

# Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee



TOWER HAMLETS

Thursday, 12 October 2023 at 6.30 p.m.

Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel

## Combined Agenda

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.

#### Contact for further enquiries:

Democratic Services,  
Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel, London, E1 1BJ  
Tel: 020 7364 4854  
E-mail: [justina.bridgeman@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:justina.bridgeman@towerhamlets.gov.uk)  
Web: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk>

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Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Thursday, 12 October 2023

6.30 p.m.

	<b>PAGE NUMBER(S)</b>
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS</b>	5 - 6
<b>3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b>	7 - 14
To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the held on 11 July 2023.	
<b>4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	
<b>4 .1 Children's Services Inspection Preparation</b>	15 - 42
<b>4 .2 Supporting Families, Key Strategies - Children and Families</b>	43 - 56
<b>4 .3 Youth Services Update</b>	57 - 80

**Next Meeting of the Committee:**

Thursday, 7 December 2023 at 6.30 p.m. to be held in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel

# Agenda Item 2

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AT MEETINGS– NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER**

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Code of Conduct for Members at Part C, Section 31 of the Council's Constitution

### **(i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)**

You have a DPI in any item of business on the agenda where it relates to the categories listed in **Appendix A** to this guidance. Please note that a DPI includes: (i) Your own relevant interests; (ii) Those of your spouse or civil partner; (iii) A person with whom the Member is living as husband/wife/civil partners. Other individuals, e.g. Children, siblings and flatmates do not need to be considered. Failure to disclose or register a DPI (within 28 days) is a criminal offence.

Members with a DPI, (unless granted a dispensation) must not seek to improperly influence the decision, must declare the nature of the interest and leave the meeting room (including the public gallery) during the consideration and decision on the item – unless exercising their right to address the Committee.

**DPI Dispensations and Sensitive Interests.** In certain circumstances, Members may make a request to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation or for an interest to be treated as sensitive.

### **(ii) Non - DPI Interests that the Council has decided should be registered – (Non - DPIs)**

You will have 'Non DPI Interest' in any item on the agenda, where it relates to (i) the offer of gifts or hospitality, (with an estimated value of at least £25) (ii) Council Appointments or nominations to bodies (iii) Membership of any body exercising a function of a public nature, a charitable purpose or aimed at influencing public opinion.

Members must declare the nature of the interest, but may stay in the meeting room and participate in the consideration of the matter and vote on it **unless:**

- A reasonable person would think that your interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair your judgement of the public interest. **If so, you must withdraw and take no part in the consideration or discussion of the matter.**

### **(iii) Declarations of Interests not included in the Register of Members' Interest.**

Occasions may arise where a matter under consideration would, or would be likely to, **affect the wellbeing of you, your family, or close associate(s) more than it would anyone else living in the local area** but which is not required to be included in the Register of Members' Interests. In such matters, Members must consider the information set out in paragraph (ii) above regarding Non DPI - interests and apply the test, set out in this paragraph.

### **Guidance on Predetermination and Bias**

Member's attention is drawn to the guidance on predetermination and bias, particularly the need to consider the merits of the case with an open mind, as set out in the Planning and Licensing Codes of Conduct, (Part C, Section 34 and 35 of the Constitution). For further advice on the possibility of bias or predetermination, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting.

### **Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 - Declarations which restrict Members in Council Tax arrears, for at least a two months from voting**

In such circumstances the member may not vote on any reports and motions with respect to the matter.

**Further Advice** contact: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer, Tel: 0207 364 4800.

## APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

(Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, Reg 2 and Schedule)

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by the Member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of the Member. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either—  (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or  (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

COMMITTEE, 11/07/2023

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS  
MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN & EDUCATION SCRUTINY SUB  
COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 6.30P.M. ON TUESDAY, 11 JULY 2023**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS – TOWN HALL, 160 WHITECHAPEL ROAD,  
LONDON E1 1BJ**

**Members Present in Person:**

Councillor Bodrul Choudhury           -(Chair)

Councillor Sabina Akhtar

Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain

Councillor Shafi Ahmed

Councillor Ahmodul Kabir

Councillor Bellal Uddin

**Co-optees Present in Person:**

Joanna Hannan                           -(Diocese of Westminster Representative)

Dr Phillip Rice                           -(Church of England Representative)

Shiblu Miah                               -(Muslim Representative)

Ashraf Zaman                           -(Parent Governor)

**Co-optees Present Virtually:**

Abena Adeji                               -(Parent Governor)

Nafisa Ahmed                           -(Parent Governor)

**Officers Present in Person:**

James Thomas                           -(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)

Susannah Beasley-Murray           -(Director of Supporting Families)

Anna Murphy                             -(Strategy and Policy Officer)

Justina Bridgeman                     -(Democratic Services Officer, Committees)

COMMITTEE, 11/07/2023

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning and Councillor Leelu Ahmed.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests.

**3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

The Chair requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub Committee for the municipal year 2023/24. Councillor Bellal Uddin proposed Councillor Shafi Ahmed for the position. This was seconded by Councillor Ahmodul Kabir.

There were no further nominations received.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Elect Councillor Shafi Ahmed the Vice-Chair of the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2023/24.

**4 CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, QUORUM, MEMBERSHIP AND DATES OF 2023/24 MEETINGS**

Justina Bridgeman, Democratic Services Officer, requested members to note the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee's terms of reference, membership, quorum and meeting dates for the municipal year 2023/24. The terms of reference were agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 May 2023.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note it's terms of reference, quorum, membership and meeting dates as set out in appendices 1,2 and 3 of the report.
2. **Agreed** to hold all Children and Education Scrutiny Sub Committee meetings at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber for the municipal year 2023/24.

**5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)**

The minutes of the Sub Committee meeting held on 4 May 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record of proceedings.

COMMITTEE, 11/07/2023

## **6. CESSC ACTION LOG**

The completed action log for 2022/23 was circulated to attendees.

## **REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **7.1 CABINET MEMBER OVERVIEW OF PRIORITIES FOR 2023/24**

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning sent his apologies and the Chair and sub-committee members agreed to progress to the next item.

### **7.2 CORPORATE DIRECTORS REFLECTIONS AND PRIORITIES FOR 2023/24**

James Thomas, Corporate Director, Children and Culture, provided reflections and lessons learnt from last year and outlined the key priorities for municipal year 2023/24.

Mr. Thomas emphasised how the lasting impact of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis has affected children within the borough, increasing the level of support required. Although many service areas have returned to pre-pandemic levels, further attention is needed to tackle children's wellbeing, development and education due to the lockdown restrictions. Young children missed key developmental milestones which have had a detrimental effect and requires monitoring.

Mr. Thomas went on to explain the progress made in continual improvement in service areas such as Children's Social Care and Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). A series of LGA Peer Reviews are planned within the service and a SEND review has been scheduled for October 2023. The Continuous Improvement Board will remain focused on attaining the best levels of service for the borough.

Other areas of progress include: continued co-production with children, young people and families. The 'Every Chance for Every Child Forum' which shapes priorities for the year ahead and the three 'Young Scrutineers' who have highlighted issues of peer abuse were noted, as were the 'Let's Talk' SEND Events where parents, education and care professionals give support and discuss concerns. Plans to embed co-production in all areas of the Directorate are ongoing.

The workforce were commended as a valuable and dedicated resource, although recruitment issues are still a concern with locum posts on the rise. Further progress is required to ensure the workforce reflects the community, with more diverse leadership roles made available throughout the Directorate.

COMMITTEE, 11/07/2023

A stronger drive to employ younger members of the community through apprenticeships and job opportunities should also be considered.

The priorities for this year were outlined, including a commitment to the Mayor's manifesto, accelerating education by investing in youth service provision, supporting young people to continue further education and tackling the cost of living crisis. The Universal Free School meals programme for secondary schools will begin from September 2023 and the Universal Bursary Grants and Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) are now in effect.

Other priorities include effective use of data and combating poverty within the borough. The main concerns for Tower Hamlets Together (THT) are SEND, Healthy weight, Mental Health and emotional wellbeing. Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership (THSCP) are committed to infant safety, tackling child exploitation, racism, peer harm and promoting online safety.

Mr. Thomas concluded by requesting the sub-committee give consideration to; sixth form performance, poverty and inequality, an annual scrutiny on safeguarding children and mental health and wellbeing.

Further to questions from the sub-committee, James Thomas:

- Clarified that there are a range of services which monitor uptake levels for young residents seeking mental health support. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) who work with schools and the local authority provide data. Joint commissioning with the NHS takes place with voluntary organisations such as Bernardo's. Universal services such as schools and youth providers also hold data.
- Conceded that there is no specific mental health provision for young Somali residents but all staff deliver a culturally appropriate service. Plans to commission community specific services are ongoing.
- Explained that a partnership exists with WorkPath who support young people within the borough to give guidance on training and employment. A council training event will take place in October for young borough residents.
- Noted that work to strengthened and mitigate the stigma related to mental health on a cultural level is required, with more messaging and promotional campaigns. This was highlighted by members of the Children and Young Peoples Takeover session, who called for more support and advice and signs of potential risks. Work with Public Health regarding Parent Champion roles is ongoing.
- Explained that uptake levels on the Universal Free Meals initiative is in progress, as are evaluations with the Queen Mary University and the University of Newcastle.



COMMITTEE, 11/07/2023

- Clarified that the Learning Academy has enabled more social workers to support young people, with a focus to recruit from the community. Consideration has been given to the social work apprenticeships.
- Noted that systematic external Peer Reviews are crucial to continual service improvement. A recent review looked at the multi-agency safeguarding child protection Hub and provided useful feedback. The Early Help peer review focused on the work undertaken and gave positive feedback.
- Clarified that the Graduate programme is still ongoing its expansion should be considered.
- Explained that the stigma of food banks can be mitigated by increasing smaller scaled sites within schools and make it more comfortable for parents. Other ways may include models which require membership and give the appearance of shops. Although these may request a minimum payment they are heavily subsidised.

The Chair thanked James Thomas for the Corporate overview and priorities and requested that further data and feedback on the Universal Free School Meals initiative be brought back to the sub-committee at a later date.

**RESOLVED that**

1. That the presentation be noted.
2. Data and feedback from residents on the Universal Free School Meals to sub-committee at a later date.

**7.3 CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY REFRESH**

Susannah Beasley-Murray, Director of Supporting Families, and Sheleena Powtoo, Improvement Delivery Lead, gave an overview of the key priorities for the five year Corporate Parenting Strategy, to be submitted to Cabinet on 26 July. Details on the Peer Review on Leaving Care with Government Advisor Mark Riddell, and the proposal for Care Experience to be adopted as a protected characteristic were also outlined.

Ms Beasley-Murray informed the sub-committee of the pledge corporate parents and partners have signed and how children in care will be protected, whilst keeping children's key messages at the forefront. The strategy will be launched in October and will set out how a community of carers will be established.

The five main priorities, developed in conjunction with children, stakeholders and foster carers were outlined as:

- A safe and stable home

COMMITTEE, 11/07/2023

- Trusted and strong relationships
- Education and aspirations
- Health and emotional Wellbeing
- Co-production

Details on adopting the Care Experience as a protected characteristic show that care leavers are at a disadvantage, with higher outcomes for homelessness, criminality and premature death. This has been introduced at a local level and the recommendation will ensure the care experience characteristic will be included in all equality impact assessments for future policies and services.

Ms Beasley-Murray updated the sub-committee on the Peer Review recommendations from Mark Riddell, National Implementation Advisor for Care Leavers (DfE), which took place in May. The presentation will be circulated to sub-committee members outside of the meeting.

Further to questions from the sub-committee, Susannah Beasley-Murray;

- Explained that co-production involved a range of holistic activities for children living in care, social workers, parents and personal advisors to design the strategy to capture their views. A parents reference group has also been established.
- Clarified that engagement with ex-carers were included in discussions focusing on money management, housing, education and other support needs.
- Noted that the 'Kit Kat Terrace' care leavers site has some open space and its use is encouraged. Collaboration with the sports, leisure and Parks teams are ongoing to ensure summer activities are available.
- Explained that all departments are committed to provide apprenticeships and there are ongoing discussions with the Department of Work and Pensions to assist care leavers within Kit Kat Terrace. The team of education employment advisors has been expanded to offer support those seeking full time employment.
- Clarified that housing needs for care leavers is a priority and a joint working protocol has been established. Care leaver allowances have been increased in an effort to tackle the cost-of-living crisis and guidance is available on the best ways to budget finances.
- Noted that families are supported by social workers to ensure the family structure is kept intact. The project 'Lifelong Links' aims to support children in care, care leavers and members of the family in the UK and abroad. The

COMMITTEE, 11/07/2023

Supporting Families Conference will be held on 12 July to empower families and improve services for children in care.

- Added that family group conferences are held to allow extended family members to voice concerns and help shape the decision-making process of children in care. Dedicated advocates for children and families are also made available to speak on their behalf.
- Clarified that research data on care leavers will be made available to sub-committee members outside of the meeting.

[Clerk's Note - The Rees Centre research data is available here:

[Over 7,500 children and young people in care share their views and experiences on contact arrangements with their families — \(ox.ac.uk\) \]](#)

- Clarified that young residents and care leavers will be invited to the sub-committee to discuss their experiences.
- Explained that many of the foster carers, are trauma informed and the 'Mocking Bird Hub' exists to ensure carers are clustered in one area with a main therapeutic support link at the centre. All needs of the child are matched to ensure they are protected. There are issues with housing and some foster carers live in neighbouring boroughs. There are ongoing discussions to rectify this.

#### **RESOLVED that**

1. That the presentation be noted.
2. To Submit research data on care leavers for sub-committee members outside of the meeting.
3. Young residents and care leavers to be invited to the sub-committee to discuss their experiences.

#### **8. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

Anna Murphy, Strategy and Policy Officer, proposed topics to discuss at the remaining meetings for the 2023/24 municipal year. The Chair informed sub-committee members that the draft will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 24 July for discussion and then submitted to Cabinet for finalisation. The final draft will then return to the OSC in September.

COMMITTEE, 11/07/2023

Following the presentation, sub-committee members suggested including discussions on:

- Sixth Form performance, recruitment retention and improvement measures.
- A legacy review on the Sixth Form provision initially held in 2020 and invite residents to discuss progress since then.

Sub-committee members also queried how schools are dealing with gender neutral lavatories.

Officers clarified that the Supporting Families revised strategy is currently in draft and will be made available at the next meeting on 12 October.

A Government review on School curriculums is being undertaken. Sub-committee members were informed that details are pending on its conclusion and it may be prudent to await recommendations if not received by 7 December.

Sub-committee members were requested to include mental health in the February 2024 spotlight on Children's health. A request was also made to include a safeguarding update with the Children's Social Care reform for the May meeting. The Chair noted that Deputy Mayor Maium Talukdar will be hosting a Mental Health Awareness event on 24 July in the council chamber.

**RESOLVED that**

1. The presentation be noted.


**9. ANY OTHER RESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT**

The Chair requested details on all local universities contributions to the borough in regard to the S106 Planning obligations and gave an open invitation to attend a sub-committee meeting to discuss.

The meeting ended at 8.19pm

Chair, Bodrul Choudhury

Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p><b>Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</b></p> <p>12<sup>th</sup> October 2023</p>	 <p><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p>
<p><b>Report of: James Thomas, Corporate Director of Children's Services</b></p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p>Children's Services Inspection Preparation</p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Jonathan Solomons
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

## Summary

This cover report accompanies the presentation slide deck [to follow] and will focus on, the preparation work undertaken in advance of the Children's Services inspection.

## Recommendations:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Scrutinise the preparation for up-coming Childrens Services Inspection

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# Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Children's Services Inspection Preparation



# 2019 Inspection

- Inspection took place in June 2019 following two years of intensive intervention due to an inadequate rating in 2017.
- Outcome was the services were good in all areas

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good





# Improvement Infrastructure



- Continuous improvement board (CSCIB) – chaired by the Director of Children’s Services and attended by Director of Supporting Families, Heads of Services and other LA staff
- Improvement plan developed – monitored via the CSCIB. Ofsted have also had sight and consider it has the right areas of focus.
- Detailed management information report prepared and scrutinised monthly
- Bi-monthly audit cycle to look at the quality of practice. Cases audited and moderated using the Ofsted gradings.
- Regular reports to the Corporate Safeguarding Board, chaired by Deputy CEX
- Monthly performance surgeries using live, child level data- chaired by the Director of Supporting Families.



# Inspection Preparation



- Fortnightly planning meetings, chaired by Director of Supporting Families and attended by Heads of Service.
- Annexe A data lists prepared
- Trial run took place in July 2023 to identify any possible gaps and issues. This also involved colleagues from IT and Facilities Management. Highlighted that our preparation was on track. Further work was completed over the summer to ensure that we were ready for when the notification comes.



# Children's Services Inspection



- Inspected by Ofsted – last inspection in 2019 – next expected in the next year.
- Currently rated Good – Second highest rating
- This means our next inspection will be a short inspection – 1 week
- New judgment specifically for care leavers
- Focused visit took place in July 2022 – focus on children we care for and the report was very positive.
- Planning ongoing, regular internal and external reviews of progress.



# Children's Services Inspection



- Call is made to the DCS on a Monday morning to announce the inspection.
- Data and documents are sent to Ofsted on Tuesday and Wednesday.
- A list of audited cases is sent to Ofsted from which they select up to 12 cases for detailed cases analysis.
- Inspectors arrive on site on the following Monday and will be with us for 1 week.



# Key numbers (August 2023)



- Number of allocated children – 2336
- CP Plans – 274
  - Rate per 10,000 42.6 (in line with national and regional)
- Children in our care – 291
  - Rate per 10,000 45.3 (lower than national and regional)
- Children in need – 790



# Key Performance Indicators



- Contains 17 key metrics – intended to give a snapshot indication of performance.
- 3 are numbers of children. In the latest report, of the other 14, 3 are RAG rated green (above target), 6 are amber (between minimum and maximum target) with 5 red (below target)
- Of the 5 reds, 4 miss the target by less than 3%. The number of CIN visited in the past 4 weeks is 8% below target. This reflects the summer period when visiting is a little harder but this will be closely monitored to ensure improvement.
- All will be addressed and monitored at the next meeting of CSCIB.



# Children's Social Care Highlight Indicators

This report provides summary overview of KPIs linked to child-centred performance management data being used in support of performance improvement across CSC

Performance measure title and reference			Performance from previous financial year	Performance for current period (either snapshot, YTD or rolling year depending on measure) - plus last six monthly performance outturns (where available)									Agreed targets (using corporate minimum/upper model)	Trend line for last 6 months performance	
Ref	Performance Measure	2022/23	Current Performance									Target		Trend	
			Num	Denom	Current	Period	Six Month Trend						Min		Upper
							Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23			
<b>Management Oversight</b>															
1.1	% cases with Management Oversight recorded in past 8 weeks	90%	1,958	2,165	90.4%	Snapshot	89.5%	87.6%	92.9%	90.9%	92.9%	90.4%	90%	95%	
<b>Cohorts</b>															
1.2	Number of CIN (exc. LAC, CP, Care Leavers)	738	n/a	n/a	790	Snapshot	738	757	812	819	777	790			
1.3	Number of children subject to CPP	214	n/a	n/a	274	Snapshot	215	234	224	246	253	274			
1.4	Number of LAC	301	n/a	n/a	291	Snapshot	301	295	297	289	288	291			
<b>Front door / assessment</b>															
2.1	% of contacts completed within 1 day	98.3%	6,015	6,417	93.7%	YTD	97.3%	98.3%	96.5%	87.9%	89.3%	99.1%	90%	95%	
2.10a	% of single assessments completed within 45 working days	89.7%	1,725	1,900	90.8%	YTD	89.3%	93.3%	88.2%	91.2%	93.0%	88.5%	90%	95%	
<b>Plans</b>															
3.1	% of children in need with CIN Plan completed	86.3%	691	790	87.5%	Snapshot	86.3%	86.5%	85.6%	87.1%	88.5%	87.5%	85%	90%	
<b>Visits</b>															
3.3	% of CIN children visited within the past four weeks	84.0%	615	790	77.8%	Snapshot	84.0%	84.5%	82.8%	83.3%	84.0%	77.8%	85%	90%	
4.7.2	% of children on a child protection plan receiving a visit within 10 working days	95.3%	245	274	89.4%	Snapshot	94.9%	89.7%	89.7%	93.1%	89.3%	89.4%	92%	95%	
5.10	% of CLA Single Assessments not yet completed or outside the one year timescale	29.6%	34	291	11.7%	Snapshot	29.6%	17.8%	9.3%	8.8%	11.3%	11.7%	10%	5%	
5.11	% of CLA with visits in last 6 weeks	92.0%	259	291	89.0%	Snapshot	92.0%	82.9%	82.7%	88.1%	88.4%	89.0%	90%	95%	
<b>Reviews</b>															
3.2	% of children with CIN Plan with reviews within last 3 months	87.8%	601	691	87.0%	Snapshot	87.8%	86.7%	88.3%	86.1%	90.4%	87.0%	85%	90%	
4.8	% of CP reviews carried out within statutory timescales	96.6%	168	176	95.5%	Snapshot	96.6%	96.5%	95.9%	97.2%	96.8%	95.5%	96.5%	98.5%	
5.18	CLA cases which were reviewed within required timescales	100.0%	328	328	100.0%	Rolling Year	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		95%	100%	
<b>Care Leavers</b>															
6.1	% care leavers "in touch" (17,18,19,20,21 yr. olds with activity updated within last year)	98.1%	256	268	95.5%	Snapshot	98.1%	95.5%	92.9%	95.6%	95.9%	95.5%	90%	95%	
6.2	% care leavers EET	77.3%	185	268	69.0%	Snapshot	77.3%	72.1%	70.0%	69.7%	70.8%	69.0%	65%	75%	
6.3	% care leavers in suitable accommodation	94.4%	243	268	90.7%	Snapshot	94.4%	92.1%	89.9%	91.5%	92.3%	90.7%	85%	90%	

# What our data tells us



- The number of families requiring support is broadly stable
- Contacts to our front door are responded to in a timely manner.
- Cases are signposted to Early Help when appropriate
- When required, child protection conferences are convened quickly and reviewed regularly
- Most of the children in our care have had review annual health and dental checks
- We are in touch with most of care leavers and most are in Education, Employment or Training
- Most children who go missing are offered a return home interview within 3 days of their return.





# Areas of focus



- Initial Health Assessments for children we care for – All children who come into our care should have a health assessment within 20 working days. Due to capacity issues within the health system, this can be challenging.
- Care and Pre-Proceedings timescales are longer than we would like. Some of this is out of our control due to court delays.
- Placement stability – we are working hard to prevent placements from being disrupted and that we minimise the amount of times that children in our care have to move. Recent data suggests significant progress here and we are optimistic of further improvement
- Re-referrals was an area of concern but the concerted focus on this area has brought this figure down to below regional and national comparators



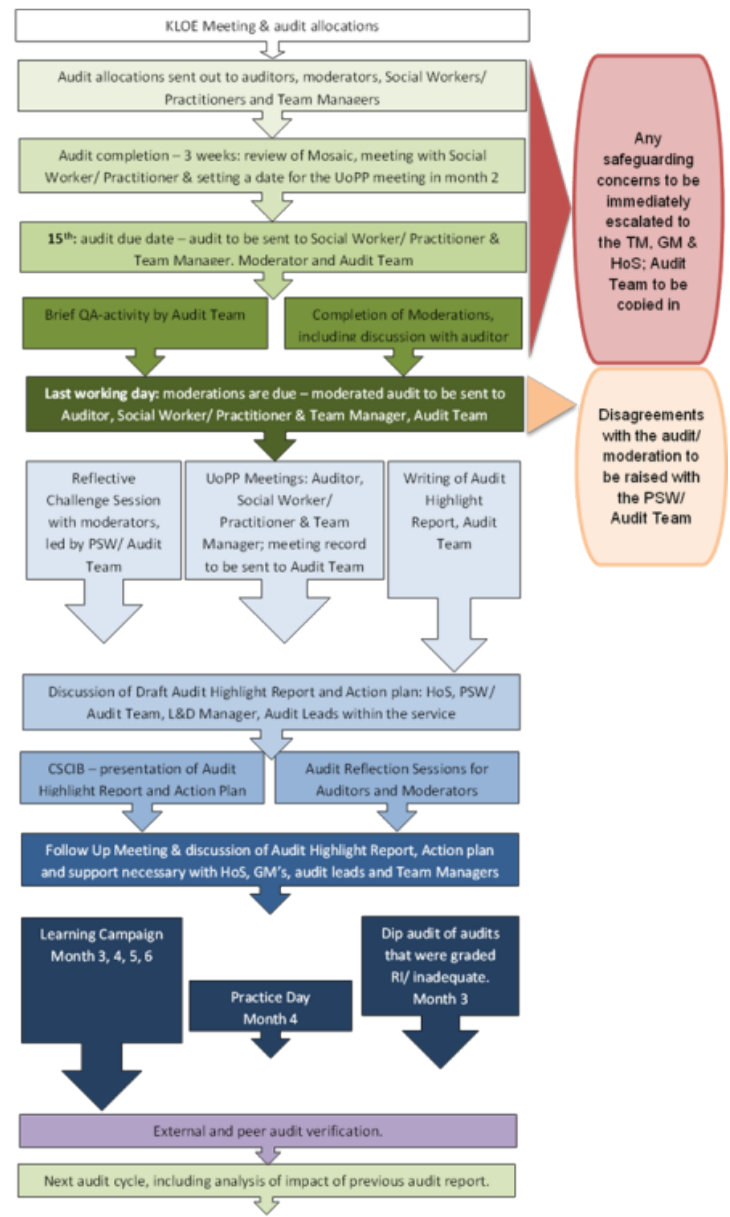
# Internal and external assurance



- We have a well developed and robust process of internal quality assurance using a variety of methods including audits, dip samples and thematic reviews.
- These are carefully moderated to ensure consistency and that auditors are correctly assessing the quality of practice.
- We have commissioned external reviews by highly qualified and experienced practitioners to provide further assurance as the quality of our practice.



PREP  
W 3  
W 4 & 5  
MONTH 1  
W 1 2  
W 3 4 5  
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W 3  
W 4 & 5  
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M 7

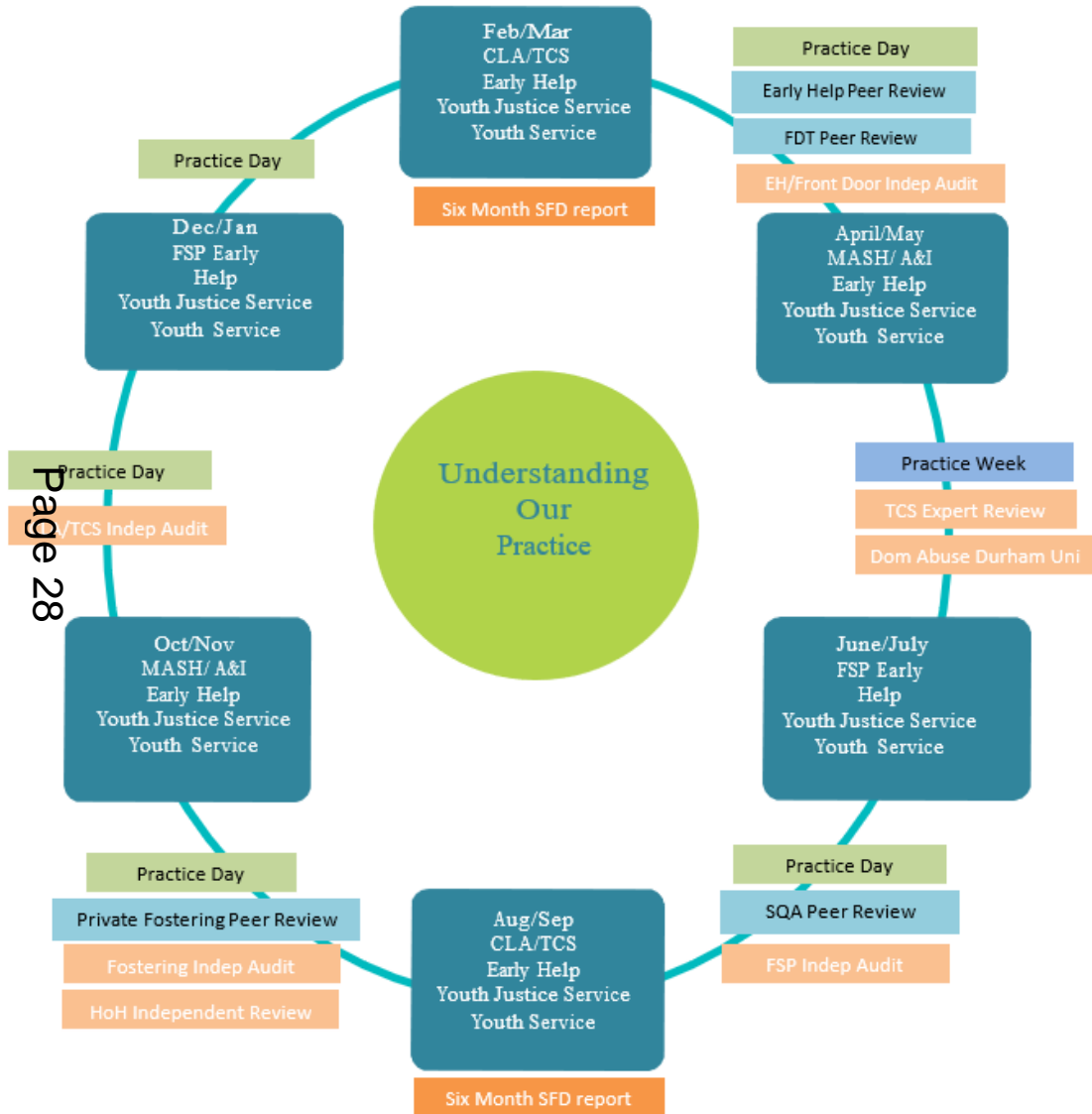


# Internal and external assurance

- We have a well developed and robust process of internal quality assurance using a variety of methods including audits, dip samples and thematic reviews.
- These are carefully moderated to ensure consistency and that themes and learning are understood at every level to ensure practice development with a focus on assessing the quality of practice.
- We have commissioned external reviews by highly qualified and experienced practitioners to provide further assurance the quality of our practice.



# The Audit Cycle 2023



- The Quality Assurance Framework utilises a blended approach of Generic Auditing, Dip Sampling and Thematic audits to Understand Our Practice.
- Robust system to ensure learning is shared and actions are progressed.
- Our practice model "Better Together" is embedded within the QA framework and the 6 C's feature throughout. Most significantly 'Collaboration' through undertaking audits with practitioners and managers and 'Checkback' where a sample of audits is re-audited and dipped to understand the impact of the audit undertaken.
- To ensure we apply the same principles of QA to our own systems we invite a selection of external auditors and Peer Reviewers to verify our QA framework on a 6 monthly cycle



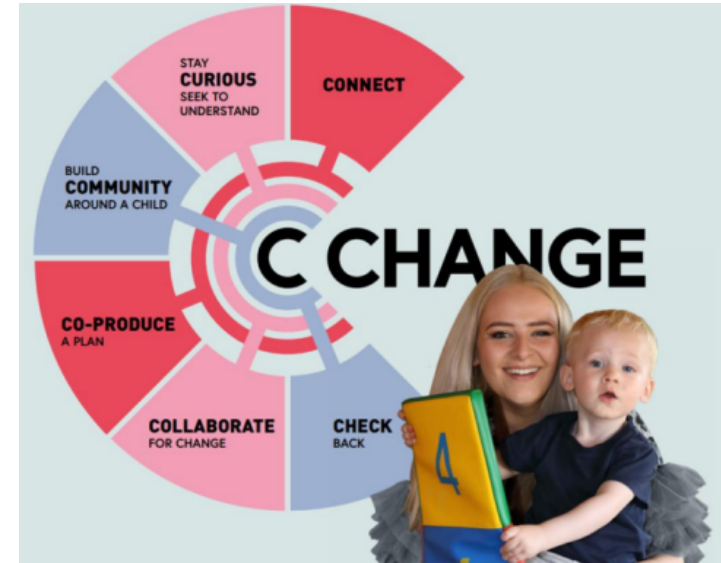


Robust training and moderation processes have been implemented since the introduction of the revised Audit framework to embed the revised audit tools. Over the last three cycles, variability of audits with moderations changing the original auditors grading in over 30% of audits has been an issue. As a result a programme of audit training and reflection exercises have been initiated both for auditors and moderators which is beginning to yield results.

The introduction of Understanding our Practice Progression meetings In Early Help and CSC further increases opportunities for collaborative interactions to maximise the impact of audit through strength based reflective discussions based on appreciative enquiry. With the introduction UoPP meetings recommendations from audits early signs appear to indicate progression within the 6-week review timescale.

Audit cycles comprise of a generic audit completed by TM's with a thematic collaborative Audit by AP's

- 118 Team Managers collaborative case audits
- 64 Advance Practitioners collaborative thematic case audits
- 717 Dip Sampling of specific key areas



# Internal Assurance

## Key Findings

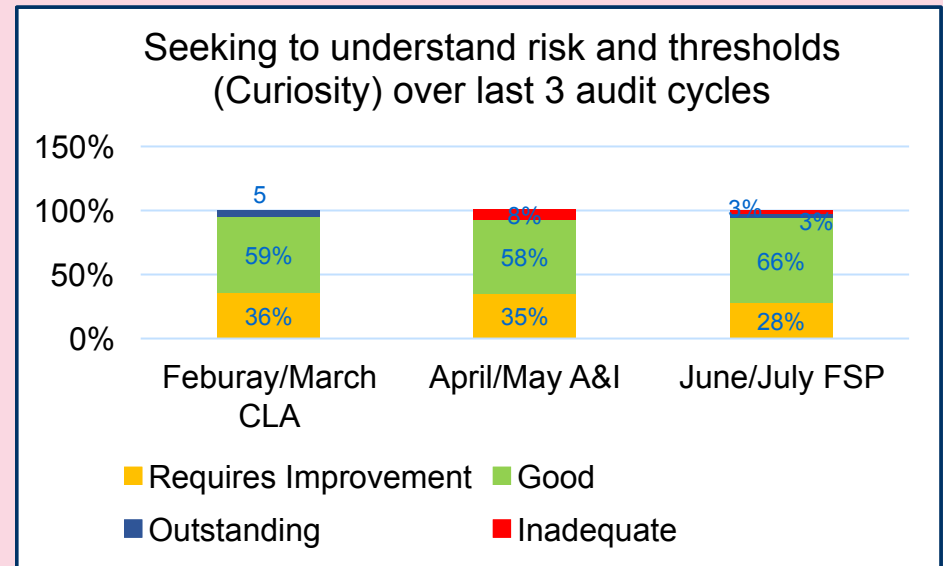
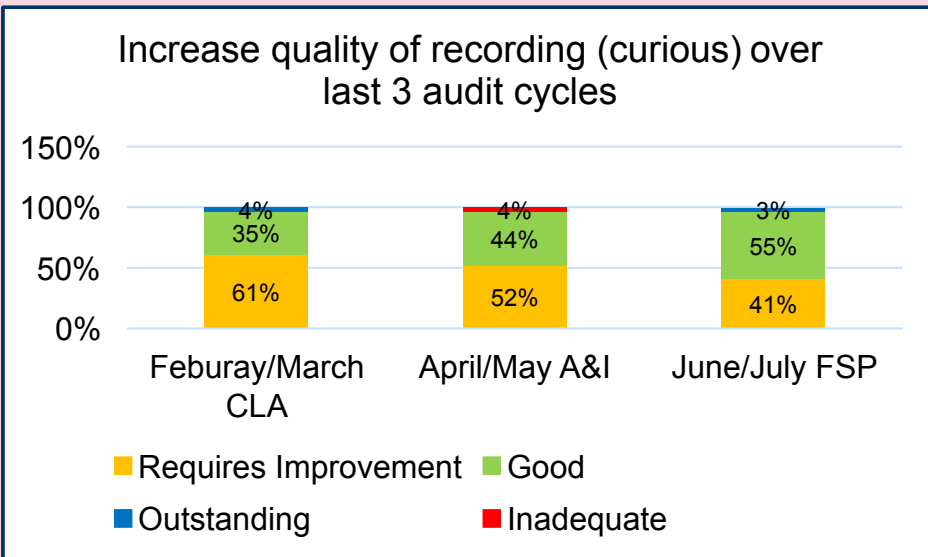
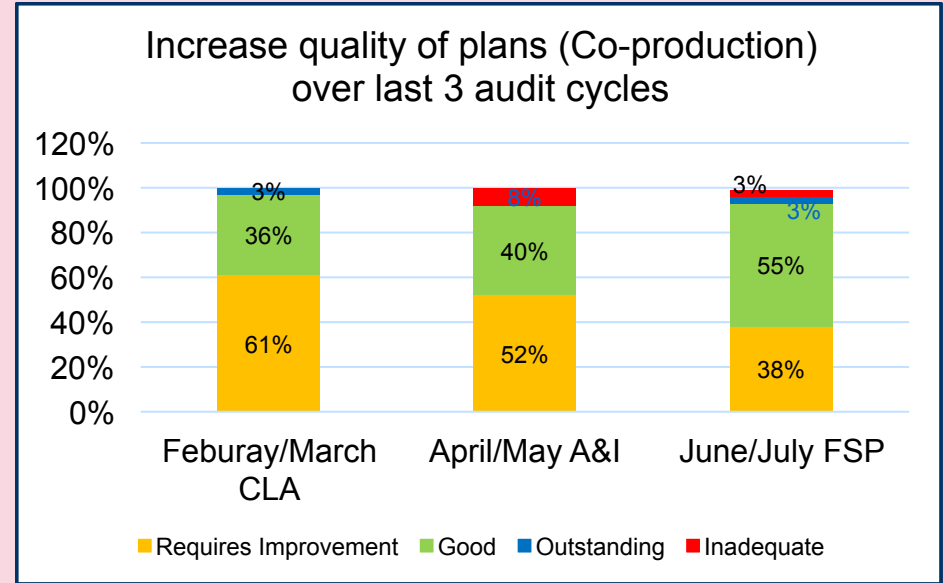
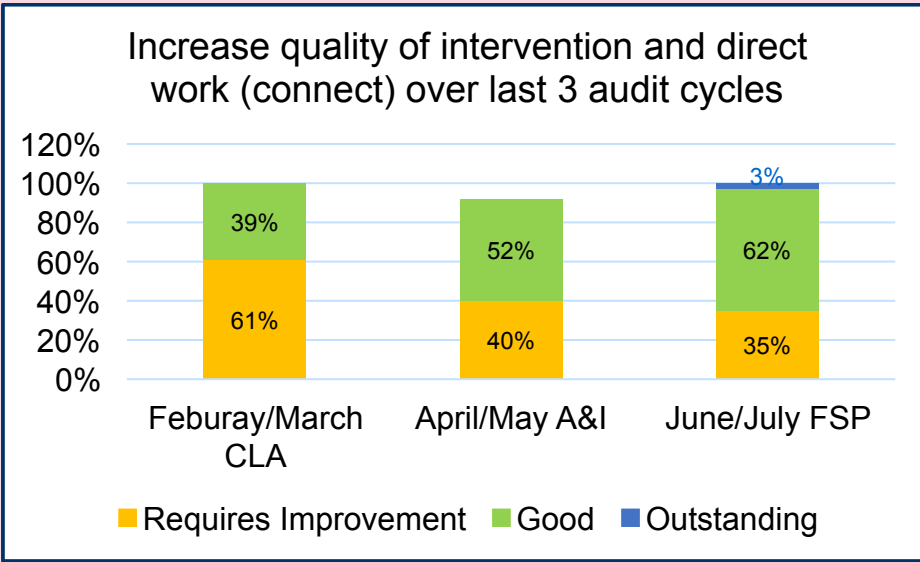
- Risk is consistently identified and responded to in a timely manner. Referrers consistently receive feedback and understand the outcome of referrals managed by the MASH
- Partnership working is good and continues to develop etc
- Childrens voices are consistently seen on files.
- Families consistently report that they feel well supported and interventions help them to understand what risks are and how to deal with them.



- The Relational approach is well embedded; growing evidence of use of direct work with children. Clear focus on domestic abuse, neglect and exploitation as priority areas.
- All avenues of familial and community placements are explored effectively before children are placed in Care. Social Workers consistently spend time with children in care to understand their needs and respond to them appropriately.
- Children are placed with carers who reflect or understand their identity, cultural and religious needs; Practitioners are being supported to further strengthen life story work

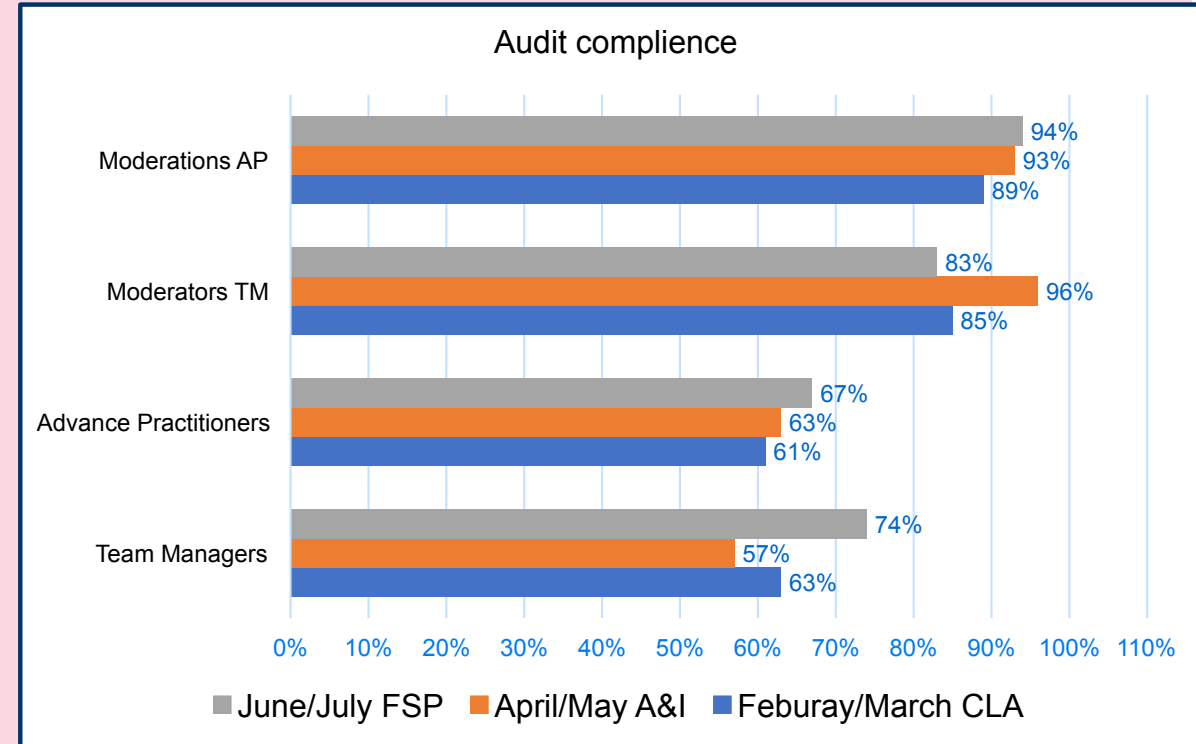
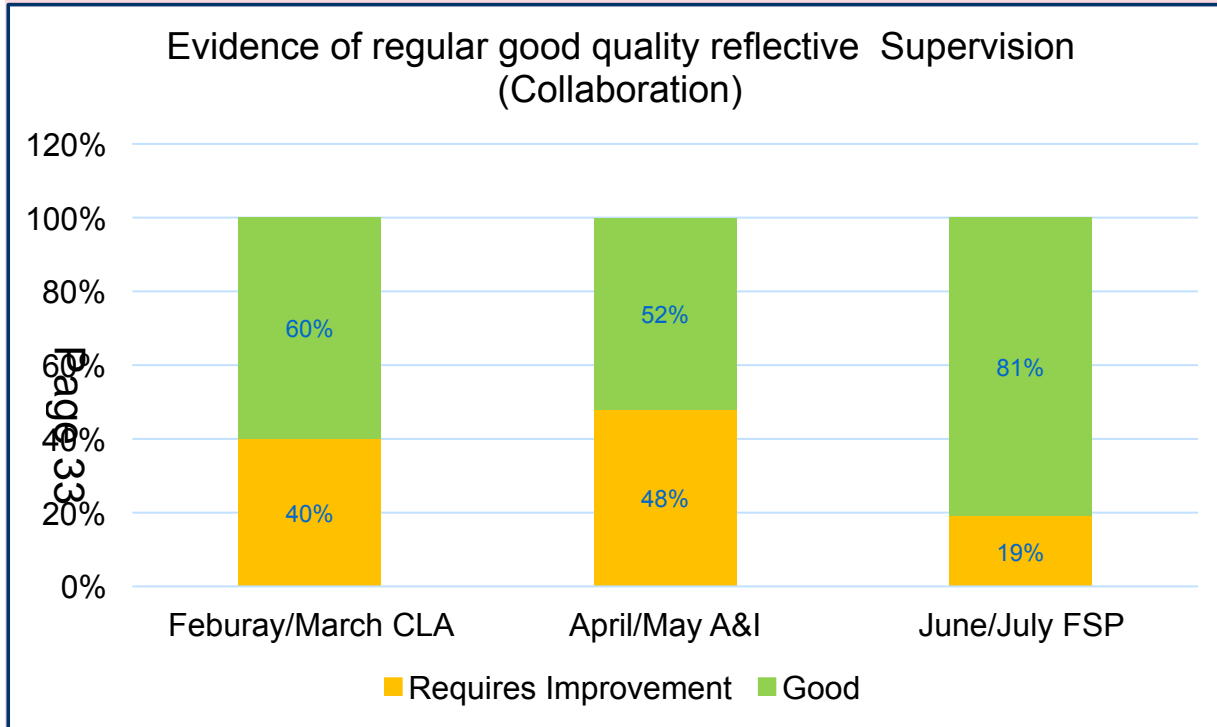


# Impact Audits- an improving picture





# Impact Audits- an improving picture



# External Assurance



- Ofsted Focused visit – July 2022
- Ofsted Annual Engagement Meeting – January 2023
- Early Help Peer Review - March 2023
- Help and Protection Review – March 2023



# External Assurance



- Since the last time this was presented at Scrutiny, we have had two further external reviews.
- Government Advisor for Care Leavers , Mark Riddell MBE
- Further review focusing on audit and quality assurance.



# External Assurance – Care leavers



- Conducted by Government Advisor for Care Leavers , Mark Riddell MBE
- Was a very positive visit, highlighting a number of strengths. He commented 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”.
- Met with senior leaders as well as groups of staff and care leavers themselves who offered vital feedback.
- Provided a number of helpful suggestions for how we can build on our offer.



# External Assurance – Audit & QA



- Was a broadly positive visit. The external auditor commented that “The local authority has made significant improvements at pace in the last 18 months now has a solid structure in place and a strong learning culture with which to build effective quality assurance.”
- The practice model “Better Together” is at the heart of this which has been welcomed by frontline staff.
- The service has a strong learning culture and an emphasis on “closing the loop” to drive improvement, promote reflection and learning
- Highlighted the new Understanding our Practice Progression (UoPP) meetings as very positive way forward.
- The review also highlighted some areas of focus to continue to build on our progress.



# Key strengths



- Our staff group remain strong, committed and there are many examples of high-quality work.
- Caseloads are generally manageable in most areas which ensures the best opportunity to affect meaningful change with families
- Senior leadership team is stable and functioning well.
- The quality of our relationship-based practice
- The support for the children that we care for
- A strong learning and development offer including for newly qualified staff and those undertaking their ASYE.
- The approach we take to keep children within their family networks is effective.



# Risks and challenges

- We continue to see increased staff turnover in some areas (particularly the front door) of the service. This is in line with other LA's but this continues to cause some pressure
- Consistency of practice remains a focus. There are examples of excellent high quality practice that needs to be replicated across the board.
- As we move Early Help onto Mosaic (IT system) and the integrate our front door to create our Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST)
- Exploitation and serious youth violence remains a live issue, in line with many other LA's.
- In line with the new Ofsted judgement in respect to Care Leavers, there will be an increased focus on our support for our care experienced young people. Support is now provided until a younger person turns 25 increasing the numbers who need to be supported.



# Divisional Priorities



- Domestic Abuse
- Neglect
- Harm outside the home
- Embedding and championing the practice framework





<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">12<sup>th</sup> October 2023</p>	
<p><b>Report of: James Thomas, Corporate Director of Children's Services</b></p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p>Children's Services Key Strategies - Children and Families</p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	<b>Frances Winter</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

## Summary

This cover report accompanies the presentation slide deck [to follow] and will focus on the development of the Children and Families Strategy.

## Recommendations:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Input into and provide feedback on the Childrens and Families Strategy

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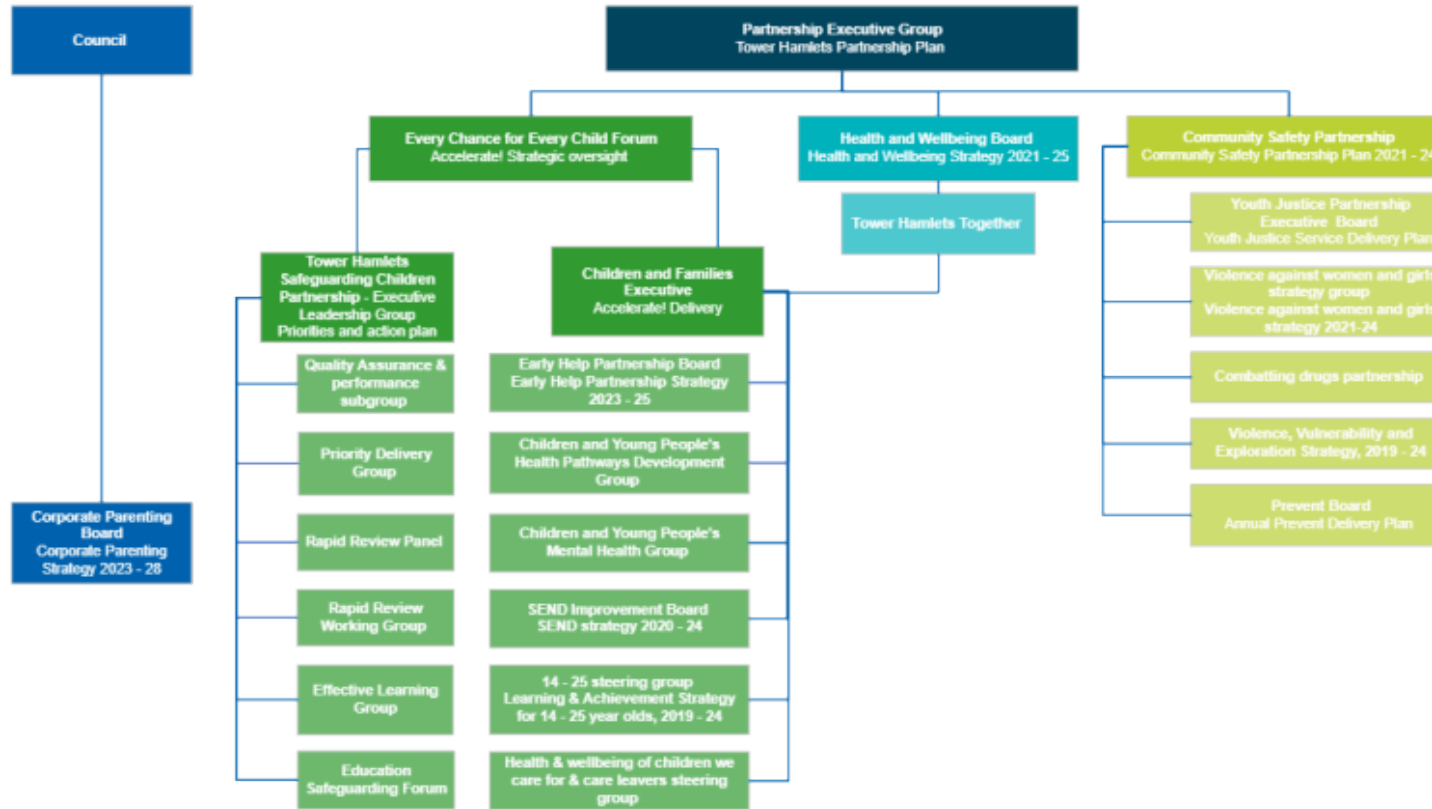
# Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Children and Families Partnership Strategy

12 October 2023



# The Children and Families Partnership

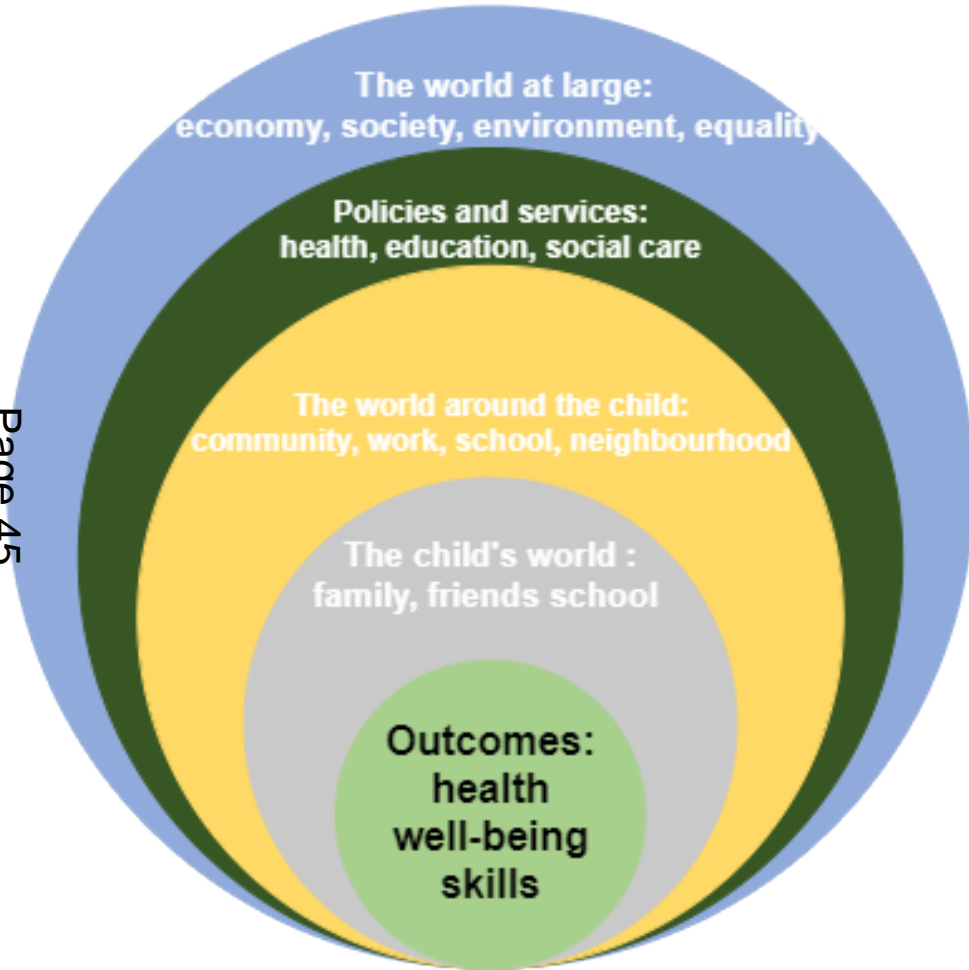


Schools, early years settings, voluntary, community, faith organisations and many others.

Babies, children, young people and their families



# Why a Children and Families partnership?



## Some examples of our collaboration

Supporting families during the pandemic

Cost of living, universal free school meals expansion, EMA and bursary programmes

Family hubs and a new approach to early help across 4 localities

Race equality in schools and governing bodies

Play charter

Asthma and wheeze collaboration

Young scrutineers in our safeguarding children partnership



# Our child population



64,250 under 18's  
84% under 16's from a non-White background, including 57% Bangladeshi heritage  
18% pupils have special educational need or disability  
301 children we care for



1 in 4 living in a low income family  
16% of households are overcrowded



% babies are born at a low weight  
52.7% of eligible two year olds take up the free education entitlement  
60.5% five year olds have a good level of development



98% of primary & 89% secondary pupils in good/outstanding schools  
66% year 6 pupils at expected standard in reading, writing and maths  
54.5% achieved grade 5+ in English and Maths  
C+ average A level result



73.5% 5 year-olds received 2 doses of MMR  
20.5% of reception age children, and 45.7% of year 6 children overweight or obese.  
29.5% 5 year olds have visually obvious dental decay



142 first time entrants to the criminal justice system per 100,000 10-17 year olds



# The changing context

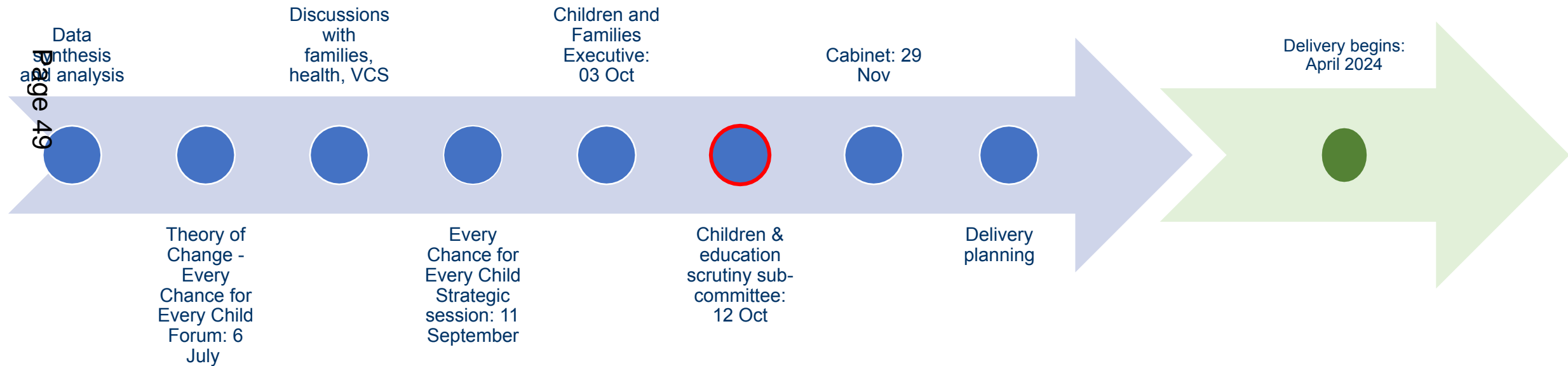


- A new Mayor and an administration which is ambitious for children and young people and committed to tackling the cost of living and housing crisis
- The pandemic and cost of living crisis: a large and lasting impact on children, families and our workforce
- Our strengthened partnerships with each other and engagement with families and children
- Policy changes in children's social care and SEND provision
- New developments in integrated locality working and Family Hubs
- A new health and social care partnership landscape





# Developing a new strategy



# What children and young people have told us



## Primary pupils

(Every Chance for Every Child Takeover January 2023)

**Online safety, including mobile phones** (Scams, fake websites, accessing content without adult supervision – importance of education for children and parents.)

**Safer communities** (More cameras, perpetrators are sad/depressed – more enrichment would help with this)

**Emotional wellbeing**

**Reducing pollution**

## Secondary Pupils

(Every Chance for Every Child Takeover January 2023)

**Mental Health** (Removing stigma (sometimes cultural), offer is rich but hard to navigate and can seem disjointed, establishing trusted relationships very important, suggestion for training to be co-produced with YP)

**Bullying** (Peer pressure, reputations, importance of/encouraging kindness, trusted adults.)

## Youth Council

(Feedback on priorities to Children and Families Executive April 2023)

**Child poverty**

**Mental health services** – feeling dismissed, access, online appts a barrier

**Cultural capital**

**Standard of social housing**



# Our proposed vision and values



*A child-friendly borough where children and young people from all backgrounds thrive, achieve their best, have opportunities, and are listened to.*

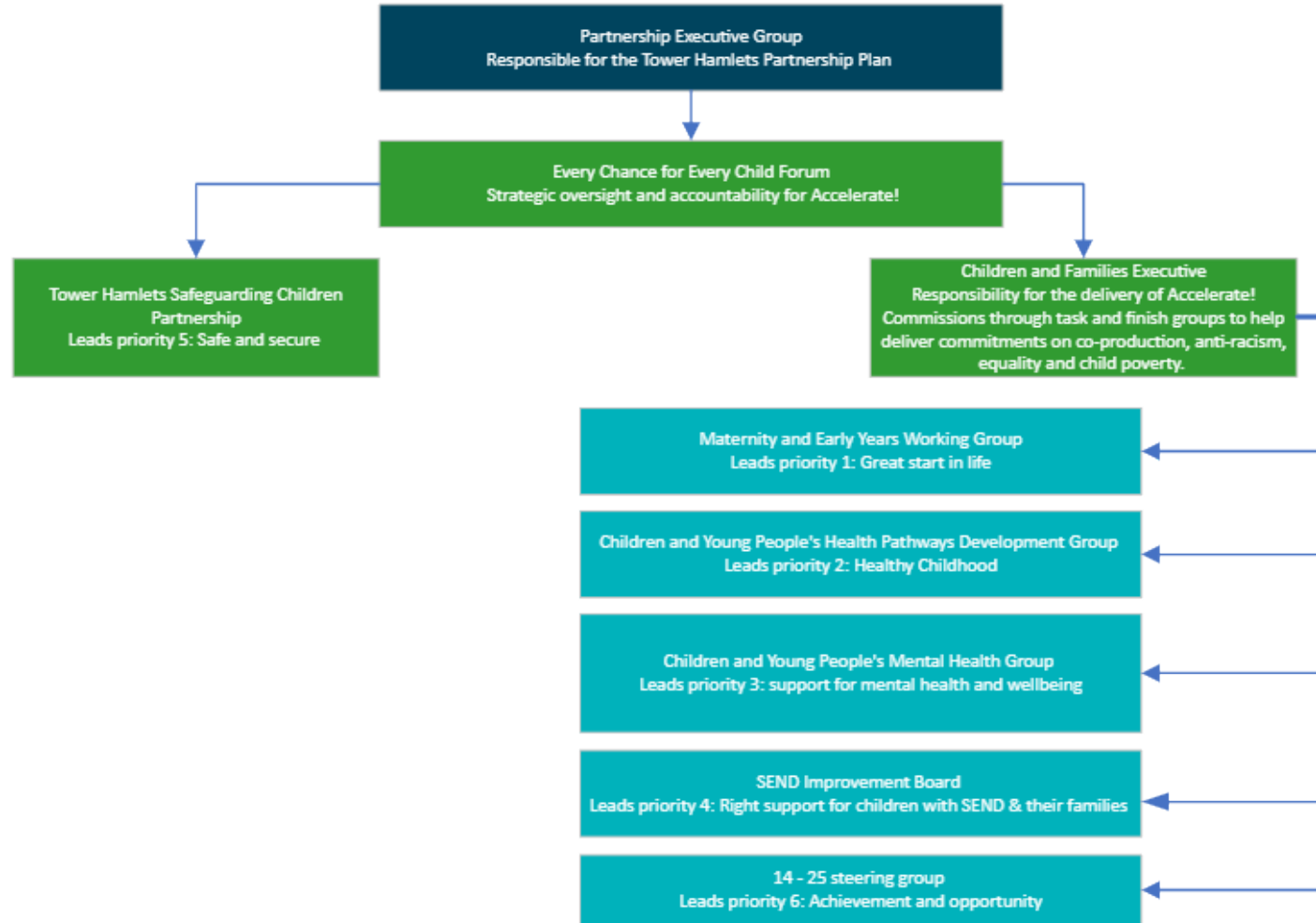
- Child-focused
- Working with the whole family, with a collaborative and co-production approach;
- Strengths-based and trauma informed
- Recognising and working actively to combat discrimination and racism




# Priority outcomes



# Delivering the strategy



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<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">12<sup>th</sup> October 2023</p>	
<p><b>Report of: James Thomas, Corporate Director of Children's Services</b></p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p>Youth Services</p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

## Summary

This cover report accompanies the presentation slide deck [to follow] which focuses on, the overall youth offer delivered to children in the borough.

## Recommendations:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Scrutinise the youth offer within the council

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Page 57

# Lower Hamlets Youth Offer

## Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

October 2023



# Contents

1

The Youth Offer

Page 58

2

Young Tower Hamlets Offer

3

Governance and next steps

**YOUNG**

# Tower Hamlets Youth Offer

# Council Commissioned Youth Providers

- Tower Hamlets Young Peoples Service currently commissions £1.2m in contracts to deliver youth services for young people in the borough.
- The contracts have been in place for two years with the providers meeting their key performance indicator targets, in fact exceeding them as set out in the 2022-2023 data table below:

Quarter	Contacts	Participants	Recorded	Accredited
April	863	338	126	490
May	2240	487	157	36
June	1913	954	411	114
July	2280	2514	583	196
August	3100	1579	1006	374
September	3218	1665	1010	386
October	3791	2067	1170	438
November	4005	2182	1258	483
December	4261	2400	1438	485
January	4553	2522	1568	495
February	4903	2753	1779	579
March	<b>5304</b>	<b>3031</b>	<b>1863</b>	<b>586</b>
<b>Commissioned Target</b>	<b>3690</b>	<b>2514</b>	<b>1600</b>	<b>490</b>

# Council Commissioned Youth Providers

## Somali Community

- We have recently commissioned 4 short term contracts to support Somali groups to deliver youth work for the next 11 months. This contract recently started in September 2023 and will finish in July 2024;
- This is a short-term solution whilst we are devising possible funding arrangements for the community providers and each contract is for £50,000;
- We will be able to start reporting on the impact of these contracts in Q4 2023-2024;

North-East:  
Numbi Arts

North-West:  
Numbi Arts

South-East:  
Ashaadibi

South-West:  
Women's Inclusive Team

- From the additional Somali contracts last year, we had 811 contacts, 341 Participants, 118 Recorded Outcomes and 39 Accredited Outcomes

## SEND

- We are currently working on a programme of exclusive SEND delivery at Haileybury Youth club, this is in partnership with Valance Youth Club and Parent Advice Centre and will be supported by a working group that is supported by Parents and young people are attending.
- This will be starting in November 2023 and we envisaged that within 12 months, we will use this platform as a chance to encourage these young people to access the universal offer.

## Young Carers

- Our weekly young carers offer continues to be strong with 81 young people as registered attendees and regularly attending. As we open additional buildings, we are expanding our offer reflecting some families difficulties in traveling across the borough.

# Young Mayors Election

- Tower Hamlets Young Mayor is elected every two years and represents the views of young people across the borough.
- They work closely with the Tower Hamlets Executive Mayor, Chief Executive, Directors and the Tower Hamlets Youth Council and other key stakeholders locally and nationally.
- In 2023, the Young Mayor will have five deputies, who will also be elected for two years and who will lead on the following areas: **social and economic development, communications, environment, health and wellbeing, and community.**
- The Young Mayor aims to be the voice of young people in the borough by consulting with them on their issues and concerns, and to create opportunities for them to address these by:

Strengthen community relations

Influencing and working at a local, regional and national decision makers

Speaking to, and encouraging young people to speak in public

Uniting young people

Projects, campaigns, workshops and lobbying

The Young Mayor is up for re-election this year. So far, 45 young people have applied for the position from 27 different schools, the closing date was 1 October 2023.

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# Care Leavers and Care Experienced offer



Page 63



- The service has recently re-designed the Children living in Care Council (CLiCC) in collaboration with the young people using the service.
- The enhanced offer went live in September 2023, which has already seen increased participation attendance.
- The offer consists of a multi-agency wrap around support offer with the following:

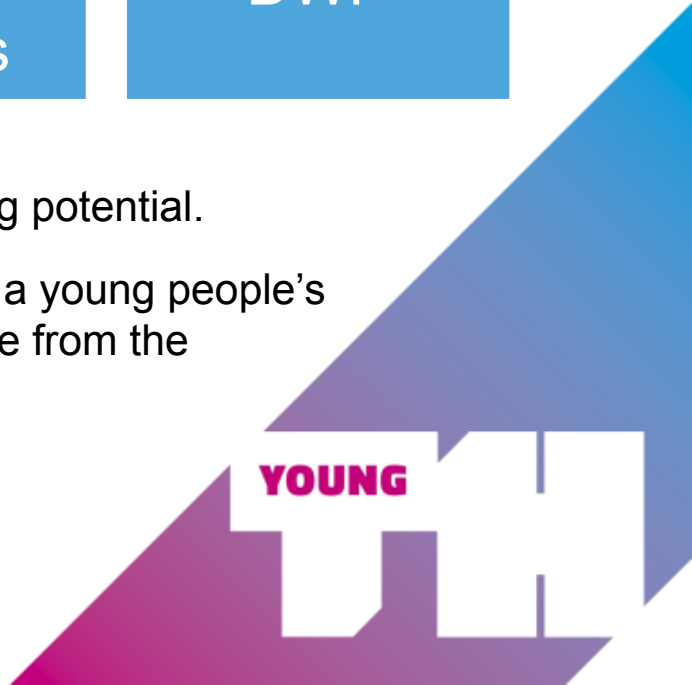
Education support

Health support

Workpath for the over19's

DWP

- This is an early offer in development that is showing strong potential.
- The next steps is to recruit a housing worker, undertaking a young people's survey to assess and understand what else they would like from the service and remodelling building.
- More information can be found in this [leaflet](#).



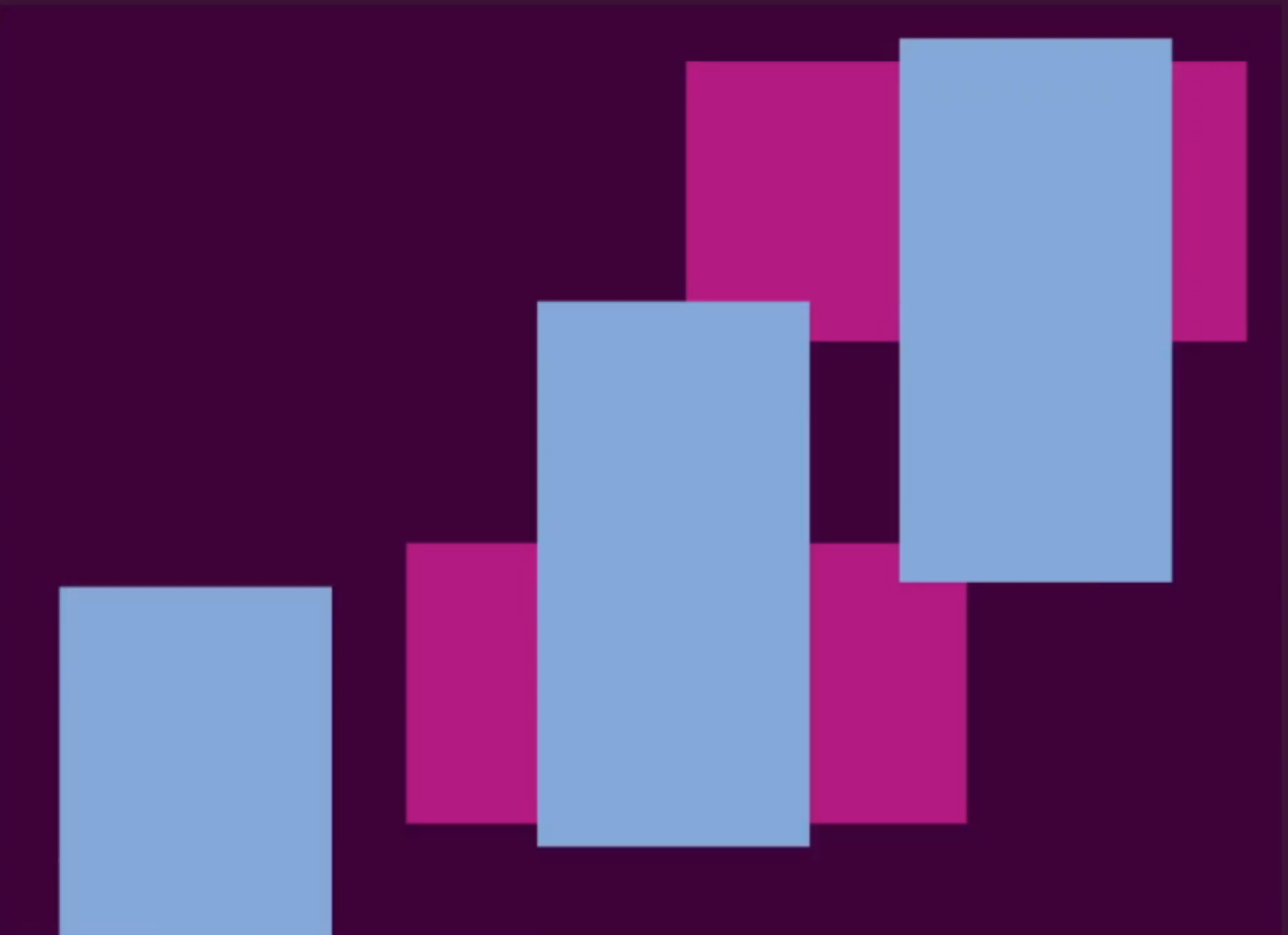
# Residential away weekend

- In September 2023, the Exploitation and Youth Justice Service took a group of young people away on a residential experience to the New Forest for 3 days and 2 nights - The Team and the children had a great time.





# Young Tower Hamlets Offer



# Young People - shaping their future Youth Service

- Through April and May 2023, a range of Hackathon events took place in partnership with local providers and young people.
- The co-designed and co-delivered participation events for young people provided an opportunity to shape the development of Young Tower Hamlets future delivery model.

The sessions took place at the following:

Haileybury Youth Centre in partnership with Newark

Osmani Youth Club in partnership with Osmani

Spotlight in partnership with Poplar HARCA

George Green School in partnership with George Green School

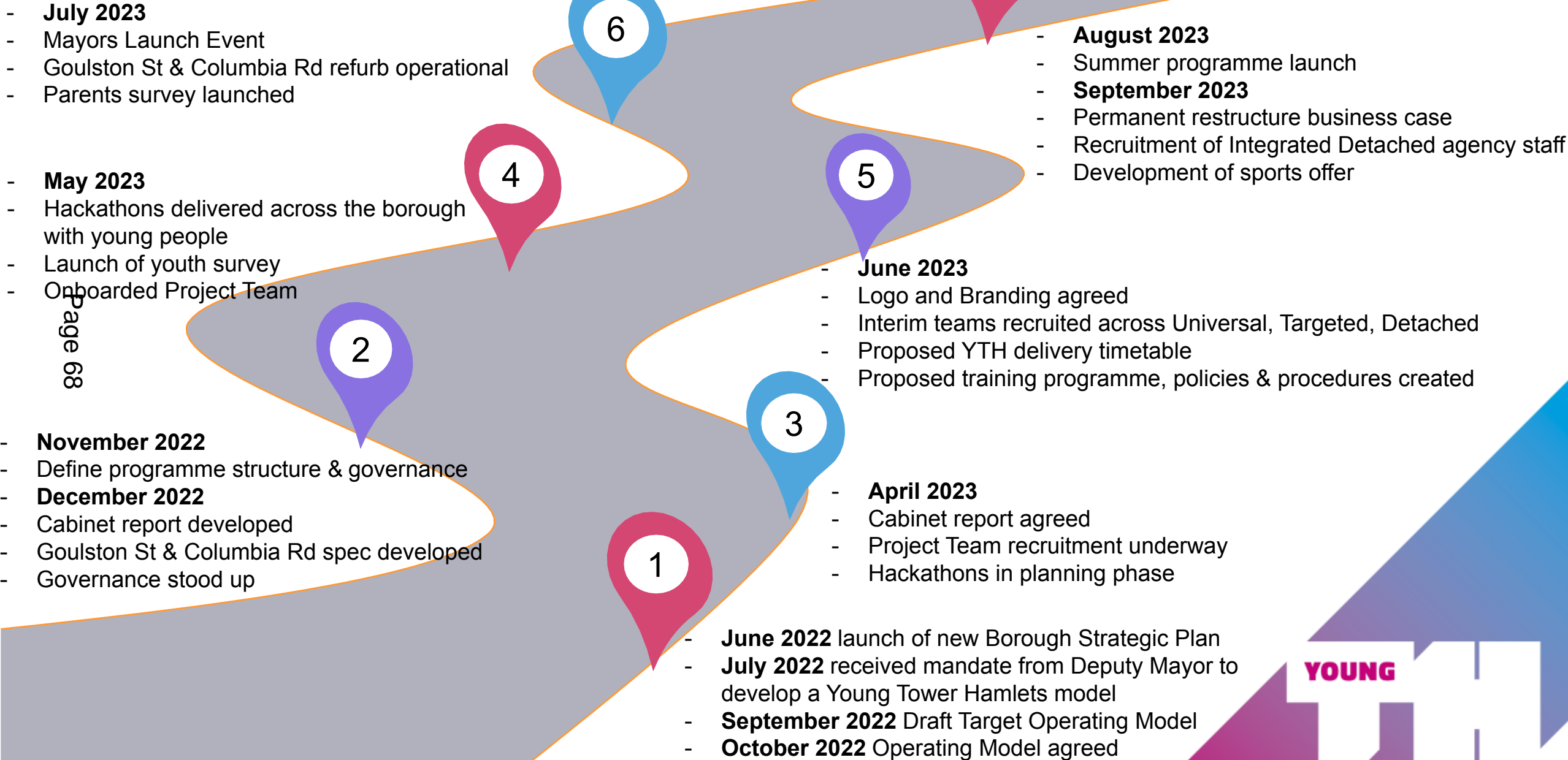
Approximately 400 young people took part in the Hackathon

In addition to the Hackathons there has been a young people's survey which over 1000 young people have completed as well as a parent's/carers survey which closed on 30 September 2023.

The feedback that has been received via the Hackathons and surveys will inform the development of the Young Tower Hamlets Strategy.

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# Young Tower Hamlets Journey so far



Page 68

**YOUNG**



# Young Tower Hamlets Current Universal Delivery

## Universal Delivery

- The new youth service universal provision provides young people with accessible ‘safe spaces’ throughout the borough, positive activities for young people to participate in which supports their developmental needs as well as a diverse, skilled and qualified workforce to access additional support from.
- The service has currently recruited or in the process of onboarding an interim model consisting of 3 Team Managers, 6 Senior Youth Workers and 26 Youth Support Workers.
- The service has been working hard over the summer months in developing the Autumn timetable and activity plans which has been live since Monday 4 September, Autumn timetable is set out below:

Safe Spaces	Ward	Operational Delivery Times
Columbia Road	Weavers	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 3:00pm – 9:00pm
Goulston Street	Spitalfields & Banglatown	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 3:00pm – 9:00pm
Limehouse	Limehouse	Mon and Wed 3:00pm – 9:00pm
St Andrews Wharf	Island Gardens	Mon and Wed 3:00pm – 9:00pm
Urban Adventure Base	Mile End	Mon – Fri 4:00pm – 7:00pm
Hailebury	St Dunstan’s	Opening 27 October 2023
Wapping	St Katharine’s & Wapping	Opening 27 October 2023

Since the service has gone live there has been over 230 young people visiting the youth settings and engaging in positive activities.

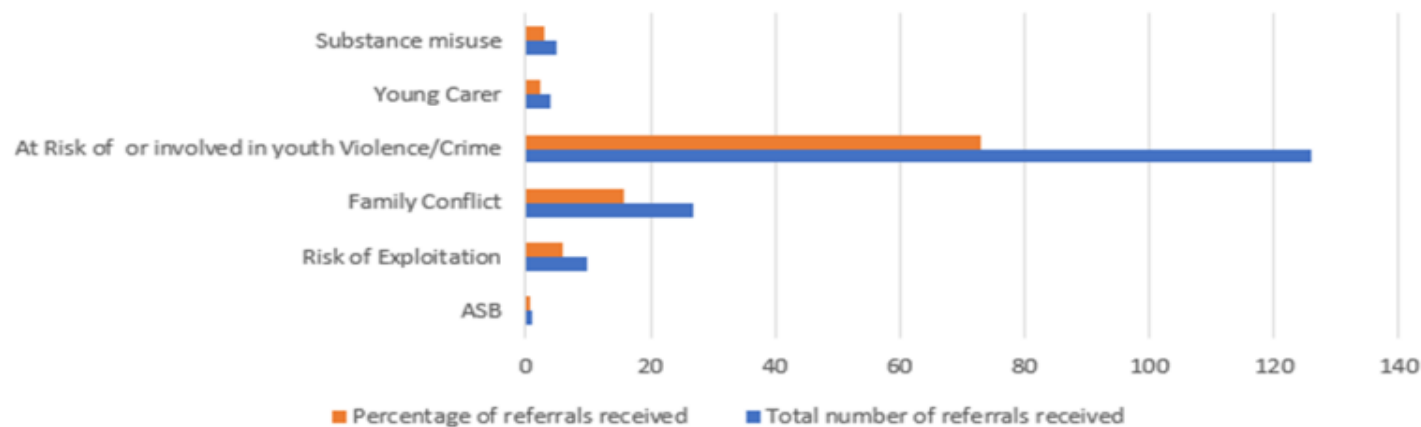
YOUNG

# Young Tower Hamlets Current Targeted Youth Support Delivery

## Targeted Youth Support

- This is an already established service called Break the Cycle which has been in operation for a number of years and is providing targeted casework support to vulnerable young people and their families;
- The Service consists of a majority of permanent staff a Team Manager, 2 Senior Practitioners and 9 practitioners;
- Break the Cycle provides early intervention for those children and young people that we are concerned about specifically those at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system. Break the Cycle works closely with the Youth Justice Service in the prevention of children entering the formal Criminal Justice System;
- Between August 2021 and January 2023, 62% of our referral came from the Local Authority – either MASH or via Children Social Care, followed by 8% from Secondary Schools;
- As demonstrated below, the main reason for referrals being made is the child being deemed as at risk of, or being involved in, youth violence/crime.

Main Reasons for referral for period August 21 - January 23



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# Young Tower Hamlets Current Integrated Detached Delivery

## Integrated Detached Team (IDT)

- There is an interim team piloting the Integrated Detached Team offer across the borough which consists of a Team Manager, 1 Senior Youth Worker and 6 Youth Support Workers.
- The Integrated Detached Team have the functionality to be deployed as both a preventative and responsive measure as well as facilitating location-based assessments and interventions as part of creating greater safety and support for young people at a neighbourhood and community level.
- Core operational hours of the team will include 3-8pm from Monday to Saturday which is when most serious incidents and offences occur. However, there will be flexibility to the operational delivery informed by need. Tasking of the Integrated Detached Team is informed by a range of sources including referrals, intelligence and information.

# Youth Sports Offer

- Local consultation with young people identified the importance and value of physical activity to young people ensuring there is real choice and a range of physical activity and sports across all centres.
- Ensuring an increased youth sport offer is linked to the Government's 'Get Active' strategy which identifies that over 50% of children fail to do an average of 60 minutes of physical activity a day. [Get Active: A Strategy for the future of sport and physical activity \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612227/get-active-strategy.pdf).
- To realise the ambition of more young people active and healthy an addition of six Youth Sport Coaches to the Young Tower Hamlets model. These posts will provide an enhanced and integrated youth work curriculum which includes meaningful choice and expertly coached sport and physical activity sessions linking the offer between Leisure Centres, Schools, Youth Centres / Safe Spaces and Community Sport Groups.
- Increased Youth Sports Offer will include accredited opportunities for young people such as NGB Coaching Awards and Sports Leaders UK.



# Impact - Summer

As part of the summer programme at the Urban Adventure Base the team offered an exciting range of activities and opportunities to young people including **six off-site visits including, ice-skating, stand-up-paddleboarding, rock climbing, Go Ape and a cultural visit of London.**

Participants	185
Attendances	543
Sessions	35
Delivery Hours	127
Nutritious Meals	543
Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) Days	19
Open Access Sessions	16
Percentage Female	60%
Percentage Diverse Backgrounds	83%
Percentage Disability	10%



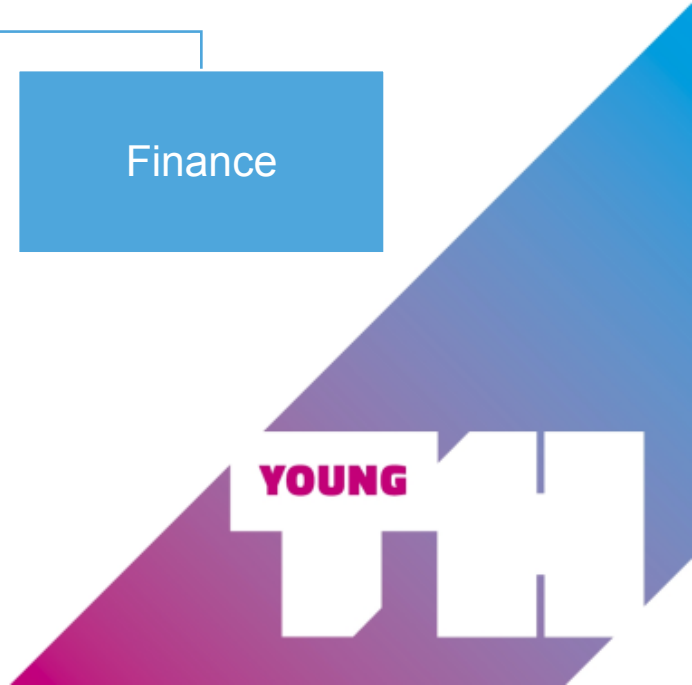
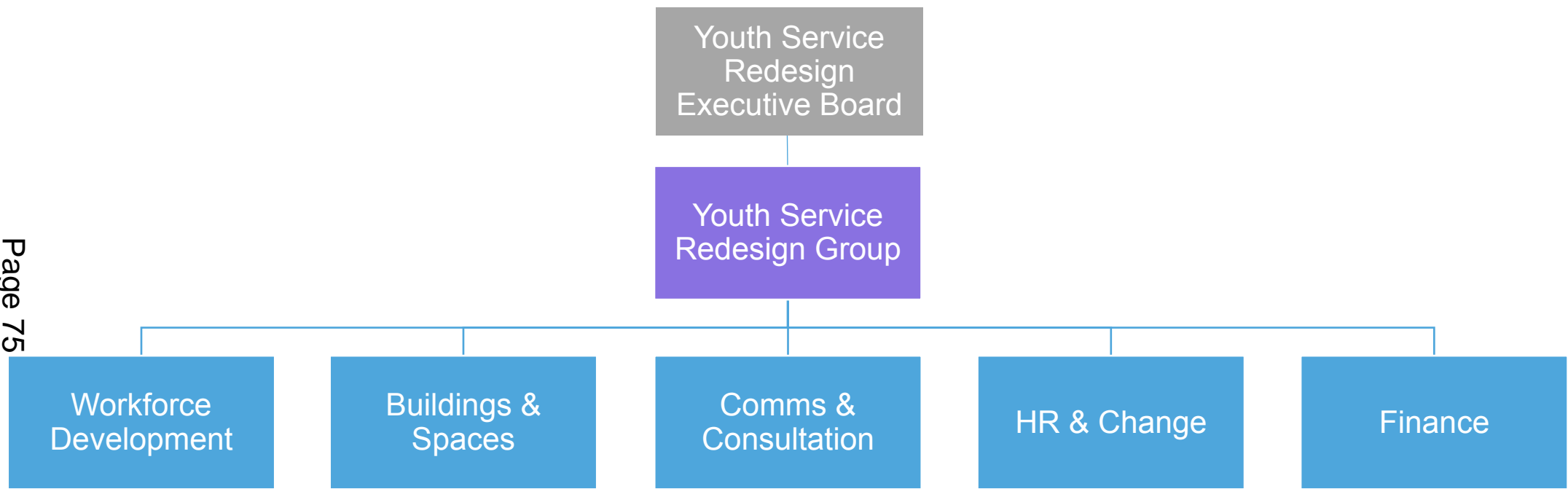
**YOUNG**



# Governance and next steps

# Young Tower Hamlets Governance

Page 75



# Governance Workstreams

Group	Aim	Frequency	Chair
Youth Service Redesign Executive Board	This group provides strategic direction and decision making to the redesign whilst removing blockages, managing risks and budget oversight.	Bi-Monthly	Deputy Mayor
Youth Service Redesign Group	Reports into the Youth Service Redesign Executive Board. Provides the day today oversight and management of the programme workstreams. It is responsible for the management of resources, risks, budget and operational decision making to ensure the programme delivers to time cost and quality.	Monthly	Director of Supporting Families
Workforce Development Workstream	Development of Practice Framework, new service offer, training plan, timetable (Staff & YP), quality assurance, development of policies, procedures and to ensure the infrastructure to support delivery and safeguarding is in place.	Fortnightly	Head of Service, Youth Justice and Young Peoples Service
Buildings & Safe Space Workstream	To ensure the new buildings coming into the portfolio are brought into operational standards and oversee the SLAs in place with third parties i.e., community buildings and VCS using LA buildings.	Fortnightly	Divisional Director Property Major Programme
Communications and Consultation Workstream	To develop robust communications internally for staff and externally for young people and families so they are aware of the new offer and locations and the rebranding of the service.	Fortnightly	Senior Communications Officer
HR and change	To support with the design and implementation of the new permanent staffing structure. Develop the business case, JD's and recruitment.	Weekly	Senior HR Business Partner
Finance	Oversight of finance, spend and forecast to ensure the programme remains within the financial envelop.	Monthly	Director of Supporting Families

# Next steps

Young Mayors  
Elections  
December 2023

Youth  
Empowerment  
Fund and Positive  
Activity Fund

Future  
relationships with  
third sector  
providers

Recruitment of  
permanent  
workforce

Increase of youth  
sports offer

Sign off and  
implementation of  
the Young Tower  
Hamlets Strategy

**YOUNG**

# Questions?

