

Notice of Meeting of the

ASSEMBLY

**to be held on Wednesday, 24 November 2021
commencing at 7:00 pm in the
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Barking**



To all Members of the Council of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Date of publication: 16th December 2021

Chris Naylor
Chief Executive

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Please note that this meeting will be webcast and members of the press and public are encouraged to view the proceedings via this method due to COVID-19 restrictions. Those wishing to attend the meeting in person must provide evidence of a negative Lateral Flow Test on arrival and wear a face mask at all times, including while seated in the public gallery on the second floor of the Town Hall. To view the webcast click [here](#) and select the relevant meeting (the weblink will be available at least 24-hours before the meeting).

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declaration of Members' Interests

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Members are asked to declare any interest they may have in any matter which is to be considered at this meeting.

3. Minutes - To confirm as correct the minutes of the meeting held on 29th September 2021 (Pages 3 - 7)

4. Minutes of Sub-Committees - To note the minutes of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel held on 1 and 8 November 2021 (Pages 9 - 11)

5. Leader's Statement

The Leader will present his statement.

6. Appointments

The Labour Group Secretary will announce any nominations to fill vacant positions on Council committees or other bodies.

7. Appointment of Statutory Scrutiny Officer (Pages 13 - 14)

8. Member Champions' Annual Report 2020/21 (Pages 15 - 29)

9. Local Safeguarding Adults' Board Annual Report 2020/21 (Pages 31 - 73)

10. Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2020/21 (Pages 75 - 94)

11. Adoption Annual Report 2020/21 (Pages 95 - 134)

12. Treasury Management 2021/22 Mid-Year Review (Pages 135 - 155)

13. Motions

There are no Motions.

14. **Questions With Notice**
15. **Any other public items which the Chair decides are urgent**
16. **To consider whether it would be appropriate to pass a resolution to exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting due to the nature of the business to be transacted.**

Private Business

The public and press have a legal right to attend Council meetings such as the Assembly, except where business is confidential or certain other sensitive information is to be discussed. The list below shows why items are in the private part of the agenda, with reference to the relevant legislation (the relevant paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended). ***There are no such items at the time of preparing this agenda.***

17. **Any confidential or exempt items which the Chair decides are urgent**

Our Vision for Barking and Dagenham

ONE BOROUGH; ONE COMMUNITY; NO-ONE LEFT BEHIND

Our Priorities

Participation and Engagement

- To collaboratively build the foundations, platforms and networks that enable greater participation by:
 - Building capacity in and with the social sector to improve cross-sector collaboration
 - Developing opportunities to meaningfully participate across the Borough to improve individual agency and social networks
 - Facilitating democratic participation to create a more engaged, trusted and responsive democracy
- To design relational practices into the Council's activity and to focus that activity on the root causes of poverty and deprivation by:
 - Embedding our participatory principles across the Council's activity
 - Focusing our participatory activity on some of the root causes of poverty

Prevention, Independence and Resilience

- Working together with partners to deliver improved outcomes for children, families and adults
- Providing safe, innovative, strength-based and sustainable practice in all preventative and statutory services
- Every child gets the best start in life
- All children can attend and achieve in inclusive, good quality local schools
- More young people are supported to achieve success in adulthood through higher, further education and access to employment
- More children and young people in care find permanent, safe and stable homes
- All care leavers can access a good, enhanced local offer that meets their health, education, housing and employment needs
- Young people and vulnerable adults are safeguarded in the context of their families, peers, schools and communities

- Our children, young people, and their communities' benefit from a whole systems approach to tackling the impact of knife crime
- Zero tolerance to domestic abuse drives local action that tackles underlying causes, challenges perpetrators and empowers survivors
- All residents with a disability can access from birth, transition to, and in adulthood support that is seamless, personalised and enables them to thrive and contribute to their communities. Families with children who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) can access a good local offer in their communities that enables them independence and to live their lives to the full
- Children, young people and adults can better access social, emotional and mental wellbeing support - including loneliness reduction - in their communities
- All vulnerable adults are supported to access good quality, sustainable care that enables safety, independence, choice and control
- All vulnerable older people can access timely, purposeful integrated care in their communities that helps keep them safe and independent for longer, and in their own homes
- Effective use of public health interventions to reduce health inequalities

Inclusive Growth

- Homes: For local people and other working Londoners
- Jobs: A thriving and inclusive local economy
- Places: Aspirational and resilient places
- Environment: Becoming the green capital of the capital

Well Run Organisation

- Delivers value for money for the taxpayer
- Employs capable and values-driven staff, demonstrating excellent people management
- Enables democratic participation, works relationally and is transparent
- Puts the customer at the heart of what it does
- Is equipped and has the capability to deliver its vision

MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 29 September 2021
(7:00 - 8:50 pm)

PRESENT

Cllr Toni Bankole (Chair)
Cllr Faruk Choudhury (Deputy Chair)

Cllr Saima Ashraf	Cllr Abdul Aziz	Cllr Princess Bright
Cllr Laila M. Butt	Cllr Evelyn Carpenter	Cllr Josie Channer
Cllr John Dulwich	Cllr Syed Ghani	Cllr Rocky Gill
Cllr Amardeep Singh Jamu	Cllr Jane Jones	Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe
Cllr Mohammed Khan	Cllr Olawale Martins	Cllr Dave Miles
Cllr Margaret Mullane	Cllr Fatuma Nalule	Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole
Cllr Glenda Paddle	Cllr Simon Perry	Cllr Foyzur Rahman
Cllr Tony Ramsay	Cllr Paul Robinson	Cllr Darren Rodwell
Cllr Emily Rodwell	Cllr Muhammad Saleem	Cllr Faraaz Shaukat
Cllr Dominic Twomey	Cllr Maureen Worby	

23. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were recorded for Councillors Achilleos, Akwaboah, Alasia, Bremner, S Bright, Chand, Fergus, Freeborn, Geddes, Haroon, Keller, Lumsden, McCarthy, Miah, Quadri, C Rice, L Rice, I Robinson, L Waker and P Waker, who were unable to attend the meeting due to the social distancing arrangements within the Council Chamber.

24. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

25. Minutes (21 July 2021)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2021 were confirmed as correct.

26. Death of Former Councillor Inder Singh Jamu, Freeman and Alderman of the Borough

The Assembly noted with deep regret that former Councillor, Freeman and Alderman of the Borough, Inder Singh Jamu, passed away on Sunday 29 August at the age of 83.

Tributes were led by Inder Singh's son, Councillor Amardeep Jamu. A number of Councillors also spoke in tribute to Inder Singh, recalling his passion, humour and desire for equality and fairness for all.

The Assembly held a minute's applause as a mark of respect.

27. **Death of Neal Crowley, Freeman of the Borough**

The Assembly noted with deep regret that Freeman of the Borough, Neal Crowley, passed away on Sunday 5 September at the age of 38.

Neal was awarded the Freedom of the Borough in May 2019, becoming the youngest ever recipient of the Borough's highest award, in recognition of his tireless work on behalf of the local community and for disabled people in general.

Members paid tribute to Neal, who would be sorely missed by all those who knew him.

The Assembly held a minute's applause as a mark of respect.

28. **Minutes of Sub-Committees**

The Assembly received and noted the minutes of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel meeting held on 2 August 2021.

29. **Senior Leadership Appointment - Strategic Director, Inclusive Growth**

The Strategic Director, Law and Governance introduced a report on the recommendation of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel which, on 9 September 2021, had interviewed candidates for the post of Director, Inclusive Growth.

The Assembly **resolved** to approve that Abi Onaboye be appointed as the Director, Inclusive Growth, subject to suitable references, employment checks and usual terms and conditions.

30. **Leader's Statement**

The Leader of the Council presented a verbal statement updating the Assembly on a range of matters since the last meeting:

A13 Tunnel: The Leader would be attending the Conservative Party Conference for one day to lobby government ministers for a tunnel over the A13.

Thames Freeport: The Thames Freeport had been launched and would create an economic zone connecting Ford Dagenham to the global ports at London Gateway and Tilbury. The Freeport had the potential to transform the borough's economy and create new jobs for local people.

Thames Clipper: The Thames Clipper service had been secured from Barking Riverside, offering a new way of getting to Canary Wharf in just 35 minutes. It would also link Barking Riverside to Greenwich in 20 minutes and Woolwich in six minutes. The pier was planned to open in Spring 2022.

New Wellbeing Hub: A new Wellbeing Hub was the latest addition to the multi-million pound development of the Barking Riverside area. It would boast a gym and fitness studios as well as an indoor waterpark, an events venue, and a community garden. It would also provide a range of services for the community

including a GP practice, social workers, advisors from the council's Home and Money Hub, and community activities.

Becontree 100 weekend: The Becontree 100 weekend event took place in August marking the 100th anniversary of the estate. Over 20,000 enjoyed the events put on by the Council.

Youth Parade: The 7^h Annual Youth Parade took place on 19 September 2021 and was well received by residents.

Black History Month: Black History Month would be taking place in October and there was a jam-packed schedule of events to celebrate the history, achievements and culture of Black African and Caribbean people. There would be a number of fantastic events including poetry, workshops, performances and talks which would take place throughout the month.

Councillor Peter Chand: The Leader congratulated Councillor Peter Chand who, during his tenure as Mayor, raised £35,000 which was split between two charities, the Independent Living Agency and Dagenham United Charity.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration then gave an update on the current COVID-19 situation.

The Cabinet Member advised that there were 50 new cases a day in the borough. As well as COVID-19, there was also the forthcoming flu season, which would hit the community hard and in this respect the Cabinet Member encouraged all vulnerable residents to get their flu jabs as soon as possible. The Cabinet Member also encouraged families to allow 12-15 year olds to take up the offer of a COVID-19 vaccination, as the take up in the borough was very low.

31. Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Health Scrutiny Committee Annual Reports 2020/21

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) presented an Annual Report highlighting the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2020/21.

The Chair of OSC advised that the year had again begun by meeting with Cabinet Members, directors and officers to find out more about their thoughts around key issues, which also helped to guide the Committee in developing a meaningful work programme. The Chair of OSC took the opportunity to personally thank Cabinet Members for allowing OSC to work so closely with them.

OSC covered a wide range of items during 2020/21, ranging from various reports on the impact of COVID-19 across the Council's services, progress on previous scrutiny review recommendations such as the scrutiny review on Ambition 2020 and its early impact and the scrutiny review on Household Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing, corporate parenting, working with residents affected by capital works and budget change proposals.

For the forthcoming municipal year, OSC had another wide-ranging programme and would be looking at how the Council was incorporating the 'Black Lives Matter'

movement into our schools' education programmes.

The Chair of OSC thanked Masuma Ahmed, Claudia Wakefield, Mark Tyson and Fiona Taylor for their ongoing support.

The Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee (HSC) then presented an annual report highlighting the work of the Committee in 2020/21.

Over the last year the work of the Committee had been predominately focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, with the support of the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration. However, the Committee did fit into its busy work programme other areas of key importance such as NELFT's Care Quality Commission Inspection.

Moving forward, the Health Scrutiny Committee would continue to oversee the Council's and health partners' response to Covid-19. There was a full and broad work programme for 2021/22, that among other items, would enable HSC to explore key topics such as how to manage the waiting lists for urgent and non-urgent health conditions, and priorities for the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Chair of HSC thanked Masuma Ahmed, Yusuf Olow, Claudia Wakefield, Matthew Cole and the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration for their support.

32. Appointments

There were no appointments.

33. Motions

There were no Motions.

34. Questions With Notice

There were no questions with notice.

35. Resolution to Extend Six-Month Attendance Rule - Section 85 of Local Government Act 1972

(The Chair agreed that the following item could be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency under the provisions of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.)

The Assembly received a report from the Chief Executive regarding the consideration of dispensation under the provisions of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of Councillor Lee Waker's non-attendance at qualifying Council meetings since 27 April 2021 due to COVID-19 health concerns.

The Assembly **resolved**:

- (i) To approve Councillor Lee Waker's absence from meetings due to COVID-19 health concerns, in accordance with the provisions of Section 85(1) of

the Local Government Act 1972; and

- (ii) That Councillor Lee Waker shall continue to be a Member of the Council.

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MINUTES OF JNC APPOINTMENTS, SALARIES AND STRUCTURES PANEL

Monday, 1 November 2021
(9:00 am - 2:30 pm)

Present: Cllr Dominic Twomey (Chair), Cllr Saima Ashraf, Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe and Cllr Eileen Keller

Apologies: Cllr Phil Waker

7. Appointment of Chair

The Panel appointed Councillor Twomey as Chair.

8. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

9. Private Business

It was resolved to exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting by reason of the nature of the business to be discussed which included information exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 1 of Part 1, Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

10. Appointment of Director of Support and Collections

The Panel considered the papers that had been submitted in advance of the meeting, which included the job description and person specification for the post together with the applications and supporting statements of the four shortlisted candidates.

The Panel reviewed and agreed the interview questions to be asked of the candidates.

Following the interviews, Members discussed the candidates' presentations and responses to the questions and reached a unanimous decision.

The Panel **resolved** to appoint Stephen McGinnes to the post of Director of Support and Collections, subject to suitable references, employment checks and usual terms and conditions.

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MINUTES OF JNC APPOINTMENTS, SALARIES AND STRUCTURES PANEL

Monday, 8 November 2021
(1:30 - 4:15 pm)

Present: Cllr Darren Rodwell (Chair), Cllr Saima Ashraf, Cllr Syed Ghani, Cllr Donna Lumsden and Cllr Phil Waker

11. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

12. Private Business

It was resolved to exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting by reason of the nature of the business to be discussed which included information exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 1, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

13. Appointment of Director of Public Realm

The Panel considered the papers that had been submitted in advance of the meeting, which included the job description and person specification for the post together with the applications and supporting statements of the two shortlisted candidates.

The Panel reviewed and agreed the interview questions to be asked of the candidates.

Following the interviews, Members discussed the candidates' presentations and responses to the questions and reached a unanimous decision.

The Panel **resolved** to appoint Rebecca Johnson to the post of Director of Public Realm, subject to suitable references, employment checks and usual terms and conditions.

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ASSEMBLY**24 November 2021**

Title: Appointment of Statutory Scrutiny Officer	
Report of the Chief Executive	
Open Report	For Decision
Wards Affected: None	Key Decision: No
Report Author: Alan Dawson, Head of Governance & Electoral Services	Contact Details: Email: alan.dawson@lbbd.gov.uk
Accountable Strategic Leadership Director: Fiona Taylor, Strategic Director, Law and Governance	
<p>Summary:</p> <p>The Council must designate one of its officers to discharge the functions of statutory Scrutiny Officer, as required under section 9FB of the Local Government Act 2000 (amended by the Localism Act 2011). The statutory scrutiny officer's role is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote the role of the Council's overview and scrutiny committee(s); • provide support to the Council's overview and scrutiny committee(s) and its Members; • provide guidance to all Members and officers of the Council in relation to overview and scrutiny functions. <p>The former Director of Strategy and Participation was the designated statutory Scrutiny Officer prior to leaving the Council at the end of August 2021. The statutory scrutiny officer cannot be the Council's Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), the Monitoring Officer (Strategic Director, Law and Governance) or the Chief Finance Officer (Finance Director).</p> <p>Henry Gregg was recently appointed as Interim Director of Strategy and Participation and it is proposed that he be designated as the Council's statutory Scrutiny Officer.</p>	
Recommendation(s)	
The Assembly is recommended to designate Henry Gregg, Interim Director of Strategy and Participation, as the Council's statutory Scrutiny Officer.	
Reason(s)	
To accord with the requirements of section 9FB of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended).	

1. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Katherine Heffernan, Head of Service Finance

- 1.1 There are no financial implications associated with the proposal in this report.

2. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Dr Paul Feild, Senior Governance Lawyer

- 2.1 As set out in the summary of this report the Council is obliged by law under section 9FB of the Local Government Act 2000 (amended by the Localism Act 2011) to appoint a Scrutiny Officer who will be tasked with promoting the role of the Council's overview and scrutiny committee(s) and supporting them in their business. In addition, they shall provide guidance to all Members and officers of the Council to in relation to overview and scrutiny functions these can be found in the Constitution at Part 2 Chapter 8.
- 2.2 The Local Government Association gives further guidance on the role in that the scrutiny officer activities could include as providing, or managing, administrative work, undertaking research, analysing data and preparation of reports.
- 2.3 The scrutiny officer cannot be either the Council's Head of the Paid Service, the monitoring Officer or the Chief Finance Officer (s151 officer). They do not need the word 'scrutiny' in their job title and similarly, someone with the job title 'Scrutiny Officer' will not necessarily be the Council's Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

- Section 9FB, Local Government Act 2000 (as amended)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/22/section/9FB>

List of appendices: None

ASSEMBLY

24 November 2021

Title: Annual Report of Member Champions 2020/2021	
Report of the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Social Care & Health Integration and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: None	Key Decision: No
Report Author: Mike Haywood, Head of Leader's Office	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8724 5013 Email: mike.haywood@lbbd.gov.uk
Accountable Strategic Leadership Director: Elaine Allegretti, Director of People & Resilience and Darren Mackin, Head of Commissioning and Programmes, Inclusive Growth	
Summary	
<p>On 18 February 2018 Assembly agreed new governance arrangements (Minute 56) including the provision of Member Champions. In May 2018, the Annual Assembly approved the new Constitution (Part 2, Chapter 6, Paragraph 9). Under the new Constitution, up to five Member Champions can be appointed by the Leader to support the work of the Cabinet and promote and raise the profile of the cause for which they are a champion.</p> <p>At its meeting on 11 December 2018, Cabinet approved the appointment of Councillor Irma Freeborn and Councillor Chris Rice as Member Champions for Quality in Care and for Mental Health respectively (Minute 71 refers). A work programme was created following this.</p> <p>The appointment of Councillor Andrew Achilleos as Member Champion for Climate Change was approved by Assembly on 13 May 2020 (Minute 7 refers).</p> <p>This report sets out the roles of each Member Champion, the work they have undertaken in 2020/21.</p>	
Recommendation(s)	
The Assembly is recommended to note the Annual Report of Member Champions 2020-2021.	
Reason(s)	
<p>It is good practice to report on the work being undertaken by Member Champions who support the Council's aim of encouraging civic pride and enabling social responsibility.</p> <p>This year's Annual Report includes the reports of the Member Champion for Quality in Care, Member Champion for Mental Health, and Member Champion for Climate Change.</p>	

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Report of the Member Champion for Quality Care
- Appendix 2 – Report of the Member Champion for Mental Health
- Appendix 3 – Report of the Member Champion for Climate Change

Report of the Member Champion for Quality of Care

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As everyone knows, the past 18 months have been some of the most challenging months since the Second World War due to the pandemic. This has had a huge impact on those giving and receiving care. For this reason, in the interests of maintain public safety standards, my work visiting care settings as Member Champion for Quality of Care has been curtailed.
- 1.2 During this time, I volunteered to contact vulnerable residents who were isolating under home care for chats and assistance as part of our BD CAN initiative. This included arranging for families or those that were shielding to be provided communication devices to help them keep in touch with their loved ones, virtually.
- 1.3 I have maintained contact with our Care and Leadership team offering them moral support through these difficult times. I also kept in regular contact with both the Cabinet Member for Community Leadership & Engagement and Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration to ensure funerals were arranged in a dignified way and in accordance with government guidance.
- 1.4 I also assisted in the provision of activities and events promoting mental well-being for care venues through online virtual events, and joined the care forum, which is supported by clinicians and admin staff as well as volunteers who have worked together throughout the pandemic. And it is to those people who have worked so hard during these difficult times to whom I turn my attention now.

2. National Insurance rise and the care pay scandal

- 2.1 Care workers, and their medical colleagues in the NHS are undoubtedly the heroes of the pandemic. Their personal sacrifice and dedication to the dignity of their residents and patients have hopefully inspired an entire generation of people to go into public service. The work they do requires them to deal daily with people who are a combination of unwell, confused and vulnerable people. They perform the most intimate tasks for strangers and the social contact they provide is a lifeline for our grandparents and disabled people.
- 2.2 Yet recent Government decisions around rises to National Insurance mean the average care worker will be around £140 worse off. With an average pay in London of £9.50 an hour, this means they will lose almost half a week's pay. It is true that adult social care funding is in a dire state nationally. There is a need for more funding for local authorities like ours. But doing so by increasing the financial burden on care workers, who are desperately underpaid, is wrong.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 This has been an incredibly difficult time for many people, particularly those working and living in care homes. The families of both groups have also been adversely affected. The future of quality care relies on the professionalism and

dedication of our care staff, as well as the continued hard work of live-in carers and informal care networks. I look forward to seeing the progress we are able to make in Barking and Dagenham in the future.

Report of the Member Champion for Mental Health

1. Introduction

- 1.1 It has been another very challenging year. Covid-19 has continued to have a severe impact on people's lives and their mental wellbeing.
- 1.2 The demand on mental health services has been increasing, with services having to adapt whilst also trying to keep their staff as safe as possible; both in terms of their mental wellness and COVID-19. Circumstances over the past year have been very fluid and are still changing and evolving.

2. NELFT

- 2.1 Over the past year I have been attending the monthly meetings of the NELFT governing body. The Covid-19 pandemic has raised many challenges that NELFT has been attempting to address, for example:
- Roll out of the vaccination programme; uptake was running the same to the average in London of 68-70% earlier in the year.
 - Vaccination of NELFT staff, with over 80% vaccinated earlier in the year.
 - Increased investment in wellbeing offer to staff, including mindfulness sessions and Schwartz rounds (**a structured forum where all staff, clinical and non-clinical, come together regularly to discuss the emotional and social aspects of working in healthcare**).
 - Due to the lengthy waits experienced by residents for a blood test, in October 2020 a Serious Incident (SI) was declared. A running total of 24,741 extra appointments were made available between October 2020 and Jan 2021. During the February Executive Phlebotomy Steering Group, an update on the recovery position was given. It was noted that recovery had, in effect, been delivered.
 - Adapted ways of working, with increased use of remote treatment sessions with patients by telephone or video conferencing.
 - Increased pressure on mental health services but especially in relation children and adolescents. It is a national pressure that includes NELFT.

3. CAMHS

- 3.1 I received an update about the B&D Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in February 2021 to see how they were managing during the wave of Covid-19 at that time.
- 3.2 In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the service had opted a blended approach of continuing to see young people virtually and holding face-to-face contacts. It aimed to contact all the referrals received within 24-48 hours from triage or sooner, depending on the urgency and/or complexity of what is being presented. In addition, the team also works jointly with the INTERACT child and young person crisis outreach service to avoid hospital admission by ensuring support in the community.

- 3.3 At the beginning it has been challenging to maintain face-to-face appointments as the safety of the young people, their carers and our staff was paramount. This meant the service had to adapt and manage its capacity, operating within strict infection control guidance.
- 3.4 School closures also meant there were some delays in accessing school reports, etc. and urgent interventions were prioritised. The team quickly adapted to the virtual way of working and has been offering assessments, consultations, and reviews virtually which is going well. However, cases are stratified - if there is a need for face-to-face contact and intervention, a face-to-face appointment is arranged with PPE made available to the staff, young people, and their carers.
- 3.5 CAMHS now have a Service Manager in post, and she oversees all the operational management including the team activity, caseload, waiting times, interventions provided, pathways and recruitment & retention, etc.
- 3.6 The team continued to hold weekly 'Hot clinics' with Education and Social services. This has been beneficial for colleagues across social care and education and positive feedback has been received. This forum enables early detection and intervention for any mental health. This has also ensured that colleagues can discuss any concerns that they may have. The 'Hot Clinics' have also improved swift access to the service and access to CAMHS clinicians.
- 3.7 However, NELFT has reported a substantial increase in demand for mental health services, with lockdown coming to an end, for children and adolescents. It is currently reviewing how to adapt services to this recent surge.
- 3.8 Unfortunately, long waiting times has been a historic issue for the speech & language therapy service for B&D. There has been a drive to bring down these numbers over the last year. Initially, the focus was on early years foundation stage caseloads (0-5 year olds), with the number of children with long waiting times having improved.
- 3.9 Caseloads also coming down for Key Stage 1&2 children (5-11 year olds). This has been achieved with a video undertaken by parents at home that can be sent back to the service prior to a first contact. The first contact with the service is then an analysis of that video and initial targets set. This can be carried out remotely so travel between school sites is saved. The local authority has provided additional funding to support their Autistic Spectrum Disorder work.

4. Barking and Dagenham Mental Health Social Care Team

- 4.1 I have received monthly updates from the B&D Mental Health Social Care Team.
- 4.2 The team reported an increase in demand of 36% but are still managing to perform exceptionally well. They have absorbed the increased caseload and have kept caseloads exceptionally low whilst increasing the volume of work. These lower caseloads allow staff to spend more time with clients and their response and turnaround times are very good:

- Approved Mental Health Professional (AMPH) service response times are amongst the best in London.
- Reported satisfaction rates are high.
- Excellent staff retention (100% in the last year) and minimal sickness (most of which has been COVID-19 related).

4.3 I remotely attended meetings with several groups in our borough, during the various waves of COVID-19, to primarily discuss how they have been managing their mental wellbeing and coping during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. B&D mental health service users

5.1 Service users fed back there were a number of groups and interventions that have stopped since the pandemic and are concerned at what will be available in the future:

- Suicide advisory group – currently we have a shared suicide prevention strategy with Havering. Public health locally is setting up meetings to ensure that it reflects the borough's needs. The service users have expressed an interest in attending and contributing.
- Peer support – One person said that he was offered some peer support; however, it was in Harold Wood. MIND were aiming to reinstate the groups.
- Crisis Café – It is apparent that that a safe space for people to go to and get support is needed. Sustainable funding is currently being sought.
- Directory of services – information on the council's website need to be updated for people who require advice and support.

5.2 They felt there were inequalities in provision for disabled people including GPs. In contrast, people being referred to Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services were being seen quickly. However, the national picture is one of severe delays in talking therapies in secondary care.

6. Carers of Barking and Dagenham

6.1 Many carers reported that lockdown had been very difficult for them, especially having to juggle multiple caring responsibilities for different family members. They would have welcomed a greater promotion of the help on offer from BD-CAN.

6.2 It was suggested that the council might hold a celebratory event for Carers when lockdown is over. The group also liked the idea of a mindfulness class. They admitted that Zoom can still be isolating, and that some had dropped out of previous activities (such as a choir) as they found that it was too much pressure to do over Zoom.

6.3 Many carers also noted that the demand from their relatives had increased due to lockdown. With schools closing and a lack of respite, many were caring on a 24/7 basis and this was causing them to experience a low mood.

- 6.4 Some have also been too anxious to leave their homes, as well as worried about the potential for them to pick up and spread the virus to loved ones. Others have been shielding. Some have also been worried about the lack of certainty and communication around school transitions (e.g. from secondary school to college).
- 6.5 Several carers had lost loved ones during the pandemic, and they had struggled with the restrictions that had been put in place around funerals.
- 6.6 All carers agreed that they wanted to explore their pay and lack of breaks/holiday. They also wanted more focus on long-term planning for children and carers, as well as to be more knowledgeable about what support is out there to help them. Many carers have no plans in place for the future.

7. Carers of Barking and Dagenham- Young Carer's Sub-Group:

- 7.1 The Young Carers' Project is aimed at Young Carers in Barking and Dagenham who are aged 12-19. Nevertheless, support is provided from age 8 up until the young person's 19th birthday. The project also used to support 5-7 year olds.
- 7.2 The project is for young people who have a role in their families' care. These care needs may relate to mental health issues, drug and alcohol issues or elderly age. At home, the young carers may have to carry out tasks such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, food preparation and laundry.
- 7.3 The Young Carers' Sub-Group are the decision makers of the Young Carers' Project and feed directly into the Carers' of Barking and Dagenham Board. The Ambassadors are the voice of the Young Carers within their schools and local community, who try and raise awareness of the Young Carers' Project.
- 7.4 The Young Carers' Ambassadors' Group was made up of young carers who went around schools, delivering information about young carers and raising awareness. They also delivered assemblies. The young people were proud that these had helped many other young people to realise that they were young carers. The Ambassador's Group had also taken part in projects such as litter picking in the past.

8. The Young Carers' Project

- 8.1 The Young Carers' Project enabled all of the young carers to have some respite from their caring duties. They met up once per week, which enabled the young people to have some respite from their caring responsibilities.
- 8.2 Some of the young carers accessed CAMHS, but the Sub-Group leads said that it was becoming harder and harder for the young people to be accepted. In this respect, the Carers of Barking and Dagenham had tried to bridge the gap with counselling for the young carers.

8.3 The Carers' Hub were trying to pilot a project around Covid-19 recovery and wellbeing. Many young people did not want 1:1 support and so the Carers' Hub were looking into delivering workshops with the young people around their resilience and mental health (although they also said that they would look into delivering some 1:1 support regardless).

8.4 The young people noted that it was hard to balance their caring responsibilities with their school/college work, as caring was almost like having a full-time job. They said that this had affected them at school in the past. The Sub-Group leads also said that young carers generally were at an academic disadvantage at school in terms of their grades.

9. Conclusion

9.1 Every family in the borough will know someone who has suffered, or will suffer, from mental health issues. From the winter blues to clinical disorders, the national conversation around mental health is changing. My hope is that the emphasis placed on the importance of mental wellbeing, and the link between physical and mental health, will result in a brighter future for us all. I look forward to seeing how we progress as a community in the future.

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Report of the Member Champion for Climate Change

1. Introduction

1.1 Since last year's annual report, the council has been working hard to build on the work it does on the 'green agenda' and tackling climate change.

1.1 Our climate change targets fall under three broad categories which I have used my role to champion. These are the built environment, transport, and parks and open spaces. There is also the vital work we are doing to improve air quality across the borough.

2. The built environment

2.1 Retrofitting

2.1.1 We have been working on a strategy to retrofit approximately 18,000 homes in the borough that desperately need it. Retrofitting brings down emissions and utility bills, saving money and the planet.

2.1.2 Retrofitting poses a couple of key issues:

- The cost of deep retro fit of one property is around £80k.
- There is a skills shortage which limits the scale and pace of delivery.

2.1.3 I joined workmen from JJ Crump and reps from E-on onsite to see cavity wall insulation being installed along with loft insulation.

2.1.4 I am currently looking to work with other London boroughs that have similar housing stock, possibly through the Greater London Authority to establish a working group that can collectively bargain or establish a baseline of delivery to put out to tender in order to bring down the cost of retrofitting per unit.

2.2 Construction

2.2.1 I have quarterly meetings with Be First to discuss current and future projects. From these meetings I have requested the following:

- An audit of contracted construction companies used by the council and Be First to ensure they meet environmental standards.
- Research into new greener, fire safety approved building materials which would reduce the reliance on steel and cement. Obviously, this must be financially viable.
- A review of how funding from the Carbon Offsetting Fund, S106 and CIL is used, can it be used to make developments more sustainable or enhance existing green space.

- 2.2.2 Be First recently appointed a lead on sustainability and I am awaiting the establishment of a new working group on sustainability in the built environment, which I will sit on.
- 2.2.3 A new biodiversity metric has been introduced by government which requires developers to evidence biodiversity net gains in new scheme proposals. This is a step in the right direction.

2.3 Energy

- 2.3.1 I am working with officers to establish the national grid potential for Barking and Dagenham. I have asked that we look into utilising council owned roof space and renting leasehold roof space to create a borough wide solar farm.
- 2.3.2 I have also been working with external organisations looking at the potential to capture lost heat to generate power.
- 2.3.3 One of the key issues we face is energy storage, which is expensive to establish. However, there are talks with potential delivery partners in the borough to create such a facility.
- 2.3.4 We are looking at the roll out of air source heat pumps as a green energy solution, which would form part of a wider retrofit strategy.
- 2.3.5 Also using district heat network schemes, which is being trialed on new developments such as the Gascoigne Estate.

3. Transport

3.1 Walking and Cycling

- 3.1.1 I am an active member of the 'Walking and Cycling Strategy Steering Committee' and have helped identify and set in place the priorities for the next few years. The strategy is about making our roads safer for all users – drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. I recently learned to ride a bike at Valence Park with Vandome Cycles who offer free bikeability courses along with Sustrans to local residents. The point being is, if I can learn at 34 anyone can!
- 3.1.2 This is part and parcel of promoting the benefits of walking and cycling for short local journeys that don't require a car – whilst also recognising that if you want to get from one side of the borough to the other you need a vehicle.
- 3.1.2 I have also been working with other Members across the borough to establish areas where we can make the street scene more inviting for pedestrians and cyclists. Two excellent examples are Rainham Road South and Whalebone Lane South where we have created bee corridors and replaced tired railings with wooden bollards.

3.2. Electric Vehicle infrastructure

- 3.2.1 Be First intend to publish a draft electric vehicle infrastructure strategy for the borough. This is not without its challenges. For example, looking for a delivery partner to ensure there are accessible charge points in every ward.
- 3.2.2 There is not a huge demand for this infrastructure but as petrol and diesel are phased out, we must be ready. Then there is the issue of power – that is a lot of additional energy which will be required which poses its own questions about long term sustainability of electric vehicles.
- 3.2.3 The council wants to ‘electrify’ its fleet of vehicles across services, with work starting with enforcement.

3.3 Public Transport

- 3.3.1 The council is consistently lobbying Transport for London to ensure our transport links are upgraded.
- 3.3.2 Many of the bus routes through the borough are still serviced by older polluting vehicles rather than electric or hybrid models.
- 3.3.3 Crossrail is still in the pipeline and the new overground extension is on the way into Barking Riverside.
- 3.3.4 The Council’s success in bringing the Thames Clipper to Barking and in doing so, opening up the river for commuters, will reduce congestion on the District Line and c2c service.

3.4 Parks and open spaces

- 3.4.1 This is my real passion – our parks are the jewel in the borough’s crown. None more so than Eastbrookend Country Park. Our achievements in this area include:
 - In December 2020 working with delivery partners SUGi and the Conservation Volunteers we planted 32,000 trees in Parsloes Park – the Forest of Thanks.
 - Assembly passed a motion to double canopy cover across the borough by 2040.
 - Increased street tree planting and looking at more woodland creation.
 - Working with external partners and the community on the ‘Greening the Fiddlers’ project, how we can green urban areas and change our understanding of ‘the environment.’
 - Opened the Ripple Greenway earlier this year – transformed an area of wasteland into a linear park with amazing sculptures based on the revolutionary book ‘The Lost Words’.
 - The Wild and Free in LBBDD scheme that I designed back in 2019 launched in 2020 but due to the pandemic was limited to a photography competition. This year the full range of events for families has taken place.

- Idea behind WildFreeLBBD was to engage young people in the outdoors – educate residents and evoke a greater appreciation for our green spaces and nature.
- Many of our parks received Green Flag Awards this year for accessibility, cleanliness, and biodiversity.
- The old Millennium Centre has been rebranded and relaunched as the Discovery Centre. It is now open seven days a week and is a core part of our strategy to engage the community with our parks and the natural world.
- We have an amazing, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable Park Ranger team. Want my thanks for everything they do on record.
- There have been talks about establishing a ‘LBBD Springwatch/Autumnwatch/Winterwatch’ but this has stalled. Hoping this can be something we introduce next year via one borough voice to really reach out and show people what amazing things can be found on their doorstep.
- The Greening Network was established through BD Can – has been a great way to get people involved in mapping what they would like to see in the borough.
- I was on the BD Giving Panel which awarded £20k to the Roding River Trust to plant trees and wayfind the River Roding footpath.
- One of my early ideas was to create a ‘green barrier’ along the River Roding and barking creek to reduce particulates and emissions from the city being brought over by the prevailing wind direction. This is now being realised.
- Next year I am hoping to launch a monthly nature walk through Beam Parklands and Eastbrookend Country Park which will be bookable.

4. A note on Air Quality

- 4.1 I was a key stakeholder in the Air Quality Action Plan Steering Committee. Since its introduction I have monitored the plan closely and aim to work with services and other members to see it delivered.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 All in all, I have been incredibly busy.
- 5.2 Over the last few months, we have seen a significant acceleration of global climate change, which has had local manifestations in Barking and Dagenham. We have seen flash floods and an unprecedented tornado rip through our streets. We have some of the poorest health outcomes relating to air pollution in London and the time for action on this is now.
- 5.3 I am wholeheartedly dedicated to the cause and want to see a greener, healthier borough in the coming years. The reality is that we cannot avert climate change now, but we can mitigate the worst effects from causing damage to our communities.

- 5.4 Part of the solution is educating towards behavioural changes, part of it is legislating with future generations in mind. There are natural solutions and solutions in how we deliver services sustainably. The bottom line is that we all have a part to play, and the council aims to lead by example.

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ASSEMBLY

24 NOVEMBER 2021

Title: The Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adult Board Annual Report 2020/21	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care Integration	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: No
Report Author: Chris Bush, Commissioning Director, Children's and Adults' Care & Support	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8227 3188 Email: Christopher.bush@lbbd.gov.uk
Accountable Director: Elaine Allegretti, Strategic Director for People and Resilience	
Accountable Strategic Leadership Director: Elaine Allegretti, Strategic Director for People and Resilience	
<p>Summary</p> <p>Under Schedule 2 of the Care Act 2014, Safeguarding Adult Boards (SABs) are required to publish an Annual Report, detailing their work over the preceding year. The attached Annual Report (Appendix 1) describes the work and priorities of the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) from April 2020 to March 2021. It sets out the key achievements, work of the partners, information around the priorities and how the SAB has worked to improve the protection of adults across Barking and Dagenham.</p> <p>The Annual Report contains contributions from a range of organisations who are involved in safeguarding vulnerable adults in Barking and Dagenham. Joint working has been effective over the past year, and the membership of the Board and its Committees have strengthened. The statutory partners have provided financial resources to support the SAB a to fulfil their functions.</p> <p>The Annual Report was agreed by the Safeguarding Adults Board at its meeting on 20th October 2021 and was presented and discussed at the Health and Wellbeing Board on the 9th November 2021.</p> <p>The Assembly is invited to note the report and draw out any issues that Members would like the Safeguarding Adults Board to consider as part of its routine business or the Strategic Plan.</p>	
<p>Recommendation</p> <p>The Assembly is recommended to:</p> <p>(i) Note the contents of Annual Report of the Safeguarding Adults Board for 2020/21;</p>	

- (ii) Add further comments to shape the work of the Board and the priorities of the SAB through its Strategic Plan.

Reason(s)

Safeguarding vulnerable adults from abuse is one of the most important statutory duties that falls upon the Council. Collaborating with partners in the health sector and the Police is mandated by the Care Act, and together with other important partners, the Safeguarding Adults Board is the mechanism for discharging that duty. It is important that all Members of the Council are aware of the work of the Council in improving the systems to safeguard adults and have the opportunity to shape that work.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Care Act 2014 requires that local partners must co-operate around the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse or neglect.
- 1.2 The Care Act 2014 identifies six key principles that should underpin all safeguarding work. These are accountability, empowerment, protection, prevention, proportionality and partnership.
- 1.3 The Safeguarding Adults Boards is made up of three statutory partners who are the Local Authority, the Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board also includes representation from other key local partner organisations and these are Barking Havering Redbridge University Trust (BHRUT), North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT), the London Fire Brigade, the Probation Service, the chairs of the SAB's committees and other key officer advisors.
- 1.4 The objectives of the SAB are to:
- Ensure that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014.
 - Embed good safeguarding practices, that puts people at the centre of its duties.
 - Work in partnership with other agencies to prevent abuse and neglect where possible.
 - Ensure that services and individuals respond quickly and responsibly when abuse or neglect has occurred.
 - Continually improve safeguarding practices and enhance the quality of life of adults in the local area.
- 1.5 All Safeguarding Adult Boards are required to produce an Annual Report. The Barking and Dagenham SAB have produced the Annual Report attached with contributions from all partners of the Board.

2. Proposal and Issues

- 2.1 The Annual Report includes a foreword by the Independent Chair of the Board, information about the Board structure and its committees, safeguarding data, the activity of the Board and of its partner agencies, quality assurance information, and comment on how the Board will review and set its priorities going forward in light of Covid-19 and other system wide safeguarding issues.
- 2.2. Key achievements of the Board in 2020/21 include the work of the three committees. The Performance and Assurance Committee, which is chaired by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, has worked to improve the engagement from all partners and is presenting meaningful data and analysis to the Board on a quarterly basis. The Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) Committee, which is chaired by a senior NHS CCG officer, commissioned and led on one Safeguarding Adult Review in 2020 continuing into 2021, has reviewed several cases against the SAR criteria and looked at wider learning from local and national cases.
- 2.3 The Complex Cases Panel has been reviewed and is now called the Safeguarding Adult Complex Cases Group. It has been brought under the governance of the SAB and the process and membership has been strengthened. The group discusses complex cases where there are safeguarding risks that need to be managed across more than one agency. Professionals from any partner agency can refer a case into the meeting. The group is chaired by the Principal Social Worker for Adults Social Care and Strategic Lead for Safeguarding Adults and includes representation from LBBD Adults Care and Support, Community Solutions, Private Sector Housing, NELFT, BHRUT, the Police and the Fire Brigade.
- 2.4 The Board has continued to have excellent engagement and commitment from all partners throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Financial Implications

Implications completed by Isaac Mogaji – Finance Business Partner:

- 3.1 The Safeguarding Adults Board received financial contributions of £30,000 from the CCG, £5,000 from the Police/MOPAC and £500 from the London Fire Brigade, while the Council provided the sum of £42k towards the running of the Board in 2020/21. The running costs include safeguarding adult reviews, training and development needs and administration costs.

4. Legal Implications

Implications completed by Lindsey Marks, Deputy Head of Law

- 4.1 Section 43 Care Act 2014 requires every Local Authority to have a Safeguarding Adults Board for its area. One of the core duties of the Safeguarding Adults Board is to publish an Annual Report detailing how effective the Board's work has been. There are no legal implications for this report directly arising from this report.

5. Other Implications

5.1 Risk Management

5.1.1 The SAB manages risks by having a Three Year Strategic Plan in place that sets out its priorities and how partners will work together to achieve these. This Strategic Plan is reviewed annually.

5.2 Corporate Policy and Equality Impact

5.2.1 The SAB is a statutory function under the Care Act 2014 which requires that local partners must co-operate around the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

5.3 Safeguarding Adults

5.3.1 The SAB has responsibility for safeguarding across the borough and this includes how the Board has worked together to protect adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

5.4 Health Issues

5.4.1 This report was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board on the 9th November 2021 for discussion and comment.

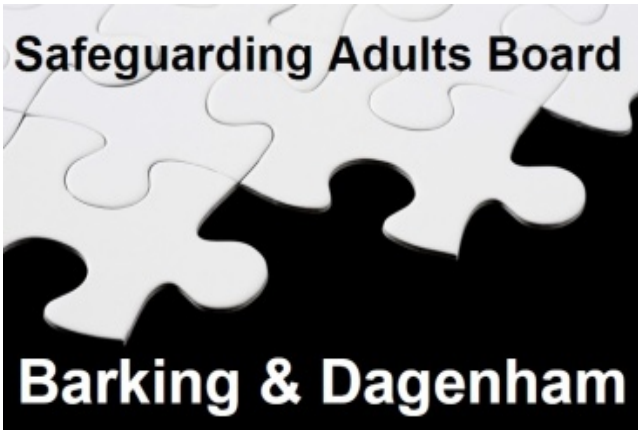
Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

Care Act 2014 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 - The Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2020/21

**Barking and
Dagenham
Safeguarding
Adult Board**



**Annual
Report
2020-21**

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Independent Chair's Foreword & Overview

1



This is my third foreword to an Annual Review Report of Barking and Dagenham's Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) for a full year in my role as Independent Chair. It was written after the close of the year (April 2020 to March 2021) in summer 2021 and agreed at a meeting of the Board in November 2021.

The year was dominated by Covid-19 and responses to it. From distress and losses at a personal level for many, to statutory organisations meeting the challenges of its impacts and responding on behalf of their local communities as effectively as possible.

The Safeguarding Adults Board was clear, Covid or no Covid, that its responsibility was to learn, to probe and to seek assurance from partner organisations individually and as a safeguarding whole for the borough. Each quarterly meeting*, and the work done in between, was geared to this end notwithstanding how it felt for so many staff members of all organisations, whether working in acute and potentially dangerous health care and other settings, or at home combining child care or other caring responsibilities, or isolated and alone, or for some a combination of these.

*Almost all meetings in 2020/21 referred to in this Annual Review Report took place 'virtually', mostly on Microsoft Teams. These were well supported by technology and worked as both 'real' and productive.

My comments cannot express sufficiently what I have observed about how those paid or volunteering to care or support others have responded to the task – with kindness, (over) commitment, amazing innovation and unceasing energy. The response in Barking and Dagenham, with one of London and England's poorest and most socially and health disadvantaged populations, has been simply outstanding. This has been led in the Borough by the Council's political and executive leaders in partnership with senior leaders from the NHS, Police and Fire Service, other statutory and voluntary sector leaders and independent providers of care and support services in care homes and people's own homes. Thank you.

At each stage of the year new questions were asked, things learned and new approaches adopted – so many it would be unfair to single out. The separate organisation reports later in this Annual Report provide abundant illustration.

At a personal level, as Independent Chair, I have appreciated the ways in which people have worked together across organisations or separate service boundaries. Inter-organisational goodwill and collaboration has been a consistent feature of the Barking and Dagenham SAB over my nearly four years, but in 2020/21 it excelled to a new level, but with never a hint of complacency or wanting to stop the probing and rigour. My thanks on behalf of the public to Barking and Dagenham Council (LBBD), Barking, Havering & Redbridge (BHR) NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, the Metropolitan Police, the Fire Service, BHR University Hospitals Trust, North East London NHS Foundation Trust and the Probation Service.

However, regardless of the greater detail in the commentaries from the specific organisations which follow in this Annual Review, it is right that I pick out some of the Covid impacts, the harm and distress, which have also featured.

- As elsewhere in England, far too many deaths of mainly older people in care homes, many which might have avoided by better government preparedness and coordinated response.
- Similarly more deaths than should have been expected of adults with learning disabilities, whether in care settings, independent housing or at home, mainly from treatable health conditions, which deserved a better response.
- Unknown levels of distress from isolation or lack of personal contact with health, social care and police services because of ill health (physical and mental), disability, anxiety, abuse or other reasons.
- Indeed perhaps a significant feature of Covid yet to emerge in its true scale is ‘what we didn’t know’, but suspected from intelligent awareness – new levels of domestic abuse and unhappiness, acute mental health distress but often insufficient to alert statutory responses, neglect, self-neglect, people taking advantage of other’s financial interests and indeed their home, and the longer term recovery effects, potentially chronic, of Covid requiring health and social care service into the future.
- ‘Hidden away’ domestic abuse became a particular concern to Police and the Council, not least in the context of Barking and Dagenham’s special awareness from its Domestic Abuse Commission review being carried out coincidentally during the year.

- The increase in safeguarding concerns notified to all services, almost double in the year for example to BHR hospitals, was striking evidence of the insecurity of people's wellbeing and their risks of harm or abuse to which all services needed to be alert. This was tracked through a national Safeguarding Data Insight study of all local authority areas. For Barking and Dagenham this exposed that half the concerns were not about older people as perhaps is imagined but adults aged 18-64, higher levels of psychological abuse and neglect, high levels of risk in people's own homes, and that Covid impacted more especially on less equal and health disadvantaged minority ethnic communities in the borough.

Notwithstanding these considerations, Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board maintained its core responsibilities for overview, assurance and proper governance. The SAB is a check on all multi-agency safeguarding practice, management, communication, information sharing, performance measurement, quality assurance and organisational governance. The SAB has operated in relation to individual cases and individual partners 'without fear or favour', challenging and seeking out assurance on varied matters of question, responsibility and action.

Our role as a Safeguarding Board is to give confidence to (i) the Barking and Dagenham public, (ii) those people who speak for their interests, and (iii) the leadership of organisations, that the borough's Safeguarding Adults Board is properly committed to and capable of discharging its responsibilities in the way in which everyone has a right to expect and are laid out in law in the Care Act 2014.

I hope that the pages of this Annual Report satisfy those challenges without being too lengthy and detailed.

During the year the Board began updating its three year Strategic Plan 2019 – 22 in the light of Covid with clear priorities going into 2021-22 and with a view to 2022-2023 and beyond. This is reproduced in section 9 of this Annual Report.

The scale of the challenges for safeguarding adults continue to be considerable. Our concerns are for people in the borough who are in some way more vulnerable than others (e.g. through frailty, disability, illness, language, culture or being of a minority in some other respect) and may be therefore at a higher risk of harm, abuse or neglect by some other more powerful person or body. The data around safeguarding concerns demonstrated this.

Covid or no Covid, protection arrangements need to be alert, available, appropriate, responsive and personal ('making safeguarding personal'). They also need to be responsive to newer and expanding areas of abuse, such as modern slavery, human trafficking, multiple forms of exploitation and domestic abuse, hate crime, forced marriage, financial and cyber

abuse. All of these impact most harshly on people who are less able to resist threats because of their mental capacity, mental health, homelessness and other less robust lifestyles. Notwithstanding, all of us are potentially vulnerable to becoming a victim of harm by those who might neglect us or by the failure of a service that may cause us harm.

People in Barking and Dagenham may also have become more vulnerable as services, staff and partnerships working in different agencies become more stretched, not just through Covid, but with funding and workforce challenges, the effects of continuing austerity on everybody, delays in service, and practitioner staff who have too much expected of them in the time they have available. Offering people individualised advice, advocacy, support or care takes time and skill. It is vital that the SAB holds a realistic overview of what is needed, what can be done and how well things are done, holding to account and reporting in a public document such as this.

During the year I am pleased to report that we have:

- Strengthened the work of the two Board committees with delegated responsibilities for (i) Safeguarding Adults Reviews (chaired by Mark Gilbey-Cross from BHR CCG) and (ii) Performance and Assurance (chaired by Vikki Rix from LBBD) with a third, (iii) Safeguarding Adults Complex Cases Group (chaired by Liana Kotze from LBBD) enhancing a previously more informal meeting to being within the SAB's broader overview.
- Having deferred fully undertaking the London wide Safeguarding Adults Partnership Assurance review process at the end of 2019/20 I am pleased to report that there now plans are to undertake this in October – December 2021, in part jointly with Havering and Redbridge SABs.
- During the year we have welcomed a new Borough Fire Commander, a new Probation Head of Service and at the turn of the year 2020/21 a new Metropolitan Police Superintendent. The latter has played a valuable, leading and influential role personally on the SAB during the year. Several organisations have also enabled and supported less senior colleagues to play key roles in the work of the Board's Committees.

The Board has recognised though that:

- It has still been slower than we wished to establish meaningful arrangements to learn directly from the lived experiences of people who need or use safeguarding services, and what people's wishes might be. This must be a priority in 2021/22 with help from Council, given LBBD's own wish to develop this aspect of their services.

- It needs to be satisfied that all partner organisations have their own robust safeguarding case audit processes, preferably with an external independent element, in a form not too dissimilar to that which LBB Council previously reported to the SAB or in another way. This too needs to be a priority in 2021/22.

At a personal level I am grateful for the consistent support to the SAB, and to myself in my Independent Chair role, from all organisations. I am particularly grateful for the support to the Board and myself from Joanne Kitching, the SAB Business Manager and to the 'lead people' from all partner organisations.

I hope that it will be apparent from the above paragraphs and what follows that the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board has a clear sense of its short term and longer-term priorities, that partners are committed to these, but that there is much to do. It is so important that what it does is 'real' and grounded in the reality of people's lives and their worries in Barking and Dagenham. Resource and staffing pressures on all partners, practitioners and managers are immense. Nowhere is there any complacency.

To people and organisations more widely, I hope that this Annual Report offers reasonable assurance that the SAB is resolved and determined that people should be protected from harm and abuse in Barking and Dagenham and that the SAB will be as effective as we can be in our duties, responsibilities and priorities.

Brian Parrott

Independent Chair

Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board

What Is Safeguarding?

2

The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance defines adult safeguarding as:

‘Protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.’

The Care Act 2014 came into force on 1st April 2015. The Act introduced new requirements for safeguarding adults and the arrangements that each locality must have in place to ensure that vulnerable people are protected from risk, abuse or neglect. The Local Authority, NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Police are all statutory partners of the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and other important local partners are also key players in the work of the partnership.

The Care Act identifies six key principles that should underpin all safeguarding work. These are accountability, empowerment, protection, prevention, proportionality and partnership.



The SAB'S Vision

3

Every adult living in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has the right to live in safety, free from fear of abuse or neglect. The Safeguarding Adults Board exists to make sure that organisations, people and local communities work together to prevent and stop the risk of abuse or neglect.

In the London Borough Barking and Dagenham we want to embed a stronger and safer culture that supports adults who are at risk of harm. We know that to achieve this we have to work in partnership with the people who use local services and with the wider local community. All agencies working with adults at risk have an essential role in recognising when these people may be in need of protection. Agencies also have a responsibility to work in partnership with adults at risk, their families, their carer(s) and each other. The introduction of the Care Act 2014 has brought in many changes in Adult Social Care Services. The Safeguarding Adults Board has a statutory duty to ensure it uses its powers to develop responsibility within the community for adults who need care and protection.

The prime focus of the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board is to ensure that safeguarding is consistently understood by anyone engaging with adults who may be at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect, and that there is a common commitment to improving outcomes for them. This means ensuring the community has an understanding of how to support, protect and empower people at risk of harm. We want to develop and facilitate practice which puts individuals in control and generates a more person-centred approach and outcomes.

The Safeguarding Adults Board developed a Strategic Plan which sets out how we will work together to safeguard adults at risk. The strategic plan was initially for 2019-22 but was updated at the end of 2020/21 going into 2021/22 for the remainder of 2021/22 and beyond. It can be viewed here <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/barking-and-dagenham-safeguarding-adults-board#tabs-3> and is referred to again in section 9.

The Safeguarding Adults Board has a responsibility to:

Protect adults at risk

**Prevent abuse
occurring**

Respond to concerns

It may be suspected that someone is at risk of harm because:

- there is a general concern about someone's **well being**
- a person sees or hears something which could put **someone at risk**
- a person tells you or someone else that something has happened or is happening to them which could put **themselves or others at risk**.

The Board & Committees 4

The Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board is made up of the following core statutory partners:

- [The Local Authority \(Adult Social Services\)](#)
- [The Borough Police](#)
- [The NHS Clinical Commissioning Group.](#)

Other members of the Board include:

- the [Council Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration](#)
- the two Chairs of the [Committees](#)
- a representative from [North East London Foundation Trust \(NELFT\)](#)
- a representative from [Barking, Havering, Redbridge University Hospitals \(BHRUT\)](#)
- a representative from the [London Fire Service](#)
- a representative from the [London Probation Service](#)
- a representative from the [Council's Community Solutions Service](#)

The SAB has three committees, which are chaired by different partner organisations:

- The Performance and Assurance Committee (chaired by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham)
- The Safeguarding Adult Review Committee (chaired by the Clinical Commissioning Group)
- The Safeguarding Adults Complex Cases Group (chaired by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham)

In addition, the SAB is able to invite other organisations or individuals to attend and speak at the meetings where they have contributions to make.

The Chair of each of the three committees is responsible for:

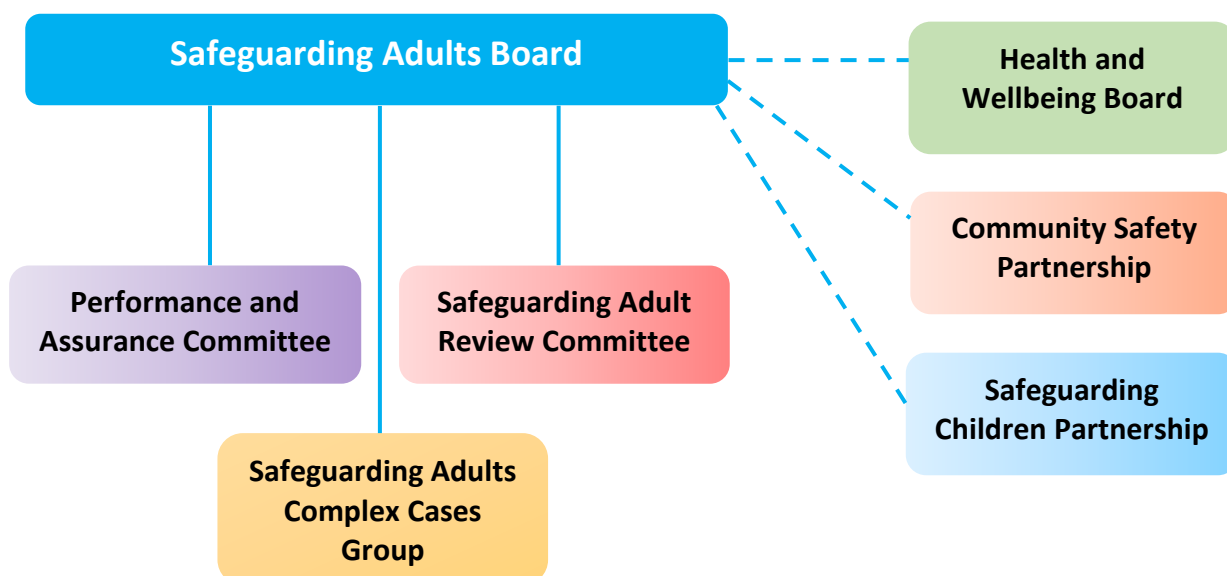
- Developing a work programme which is incorporated into the SAB strategic plan and monitored by the SAB
- Resourcing the meetings of the committee
- Reporting on the progress of the committee's work to the SAB and ensuring that the membership of the committee draws in the required experience.

During 2020/21 the Independent Chair talked with relevant colleagues about children's safeguarding while the previous Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) arrangements were transitioning to the current new partnership arrangements in 2021/22. This allowed for opportunities to consider safeguarding adults and children at risk, and the issues affecting both areas.

The Independent Chair attended the Health and Wellbeing Board to allow for further consideration and debate regarding the issues of safeguarding within the agenda. The Independent Chair also attended quarterly the Council Corporate Safeguarding Meeting with the Leader of the Council, the Lead Member for Social Care and Health Integration, the Chief Executive of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and the Strategic Director for Service Development and Integration, to review performance data for adult social care, including workforce data and associated risks and mitigation. This allows for open debate, discussion, challenge and demonstrates a climate of openness and transparency.

The Independent Chair also met regularly with LBBDCouncil's Director of People & Resilience and Adult Social Care Operations Director, the NHS CCG Deputy Nurse Director and Metropolitan Police Superintendent in their lead statutory roles, as well as with Committee Chairs and other key SAB partners.

The Board is supported by the Council Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration as a participant observer. This enables Councillor colleagues to be kept up to date with safeguarding adult matters. In addition, the Committee Chairs and officer advisors also attend Board meetings.



The SAB's Statutory Responsibilities

The SAB must publish an Annual Report each year as well as having strategic plan. This Annual Report of the Barking and Dagenham SAB looks back on the work undertaken by the SAB and its committees, throughout 2020/21 and provides an account of the work of the partnership including achievements, challenges and priorities for the coming year.

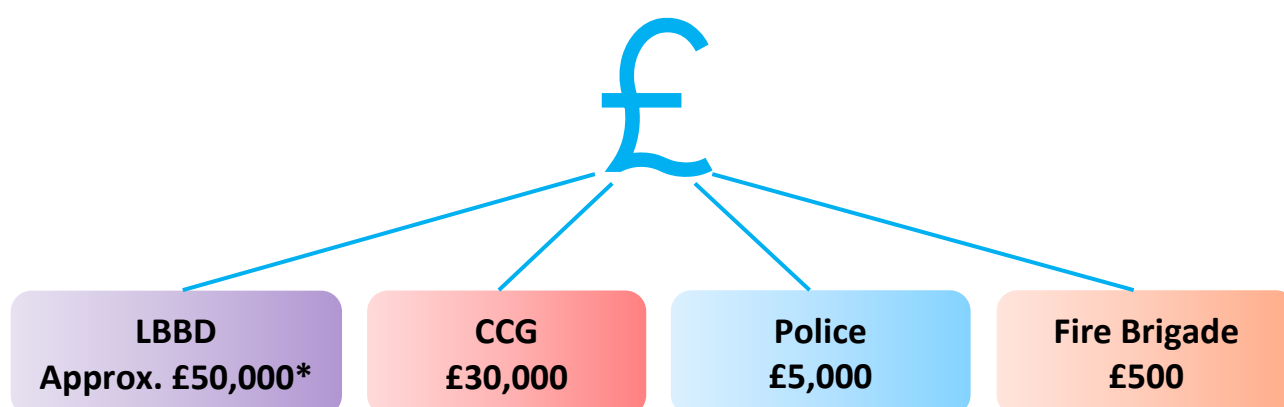
In addition, the SAB has a statutory duty to carry out Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) where an adult in the Local Authority area:

- has died as a result of abuse or risk (either known or suspected) and there are concerns that partner organisations could have worked together more effectively to protect that adult.
- has not died but the SAB knows or suspects that adult has experienced serious abuse or neglect.

The implementation of recommendations and action plans from a SAR must be reported in the Annual Report, including any decision not to implement any recommendation. One SAR was commissioned in 2020/21 and continued into 2021/22. The details of this SAR can be seen at chapter 6.

Financial Contributions and Expenditure

Statutory partners make financial contributions to the Safeguarding Adults Board. For 2020/21 the partner contributions to the SAB were as follows:



*The Council makes up any shortfall in costs covering service support, staffing etc.

Safeguarding Data

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The following summary has been collated with data from the annual Safeguarding Adults Collection (SAC) which was submitted to NHS Digital in July 2021.

Performance data for Barking in Dagenham is for the period between the 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021. Any comparator data which is referred to is for the previous reporting period between the 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, unless otherwise stated. National and comparator data for 2020-21, at the time of writing, has not yet been published. National and comparator performance data for 2020-21 is expected to be published in September 2021.

Safeguarding Concerns

- The number of safeguarding concerns raised during 2020-21 rose 26% from 1,408 to 1,769 in the past year. This is the highest number since reporting through this data collection began.
- In 2019-20 Barking and Dagenham's safeguarding concerns rate per 100,000 residents was 943 compared to the statistical neighbour comparator average of 707.
- During 2020-21, 15% of concerns went on have a Section 42 enquiry started compared to 18% in the previous year. The conversion rate has been downwardly trending since 2018-19 (23%). This trend has also been noticed between London and statistical neighbour comparators between 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Section 42 enquiries

- There was a total of 539 concluded Section 42 enquiries during 2020-21, a rise of 37% compared to 394 concluded enquiries in 2019-20.
- Neglect and acts of omission remain the highest type of risk associated with concluded Section 42 enquiries accounting for 32% - despite a 7% fall from the last reporting year. This type of risk is highest nationally (32%) within London (35%) and within our statistical neighbour local authorities (34%). Self-neglect rose from 9% to 13% during 2020-21.
- The location of risk reported within the Section 42 enquiries remains highest within home settings; this has remained unchanged in Barking and Dagenham since 2015-16. In 2020-21, 65% of risk was located at home (up from 60%), followed by 17% within care home settings (down from 25%). The same trends are noticed nationally and within London.

- Of all Section 42 enquiries, 56% of the risk is from individuals known to the individual at risk, this is slightly above our comparators. 31% of risk was caused by people who were unknown, a rise from 26%. This increase may be due to the closure of Section 42 enquiries which migrated from AIS to LAS leading perpetrators being recorded as unknown.

Outcomes

- The risk was removed or reduced in 91% of enquires that concluded; a small reduction compared with 2019-20 data, during which 94% of enquiries resulted in an overall reduction in risk for the adults at risk of abuse. This measure remains above the set target of 90%
- The risk remained in 9% of concluded cases (37) in 2020/21. In all cases where the risk remained the person continued to be offered support and advice.
- There were 85 Section 42 enquiries where the individual at risk lacked mental capacity, this represents 16% of all concluded Section 42 enquiries. Due to a decline in enquiries from care homes and closure of migrated cases from AIS to LAS this has fallen from 29% in 2019-20.
- 59% of adults were asked if they would like to express their desired outcomes, whether they were expressed or not. This has fallen from 83% in 2019-20 as for the referrals that had been closed, it could not be ascertained whether individuals had been asked. Of those that were asked, 91% expressed their desired outcomes were achieved.

Local Government Association COVID-19 Adult Safeguarding Insight Project

- The Local Government Association developed an insight project to create a national picture regarding safeguarding adults' activity during the Covid 19 pandemic and provide an understanding of how safeguarding adults activity in England was affected by the initial stage of the pandemic and 'stay at home' orders. Local authorities were asked to provide data on safeguarding adults activity from June 2019 up to June 2021. The data was produced from Liquid Logic Adult's Social Care case management system.

Safeguarding Concerns

- The pandemic and accompanying lockdowns had an impact on safeguarding in the borough, with the rates of safeguarding concerns throughout 2020 higher than 2019. During 2019 there was an average of 115 concerns a month; this rose to 145 during 2020. Safeguarding concerns raised remained higher than usual from January to June 2021, at an average of 142 concerns per month.

- Over the course of the pandemic an increased number of concerns were reported from health partners and family, friends, and neighbours, involving adults aged 18-64 years. Many of the concerns were regarding adults who did not have care and support needs and were supported without going down a safeguarding pathway, through signposting and preventative support.

Types of risk

- The distribution of types of risk changed in the borough during the pandemic. Neglect remained the most prevalent type of risk in Section 42 enquiries, although rates fell from 37% in 2019 to 31% in 2020. There were moderate increases in domestic abuse and psychological abuse in 2020 compared with 2019. Domestic abuse increased from 2% in 2019 to 4% in 2020, whilst psychological abuse increased from 13% to 15% over this period.
- Self-neglect also increased during the pandemic, from 9% in 2019 to 13% in 2020. During some months in 2020 rates peaked at 19%. The overall increase may be attributable to the strengthening of local practice and learning and the early identification of people experiencing difficulty in managing their home environments through community interventions.

Location of risk

- Risk located in the individual's home increased noticeably during the national and regional lockdowns. During 2019 approximately of 40% Section 42 enquiries involved risk in the individual's home, however from April 2020 this increased steeply to an average of 56%.
- The proportion of enquiries with risk located in care homes fell from 16% in 2019 to 12% in 2020 and increased again to 16% in 2021. The moderate decrease in 2020 is most likely due to the reduction in social care and health professionals visiting care homes regularly and reporting concerns. Also, many homes were focussed on managing outbreaks which may have reduced reporting.

Reducing risk for adults at risk

- Enquiry outcomes remained relatively unchanged from 2019. In the first half of 2021, from January to June, risk was reduced or removed in 91% of concluded Section 42 enquiries. This is almost the same as for 2020, 90%, and a slight reduction on the rate for 2019, 94%.

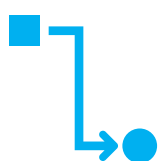
Safeguarding in numbers 2020-21



1,769 safeguarding concerns were raised to LBBB.



Safeguarding concerns have increased by **26%** to 1,769 compared to last year (1,408).



15% (269/1,769) of all concerns raised have led to Section 42 enquiries.



Neglect and acts of omission accounted for 32% of all types of risk. It remains the highest category of all comparators.



65% of risks were investigated in the person's own home; up from 61% last year. 17% of risk was in care homes.



Of all Section 42 enquiries, **56%** of the risk is from individuals known to the individual at risk. Only **13%** of the source of risk is due to service providers.



In **91%** of Section 42 cases risk was removed or reduced.



16% of individuals lacked mental capacity compared to 29% in 2019-20.



59% of adults were asked if they would like to express their desired outcomes, of which **91%** of their outcomes were achieved.



One Safeguarding Adult Review was commissioned in 2020/21.

Safeguarding Adult Reviews 6

In 2020/21 the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adult Board commissioned a Safeguarding Adult Review to be undertaken by an Independent Reviewer following the unexpected death of Mrs X. The Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) Committee reviewed the case and details and concluded that the case met the criteria for a SAR to be undertaken. The SAR Committee appointed the Independent Reviewer have overseen the undertaking of the review, production of the report and was involved in drafting the final recommendations. Although the SAR was commissioned in 2020 it did not conclude until July 2021. The final report and recommendations were agreed by the SAB in July 2021 and the Safeguarding Adult Review Committee were tasked with developing an action plan which has been agreed by the SAB and which will implement the recommendations. The full report will shortly be available at this link <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/barking-and-dagenham-safeguarding-adults-board>

The SAB'S Partners

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London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Adult Social Care

Developments and Improvements in Safeguarding Adults Practice, including in the context of Covid-19

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham are continuing to see high levels of safeguarding concerns. Professionals are increasingly seeing people face to face which makes it more likely that they are spotting evidence of abuse and neglect. Referrals are being carefully monitored to ensure that trends and new developments are identified. It is not yet clear what impact the long periods of lockdown and isolation have had on safeguarding, but it is fair to assume that it is likely that more abuse has taken place behind closed doors. Heightened stress levels in family settings are likely to have led to aggression and arguments. Families that provide informal care need our support more than ever.

The extended period of lockdown which led to many people being furloughed or without work will have caused families financial difficulties. This may have increased the risk of financial abuse. Access to care homes has been restricted and it will be critical for our workers and colleagues from our Commissioning and Quality Assurance teams to make sure they look out for signs of neglect and abuse as they return to undertaking site visits.

Contribution to Multi-agency Safeguarding Practice and Partnership Working Arrangements

This year there was a focus on building better relationships with the Metropolitan Police to support community safety initiatives. We knew that adults had fewer opportunities to go out as a result of the pandemic and subsequently fewer opportunities to report domestic abuse or ask for support from health professionals like their GP, community nurses or community and voluntary sector organisations. The Police delivered a workshop at the Council's Adult Social Care Strengths-based Practice Forum to social workers on coercion and control. Social workers were able to consider how police action is helping to keep residents safe and how, by working in partnership, professionals can identify and act on concerns. Professionals discussed how to ask open questions, prompts and professional curiosity aids such as safeguarding enquiries and police processes. Social workers shared practice examples of how they are conducting home visits where necessary and having video calls to manage risks of abuse where these were suspected or known. The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings have now moved online and through enhanced relationships between Adult Social Care and the Police there is confidence to raise cases through the Safeguarding Adults Complex Cases Group. Following

SAR recommendations and multi agency working across the SAB partnership the Complex Cases Group has now been reviewed and remodelled to facilitate a more robust process where risks are able to be shared at a strategic leadership level across the organisational representatives of the SAB. Multi agency cases and safeguarding risks are presented and discussed and the risks are managed through the monitoring and review process. The revised process ensures better management oversight and enhances the timeliness of the outcomes for adults and management of multi agency risks across the partnership.

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Community Solutions

Developments and Improvements in Safeguarding Adults Practice, including in the context of Covid-19

In 2020/21 Community Solutions continued to develop the Adult Intake Team which is the front-door into Adult Social Care. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Community Solutions have increased capacity within the Adult Intake Team by re-deploying staff from other services. The extended team became the co-ordinating point for the Council's response to vulnerable residents seeking help and support, particularly those who were shielding.

Recent quality assurance activity led by the Principal Social Worker continued to show that thresholds were being applied proportionately, that decision making was safe and that residents are receiving timely support. In instances where adults did not have care and support needs, Community Solutions brokered community support and connected these residents to relevant support services.

Support provided to residents included:

- The Adult Intake Team led on the co-ordination of support for vulnerable residents including 8000 shielding residents. The support provided included welfare calls, visits and co-ordination of food provisions and medication. Overall, the service contacted over 22000 residents.
- Over 1000 residents were connected to BD-CAN, which is the local Citizens' Alliance Network that supports people in the community, and Independent Living Agency (ILA) support.
- Community Solutions supported 29 assisted funerals for vulnerable residents and arranged for the protection of their properties pending resolution of any estates.
- The Adult Intake Team continued to provide safeguarding and support advice to colleagues within the voluntary sector and wider community.

The Adult Intake Team and the wider Community Solutions services have been involved in direct safeguarding work particularly where there have been significant neglect, self-neglect and deprivation related issues. In some circumstances where the Section 42 threshold has not been met, to initiate a safeguarding enquiry, the team has strengthened joint working opportunities with partners to provide best placed community-based support. As a result of Community Solutions' Covid-19 pandemic coordination and proactive role, the Council did not take up the Care Act easements as most of the Covid-19 related demand was safely managed outside of statutory services. In 2020/21, 7042 contacts were received by Adult Intake Team of which 3104 (44%) resulted in the adults being supported within Community Solutions (outside of statutory services).

In conjunction with the Adult Mental Health Service, a front door mental health duty support system was put in place to strengthen the response to mental health referrals and reduce avoidable referrals into statutory adult services. While it is still early days, anecdotal evidence indicates increasing safe diversions from statutory services and confidence at the front door.

Community Solutions has continued with 'street counts' in the borough to identify any adults rough sleeping or new to the streets. A full street count took place in November 2020 and 10 rough sleepers were identified. We have also been undertaking targeted monthly street counts identifying an average of 6 to 7 rough sleepers per month. Support was offered to these residents with the view of re-integrating them into the community. In 2020/21, 19 rough sleepers were placed in safe accommodation as part of the Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). These adults were supported with moving on support plans that includes housing options, drug and alcohol support, food, skills and employment.

In response to an anticipated increase in domestic abuse, the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) has been re-configured into weekly well attended virtual meetings. About 480 adult victims of high-risk domestic abuse have been supported through MARAC over the past year.

Contribution to Multi-agency Safeguarding Practice and Partnership Working Arrangements

The Adult Intake Team has continued to strengthen relationships with key partners within the wider community. This involves improved working relationships with partners such as Reconnections, Independent Living Agency and the broader voluntary sector offers. The service is closely linked into the borough's Re-Imagining Adult Social Care and Early Help networks, which include a focus on relationship building and community led prevention.

Community Solutions continued to provide essential frontline support and mitigate hardship for residents with specific concerns and support requirements such as finance, debt, rent, benefits, housing and employment.

Community Solutions continues to work with The Source (a local voluntary organisation) to provide support and face to face contact for residents with issues of homelessness, from Barking Learning Centre. This 'day centre' support offer has continued throughout this period and is supporting on average 50 people per week. This support includes food, help with accessing benefits, engagement with GPs, dentists and other services that include drug and alcohol support.

Community Solutions continues to manage a No Recourse To Public Funds (NRPF) offer for adults with children. In 2020/21, 58 vulnerable NRPF households were supported with accommodation and subsistence support. Community Solutions and Adult Social Care are working towards launching a single support offer for single adults subject to NRPF conditions who are at risk of experiencing destitution.

The Metropolitan Police

Developments and Improvements in Safeguarding Adults Practice, including in the context of Covid-19

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic the responsibility of the police to prevent crime and protect the public has remained. However, the way in which the police have delivered services to the public has had to adapt in response to the challenges of Covid secure working. Safeguarding and public protection services have become more agile, and the police have developed new approaches to ensure that people in need of help and protection receive the support they need. Technology has played a significant part in our ability to do this and innovative (and more timely approaches) have been introduced to ensure that for example victims of domestic abuse receive support and protection more quickly than before the pandemic. Virtual court processes to allow domestic violence protection order applications to be heard have been developed here and are now being used across London to support the victims of domestic abuse. Similarly, more timely multi-agency meetings have been made possible for issues like domestic abuse allowing earlier and more effective interventions to be considered. While the overall volume of crime dropped during the pandemic, levels of domestic abuse increased significantly, and this placed additional demands on staff. While Covid secure working practices meant that sickness did not increase significantly the welfare and fatigue of staff working under pressured circumstances required additional oversight by leaders and managers. Additional support

mechanisms were put in place to support staff and staff were sign posted to these and encouraged to make full use of them.

Contribution to Multi-agency Safeguarding Practice and Partnership Working Arrangements

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has introduced a public protection improvement plan to support an increased focus on more effectively recognising and responding to the needs of vulnerable people. This new framework places greater emphasis on improving the quality and effectiveness of the policing response and is leading to changes in the approach taken to public protection work and leading to improvements across a wide range of adult safeguarding issues. Arrest rates for domestic abuse offences have increased meaning there is an increased likelihood of a positive outcome at court. We have increased the use of body worn video in domestic abuse investigations as we know this leads to higher number of perpetrators pleading guilty at the first opportunity meaning survivors of abuse need not attend court. In 2019 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services published a report on the police response to older victims. The report highlighted much more should be done to protect older people from abuse. The MPS has developed an action plan and has made improvements to training and recording practices. For the first time the MPS is able to record the proportion of adults who report crime who have an additional vulnerability. While it is too early to undertake detailed analysis early data suggests that 39% of adult victims of crime have an additional vulnerability. Over time this will inform work to improve the recognition and response to adult vulnerability and ensure more adults who need help and protection receive the support they need.

Barking and Dagenham NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Developments and Improvements in Safeguarding Adults Practice, including in the context of Covid-19

The Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) have continued to contribute to both London Safeguarding Adult Forums and tri-borough Safeguarding Adult Boards Covid-19 risk assessments and recovery plans over the past year. There was a particular focus on care home support and compliance with Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and use of Personal Protective Equipment during the early stages of the pandemic. The CCGs redeployed three Continuing Health Care nurses into NELFT Infection Prevention and Control team to enhance support to care home and domiciliary care providers across three boroughs. The Infection Control Prevention (ICP) train the trainer programme was rolled out to ensure a consistent application of IPC guidance. Throughout the year, the Designated Nurse for Adult Safeguarding has shared the learning from the North East London Learning

Disability Death Mortality Review (LeDeR) process and information on Covid-19 related deaths with the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adult Board. Access to online Safeguarding Adult levels 1, 2 and 3, Prevent and Mental Capacity Assessment (MCA)/Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) training has been made available for staff within commissioned services and GP practices. The CCGs have continued to monitor CCG and provider staff compliance with statutory Safeguarding Adult and Prevent training. Three of the CCGs Quality and Safeguarding Team were redeployed to assist with the Covid-19 vaccination programme between January to March 2021.

Contribution to Multi-agency Safeguarding Practice and Partnership Working Arrangements

The North East London Clinical Commissioning Group and Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Integrated Care Partnership commission services from providers (care homes and hospitals) and updated their Domestic Abuse Policy which provides advice and guidance for managers or staff members who are victims of Domestic Abuse. The Local Quality Surveillance Group is chaired by the Designated Nurse Adult Safeguarding and continues to monitor quality, assurance and safeguarding issues in care homes, supported living and domiciliary care services across the tri borough partnership. Representatives from the Local Authority Quality Assurance Teams and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) attend this meeting and regular updates are provided about providers where concerns are raised. The purpose of this meeting is to share information and agree where follow up action is required. The Designated Nurse for Adult Safeguarding attended the tri-borough Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) Task and Finish Group which oversees the preparations for implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards across the boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge. The Designated Nurse for Adult Safeguarding attends the Community Safety Partnership in Barking and Dagenham and the Domestic Abuse Operational Forum. The CCG's are responsible for seeking assurance that providers are fulfilling their legislative duties in relation to safeguarding adults in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Care Act 2014. The Deputy Nurse Director represents North East London Clinical Commissioning Group and Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Integrated Care Partnership at the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adult Board and chairs the Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) Committee.

Barking Havering and Redbridge University Hospital Trust (BHRUT)

Developments and Improvements in Safeguarding Adults Practice, including in the context of Covid-19

During April 2020 to March 2021, BHRUT has seen a total of 1056 Safeguarding Adult concerns raised by Trust staff which is a substantial increase on 558 in 2019/20. 251 of

these were raised for Barking and Dagenham. The increase in the number of concerns raised is part likely to be as a result of the national lockdown restrictions imposed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. These restrictions continued during quarter 1 and into quarter 2. During this period there was limited access to community services. There was also a significant increase in non-safeguarding referrals made in quarter 1 and 2. Following review, it was identified that many of these referrals did not meet criteria for safeguarding review. Support was offered to the Trust's divisions during this period, which saw a reduction in non-safeguarding referrals in the following quarters.

Mental health presentations to the Trust's Emergency Departments were high during quarter 1 with 63% of the referrals made showing that mental health played a part in the service user's attendance. During quarter 2 this reduced significantly to 11% and is most likely attributed to lockdown measures being eased and community services becoming more accessible. A further increase was seen during quarter 3 (48%) and quarter 4 (38%) and may be attributed to lockdown measures being reinstated in response to the pandemic.

Throughout 2020/21 the BHRUT Named Professionals for Safeguarding Adults have maintained a regular presence on the local area Safeguarding Adults Board for Barking and Dagenham. Members of the Trust's Safeguarding Team also attend the Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) Committee, the Complex Cases Group and the Performance and Assurance Committee. The Adult Safeguarding Team are regularly requested to attend Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings to provide advice and support for complex cases, often involving complicated family dynamics.

Safeguarding learning bulletins are produced by the Safeguarding Team and cascaded Trust-wide. The bulletins may relate to cases that the Safeguarding Team have been involved in, or Safeguarding Adult Reviews that have been published, some of which will have been discussed at the Safeguarding Operational Group Case Study meeting. All bulletins include details of a cases along with identified issues and concerns and lessons learnt. Some of the bulletins produced and circulated during 2020/21 relate to SARs, domestic abuse (including a male victim), patients living with dementia, mental capacity for an adult patient with a learning disability, self-neglect and forced marriage. Cases are also discussed at the Trust Patient Safety Summits and Safeguarding Case Discussion meetings which are advertised Trust-wide and attended by all disciplines.

Contribution to Multi-agency Safeguarding Practice and Partnership Working Arrangements

In 2020 the Trust began work on developing a new Safeguarding Strategy for 2021-2025. It is aligned to the key safeguarding priorities identified at national and local level and includes the following:

- Think Family - including the whole family when planning care and ensure the child's voice is heard.
- Service User Engagement - sharing safeguarding concerns with service users where appropriate, while ensuring those concerns are reported swiftly.
- Responsive and Healthy Workforce - our staff will be supported to respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns; their health and wellbeing will be at the forefront of what we do.
- Harmful Practices - promoting the protection of adults and children who may be at risk of harm from all types of abuse.
- Bridging the Gap - supporting the care needs of vulnerable young people as they move into adulthood.
- Empowerment and Advocacy - empowering patients and their families/carers to engage in decision making about their care and treatment.
- Learning from Practice - empowering staff to identify learning needs and source opportunities for them to learn.
- Learning Disability and Autism - working with external partners to ensure service users receive excellent care and support.

The Safeguarding Strategy 2021-2025 will be displayed throughout the Trust in poster format and is underpinned by a 12 page booklet which expands on the Trust's vision for safeguarding and how the Safeguarding Team plans to achieve that vision. In addition, the Safeguarding Annual Workplan will contain key actions to be progressed throughout each year relating to each of the priorities. The progress of the workplan is monitored quarterly by the Trust's Safeguarding Operational Group and is overseen by the Trust's Safeguarding Strategic and Assurance Group.

In 2020/21 the Trust placed a bid with The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) for funding for a Hospital Based Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). The post will be a year-long contract. The successful candidate will support the Safeguarding Team in cases relating to domestic violence and abuse, and advocate for women, men and young people.

North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT)

Developments and Improvements in Safeguarding Adults Practice, including in the context of Covid-19

The NELFT model of safeguarding highlights that 'safeguarding is everyone's business'. This has continued during NELFT's response to the pandemic. The Named Safeguarding Professionals have continued work closely with operational and management colleagues

within NELFT and continued to respond to safeguarding concerns and risks. Safeguarding has been considered by the Trust in all Covid-19 responses and implementation of new ways of working via the membership in the Incident Management Team (IMT) and in the Future Focus Recovery groups, staff and patient Covid-19 Testing, Nightingale 2 and Covid vaccination work streams.

The Community Health and Mental Health Service have continued to offer face-to-face contact to services users with the highest care needs. The NELFT Safeguarding Advice Service has remained business as usual offering support and guidance to all NELFT Staff.

NELFT have embraced the use of modern technology to ensure timely service delivery and accessible pathway of communication between staff and for service users was maintained during the pandemic. They have also used IT to deliver safeguarding training, webinars, weekly Covid-19 briefings and virtual attendance at multi-agency meetings with the safeguarding partnerships.

Members of the Corporate Safeguarding Team were redeployed during the first lockdown in spring 2020 however this was planned in such a way that the safeguarding advice service remained operational. No safeguarding team members were redeployed in during the second wave of the Covid-19 lockdown.

NELFT have also deployed a Named Professional at Sunflowers Court, Goodmayes Hospital who is based within the hospital to ensure direct support and contact is available to all in-patient staff.

Enquiries to the Safeguarding (Adult) Advice service remained consistent between April 2020 and March 2021 compared to the previous 12 months. The most common enquiries to the service continue to be domestic abuse, patient on patient abuse (Goodmayes Hospital), pressure ulcers and staff education and advice.

There has been an increasing evidence nationally that the effects of lockdown restrictions have led to a further increase in incidences of domestic abuse. In response to this, the safeguarding team have participated in the all staff webinars where they have presented information about the increase in risks, provided guidance in relation to responding to disclosures via telephone and video consultation and raised awareness with regards to the specialist services available to support those affected by domestic abuse. In addition, the NELFT domestic abuse guidance and staff domestic abuse HR policy have been reviewed. Specific training has also restarted and has been made available to all staff.

Contribution to Multi-agency Safeguarding Practice and Partnership Working Arrangements

During 2020/21 NELFT were involved and contributed to one Safeguarding Adult Review and have continued to prioritise safeguarding partnership working, attendance and participation at meetings at both a strategic and operational level. NELFT representatives attend the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), the Adult Safeguarding Complex Cases Group, the SAR Committee, the Performance and Assurance Committee and the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) sub-group.

NELFT supports the SAB's work as a partnership and the development of partnership strategies. Despite the pandemic partners have embraced and utilised technology that has enabled them to continue to oversee and lead adult safeguarding in Barking and Dagenham. NELFT continue to contribute, critique and appraise data and information and engage in the existing developments of inter-agency arrangements to ensure and support the SAB in fulfilling its duties. The NELFT safeguarding team support key pieces of work, including learning from serious incidents, which are shared via the SAR Committee to explore learning opportunities.

NELFT continue to prepare for the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) and although implementation of LPS has been delayed until at least April 2022, a number of key deliverables are currently being progressed and reported to Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) and Integrated Care Systems (ICSs).

The Fire Service

Developments and Improvements in Safeguarding Adults Practice, including in the context of Covid-19

During 2020/21 the Fire Brigade have undertaken a number of training sessions run for all senior officers around dealing with safeguarding referrals as part of the implementation of the recommendations from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). An online package of training is in place that all fire fighters can access around safeguarding awareness and referral. Senior officers receive training from our external course provider, that covers policies and procedures and the importance of safeguarding. In addition, more efficient processes have been implemented for London Fire Brigade to assist frontline staff to report any safeguarding issues within the Borough. During Covid-19 safeguarding policies and procedures remained in place. Visits were undertaken via a risk assessment and those who were 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' individuals received home fire safety visits.

Contribution to Multi-agency Safeguarding Practice and Partnership Working Arrangements

The London Fire Brigade contributes to the SAB's development of information sharing and referral pathways to ensure a multi-agency approach to the safety and wellbeing of local people. The vast majority of Borough Commanders are non-statutory members of their local Safeguarding Adults Boards. In addition, Borough Commanders and Station Managers across London chair and participate in a range of sub-groups concerning single issue safeguarding concerns or specific at-risk individuals such as the Barking and Dagenham Complex Cases Group and Safeguarding Adult Reviews.

The National Probation Service

Developments and Improvements in Safeguarding Adults Practice, including in the context of Covid-19

2020/21 has been a challenging year for the Probation Service which has seen the implementation of the exceptional delivery model to continue service delivery throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Both the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) adopted a blended approach to supervision which utilised remote telephone reporting, door step visits and face to face appointments based on assessed risk of harm. At the start of the pandemic the entire probation caseload underwent a validation process to ensure the personal circumstances including their vulnerabilities to Covid were recorded and could be considered when assessing the mode of reporting required.

During this period the Probation Service has also undergone a unification process which has seen the ending of the CRC contracts and creation of a new unified service. Leading up to this a programme of mandatory training has taken place to ensure all staff are equipped to work within the new service. This included all transferring staff completing the appropriate level of safeguarding training.

As part of unification the service has awarded Catch 22 a contract to deliver wellbeing services to those subject to probation supervision and this includes a suite of interventions focused on mental health and wellbeing including mentoring and low level mental health intervention.

Contribution to Multi-agency Safeguarding Practice and Partnership Working Arrangements

Throughout the year the Probation Service has continued to work collaboratively with partners both statutory and non statutory to maximise support for service users. An

increased use of MAPPA 3 for Service users where safeguarding is an issue is being driven especially in the area of serious group offending.

The pandemic has meant that all agencies have had to adapt to the use of technologies and the Probation Service has rolled out the use of MS Teams across the organisation which has allowed, in some aspects, greater involvement and engagement with partnership meetings. As the organisation enters a recovery position and return to 'business as usual' some of the learning around the use of technology will remain and form part of a flexible approach to partnership engagement in the future. The Probation Service will continue to work with the SAB and local partners to ensure local governance and effective partnership working, as well as developing ways of co-commissioning services for vulnerable adults under probation supervision.

Quality of Care

8

Overview from the Council - Adult Social Care Provider Market

The pandemic tested the resilience of our social care workforce, both within the local authority and in the provider market. However, partners from across the health and social care system have worked closely and collaboratively, taking learning from the first wave to minimise Covid-19 transmission and better support vulnerable residents.

In-house and external providers provided an excellent level of care to residents, whether in an individual's own home or in a care home, despite facing significant challenges around infection control, staffing and morale as a result of Covid-19. A Healthwatch report into the work of care homes during the first wave said that families and residents felt that our borough care homes had 'provided excellent care for both the health and well-being of residents'.

Nearly all providers across residential care, and many of our supported living and extra care schemes, experienced a Covid-19 outbreak and we worked closely with these providers to manage the outbreaks swiftly and safely. We did this using coordinated outbreak management teams (with input from a range of health and care professionals), infection and prevention control specialist advice and visits and distributed thousands of items of emergency personal protective equipment (PPE) before effective government supply chains were in place. Our Public Health, Commissioning and Provider Quality and Improvement teams provided a seven-day support service to providers throughout the first and second wave. This comprised of advice, information and guidance and particularly moral support. Providers have uniformly given positive feedback to the support that they've received by these Council teams.

During the pandemic, the Council continued our robust risk rating process with providers using all of the intelligence at the disposal of operational and Commissioning teams, health colleagues and of course the Provider Quality team. The Provider Quality team visited providers where significant risks were identified with full PPE and infection control measures in place. For other providers, virtual quality visits were undertaken. Since 1st April, the team have been visiting providers in person with a full risk assessment and required PPE. Although there were concerns that there may be unsighted risks that we were unaware of within our provider market, we have been pleased that our reviews of services have been mainly positive, and our care homes in particular have all had favourable reviews. We have also introduced a tool called the PAMMS Quality Assurance Tool which

has enabled the Provider Quality team to complete quality reviews and standardise practice using a portal for providers to upload documents and to monitor that they are following the latest guidance. The team can also track trends and make comparisons with similar services across several London boroughs. This has made quality reports more efficient and has enabled the team to spend even more time in the community than they were previously.

Since the beginning of 2021, local authority support to providers has also included vaccine uptake. We have worked closely with BHRUT and GPs to undertake vaccination sessions for homes and other providers and have organised a series of webinars to try and dispel myths and allay fears around the vaccine for provider staff. We now have individual plans in place with the few remaining care homes that are below the 80% staff and 90% resident target for having their first Covid vaccination.

Financially, we have also provided support to our providers, giving a 10% uplift in rates during the first wave to older people providers to help mitigate provider failure and distributing over £2.8 million of Infection Control Grant, Workforce Capacity Grant and Rapid Testing Fund monies to providers to support with infection control, testing and workforce challenges.

Lockdown and restrictions have been difficult for our vulnerable, older residents, particularly as the social infrastructure they rely on has reduced. Community-based networks such as BD CAN, along with organisations like the Independent Living Agency, Carers and Barking and Dagenham and Reconnections, put in place initiatives to reduce loneliness and isolation and embed practical support such as food and medication pick-ups and training around the use of technology to connect with others. In addition to this, the Intake team have made upwards of 20,000 calls to support the most vulnerable residents during the pandemic, particularly those who were shielding. The Social Prescribing service linked people into befriending and support services as well as providing a range of virtual programmes to address social isolation and other needs.

The Council have worked closely with the hospital, NELFT, the CCG and our neighbouring boroughs to put in place initiatives to support and improve hospital discharge and protect against transmission of Covid-19 throughout the pandemic. This included the implementation of a new 'discharge to assess' model, a multi-disciplinary team to undertake Continuing Healthcare Assessments, and separate provisions for Covid-19 positive residents to reduce infection rates. Flows of communication have been critical to getting solutions in place and we have worked through challenges with partners at regular meetings to improve pathways and support. Challenges have included staffing the Infection Control team led by NELFT and ensuring that the hospital are communicating test outcomes before discharge. Despite challenges, the system has worked collaboratively throughout and partnership working has been a real success story of the pandemic.

Against this backdrop, the Council developed our Improvement Programme for Adults' Care and Support and Mental Health for the next two years in the Summer of 2020. This includes a number of workstreams, taking learning from the pandemic and building on our new strengths and asset-based approach to social work which we have formalised through a new Delivery Model, Quality Assurance Framework and Practice Standards. One of our key priorities for the next period will be our 'From Hospital to Community' workstream. This will see us remodel our hospital discharge arrangements with Havering, Redbridge, the hospital trust and NELFT, bringing social workers back into the community and establishing a new unit to coordinate discharges. Additionally, LBBD will be reviewing hospital discharge pathways to ensure they are clear, improve the patient experience and are outcome focused. The overall aim of the review is for residents to stay as independent as possible and away from long-term care options. Additionally, we are tendering for a new, ambitious Innovation Partner for an all-age care technology service to support our objective of being a national leader in this area and placing technology at the heart of our care and support offer. Through the Mental Health Improvement Programme, the dementia workstream will focus on building the respite offer, improve the use of day services and increasing the Dementia Advisor provision.

Barking and Dagenham Primary Care Providers

Out of thirty-three GP practices in the borough twenty-nine have been rated as good. This means the quality of GP services across Barking and Dagenham have improved and maintained greatly with support from NHS England, Barking and Dagenham CCG and the CQC.

Four practices have been rated as requires improvement. Practices rated as requires improvement are supported to improve by the CCG primary care support staff. Common areas of development include safeguarding, education and training, practice policy updates and communication.

Partnership Priorities

9

The Board regularly considers the work of the SAB in light of the changing contexts of:

- (i) health, social care and public protection nationally and locally
- (ii) objectives, views, emerging risks and financial pressures of partner organisations.

The Foreword and Overview (section 1) of this Annual Report for 2020/21 said that, in the context of Covid-19, we have reviewed our Strategic Priorities for 2021/22 and beyond.







The Board recognises that it needs to have oversight of safeguarding practice and performance in the borough to ensure that quality of care is not compromised or that there is avoidable harm and abuse. The SAB has a role to play in supporting the workforce across the partnership, ensuring that they have the skills and competencies to fulfill their roles.







The Board agreed a Three-Year Strategic Plan 2019/22 at its meeting in July 2019 which was still valid and very relevant in 2020/21. Specific priority areas for attention in 2020/21 were identified as:



- Safeguarding in relation to people who present challenging behaviour to their carers.
- Reviewing commissioning approaches to restrictive practices and restraint.
- Avoidable deaths and harm in hospitals.
- 'Transitional care', particularly of children and young adults with disabilities.
- Homelessness and people with no recourse to public funds, including identification in hospitals.
- Exploitation of vulnerable adults, improving practice in relation to financial and sexual abuse and modern slavery.
- Domestic abuse.
- Mental capacity and advocacy in relation to new approaches to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and the forthcoming implementation of new law around Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS).
- Mental well-being in the community.
- Poverty, neglect and self-neglect in relations to safeguarding concerns.

These subjects embrace the SABs ambitions for 'efficient systems', 'effective practice' and 'meaningful engagement'.

With regard to the SAB’s priorities for 2021/22 (and with a view also to 2022/23 and beyond) we have now updated our thinking and published a revised plan which was agreed by the SAB in February 2021. Below sets out our revised priorities in tabulated form.

Priorities	How will we work to implement these?	Assurance	Learning and Development	Delivery
1. Improving multi-agency partnership working to safeguard adults and their families	Learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from SARs undertaken in Barking and Dagenham and across London and LeDeR reports. • Learning from the Safeguarding Peer Review. • Ensure alignment with children’s safeguarding and CSP - exploitation, forced marriage, domestic abuse and modern slavery. • Develop a multi-agency audit programme, building on the separate agencies processes and applying the learning. 			
	Practice development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop practice around self-neglect, mental capacity, people’s exercise of their ‘rights to choose’, hoarding, restraint and restrictive practices. • Prepare as needed for changes in Liberty Protection Safeguards and Mental Health legislation. 			
	Delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board assurance around Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP), audits. • Prepare for the impact on safeguarding of NHS changes in local Integrated Care System and Clinical Commissioning arrangements. 			

<p>2. Safeguarding residents at risk during the pandemic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of provision. • Assurance from care homes. • Increased demand on adult mental health. • Information sharing - regular updates on SAB agendas (Covid, LeDeR, SARs, Complex Cases Group). • Being alert to the workforce impacts of the pandemic and challenges across all partner organisations and assisting each other wherever appropriate and possible. • Being assured that safeguarding 'business as usual' processes are working effectively during the period. • Being alert to abuse and harm which is not visible, be quick to identify indications and communicate with others, ensure good practice response. 			
<p>3. Reducing inequality across the diversity of Barking and Dagenham's communities and developing safeguarding practice that meets the needs of the many different communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series of SAB workshops to inform developmental priorities to address the different needs of all Barking and Dagenham communities, including recognising issues raised by 'Black Lives Matters'. • Cultural safeguarding priorities (training, audit). • Mapping and audit of racial themes/demographics from SARs and complex cases. • Develop an effective process to engage with the personal experiences, and hearing the voices, of people with lived experience of safeguarding. 			

<p>4. Strengthening priorities across Adults, Children, Community Safety and Health and Wellbeing partnership working arrangements and the respective responsibilities and opportunities of the four partnership boards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think Family approach. • Transitional safeguarding. • Pause Board – supporting vulnerable women. • Assurance from Community Solutions and the ‘front door’ around referrals and the role of NHS partners. • Preventing homelessness presentations in hospitals through earlier intervention, and supporting the needs of people with no recourse to public funds. • Develop plans for a stronger community-based and community-led offer for prevention of the escalation of social care needs in three key groups: disability, mental health and older people. To include stronger community-focused support around safeguarding intervention and reporting. • Strengthen and reinforce awareness of exploitation in all its possible forms and clarity of appropriate responses to cases which become known or suspected. • Strengthen training and awareness of generalist staff, including for example enforcement, caretakers and protectors of the public realm. • Build better community awareness of mental wellbeing through campaigns and other mental health preventive initiatives. 			
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Safeguarding Information 10

For further information about safeguarding and information about the Safeguarding Adults Board please use the following link

<https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/tell-us-if-youre-worried-about-an-adult-at-risk-of-abuse-or-neglect>

To report a safeguarding concern:

Adult Triage, Community Solutions

020 8227 2915

intaketeam@lbbd.gov.uk

safeguardingAdults@lbbd.gov.uk



**In an emergency:
Call 999 and ask for the Police**

Call 101 if you are worried but it is not an emergency.

Out of Hours Emergency Social Work Duty Team

020 8594 8356

adult.edt@nhs.net



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ASSEMBLY**24 November 2021**

Title: Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2020/21	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care Integration	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: No
Report Author: Vikki Rix, Head of Performance and Intelligence, Children's Care and Support Commissioning	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8227 3188 E-mail: christopher.bush@lbbd.gov.uk
Accountable Director: April Bald, Operational Director for Children's Care and Support	
Accountable Strategic Director: Elaine Allegretti, Director of People and Resilience	
<p>Summary:</p> <p>The Council is required to produce an annual report on corporate parenting, which is included in the agenda for your consideration today.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Annual Report is produced on behalf of the Members Corporate Parenting Group (MCPG) and covers the period of 1st April 2020 to end of March 2021.</p> <p>This report introduces the Corporate Parenting Annual Report.</p>	
<p>Recommendation</p> <p>The Assembly is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Note the contents of the report on corporate parenting. (ii) Note achievements and plans for the financial year 2021/22. 	
<p>Reason(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Council is required to produce a Corporate Parenting Annual Report and present these to elected members in their capacity as corporate parents. 	

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs that councils do and when a child, for whatever reason, can't safely stay at home, it is up to us as the local authority to step in and give them the care, support, and stability that they deserve.
- 1.2 This is not just up to the lead member or director of children's services – we need everyone looking out for our most vulnerable children and young people, and every

councillor has a role to play. Being a corporate parent means doing everything we can for every child in the council's care – and every care leaver – to give them the opportunities that other children get. This covers everything from keeping an eye on their progress at school, to looking after their health and wellbeing, to preparing them for life as independent adults – and supporting them when they get there. We need to be ambitious for the children in our care, encouraging them to dream big and take chances even if they do not feel like that has been an option in the past.

2. Corporate Parenting Annual Report

- 2.1 This annual report provides an overview of what we are doing well, our key achievements in the last year, what are our key challenges and our plans to address those challenges in 2021/22 and beyond. The report presents activity and performance data from 2020/21 and identifies the Board's plans and priorities for the year ahead.
- 2.2 Since the last Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2019/20 was produced, we have experienced one of the most turbulent periods for public services – and people services in particular – with the global pandemic. Given the context of the borough and high levels of deprivation, the pandemic has posed significant challenges for our whole community, families, children, and young people and remains – one of the greatest challenges many of us have faced.
- 2.3 Despite the profound impact of the pandemic, and the significant challenge of maintaining business as usual throughout, we have continued our improvement journey. We have remained relentless in our ambitions to improve the quality of social work practice and lived experiences, with many key achievements and improved outcomes for our children in care and care leavers.
- 2.4 We were pleased with the overall positive feedback and published Ofsted letter from our ILACS focused assurance visit held in May 2021 (Ofsted letter published 15th of July 2021) which confirmed many strengths and improvements during the pandemic. We have noted the areas for improvement relevant to children in care and care leavers and these have been incorporated into our improvement plan and progress will be reported regularly at MCPG this year.
- 2.5 The work of the MCPG has also concentrated on delivering the promises we have made to our looked after children and care leavers. We are ambitious for children and young people and want them to lead happy, safe, and successful lives.
- 2.6 A summary of the key achievements in 2020/21 include:
 - Strong and effective senior leadership with an unrelenting focus on improving outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, and their families. A robust and effective response to COVID-19 premised on our culture of putting the needs of the most vulnerable first, honest conversations, robust risk management and creating the conditions to work together as a team and with partners.
 - Lead Member led Corporate Parenting Group going from strength to strength with honest conversations with children, young people, foster carers, and partners resulting in better understanding of experiences, what needs to be different and agreed actions for improvement.

- Further work to do, but continued improvement in our partnership working, with education and health outcomes improving. A health led overhaul of our initial health assessment and reviews has led to improved performance but more work to do especially for health of care leavers.
- Practice improvement continues although consistency and variability remain a priority. This is set against a trajectory of improving practice as identified by audit, good stability, and sustained performance in adoption.
- Innovative and exciting Specialist Intervention Service continues to develop interventions that reflect children, young people and community needs to help keep children in their families or return home.
- For those children in care, a strong in-house fostering service supported by the Mockingbird programme continues to keep placements stable and responding to the variety of needs of our children, with stronger Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) footprint evident.
- Effective Virtual School during the pandemic demonstrating good outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- New care leaver service that is young person centred in capacity and processes and that responds to new duties.
- Our work with care leavers underpinned by “no expiry date” ethos for our care and support offered, with strengthening relationships, good rates of keeping in touch, and celebration of their achievements.
- Increased investment in our enhanced local offer underpinned by better internal and external partnership working including Community Solutions, Housing, Inclusive Growth, and Brokerage with aspirations to work towards Care Leaver Covenant.
- Continuous improvement plan that reflects our strengths and challenges of our offer and practice following a helpful and inspirational visit from the National Improvement Advisor for Care Leavers – Mark Riddell, owned politically and operationally at the highest level.
- Good progress in strengthening consistency and visibility of child’s voice and lived experience.
- An active and greater presence of children in care council in our improvement and corporate parenting work including shaping virtual ways of working.

2.7 We know we still have a lot to do to improve the lives of our children and young people in care and care leavers, but with our stronger invigorated MCPG and as committed Corporate Parents, we are relentless in our ambition to achieve this. Headline plans for 2021/22 are set out at the end of the corporate parenting annual report.

2.8 The Corporate Parenting Annual Report is attached as Appendix C.

3. Consultation

One key element of our work in corporate parenting and in planning for permanence is ensuring that children and young people are involved, both in their own plans and by feeding into broader service development through groups such as Skittlz and the Members Corporate Parenting Group. The corporate parenting annual report outlines activity in this area over the last year and the new strategy will seek to further improve opportunities for children and young people to meaningfully contribute to planning.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of appendices:

Appendix A: LBBD Corporate Parenting Annual Report (2020/21)

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2020/21

Councillor Maureen Worby; Chair of Members Corporate Parenting Group; Lead Member for Social Care and Health Integration

Elaine Allegretti; Director of People and Resilience
(Director of Children's Services)



September 2021

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Foreword

As Lead Member for Social Care and Health Integration and Chair of the Members Corporate Parenting Group, I am proud to introduce the 2020/21 annual report of Barking and Dagenham's Members Corporate Parenting Group (MCPG).

Since the last Corporate Parenting report was produced, we have experienced one of the most turbulent periods for public services – and people services in particular – with the global pandemic. Given the context of the borough and high levels of deprivation, the pandemic has posed significant challenges for our whole community, families, children, and young people and remains – one of the greatest challenges many of us have faced.

Despite the profound impact of the pandemic, and the significant challenge of maintaining business as usual throughout, we have continued our improvement journey. We have remained relentless in our ambitions to improve the quality of social work practice and lived experiences, with many key achievements and improved outcomes for our children in care and care leavers.

We were delighted with the overall positive feedback and published Ofsted letter from our ILACS focused assurance visit (July 2021) which confirmed many strengths and improvements during the pandemic. We have noted the areas for improvement relevant to children in care and care leavers and these have been incorporated into our improvement plan and progress will be reported regularly at MCPG this year.

The work of the MCPG has concentrated on delivering the promises we have made to our children in care and care leavers. We are ambitious for children and young people and want them to lead happy, safe, and successful lives.

Our children in care council are pivotal to the work of the MCPG and we continued to strengthen their voice and participation in 2020/21. We highly value listening to our children and young people and want them to be at the heart of service improvement.

This annual report provides an overview of what we are doing well, our key achievements in the last year, what are our key challenges and our plans to

address those challenges in 2021/22 and beyond. The report presents activity and performance data from 2020/21 and identifies the Board's plans and priorities for the year ahead.

We know we still have a lot to do to improve the lives of our children and young people in care and care leavers, but with our strong and effective MCPG and as committed Corporate Parents, we are relentless in our ambition to achieve this.

Councillor Maureen Worby

Chair of the Corporate Parenting Group

1. Introduction and Background

Introduction

The concept of Corporate Parenting was first introduced in the Children Act 1989 and describes the responsibilities of the Council to provide the best possible care for our children in care and care leavers, as any good parent would do for their children.

Elected Members have a lead role in ensuring that the Council acts as an effective Corporate Parent and have high aspirations for our children and young people to improve their life chances.

Corporate Parenting has been reinvigorated with strong leadership, challenge, and accountability at every level as confirmed by the recent DfE care leavers improvement visit.

Elected members are playing a leading role in championing the Council's aspiration for our children in care and care leavers with the Lead Member as Chair and three other elected Members. Our MCPG has good representation from Children's Social Care, Health, the Virtual School, Community Solutions including Housing, Homes and Money, Health, Commissioning, Education, as well as representatives from the Children in Care Council (Skittlz), and a Foster Carer representative.

We were very pleased with the positive feedback from our two-day DfE improvement visit, undertaken in November 2020 by Mark Riddell, the National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers. In summary, this visit endorsed our rapid improvement and progress to have a better offer for care leavers across the whole service area. Mark Riddell stated that he was *“very impressed by the leadership and management approach that was ambitious, aspirational and I got a real sense of passion and commitment to have a better offer for care leavers across the whole service area”*. The visit and feedback confirmed the strengthened leadership in this area and the significant progress we have made in our approach to Corporate Parenting, our local offer and the extended duties that apply to care leavers up to 25 years. As recommended by the DfE care leavers improvement visit, we have extended the membership to include Department of Work and Pensions and Probation

All new members are fully inducted, each committing to uphold and deliver the key promises made to our children and young people in care and care leavers. The MCPG is well attended, offers challenge, and holds all members to account in their role in delivering a quality service and improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers.

Our MCPG meets on a bi-monthly basis and all meetings took place during the pandemic virtually. The Forward Plan and agendas are set by the MCPG led by young people ensuring our young people in care and care leavers are instrumental in the priorities going forward. The MCPG hear from children and young people directly at every meeting about their views and experiences of services offered. Once a year, we hold a takeover of MCPG by our children in care council. The MCPG reviews performance and outcomes at each meeting through a comprehensive child in care and care leavers dataset inclusive of comparator data and targets set by the MCPG.

Our priorities and plans for 2020/21 are based on the analysis of progress in this annual report, Ofsted recommendations post the focused assurance visit in May 2021, the DfE Care Leavers improvement visit and from what we understand about the lived experiences of children in care and care leavers.

The Promises made to our children in care and care leavers remain the focus of the MCPG to shape the Council being the best parent we can be to those we are responsible for. Progress on the Promises is outlined later in this report.

About the borough

Barking and Dagenham has become one of the fastest-changing communities in Britain. The population was estimated to be 214,107 in 2020: an increase of 29% over the last 15 years and 5% over the last five years. National statistics project the population to increase to 227,000 people by 2043.

The age of the community is changing with the highest birth rate in London, and a large proportion of young people. Barking and Dagenham has the highest proportion of children aged under 16 in London and the UK. The borough becomes more diverse each year with 66% of the resident population identifying as coming from black and minority ethnic backgrounds compared to 19% in 2001.

Barking and Dagenham had the highest overall deprivation score in London and 17th highest in England (IMD 2019; MHCLG). People in the borough die earlier, have poorer health and lower levels of education and skills than across London whilst too many residents are in low paid work and struggle to find suitable homes they can afford. Unemployment remains high. Nearly 4 in 10 dependent children in the borough live in a lone-parent household, double the national average.

Given the levels of significant deprivation and complex need in Barking and Dagenham, the pandemic has a considerable impact on the community and residents. At the time of writing, 557 of our residents have lost their lives to the pandemic. Since the start of the pandemic, 45% of working residents were either furloughed or in receipt of self-employment support. The number of residents in receipt of Universal Credit has increased by 133% during this time, with 15% of residents now receiving welfare support.

An increasing number of families have and are continuing to experience the effects and impact of the pandemic and as a result, are displaying a high level of need. This has led to an increasing demand on children’s services.

Our child population

Barking and Dagenham is a young borough, with around 64,100 children and young people under the age of 18 - 30% of the total population, the highest proportion in the UK.

76% are from ethnic minorities and the proportion of children and young people who speak English as an additional language is more than twice the national average. This level of diversity presents its own challenges when working with families and young people, where a better understanding of cultural subtleties becomes crucial.

29% of children under 16 in the borough are living in low-income families, an increasing proportion, and way above the UK average of 19%. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals in nursery and primary schools is on par with the national average, but the proportion in secondary schools is higher than the nation average at 23% compared to 19% across England.

Domestic abuse is a significant issue in Barking and Dagenham and impacts on all service areas - 16.6 domestic abuse offences per 1,000 people - highest in London. It accounts for 39% of violence with injury offences in the borough and is a presenting factor for at least 30% of children's social care contacts annually and rising.

This sits in a context of an ever increasing stretched and challenged health and social care economy, struggling to keep pace with changing community needs and the fast-growing child population with increasing diversity and complexity. This is also on top of a global pandemic that has and continues to place significant pressure on the Local Authority, all partner agencies, the community, and children, young people, and families across the board.

Despite the challenging context, the Council and elected members are ambitious and aspirational in their commitment to improving the lives and outcomes of our residents as set out in the borough's Corporate Plan 2018/2022: No-one left behind.

Our children in care and care leavers

At the end of 2020/21, the number of children in care decreased to 391 compared to 402 in the previous year. This end-of-year position corresponds to a rate of 61 per 10,000 children, which, has been declining in recent years, but remains higher than the London rates but lower than national and statistical rates. During 2020/21, the number of new children coming into care increased from 191 to 193, an increase of 1% and 204 children left care comparable with the previous year.

Overall, this is positive when set against the growth in population and demand. The age profile of children in care is older than the local authority average and national average with 72% of our children in care aged 10-17 and we have a higher proportion of 16-17-year-olds in care – 30% compared to 9% in the population of the borough. White children are over-represented in Barking and Dagenham's children in care, comprising 49% of children in care at the end of 2020/21 (36% in the local under 18 population). Conversely, Black African, and Asian children are under-represented, making up 31% and 14% of children in care, but 37% and 22% of the under 18 population. We have a higher proportion of males in care, with 223 (57%) males and 168 (43%) females at the end of 2020/21. Of the 391 children in care at the end of 2020/21:

- 268 (69%) lived with foster and kinship carers - up 1% on the previous year.
- 54 (14%) were in residential care. This is an increase on the 2019/20 figure of 34 (9%) but our proportion remains in line with London and statistical neighbours.
- 15 (4%) were placed with their parents comparable with 2019/20.
- 42 (11%) were in semi-independent placements and this is a positive decline on the 2019/20 outturn of 62 children (15%).
- 12 (3%) were in adoptive placements with prospective adopters at year end, slightly lower than the previous year of 14 children (3.5%).
- 39% were placed in the borough – up by 2% and 58% outside the borough.

During 2020/21, 14 children were adopted (1 less than 2019/20), representing 7% of all children leaving care - above London, but below the national and similar areas averages of 10% and 11% respectively. 20 children (10%) had become subject to special guardianship orders (SGOs), lower than the 2019/20 figure of 33 children (16%), but we remain higher than similar areas and the London average.

At the end of 2020/21, 310 young people 18 plus were care leavers, of which 109 were former UASC. This is an increase on the previous year of 245 care leavers (82 former UASC). The number of UASC aged under 18 decreased to 33 (0.05%) at the end of 2020/21 compared to 38 (0.06%) in 2019/20 and numbers remained below threshold set at 0.08% (51 children).

2. Key achievements in 2020/21

- A robust and effective response to COVID-19 premised on our culture of putting the needs of the most vulnerable first, honest conversations, robust risk management and creating the conditions to work together as a team and with partners.
- COVID-19 has exacerbated our systems and strengths and challenges, and in some areas transformed the way we work for the better, especially with partners such as health and embracing technology in our ways of working.
- Seeing the benefits of this through increasing permanence in our workforce, good morale and services that have remained safe and resilient throughout COVID-19.
- Lead Member led Corporate Parenting Board going from strength to strength with honest conversations with children, young people, foster carers, and partners resulting in better understanding of experiences, what needs to be different and agreed actions for improvement.
- Further work to do, but continued improvement in our partnership working, with education and health outcomes improving. A health led overhaul of our initial health assessment and reviews has led to significantly improved performance.
- Practice improvement continues although consistency and variability remain a priority. This is set against a trajectory of improving practice as identified by audit, good stability, and sustained performance in adoption.
- Innovative and exciting Specialist Intervention Service continues to develop interventions that reflect children, young people and community needs to help keep children in their families or return home.
- For those children in care, a strong in-house fostering service supported by the Mockingbird programme continues to keep placements stable and responding to the variety of needs of our children, with stronger Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) footprint evident.
- We continue to respond to the diversity of children in care population including upskilling the workforce to better support our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). Also, in our anti-racist practice developments, ensuring our care offer understands and meets the needs and experiences of our black and ethnic minority children and young people in care.
- New care leaver service that is young person centred in capacity and processes and that responds to new duties.
- Our work with care leavers underpinned by “no expiry date” ethos for our care and support offered, with strengthening relationships, good rates of keeping in touch, and celebration of their achievements.
- Continuing to work to support our most vulnerable care leavers, including increased communication through virtual ways of working, exploitation and safeguarding oversight and intervention.
- Increased investment in our enhanced local offer underpinned by better internal and external partnership working including Community Solutions, Housing, Inclusive Growth, and Brokerage with aspirations to work towards Care Leaver Covenant.
- Continuous improvement plan that reflects our strengths and challenges of our offer and practice following a helpful and inspirational visit from the National Improvement Advisor for Care Leavers – Mark Riddell, owned politically and operationally at the highest level.
- Good progress in strengthening consistency and visibility of child’s voice and lived experience.
- An active and greater presence of children in care council in our improvement and corporate parenting work including shaping virtual ways of working.
- Young people voices and experiences shaping our strategy and ways of working to big local and entrenched issues such as domestic abuse and structural racism.

Promise 1: To make sure you get the best care

The MCPG is committed to making sure children in care and care leavers get the best care. Skittlz - our Children in Care Council – has an active membership and continues to help shape practice and influence decision-making through our Member Corporate Parenting Group (MCPG) guided by the Council's *'Children in Care and Care Leaver Promises'*.

Skittlz' comprises of two groups: a 6 -13 and 14 - 21-year-old group. The Leaving Care team also have a cohort of young people with whom they regularly consult. The younger group has 21 members, and the older group 14, the largest representation we have had in over five years.

During 2020/21, Skittlz continued to meet virtually, and representatives attended each MCPG meeting. Our children in care council provided invaluable feedback on the MCPG review of its Terms of Reference and how to make the meetings more valuable for young people, sharing feedback from our various consultations, including housing and communication between young people and social workers. Young people also set their own themes, and one of those was the transition from being in care to becoming a care leaver and the level of support and information they felt they needed and is sometimes lacking.

In October 2020, we consulted with children in care and care leavers about Black Lives Matter (BLM) to understand their experiences and views. Young people shared personal experiences of being a young black person within the care system, noting positive experiences alongside areas for improvement. Their feedback was shared at the November Members Corporate Parenting Group meeting. Further work will be undertaken with regards to ensuring all foster carers know how to meet the needs of children who are cross-culturally and racially placed, as this issue was raised by some young people as an area for further development.

The older Skittlz group have been involved in a range of consultations aimed at giving young people in care and care leavers a chance to express their views based on their experiences. The group were approached via youth workers to give their views about employment in the NHS and what potential barriers would prevent them from pursuing a career in the NHS. The feedback is helping to

shape a DWP pilot in collaboration with NHS to offer employment options for care leavers. As a follow up to this, two Skittlz members attended an online conference entitled Creating the Future with peers from across NEL sharing their views about what care leavers need in relation to pathways to employment. This was during the COVID period, and the two Skittlz members spoke about mental health and the additional support that is needed for care leavers, particularly during the pandemic.

Skittlz members have also participated in other consultations including an air quality consultation looking at how they feel their air quality is affected and what they would like to see implemented to improve their air quality. They have also met with the Principal Social Worker to discuss effective relationships and communication with social workers.

They have met with service managers to discuss housing options and how this information is conveyed to care leavers, as well as giving valuable input into a housing brochure which will be given to all young people who are transitioning to being a care leaver. Lastly, young people have consulted with Bedfordshire University regarding document an Adolescent Safety Plan, which forms part of the borough's commitment to contextual safeguarding. Young people gave their views about the language in the document, what questions to ask and the name of the form. This will be combined with feedback from the BAD Youth Forum and will help to shape the form content and how it is used.

Skittlz members formed part of the panel that appointed the borough's new Independent Scrutineer, who oversees Barking and Dagenham's Safeguarding Children's Partnership. Skittlz members helped devise questions to put to the candidates and completely led the interview process.

In addition to local discussions, Skittlz members are also regular attenders of the London Children in Care Council. These meetings give older Skittlz members the opportunity to meet with peers from across London, hearing about their experiences and being able to discuss common issues and sometimes how to resolve them. Much of the work in 2020/21 focused on the Local Offer and ensuring young people in care and care leavers know what they are entitled to and how to ensure they get it. These have been interesting discussions and will likely shape the work we do locally going forward.

We also formally consult with our children in care and care leavers through an Annual Survey. Survey findings in 2020 were largely positive and an improving picture with 90% of children in care aged 8-17 feeling listened to; 92% telling us that they can contact their social worker and 89% said they know how to make a complaint. One of the most significant improvements is a reduction in the number of social workers children (aged 8-17) had – only 8% had four or more social workers compared to 26% last year. Frequent changes of social worker are one of the most significant issues that children in care raise.

To continue our commitment to listening to young people we hosted two consultations in November this year. Care leavers were also invited to speak to Mark Riddell, the DfE National Implementation Advisor for Care Leavers during the virtual visit. Overall, feedback was positive and personal advisers were viewed as generally good. Care leavers expressed the need for more support as they get older, and recommendations are being taken forward.

A consultation was held asking young people in care and care leavers for their views in relation to the council's plans for accommodation for young people. The group were able to share their views about what home should feel like, what they would need to feel safe, the style of the accommodation and what facilities should be available for them. The young people enjoyed the opportunity to participate and look forward to meeting with the architects in the future.

In 2020/21, during the pandemic, the IRO service continued to strive to deliver a high-quality service to our children in care. The IRO service in Barking and Dagenham is stable and made up of permanent workers who say that the borough is a great place to work. This is despite having caseloads of around 71 children, just above the recommendation of 50-70 children.

From March 2020 and during national lockdowns, all statutory work continued and the IRO service worked closely with social care teams and partners to develop ways by which reviews could be held virtually. Within 48 hours of lockdown, staff implemented the use of Skype for Business and then moved to MS Teams to ensure service continuity.

Participation of parents and agencies have improved greatly since working virtually and consideration will be given to the use of virtual and hybrid meetings following the ease of Covid-19 restrictions due to its success. Children have

reported that they have liked the use of MS Teams or WhatsApp. IROs have reported that they have seen some improvement in children participating in their reviews although this is dependent on their ages and understanding.

IRO's have also recognised in some children an impact of the pandemic and restrictions, an increase in anxiety, the risk of online exploitation and the difficulties a break in education may bring and have provided support accordingly.

A high percentage of children participate before and during their care planning review meetings. IROs have encouraged young people to 'have a say' about how their care plan is meeting their needs through a range of methods. IROs strive to have face to face conversations with children but during this year this has been difficult to achieve. IROs have offered online feedback, telephone discussions, meetings via Teams or communication via WhatsApp. The anecdotal feedback is that children enjoy the virtual meetings and feel able to communicate in an easier and more fluid way.

The IRO service has successfully continued to drive a child friendly review process. We have worked with our partners to ensure that the review meetings are focused on and celebrate the progress and success of our children. IROs encourage the participation of children in their reviews and in more cases, children are supported to chair or co-chair their Reviews. IROs continue to increase the monitoring and tracking activities between reviews to reduce drift and delay in implementing actions in the Care Plan. The recording of their monitoring is visible on children's files and an IRO box for recording is now available on the Liquid Logic system.

Children in Care reviews are also timely with 95% being held in statutory timescales in 2020/21. This is 1% lower than last year but accounts for some of the challenges related to the pandemic - foster carer illness, difficulties holding reviews in residential settings and YOIs due to illness and staff shortages. We have developed good communication with social work teams to ensure that in most situations we are aware of children who have become looked after within 24 hours. This ensures we have more time to consult with children about arrangements for their meeting. We have a tracking system for all reviews.

IRO contribution to permanence planning for children has improved. The IRO Manager is part of the strategic Permanence Taskforce, which provides the opportunity to ensure single oversight and assurance of permanence through the child's journey, from CIN through to adoption, including children placed with parents and those on remand. In addition to dispute resolutions, the Permanence panels e.g., CIN, CP, Resettlement and LAC panels are an early opportunity to highlight where any drift or delay has been identified.

During 2020/21, 100 practice alerts were raised by IROs on behalf of young people. This is an increase on the 72 practice alerts raised last year. The key themes arising from practice alerts were drift and delay (recommendations not being acted on); reports not being prepared for statutory reviews; and visits taking place outside of timescale. Our senior IRO will present those findings and the 2020/21 IRO annual report to MCPG later this year.

Promise 2: To look after you and treat you well

Promise 2: To look after you and treat you well

To look after and treat children in care and care leavers well has been critical during the pandemic with so many challenges and widespread restrictions posed by national lockdowns. Our values and ambition that "we are corporate parents to all children in care and care leavers up to the age of 25" with no expiry date has been strengthened during this challenging time. Launching the new Corporate Parenting and Permanence Service in April 2020 was also very timely as it provided increased capacity. There are now four Corporate Parenting teams responsible for children up until the age of 18 and two Leaving Care teams responsible for care leavers aged 18 through to 25. This service has a clear focus on planning, permanence and improving the experiences and progress for children in care and care leavers and is beginning to demonstrate positive impact.

Plans to increase the Corporate Parenting and Permanence Service further with additional leaving care adviser capacity is in development this financial year. This will enable us to provide personal advisers to children in care at an earlier age and not wait until they are almost 18, an Ofsted area for improvement.

In 2020/21, social workers and leaving care advisers prioritised contact with children in care and care leavers using virtual visits interspersed with face-to-face visits when lockdown restrictions allowed. Our workers and IROs have been creative in maintaining and building strong positive connections, and for many young people virtual visits have been positive. 95% of children in care were visited every six weeks and 99.5% were seen every three months.

Care leavers have been visited regularly, and those visits have been face-to-face where appropriate and virtual during the pandemic. Care leavers keep in touch figures are high at 96% and over 90% of care leavers say they can contact their worker. Anecdotal evidence is that virtual visits between care leavers and leaving care advisers has been positive, enabling increased communication and a timely resolution of any issues or problems.

Pathway planning is an area for improvement. All care leavers should have a pathway plan which should be regularly updated. Our performance has dropped by 9% in 2020/21 with 78% of care leavers having up to date plans. Improving compliance, consistency and the quality of pathway plans remain priority areas for the Corporate Parenting Service and MCPG.

In 2020/21, most of our children in care (76%) continue to be placed within family settings and are living in stable homes. Most children are placed less than 20 miles from their home enabling them to maintain connections with school, family, and friends – a positive outcome.

We have seen an increase in the demand for residential placements, due to the level and complexity of need of children coming into care, which has been exacerbated due to the pandemic, when comparing data to 2019/20. 54 young people (14%) were in residential placements at the end of March 2020/21 compared to 34 (9%) at year end 2019/20. There has also been an increased demand for Mother and Baby Units – demonstrating the positive impact of the pre-birth team. Planning for unborn babies and young babies entering care is much stronger with the pre-birth team in place. There has also been an increase in placements in Youth Offending Institutions and two children in care were admitted in hospital, due to being sectioned under the mental health act. Despite this overall increase, we have a lower proportion of children placed in residential care than London and are in line with similar areas.

The number of children coming into care via police protection increased in 2020/21 to 19.7% (38 children) and we are now above London, similar areas, and England. As reported in the recent Ofsted Focused Assurance Visit not all children come into care in a planned way and we are working on improvements and addressing any practice issues. We track and report numbers of children entering care on police protection weekly and audit all children subject to police protection quarterly. Findings and recommendations are reported to senior leadership, the Children's Improvement Board and MCPG.

The number of children coming into care under section 20 increased slightly to 26% in the last year but remains below London, similar areas, and national averages. The proportion of children on a Full Care Order or Interim Care Order are above national, London and similar areas.

We have increased investment in good edge-of-care services to ensure, where possible, children can remain at home with their families. The Specialist Intervention service was launched in July 2020 bringing together a range of existing edge of care services such as Family Group Conferencing, Restorative Intervention, Family Support, Therapy, Family Contact, Lasting Links, Group work and Substance Misuse under one Head of Service who joined also in July last year. Despite being launched in the middle of the pandemic, the service is working with increasing numbers of children and their families. The service has worked hard to raise its profile providing consultation and bespoke support for some of our most vulnerable children. This service already has waiting lists due the demand for such good quality interventions, and the increasing demand in the system. Some of our children in care have already started to benefit from the Lasting Links pilot work helping them contact family whom they had lost contact with, with heart-warming outcomes for these children.

Parenting and group work were postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions, but we will recommence when safe to do so. Our Family Time Contact service found it a challenge to provide the level of positive contact between looked after children and their family members due to restrictions. This has improved and we are trailing the use of other council buildings to facilitate these contacts.

Despite these challenges, placement stability performance was good, and we exceeded the target in not having more than 10% of children in care experiencing

more than three plus placements in a year. Good performance was also maintained in long term placement stability at 69% better than London and similar areas.

During COVID-19, ensuring stability of placements was a priority. Early on, as lockdown was beginning, we identified foster placements that may be more at risk of breakdown because of the foster carers' age or health condition to provide additional support if required. We are proud that no placements changed because of the pandemic and stability has been maintained.

We have a strong and well-regarded in-house fostering service that uses the Mockingbird programme to help keep children in their placements. The feedback from carers and children and the Fostering Network are extremely positive and our model is considered a national leader. There were no plans to increase the number of constellations in 2020/21 due to the pandemic, but in the latter part of 2021 a further two constellations are planned. Our Specialist Intervention Service is also impacting on placement stability positively.

We have reviewed our Children in Care and Care Leaver Sufficiency Statement and aim to have a refreshed sufficient statement presented and agreed by the autumn of 2021.

All unaccompanied asylum-seeking children enter the Corporate Parenting service to ensure expertise is utilised and we continue to provide a timely and effective service placing them in independent accommodation or foster care according to their assessed needs. As reported by Ofsted in the focused assurance visit published in July 2021, we make excellent use of interpreters and specialist support to ensure UASC get the help and support they need. We have increased the number of UASC placed in foster care placements, which is a positive outcome for those vulnerable young people. The number and proportion of UASC placed in semi-independent accommodation is lower at 42 (11%) compared to 62 (15%) at end of 2019/20. Although this is still high compared to London and national, we are pleased with our progress.

Our vulnerable children in care at risk of abuse, exploitation and going missing are reviewed regularly at MASE and CEG(Criminal exploitation group). We continue to monitor missing children through the effective monthly multi-agency missing children operational panel (MCOP). This Panel has been further

strengthened and now also considers looked after children placed in the borough by other authorities on a quarterly basis. A daily missing children report is circulated to the DCS and other safeguarding partners and includes children placed in LBBD by other authorities who have been reported missing to police.

An area for improvement as set out by Ofsted is to ensure that children in care who go missing or who are vulnerable to exploitation, return home interviews are routinely completed. We need to work on ensuring that the level of risk is assessed, and safety planning is informed by this risk assessment. Actions to address this improvement area are set out in our improvement plan and work is underway to improve offer, take up and timeliness of return home interviews.

Barking and Dagenham no longer operates as an Adoption Agency. Adopt London East is our Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). The adoption functions of Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham were delegated on the 1st of October 2019 to the London Borough of Havering within terms drawn up in a detailed partnership agreement. Adopt London East (ALE) formally commenced operational activity on this date. Adopt London East works in close collaboration with the 'Adopt London' adoption agencies who provide services for 23 Local Authorities in total. In this way, developing a London wide profile, economies of scale and sharing best practice are possible.

Feedback from Regional Adoption Agencies in operation for a year or more is positive. Adopters report on improved services and staff on improved job satisfaction. Ofsted reports on Local Authorities with adoption services delivered regionally have been universally positive. The government have noted the significant progress in cutting the time children wait to be placed with their adoptive parents and this is a positive outcome for children. However, both the number of registrations of interest and approved adopters nationally, regionally, and locally within East London have fallen in recent years. An increase in expressions of interest has been sustained since the service went live last October and we anticipate this will increase the number of adopters approved in 2020/21. The Adopt London East annual report 2020/21 sets out performance and progress and will be presented and discussed at MCPG and Assembly later in the year.

During 2020/21, 14 children achieved permanence through adoption compared to 15 in 2019/20. This represented 7% of all children leaving care - above

London, but below the national and similar areas averages of 10% and 11% respectively. We have had no adoption disruptions for the eighth consecutive year. 20 children (10%) had become subject to special guardianship orders (SGOs), lower than the 2019/20 figure of 33 children (16%), but we remain higher than similar areas and the London average.

The latest published DfE adoption scorecard covering 2017-20 demonstrates continued improvement. The average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family including foster carer adoptions (A10) for children adopted decreased from a three-year average of 642 days to 465 days. This remains above the nationally set target of 426 days but reflects improving practice. Despite the improved timeliness, performance remains above London at 364 days, national at 367 days and similar areas at 381 days. For the year 2020/21, the average time for this measure further decreased to 435 days just 35 days off the DfE target but the adoption scorecard three yearly rolling average for 2018-21 once published next year will see an increase to 503 days because 2018/19 was higher at 586 days.

The average time between the Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family remained also improved in 2017-20 decreasing to 246 days compared to 394 days in 2016-19. Performance has been improving on this indicator year on year since 2018, although remains 125 days above the DfE threshold of 121 days, and we remain above all comparators - national average (175 days); London average (205 days) and similar areas (232 days). Our performance for 2018-21 is also better with timeliness decreasing further to 218 days (97 days above DfE threshold).

We have worked hard to improve oversight and quality of Placement with parents' arrangements. Through doing so we have seen the numbers reduce with a corresponding increase in successful revocations of care orders.

The Permanence Taskforce continues to keep oversight of adoption and the adoption scorecard indicators tracking and understanding reasons for those children who have been awaiting matching for long periods. Those waiting the longest tend to have complex health needs and be in older sibling groups. Only one adoption was delayed due to COVID-19 and this delay was managed exceptionally well by our play therapist and we are pleased to that the adoption has now been finalised.

Children who are privately fostered are assessed in a timely way, visited regularly, and are living in suitable care arrangements.

Promise 3: To keep you healthy

Strengthened strategic oversight and leadership to improve health outcomes for children in care but still much to do especially for care leavers.

An effective partnership and health led overhaul of our initial health assessment and reviews has led to significantly improved performance, as confirmed by Ofsted during the focused assurance visit in May 2021.

The multi-agency LAC health sub-group of the MCPG chaired by the CCG, and the health focused Zoning Meeting which tracks performance on IHAs and RHAs have both had a positive impact. We are pleased to report that the timeliness of initial health assessments further improved to 51% at the end of 2020/21, compared to 26% in 2019/20. Whilst an improvement, this is not good enough for our children and young people as reflected in the local target of over 70% for 2021/22.

92% of all children in care had an up to date medical at the end of 2020/21, 3% higher than the previous year. This is very good performance when considering the impact of the pandemic. Performance on eye checks dropped slightly to 71%, but it is in dental checks that the pandemic had the most significant negative impact. Overall, health check performance for children in care one year or more, therefore, dropped to 71% compared to 91% in 2019/20. With lockdown restrictions removed, we are reporting an improvement in dentist performance, and we expect our health review performance to recover in this financial year.

As part of health assessments, emotional issues are identified, and emotional wellbeing is monitored as part of the annual health check process. A good proportion of children in care return a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), and the results of those SDQ scores show good performance. SDQ scores

reduced from 12.5 to 11.6 (the lower the better) and remain below London, similar areas, and England.

In 2020/21, we set up SDQ scoring on Liquid Logic for all children in care aged four or over and at the end of the year, a high proportion – 86% - had an SDQ recorded in the last 12 months. This means that changes in emotional health over time will also be more clearly tracked and appropriate provisions to support emotional wellbeing will be identified as part of the health assessment process.

Hot Clinics provided by CAMHS ensure children in care and foster carers receive the appropriate help and support, and during the pandemic, this was critical in preventing placement breakdowns. SDQs and CAMHS are both standing items on the LAC Health Subgroup and operational issues are picked up at LAC Zoning meetings held monthly.

A dedicated CAMHS looked after children specialist works directly with a small number of children to ensure their needs are addressed within local CAMHS services, liaising with services out of borough when necessary. This worker also offers support to foster carers and is developing alternative ways to engage children and young people with support for their emotional wellbeing.

The DCS is Chair of the 3-borough child health transformation meeting providing greater opportunity for local oversight of CAMHS transformation work.

Improving health outcomes further remains a top priority. Whilst there have been improvements both strategically and operationally, there is still much to do.

Much more to be done on improving health for care leavers.

We recognise that health arrangements and provision for care leavers still require improvement. During the pandemic, care leavers mental health and isolation was a priority. A good proportion of care leavers do return a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), and these are tracked so we can ensure a holistic approach to our care leavers health needs. Our CAMHS Hot clinic did provide support to some of our care leavers, but as Ofsted reported in May 2021 “Timely mental health services for care leavers are not readily accessible”. Care leavers have to access services via their general practitioner, and waiting lists are long for adult services. Care leavers also do not have easy access to specialist

support with substance misuse, and their health histories are not available. This resulted in an improvement recommendation - **The quality and impact of services to support care leavers and to help them to prepare for adulthood, with a specific focus on their emotional and physical health and well-being.**

In 2021/22, a top priority is to address the Ofsted findings and an improvement plan is in place. We are developing a specific health offer for care leavers aged over 18. BHRCCG has agreed recurrent funding for a dedicated care Leaver practitioner to be hosted in the Corporate Parenting leaving care team to support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of our care leavers. Recruitment has commenced in September 2021. The care leaver practitioner role will work with the Adult MH TB (Mental Health Transformation Board) and with our LBBB Transition Subgroup to manage LAC / Care Leaver transitions post 18 with multi agency working and support in the transition from children to adults' mental health provisions.

The substance misuse worker in our Specialist Intervention Service is carrying out an initial assessment of care leavers with substance misuse issues to inform and refer on to appropriate specialist support.

We will ensure care leavers have access to their health histories, so that they understand their health needs and to access their information. Consultation and co-production are underway led by Skittlz to meet this improvement area.

All care leavers can access free annual membership to Barking and Dagenham leisure centres with opportunities to take a friend and have free membership for the Youth Zone.

The multi-agency looked after children and care leavers Health sub-group reporting into the Corporate Parenting Group has been tasked to drive forward improvements in this area.

Effective Virtual School during the pandemic

The Aspire Virtual School (AVS) continues to be strong, providing an effective service and response to children's learning with a clear identification and focus on our most vulnerable children and children placed out of borough during the pandemic. This was confirmed by Ofsted in the ILACS Focused Assurance Visit in May 2021 reporting that '*Staff at the virtual school have maintained effective oversight of children's learning during the pandemic, including of those who are more vulnerable. Staff have developed bespoke responses to meet individual needs, and progress has been reviewed more frequently for children where there is concern.*'

During the pandemic, the AVS held virtual Designated Teacher (DT) meetings, enabling out of borough colleagues to attend and hear first-hand the Virtual Schools offer of support. As a result, contact with out of borough colleagues increased considerably and this allowed the AVS to monitor safeguarding/keeping in touch arrangements as evidenced by the student voice in the PEPs. Resources were made available to all DTs and young people ensuring that our young people were well supported by their schools as demonstrated in the quality assurance of PEPs.

During the pandemic, 98% of ePEP meetings held via Microsoft Teams were attended by the Virtual School to provide support and address the needs of the young people. The PEP format was adapted to ensure that the student's voices were heard. Our students told us that they were learning new skills but missing their friends and that someone from school was keeping in touch with them. No safeguarding concerns were raised.

We ensured rapid PP+ core, blanket payment drop direct to schools to ensure schools and young people had the equipment they needed for online learning/or to purchase hard copies of resources if relevant. In April 2020, at the start of lockdown, the AVS ensured that the necessary ICT equipment was provided for our students. This was checked up on via the PEPs and all students had appropriate equipment. This allowed the AVS to creatively use the Government IT support to prioritise our care leavers. Additional PP+ were paid if additional resources were needed.

AVS attended fortnightly 'high needs' meetings with the inclusion, EHC, Social

Promise 4: To get the best education

care, Health, Educational Psychology teams and the Director of Education to ensure our most vulnerable students were supported. This meeting ensured that students were placed in the most appropriate provision and help was available to prevent education placement breakdown. All education placements were sustained during the COVID period.

The Virtual School involved more professionals at PEP meetings for students with EHC to give a more robust support to students, such as CAMHs, the Educational Psychology service, SENCOs. EHC team colleagues and mentors also attended as many annual review meetings as possible

We supported carers whose young people were struggling to engage with online learning. For a few students (during the first lockdown) we had to insist that the students went back into school as they were not engaging at home, others ended with a more blended approach of part time school and part time home learning. One huge impact of our support for carers was that there were no foster placement breakdowns due to COVID-19.

We continued to deliver designated teacher training (virtually) with an emphasis on mental health support for young people and staff. We found that the take up for our meetings was excellent, with a 40% increase on our usual attendance, and DTs commented how well supported they felt with the advice and guidance we offered. As they had a Virtual School member of staff at the PEPs, they were able to ask for advice/support directly. In some cases, this resulted in commissioning a mentor for students or some online training for staff (we used AC Education for our online training)

We commissioned tuition for students not in education, for example those who had a placement move. This was delivered virtually. In addition, we also supported the Social Worker with school applications.

The AVS commissioned the Goblin's Chest to work with four of our year 6 students who had been identified as needing additional support with the transition to secondary school. These students all transitioned successfully to secondary school. We also ensured virtual careers interviews for year 10 and 11 to support KS5 choices continued throughout the pandemic and achieved a very high uptake from our students.

During the pandemic, the AVS identified 13 young people who were struggling

emotionally and academically. We commissioned a School Enrichment Program delivered online which was open to in and out of borough students. This was a blend of group tutoring to address emotional, social, and mental health needs and soft skills to prepare to reintegrate into school post Covid. The feedback was very positive from both staff and students. One student said, 'I really enjoyed the sessions and am learning new skills and a staff member commented 'students were fully engaged throughout'.

The Virtual School has worked successfully with The Transformed You mentoring service – bespoke for Looked after Children. The company staff, who were all previously looked after themselves, and therefore uniquely placed to understand and support our students, continued to mentor several of our students during lockdown.

Strong Virtual School achieving good outcomes.

The Aspire Virtual School (AVS) continues to demonstrate robust outcomes in terms of attainment, attendance, exclusions, PEP quality and timeliness. Most children in care make good progress and attainment for our children in care remains above national children in care average. The most recent data shows that we remain in the top quartile for all attainment data and for unauthorised and overall absence and for fixed term exclusions. Most of our children in care are in good or outstanding schools.

Due to COVID-19, there is no data at KS1 or KS2 for 2020. At KS4 in 2020, based on teacher assessments, 41.4% of children in care achieved 9-4 pass in English and maths compared to 27.2% in 2019. Performance remains way above the national average at Key Stage 4 and performance is in the top quartile for KS4 Average Attainment 8 Score and KS4 Average Progress 8 score, also above national average.

The AVS has worked hard to improve the Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion rate and in 2020/21, 86% of children in care had an up to date compared to 82% in 2019/20. This has further improved to 90% as at the end of Q1 2021/22. The quality of PEPs has also improved and during the recent OFSTED focused assurance visit, positive feedback was provided by the Education HMI describing the 'love and care' shown in the PEPs sampled.

The AVS Awards have been created with the winners receiving a trophy or medal, a gift card, and a certificate. These were posted due to COVID-19 but will be given as part of the children in care and care leavers awards later this year. These are inclusive awards and not simply for academic excellence.

The AVS Management Committee is now functional, providing an extra layer of challenge and support to the Virtual School. It is comprised of an Independent Chair, 7 members and a clerk to record minutes. We have had two meetings so far and are currently preparing a review of our SEND cohort for the next meeting.

Our training for schools has focussed on SEMH of students and staff to try and meet the growing need for mental health support.

The Aim Higher Program is an exciting initiative of the Virtual School to raise aspiration. The program is organised in collaboration with local universities and the Careers team in the council for an identified group of young people from Year 4 to Year 12. Different events will be organised for the different year groups to ensure that they are inspired to focus on higher education and subsequently supported to achieve this goal.

Promise 5: To be successful in life

Ambitious, aspirational, and passionate Council investment to Care Leavers, an improved enhanced Local Offer, and improved outcomes

Our ambition, investment and progress were confirmed by the positive feedback from the two-day DfE improvement visit, undertaken in November 2020 by Mark Riddell, the National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers. The visit and feedback endorsed our rapid improvement and progress to have a better offer for care leavers across the whole service area. It also confirmed the strengthened leadership in this area and the significant progress we have made in our approach to Corporate Parenting, our enhanced local offer and the extended duties that apply to care leavers up to 25 years.

Our housing offer to care leavers was considered as very positive especially given the challenges with supply and demand in the borough. We have care leaver

apprenticeships already in our local offer, but a recommendation was made for us to set a ringfenced amount as a target. Our leisure offer, and Council Tax Exemption for care leavers were also viewed as very good.

The visit confirmed that our leaving care model is operationally good but that the model could be stronger with specialist workers based in the leaving care team such as a dedicated housing officer resource in the team, an emotional wellbeing/mental health practitioner and an EET officer. Caseloads were at an acceptable level, although our Leaving Care Personal Advisors covered many areas, tasks and processes that sometimes made them feel out of their depth.

A key recommendation was to review and strengthen our 'whole council' offer by organising an event with each partner agency so that they can set out their local offer and *"for the test to be applied 'is this good enough for my child' and with a particular focus on: A health offer to care leavers from 18yrs to 25yrs; and a Probation offer to care leavers entering and leaving custody up to 25yrs"*. Several other recommendations have been made and these have been incorporated into our improvement plan enabling us to reach our ambition of being 'the best corporate parents' we can be.

2020/21 has been an exceptionally difficult year for young people due to the pandemic impact on education, employment, and training. So as corporate parents, we were pleased that for the second consecutive year running, over 60% of care leavers were in education, employment, or training, above London, similar areas, and England averages by 6% and 8% respectively. This has further improved this year to 63%. This is testament to senior leaders and managers across the Council and partnership working hard to support and improve young people's education, employment, and training outcomes through internships, in-house apprenticeships, and traineeships. The multi-agency EET Panel, comprising representatives from the Virtual School, Job Shop, Apprenticeships and Careers Advisors, also continues to have a positive impact.

We were very proud when two of our care leavers obtained an apprenticeship position in Children Care and Support in 2020, and one of them has been successful in obtaining a permanent position in the Business Improvement team in the service.

Our Virtual School also supports care leavers well and has focused on three key areas: Robust Support for Care Leavers with More Complex Needs, Raising Aspiration, Creating Partnership for employment and training opportunities. The AVS has also been successful in securing additional funding for a part time post 16 role, to ensure that no young people are excluded from education, employment, or training. This will impact positively on improving outcomes further for older care leavers in 2021/22 and beyond.

From the beginning of May 2020, to facilitate the Department for Education's scheme to provide digital devices to vulnerable young people, we identified care leavers who required laptops, and facilitated these being delivered and supported with set up.

In 2020, we had the highest number of students (10), progress to higher education. In this academic year we have four care leavers who are at University and eight care leavers graduated. This can be attributed to the support provided by the Virtual School through organising events like the University Support Network Meeting, commissioning careers interviews, interventions regarding transitions to Higher Education and working closely with social workers to support transition to Higher Education.

The AVS has also led on the Inspire Project in partnership with the London School of Management Education, aimed at tackling barriers preventing progression into higher education. This is done through tutoring to support younger students, year 10-13, in their areas of low attainment in Maths and English with one-to-one support, mentoring and tuition. This has enabled the Virtual School to provide support to post 16 who are not eligible for funding from the Virtual School.

The Vulnerable Housing Panel continues to improve housing options for care leavers with dedicated staff to support young people paying their rent and preventing evictions. Joint work with housing colleagues is taking place to increase options for care leavers and signing up young people to tenancy arrangements and tenancy sustainment. Care leavers are also included in the Council's Inclusive Growth and Vulnerable Housing strategy. Suitable accommodation for care leavers, therefore, has improved further despite the pressure of the pandemic and the supply challenges faced in the borough. At the end of 2020/21, 88% of care leavers were living in suitable accommodation,

up by 4% on 2019/20 and up by 7% on 2018/19. Performance is above London, similar areas, and England averages.

Care leavers continue to be supported in a range of semi-independent provision secured through commissioned framework, and includes shared houses rented from the private sector with bespoke support packages if required. This framework ensures an appropriate service that delivers excellent outcomes for young people and ensures consistency in the quality of accommodation.

Our Brokerage service has created additional resources to quality assure providers in both Adult's and Children's Care and Support. The sourcing of placements now sits in the Brokerage service to ensure we are better at finding the right placements for children and young people.

We have extended the Independent Visitors offer to include care leavers and currently three Members have been mentoring three of our young people, offering them inspiration, guidance, and support.

We have high aspirations for our care leavers, and they are involved in their services and their achievements are celebrated. We ensure that the Local Offer to care leavers is available to all eligible young people in various formats. A text messaging service to keep young people updated on events, jobs and opportunities is now live.

We usually celebrate our children's achievements at an annual awards ceremony but last year, due to the pandemic, workers visited young people to deliver trophies, certificates and took pictures to mark the occasion.

The DfE introduced a 'care leaver covenant' that will enable organisations to make commitments to care leavers within the spirit of the corporate parenting principles: we have signed up to this covenant. We believe that with our Council ethos of 'no one left behind', our strong partnerships and inclusive growth ambitions, we are well placed to become a truly 'universal family' to our care leavers.

Our headline plans for the next 12 months – 2021/22

Leading and managing the recovery and legacy and new ways of working because of the pandemic.

Implement the DfE Care Leavers Improvement plan post the two-day visit in November 2020.

Improve the offer and take-up of return home interviews to children in care who go missing, so that information is gathered and used to minimise risk and to inform safety planning (Ofsted recommendation).

Improve the quality and impact of services to support care leavers and to help them to prepare for adulthood, with a specific focus on their emotional and physical health and well-being (Ofsted recommendation).

All Elected Members to continue to be ambitious and passionate corporate parents.

Enhance the Corporate Parenting and Permanence Service, further strengthening Corporate Parenting, permanence and outcomes for LAC and Care Leavers.

Refresh the Corporate Parenting Strategy by the end of the year.

Consult with a larger cohort of children in care and care leavers, including those placed further away. This is a top priority for the year ahead .

Strengthening participation in Reviews.

Implement Virtual School Peer Review opportunities and continue to ensure education outcomes improve for children in care.

Maintain or further improve performance on placement stability.

Ongoing focus on edge of care work and rehabilitation home to ensure the right children are in care.

A focus on unregulated 16+ placements; maintain fostering post 16 when placements can become fragile and increase foster care options for UASC.

Our new fostering recruitment campaign is planned to recruit more foster carers who are willing to consider adolescents and UASC placements.

Improve and sustain performance on health assessments. The foundations of improvement have already been laid.

Continue to improve the offer to support children and young people's emotional wellbeing. Integrate the use of SDQs more holistically into the health assessments so emotional wellbeing is considered.

Listen to our Black and Asian children to understand their experiences of care in the context of our ambition to drive forward Black Lives Matter.

Elected Members to continue to hold all partners to account and champion the needs of our care leavers, unlocking the full potential that the council, voluntary services, and businesses offer to improve the lives of our carer leavers. This includes signing up to the Care leaves Covenant and the whole Council celebrating National Care Leavers week.

Continue improvements for Care Leavers in Employment, Education and Training, with a focus on older care leavers using cross-Council support and opportunities in challenging COVID-19 times.

Develop a preparation for apprenticeship scheme where care leavers can experience extended work experience placements.

Continue to develop the housing offer to care leavers and the support they need to manage independent living.

Extend the use of mentors/independent visitors for care leavers who have no or limited contact with family.

Review the Pathway Plan with care leavers to make it more meaningful to young people.

Pause programme offered for care leavers who have lost a child to the care system and improved joint working needed between LCA's and Pre-birth team.

Deliver Lasting Links working with care leavers supporting them in securing lifelong positive links to support their transitions beyond 25.

ASSEMBLY

24th November 2021

Title: Adoption Annual Report	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: No
Report Author: Valerie Tomlinson, Lead Commissioner for Children's Care and Support. Services	Contact Details: Tel: 02082273549 E-mail: valerie.tomlinson@lbbd.gov.uk
Accountable Director: April Bald; Operational Director Children's Care and Support	
Accountable Strategic Leadership Director: Elaine Allegretti; Director of People and Resilience	
Summary	
<p>The adoption functions of Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham were delegated on the 1st October 2019 to the London Borough of Havering within terms drawn up in a detailed partnership agreement. Adopt London East (ALE) formally commenced operational activity on this date.</p> <p>An Adoption Service review in LBBB was undertaken in August 2020 and found that there were no established contract monitoring specific meetings or set performance metrics.</p> <p>This report verifies the processes that are in place to ensure formal assessment against targets holding ALE to account on overarching contract performance.</p>	
Recommendation(s)	
The Assembly is recommended to note the contents of the annual report on adoption.	
Reason(s)	
The Council is required to produce an Adoption Annual Report, and present it to elected members in their capacity as corporate parents.	

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Council is committed to placing children in suitable sustainable adoption placements. In 2015 The Department for Education (DfE) paper, Regionalizing Adoption proposed the move to Regional Adoption Agencies [RAA] in order to:
- Speed up matching;
 - Improve adopter recruitment and adoption support;
 - Reduce costs; and

- Improve the life chances of vulnerable children.
- 1.2 It was proposed that all Local Authorities must join a Regional Adoption Agency by April 2020.
 - 1.3 The adoption functions of Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham were delegated on the 1st October 2019 to the London Borough of Havering within terms drawn up in a detailed partnership agreement. Adopt London East (ALE) formally commenced operational activity on this date and became fully operational on 1st October 2020.
 - 1.4 An Adoption Service review in LBBD was undertaken in August 2020. The findings were as follows:
 - 1.5 LBBD had not established any contract monitoring specific meetings or set performance metrics / 'Key Performance Indicators' (KPIs) to scrutinise and review ALE's performance beyond the two timeframe KPIs:
 - A1 – monitors the time between the child being in care to the Adoption Order going through; and
 - A2 – monitors the time between the Placement Order and moving into the adoptive family home.
 - 1.6 It was understood that quarterly ALE Board meetings were held, and Heads of Service discussions took place, however these did not focus on the contractual performance targets and KPIs relating to LBBD. It was agreed at the time of finalising the 2020/21 Internal Audit report for Adoption Services review, that internal audit would follow up and verify that processes were in place to ensure formal assessment against targets holding ALE to account on overarching contract performance

2. Current Context

- 2.1 Feedback from Regional Adoption Agencies in operation for a year or more is positive. Adopters report improved services and staff on improved job satisfaction.
- 2.2 The government have noted significant progress being made in reducing the time children wait to be placed with their adoptive parents which contributes to a positive outcome for children. However, both the number of registrations of interest and approved adopters nationally, regionally and locally within East London have fallen in recent years.

Adopter Voice

- 2.3 Adopters in East London contribute to service development through the Adopt London commissioning arrangements with 'We are Family', a London wide peer-led organisation delivering support to adopters.
- 2.4 The voice of our adopted children was captured through a partnership with 'Body and Soul'. ALE plan to re-commission this service in 2021/22

Governance

- 2.5 All service functions and relationships are detailed within the partnership agreement. The ALE Partnership board has met on 4 occasions in 2020/21.
- 2.6 The partnership board comprises of ADCS or their representatives with delegation of authority. These members have responsibility for all partnership decisions.
Service delivery
- 2.7 The central ALE panel was developed in phase 2 of go-live. In-house panels have been in operation since the end of May 2020. Two panel chairs ensure panels are able to meet every 2 weeks in order to support timeliness. The panel makes recommendations in respect of both adopter approval and child matches. Decisions in respect of child matches continue to be made by the Agency Decision Maker in the LA with responsibility for the child. The ALE HOS acts as ADM for decisions in respect of approval of adopters.
- 2.8 The panel has met virtually since commencement of operation. This has provided some benefits for panel members and adopters alike in terms of ease of attendance. All but one prospective couple responded positively about the virtual experience. Decisions regarding continuation of virtual or direct panels will be made in line with easement of regulations and consideration of the costs and benefits.

Impact of Covid – Staffing

- 2.9 All staff have responded positively to the challenge of working from home during Covid restrictions. A lot was learned during this period of enforced remote working and ALE will continue to undertake many functions remotely where it is efficient to do so without detriment to the quality of service provided.
- 2.10 Work was undertaken with the senior leadership team, the management team and with all staff to establish the vision and values of Adopt London East. ALE have worked to maintain this whilst working remotely.
- 2.11 Weekly remote team meetings and fortnightly service meetings have ensured that ALE maintain a clear service focus and provide mutual support. Space is provided for informal conversations, mirroring 'coffee break' spaces as far as possible.

Adoption Panel

- 2.12 Adopt London East panels became operational on 27th May 2020.
- 2.13 Two highly experienced panel chairs have been recruited together with a central list of panel members. Panel member expertise includes adoption experienced social workers, adopters, care leavers and professionals from a range of backgrounds. Two panels operate per month with additional panels where necessary. Panels are currently held virtually. Panel papers are sent securely through egress.
- 2.14 Medical advisors provide advice to panel on their own children either in writing or directly to panel.

2.15 Legal advice to panel is provided by the Havering legal team though legal advice in respect of an individual child's care plan remains with the Local Authority.

Partnership work

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

2.17 ALE have also commissioned PAC-UK to provide a helpline and one to one counselling. This service is also available to birth families. We plan to re-commission the birth family support service as a pan London service in 2021/22.

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

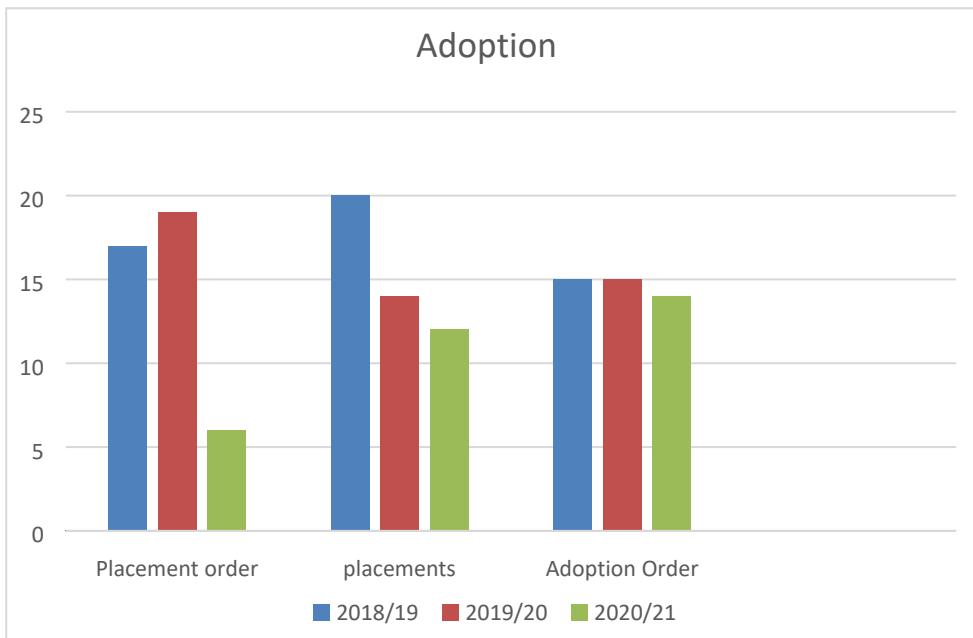
2.19 ALE work closely with We are Family, an adopter led support group providing support to families across London. We are Family have adapted to Covid requirements through development of an online webinar and podcast-based service. Adopt London has partially funded these highly successful initiatives. ALE also work in partnership with New Family Social who support LGBTQ adopters.

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

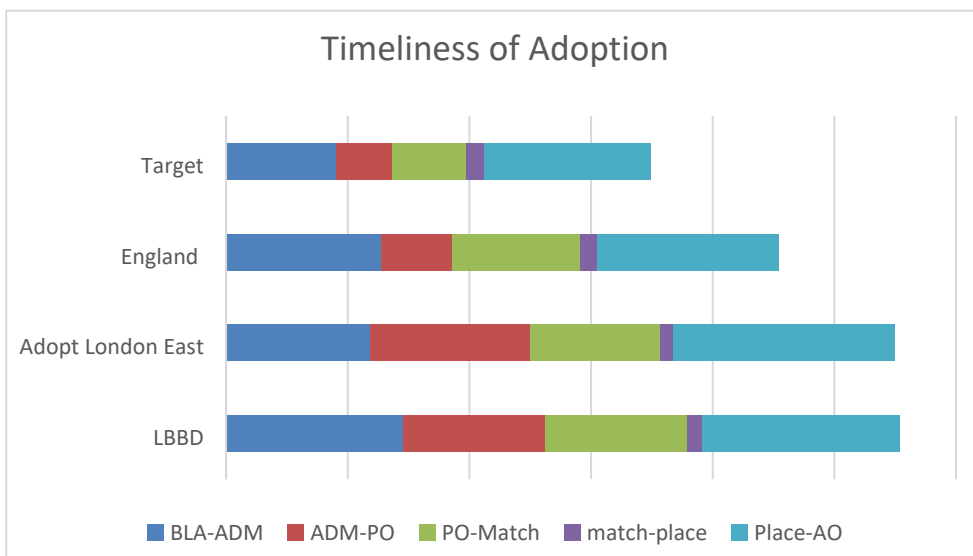
Performance information 2020/21

2.21 A placement order is made by court when a decision is made that adoption is in the best interest of the child. This allows the Local Authority to place for adoption. The table below, illustrates how the number of placement orders decreased from a high of 19 in 2019/20 to 6 in 2020/21. This is reflected in a subsequent decrease in placements in 2020/21. The higher number of placements made than placement orders granted reflects placement of some children who were granted a placement order in 2019/20.

2.22 Children cannot be adopted until at least 16 weeks after placement. In practice adoption usually takes longer as court processes must be followed. The number of children adopted in 2020/21 reflects adoptions of children placed in both 2019/20 and 2020/21



Timeliness of Adoption



2.23 Adoption timeliness is subject to DfE set targets for timeliness. These are measured from when a child becomes looked after through a series of stages as described below:

- becomes looked after (BLA);
- The date a decision is made by the agency that adoption is in the child's best interest (ADM);
- The date a placement order is made (PO);
- The date a child is matched to prospective adopters (Match);
- The date a child is placed with the adopters (Place); and
- The date an adoption order is granted (AO) .

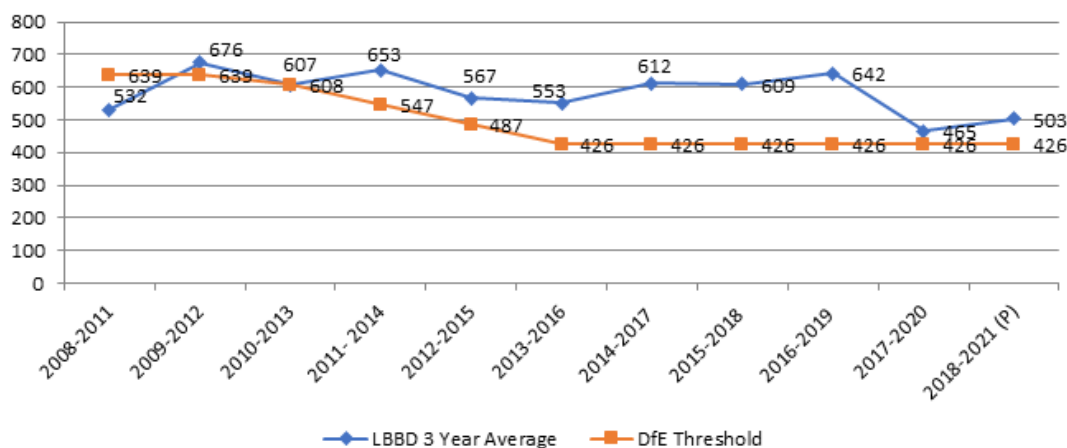
2.24 The above targets set are not usually met by RAA's and Local Authorities, England averages are considerably higher than targets set.

- 2.25 LBBB performance is roughly in line with Adopt London East average performance in BLA to ADM decision and ADM to PO, though higher than England averages and the target. These reflect early-stage social work and court processes. Although LBBB has lengthier timescales in the earlier stages, this is reflective of the greater complexity of the needs of children and complex court cases.
- 2.26 Timeliness from match to place is roughly in line with Adopt London East and England averages. Children with greater complexity of need are harder to place and may wait significantly longer for a placement. Timeliness on a par with England averages is therefore a positive indication of good partnership working between social work teams in LBBB and Adopt London East. Timeliness from match to place is lower than the target and England averages, this is reflective of efficient processes. Once placed LBBB children wait longer than both the target and England average times to be formally adopted. This reflects lengthier court times in East London which have been addressed by joint work with the courts. Some cases have also had ongoing complexity.
- 2.27 Overall timeliness must be considered in the context of the challenging needs of children in LBBB. In England 32% of children are deemed to have no characteristics of a hard to place child. These children are usually placed more quickly. Only 9% of children in LBBB are categorised as easy to place. LBBB has unusually high rates of sibling groups and children with complex needs for whom adoption is in their best interest. The policy to never to give up on a child who would benefit from adoption will increase the time taken to identify a positive match.

A10 (formerly A1): Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions, for children who have been adopted (days)

- 2.28 The three-month rolling average for A10 has decreased from **642 days in 2016-19 to 465 days for 2017-20**. This puts us 39 days above the DfE threshold of 426 days. Despite the big decrease, we remain above other comparators – London 364 days, National 367 days and similar areas 381 days. Our performance for 2018-21 - will mean when published next year, our performance will increase to **503 days** (77 days above DfE threshold).

A10 - Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days)



2.29 For A10, our individual in year performance was:

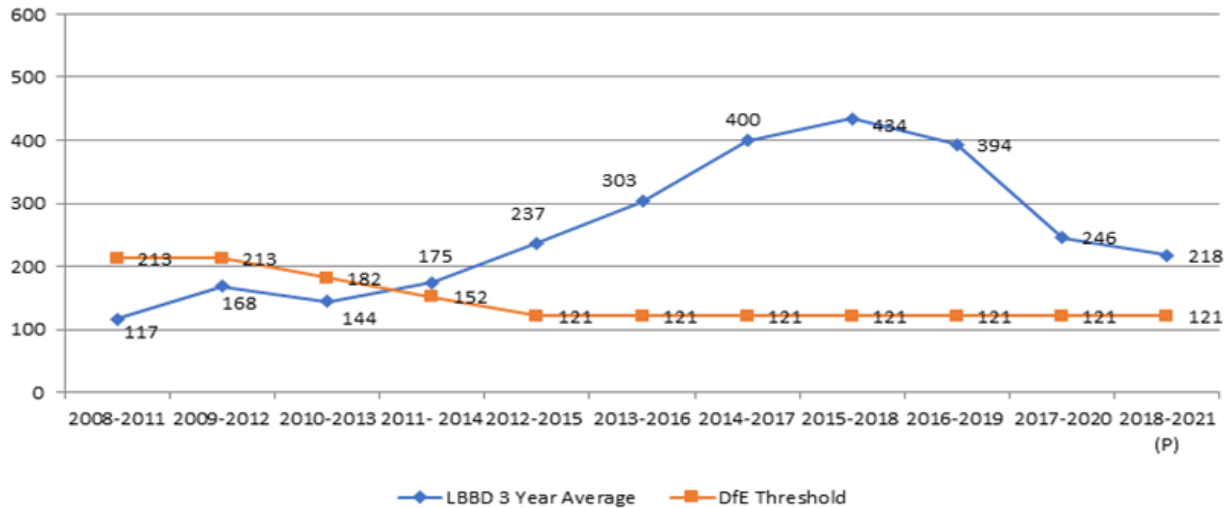
- 2017/18 360 days
- 2018/19 578 days
- 2019/20 437 days
- 2020/21 435 days

2.30 In year performance has remained similar in 20/21 when compared to 19/20 (decline of 2 days)

A2: Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days).

2.31 The three-month rolling average for A2 has decreased from **394 days in 2016-19 to 246 days for 2017-20**. Performance has been improving on this indicator year on year since 2018, when performance was 434 days. This puts us 125 days above the DfE threshold of 121 days, and we remain above all comparators - The National average (175 days) and London average (205 days) and similar areas (232 days). When published next year, our performance for 2018-21 will decrease further to **218 days**. (97 days above DfE threshold)

A2 -Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)



2.32 For A2, individual in year performance was:

- 2017/18 262 days
- 2018/19 223 days
- 2019/20 255 days
- 2020/21 166 days

2.33 In year performance has decreased by 89 days between 19/20 and 20/21.

Summary of current achievements

2.34 Adopt London East has been operational for 18 months. 12 of these months have been in Covid related lockdown. Despite this much has been achieved:

- The highest rate of children placed in all London RAA's;
- Adopter approval in line with or higher than all London RAA's;
- A large increase in the percentage of black and LGBT adopters;
- A new adopter support offer both locally and pan London;
- A Covid support offer independently evaluated as outstanding and praised by the DfE;
- Rapid response to Covid including quick development of online training and support
- A productive partnership with We are Family delivering webinars and podcasts as well as direct support; and
- A clear and positive website showcasing our work.

Future challenges

2.35 The service is still new and has primarily operated within Covid related restrictions. These restrictions have affected the service, partners and our adoptive families.

Infrastructure development

2.36 Certain aspects of infrastructure development have been delayed and a primary focus in 2021/22 will be in this field. Development areas include:

- A Liquidlogic based software tool for use across the service
- An ASF supplier accreditation tool
- Digital read only access to LA files to ensure easy transfer of information
- Improved financial reporting systems through separation of cost centres
- Pan London commissioning of a birth parent service
- Improvements to the website including a readiness tool for prospective adopters and adopter led access to services
- Consolidation of new ways of working post Covid restrictions

Adopter approval

2.37 Due to the long lead in time and the impact of Covid restrictions: adopter approval has taken longer to turn the curve than other sectors. Approvals have begun to increase and 21/22 will see increased numbers of adopters improved. Development areas include:

- Higher ratio of adopter applications from target groups such as black adopters
- Increase in applications from adopters able to care for more hard to place children
- Increase in the number of adopters willing to consider early permanence
- Improvement in timeliness in all aspects of the approval process

Family finding

2.38 Family finding continued throughout restrictions and the number of children placed increased. Development areas include:

- Production of further tools to assist LA social workers to understand adoption and adoption processes
- Streamlining processes to ensure each LA has the same offer and best practice is shared
- Further embedding the Beth Neil approach to introductions
- Increase in the use of in-house adopters

Adopter support

2.39 Prior to the development of ALE the adoption support offer was underdeveloped. Many adopters were not aware of the offer available. The support offer is now much more readily available and demand for services is high. The offer has been streamlined with an immediate duty offer triaging into a social work allocated offer. Development areas include:

- Improved management of the ASF offer through dedicated administrative support
- Improved management of direct contact through review of contracts and safe transition to adopter led contacts where safe to do so
- Further development of the partnership with We are Family and other local peer led adopter support groups

- Improved adopted adult and birth family support through re-negotiated contracts and focussed support

3. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Florence Fadahunsi, Finance Business Partner

- 3.1 The Council joined the Adopt London East along with the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Havering and Newham in October 2019. The formation of the agency is designed to be cost neutral. This report provides an update on the progress and performance of the new agency. There are no financial implications arising.

4. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Lindsey Marks Deputy Head of Law

- 4.1 The Education and Adoption Act 2016 amends the Adoption and Children Act 2002, so that local authorities are no longer required to maintain an adoption service within their area but may secure provision with other local authorities or registered adoption societies. The Secretary of State may direct one or more local authorities to make arrangements for all or any of their adoption functions to be carried out on their behalf by another local authority or adoption agency, through the formation of regional or sub-Regional Adoption Agencies . The Department for Education's intention with Regional Adoption Agencies is to reduce the large number of agencies providing adoption services and create 25-30 Regional Adoption Agencies to pool resources resulting in targeted and efficient recruitment of adopters, speedier matching with a larger, more diverse pool of adopters, and an improved range of adoption support services and regulatory compliance. In the longer term it is hoped that the with local authorities joining Regional Adoption Agencies such arrangements will achieve better outcomes for children and adopters, reduce practice and performance inconsistencies, be a more effective strategic management of the service delivering efficiency savings, and develop a culture of excellence in adoption practice through strong partnerships with the Voluntary Adoption Agency sector.
- 4.2 As Barking and Dagenham's adoption functions with those of Tower Hamlets, and Newham were delegated to the London Borough of Havering within terms drawn up in a detailed partnership agreement and Adopt London East has become fully operational , Barking and Dagenham has followed the Department for Education's intention in respect of Regional Adoption Agencies.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

- None

List of appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Adopt London East Annual Report



Adopt London East Annual Report April 2020 to March 2021

Background information

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

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

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

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

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

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

Outcomes

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

- Increase in the percentage of children adopted from care



- Improved timescales for placing children with adoptive families
- Fewer adoption placement disruptions
- More children placed in an early permanence placement
- Reduction in the number of children for whom the permanence plan has changed from adoption
- Improved timescales for adopter assessments
- Higher conversion rate from enquiry to approval
- Fewer prospective adopter approvals rescinded
- More timely matching of approved adopters

Scope of service

Adopt London East has responsibility for all adoption led services:

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

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

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

Design Principles

The Board agreed the following design principles

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

Adopter Voice

Adopters in East London contribute to service development through the Adopt London commissioning arrangements with 'We are Family', a London wide peer-led organisation delivering support to adopters.

The voice of our adopted children was captured through a partnership with 'Body and Soul'. We plan to re-commission this service in 2021/22



Service development post go-live

Governance

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

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

The Ale Partnership board has met on 4 occasions in 2020/21.

The partnership board comprises of ADCS or their representatives with delegation of authority. These members have responsibility for all partnership decisions

Service delivery

The central head office is in Havering but staff also have a local base in each Local Authority. In this way we aim to ensure that the existing close working and supportive relationships with children's social work staff and partner agencies remain absolutely central to our practice.

Throughout 2020/21 due to Covid restrictions all staff have primarily worked from home. Adopt London East has followed national and local guidance and as such working practices have adapted to periods of lockdown and easement. The service has continued to provide all services and to undertake face to face work where necessary and safe to do so. Working from home has proven to be highly efficient and where it benefits the service, workers will continue to be able to home work. Plans are in place for a partial return to face to face staff meetings in 2021 following further easement of restrictions.

Adopt London East and the Havering Liquidlogic support team worked jointly on a project to develop Liquidlogic capacity to operate an adoption file system. This work identified that the Havering Liquidlogic LCS system was unable to host easily retrievable and secure adoption files. A solution has been identified and a workspace purchased. Further work is ongoing to develop appropriate pathways and generate forms. Family finding and adoption support case files are currently held on a secure drive. Recruitment and Assessment files are now held on Liquidlogic.

We also have agreements in place that locally based adoption staff will continue to be able to access LA systems. The practicalities of access have proven challenging but work is underway to resolve this

Although services are delivered locally we are also able to work together to develop a more responsive service. This helps us to recruit more adopters to meet our children's identified



needs and to provide better support through a core offer delivered by the adoption support workers in partnership with local agencies.

The central ALE panel was developed in phase 2 of go-live. In-house panels have been in operation since by the end of May 2020. Two panel chairs ensure panels are able to meet every 2 weeks in order to support timeliness. The panel makes recommendations in respect of both adopter approval and child matches. Decisions in respect of child matches continue to be made by the Agency Decision Maker in the LA with responsibility for the child. The ALE HOS acts as ADM for decisions in respect of approval of adopters.

The panel has met virtually since commencement of operation. This has provided some benefits for panel members and adopters alike in terms of ease of attendance. All but one prospective couple responded positively about the virtual experience. Decisions regarding continuation of virtual or direct panels will be made in line with easement of regulations and consideration of the costs and benefits.

Staffing

Adopt London East has permanent managers in all posts and has only one agency worker covering maternity leave. Three posts are vacant. Two have been successfully recruited to and the third will be re-advertised as soon as possible. A further agency or seconded worker will be required to cover maternity leave.

Service demand has been high and three additional posts were created within budget in 2020/21.

- Stage 1 recruitment and assessment coordinator – to ensure a speedy response to all enquirers and efficient transition through the early stages of assessment
- Family finding social worker – to assist in response to an increasing volume of work. We have been unable to recruit to this post to date
- Contact coordinator – to assist in response to increasing demand for this work

All staff have responded positively to the challenge of working from home during Covid restrictions. All staff had previously been issued with portable tablets and headphones to assist in home working. Risk assessments have been used to ensure individual staff needs are met. Social work is a face to face activity and although many meetings were held virtually, where necessary and safe to do so direct visits have continued to take place. Some workers are now partially office based in order to ensure letterbox contact continues. This service was placed on temporary hold during full lockdown. All visits including office visits are subject to individual risk assessment.

We have learned a lot during this period of enforced remote working and will continue to undertake many functions remotely where it is efficient to do so without detriment to the quality of service provided.

Work was undertaken with the senior leadership team, the management team and with all staff to establish the vision and values of Adopt London East. We have worked to maintain this whilst working remotely.



Ongoing development work has continued with all staff regarding the importance of relationships as we build the Adopt London East profile within all Local Authorities, working in a culture of high support and high challenge. Remote visits have taken the place of direct office bases but have worked well

Weekly remote team meetings and fortnightly service meetings have ensured we maintain a clear service focus and provide mutual support. We provide space for informal conversations, mirroring 'coffee break' spaces as far as possible. At times of challenge other means of coming together have been used.

Sadly one valued social worker in the family finding team died in January following a brief battle with Covid. She has been sorely missed by all. Additional support was offered to all staff. The strength of the service was reflected in the ways in which all supported each other and also ensured her work was completed in her memory.

Business and Service support

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

ICT and systems development

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

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

The migration of casework data onto Liquid Logic (LL) was hampered by challenges in system development. Development work was complicated by an incomplete transfer from the development team to the permanent LL support team. Recruitment and Assessment files are completed and uploaded. It was essential to develop a new pathway for family finding and adoption support files. Work on adoption support files has nearly concluded. The family finding work involves a restructure of the Havering pathway and is being managed through a task and finish group chaired by the ALE HOS.

Service accessibility

Adopters, prospective adopters, birth families and professionals may access the service through the Adopt London website, by email or by telephone. The duty telephone is staffed by Business Support Officers (BSO's) between 9 and 5 each weekday. The BSO's have been trained in telephone response. Each team operates a duty response system and calls forwarded from BSO's are usually answered quickly. A high turn-over and vacancy rate within the BSO service has impacted on our response rates and also on social work staff who answer calls in the absence of the BSO. Work is ongoing to resolve this.

Adoption Panel

Adoption panels initially remained in Local Authority in order to allow other aspects of the service to bed in prior to go-live of panels. Adopt London East panels became operational on 27th May 2020. All panel members also attended webinar training prior to panel. This



included an overview of Adopt London East, updates on regulation and best practice and a welcome from the panel chairs.

Two highly experienced panel chairs have been recruited together with a central list of panel members. Panel member expertise includes adoption experienced social workers, adopters, care leavers and professionals from a range of backgrounds. Two panels operate per month with additional panels where necessary. Panels are currently held virtually. Panel papers are sent securely through egress.

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

Legal advice to panel is provided by the Havering legal team though legal advice in respect of an individual child's care plan remains with the Local Authority.

Partnership work

Adopt London East coordinated a London wide group of virtual school heads, teachers and therapeutic service providers aiming to promote a pan London approach to trauma informed schools. This has encouraged conversations and supported development of professional networks. A Pan London virtual training session with Louise Bomber an expert in the field was attended by over 100 professionals.

It has proven difficult to engage with the CCG's at a strategic level during times of Covid but positive operational service relationships have developed. The panel advisor has positive relationships with all designated Doctors and individual social workers have developed positive working relationships with providers. A more strategic approach will bring dividends and will be followed when capacity allows.

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

We have also commissioned PAC-UK to provide a helpline and one to one counselling. This service is also available to birth families. We plan to re-commission the birth family support service as a pan London service in 2021/22

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

We work closely with We are Family, an adopter led support group providing support to families across London. We are Family have adapted to Covid requirements through development of an online webinar and podcast based service. Adopt London has partially funded these highly successful initiatives. We also work in partnership with New Family Social who support LGBTQ adopters.

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

A separate sub group considers the means to promote adopter sufficiency.

Covid fund response



The DfE funded Adoption Support Fund was extended in 2020 to allow regional adoption agencies to provide enhanced support to adoptive families and those caring for children on a Special Guardianship Order. In total Adopt London had £800,000 in funds to provide a flexible and immediate response. Special Guardians are supported by individual Local Authorities in all but one of the RAAs. We worked closely with our LA partners to ensure we provided comprehensive support for all our families.

We commissioned services from 13 agencies. These included:

- Helpline
- Brief interventions
- Counselling and support
- Practical support for special guardians
- Direct support for adoptive children and teens
- Training and group support

The four Adopt London head of service worked jointly with all Voluntary sector partners to provide an innovative and flexible service whereby adopters accessing the helpline could be referred onto a number of differing interventions on the basis of an immediate assessment of need.

Feedback in respect of these services was extremely positive. An evaluation of this approach was undertaken by Hugh Thornberry, a renowned expert in adoption in the UK. Hugh reflected the positive experience of our adoptive families and also the added value felt by our voluntary sector partners in this permissive approach.

This work was fed into the DfE review of the Adoption Support Fund and was commented on positively. We hope this will inform decisions as to how to allocate funds in the future.

Performance information 2020/21

Best Interest/SHOBPA decision

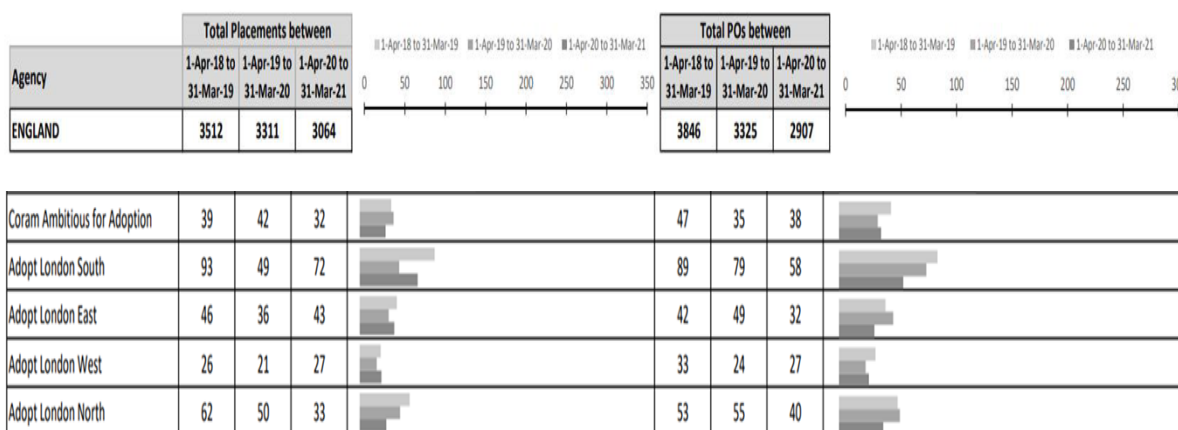




The number of decisions made in each Local Authority by the Agency Decision Maker that a child should be placed for adoption (SHOBPA) have decreased overall over the last three years in all London RAA's. Three of the five (including ALE) saw an increase in 2019/20 and subsequent decrease. It may be that Covid regulations impacted on the LA's ability to progress cases. The decline in numbers echoes the England figures.

In all cases the number of SHOBPA decisions per 10,000 of the population is lower than the England average (London LA's typically place more children in extended family placements under a Special Guardianship Order). ALE has roughly the same percentage of children placed as all other London RAAs except ALW where the placement rate is considerably lower.

Placement orders and children placed



Placement orders are granted by the court during care proceedings following review of the ADM decision that the child should be placed for adoption. Care proceedings are complex and not all children with an agency decision will be granted a placement order, however the number of placement orders made roughly mirrors the number of SHOBPA decisions made as would be expected.

The overall number of adoptive placements made in England has decreased over the course of the last 3 years. All Adopt London agencies went live in mid-2019/20 and the number of placements made dipped as a result of the transition. Adopt London East and West have both placed numbers comparable to 2018/19 in 2020/21 all other services have seen a significant reduction.

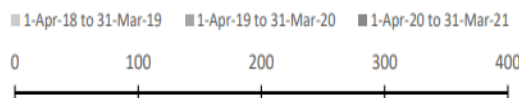
Overall numbers placed across each RAA vary considerably and are largely dependent on the number of LA's the RAA serves. ALE performance equates to an average of 11 placements per LA. The other RAA's average is considerably lower and ranges from 3.5 to 8 placements per LA

RAA	Number placed	Number of LA's	Average per LA
Coram	32	9	3.5
AL South	72	9	8
AL East	43	4	11
AL West	27	4	7
AL North	33	6	5.5



Adoption Orders

Agency	Total AOs between		
	1-Apr-18 to 31-Mar-19	1-Apr-19 to 31-Mar-20	1-Apr-20 to 31-Mar-21
ENGLAND	3521	3427	2863



Agency	1-Apr-18 to 31-Mar-19	1-Apr-19 to 31-Mar-20	1-Apr-20 to 31-Mar-21
Coram Ambitious for Adoption	51	33	35
Adopt London South	80	91	51
Adopt London East	50	44	42
Adopt London West	19	30	25
Adopt London North	76	45	37

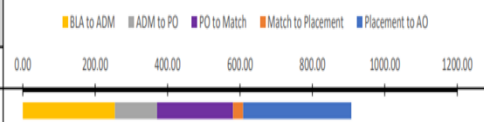
The number of adoption orders granted in each year will follow the number of placements made.

The England numbers have shown a steady decline in reflection of the reduction in placements made. The decline steepened in 2020/21 at least partially due to delays in court following Covid restrictions.

Numbers across London have also declined. The decline in ALE is not as steep as elsewhere following concerted work with the East London Courts.

Childs journey timescales

Agency	BLA to ADM	# ADMs	ADM to PO	# POs	PO to match	# matches	Match to placement	# placed	Placement to AO	# AOs
Target timescale (days)*	182		91		121		31		274	
ENGLAND	255	3731	117	2907	210	2946	28	3064	299	2863



Coram Ambitious for Adoption	261	56	114	38	161	29	23	32	308	35
Adopt London South	251	72	86	58	228	70	36	72	309	51
Adopt London East	236	38	163	32	215	40	21	43	364	42
Adopt London West	205	25	105	27	192	22	31	27	373	25
Adopt London North	232	56	105	40	256	29	57	33	420	37

Timescales for each individual child will vary considerably and a lengthy journey to adoption for a single child will impact on overall figures.

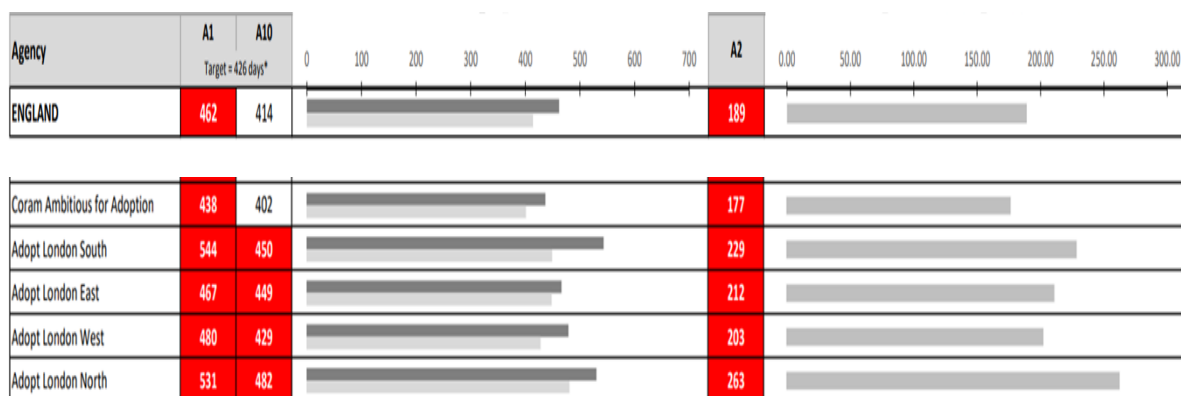
As can be seen most government set targets are not met by any RAA.

ALE achieves the set targets in timescales from match to place and performs better than England average and London RAAs in this field. Overall however ALE timescales are higher than England averages. Timescale delays are most marked in the early stages of decision



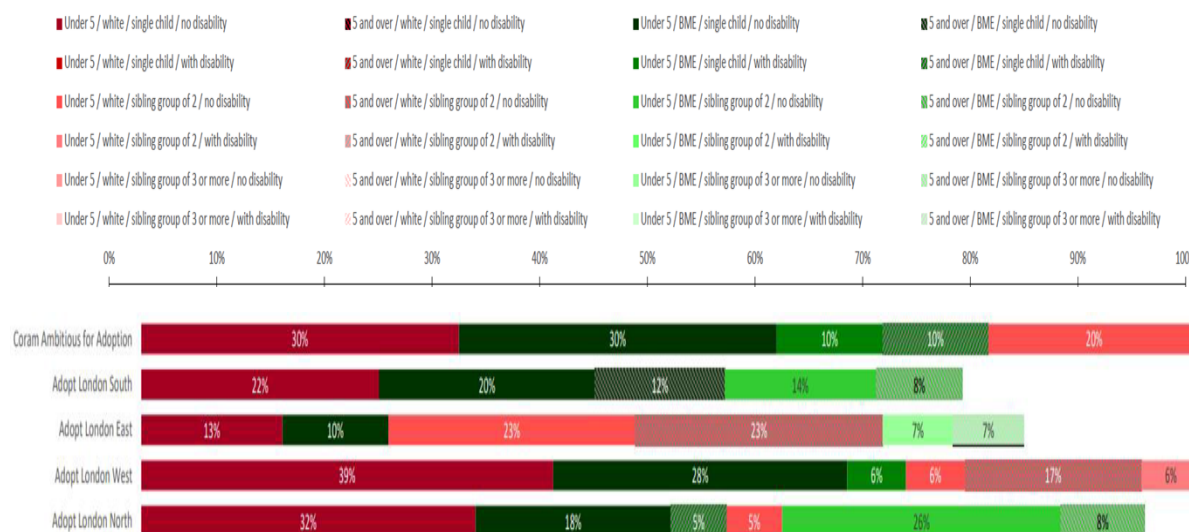
making and in the time taken from placement to adoption order. Timescales here are affected by complexity of adoption cases and in court delays. We are working with LA's and courts to ensure delays are kept to a minimum.

Adoption Scorecard indicators – Reflecting 3 year average, all figures based on completed adoptions



The three year average figures form part of the Adoption Scorecard. The scorecard provides a means of comparing performance across England. ALE is performing roughly in line with England and London averages. This reflects positively on the service as ALE LA's have a significantly larger percentage of children with complexity in need of placement.

Characteristics of children waiting at the close of 2020/21



Typically white British children aged under 5 are deemed to be the easiest children to place. Timescales for all harder to place children are usually longer. London has higher rates of harder to place children than England averages. Even within London averages ALE children are most likely to be in the harder to place category. Only 13% of our children are deemed easy to place. All other London areas operate within a range closer to the England average (between 24% and 39%).

Newham and Tower Hamlets have some of the highest incidences of poverty in the UK. All LA's with the exception of Havering have significantly higher number of children from BME



backgrounds including 60% of children in Newham and 50% in Tower Hamlets. 60% of all children waiting for a placement in ALE are children in sibling groups. Of these 14% are in a sibling group of 3 or more.

Analysis of Adopt London East

Outstanding adopters meet the needs of our children

Adopter approvals – historical performance analysis across each Local Authority

LA	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
Newham	3	1	6	4	
Tower Hamlets	5	7	10	4	
Havering	7	9	8	4	
LBBB	3	3	12	6	
Total	18	20	36	18	19

The numbers of adopters approved varies considerably across all LA's. Numbers approved in 2019/20 declined to 2016/17 levels as is consistent with all RAAs in their year of go-live. The general pattern of adopter approval prior to this decline was an increasing pattern from 18 in 16/17 to 36 in 18/19

Please note that as all adopters approved in 20/21 were approved in ALE there is no breakdown by LA

ALE service modelling was based on a commitment to improving on 17/18 figures of 20 approvals per year.

In 2020/21 ALE achieved the results below

- Number adopters approved last year in total = 19
- Number of adopters matched last year in total = 14

Stage	Number	Comment
Enquiries	8	Initial Enquiries Completed April 21
Stage 1	42	Stage 1 Assessments
Stage 2	37	Stage 2 assessments
Approved in ALE and waiting for placements	9	
Approved pre-ALE and waiting for match	4	All have been subject to review by HOS



Other assessments

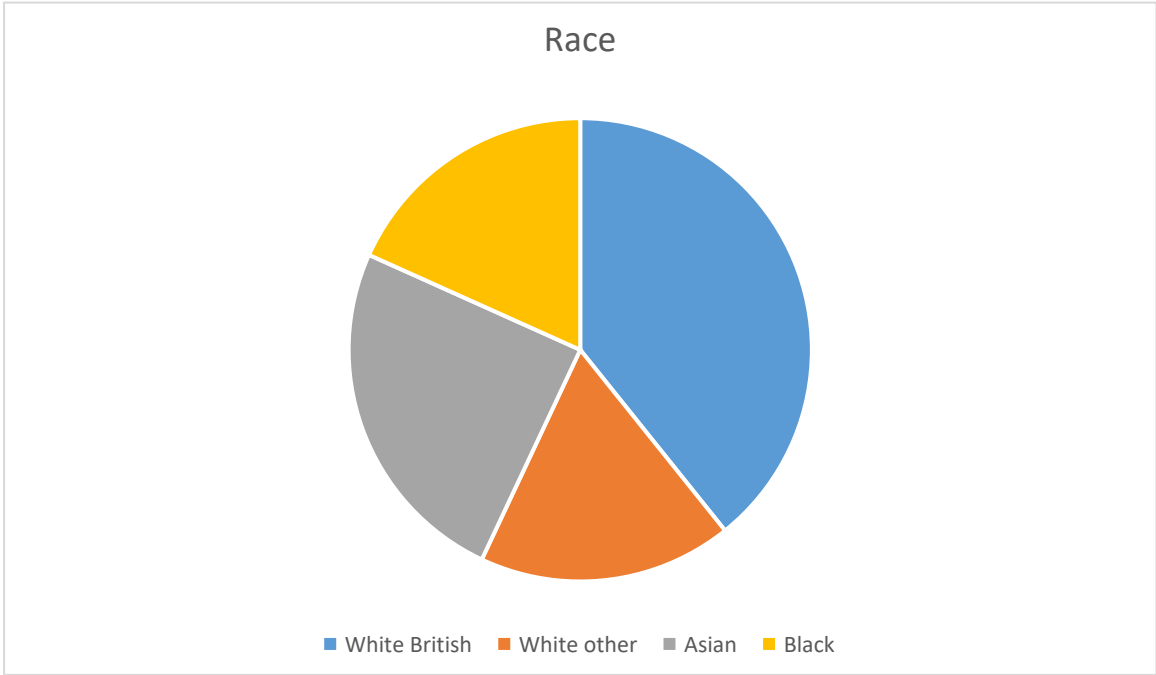
Type	Number	Comment
Step parent (family) adoptions	38	6 were passed from LA's
Inter-country	15	5 in court 1 CP concerns 3 complex cases – all related to children being brought into the country without following regulation

Characteristics of prospective adopters

We work hard to engage with our local communities, especially our black communities as black children often wait the longest for placement

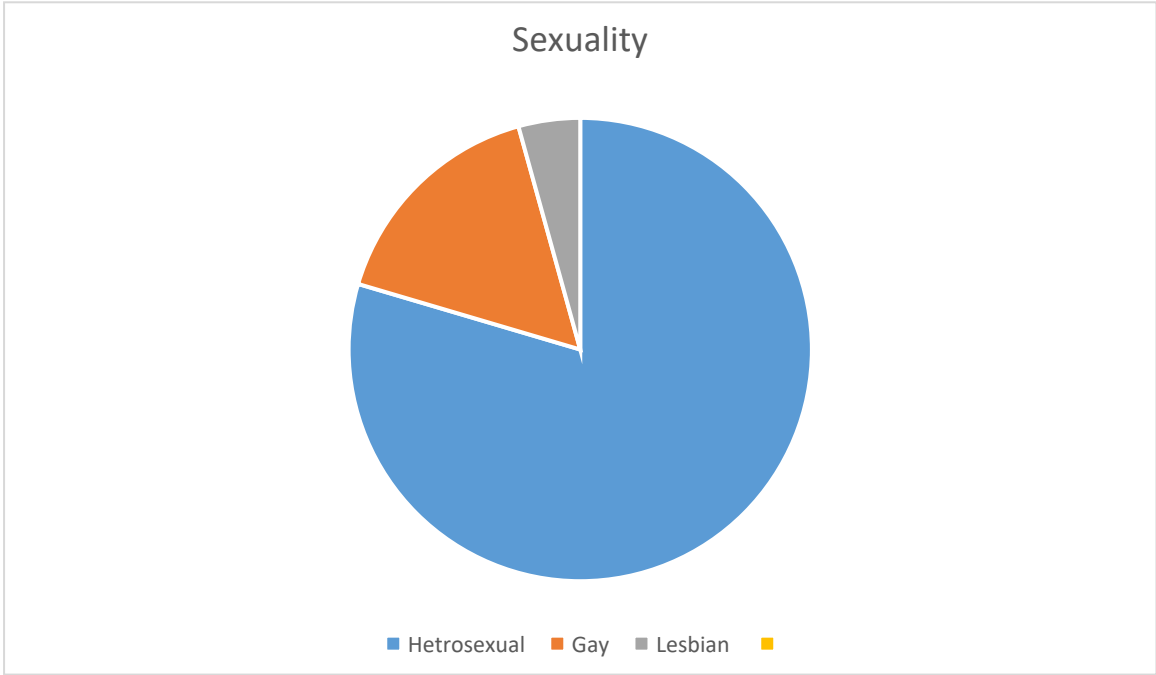
Factors such as lower average pay and poorer housing opportunities can impact on adopter availability from our black communities. Covid has also disproportionately affected our less financially secure communities; prospective adopters from these communities are more likely to have lost employment or decreased hours/income. We continue to work creatively to extend opportunities wherever necessary.

Characteristics of all prospective adopters



Although White British adopters continue to be the largest single group, a wider span of adopter applications has resulted in greater diversity. Last year 69% of prospective adopters were White British: this has decreased to 39% in one year. The percentage identifying as Black has increased from 7% to 39% in the same timescale. This also only captures individual characteristics of each applicant. Many applications are from couples with diversity.

There is an oversupply of adopters from Asian communities nationally as Asian children are often cared for within family and community networks. We work with prospective Asian adopters to ensure they are able to accept a diverse range of children.





Heterosexual adopters remain the majority but increasing numbers of gay and lesbian people apply. The number of Gay men applying has increased from 9% to 15% and lesbian applicants have increased from 6% to 8%. We continue to ensure we have a presence in pride events and work with the specialist support group New Family Social to raise awareness of our offer.

Summary

Adopter approvals have taken longer to turn the curve than placements made. The reasons for this are varied

- The lead in time for adopter approval is lengthy and the amount of other work especially in private adoptions and complex inter-country work which sits outside the IAC contract has increased.
- Initial uncertainties following Covid restrictions resulted in a decrease in adopter applications
- Covid restrictions had a disproportionate impact on adopter approval timescales due to lengthy delays in medical assessments and in checks from overseas. This had a greater impact in ALE as we actively promote applications from our incoming communities

ALE achieved 19 adoptions in 2020/21. This still placed ALE as one of the higher achieving RAA's in 2020/21.

Campaigns have been successful and the new National 'you can adopt' campaign which launched on 16th September has brought more interest.

We continue to face a number of challenges in improving our adopter approval rate but are progressing with a clear action plan as detailed below

Challenge	Description	Action
Staffing	High vacancy rate 3 agency workers failed to meet standards One successful applicant not progressed due to poor reference Capability issues	Continued attempts to recruit both to permanent and interim positions One permanent staff member recruited – commenced in November Further staff member recruited – to commence in July 2021
Early stage processes	Inefficient early stage processes Back log of enquiries	Review of processes Initial enquiry coordinator post created Worker in place since early December New processes and close monitoring Improvements across the board
Enquirer suitability	Enquirers unsuitable to adopt Adopter offer gap See below for National availability	Improved website information Information evenings and meet the adopter evenings Counsel out at initial enquiry or initial visit Development of a self-select adopter readiness tool using the website (in progress)



Service capacity	Insufficient staffing to allocate all assessments	Development of ISW role Recruitment of flexible workforce of ISW's
Covid related issues	<p>Medicals</p> <p>International certificate of good conduct – police do not take fingerprints</p> <p>Health and safety visits – adopter approval to visit</p> <p>Inability to undertake direct training</p> <p>Virtual Panel cannot hear all cases</p>	<p>GP's undertaking virtual medicals</p> <p>Use of specialist agency – adopter funded</p> <p>A challenge in a small number of cases</p> <p>Development and delivery of virtual preparation and training sessions</p> <p>Use of Covid regulations for straight to ADM approval. Now ceased</p>
Private adoptions	<p>38 families awaiting assessment (highest in London)</p> <p>4 allocated</p>	<p>Urgent allocations to be made</p> <p>Letter to all others to state will not be allocating until at least April 2022 – information about other options</p>
Inter-country adoptions	<p>15 cases – some highly complex</p> <p>Court delays</p>	<p>ICA contract – for assessments</p> <p>Continue to undertake supervision and Annex A</p> <p>Some further work contracted out</p>

Timely matching of children with outstanding adopters

Placements made – Historical performance analysis across each Local Authority

LA	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
Newham	10	27	5	10	14
Tower Hamlets	8	19	10	7	14
Havering	8	7	11	4	4
LBBB	15	13	21	8	13
Total	41	66	47	29	44

Placement orders



LA	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
Newham	24	18	11	12	8
Tower Hamlets	21	9	12	11	11
Havering	7	15	2	2	7
LBBB	13	21	16	13	6
Total	65	63	41	38	32

The numbers of placement orders and placements made varies considerably from year to year and across each Local Authority. A down turn was noted in 2019/20 as is consistent with all RAA's in the year of go-live.

Most LA's saw an increased number of placements made in 20/21 with the exception of Havering where relatively few placement orders had been made. 7 placement orders were made in Havering in 202/21 and an upturn in placements made is expected in 21/22.

The number of placement orders made reduced considerably in 2 LA's, increased in 1 and remained consistent in one. The national background rate is of a reduction in placement orders.

Family Finding workload breakdown on 31st March 2021

The chart below details a snapshot of the workload of the family finding team at the end of the 20/21 financial year.

	Placed for Adoption	Matched not yet placed	Linked not yet matched	Family finding post PO	Post ADM no PO	Early Monitoring	Total Children in tracking	Children in EP prior to formal matching
Newham	14	2	3	3	3	8	14	2
Havering	4	2		3	7	2	9	
Tower Hamlets	14		3	9	19	12	25	
LBBB	13	1	3	8	7	4	18	
total	45	5	9	21	36	26	66	2

Newham, Tower Hamlets and LBBB continue to have a remarkable degree of consistency in terms of placements made. Havering has traditionally had a lower level of demand and only 4 placements were made in 2020/21. A further 14 are either linked or matched and awaiting placement. Numbers in this cohort are fairly consistent across all Local Authorities. Numbers in Tower Hamlets in pre PO stages remain comparatively high and this requires further exploration.



Placement statistics

44 matches were made in 2020/21 with an additional three children placed in early permanence placements but not yet matched. A total of 10 children were placed through early permanence. This is the highest performance per number of Local Authorities in London by a considerable margin.

Each Local Authority has a lead worker but workers are also paired to ensure cover for each Local Authority at all times and to allow a more flexible response in times of higher demand. Tower Hamlets and Newham are paired as are LBBD and Havering.

All workers attend placement planning and tracking meetings, offer support and guidance to children's social work staff and give additional support to complete paperwork and drive progress where necessary

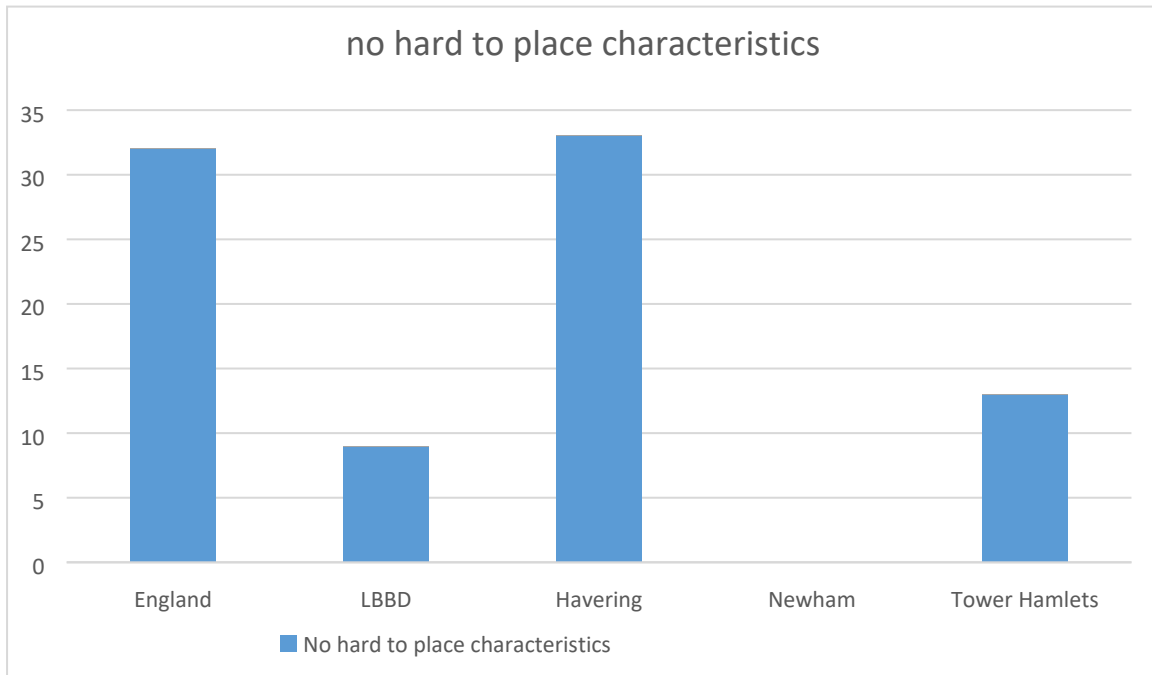
One Advanced practitioner takes lead responsibility for relinquished children and early permanence.

It was agreed in the Board meeting in November 2020 that a further temporary position could be created. A further vacancy was created through the sad death of a worker; Anne Fitzgerald in January. A further temporary vacancy was created due to a worker going on early maternity leave. Two workers are currently providing cover for a team of five. The service has continued to provide support for all children requiring a match but has temporarily ceased direct attendance at legal and permanency planning meetings.

The service has advertised permanent and temporary posts and has found it difficult to recruit to these posts. We have successfully recruited to one post and are offering a secondment opportunity for the temporary post. A further advert has gone out.

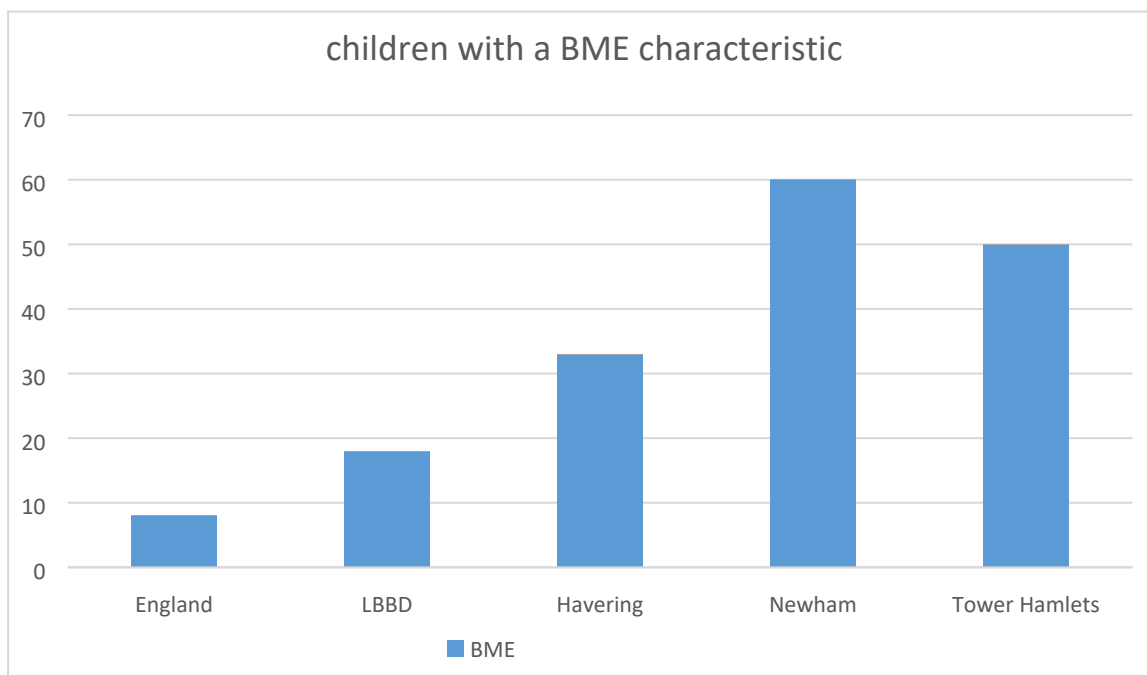
Children in active family finding

Percentage of children in active family finding at 31st March 2021 who were categorised as having no hard to place characteristics



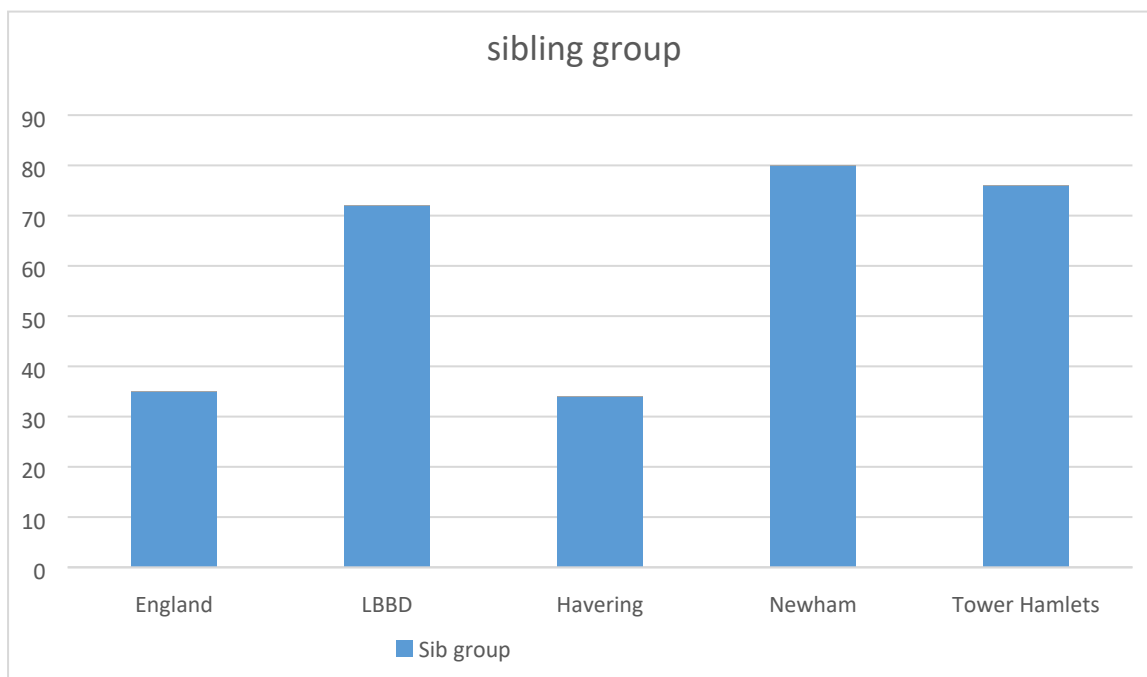
On average in England 32% of children have no hard to place characteristics. These children are usually placed more quickly than children deemed harder to place. Only Havering equals this percentage. All other Local Authorities have much lower numbers of children ranging from 13% in Tower Hamlets to no children in Newham

Percentage of children in active family finding on 31st March 2021 from a BME background



Children from a BME family are often harder to place. Adopt London works with all BME communities to promote adoption and a number of successful campaigns have increased the number of applications considerably. The England average of 8% of children waiting is much lower than averages from all ALE Local Authorities. In Newham 60% of all children waiting are from a BME heritage.

Percentage of children waiting at 31st March 2021 who are part of a sibling group



The number of children waiting to be placed in a sibling group in Havering reflects the England average. In all other Local Authorities up to 70% of children waiting are in a sibling group.

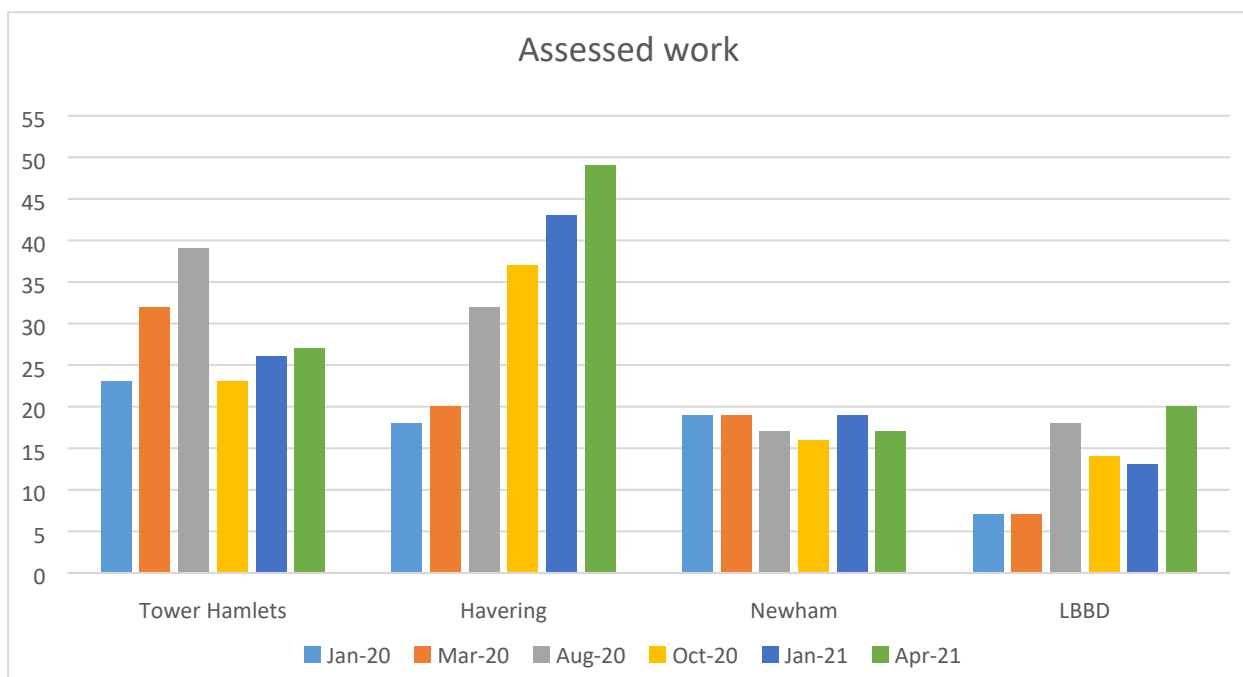
Service Plan

Development area	Action	Comment	Progress
Staffing	Full staffing. Back fill for maternity leave Staffing insufficient to meet demand	Increase in core staffing from 4 to 5 workers achieved in budget Difficulty in recruitment	3 permanent staff 1 post temporarily covered for maternity leave 1 post remains vacant
LA relationships	Locally based staff Agree strategic and operational leads in all LA's Develop positive working relationships	Covid restrictions resulted in WFH for most staff Relationship building through online platforms	Development of pairing system to allow for named worker support with flexible response
Access to LA records	Identify solutions to access LA records on read only basis to	This has proven difficult	Access in place in 2 LA's and partial access in one other

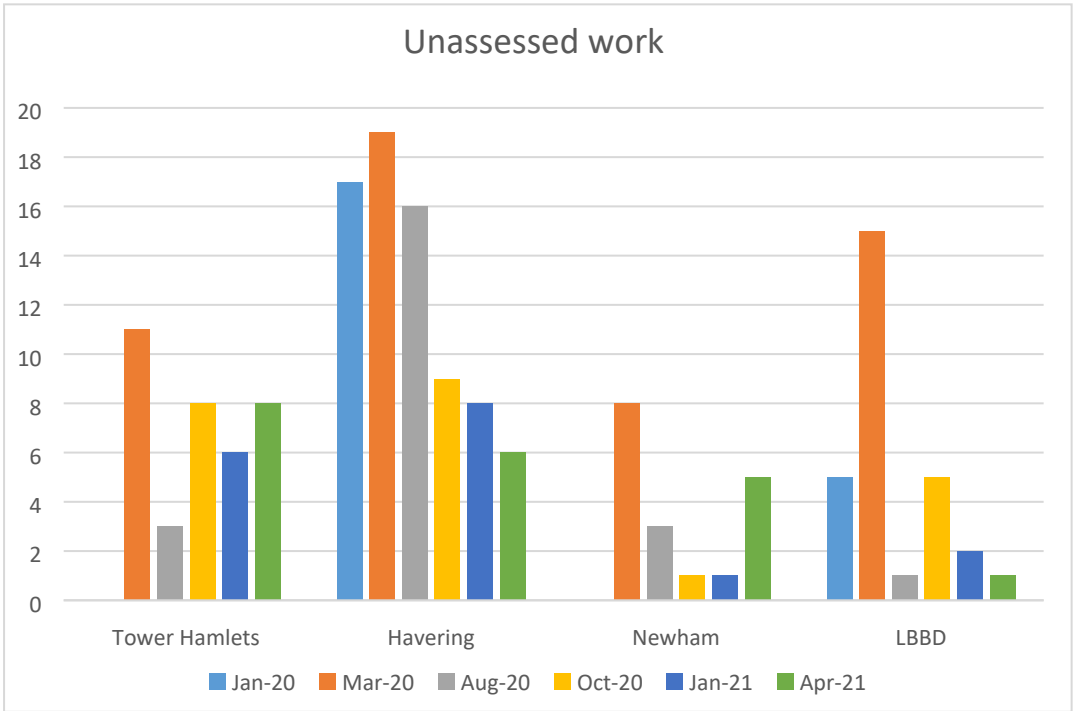


	ensure information flow is seamless	Further work ongoing	
Protocols	Protocols developed and shared with LA services	High staff turnover – to review and re-issue	Further protocols to be developed Operational sub group of the Board to be developed
Relinquished babies And Early permanence	AP to take lead role in development and delivery		Lead role progressing EP increasing to 10%
Tracker	Develop effective tracker ASGLB compliant	System glitches	Completed – to further review

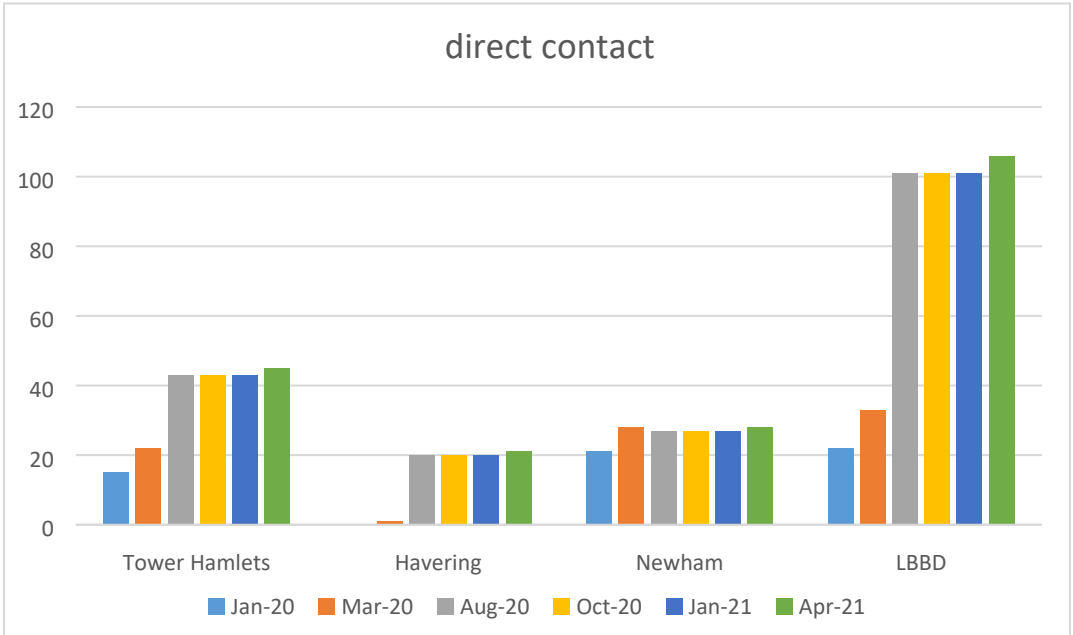
Adoptive families are supported to achieve happiness and the best outcomes



With the exception of Havering, assessed adoption support work has begun to stabilise although overall assessed work continues to increase. There are a larger number of adoptive families living in Havering and entitled to a service. Many were not recruited in Havering and therefore were previously unaware of their entitlement. As can be seen below this increase in demand in Havering initially resulted in an increase in unassessed work being held prior to assessment. This has now been addressed



A low number of cases will continue to be held as unassessed work. 5 cases are awaiting adoption support (down from 9 cases in January); 15 adopted adults are also receiving support. A further cohort of adopters receive one off advice and support through the duty system and are not included in these figures. Other adopters may access our universal services provided through PAC-UK, 'We are Family', Adopter Hub and National Association of Therapeutic Parents.





As can be seen supported direct contact has stabilised. We are now confident that we have identified all families in need of support. Some direct contact was supported during the summer months but almost all supported direct work has been undertaken virtually this year. Direct work plans have resumed in line with government guidance.

LBBB traditionally supported all direct contact. Direct supported contact will be subject to continuous review with the aim of preparing families to meet safely without support wherever possible.

Overview

Although numbers of adopters being offered a service has stabilised, demand for adoption support continues to rise. We continue to support adopters to access other support services such as those provided by We are Family and the Adopter Hub in order to ring-fence support services for those families most in need. Our duty service provides an immediate source of support for our adoptive families prior to allocation and following completion of allocated work.

Most families receiving direct support from ALE have high levels of need. ALE social workers work in partnership with workers from a range of organisations to support children on the edge of care and in need of safeguarding. In many cases ALE social workers take a lead role in provision of direct support. Levels of need have increased through

- the impact of Covid,
- post Lockdown reintegration into education
- community issues (including county lines)
- impact on mental health

Service plan

Development area	Action	Comment	Progress
Staffing	Temporary cover for maternity leave	Workload high and resources must be restricted	Fully staffed
ASF	<p>Ensure compliance with new ASF requirements</p> <p>All providers to be subject to compliance checks</p> <p>Annual returns to be signed off by lead finance officer</p>	Some challenge with historical returns	<p>All new contracts issued only after compliance</p> <p>Annual return ready to complete</p>



	Historical issues to be addressed in LA		
Adopter led support	<p>Liaise with existing peer support networks</p> <p>Work with WAF Pan London</p>	<p>Formal consultation with adopters through WAF</p> <p>Links and relationships in Local area made and maintained</p>	WAF offer well established
Develop immediate access service	Duty system to be developed	Managed by TM with close oversight	System developed and operating well High levels of customer satisfaction
Develop core offer	<p>80% direct work to be assessed</p> <p>Improve early offer to all adopters</p>	<p>Develop structure for planned interventions</p> <p>Some commissioned services offer direct access</p> <p>Improved working with peer support networks</p>	Some delay in assessments due to staffing challenges
Develop core adopted adult/birth family offer	<p>Develop protocol for clarity of role</p> <p>Develop effective commissioned offer</p>	<p>This aspect of work has been delayed due to pressure on the adoption support offer</p> <p>Birth family support undertaken wherever possible</p>	Commissioning of pan London birth family service being led by ALS
Improve partnership offer	<p>Develop effective working relationships with key partners</p> <p>Undertake joint delivery/programmes where appropriate</p>	Challenge with health services due to differing CCG's	<p>Training for Virtual schools and LAC designated teachers Pan London</p> <p>Local operational networks developing</p>
Review commissioned services	Review and develop effective commissioning strategy	Pan London approach wherever possible commencing with Adopted adult and birth family services	Delay in Adopted adult services – Pan London Southwark commissioning service lead



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Adopter consultation

Adopt London services work closely with We are Family an adopter led peer support organization.

All adopters and prospective adopters are invited to enroll with We are Family (WAF) at the point they enter stage 2 assessment. Take up of the service is high. During Covid restrictions WAF re-modelled their service to a more centralized webinar and podcast based model with presentations from a number of expert speakers. This work was funded by Covid funds, charitable funding streams and Adopt London.

WAF conducted consultation with their members on their needs during Covid lockdown. This informed our spending priorities. Further consultation is now built into our annual cycle.

Adopt London also sent out adopter consultation questionnaires to all adopters on approval and to all adopters on our newsletter list regarding our support to them.

We have had some teething problems with staffing in the adopter recruitment team and as a result although most comments were positive we also recognized we needed to ensure consistency of approach

Overall comments were positive and included the following

- Overall, we found the experience straightforward. Built a very good rapport with our social worker. Had no issues speaking to anyone. No issues with Zoom meetings or skype. We were well informed about all stages of the Assessment and what was expected. The information days were informative. Our experience of the process has been positive overall
- We felt that our assessment was very thorough + professional and that xx had really prepared for each session.
- xx was able to explore our backgrounds and difficult topics whilst making us feel at ease and confident in our application. Whenever xx left, we always felt positive and looking forward to our next session with her.

Comments suggesting improvements included the following

'After this prep course I think you should help people set up a what's app group so people can keep in contact after prep course. We did this on my recommendation after the previous prep course & we still communicate nearly a year later.'

- Since Covid restrictions Preparation groups operate online and include as homework small group discussions with the participants on subjects delivered in podcast form. WhatsApp groups facilitate this process and are now an integral part of the offer

'I would suggest that after the prep course that for stage 2 you work out all the prior dates and times in advance between SW and potential adoptee'



- It is a service expectation that work is structured in this way. We have ensured all social workers whether employed or Independent assessing social workers understand this expectation

'I think you should very seriously consider & put in place a buddying up process. So all potential adopters would buddy up with a person who has already adopted through you so all the basic questions they have could be answered. '

- We work in partnership with We are Family who now offer a range of forums for adopter to adopter communication and support

'Very long. Communication with the social worker was chaotic, what made us very anxious and insecure with the whole progress . Assessment with (team manager) was great, excellent communication and guidance for the preparation for the Panel day.'

- These individual issues have been addressed

We received only 7 responses to the questionnaire in respect of adoption support. All seven were highly positive. Comments included

- In the short time that we've known xx, she quickly had a clear understanding of what our Son is like, which is such a relief.
- She is incredibly efficient in getting her work done.
- xx has helped us in contacting the school which has helped move them along in their complacency.
- Xx (manager) who was the first person to contact us was very supportive.
- xx was available when we needed her, reminded us of what needed doing and in what order and responded to us, quickly going to find information and get back to us with it much faster than we expected.

One adoptive couple whilst praising the service also made some suggestions for improvement as below

'One thing that would be positive for future adopters is to have a rough guide of the approximate foreseeable costs of adoption right from the outset to the final costs of ordering certificates. Though we knew that some of them would be coming, we were still surprised by some of the costs. It would be a way to improve the information given to adopters'.

- The offer varies from Local Authority to Local Authority. We plan to work on clarifying the offer in partnership

'We would have loved to have had more opportunities to talk to current adopters during training days as, when this did happen, there was a really nice balance of being able to have trainers/social worker's professional responses to questions alongside an adopters' more personal take on it. It also gives prospective adopters an opportunity to ask questions in a way they might not when talking to adopters in a social setting.'



- This couple undertook training commissioned from Barnardos in the previous LA model of practice. Training has since been delivered by ALE. We have delivered training remotely since Covid restrictions commenced. Training sessions include an adopter led session and a session with contributions from a birth mother. Training will continue to be subject to review.

Complaints and compliments

The service has had two complaints in 2020/21. Both complaints were from prospective adoptive parents. One complaint was in respect of a decision not to proceed following receipt of statutory checks. The other was in respect of timescales for approval. Both complaints were resolved in stage 1.

Some lessons were learned as a result of these complaints. We have improved our information giving re time-scales and provide more clear information following a decision not to proceed on other options available.

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

In addition to the compliments noted in adopter feedback compliments include:

Adopter on direct support: Thank you so much for your time and support today. We really appreciated having you there

Adoption panel members: The panel members wished me to pass on that they felt your presentation of your case at panel today was "excellent".

LA Team Manager: I would like to compliment (worker) for her amazing partnership work and supporting us today with a very complicated COVID-19 situation. (the worker) is amazing, she is such a hard worker, she is driving things forward and I could not be happier to have such member in our extended partnership team.

LA Social worker: (worker) is always supportive, positive, quick to find solutions and moving things quickly and providing high quality work.

Summary of current achievements

Adopt London East has been operational for 18 months. 12 of these months have been in Covid related lockdown. Despite this much has been achieved:

- The highest rate of children placed in all London RAA's
- Adopter approval in line with or higher than all London RAA's
- A large increase in the percentage of black and LGBT adopters
- A new adopter support offer both locally and pan London
- A Covid support offer independently evaluated as outstanding and praised by the DfE
- Rapid response to Covid including quick development of online training and support
- A productive partnership with We are Family delivering webinars and podcasts as well as direct support
- A clear and positive website showcasing our work

Future challenges



The service is still new and has primarily operated within Covid related restrictions. These restrictions have affected the service, partners and our adoptive families.

Infrastructure development

Certain aspects of infrastructure development have been delayed and a primary focus in 2021/22 will be in this field. Development areas include:

- A Liquidlogic based software tool for use across the service
- An ASF supplier accreditation tool
- Digital read only access to LA files to ensure easy transfer of information
- Improved financial reporting systems through separation of cost centres
- Pan London commissioning of a birth parent service
- Improvements to the website including a readiness tool for prospective adopters and adopter led access to services
- Consolidation of new ways of working post Covid restrictions

Adopter approval

Due to the long lead in time and the impact of Covid restrictions: adopter approval has taken longer to turn the curve than other sectors. Approvals have begun to increase and 21/22 will see increased numbers of adopters improved. Development areas include:

- Higher ratio of adopter applications from target groups such as black adopters
- Increase in applications from adopters able to care for more hard to place children
- Increase in the number of adopters willing to consider early permanence
- Improvement in timeliness in all aspects of the approval process

Family finding

Family finding continued throughout restrictions and the number of children placed increased. Development areas include:

- Production of further tools to assist LA social workers to understand adoption and adoption processes
- Streamlining processes to ensure each LA has the same offer and best practice is shared
- Further embedding the Beth Neil approach to introductions
- Increase in the use of in-house adopters

Adopter support

Prior to the development of ALE the adoption support offer was underdeveloped. Many adopters were not aware of the offer available. The support offer is now much more readily available and demand for services is high. The offer has been streamlined with an immediate duty offer triaging into a social work allocated offer. Development areas include:

- Improved management of the ASF offer through dedicated administrative support
- Improved management of direct contact through review of contracts and safe transition to adopter led contacts where safe to do so

- Further development of the partnership with We are Family and other local peer led adopter support groups
- Improved adopted adult and birth family support through re-negotiated contracts and focussed support

Financial statement

Category of Expenditure	20-21 Budget	Actual Expenditure 2020/21	Variance 2020/21
Staffing Costs	1,161,566.80	1,161,567	0
Agency Staffing	282,421.03	282,421	0
Other Staff Costs	69,370.12	69,370	0
Travel/Transport	2,805.12	2,805	0
Office Expenses	39,749.13	39,749	0
Premises Related Costs	944.55	945	0
Commissioned Services	102,634.32	102,634	0
Communication/Publicity/Market Engagement	169.59	170	0
Internal Recharges	42,772.06	42,772	0
Total Expenditure	1,702,433	1,702,432	0

Category of Income	20-21 Budget	Actual Income 2020/210	Variance 2020/21
DFE Income carried-forward from 18/19	-48,931	-48,931	0
LA Contributions:			0
LB Barking & Dagenham	-463,041	-463,041	0
LB Newham	-479,690	-479,690	0



LB Tower Hamlets	-337,051	-337,051	0
LB Havering	-373,720.00	-373,720.00	0
Total Income	1,702,433	-1,702,433	0

Net Expenditure 20/21

	Adjusted Budget 20-21	Actuals 2020/21	Variance 2019/20
Net Expenditure	0	0	0

Sue May

HOS Adopt London East

1st September 2021

ASSEMBLY**24 November 2021**

Title: Treasury Management 2021/22 Mid-Year Review	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services	
Open Report	For Decision
Wards Affected: None	Key Decision: No
Report Author: David Dickinson, Investment Fund Manager	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8227 2722 E-mail: david.dickinson@lbbd.gov.uk
Accountable Director: Philip Gregory, Finance Director (S151 Officer)	
Accountable Strategic Leadership Director: Claire Symonds, Managing Director	
<p>Summary</p> <p>Regulation changes have placed greater onus on elected Members in respect of the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This mid-year review report provides details of the mid-year position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by the Assembly on 3 March 2021 as part of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2021/22.</p> <p>The Cabinet is due to consider this report at its meeting on 16 November 2021 (the date of publication of this Assembly agenda). Any issues arising from the Cabinet meeting will be reported to the Assembly.</p>	
<p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>The Assembly is recommended to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement Mid-Year Review 2021/22; (ii) The economic update covering the increase in inflation and the potential for an increase in the Bank of England Base Rate; (iii) That the value of the treasury investments and cash as at 30 September 2021 totalled £170.2m and that the treasury investment strategy outperformed its peer group, with a return of 1.51% against an average of 0.24% for London Local Authorities (as at 30 June 2021); (iv) That the value of the commercial and residential loans lent by the Council as at 31 March 2021 totalled £171.5m; (v) That the total borrowing position as at 30 September 2021 totalled £1.0 billion, with £331.2m relating to the Housing Revenue Account and £669.1m to the General Fund; 	

- (vi) That interest payable was forecast to be £12.6m against a budget of £13.6m, representing a surplus of £1m;
- (vii) That interest receivable was forecast to be £8.2m against a budget of £6.5m, representing a surplus of £1.7m;
- (viii) That capitalised interest was forecast to be £6.5m against a budget of £5.0m, representing a surplus of £1.5m;
- (ix) That Investment and Acquisition Strategy income was forecast to be £4.9m against a budget of £6.6m, representing a deficit of £1.7m;
- (x) That in the first half of the 2021/22 financial year the Council complied with all 2021/22 treasury management indicators.

Reason(s)

To accord with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Council operates a balanced budget whereby cash raised during the year meets the Council's cash expenditure needs. Part of the treasury management operations is to ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies invested with counterparties of an appropriate level of risk, providing adequate liquidity before considering maximising investment return.
- 1.2 A second main function of treasury management is the funding of the Council's capital programme and Investment and Acquisition Strategy (IAS). These capital plans provide a guide to the Council's borrowing need, which is essentially the use of longer-term cash flow planning to ensure the Council can meet its capital spending operations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging loans, using cash flow surpluses, or restructuring debt to meet Council risk or cost objectives. To fund the IAS, it is essential that a significant level of borrowing is secured prior to being used to reduce interest rate risk.
- 1.3 A third main function of treasury management is the funding and treasury advice that is required for the Council's Investment and Acquisitions Strategy (IAS).
- 1.4 In accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice for Treasury Management, there should be a review of that strategy at least half yearly. The principal requirement of the Code includes:
- 1) Maintain a Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the policies and objectives of the Council's treasury management.
 - 2) Maintain a Treasury Management Practices which set out the how the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.
 - 3) Receipt by full Council of a Treasury Management Strategy Statement, (TMSS) including the Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue

Provision (MRP) Policy for the year ahead; a Mid-Year Review Report (this report); and an Annual Report covering activities during the previous year.

- 4) Delegation by the Council of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions.
- 5) Delegation by the Council to a specific named body, for this Council this is Cabinet, to scrutinise the treasury management strategy and policies.

1.5 This mid-year report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of practice on Treasury Management, and covers the following:

- 1) Introduction and Background;
- 2) Economic Update and Interest Rate Forecast;
- 3) Council's Cash, Interest Budget and Debt Position as at 30 September 2021;
- 4) Investment Portfolio as at 30 September 2021;
- 5) Investment Strategy Performance and Benchmarking;
- 6) Loans and IAS Income Forecast as at 30 September 2021;
- 7) Accounting Policy change to interest costs; and
- 8) The Council's Capital Position (Prudential Indicators).

2. Economic Update and Interest Rate Forecast

2.1 Economic update

2.1.1 The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting 24.9.21: voted unanimously to leave Bank Rate (BR) at 0.10%, with no changes to its programme of quantitative easing purchases due to finish by the end of this year at a total of £895bn; two MPC members voted to stop the last £35bn of purchases as they were concerned that this would add to inflationary pressures.

2.1.2 There was a shift in the tone of the MPC's minutes from indicating that some tightening in monetary policy was now on the horizon, but also not wanting to stifle economic recovery by too early an increase in BR. The MPC indicated there had been a marked increase in concern that more recent increases in prices, particularly the increases in gas and electricity prices in October and due again next April, are likely to lead to faster and higher inflation expectations and underlying wage growth, which would increase the risk that price pressures would prove more persistent next year than previously expected. Indeed, to emphasise its concern about inflationary pressures, the MPC pointedly chose to reaffirm its commitment to the 2% inflation target in its statement; this suggested that it was now willing to look through the flagging economic recovery during the summer to prioritise bringing inflation down next year. This is a reversal of its priorities and a long way from earlier MPC meetings which indicated a willingness to look through inflation overshooting the target for limited periods to ensure that inflation was 'sustainably over 2%'. Now the MPC's primary concern is that underlying price pressures in the economy will embed over the next year and elevate future inflation to stay significantly above its 2% target and for longer.

2.1.3 Financial markets are pricing in an increase in BR from 0.10% to 0.25% in February 2022, but this looks ambitious as the MPC has stated that it wants to see what happens to the economy, and particularly to employment once furlough ends at the end of September. At the Feb 2022 MPC's meeting it will only have

available the employment figures for November: to get a clearer picture of employment trends, it must wait until the May meeting when it will have data up until February. At its May meeting, it will also have a clearer understanding of the likely peak of inflation. The MPC's forward guidance on its intended monetary policy on raising BR versus selling (quantitative easing) holdings of bonds is as follows:

- Place focus on raising BR as “the active instrument in most circumstances”.
- Raising BR to 0.50% before starting on reducing its holdings.
- Once BR is at 0.50% it would stop reinvesting maturing gilts.
- Once BR had risen to at least 1%, it would start selling its holdings.

2.1.4 COVID-19 vaccines - These have boosted confidence that life in the UK could largely return to normal during the summer after a third wave of the virus threatened to overwhelm hospitals in the spring. With the household saving rates high since the first lockdown in March 2020, there is pent-up demand and purchasing power stored up for services in hard hit sectors like restaurants, travel and hotels. The big question is whether mutations of the virus could develop which render current vaccines ineffective, as opposed to how quickly vaccines can be modified to deal with them and enhanced testing programmes be implemented to contain their spread.

2.1.5 World growth: This was in recession in 2020 but recovered during 2021 until starting to lose momentum more recently. Inflation has been rising due to increases in gas and electricity prices, shipping costs and supply shortages, although these should subside during 2022. It is likely that we are heading into a period where there will be a reversal of world globalisation and a decoupling of western countries from dependence on China to supply products, and vice versa. This is likely to reduce world growth rates from those in prior decades.

2.1.6 Supply shortages: the pandemic and extreme weather events have disrupted supply chains and have led to misdistribution of shipping containers around the world and an increase in the cost of shipping. Combined with a shortage of semi-conductors, these issues have had a disruptive impact on production in many countries. Many western countries are also experiencing difficulties in filling job vacancies. It is expected that these issues will be sorted out, but they are currently contributing to a spike upwards in inflation and shortages of materials and goods on shelves.

2.2 Interest Rate Forecast.

2.2.1 The Council's treasury advisor, Link Group, provided the following forecasts (PWLB rates are certainty rates):

Link Group Interest Rate View		29.9.21								
	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24
BANK RATE	0.10	0.10	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.75
3 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.20	0.20	0.30	0.40	0.50	0.50	0.60	0.70
6 month ave earnings	0.20	0.20	0.30	0.30	0.40	0.50	0.60	0.60	0.70	0.80
12 month ave earnings	0.30	0.40	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.60	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00
5 yr PWLB	1.40	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.70	1.70	1.70
10 yr PWLB	1.80	1.80	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.10	2.10	2.10
25 yr PWLB	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.60
50 yr PWLB	2.00	2.00	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.40

2.2.2 Forecasts for Bank Rate

BR is not expected to go up quickly after the initial rate rise as the supply potential of the economy has not generally taken a major hit during the pandemic, so should cope with meeting demand without causing inflation to remain elevated in the medium-term, or to inhibit inflation from falling back towards the MPC's 2% target after the surge to around 4% towards the end of 2021. Three increases in BR are forecast in the period to March 2024, ending at 0.75%. However, these forecasts may well need changing within a relatively short time frame for the following reasons:

- There are increasing grounds for viewing the economic recovery as running out of steam during the summer and now into the autumn. This could lead into stagflation which would create a dilemma for the MPC as to which way to face.
- Will some current key supply shortages e.g., petrol and diesel, spill over into causing economic activity in some sectors to take a significant hit?
- Rising gas and electricity prices in October and next April and increases in other prices caused by supply shortages and increases in taxation next April, are already going to deflate consumer spending power without the MPC having to take any action on BR to cool inflation. Then we have the Government's upcoming budget in October, which could also end up in reducing consumer spending power.
- On the other hand, consumers are sitting on +£200bn of excess savings left over from the pandemic so when will they spend this sum, in part or in total?
- There are 1.6 million people coming off furlough at the end of September; how many of those will not have jobs on 1st October and will, therefore, be available to fill labour shortages in many sectors of the economy? So, supply shortages which have been driving up both wages and costs, could reduce significantly within the next six months or so and alleviate the MPC's current concerns.
- There is a risk that there could be further nasty surprises on the Covid front, on top of the flu season this winter, which could depress economic activity.

In summary, with the high level of uncertainty on several fronts, it is likely that these forecasts will need to be revised again soon - in line with what the new news is.

It is important to remember that BR was cut to 0.10% was an emergency measure to deal with the Covid crisis hitting the UK in March 2020. At any time, the MPC could decide to simply take away that final emergency cut from 0.25% to 0.10% on the grounds of it no longer being warranted and as a step forward in the return to normalisation. In addition, any BR under 1% is both highly unusual and highly supportive of economic growth.

2.2.3 PWLB Rates: The current margins over gilt yields for PWLB rates are:

- **PWLB Standard Rate & HRA is gilt plus 100 basis points (G+100bps)**
- **PWLB Certainty Rate & HRA is gilt plus 80 basis points (G+80bps)**
- **Local Infrastructure Rate is gilt plus 60bps (G+60bps)**

Gilt yields - Since the start of 2021, there has been significant volatility in gilt yields, and hence PWLB rates. During September, gilt yields from 5 – 50 years have steadily risen and rose further after the hawkish tone of the MPC's minutes last week. Link's forecasts show a steady, but slow, rise in both BR and gilt yields during the forecast period to March 2024.

While monetary policy in the UK will have a major impact on gilt yields, there is also a need to consider the impact that rising treasury yields in America could have. As an average since 2011, there has been a 75% correlation between movements in US 10-year treasury yields and UK 10 year gilt yields. This is a significant UPWARD RISK exposure to Link's forecasts for longer term PWLB rates.

US treasury yields - During the first part of the year, US President Biden's, and the Democratic party's, determination to push through a \$1.9trn (equivalent to 8.8% of GDP) fiscal boost for the US economy as a recovery package from the Covid pandemic was what unsettled financial markets. However, this was in addition to the \$900bn support package agreed in December 2020. This was followed by additional Democratic ambition to spend huge sums on infrastructure and an American families plan over the next decade which are caught up in Democrat / Republican haggling. Markets were alarmed that stimulus was happening at a time when: -

1. A fast vaccination programme has enabled a rapid opening up of the economy.
2. The economy has been growing strongly during 2021.
3. It started from a position of little spare capacity due to less severe lockdown measures than in many other countries.
4. And the Fed was still providing stimulus through monthly QE purchases.

These factors could cause an excess of demand in the economy which could lead to strong inflationary pressures, forcing the Fed to take earlier action to increase the Fed rate from near zero, despite their stated policy being to target average inflation. It is notable that in the September Fed meeting, Fed members again moved forward their expectation of when the first increases in the Fed rate will

occur. In addition, shortages of workers appear to be stoking underlying wage inflationary pressures which are likely to feed through into CPI inflation. A run of stronger jobs growth figures could be enough to meet the threshold set by the Fed of “substantial further progress towards maximum employment” for a first increase in the Fed rate.

A further concern in financial markets is when will the Fed end QE purchases of treasuries and how will they gradually wind them down. These purchases are currently acting as a downward pressure on treasury yields. In his late August speech at the Jackson Hole conference, Fed Chair Powell implied that the central bank plans to start tapering its asset purchases before the end of this year. But the plan is conditional on continued improvement in the labour market, which the August employment report suggests is proceeding more slowly than the Fed anticipated. That may mean that any announcement of tapering is pushed back possibly even into early 2022.

As the US financial markets are, by far, the biggest financial markets in the world, any upward trend in treasury yields will invariably impact and influence financial markets in other countries. Inflationary pressures and erosion of surplus economic capacity look much stronger in the US compared to those in the UK, which would suggest that Fed rate increases are likely to be faster and stronger than BR increases in the UK. Nonetheless, any upward pressure on treasury yields could put upward pressure on UK gilt yields too.

There are also possible DOWNSIDE RISKS from the huge sums of cash that the UK populace have saved during the pandemic; when savings accounts earn little interest, it is likely that some of this cash mountain could end up being invested in bonds and so push up demand for bonds and support their prices i.e., this would help to keep their yields down. How this will interplay with the Bank of England eventually getting round to not reinvesting maturing gilts and then later selling gilts, will be interesting to keep an eye on.

2.2.4 Significant risks to the forecasts

- COVID vaccines do not work to combat new mutations and/or new vaccines take longer than anticipated to be developed for successful implementation.
- The pandemic causes major long-term scarring of the economy.
- Government implements an austerity programme that suppresses GDP growth.
- The MPC tightens monetary policy too early – by raising BR or unwinding QE.
- The MPC tightens monetary policy too late to ward off inflationary pressures.
- Major stock markets e.g. in the US, become increasingly judged as being over-valued and susceptible to major price corrections. Central banks become increasingly exposed to “moral hazard” of buying shares & corporate bonds.

The balance of risks to the UK economy: the overall balance of risks to economic growth in the UK is now to the downside, including residual risks from Covid and its variants - both domestically and their potential effects worldwide.

The balance of risks to medium to long term PWLB rates: there is a balance of upside risks to forecasts for medium to long term PWLB rates.

A new era – a fundamental shift in central bank monetary policy: One of the key results of the pandemic has been a fundamental rethinking and shift in monetary policy by major central banks (Fed, BoE and ECB), to tolerate a higher level of inflation than in the previous two decades when inflation was the prime target to bear down on so as to stop it going above a target rate. There is now also a greater emphasis on other targets for monetary policy than just inflation, especially on ‘achieving broad and inclusive “maximum” employment in its entirety’ in the US.

- The Fed in America has gone furthest in adopting a monetary policy based on a clear goal of allowing the inflation target to be symmetrical, (rather than a ceiling to keep under), so that inflation averages out the dips down and surges above the target rate, over an unspecified period of time.
- The BoE has also amended its target for monetary policy so that inflation should be ‘sustainably over 2%’ and the ECB now has a similar policy.
- For local authorities, this means that investment interest rates and very short term PWLB rates will not be rising as quickly or as high as in previous decades when the economy recovers from a downturn and the recovery eventually runs out of spare capacity to fuel continuing expansion.
- Labour market liberalisation since the 1970s has helped to break the wage-price spirals that fuelled high levels of inflation and has now set inflation on a lower path which makes this shift in monetary policy practicable. In addition, recent changes in flexible employment practices, the rise of the gig economy and technological changes, will all help to lower inflationary pressures.
- Governments will also be concerned to see interest rates stay lower as every rise in central rates will add to the cost of vastly expanded levels of national debt; (in the UK this is £21bn for each 1% rise in rates). On the other hand, higher levels of inflation will help to erode the real value of total public debt.

3. Council’s Cash Position as at 30 September 2021

3.1 Table 1 details the Council’s mid-year treasury position. Overall, the Council’s borrowing has increased by £1.2m since 31/03/2021 with the following changes:

- short-term borrowing reduced from £67.5m to £38.0m, a reduction of £29.5m;
- £40m of PWLB debt was borrowed at an average rate of 1.54%, split into £20m repayment on maturity for 50 yrs at 1.71% & £20m EIP for 18 yrs at 1.38%.
- £9.3m of debt was repaid for Annuity and Equal Instalment Repayment Debt.

3.2 Treasury investments have reduced from £255.4m at 31 March 2021 to £144.4m at 30 September 2021, with the average rate reducing from 1.62% to 1.46%. Commercial loans total £171.5m at an average rate of 3.56%. The reduction in cash is due to funding the investment strategy and will continue for the rest of the

financial year. In addition, some loans will potentially be repaid during 2022 and will be used to further fund the investment strategy.

Table 1: Council's Treasury Position at 30 September 2021

	Principal Outstanding £000s	Rate of Return %	Average Life (yrs.)
General Fund Fixed Rate Borrowing			
LOBO	10,000	3.98	55.78
Local Authority (Short-term)	38,000	0.03	0.35
European Investment Bank	76,820	2.21	22.51
L1 Renewables (Street Lighting)	6,782	3.44	25.02
PWLB	537,506	2.02	25.92
Total General Fund Debt	669,107	1.97	24.51
HRA Fixed Rate Borrowing			
PWLB	265,912	3.50	34.31
Market Loans	30,000	4.03	44.21
HRA – Internal Borrowing	35,332	1.98	1.00
Total HRA Debt	331,244	3.38	35.31
Total Council Borrowing	1,000,351	2.44	37.67
Cash			
Short-Term Investments	25,805	0.01	-
Investments			
Financial Institutions	5,500	1.59	0.55
Pension Fund	23,650	0.50	-
Local Authorities	115,250	1.65	1.8
Total Investment Income	144,400	1.46	1.39
Commercial and Reside Loans	171,541	3.56	
Total Investments	283,300	2.60	

4. Interest and IAS Position at 30 September 2021

4.1 The funding of the IAS will require a significant amount of borrowing. Pressure on the net interest budget could be from:

- a delay in developments becoming operational, delaying interest receivable;
- an increase in borrowing requiring more interest payable than forecast; and
- a drop in treasury returns through lower returns or lower investible cash.

4.2 Table 2 provides the latest interest receivable and payable budgets forecast for the Council. The current net interest forecast is for a large surplus of £4.1m, even factoring in the increased budget of £5m of capitalised interest supporting the MTFS.

Table 2: General Fund (GF) Interest Budget Forecast 2021/22

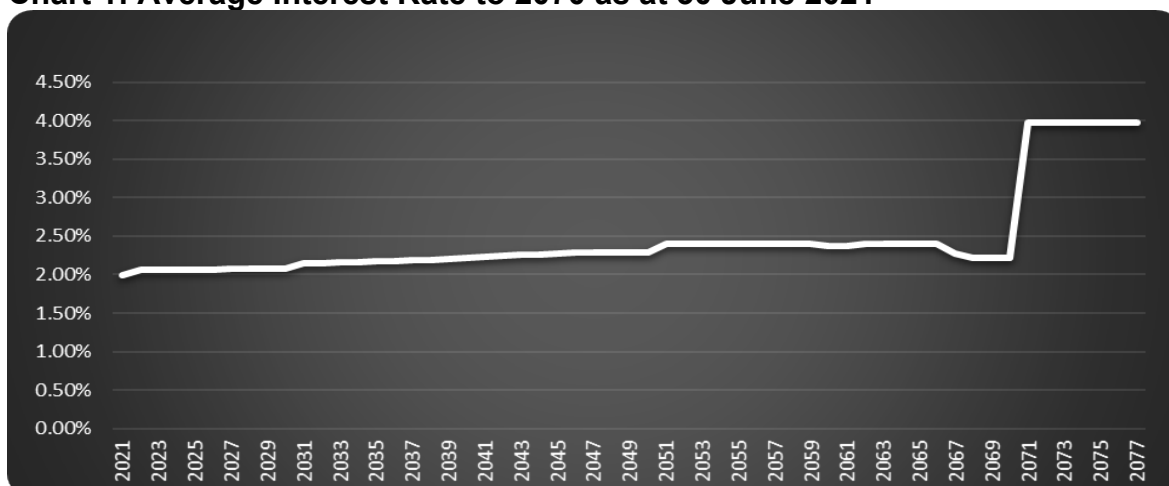
Interest Forecast	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22
	Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
GF Interest Payable Budget			
LT Borrowing		12,378	
ST Borrowing		37	
Brokerage and other costs		200	
Total Interest Payable	13,593	12,614	-979
GF Interest Receivable Budget			
Treasury Income		-2,080	
Other Loans		-3,537	
Pension Fund Prepayment		-1,240	
Reside		-1,297	
Total Interest Receivable	-6,503	-8,154	-1,651
Capitalised Interest	-5,000	-6,498	-1,498
Net Interest	2,090	-2,038	-4,127

4.3 Borrowing

4.3.1 Interest payable budget is forecast to have a surplus of £979k against a budget of £13.6m (excluding capitalised interest). £40m was borrowed in July 2021 but an increase in borrowing costs has resulted in no further long-term borrowing, with cash and short-term borrowing used to cover cashflow requirements. Capitalised interest is forecast to be £6.5m. As the 2020/21 accounts will not be audited until the end of 2021, there remains a risk that the capitalised interest will be adjusted, but this is low risk. Currently all the income from capitalised interest for 2019/20 and 2020/21 is part of the reserve.

4.3.2 **General Fund Interest Costs:** Currently the average long-term interest rate on borrowing is 1.97% for £669.1m. The long-term borrowing rate increases to 2.4% by 2051 but on a balance of £140m, as cheaper borrowing is repaid and older, more expensive borrowing remains. The rate drops to 2.21% in 2068 but on a balance of £30m. The average interest rate to 2070 is provided in chart 1:

Chart 1: Average Interest Rate to 2070 as at 30 June 2021



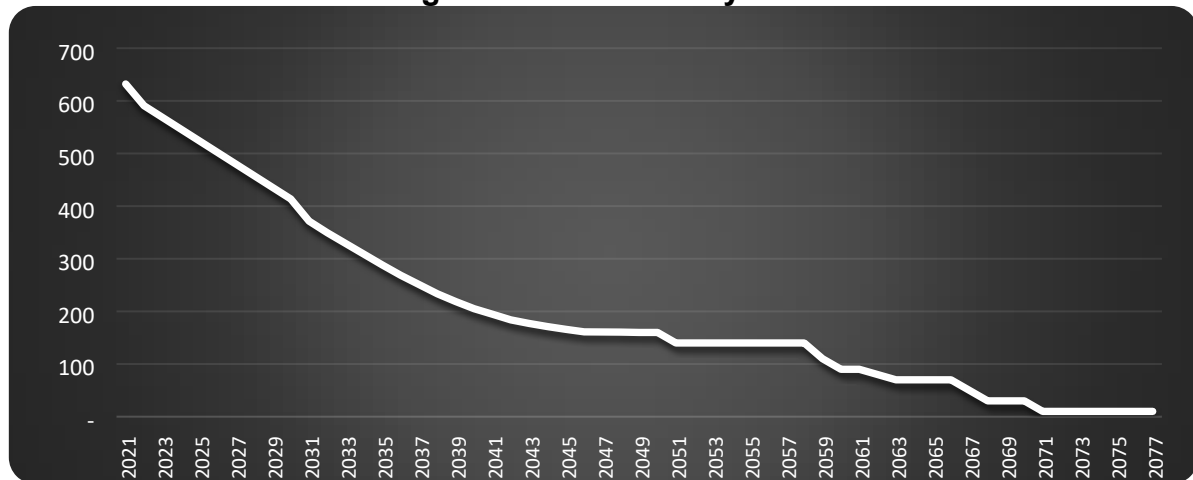
4.3.3 If future borrowing can keep the longer-term average borrowing rate to under 2%, then this will provide a margin against the on-lending rate to Reside of approximately 2.9%. The average rate could increase if PWLB margin increases, if borrowing costs increase or more expensive borrowing, i.e. index linked borrowing, is used.

4.4 Debt Position at 30 September 2021

4.4.1 The total GF borrowing was £669.1m and £331.2m of HRA borrowing. The total borrowing as at 30 September 2021 was £1.0bn. Ensuring low cost of carry and debt repayment is at the forefront of any borrowing decisions made. Although the size of the Council's overall borrowing is significant, Members are asked to note that the majority of debt includes a repayment profile and that the repayment is linked to income streams that are sufficient to cover the interest costs and debt repayment.

4.4.2 As an example, the EIB borrowing of £89m is an annuity repayment (AP), which means a proportion of the loan will be repaid each year. Currently the balance owed on the EIB loan is £76.8m, with all repayment made from returns from the investment strategy (Abbey Road and Weavers). In addition, £347.5m of the long-term PWLB borrowing is Equal Instalment Payments or AP, which means there is repayment of a portion of the debt each year. As a result, the Council has a loan repayment profile that is similar to its forecast property debt repayment schedule. The Council's GF long-term borrowing repayment schedule is outlined in Chart 2:

Chart 2: General Fund Long Term Debt Maturity Profile



4.4.3 **Debt Repayment and Rescheduling:** For the first half of the financial year, the treasury section has repaid approximately £9.3m of long-term borrowing through equal instalment and annuity repayments. In addition, short-term borrowing reduced to £38.0m at 30 September 2021.

Debt rescheduling opportunities are limited in the current economic climate and no debt rescheduling were undertaken during the first six months of the financial year.

5. Treasury and Loan Portfolio at 30 September 2021

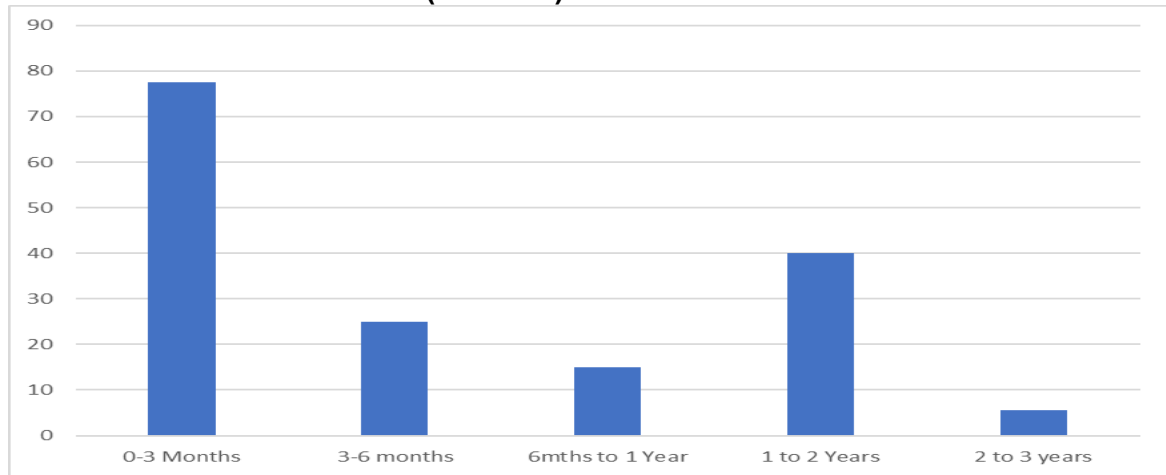
- 5.1 It is the Council's priority to ensure security of capital and liquidity before obtaining an appropriate level of return which is consistent with the Council's risk appetite. In the current economic climate, the Council's risk appetite remains relatively low, with the treasury section looking to take advantage of the fluctuations in rates offered by Local Authorities (LAs) and Financial Institutions.
- 5.2 As at 30 September 2021 the Council held £170.2m in treasury investments, with £115.25m invested with LAs, £5.5m held with banks, a short-term position of £25.8m to cover liquidity risk and as part of building up a short-term borrowing position. Building up a short-term borrowing position will continue for the near future as short-term borrowing rates are very low, the Council does not have an immediate need to borrow long-term and long-term borrowing rates are currently elevated when compared to recent levels. The Council also held a £23.65m position with the pension fund. The pension fund is in the process of exiting a property fund and will repay a significant part of this balance over the next month.
- 5.3 A breakdown of the Council's treasury investments is provided in the table 3:

Table 3: Treasury Investments as at 30 September 2022

Counterparty	Start Date	End Date	Amount £000s	Interest Rate (%)
LBBB Pension Fund	01/10/2021	01/10/2021	23,650	0.50
Cash - Lloyds Bank	01/10/2021	01/10/2021	25,805	0.01
Lloyds Bank	18/04/2019	19/04/2022	5,500	1.59
Rugby BC	18/10/2019	18/10/2021	5,000	1.80
Rugby BC	15/11/2019	15/11/2021	5,000	1.80
Rugby BC	25/11/2019	25/11/2021	10,000	1.60
Wokingham BC	28/01/2020	28/01/2022	15,000	1.65
Folkstone & Hythe DC	31/01/2020	31/01/2022	5,000	1.60
Birmingham CC	24/04/2020	22/04/2022	10,000	1.70
L B Croydon	06/07/2020	06/07/2022	10,000	1.70
L B Croydon	14/07/2020	14/07/2022	10,000	1.70
Runnymede BC	20/12/2019	20/12/2022	5,000	1.80
Colchester BC	02/03/2020	03/01/2023	5,000	1.75
Cardiff Council	10/01/2020	10/01/2023	10,250	1.75
Dudley Metropolitan BC	21/02/2020	21/02/2023	10,000	1.80
Northumberland CC	27/02/2020	27/02/2023	5,000	1.80
Cambridgeshire CC	11/01/2021	11/01/2024	10,000	1.00
Total			170,205	

- 5.4 The Council's investment maturity profile in Chart 3 shows that, at 30 September 2021, 72.1% of the Council's investments had a maturity of one year or less. The Council is reducing its long-term investment positions as reinvestment returns are low and as the Council reduces its cash balance to fund the investment strategy. Due to the economic uncertainty, treasury has sought to reduce the Council's exposure to banks and has reduced its investments in banks to just £5.5m.

Chart 3: Investment Profile (Millions)

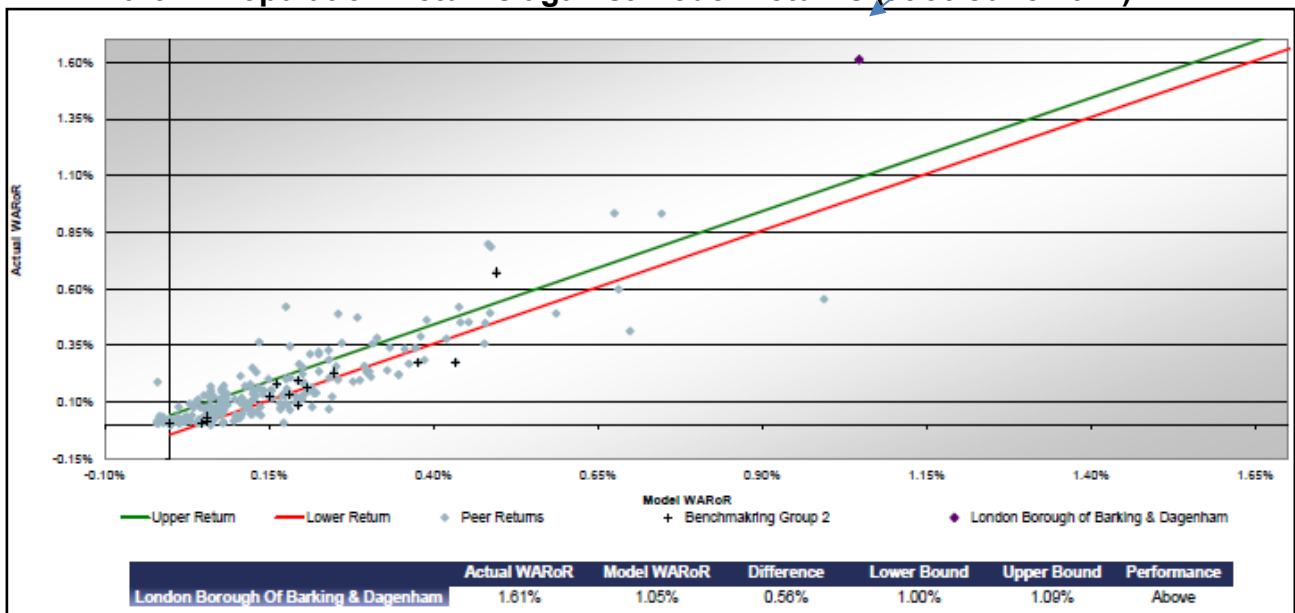


6. Treasury Investment Strategy Performance and Benchmarking

6.1 Although yields are at very low levels, the longer-term investment the Council holds has resulted in a stable average return of **1.46%** for the first six months of 2021/22.

6.2 **Benchmarking at 30 June 2021:** The treasury strategy, which excludes loans and the pension prepayment, continues to outperform its peer group, with a return of 1.61% against an average of 0.24% for London LAs. This is highlighted in chart 4:

Chart 4: Population Returns against Model Returns (at 30 June 2021)



6.3 The strategy has a significantly lower credit risk of 1.43 against a London LA average of 2.80, which means the Council gets a higher return while having a lower credit risk exposure.

7. Commercial and Reside Loans

7.1 In addition to its treasury investments, the Council has several loans to its subsidiary companies, including Reside and a prepayment to the pension fund. These loans all have repayment schedule agreed. At 30 September 2021 the Council's loans totalled £171.5m and are summarised in table 4 below:

Table 4: Commercial and Reside Loans at 30 September 2021

Entity	Loan Type	Value £000s
Barking & Redbridge FC	Commercial Loan	92.79
Grafton Primary School	Commercial Loan	55.07
Gascoigne Primary School	Commercial Loan	63.55
Southwood Primary	Commercial Loan	19.36
BARKING RIVERSIDE LTD	Commercial Loan	5,500.00
BE-FIRST LTD	Commercial Loan	4,599.56
BD ENERGY LTD	Commercial Loan	925.33
BDTP LEUK	Commercial Loan	23,857.02
LBBD Pension Fund	Pension Fund Prepayment	30,000.00
TPFL Regeneration Ltd	Commercial Loan	27.46
B&D Reside Roding ltd	Commercial Loan	792.36
Reside Regeneration Ltd	Commercial Loan	164.28
Reside Regeneration LLP	Commercial Loan	6,400.43
Reside Weavers LLP	Commercial Loan	34,553.14
Reside Ltd	Commercial Loan	288.62
Reside Abbey Roding LLP	Commercial Loan	47.68
BD Muller Developments	Commercial Loan	24,571.38
BD Muller Developments	Equity	23,348.97
Reside Weavers LLP	Commercial Loan	66.29
Reside Weavers LLP	Commercial Loan	2,200.73
Reside Weavers LLP	Commercial Loan	1,343.85
BD ENERGY LTD	Commercial Loan	1,892.70
CARE CITY	Commercial Loan	30.00
B&D Homes Ltd	Commercial Loan	4,100.00
B&D Homes Ltd	Commercial Loan	6,450.70
Barking Enterprise CIC	Commercial Loan	150.00
Total		171,541.27

7.2 The majority of the loans outlined above are secured against an asset. Where the loan is unsecured the company is closely monitored to ensure that it remains financially viable. Loans against residential properties are very long term, with the loan duration of up to 55 years (to match the asset life of the asset it is secured against). A repayment schedule, based on an annuity repayment, is in place for each loan.

7.3 Commercial loans durations vary, with some loans to schools maturing in 14 years but most of the loans have a maximum duration of 5 years. Each loan has been agreed at Cabinet. The Pension Fund prepayment is of contributions totalling £40m. The prepayment provides the pension fund with cash, which it uses to fund investments in infrastructure but also provides a return to the Council from making the payment early. Each month a portion of the loan is repaid and the actual

contribution for the month is paid by the Council to ensure the correct contribution rate is paid to the pension fund.

8. IAS Income Forecast

- 8.1 The IAS is forecasting to achieve £1.7m less than the target, which is £6.6m for 2021/22. The strategy is supported by higher-than-expected level of commercial income. The return from current residential schemes, increased Reside costs, security costs on some schemes and delays with schemes becoming operational are putting pressure on achieving the target return. A number of loans from the Council to Reside are included as interest receivable and the treasury and IAS return are therefore interlinked and, at times, one underperforms while the other outperforms.
- 8.2 The IAS has received significant income contributions from rental received from land assembly purchases on Thames Road and from commercial loans made for the purchase of Muller and for LEUK. Although this is short-term income received during land assembly, this income has provided additional support to the IAS and allows for the costs of borrowing to be covered for part of the development. Table 5 below outlines the income received from the various commercial investments and includes costs to fund additional resources in the investment strategy.

Table 5: IAS Income Forecast as at 30 September 2021

IAS Forecast	Budget	Forecast	Variance	Comments
Residential				
Regen LLP	-94	-98	-4	Best current forecast
Abbey	-1,175	-647	528	
Weavers	-329	-452	-123	
Reside Ltd	236	798	562	
Security costs	689	689	109	
Abbey Road MRP	-600	-600	0	
Temporary Accommodation	-509	-509	0	
Total Residential	-1,782	-819	1,073	
Commercial Income				
BBC	-900	-901	-1	Interest secured, risk on net profit allocated to Be First
Heathway	-237	-237	0	
Welbeck	-816	-866	-50	
Restore	-409	-409	0	
Travelodge	-235	-235	0	
Thames Road	-866	-514	352	
Piano Works	-408	-408	0	
CR27	-867	-867	0	
Total Commercial	-4,738	-4,438	300	
Expenses	Budget	Forecast	Variance	Comments
New build asset manager role	75	50	-25	Investment in resource to support the delivery on the IAS return.
ST housing man. transformation	50	50	0	
Contribution to handover prog.	50	50	0	
Fund industrial intensification	200	200	0	
Total Costs	375	350	-25	

Surplus / (Deficit)	-445	0	445	
IAS Target	-6,590	-4,907	1,683	

- 8.3 There are a number of caveats, both positive and negative, around the figures including:
- i) uncertainty on the impact of bad debts and reduced rental from Reside schemes. This has been reflected in the returns above but there is potential for this to deteriorate further.
 - ii) Part of the Reside return is dependent on the handover of properties.
 - iii) Temporary Accommodation had a number of issues around voids and handover. Currently just the borrowing costs are included in the strategy.
- 8.4 Overall there is the potential for a net surplus of £2.4m to be available to transfer to the IAS Reserve, which will potentially increase to £24.0m. In addition, £5m will be contributed to the Council's financing requirements from Capitalised interest.

Table 6: Forecast Reserve Movements 2021/22

IAS Reserves	£'000s
Investment Reserve	10,998
Transfer to support dividends*	1,254
Capital Reserve	3,779
CR27 Reserve	5,500
Reserves at 31 March 2021	21,531
Potential Year End Transfer 2021/22	2,444
Reserves at 31 March 2022	23,975

*Due to timing differences in the dividend payment from Be First, £1.25m used to cover the impact. This amount will be repaid to IAS in 2021/22.

9. Capitalised Interest

- 9.1 The Council uses a mix of short-term and long-term borrowing to fund the capital costs for the various IAS schemes. To fund this borrowing the Council has allocated an interest budget for the IAS borrowing. The interest budget includes both interests received, and interest expensed.
- 9.2 The Council, from 1 April 2019, has capitalised interest costs against qualifying assets. A qualifying asset is an asset that takes in excess of two years to get ready for intended use and is where the forecast expenditure is in excess of £10m. Qualifying assets are therefore the majority of the IAS schemes. Capitalisation of interest will start from when the asset has been agreed at Gateway 2, which is the point at which the development is initially agreed and will be on all qualifying expenditure. Where land has been purchased as part of land assembly the capitalisation of interest will be from the later date of the either the completion date of the purchase or the date of this accounting policy.

9.3 Interest will be capitalised quarterly and is based on the weighted average of the borrowing costs. Cessation of capitalisation will occur when substantially all the activities necessary to prepare the qualifying asset for its intended use are complete.

9.4 As part of the Treasury outturn report, an outturn figure for the amount of interest that was capitalised for the year, will be provided to Members.

10. The Council's Capital Position (Prudential Indicators)

10.1 Table 7 shows the changes to the original capital expenditure budgets.

Table 7: Revised Estimate to Capital Programme at 30 September 2021

Capital Expenditure	2020/21 actual	2021/22 Initial Budget	2021/22 Forecast
	£000s	£000s	£000s
General Fund			
Adults Care & Support	1,449	1,582	1,582
Community Solutions	113	74	74
CIL	622	1,501	1,501
Core	1,860	2,118	1,989
Culture, Heritage & Recreation	623	8,901	7,495
Enforcement	389	724	724
Transport for London	1,000	1,193	516
My Place	4,145	8,348	8,348
Public Realm	924	1,657	1,657
Education, Youth and Childcare	19,999	44,095	30,743
Inclusive Growth	0	15,533	15,533
Other	700	1,765	1,765
Transformation	3,999	2,063	5,702
General Fund	35,823	89,555	77,630
HRA			
Stock Investment (My Place)	17,428	35,130	24,813
New Build Schemes (Be First)	1,064	2,931	2,931
Estate Renewal (Be First)	7,645	5,155	5,900
HRA Total	26,137	43,216	33,644
IAS			
Residential Developments	153,939	271,679	258,771
Temporary Accommodation	10,777	5,439	18
Commercial Investments	94,570	29,252	18,621
Investments Total	259,286	306,370	277,409
Add: PFI Additions (lifecycle costs)	144	184	184
Add: New Finance Lease (CR27)	74,333	0	0
Approved Capital Programme	395,723	439,325	388,867
Financed by:			
Grants	-37,721	-66,109	-52,080
Section 106	-5,196	-456	-456

CIL	-775	-2,347	-2,347
Capital Receipts	-3,999	-2,063	-5,702
GF Contributions	0	-1,832	-1,832
HRA Contributions	-26,138	-30,235	-30,235
Sub Total	-73,829	-103,041	-92,652
Net financing need for the year	321,894	336,284	296,215

Table 7 also highlights the original supported and unsupported elements of the capital programme and the expected financing arrangements of this capital expenditure. The borrowing need increases the underlying indebtedness of the Council by way of the CFR, although this will be reduced by MRP. This direct borrowing need may also be supplemented by maturing debt and other treasury requirements.

10.2 Prudential Indicator – CFR

Table 7 shows that the Council's revised CFR will not exceed the Operational boundary. The S151 reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with this prudential indicator.

The Authorised Limit represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited and needs to be set and revised by Members. It reflects the level of borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. It is the expected maximum borrowing need with some headroom for unexpected movements. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

Overall table 7 and 8 show the forecast capital spend is lower than originally forecast, predominantly due to delays caused by Covid-19. Expenditure is still significant in the IAS but there are delays in completing some of the schemes. There is a significant gap between the borrowing of £1.248bn, the forecast CFR of £1.411bn and the Operational Boundary of £1.700bn. Most of this has been caused by delays to investment schemes and by some pipeline schemes not being progressed. Borrowing will only be made when there is certainty over schemes being progressed.

Table 8: Revised Capital Financing Requirement as at 30 September 2021

Prudential Indicator – CFR		
Capital Expenditure	2020/21 actual	2021/22 Forecast
Opening CFR as at 31 March 2020	867,933	1,121,438
Change in Year – General Fund	253,505	286,261
Change in Year – Housing	0	3,409
Total CFR as at 31 March 2021	1,121,438	1,411,108
Net movement in CFR	253,505	289,670
Net financing need for the year	325,893	301,917
Less: MRP*	-12,038	-12,247
Less: Capital Receipts	-60,350	0
Movement in CFR	253,505	289,670

Long & Short-Term Borrowing	963,850	1,050,351
PFI and finance lease liabilities*	200,365	197,357
Total debt 31 March 2021	1,164,215	1,247,708
Operational Boundary	1,250,000	1,700,000
Authorised Limit	1,350,000	1,800,000

10.3 Treasury Indicators: Limits to Borrowing Activity

There are three debt related treasury activity limits. The purpose of these are to restrain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of any adverse movement in interest rates. However, if these are set to be too restrictive, they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs / improve performance. The indicators are:

- i. Upper limits on variable interest rate exposure: identifies a maximum limit for variable interest rates based upon the debt position net of investments;
- ii. Upper limits on fixed interest rate exposure: similar to the previous indicator and covers a maximum limit on fixed interest rates; and
- iii. Maturity structure of borrowing: gross limits to reduce the Council's exposure to large fixed-rate sums requiring refinancing.

The S151 officer reports that there were no breaches in any of the limits outlined below:

Interest rate exposures	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22
	Upper	Upper	Upper
Limits on fixed interest rates based on net debt	100%	100%	100%
Limits on variable interest rates based on net debt	70%	70%	70%
Limits on fixed interest rates:			
• Debt only	100%	100%	100%
• Investments only	90%	90%	90%
Limits on variable interest rates			
• Debt only	70%	70%	70%
• Investments only	80%	80%	80%

Maturity structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2021/22		
	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	50%
12 months to 2 years	0%	60%
2 years to 5 years	0%	70%
5 years to 10 years	0%	70%
10 years and above	0%	100%

Maturity structure of variable interest rate borrowing 2021/22		
	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	50%
12 months to 2 years	0%	50%
2 years to 5 years	0%	70%
5 years to 10 years	0%	70%
10 years and above	0%	80%

11. Consultation

- 11.1 The Finance Director, in his role as statutory chief finance officer, has been informed of the approach, data and commentary in this report.
- 11.2 The Cabinet will also be considering this report at its meeting on 16 November 2021 (the date of publication of this Assembly agenda). Any issues arising from the Cabinet meeting will be reported to the Assembly.

12. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Katherine Heffernan, Head of Services Finance

- 12.1 This report sets out the mid-year position on the Council's treasury management position and is concerned with the returns on the Council's investments as well as its short and long-term borrowing positions.

13. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Paul Feild, Senior Governance Lawyer

- 13.1 The Local Government Act 2003 (the "Act") requires the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy which sets out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.
- 13.2 The Council also has to 'have regard to' the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities when carrying out its functions under the Act.
- 13.3 The Assembly agreed the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2021/22 on 3 March 2021. This report is a mid-year review of the strategy's application and there are no further legal implications to highlight.

14. Options Appraisal

- 14.1 There is no legal requirement to prepare a TMSS Mid-Year Review. However, it is good governance to do so and meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

15. Other Implications

- 15.1 **Risk Management** - The whole report concerns itself with the management of risks relating to the Council's cash flow. The report mostly contains information on how the Treasury Management Strategy has been used to maximise income during the first 6 months of the year.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of appendices: None

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