and stable relationships with their social workers.

It was evident to reviewers from this cohort of reviews that practitioners in the City of London aim to create a culture where, overall, young people want to keep in touch. Social workers were generally proactive in creating opportunities to engage with care leavers, including those who are not currently in regular contact with the Local Authority. The level of engagement with individual young people reflected their known and stated needs and preferences, and the autonomy and independence of young people was respected. However, this could have been challenged more robustly on a few occasions, when young people were not making use of their accommodation or not engaging with services. Where two young people had disengaged from contact with their social worker, employment and education, social workers were nonetheless proactive in trying to contact them. For example, a social worker devoted time and showed persistence in trying to work with a young man despite his anger and frustration with the Local Authority. However, an emphasis on responsibilities as well as rights or focus on use of resources being provided may have been appropriate.

On the whole social workers were ambitious and aspirational for the young people in the review cohort and developed plans to support this. It was apparent that care leavers have access to a range of social and recreational opportunities that help them to create and maintain supportive and positive relationships with people that are important to them and to feel a part of their community. We saw evidence of young people being actively involved in the Child in Care Council and related activity, such as attending a Christmas meal, or playing football with their peers. Creative attempts were made to ensure a young person had appropriate kit for the latter, for example.

4.2. Identification of needs, provision of support, and outcomes

The Early Help Assessments, Child and Family Assessments and Pathway Plans seen by the reviewers were holistic, proportionate and completed in a timely way. It was evident from this cohort of reviews that professionals in the City of London can identify children and young people in need of help and protection and make appropriate referrals. For example, in one instance a referral was made by a Dentist (I understand for the first time). In another, Homelessness Services appropriately raised concerns for the welfare of an unborn baby and remained engaged in the Assessment process.

Assessments were variously described by reviewers as ‘robust’, ‘dynamic’, ‘proportionate’, ‘strengths’ or ‘child focused’ and ‘well written with salient points’ addressed. Need and risk was seen to be identified and the appropriate and effective level of support and intervention offered through the clear Plans developed as a result. Overall, this support improved the lived experiences of children, young people and their families through regular visits and engagement with the multi-agency network or team around the child / family. The exceptions to this being where two of the young people chose not to engage, despite the efforts of the social workers.

Reviewers saw the family background of children and young people explored in detail in

Assessments and observed the effective use of Genograms. Evidence was seen of effective consultation with the multi-agency professional network to inform Assessments and potential support available to children and families. In Pathway Plans, the Independent Living Skills of young people are explored through the checklist and the voice of the young person articulated. Where it had not been possible for the social worker to meet the young person, other methods were used for example, one young person who is staying in Norwich was consulted with using WhatsApp.

Reviewers saw children's vulnerabilities being addressed in a timely way with appropriate intervention and services provided in the cohort reviewed. This included Early Help support through the Family Therapy Clinic; through a Gambling Clinic for one young person or through Housing and parenting support for another young person. The reviewers saw a proactive response to the risk of exploitation for one asylum seeking child through referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), and the Independent Child trafficking Guardian (ICTG) and consultation with the National Transfer Service (NTS).

The reviewers saw evidence of timely and ongoing communication between social workers and partner agencies both, in and in between, formal meetings which was documented in holistic and comprehensive Assessments (including Early Help), case notes, Plans, and records of multi-agency meetings such as Child Protection Conferences or Child in Care Reviews. Information-sharing between agencies and professionals was seen to be timely, specific, effective, and lawful.

Visits to children, young people and their families were seen to be completed within the requisite timescale and informed all Assessments and Pathway Planning. In one case reviewed it was evident that an appropriate pre-birth Child Protection enquiry was undertaken and led to timely safeguarding action, informed by clear legal advice, which reduced the risk of harm. Care Proceedings were appropriately initiated and support offered through the provision of a parent and baby residential assessment. The Plan developed was dynamic and adapted in the light of a change of circumstances for the parents and required assertive engagement with the host Local Authority to ensure the needs of this child and his family were appropriately met.

As noted above, overall, reviewers identified that children, young people and families benefitted from stable and meaningful relationships and engagement with practitioners. This was apparent in several examples of feedback from service users which included care leavers as well as the parent of a child receiving Early Help support. One young person clearly benefitted from a nonjudgemental and compassionate approach from his social worker about his issues with gambling which led to him building trust with her and to an extent accessing appropriate support services.

While some care leavers chose not to engage with regular support, reviewers saw ambition and aspiration for care leavers reflected in their Pathway Plans and discussions with practitioners. Most of the children in care or care leavers in the cohort were or had been unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The reviewers saw and heard evidence that practitioners understood the emotional well-being and mental health needs of these young people, including the potential impact of trauma and adverse life experiences. Reviewers saw evidence of an understanding of risks related to trafficking and exploitation and appropriate action taken

accordingly.

We saw evidence that most care leavers in this cohort had effective Pathway Plans. These plans were created sufficiently early, addressed young people's needs, were aspirational and set out clearly how young people would be supported to achieve their goals. The reviewers saw evidence that most Plans were dynamic and reviewed regularly, reflecting that young people's needs and wishes may change and that they may need multiple opportunities to make the choices that are right for them. We saw evidence that Pathway Plans where possible involve young people. Interventions and regular social work visits were in accordance with the Plan identified. We also saw the daily lived experience of care leavers being explored and referred to in Supervision and Pathway Plans and proactive intervention by an Independent Reviewing Officer to ensure the needs of one young person were being appropriately met.

In the cases reviewed, reviewers saw consistently that care leavers in the City of London have somewhere secure and stable to live that best meets their needs, where they feel safe and where they can develop their independence skills. This was consolidated by many of the care leavers having been supported to secure refugee status and leave to remain in the UK for 5 years. Most of the young people lived in supported accommodation, which appeared to be suitable for their needs, and regular contact with key workers and housing providers to ensure the needs of the children were being met. Reviewers saw several examples of young people working to support themselves and evidence that care leavers had developed the skills and confidence they need to become independent and successful adults, for example being able to manage their finances and parenting skills. Many of the care leavers had received and said they appreciated the practical, emotional and financial support they needed until they were 21 and were aware this was continuing until they were 25.

4.3. Management oversight, influence, and direction

Systematic management oversight and regular supervision that was effective in supporting and driving practice was evident from this cohort of reviews. Staff fed back to reviewers that they found supervision and management support helpful in informing and reflecting on their practice. The opportunity to 'stop and think' within supervision was welcomed, for example. Within the cohort reviewed, we saw decisions on screening, referrals and oversight of Assessments by suitably qualified and experienced social workers and managers. Required actions were clearly recorded and followed up in a timely way.

Reviewers saw the recording of decisions to provide accommodation, legal advice being accessed where required, and escalation where necessary. 'Tracker' meetings led by Senior Managers to explore progress for young people not in employment, education or training; progress of the reviews of Pathway Plans, Permanency Planning meetings and commissioning meetings with care providers were evident on the case record. Reviewers saw an example of a young person being challenged about his use of allowances supported the Senior Manager.

In the cohort reviewed, supervision was provided consistently and regularly in accordance with practice standards as well as in accordance with the status of the child (monthly in general or bimonthly for care leavers). The rigour and robustness of supervision recorded was of a good quality and informed by systemic principles and professional curiosity. Reviewers were aware of the opportunity both for group and individual supervision, informed by reflective models such

as ‘the bells that ring’. Comprehensive supervision records were evident and agreed actions were tracked and monitored, with new actions identified in accordance with the discussion. Reviewers saw the lived experience of the child or young person being explored, and hypotheses developed to inform planning and reflect on the impact and progress of the work. We saw supervision that drove practice in between sessions that cross reference with the various tracking meetings referred to above.

Where thematic issues were identified, the reviewers noted efforts by the service to understand and address these issues with other agencies or Local Authorities as well as within the service. For example, work with the London Asylum Seeking Consortium around failed NTS transfers or the threshold discussion meeting with Early Help partners.

4.4. Understanding of Identity and impact on practice

In most of the reviews, the reviewers were able to get a clear sense of the individual characteristics of a child or young person from the case record. This was consistent with discussions with the practitioner or their manager. This was more difficult for some young people that had expressed a wish not to work with the social worker or were not in contact. Nonetheless it was evident that individual vulnerabilities were understood as were factors that would increase risk.

It was evident from the reviews that identity and culture was seen as a strength and protective factor. Reviewers saw and heard active consideration of the Social Graces as well curiosity about the cultural heritage and customs of children, young people, or their families. The reviewers saw strong examples of the identify of young people being explored, clearly outlined and linked to both lived experience and the work undertaken. The ‘Who am I’ section of the Pathway Plans reviewed provided several good examples of this. For young people who have lost or have limited contact with their families, there is a strong sense of ‘Corporate Parenting’ to ensure their experiences of services and life in the UK are positive.

The effective use of interpreters to ensure the wishes and feelings of children and young people were understood was apparent. The need for an Interpreter was clearly identified on the case record when required. Reviewers saw some practice and services delivered in accordance with the Anti-Racist Practice standards, although more explicit reference to these standards and how they were being applied alongside the Social Graces may be appropriate.

4.5. Impact and quality of multi-agency work, involvement of partners and community services

The reviewers saw evidence of children and young people being supported or if necessary protected through effective multi-agency arrangements.

For one child, key participants attended the multi-agency Strategy meeting and contributed to the subsequent Section 47 investigation. The resulting pre-birth Child Protection Conference was an effective forum for timely information-sharing, planning, decision-making and monitoring and the help and protection provided reduced risk and met need. When Court Proceedings were initiated, the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) appropriately consulted with the child’s Guardian and relevant Local Authorities and agencies were contacted. For another child, proactive communication with relevant agencies such as the NRM, ICTG, and the

NTS was evident in order to identify and address risks in relation to the potential for exploitation and previous trafficking.

The reviewers saw Corporate Parenting responsibilities being taken seriously both for care leavers and for a newborn child subject to Care Proceedings. Where escalation and action was required by senior managers to ensure an appropriate response from another Local Authority this was undertaken appropriately. Services were found to be delivered to care leavers in accordance with the Local Offer and for some young people effective multi-agency support was in place, including key worker or tenancy support and the Virtual School. Social workers and their managers demonstrated a good understanding of the Local Offer and how to access relevant information.

5. Areas for development and recommendations

While the review found that for most children and young people needs and risk were addressed very effectively, and Good or Outstanding outcomes achieved, there were some areas or examples of where improvement was required in the potential outcomes for children and young people. Recommendations were accordingly made by the reviewers for individual practitioners relating to their work with the child or young person as well as for the whole service.

I have noted above, for example, the tension noted by reviewers between the quality of practice and outcomes for two care leavers. Despite the efforts of social workers and evident good practice, the social workers had difficulties meeting with two young people - one because he was in Norwich then had travelled to Ethiopia and one who was refusing to meet with services because he was angry at the appropriately challenging approach taken about his use of allowances.

5.1. Journey of the Child

The reviewers noted several inconsistencies in the approach to recording such as use of names and use of language around challenge and suggested reflection on practice standards in relation to this. In one audit the use of acronyms was challenged. In several cases, a delay in the completion of case records was noted and reflection on practice standards around contemporaneous recording as well as tracking of this was encouraged. No impact was observed on the quality of practice or outcomes for the child or young person from this.

In their feedback to reviewers, several young people expressed frustration at delays in being awarded a permanent housing offer. This was also evident from the case records noting the views of the young person who had travelled to Ethiopia to see his sister. This frustration and unmet expectation in turn impacted on the engagement of young people with services. It was queried by reviewers whether this expectation should be explored further.

I have noted above the need for religion and ethnicity to be recorded as expected on the case record. This was identified to be an issue in one review.

5.2. Identification of needs, provision of support, and outcomes

The reviewers saw one example where the Assessment document (Early Help) and one example where the Pathway Plan should have been updated to reflect current issues and lacked detail. This prevented the judgement on practice from being outstanding. The Early Help Assessment

and visits to inform it prompted the Auditor to recommend that practice standards including timescales for Early Help Assessments and visits were reviewed and made explicit, although it was noted that this was the first time this worker had undertaken an Early Help piece of work.

In two reviews, an issue with the sharing of assessments or plans was identified. The first related to ensuring that the sharing of an Early Help assessment with parents was recorded on the case file. The second related to consideration of how documents such as Pathway Plans were translated or shared with young people when English is not their first language to ensure they understood the content and decisions made,

The reviewers identified several examples where greater curiosity was potentially needed. For example, in exploring the peer networks of one young person living in Norwich and their motivation to support him, or for one young person that may have accrued significant gambling debts and what this might mean for him. Nonetheless over all practice was good and further exploration of these issues was dependent on engagement with the young person and their willingness to be open and transparent with the social worker.

5.3. Management oversight, influence, and direction

The reviewers saw evidence of several 'Tracker' Meetings or commissioning reviews providing Management Oversight. While evidence of tracker actions being cross referenced in supervision was seen, reviewers recommended that the notes articulated specific (SMART) actions arising from any concerns identified to more effectively drive practice.

The reviewers saw an example of the use of allowances being challenged with one young person and beyond that his expectations of services. However, this and several other reviews prompted reflections on how the tension between respecting autonomy and the rights of individuals against the responsibilities of care leavers could be balanced within available resources, particularly those aged over 21. One care leaver for example, had only spent a few nights in his accommodation over the last few months and was also receiving keyworker support. He was spending most of his time with friends in another Local Authority. A systematic process to oversee such situations was recommended.

In one review it was identified that the young person had requested a new social worker. A clear and considered approach to this was articulated but the auditor queried whether this should be explicitly written down – as part of the complaints policy for example.

5.4. Understanding of Identity and impact on practice

While consideration of the Social Graces was apparent in the case records and from discussions with staff this was not always consistently evident in Supervision records or Pathway Plans.

The anti-racist practice standards are a positive development. However, how the standards translate into practice needs to be more explicit on same case records.

5.5. Impact and quality of multi-agency work, involvement of partners and community services

The reviewers identified good quality multi-agency work that involved partners and community services within the City of London and with housing providers. This was not reflected, however, in one example of interaction with another Local Authority that was escalated appropriately by and through Senior Managers but was only resolved through the Court process. The reviewers within the moderation reflected on learning from this and whether an earlier escalation may have been more successful (probably not given the position of the other Local Authority).

6. Closing Remarks

The reviewers saw effective child centred practice that had on the whole improved outcomes for children and young people in the City of London. This was supported by appropriate multi-agency involvement and an emphasis on capturing the voice and experiences of the child or young person. On the whole social work practice was curious and supported by effective supervision and management oversight and a systemic approach.

The reviewers would like to thank the practitioners, their managers and the young people and families that constructively engaged in these Practice Reviews. The commitment to learning from external scrutiny and to service improvement and professional development was apparent from their engagement. The development of a Moderation meeting between reviewers and senior managers to mirror this process will reinforce improvements, the embedding of learning and the tracking of recommendations made. The process of the independent auditor working alongside City of London staff also promoted a collective approach to learning from each other as well as providing the opportunity for challenge and developing a shared sense of 'what good (if not outstanding) looks like'.

This document should be read in conjunction with the individual audits themselves, the 2024-25 Quality Assurance Recommendation and Impact Tracker as well as the previous Summary Report from September 2024.

Huw Bevan

Aidhour Associate and Independent Auditor

3rd March 2025

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee – For Information	Dated: 01/07/2025
Subject: City of London, Department of Community and Children’s Services, 2024–25 Private Fostering Annual Report	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides statutory duties 	The Children Act 1989, The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services
Report author:	Laura Demetriades, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Department of Community and Children’s Services

Summary

The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service within the People’s Directorate oversees awareness-raising in relation to Private Fostering arrangements. The Private Fostering Regulations apply when children or young people, aged under 16 years (18 if they have a disability) live with a person who is not a close relative for 28 days or more. It is a legal duty for parents, private foster carers, and professionals to notify the local authority where it is suspected or known that a child is residing in a private fostering arrangement. This report details how the City of London has complied with its duties and functions in relation to private fostering. There have been no private fostering arrangements identified in the City of London from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Private Fostering Regulations apply when children or young people, aged under 16 years (18 if they have a disability) live with a person who is not a close relative for 28 days or more. The term 'close relative' has a specific definition within the legislation: it includes grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts (whether of the full or half blood or by marriage) and step-parents. Children living with people who are not defined as a close relative – such as a cousin, great aunt or family friend – need to be assessed and reviewed under the Private Fostering Regulations to ensure that the arrangement is able to safeguard and promote their welfare.
2. Private Fostering Regulations came into force as a direct action from the Victoria Climbié Inquiry, recognising that children who are not living within their immediate family network can be vulnerable and there needs to be clear assessment and support provided to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted.
3. Nationally Private Fostering arrangements are under-reported and there needs to be consistent efforts made to raise awareness among the community and professionals, and to ensure that children in Private Fostering arrangements are visible and supported.

Current Position

4. During the last year we have had zero notifications in relation to Private Fostering arrangements in the City.
5. Private Fostering continues to be promoted by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) with the information App available on their website, supported by bi-annual training sessions.
6. In-person awareness-raising has taken place with partnership colleagues across the City via the People's Service Induction, the Safeguarding in Education Forum, and the Corporate Induction Breakfast. Internal awareness-raising across the Department of Community and Children's Services has taken place via circulation of information in 'The Buzz'.

Options

7. Awareness-raising work will continue in line with statutory expectations, progressing the priorities outlined in the Annual Report (see Appendix 1).

Proposals

8. The above arrangements continue to be overseen by the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service within the People's Directorate.

Key Data

9. There is no data related to this report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.

- Financial implications – N/A
- Resource implications – N/A
- Legal implications – N/A
- Risk implications – N/A
- Equalities implications – N/A
- Climate implications – N/A
- Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

11. There is low reporting of Private Fostering arrangements nationally and within the City. Action will be taken to prioritise the updating of promotional material and recirculating it to a wide range of partners, including promotion of the CHSCP training in relation to Private Fostering. As and when notifications are received, prompt action will be taken by the Service to ensure the welfare of any children in such an arrangement.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – 2024-25 Private Fostering Annual Report

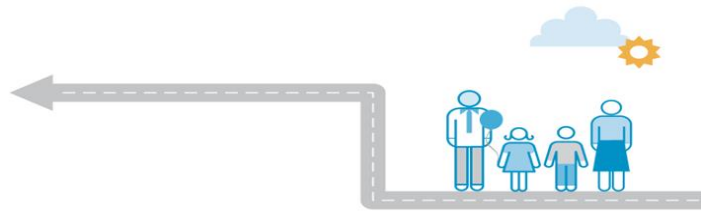
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City of London

Department of Community and Children's Services

Private Fostering Annual Report 2024-25

Author: Laura Demetriades,
Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

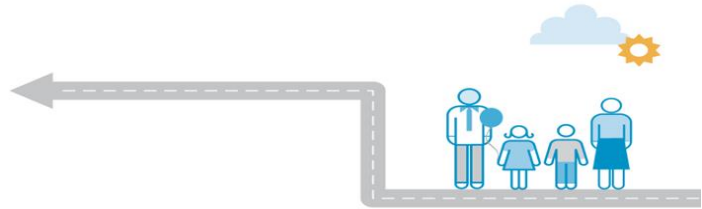


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1. Introduction

The Private Fostering Regulations apply when children or young people, aged under 16 years (18 if they have a disability) live with a person who is not a close relative for 28 days or more. A private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority). The term 'close relative' has a specific definition within the legislation it includes grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts (whether of the full or half blood or by marriage) and stepparents. Children living with people who are not defined as a close relative, such as a cousin, great aunt or family friend need to be assessed and reviewed under the Private Fostering Regulations to ensure the arrangement is able to safeguard and promote their welfare.

This annual report gives an overview of activities in relation to privately fostered children in the City of London in the last financial year 2024-25. The report details how the City of London has complied with its duties and functions in relation to private fostering. The report also outlines the activities which have been undertaken to promote awareness of the notification requirements regarding children who are living in private fostering arrangements. The responsibility for the promotion and awareness raising in relation to private fostering sits within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service which is part of the People's Directorate, within the Department for Community and Children's Services.

2. Context of City of London

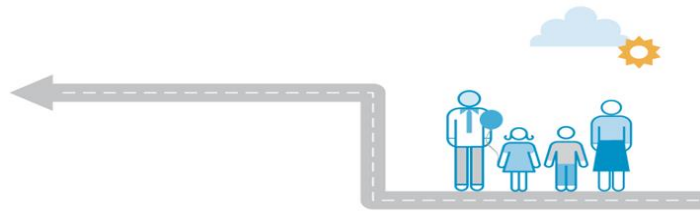
The City of London is the smallest local authority area in the country at 1.12 miles, and the second smallest by population. The City of London is home to just under 9,000 residents, with 713 children and young people aged 0–18 (Census 2021). Most children attend one of over 66 different schools outside the City of London. Our Children and Families Service supports a small but complex group, including a high proportion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). We have one state maintained primary school, six private schools in the City, and nine nurseries.

There are high levels of affluence with pockets of deprivation. More diverse communities live in the east side of the City and the younger population is growing there. The resident population of the Square Mile is predominantly white, though this is projected to decrease over the period to 2026. The Asian population (the largest Global Majority group in the Square Mile) is projected to remain as a similar proportion of the population (around 13%) and groups which are relatively under-represented, including Black and other populations, are projected to increase. Older population is growing but overall high life expectancy.

3. Meeting the National Minimum Standards¹

Standard 1. The local authority has a written statement or plan, which sets out its duties and functions in relation to private fostering and the ways in which they will be carried out.

¹ [national_minimum_standards_for_private_fostering.pdf](#)



The City of London's 'Statement of Purpose for Private Fostering' was reviewed and updated in April 2024 and remains fit for purpose. This is available for all members of the Children's Social Care and Early Help Team via the online TriX Document Library². There is clear information available on the City of London Corporate website pages which layout information about what private fostering is, the role of private foster carers, parents and the Local Authority³.

This is also supported by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership [Private Fostering | chscp](#), specifically an easy-to-use downloadable app. The App aims to help everyone better understand this important safeguarding issue. It is easy to access and simple to understand, the Private Fostering App is the go-to guide that fits right in your pocket. Anyone can access the Private Fostering App by downloading the CHSCP poster or via the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

Standard 2. The local authority promotes awareness of the notification requirements and ensures that those professionals who may come into contact with privately fostered children, understand their role in notification, responds effectively to notifications; and deals with situations where an arrangement comes to their attention, which has not been notified.

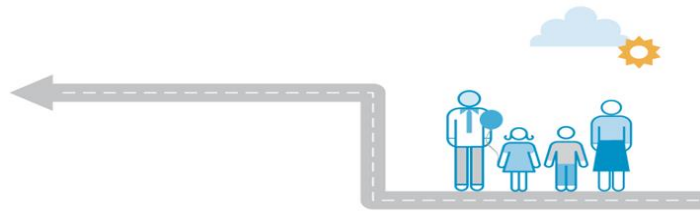
Raising awareness around Private Fostering is led by the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service and monitored by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership. The key objectives are to ensure.

1. Professionals understand what their responsibilities are relating to private fostering and know how to report any arrangements appropriately.
2. Parents understand what private fostering is and whether it is a suitable option for them and their family.
3. Carers understand their responsibilities if they are offering care to someone else's child(ren).
4. Children know what to expect if they are cared for someone who is not their parent or a close relative, how they should be treated, and where they can get support if needed.

Within this reporting year a presentation has been given to the Children's Social Care and Early Help Team to remind them of the private fostering criteria and action to be taken when a private fostering arrangement is identified. In November 2024 an in-person People's Directorate Induction was held, with 22 attendees from internal staff to external partners and commissioned services, within this there was a specific reference to private fostering and the legal duty to notify. We have attended three Corporate Induction Breakfast's where general safeguarding information is shared with new starters including information in relation to private fostering. All new starters in the People's Directorate have an induction with the lead for Private Fostering and all workers can access advice and guidance from the lead at any time.

² [Documents Library](#)

³ [Private fostering - City of London](#)



Training on private fostering is run bi-annually through the CHSCP and information in relation to private fostering shared through internal Corporate communication channels to coincide with private fostering day. An overview presentation in relation to private fostering has been shared with multi-agency partners for their internal use, and regular private fostering updates are given to the Safeguarding in Education Forum.

Standard 3. The local authority determines effectively the suitability of all aspects of the private fostering arrangement in accordance with the regulations.

There are effective processes in place to respond to notification when they arise. This reporting period there have been 0 private fostering notifications, so these processes have not needed to be enacted. However, there is a duty worker available every day to respond to any queries or notifications in relation to privately fostered children.

Whilst there were 0 notifications we did have a referral this year which raised queries about whether it might be a private fostering situation, as there were questions around the validity of the relationship between the adult and child. Strong curiosity was demonstrated during the assessment and significant attempts made to verify the relationship, including liaising with authorities and parents abroad. This piece of work was subject to an independent practice review through our Quality Assurance processes, the social work practice was found to be 'Outstanding'. Therefore, demonstrating that whilst the volume of work in this area is low when it does arise it is scrutinised robustly and sensitively to ensure children's safety.

Standard 4. The local authority provides such advice and support to private foster carers and prospective private foster carers as appears to the authority to be needed.

The Children's Social Care and Early Help Service are aware that it is their role to assist and advise all private foster carers with general care skills and provide advice on an on-going basis. There would also be assistance with practical issues for private foster carers around benefits, housing and immigration status as required. The City would ensure that all private foster carers can access education, and support would be offered by the Virtual School in this. Social workers would also ensure that children in private fostering arrangements are able to access adequate health provision, and this would be supported by the local Safeguarding Nurse. All team members have access to and promote the CHSCP Private Fostering App [Private Fostering | chscp](#) as an information sharing tool as well as signposting to services such as [City Advice - helping you to manage everyday problems - City of London](#).

Standard 5. The local authority provides advice and support to the parents of children who are privately fostered within their area as appears to the authority to be needed.

Where possible all parent(s) would be met with as part of the Private Fostering Assessment, and their understanding and written consent gained as part of this process. Where parent(s) are not living in the UK contact would be made via phone/video call as able. In any case it would be essential that the parent(s) can be contacted and provide their informed consent for the arrangement, if parent(s) were not able to do this then consideration to seeking legal advice would be required.



A leaflet designed for parents, carers and children about private fostering arrangements is available and would be given to anyone entering such an arrangement. There is also information available about services and activities in the City of London which would be provided for parents, carers and children from the Family Information Service.

Parent(s) would be included as far as possible in any meetings pertaining to their child and would be required to give consent to any decisions made in relation to their child, as they retain Parental Responsibility. They would also be responsible for any financial support needed to maintain the arrangement.

Standard 6. Children who are privately fostered are able to access information and support when required so that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Privately fostered children are enabled to participate in decisions about their lives.

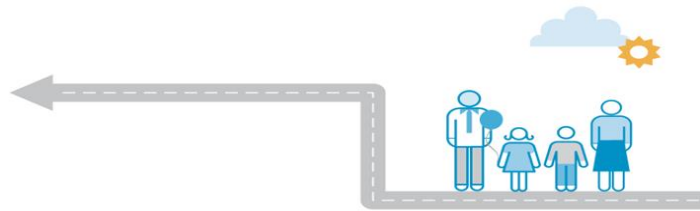
The allocated social worker would consult with any privately fostered child about their views and ensure that their carers understood their needs and wishes and could meet these appropriately. The child's view would be a core part of the assessment report and on-going monitoring visits. They would be seen and spoken to on their own (subject to their age and understanding) with direct work being completed to best understand their experiences and wishes for the future.

Children who are living in private fostering arrangements would be given information about what they should expect, where age appropriate, and how they can access support from their social worker or other services. Children who are privately fostered in City of London would also have access to the advocacy and independent visitor service. They would be signposted and support to access services as appropriate including Youth Services, participation support, and enrichment activities.

Standard 7. The local authority has in place and implements effectively a system for monitoring the way in which it discharges its duties and functions in relation to private fostering. It improves practice where this is indicated as necessary by the monitoring system.

All information relating to children who are privately fostered is recorded on Mosaic, the integrated children's system used by the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service. This information can be utilised for performance reports and National Indicator returns, including age of the child, place of birth, ethnicity, first language and any disability etc.

As part of the Quality Assurance Framework any private fostering arrangements would be subject to a practice review process and the qualitative and quantitative information obtained would be reported into the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership via the Quality Assurance subgroup. As can be seen above this process was implemented this year and reassurance as to the practice and curiosity in relation to potential private fostering arrangements was evidenced and found to be strong, although the arrangement ultimately did not fall into the required criteria.



4. Oversight

CHSCP Quality Assurance and Training, Learning and Development Subgroups and Safeguarding Partnership Board

The Private Fostering Annual Report is taken to the CHSCP Quality Assurance Subgroup and Safeguarding Partnership Board Meeting for review. Any themes or emerging trends are raised at the Quarterly Subgroups as required, specifically any learning needs being identified across the multi-agency partnership or new ideas for raising awareness.

Safeguarding Sub-Committee

The Private Fostering Report is taken to the Safeguarding Sub-Committee for consideration of Members, to ensure that there are safe and effective working practices should a notification be received, and to monitor the ongoing awareness raising of the need to notify in relation to private fostering arrangements.

5. Progress Against 2024-25 Priorities

- **Update the Private Fostering information available both as paper copies and online** – In Progress updated copy has been provided but due to other commitments and a change in personnel this has not been implemented
- **Send out updated information to all religious institutions within and bordering the City** – Due to the above this priority has not been met, however as outlined above there has been awareness raising activity in this area throughout the year.
- **Utilise Private Fostering Awareness Day to promote awareness and training for staff internally and across the partnership** – Completed this was highlighted to multi-agency partners and a presentation and other promotional materials shared for their use and dissemination across their organisations.
- **Ensure internal procedures in relation to Private Fostering are up to date and accessible on the TriX Library for staff to utilise as needed** – Completed internal procedures are up to date and available on the online system.

6. Priorities for 2025-26

- **Ensure that online information and promotional materials are updated by June 2025 this year**
- **Once the material is updated this is to be shared with all religious institutions within and bordering the City by July 2025**
- **Schools and libraries to also receive copies of the updated promotional information by July 2025**
- **Continue to review and update as required internal procedures and expectations in relation to private fostering**
- **Continue to raise awareness of private fostering through various internal and external channels**

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