

**Better  
Together**

STRENGTHENING  
FAMILIES.  
BUILDING  
COMMUNITIES.

# Tower Hamlets - Ofsted Preparation - Scrutiny

October 2024



# When an inspector calls: Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)

## ILACS – Week 1



Call comes on a Monday morning – by 9.30am



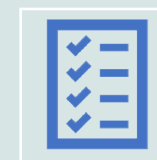
Set up meeting will take place that day



Annexe A Data Lists – 11 lists will be submitted by end of day Tuesday



List of Audits carried out in the last 6 months will be shared, from this up to 12 cases will be selected by Ofsted for case tracking



Annexe A Document list will be submitted by end of day Wednesday



Timetable for the following week will be finalised

## ILACS Week 2



As we will receive a short inspection – inspectors will arrive the following Monday and be on site for one week.



When inspectors arrive, we will deliver an opening presentation – they will then spend time case tracking and in teams.



The inspection team will be 4 social care inspectors, who will be joined by one education and one regulatory HMI for part of the inspection.



We expect a significant focus on care leavers as this now has a separate judgment.



Will receive initial feedback and indicative judgment on Friday.

# What inspectors look at....

## The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection



## The experiences and progress of children in care



## The experiences and progress of care leavers



# Our Strengths

**Our vision:** “We believe that the best place for children is to be **raised within their own families**, immediate or wider, wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so.

We are committed to **building relationships and strengthening families** by working **with** people in a compassionate and understanding way. We are **ambitious** for Tower Hamlets children and families and endeavour for every child and young person to be **healthy, safe and successful.**“

## Workforce Excellence

- Our workforce stands as our greatest asset—motivated, managing low caseloads, and passionately dedicated to improving outcomes for children. The prevailing culture nurtures social workers' professional growth and ambition.

## Embedding excellence in Practice:

- Our Better Together practice framework places relationships at the core of our approach. The synergy between our framework and Quality Assurance (QA) initiatives underscores our commitment to excellence.

## Supportive and Challenging Culture:

- We've fostered a culture of high support and high challenge, welcoming both internal and external scrutiny. This approach ensures continuous improvement and a commitment to delivering the best for children.

## Effective Leadership:

- Strong leadership supports the development and passion of staff to undertake their best work and be leaders of tomorrow.

## Early Intervention Focus:

- Our success in maintaining low numbers in care is attributed to our proactive approach, offering support to families at earlier stages e.g. Early Help, FGC and Edge of Care etc.

# Our Areas of Focus

## Relentless focus on our practice priorities

Strengthening our response to domestic violence, harm outside the home, and neglect, further aligning these priorities with our practice framework. Enhancing interventions and impact through improved risk identification and targeted strategies.

## Partnership Enhancement:

Elevating and solidifying our partnerships even further to strengthen our offer and practice interventions and effectiveness.

## Better together refinement:

Embedding, enriching, and ensuring greater consistency and curiosity in supervision as part of continuous improvement in our professional practice.

## Cultural and Diversity Integration:

Evidencing greater cultural and diversity considerations in our assessments and work. Champion the career development of Black and global majority professionals.

## Early Help transformation:

Deliver the Early Help transformation to Family Hubs. Elevating family well-being through robust assessments and ensuring smooth transitions between services.

## MAST Integration:

One Front Door and the rollout of Levels of Need within the MAST framework is a focal point. This integration aims to streamline processes and enhance our responsiveness to needs.

# Themes emerging from other local authority inspections

Step up/ step down

16/17 Homeless

Young Carers

Impact

Care leavers

Incorporation of the professional network,  
multi-agency decision making and partnership

Unregulated placements

Exploitation and missing

Senior leaders taking an active role and  
championing children's safeguarding and  
corporate parenting

# Annual Engagement Meeting

- Took place in March 2024, attended by Senior HMI for Ofsted along with Senior Local Authority staff.
- We presented our updated Self-Evaluation and had a wide-ranging discussion about our areas of strength and focus.
- They did not highlight any significant concerns and while they confirmed that our next inspection would be a Short ILACS, they gave no indication in respect to timing.

# Improvement Plan

- Improvement Plan refreshed in April 2024. Contains 5 key priority areas
  - Providing effective help and protection
  - Helping, supporting and protecting adolescents
  - Improving the experience and progress of children we care for and those leaving care
  - Making good decisions, understanding, learning, and achieving consistency
  - Leadership and governance that promotes a high support, high challenge culture
- Developed at a series of away days reflecting on performance, service area audits and wider national and regional developments in the sector
- Plan is monitored monthly at the Childrens Services Continuous Improvement Board



# How are we remaining prepared

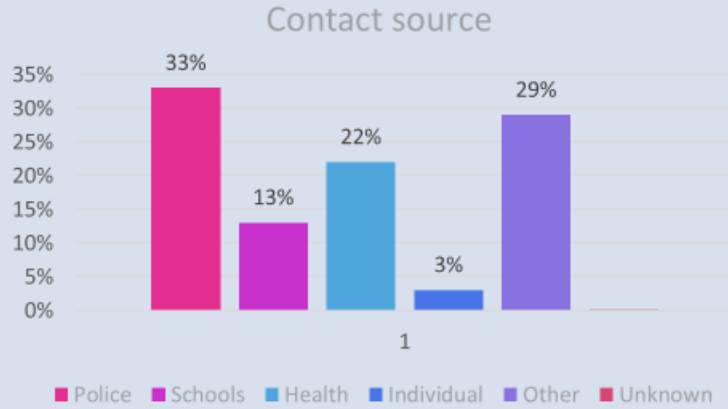
- Children's Services Continuous Improvement Board, chaired by the DCS continues to meet monthly. Considers all of our qualitative and quantitative data as well as spotlights on other key issues
- Fortnightly meetings chaired by the Director of Support Families (Better Together) to ensure that our inspection preparation is on track.
- Weekly KIT meetings – including some that have been extended to focus on inspection preparation
- Staff briefing and communications
- Audit programme continues to focus on different areas of the service, supplemented by dip sampling and more targeted deep dive audit activity.
- Monthly performance surgeries
- Have a good understanding of our work with children and families – series of peer reviews

# Our work with children (August 2024)

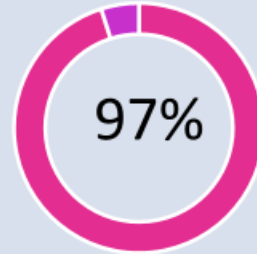
In the last 6 months  
(Mar 24 – Aug 24)

## 7261

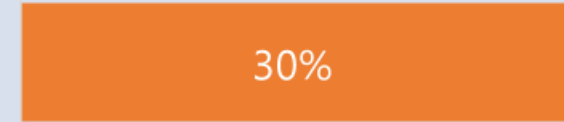
Contacts on avg.  
per month: 1210



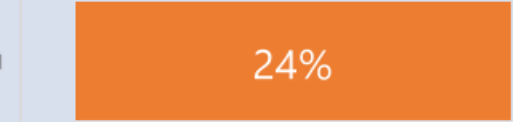
Contacts progressed in 1 day  
(avg. Mar 24 – Aug 24)



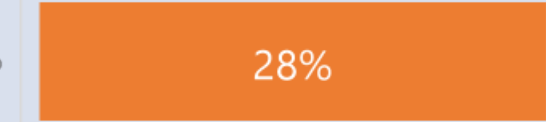
% Information or Advice...



% MASH



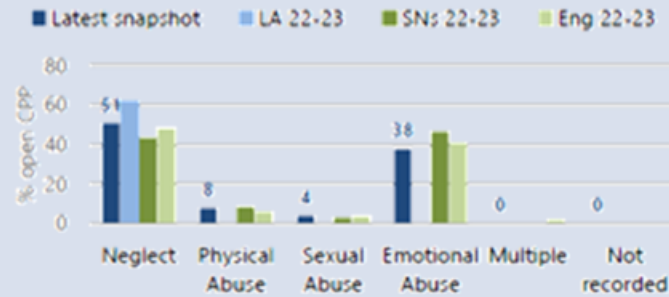
% Early Help



% Referral



Latest category of abuse for current CP plans



Early Help  
Assessments

## 12

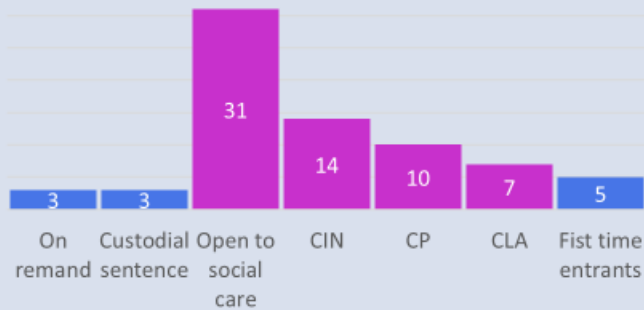
Children and  
Family  
Centres



Children subject to a  
child protection plan



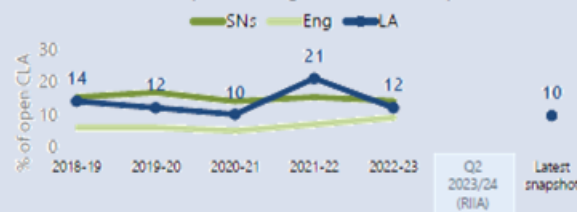
Children  
looked after



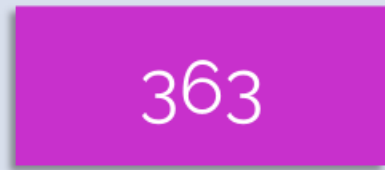
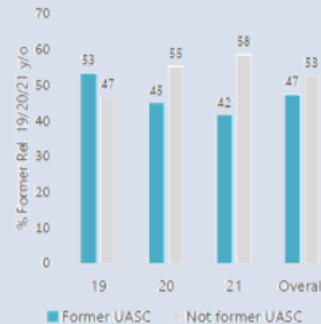
62 Open cases to Youth Justice

27 open unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)

UASC as a percentage of CLA (snapshot)



Former relevant 19/20/21 year olds by UASC Status



Care Leavers

## 13

Average  
caseload

# Children's Social Care Highlight Indicators

Aug-24

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

Ref	Performance Measure	2023/24	Current	Period	Mar 24	Apr 24	May 24	Jun 24	Jul 24	Aug 24	Trend
<b>Management Oversight</b>											
1.1	% cases with Management Oversight recorded in past 8 weeks	96%	93.6%	Snapshot	96.2%	94.7%	96.4%	93.8%	93.6%	93.6%	
<b>Cohorts</b>											
1.2	Number of CIN (exc. LAC, CP, Care Leavers)	876	901	Snapshot	876	898	906	902	905	901	
1.3	Number of children subject to CPP	307	255	Snapshot	305	304	297	291	261	255	
1.4	Number of LAC	276	280	Snapshot	277	279	271	272	283	280	
<b>Front door / assessment</b>											
2.1	% of contacts completed within 1 day	96.0%	97.0%	YTD	98.1%	97.8%	98.8%	96.9%	97.5%	93.3%	
2.10a	% of single assessments completed within 45 working days	90.1%	82.8%	YTD	88.6%	85.3%	88.9%	79.3%	80.9%	79.6%	
<b>Plans</b>											
3.1	% of children in need with CIN Plan completed	86.2%	85.1%	Snapshot	86.2%	89.0%	90.6%	88.6%	80.9%	85.1%	
<b>Visits</b>											
3.3	% of CIN children visited within the past four weeks	85.0%	73.9%	Snapshot	85.0%	86.1%	85.4%	81.5%	78.0%	73.9%	
4.7.2	% of children on a child protection plan receiving a visit within 10 working days	92.2%	88.6%	Snapshot	92.8%	92.4%	91.9%	90.4%	88.5%	88.6%	
5.10	% of LAC Single Assessments not yet completed or outside the one year timescale	14.5%	5.7%	Snapshot	14.5%	12.1%	14.0%	11.0%	10.4%	5.7%	
5.11	% of LAC with visits in last 6 weeks	88.0%	85.4%	Snapshot	88.0%	90.7%	87.1%	82.7%	87.1%	85.4%	
<b>Reviews</b>											
3.2	% of children with CIN Plan with reviews within last 3 months	89.7%	85.8%	Snapshot	89.7%	87.1%	87.0%	86.0%	93.0%	85.8%	
4.8	% of CP reviews carried out within statutory timescales	88.9%	95.8%	Snapshot	88.9%	88.3%	91.1%	96.8%	96.4%	95.8%	
5.18	LAC cases which were reviewed within required timescales	97.5%	97.5%	Rolling Year	97.5%	95.4%	98.2%	98.2%	99.6%	97.5%	
<b>Care Leavers</b>											
6.1	% care leavers "in touch" (17,18,19,20,21 yr. olds with activity updated within last year)	98.2%	97.4%	Snapshot	98.2%	96.7%	97.5%	96.8%	95.7%	97.4%	
6.2	% care leavers EET	76.8%	73.8%	Snapshot	76.8%	77.4%	77.8%	76.3%	74.3%	73.8%	
6.3	% care leavers in suitable accommodation	92.8%	93.7%	Snapshot	92.8%	94.5%	94.9%	94.2%	92.9%	93.7%	

# Duties and responsibilities of politicians and senior leaders – Ofsted expectations



Ofsted will want to ensure that Children's Services is a corporate and political priority. They will want to see that senior leaders have a sound understanding of the key issues and priorities.



There will want to test the mechanisms that are used to ensure that Senior Leaders are informed about key issues.



They will not expect granular knowledge but will want to see that there is grip and challenge at the most senior levels.