

# Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee



TOWER HAMLETS

Wednesday, 8 December 2021 at 4.30 p.m.

Committee Room One - Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

## Supplemental Agenda - Presentations

This meeting is open to the public to attend.

### Further Information

For further information including Membership of this body and public information see the main agenda.

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**Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

**Wednesday, 8 December 2021**

**4.30 p.m.**

	<b>PAGE NUMBER(S)</b>
<b>4 .1 Outcome for Children we Care for and Care Leavers</b>	3 - 22
<b>4 .2 Children's Services Improvement including Covid 19 update</b>	23 - 64

**Next Meeting of the Committee:**

Monday, 28 February 2022 at 4.30 p.m. to be held in the Committee Room One -  
Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

# Children Living & Leaving Care Council (CLICC)

9<sup>th</sup> September 2021



# Introductions



## The CLICC Team

- Hasan Faruq, Participation & Engagement Manager
- Farhan Hoque, Young People's Coordinator (Apprentice)
- Samantha Anderson, CLICC Participation Officer
- Shihad CLICC Plus Chair
- Hamida CLICC Plus Deputy Chair

## Items to discuss

- Care Leaver App
- CLICC Plus Residential to Wales – Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> Sept
- Wish List from CLICC Plus
- Recruitment to Junior (8 to 12) & Teen (13 plus) CLICC



# KNOW NOW

Support for Tower Hamlet's Care Leavers  
as you move in to independent living



**Information  
and Advice**



**Key Contacts**



**Apprenticeships**



**Events**



# KNOW NOW

- Home
- Information and Advice
- Messaging
- Favourites
- VIPs
- Organisations
- Apprenticeships
- Events
- Settings and More

Update the default language

English ▾



# Residential – 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Sept 21

## Denbighshire in Wales



Activity: 11 young people & 3 staff

- Archery - This activity is to develop communication, self belief and personal achievement
- Coasteering - Concentration, following instructions
- Canoeing - Water safety and communication skills
- Leadership Development - Discovering the inner skills through experiential learning
- Assault Course - Team working, push-ing self to the limit, supporting others
- Caving - Going into unfamiliar places and pushing self to do things unusual



# Wish List from Young People



We asked the young people to come up with some key actions they would like to be taken up by the CPB and they came back with the following:

Page 7

1. Wrap around Service – young people want a lead professional (social worker or personal advisor) to make sure all services come together for the young person (e.g. housing, benefits, immigration)
2. Smooth Transition – services don't work together and so transitioning from one place/situation to another doesn't always go smoothly and can cause lots of stress and anxiety



# Wish List from Young People



3. Creating CLICC Ambassadors – a big campaign should be run to get these young people recognised as representatives for others in care so they can advocate on their behalf and become real voices for them

4. Training and Development for social workers – social workers aren't always trained up adequately in the services that young people need so they need regular refreshers so that they help young people promptly and offer the right services at the right time





# Wish List from Young People



5. Oyster cards (free travel) – some young people have free travel and others don't. Could this be escalated so that all young people in care are offered free travel

6. Local Offer – needs to be refreshed and updated so that it is clear to ALL what is expected and what is delivered

7. Staff Rapport – Young people want staff consistency as they are frustrated by constant changes of professionals meaning they have to repeat their story and build another new relationship



# Wish List from Young People



Page 10

8. Referral Fatigue – Young people want to stop the constant referrals from one agency to another without support. They get worried about what the new person will think of them and it builds up their anxiety. They avoid going to new places or making new contacts as its intimidating and always very stressful

9. Mindfulness – MH Support/Counselling. Young people don't like to go to CAMHS because of the stigma attached to mental health. They'd rather focus on the positives through mindfulness or mind and body workshops. The word 'mental' can put some of them off



# How can the CLICC support YOU?



1. A space to share your voice – You can help shape council activity through your feedback.
2. Support accessing services – Dedicated support staff will help you access other services you need.
3. Activities and respite – You can attend fun activities and sessions at Haileybury Youth Centre.
4. A peer support network – You will have the chance to meet with and learn from other young people.

## Join a group:

1. Junior CLICC for young people aged 8 to 12
2. Teen CLICC for young people aged 13 to 17
3. Young Adult CLICC for young people aged 18 to 25



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# Overview of Services for Children We Care For in Tower Hamlets

Leo Major

Head of Service

Children Looked After & Through Care



# Context



- In June 2019, Ofsted rated services for children in care and care leavers as Good, stating that children we care for benefited from collaborative and thorough planning and multiagency work, and practice leaders who modelled excellent child-centred practice.
- In the intervening 2.5 years since that time, the borough like all parts of London and indeed the country has faced the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on our communities, especially cared for children and young people. Since being appointed 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021, my challenge has been ensuring that as engaged Corporate Parents, high quality service delivery is maintained despite this.



# Challenge & Opportunity



- Constructive relationships grounded in respecting and engaging with children in care and care leavers and the sectors with which they interact is critical to ensuring they achieve positive outcomes.
- At the same time, we recognise that disengagement from services is related to increasing risk factors, including behavioural and relationship problems, substance misuse, and difficulties with mental health or wellbeing. This includes learning feedback from our children and young people that disengagement is often linked to a perceived lack of support from social workers or personal advisors, financial or housing problems and low self-esteem or confidence (From Care to Independence, May 2017).



# Service Model



- Children Looked After (CLA) consists of 4 Teams.
- Works with children and young people up to 14 who become looked after either through court intervention (e.g., EPO or ICO) or are by parental agreement under s.20.
- Children allocated from 1<sup>st</sup> hearing if in proceedings, or 1<sup>st</sup> statutory review if not in care proceedings.
- Through Care (TCS) consists of 5 Teams.
- Works with children and young people from age 14 once care proceedings are concluded, or who enter care after this time, up to age 25.
- Prepares young people to leave our care by trying to ensure they have skills for independent living and are in suitable accommodation.





# Service Model (cont'd)



- Each CLA Team is led by a Team Manager and has up to 6 Practitioners who are a mix of Advanced Practitioners, Social Workers, and New Qualified Workers in their ASYE. Occasionally there will also be Student Social Workers in the Teams. Each child or young person is at all times allocated to a SW-qualified practitioner.
- Each TCS Team is led by a Team Manager and has up to 6 Practitioners, who will be a mix of Advanced Practitioners, Social Workers, and Personal Advisors. All children and young people under 18 are allocated to a SW-qualified practitioner, whilst most over-18's will be allocated a Personal Advisor.



# KPI's

- For CLA, includes:
  - -Timeliness of visits to children we care for;
  - -Timeliness of initial care plans, health assessments, and statutory reviews;
  - -Timeliness of care proceedings;
  - -Placement stability.
- For TCS, includes:
  - -Timeliness of pathway planning;
  - -Timeliness of 'keeping in touch';
  - -Care Leavers in suitable accommodation;
  - -Care Leavers in employment, education, or training.



# Audit Findings



- Last area focus in April 2021.
- Findings of 35 moderated audits:
  - 6% (2) graded as Outstanding
  - 60% (21) graded as Good
  - 17% (6) graded as Requiring Improvement
  - 3%(1) graded as Inadequate
- Strong partnership working;
- Practitioners had established relationships with our children and young people as well as their parents and carers;
- Skilled Foster Carers caring for our children and young people;
- Strong IRO oversight;
- Practitioners being knowledgeable about their children and young people;
- Strong permanency planning oversight through Perm Summit;
- SMART care planning;
- Children and young people's wishes and feelings being obtained and acted upon.



# Upcoming Audit Focus and Development Areas



- Next area focus in December 2021.
- Key lines of enquiry will include, in post-lockdown context:
  - -Quality and impact of supervision on practice effectiveness;
  - -Direct work and influence of child/young person's voice;
  - Practitioner engagement with the child/young person's network;
  - -Effectiveness of interventions for emotional and mental health and wellbeing.



# Future Priorities



- Ensuring access to timely and effective emotional and mental health and wellbeing support, increased placement stability, and skills for independent living for children and young people we care for;
- Stronger and more effective engagement with all levels of our CLICC and Foster Carers;
- Revitalised Local Offer 2022-23;
- Embedding learning from audit activity, QMUL workshops and other feedback;
- Increased proportion of care experienced young people achieving at least one qualification at Level 2 for Maths and English.



# Questions?



# Children's Services Improvement including Covid 19 update

Page 23

8<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Agenda Item 4.2



# Overview;



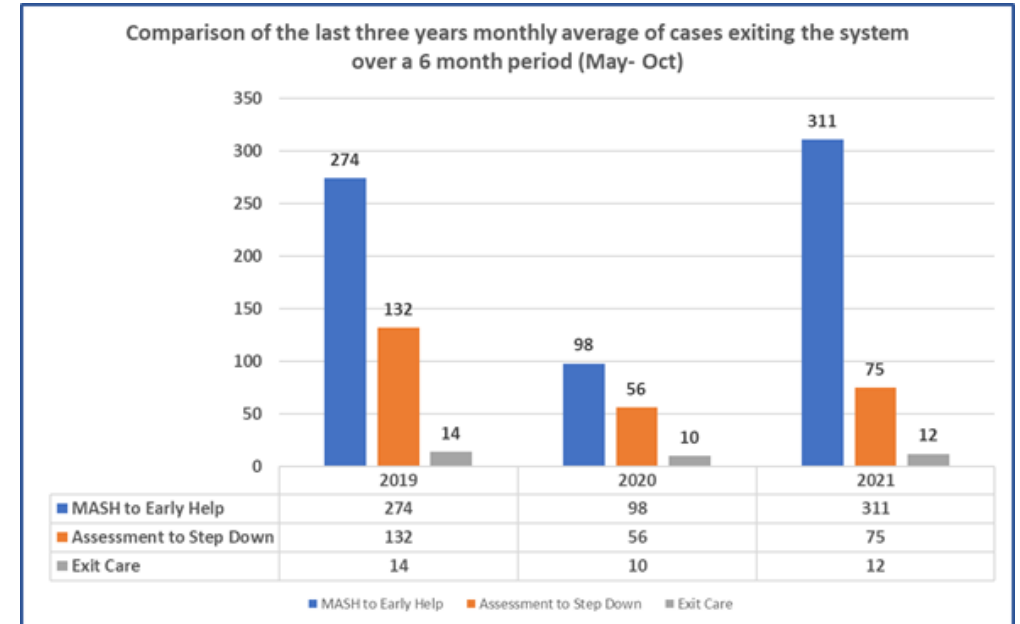
- Re-alignment of Youth Services/Early Help/Youth Justice now complete (with exception of “Detached” and “Arts” commissions.) Linkages between services are developing well and are productive.
- Recent months have seen a rise in demand which is Covid and poverty related (with recent spike in UASC from refugee hotels). We are seeing the impact of Domestic Abuse and emotional well-being on young people.
- Resulting in increase in Child Protection plans (90 plus more children). But no significant rise in court activity or children coming into care
- Social workers in schools project has been successful and well received by those schools involved.
- Youth Justice inspection anticipated for early 2022
- Preparation for OFSTED “Focused visit” (spring/early summer 2022?) and next full IILACS inspection (spring/summer 2023?)





# Early Help;

- New structure went live in August 2022. This is working well.
- Social Workers in Schools project has worked well. It has assisted in identifying issues earlier, more speedy responses and may have also contributed to preventing more children coming into care.
- Links with MASH working well; providing assistance in absorbing additional demand.
- Children and Family Centres; in line with government thinking for “family hubs”.
- Independent review of Early Help service to assist review of the partnership Early Help Strategy for 2022 – 25



# Edge of Care team

Case study by Charlotte Moodie  
EoC Team Manager



# Edge of Care Team.



## Who are we?

- We are a specialist adolescent service working with young people aged 11-17.
- **Individual and whole family support, we focus on:**
- Prevention work – work to avoid family breakdown and;
- Reunification work - work to return children back home.

## During Covid?

- Face to face visits – we are an essential service!
- Staff risk assessments / family risk assessments
- PPE,
- Met outside where we could.
- Online sessions, and meetings.
- Not many young people like talking with professionals online! - they prefer face to face.
- Team support – check-in's.



## Point of crisis:

### Anonymous case background:

- Hans Larson (48) and Christopher Patel (43) are a same sex couple who have been caring for three children, for almost five years.
- Hans and Christopher Special are Guardianship carers (SGO).
- Hans and Christopher have reached the point of giving up the care of all three of the children and expressed their wish to apply back to the court to discharge the order.
- Impact!

### What we did:

- **A crisis visit:** 3 hours in the family visit quite late that evening, after work hours.
- Edge of Care **worked together** and **listened** and validated the families voices, and used **professional curiosity** to **promote thinking and reflection**, and offered information and advice.
- Edge of Care Team gave the family time and helped to slow things down.



## What did Edge of Care Team do:

- A very emotional visit.
- Agreed a short term plan of respite to stay with a family friend for the weekend while Hans and Christopher took time away to think about the decision they made.
- Hans and Christopher contacted the team having reconsidered their position. To keep the children in their care and work to improve communication.
- **Family goal:** To strengthen relationships and prevent the teenagers from entering care.
- The Family Therapist role. Peer consultation, family consultation.
- Explored the families strengths and challenges and shared ideas how to support the relationships with the aim of finding a way forward as a family.
- Emense was able to liaise with young people's CAMHS service who identified support for the family.



## Impact of our work:

- High level of support and time to help the family feel listened to.
- The placement hasn't broken down, and family crisis was prevented.
- Work is ongoing –we remain hopeful we can continue to be the support the family needs to remain together.

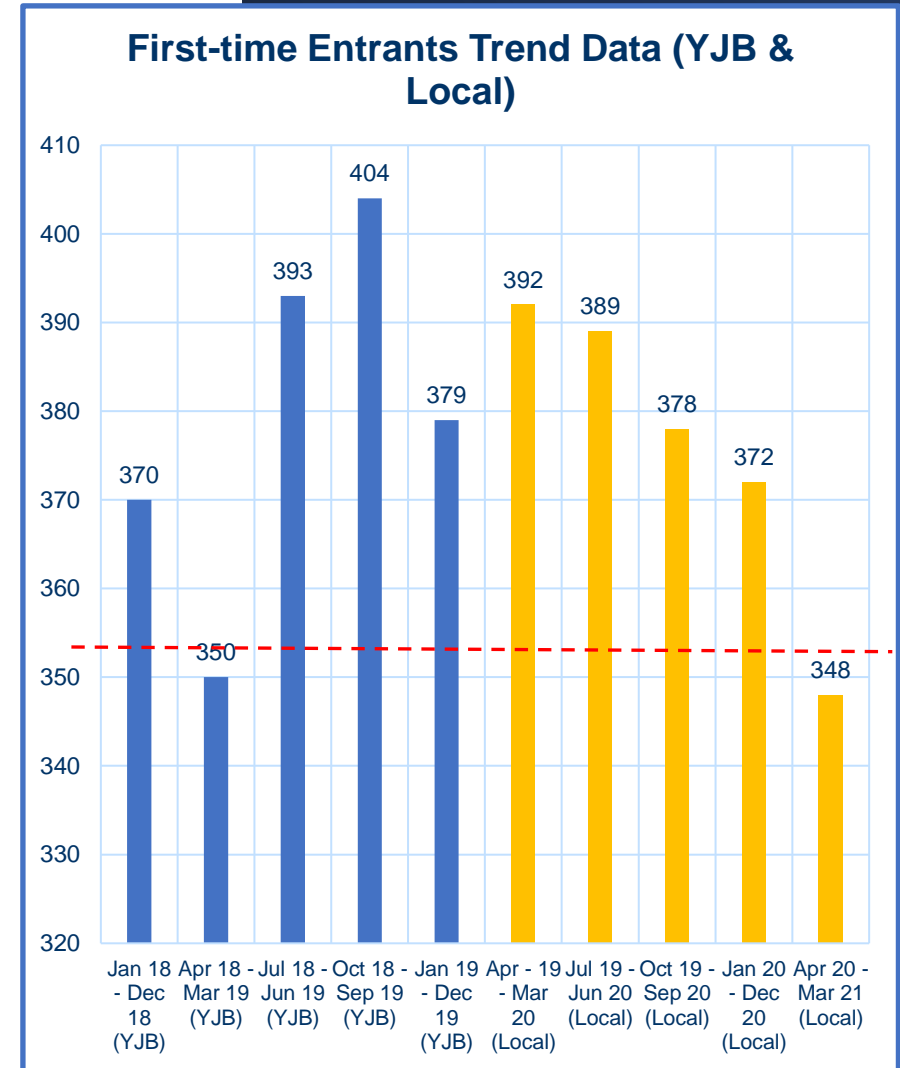
## Family feedback:

- *Hans and Christopher said ‘they now realise how much it helps to talk to professionals and to share their feelings in times of crisis without feeling that they were being judged negatively.*
- *They really welcomed the support of the edge of care team;. They told the workers Emense and Henriette ‘that the EoC support is helpful’.*



# Youth Justice and Young People;

- New Head of Service (Kelly Duggan) starting in December.
- Still work to do to ensure that the new service begins to functions as one service
- Youth Justice Inspection due in early 2022. Preparation underway and good partnership engagement.
- Good improvements in performance for reducing First-time entrants and Re-offending.
- Youth Service Commissioning; Outstanding legal challenge in relation to the “Detached” youth work contract and the “Arts” contract. These challenges mean that we currently cannot provide these services to young people.



Ref	Performance Measure	Historic Performance				Num	Denom	Current
		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Previous Report			
Section 7 - CSE								
7.1	Number of Exploitation Risk Assessments completed		155	230	118	n/a	n/a	130
7.1a	Exploitation Risk Assessments completed - Risk Assessed as Low (RAG rating, score 10-20)		27.7%	20.0%	23.7%	33	130	25.4%
7.1b	Exploitation Risk Assessments completed - Risk Assessed as Medium (RAG rating, score 21 - 40)		58.1%	65.2%	59.3%	78	130	60.0%
7.1c	Exploitation Risk Assessments completed - Risk Assessed as High (RAG rating, score Over 41)		11.6%	14.3%	16.9%	19	130	14.6%

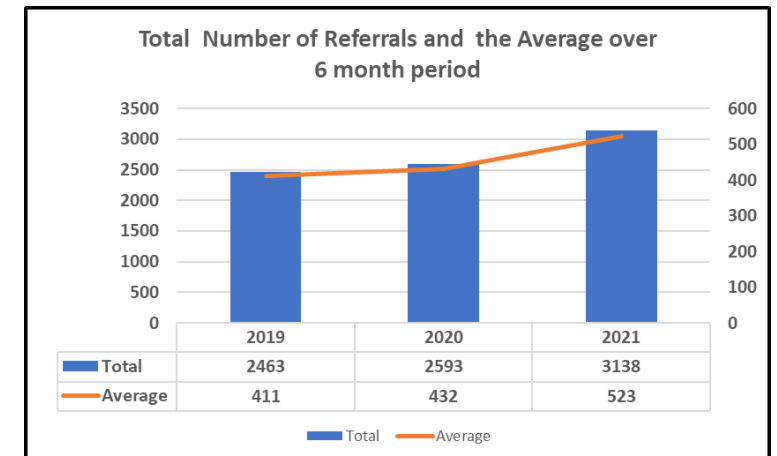
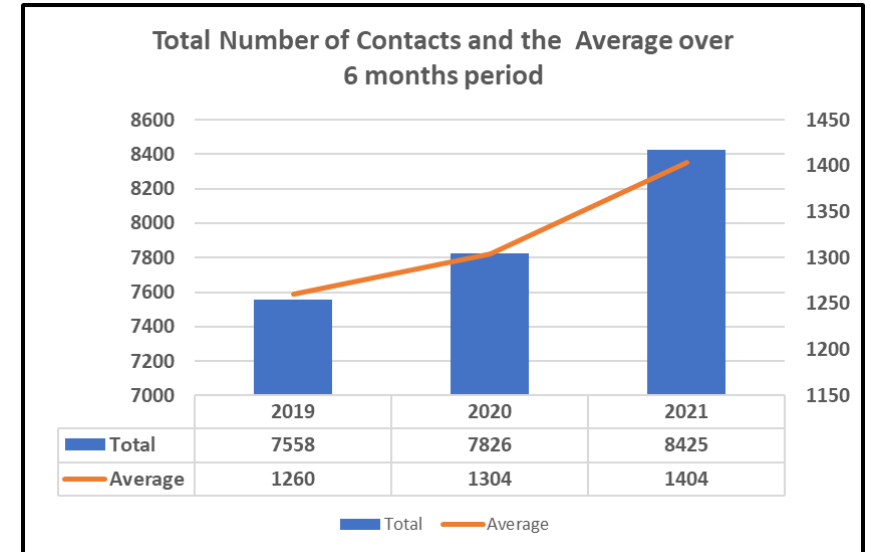
# Exploitation;

- Good working relationship with Police colleagues although we continue to challenge them on providing a greater level of “disruption” activity.
- Continued training and emphasis on use of “Risk Assessment” tool for Social Workers.
- Implementation of the VVE Strategy continues to be monitored by the Safeguarding Children Partnership. Action plan reviewed at sub-group meetings.
- IICSA report on the sexual exploitation “limb” expected soon this is likely to be critical of historical practice in all 6 LA’s involved.



# Assessment and Intervention/MASH;

- Continued high demand linked to Covid and poverty (inc NRPF) (impact of witnessing Domestic Abuse and emotional well-being concerns)
- More recent pressures from refugee hotels; Requests to be “accommodated” for young people where age-assessments are required.
- Staff group continue to be more stable with reduced turn over and agency numbers (although still more work to do)
- Developing stronger and more integrated links with Early Help service to ensure wider spread of support options to families and reducing number of cases moving directly to Family Support and Protection service.



# Challenges faced in my social work practice during the Covid-19 lockdown

By Johanna Burke-Richards  
Assessment and Intervention Team  
Children & Families Social Worker



# Agenda



- **Case example relating to neglect and parental mental health**
- **Challenges faced**
- **Family Intervention / Direct work**
- **Outcome / Case overview**



# Case Example



- This case is in relation to four siblings (child A, male age 7), (child B, male age 4), (child C, male age 2) and (child D, male age 10 months) living with their mother and father.
- This referral was received from the police in April 2020 informing that a welfare check had been undertaken at the family home as requested by school. The school were concerned about the children's welfare as child A and child B have not attended school since mid March 2020 and school have not had contact with the parents.
- Police attended the property address and raised concerns about the cleanliness of the home environment which was described as 'messy'. The police were also concerned about fathers' mental health, describing him to be 'animated'. No immediate concerns were reported for the welfare of the children.



# Challenges faced

- Increased referrals / staff pressure
- Family anxiety / refusal of home visits
- Adapting to change re intervention methods / working creatively with children and families
- Virtual visits / doorstep visits / impact on families
- Practitioners own anxiety / impact on my practice



# Family Intervention / Direct Work



- Initial contact with parents to discuss referral concerns
- Assess families' current circumstances and identify support needs:
  - a) Child neglect assessment tool kit
  - b) DASH (domestic abuse, stalking & harassment) assessment tool
- Direct work with children to obtain their views, feelings and wishes:
  - a) Three Houses Assessment Tool
  - b) Verbal and nonverbal communication from child
  - c) Child observations
- Discuss with parent's relevant referrals to help support families presenting needs



# Outcome / Case Overview



Below interventions discussed with parents to promote the safety and welfare of the children.

- a) **Home conditions:** Parents to take immediate action and de-clutter their home environment to prevent a hazardous situation and ensure the children are appropriately safeguarded.
- b) **Education:** School to provide parents provisions to facilitate remote working while children remain at home during the lockdown period as parents refuse for the children to attend school due to fears around Covid-19.
- c) **Referral to Talking Therapies:** Therapeutic intervention for mother to help reduce her feelings of stress as she balances her role as mother, fulltime carer for husband and studying.
- d) **Father to engage with GP services:** Father to take required medication to promote his mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- e) **Referral to Children Centre:** To request the allocation of a family support worker to offer the children and parents practical support/signpost to relevant services.

Parents agreed to the above recommended referrals. No further safeguarding concerns for the children, case subsequently closed to children services.

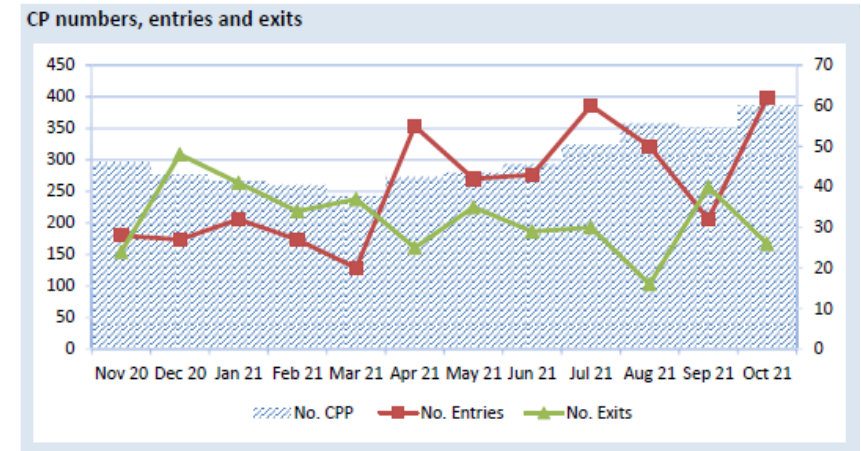
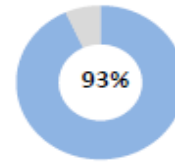


# Family Support and Protection Service;

Current CP

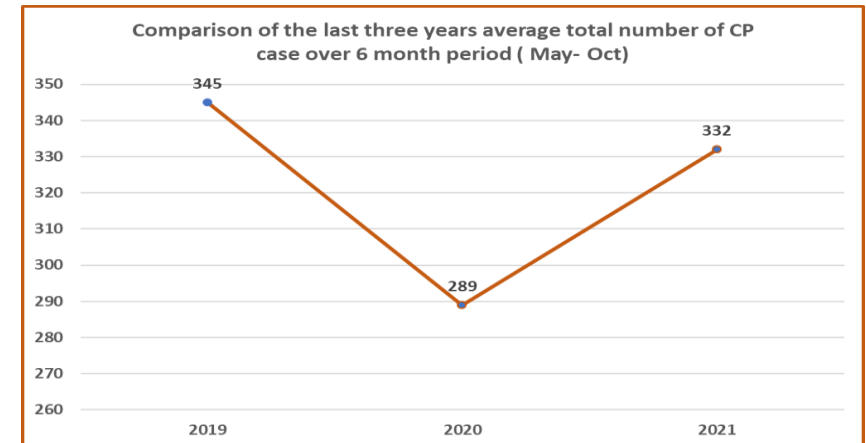
386

Mgmt oversight



Page 40

- Rise in numbers of Child Protection plans; increase of 90 plans since April (when schools returned to full curriculum offer)
- Two additional posts agreed to ensure that caseloads remained manageable and to acknowledge increased demand.
- Staff group remains stable and with good morale.
- Strengthen links with LEAP (Pupil referral unit), dedicated SW post into LEAP will strengthen links in relation to criminal exploitation and serious youth violence.





# Background

- Extensive Children's Social Care history of Domestic Violence between parents perpetrated from Father to Mother
- Children previously on Child Protection plans for a year, Child In Need plans for a further year.
- Father went to Bangladesh for 18 months and returned 2 months into the pandemic – re-referral
- Three children (aged 16,12 and 8), an adult in the home clinically vulnerable and shielding
- Overcrowding at home, small 2-bedroom flat with no outdoor space
- **Challenges:**
  - Seeing parents for 1:1 work
  - Use of interpreters, concerns raised in the past that father may have underlying learning needs
  - Safety Planning – with parents and whole family



# Case Work

- Use of nearby school playground to meet with parents 1:1 with interpreter - risk assessment using RIC-DASH template
- School remained open for younger child, offer for older children to use facilities for studying as way to get some time-out at home
- Safety planning
  - ‘Cool down’ spaces in the home each parent agreed to not enter
  - Exploration of family networks – Family Group Conferences able to be offered fully online
  - Reminder of services still operating (e.g. calling 999 and pressing 55 to alert police to a Domestic Violence call)
  - Use of safe word / safe emoji



# Direct Work

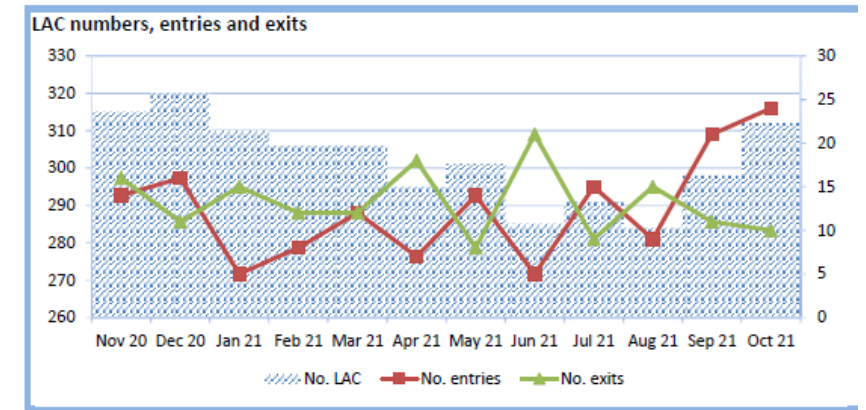


- Trying to see children outside of the home, e.g. playgrounds, walk round the block
- Low challenge on video calls – allows for containment
- ‘Show-me’ activities via WhatsApp call with a focus on feelings
- Recognising and giving voice to fears around Covid as well as feeling around Dad’s return

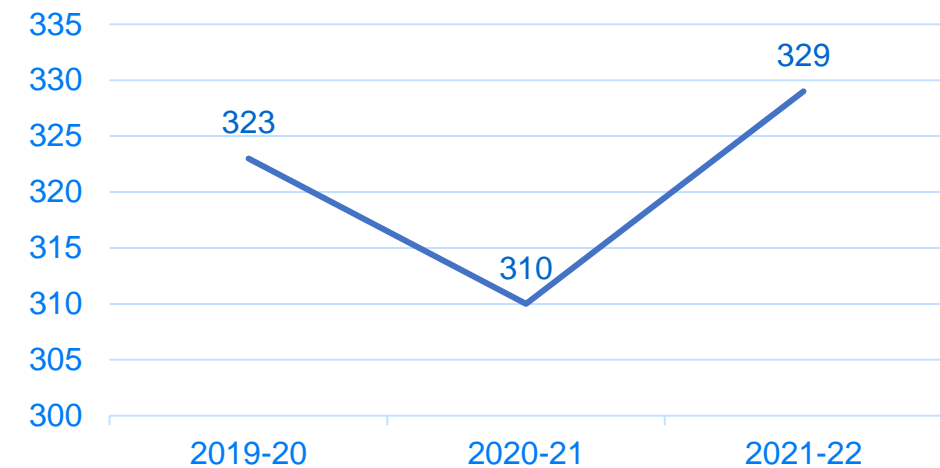


# Children In Care/Care Leavers;

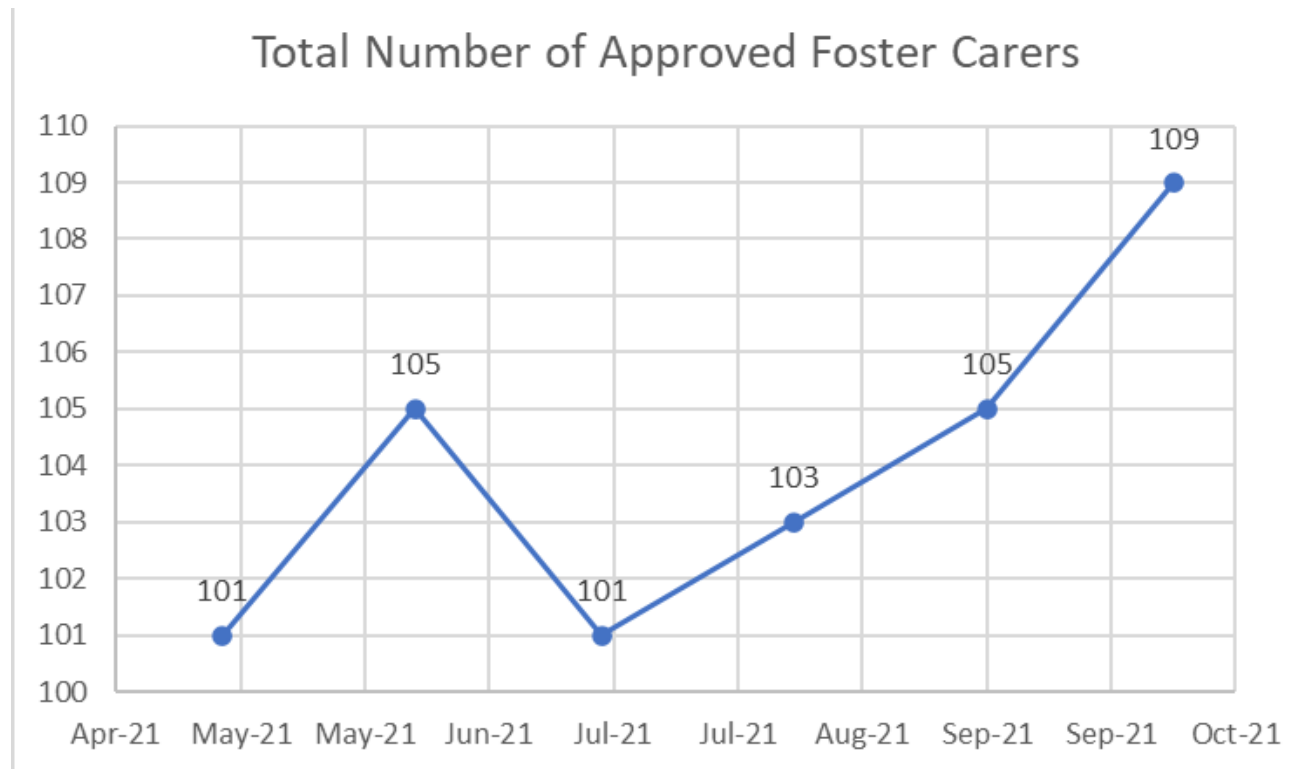
- Corresponding increase in number of children in Care; significant impact of UASC.
- Children Living In Care Council (CLICC) has been strengthened by widening the involvement of young people other care-leavers (but still work to do)
- We have made some progress with apprenticeships for care-leavers, but still restricted by a need to promote apprenticeships across the council.



CLA (May-Dec) 3 year Comparitor



# Foster Carers



- Foster carers have continued to manage the demands of Covid for our young people with resilience and ingenuity.
- “Mocking Bird” project continued to provide a robust level of peer support to carers.
- Recruiting carers is becoming increasingly difficult. Needing to strengthen social media presence for recruitment.
- One option currently being developed is the possible offer of tax exemption for foster carers.



# Tower Hamlets Mockingbird Family Model Project

Page 46





# What we are sharing today

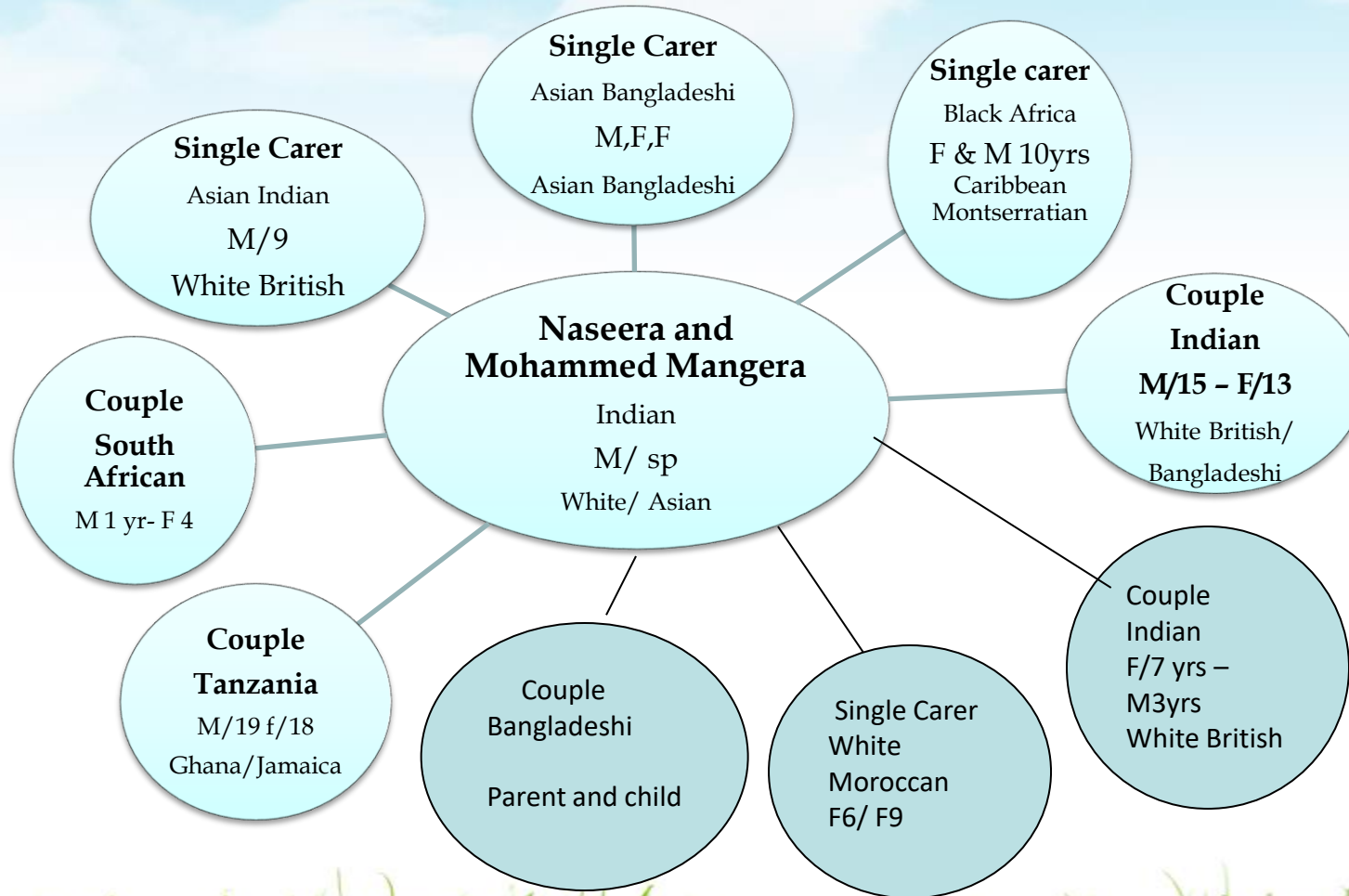
- What is the Mockingbird project
- What the constellations look like
- Benefits of MFM and what has worked well for the service
- Challenges and Plans for the future



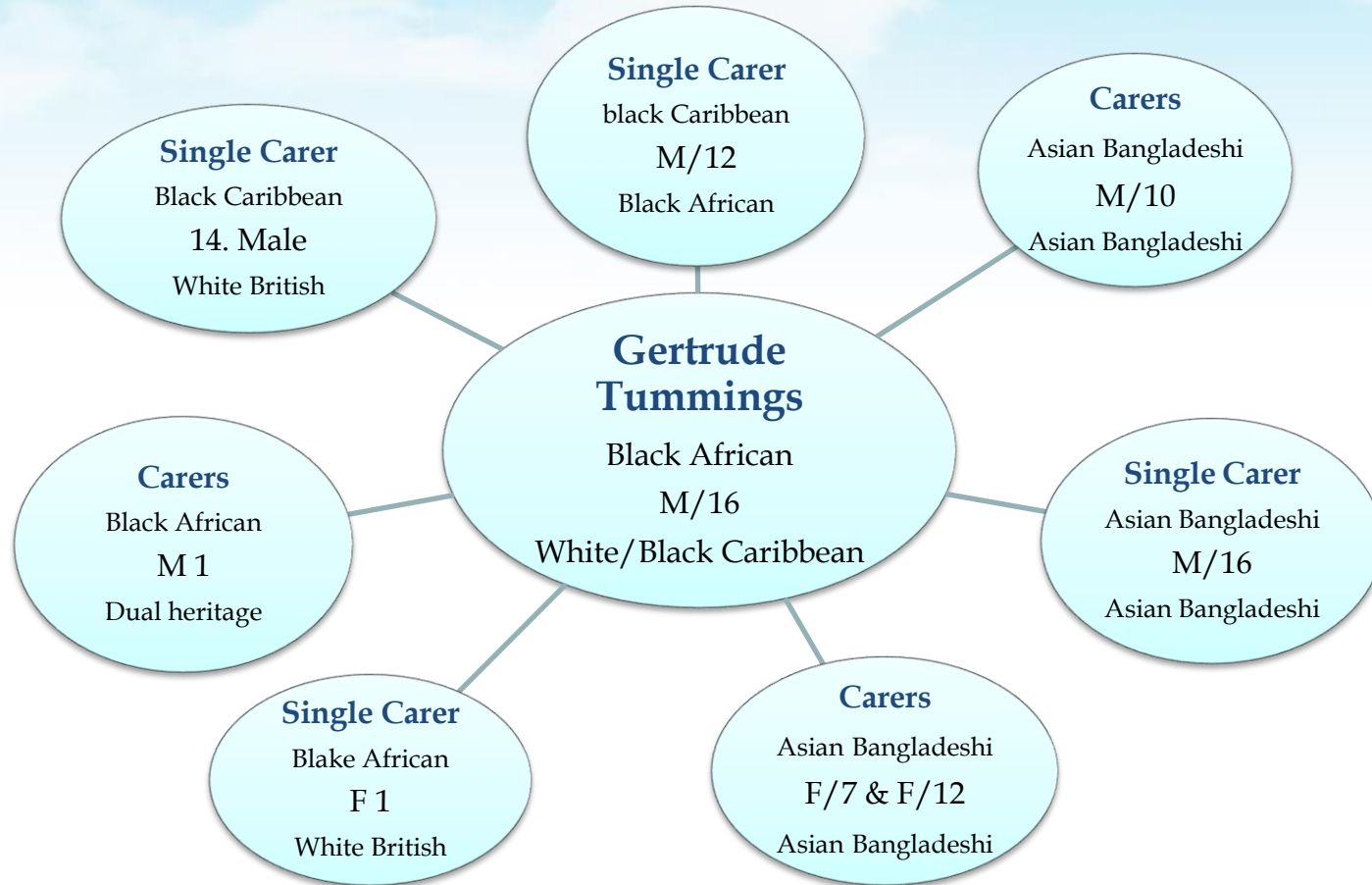
# What is the Mockingbird project

- MFM is a Model for delivering “Foster Care” that was developed in Seattle Washington State, USA
- LBTH was one of 8 pilot Local Authorities
- An alternative method for delivering foster care with the potential to improve Safety, Stability and Permanency for children and young people in local authority care
- Evidence based – model that has been formally evaluated and shows significant improved outcomes for children and young people, foster carers and the teams that work with the child

# Constellation – Naseera and Mohammed



# Constellation – Gertrude



## Benefits of the Mockingbird project

- Creating communities, where the children have a safe and stable environment to grow and learn.
- Increased stability & retention of placements
- Carers receive a natural break (not burnt out)
- Positive relationship for the children we care for.
- Social Workers being able to do hands on social work

# Some of our activities out

- Celebrating birthdays together
- Out playing crazy golf , Kayaking
- Bowling, fruit picking, winter wonderland
- Nadhim Zahawi children's minster visited  
Activity wkend away with Fostering network



# Holidays they have been on

Bournemouth; One hub constellation visit Bournemouth for their annual holiday yearly since 2016 -2017-2018-2019

Spain ; Hub visited Spain in the Easter holidays in 2017

Turkey; Hub visited with their children, birth children and grandchildren in 2019

Benefits of trips

Allow single carers to have company, security and additional support

Children to have additional friendships, are able to travel abroad, security of additional adults

# Social Distancing Joint Hub Picnic Aug 21

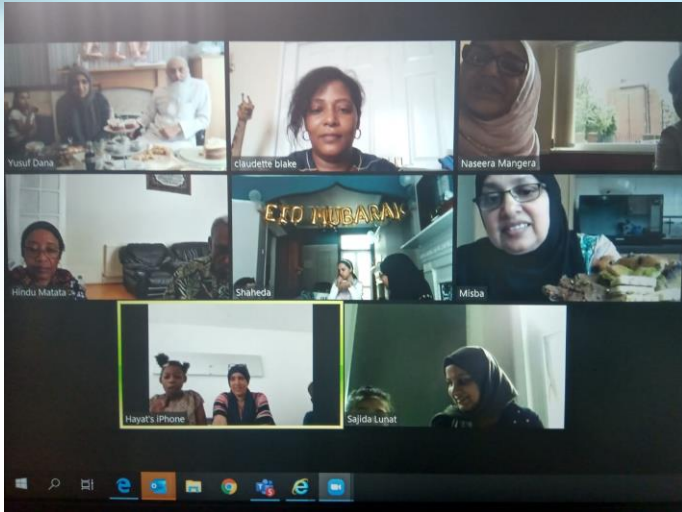


# Days out / meals out





# Virtual activities



# Virtual on line feedback

**We enjoyed taking on new challenges, puzzle building, drawing competitions**

**We get active and supporting each other**

We meet different groups from different Constellations from all over the country.

We had the opportunity to make new friends.

Carers were able to attend training facilitated from the USA and were able to build extended networks

# Challenges & Plans for the future

1. To form more constellations in local areas
2. Housing
  - i. Carers need larger houses within the borough as two spare bedrooms are required to be a hub home
  - ii. Due to Covid children having sleep overs have been limited due to cross infections; Available only for children to prevent placement breakdown
3. Co-ordination and partnerships of the Hubs with
  - virtual school.
  - CAMHS therapist
  - CSE, Police
  - Missing person team
4. Fun Fun Fun

# Any questions

Claudette, Iris , Gertrude and Mohammed and Naseera



Total SW Vacancy	104	83	77	50	40	Tbc Informed by SFD vacancies for 2022
Total SW Vacancy in % ( as per Estb)	39.5%	31.6%	29%	15.2%	12.5% * Current CSC staffing numbers of 319 (260 SW posts+ 51 TMs+8 SMs)	10%

## RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY

Three-Pronged Recruitment Approach April -March (Revised May 2021)										
	Year 0 Actuals	Year 1 2018-19		Year 2 2019-20		Year 3 2020-21		Year 4 2021-22		Year 5 2022-23
	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Planned Targets
Recruitment of ASYE target	0	34	35	20	20	19	20	18 (Further 1 in progress)	20	20
Conversion of Agency to Perm (SWs & TMs)	0	6	11	9	8	20	5	4 (further 5 in progress)	5	5
Direct Recruitment of Experienced SWs	5	2	16	11	30	25	20	15 (further 5 in progress)	15	15
Direct Recruitment of HOS/GMs/TMs								8 (further 5 in progress)	10	5
<b>Total Recruitment Target</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b> @ 12.11.21	<b>50</b>	<b>38-tbc</b> Informed by SFD vacancies for 2022
Staff Turnover Numbers	59	21		34		37		28		tbc Informed by SF staff estb for 2022

- We have continued to maintain good level of staff stability (10% turn-over).
- We have continued to recruit permanent staff and continue to reduce numbers of agency staff (currently below 20%, with the majority in Assessment and Intervention teams.)
- The training provided by the Academy continues to reflect the broader range of skills now within the Division (ie; not just SW focused).
- Continued development of Restorative approach, links to “Trauma Informed” approaches
- Now have specialist recruitment “micro-site” embedded within the council site, and have completed and shared two recruitment video’s.

# Social Care Academy/Workforce;

# Assurance

- Improvement Board
- Performance Surgeries
- Audit Schedule (including service user feed-back)
- Practice Weeks
- Ofsted; Focused Visit
- Peer Review; (LADO review by Islington for June) we wish to expand this focus to other areas
- Audit Peer Review
- LGC Peer review in 2022



# Future Challenges;

- Induction and hand-over to new Director (Susannah Beasley-Murray; 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2022)
- Youth Justice Inspection; Early 2022
- Ofsted “Focused Visit” ; likely spring/early summer 2022
- Commissioning of LGA Peer Review (possibly summer 2022) as part of Ofsted preparation.
- Continued budget pressures linked to staffing costs
- Continued demand pressures linked to Covid 19
- Continued development of the Restorative approach, and maintaining engagement with staff (linked to staff retention)



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