



**Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Board
Annual Report 2022/23**

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Foreword

Welcome to the annual report for the Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Board. The board provides strategic oversight to review progress and drive forward work with our children, ensuring that our corporate parenting responsibilities are fulfilled and outcomes for our children and young people are improved.

During the last year we have continued to strengthen how the board operates. Following the elections of May 2022 new members joined and we have reviewed overall membership from the council and partners to ensure we consistently make progress on our priorities.

The voices and experiences of our children are at the heart of everything the board does. The board has always been a place where young people engage directly with senior leaders and council members and we have made further improvements to how this works in the last year. The involvement of our children starts earlier so that they have more time to consider their feedback on specific topics ahead of each meeting with the support of lead officers and board members. This has led to more in-depth discussions before and during board meetings and greater involvement of young people in planning how we can respond and improve services and support.

Our annual report provides an overview of progress made during the last year, as well as plans for the future, especially via the development of a Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Some of the achievements we are most proud of for 2022/23 include GCSE results that are higher than the national average for care experienced children, 'A' level results which enabled university entrance for some Virtual School students, and a programme of inspirational enrichment opportunities. We have also strengthened how we involve our children with more opportunities for them to engage directly with Elected Members, Senior Managers, and council officers, and be involved in the development and commissioning of services.

Looking forward, areas we are focused on for improvement include increasing education, employment and training opportunities, supporting good emotional wellbeing and mental health, and ensuring our children feel well-equipped for making their voices heard and getting involved.

We hope you find this report helpful, and it inspires you to think about the ways in which you can play a part in supporting our children to thrive and have the best experiences possible.



**Councillor Maium Talukdar,
Cabinet Member for Education,
Youth and Lifelong Learning and
Chair of the Corporate
Parenting Board**

The children we care for and care experienced young people

Children Looked After

301 children were looked after by the local authority (at end of Mar 2023 – this was 334 for Mar 2022)

Under 5	47
5 to 9	48
10 to 15	92
16 to 17	114

- There were 31 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) (at end of Mar 2023 - this was 67 at Mar 2022)
- ‘Children Looked After’ long term placement stability 55% (end of Mar 2023 - this was 65% at Mar 2022)
- Average no. of placement moves 1.6 (end of Mar 2023 - this was 1.6 at Mar 2022)

Accommodation

94% of allocated care experienced young people were in suitable accommodation (at end of Mar 2023 - this was 84% at Mar 2022)

Care experienced young people

At 31st March 2023 the Through Care Service was working with a cohort of 457 young people, between the ages of 14 – 25 (this was 455 at Mar 2022)

Health

89% of ‘Children Looked After’ had an annual health check within 12 months (end Mar 2023 – this was 97% at Mar 2022)

93% of ‘Children Looked After’ had an annual dental check within 12 months (end Mar 2023 - this was 82% at Mar 2022)

Education, Training and Employment

75% of pupils making expected progress (autumn term 2022/23 - this was 68% for autumn term 2021/22)

98% of pupils had a personal education plan meeting during the term (autumn term 2022/23 - this was 96% for autumn term 2021/22)

95% of allocated care experienced young people had a pathway plan (end of Mar 2023 - this was 97% at Mar 2022)

77% of allocated care experienced young people were in employment, education or training (end of Mar 2023 - this was 64% at Mar 2022)

Governance

The national strategic context

The **Independent Review of Children’s Social Care** (published in May 2022)¹ examined the needs, experiences and outcomes of the children supported by social care and put forward recommendations for system changes.

In February 2023 the government published its implementation strategy and consultation **Stable Homes, Built on Love**². The strategy responds to the independent review and focuses on providing nurturing, stable and loving homes for children in care and care experienced young people.

In December 2022 Ofsted announced the introduction of a **new judgement for care experienced young people** to the framework for inspecting local authority children’s services (ILACS)³. The new judgement will focus on experiences and progress of care experienced young people. This will include consideration of whether local authorities are making good decisions for care experienced young people, and what they are doing to support them into adulthood.

¹ [Independent review of children's social care: final report](#)

Legal Context

The **Children and Social Work Act 2017** (Section 1) sets out seven corporate parenting principles which local authorities must have regard to for children looked after or care experienced young people. In February 2018 the statutory guidance for local authorities **Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care experienced young people**⁴ was published.

The guidance puts forward the critical question for local authorities as the corporate parent should be *‘would this be good enough for my child’?* They also highlight that children in our care have the same needs – to be loved, cared for and feel safe - as other children.

The corporate parenting principles

In order to thrive, children and young people have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. The corporate parenting principles set out seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to children in our care and young people, as follows:

² [Children's social care: stable homes, built on love - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

³ [Ofsted new judgement for care experienced young people](#)

⁴ [Applying corporate parenting principles guidance](#)

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The statutory guidance on applying the principles also makes clear that when the ethos around corporate parenting is strong “everyone from the Chief Executive down to front line staff, as well as elected council members, are concerned about those children and care leavers as if they were their own.’ We consistently look for ways to promote the interests of our children across the organisation and beyond, so that we can engage maximum support in delivering on our responsibilities. Following this approach, we always take our annual report to full Council.

Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Board (CPB)

The Corporate Parenting Board, chaired by the Lead Member (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning) provides strategic oversight to review and drive forward our work with children in our care and care experienced young people, ensuring that our corporate parenting responsibilities are fulfilled. The board meets quarterly and includes representatives from internal council departments and wider multi-agency partners ensuring cross-collaboration and shared decision making.

Alongside the Children Living in Care Council (CLICC), the board provides a forum where children and young people in the care of the council engage directly with senior leaders and decision makers to share their views and raise and address issues.

The diagram on page 5 sets out the membership of the board and a full list is provided at Appendix A. Appendix B provides an overview of the topics covered in CPB meetings during 2022/23.

Membership of the Corporate Parenting Board



Developing a Corporate Parenting Strategy for Tower Hamlets

The Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Strategy aims to set out how we will work to ensure that children in our care and care experienced children have every opportunity to develop, realise their aspirations and thrive.

The strategy will include a 'Pledge' (a set of commitments for all stakeholders to sign up to) priorities and an action plan to steer the work of the council and partners.

A Steering Group was set up in Autumn 2022 to help guide the development of the strategy through monthly meetings. The Corporate Parenting Board is provided with regular updates to overseeing progress.

The involvement of children and young people was sought at an early stage. A series of discussion workshops were held during the Spring 2023 Half Term which focused on what matters most to them and what they would like to see in the future. A set of 'key messages', articulating what is fundamentally important to children and young people, have been developed and reviewed with young

people. Alongside a review of all feedback from young people over the last 12-18 months, this work is forming the foundation of the strategy.

A wide range of consultation events and meetings with stakeholders is taking place in Spring 2023 and the draft will be reviewed and refined with feedback before going to Cabinet in July 2023.



Engagement and involvement of children we care for care experienced young people

Throughout the last year we have broadened how we engage with our children and young people through a variety of events and forums. These activities have been focused on increasing opportunities for our children to get involved and have their voices heard.

The Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) Groups

The groups have expanded their membership in 2022/23 and further developed how they address issues through appointing leads for specific themes. Alongside a Chair and Deputy Chair there are now the following roles:

- Lead for Independent Living – exploring ways to support young people to be better prepared to live independently in good quality accommodation
- Lead for improved access to employment, education and training opportunities
- Lead for Safety & Security – finding more ways to help young people feel safe, secure and stable in their life
- Lead for Health & Wellbeing – improving access to services and support
- Lead for Financial Independence – ensuring young people finance and budgeting skills they need

Building stronger links with Foster Carers

Young People's Services have been working closely with Foster Carers during the last year and have introduced 'Chat & Chai' meetings on the first Thursday of each month. A trip is also being planned for May 2023 to bring together Foster Carers, their children and members of the Junior CLICC Group to continue developing and strengthening relationships.

CLICC Summer Programme

Our care experienced young people took part in a 4 week summer programme in 2022. All of the CLICC Groups were involved in devising what would be on offer which ultimately included Sea Cadet activities, an Escape Room and a BBQ.

These activities encouraged the making of new friends, including through bringing together care experienced young people and young carers. Young people were challenged by taking part in team building activities which helped to further develop communication and interpersonal skills.

The CLICC Senior Group has reviewed and refreshed their weekly sessions, moving to a more structured approach with themed activities. These include:

- More support for reading, writing and speaking
- Job searching skills, CV writing and interview techniques
- Preparing for independent living and budgeting
- Support on housing & immigration issues

CLICC Group members have also been essential participants in the work to develop the Corporate Parenting Strategy. They took part in the Spring Half Term workshops, which were hosted at Haileybury Youth Centre, and will continue to be instrumental in taking the strategy through the next phase of development.

Councillor engagement with young people

Councillors came to meet over 30 care experienced young people at Kitcat Terrace in March 2023. A wide-ranging discussion took place exploring topics and raising questions on subjects such as the cost of living crisis and preparing for adulthood. Ways forward on a number of issues were identified, such as securing a representative from the Dept of Work & Pensions to provide further guidance to young people.

Just4U Event (July 2022)

This event was planned by staff and representatives from several teams and organisations including social work teams, the Virtual

School, Young People's Service, Foster Carers Association, and Barnardo's. It was designed as a fun day for children and young people who are in our care and aged 8 to 17 years old.

A range of activities were on offer including jewellery making, face painting, bouncy castle, football and a games room. The relaxed and unstructured approach helped to build connections and develop relationship for participants. The day was also an opportunity for children and young people to share their views in an informal setting. Feedback was shared at the CPB and is informing plans for services, as well as how future events can be even more successful.

Several attendees at the Just4U event decided to try joining a Children Living in Care Council Groups which will help them to stay connected with other care experienced children.

Role of Foster Carers

Tower Hamlets Foster Carers' Association (FCA)

The independent Tower Hamlets FCA has been running for 18 years and continues to work closely with the council, providing feedback on services and advice, guidance and support for carers.

The TH FCA committee meets monthly to advocate and negotiate with the Fostering Service and to be a voice for the carer community on all issues affecting members. Foster Carers Support Group meetings are held regularly with morning and evening sessions which are co-facilitated by the TH FCA and Fostering Development Team. These are well attended and provide opportunities for carers to share their experiences and offer advice. The TH FCA manage any issues raised, seeking a response or resolution, and feeding back outcomes to members.

The TH FCA are also dedicated to promoting fostering and act as ambassadors in the recruitment of new carers. Three of the committee members regularly help facilitate the 'Skills to Foster' workshop groups and four members serve as mentors.

Each year they arrange several exciting trips and activities for foster carers and children. During 2022-2023, the following events were arranged:

- Day trip to Margate – 52 carers and children took part in fun on the beach, the amusement park, and a surprise visit from the Head of the Virtual School
- Frozen the Musical – 75 foster carers and children enjoyed a sing-along
- Picnic at the Park – games, bouncy castle, and food was enjoyed by 160 fostering families, children and staff
- Greenwich Theatre – 120 carers and children had fun watching the pantomime 'Robin Hood'

Foster Carers' Award Ceremony

The annual foster carers awards took place on the 28 April 2023 with speeches from senior managers and the Deputy Mayor. Awards were given to carers who have successfully attended training, to those achieving long service milestones and to eight carers who have made an outstanding contribution in making a difference to children's lives.



Tower Hamlets Fostering Service

The service has been busy implementing an ambitious recruitment strategy which includes the development of a specialist foster carer scheme to provide a family home environment to children at risk of exploitation, rather than a residential placement.

The service is also working with the housing directorate to support current fostering households secure additional bedroom space for foster children. This is being done by helping adult children, within fostering households, to move to their own accommodation.

The benefits package for foster carers has been reviewed and improved to help retain existing foster carers and attract more people to consider fostering. A wide range of recruitment and promotion activities have been carried out to increase the number of foster carers. Foster Care Fortnight (from 15 May 2023) will see some video clips with our foster carers being shared on Council communication channels, alongside staff going out and about to promote opportunities.

Key achievements in 2022/23

The Children Living in Care Council ‘Wishlist’

- The table below shows an update on progress during 2022/23 against items on feedback on priorities from the Children Living in Care Council (their ‘wishlist’).
- The items on the wishlist have informed the development of the new Corporate Parenting Strategy. They were a key part of the review of all feedback shared with us (as described on page 7). The strategy will show what we are doing next to respond further to what our children have told us they want to see happening.

‘Wishlist’ item	Update for 2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating wrap around services – identifying gaps in service delivery and exploring how feedback from young people can be embedded in practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every Corporate Parenting Board meeting now has a theme so that agendas can be planned further in advance and explore topics in detail. The themes are set by the board members for the year ahead. There is consultation with young people in advance of each meeting to explore their views on the themes being covered. They then presented their feedback to the board for discussion. This has helped increase opportunities for the views of young people to inform service planning and delivery, including identification of any gaps. • Other ways in which feedback from children has been influencing services, and the way that professionals work, has included use of feedback from events designed for engagement (such as the ‘Just4U’ event in July 2022) and work with our children to make social care documents and records more ‘child friendly’ led by Independent Reviewing Officers.

'Wishlist' item	Update for 2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening joined-up approach to transitions – working with young people to find ways to make transitions smoother in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our 'Pathway Planning' is a key part of how we actively support our young people to manage transitions and achieve their future goals. We provide guidance to young people as they navigate the transition into adulthood through their pathway plan and we are consistently ensuring that our young people have a plan in place which is regularly updated. Our Education, Training and Employment Advisor also offers specialist support and provides information and advice to ensure smooth access to services based on aspirations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating CLICC Ambassadors Scheme – to represent children looked after and care leavers by advocating for them and being their voice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The three Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) Groups continue to provide children and young people with opportunities to actively participate and ensure their voices are heard. Each group is designed for a different age range and they all help foster a sense of belonging, encourage participation, and promote positive relationships among young people. The Senior CLICC Group (for 18 to 25 year olds) now has a Chair, Deputy Chair and leads for specific issues. Young people within these roles, with the support of other CLICC members, have been working as Ambassadors and are engaging directly with Senior Managers and elected members. You can see more about what the CLICC Groups have been doing throughout 2022/23 on page xx of the annual report.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and development for social workers – young people to help shape the future training offer, including awareness of the wider services and opportunities that young people may need to access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people, as members of the three Children Living in Care Council Groups, have been working with the Tower Hamlets Social Work Academy. They have provided feedback to inform training for professionals and recruitment of new social workers, personal advisors and others who provide support and services our children. Alongside this, we are refreshing our training programme for Personal Advisors using the training offer from charity "Become" to include more of a focus on building relationships and young people's experience of transitions.

'Wishlist' item	Update for 2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable travel – improving awareness of, and access to, travel entitlements and increasing the offer through the Pan-London CLICC Participation Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We provide initial Oyster card payments for all young people to get around and financial assistance for those in education and training, as well as for those moving from education to employment until they receive their first salary. We are pursuing work with other local authorities to improve the transport offer for young people through our membership of the Pan London Care Leavers Compact. We are working with other local authorities, and the Department for Transport, to increase accessibility and support for transport for everyone.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Offer for Care Leavers – delivering a more 'young person friendly' resource. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Local Offer for Care Leavers was refreshed, with input from young people, in early 2022. The Local Offer App called 'Know Now' is providing a valuable resource for keeping our children informed (via their phone) about the wide range of support and services available to them. It provides access to information, advice, helpful organisations, events, and apprenticeship opportunities. The app has been revised in collaboration with our young people to ensure it reflects their wishes and requests.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships with professionals and agencies – establishing ways that young people can easily raise and address any concerns about relationships with staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The professionals that children and young people have contact with, including social workers, personal advisors and Independent Reviewing Officers, have agreed a way of working that puts relationships at the heart of the way they work. This is called the 'Better Together Framework' and it was launched in the council in Feb 2023. It demonstrates the way all staff in the Supporting Families Division should work and emphasises the importance of building a good relationship with you and those supporting you, and also helping you to keep relationships with those who are important to you. The council will be checking the difference this is making through regular monitoring. All of our children also have access to independent advice and advocacy which is provided by the organisation Barnardos. We actively promote this service to ensure our children are well-informed about their rights and entitlements within the system.

‘Wishlist’ item	Update for 2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral processes – working with young people to identify challenges with referral processes ensuring support is provided and reducing the need to repeat information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social workers, personal advisors and support workers usually attend appointments with the children and young people they are supporting which helps to ensure smoother referral processes. This includes sign ups to tenancies, registration at college and appointments with other organisations such as the Home Office. Young People’s Services (who support the CLICC Groups) also support children and young people to find any support, services or opportunities they might be looking for, and help them to manage referral processes when they are needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health and wellbeing – finding more ways to provide support around emotional wellbeing for young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have an in-house team called the ‘Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Social Care Team’ which is dedicated to working with children who have a social care plan, including children who are in our care. The team provides a dedicated service to children, families and the networks around them. Professionals from the team have been attending CPB through the year and working with us on exploring new ways to respond to feedback from our children. ‘Kooth’ (an online service) is providing free, safe and anonymous mental health support to young people living in Tower Hamlets aged 10 to 25. The service includes material that is specific to experiencing care and has offered to engage directly with our young people. A new programme has also been developed by East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) called the ‘Tower Hamlets Recovery College’. This provision is designed for people who are 18+ who do not reach the threshold for other services. The courses on offer have been co-produced with young people. Both of these services have been promoted to our care experienced young people during the last year and we are continuing to gather their feedback on the offer.

Educational attainment

- The Tower Hamlets Virtual School supports all children in our care and care experienced young people, regardless of which physical school they attend. They are champions, advocates and educators and help to improve education outcomes in a broad range of ways including through co-ordinating educational services.
- A level attainment for our Virtual School students has enabled university entrance for a several of them to study at Kings College London, Royal Holloway University, and the University of East London. The need to support post-16 students has been recognised by the DfE and some funding will be available to support these students in 2023-24
- Attainment at Key Stage 1 was up 3% to 33% achieving national standards in both English & Maths, and at Key Stage 2 there was an increase of 14% to 50% for the same measure.
- Although GCSE results fell in 2022 they were still significantly higher than the national average despite a very challenging prior attainment profile. 22% of virtual school students achieved grade 4+ in English & Maths (with 3 other subjects), compared to the national average of 17%.

Virtual School Awards & enrichment programme

- The achievements of our children in our care were recognised and celebrated at the Virtual School Awards in Feb 2023. These

were hosted by the athlete Kriss Akabusi MBE, who experienced care as a young person.

- The awards recognised the academic achievements of our children but also their engagement in catch-up tuition and our extensive “Give It A Go” enrichment programme. This includes work with the English National Ballet, West Ham Utd, Parkour Generations, Big House Theatre Company and ‘Dead Beat’ film company.

Mockingbird Programme

- The Mockingbird Family Model is a way to bring a group of carers together very much like an extended family. Each group has a main hub carer and with other carers in the group this arrangement allows access to extra support, respite, training and events out together. The model brings benefits to children as they can experience fun activities such as sleepovers and be with a fostering family where there is a shared understanding of experiencing care.
- We constantly receive positive feedback from children, carers and professionals of the impact Mockingbird has had. Many children have been supported to remain with their foster carers, children have built safe and trusting relationships with adults and made many friends within the hubs.
- A third Mockingbird group is being launched in Tower Hamlets in May 2023 and there are plans to create two more additional groups by 2025.

Child focused language and reporting

- Our Independent Reviewing Officer Service is leading on this work which includes recording what comes out of reviews in a letter, written directly to the child in age-appropriate language. This approach is in response to feedback from children and is aimed at being more personal and engaging for our young people.
- This model is being used for other records such as monitoring, case notes and audits. We will work with social work teams and the Learning Academy to implement it as the standard for how all children's files are written.

Lifelong Links Service

- The Lifelong Links Service connects children and young people in care with family, friends and other significant people - creating support networks for the years to come. Lifelong Links workers find the right people to provide ongoing support and contact. This often involves reconnecting with key people in a child's life after some years so they can be part of their lives in the future.
- The service has continued to develop during 2022. A planning & implementation group is in place which brings together representatives from children's social services, parents, fosters carers and others to drive and support further development of the service.

- An example of the Lifelong Links service in action comes from a co-ordinator who described one experience *'I had the privilege of working with 'M', an adopted young person, and their family. I gathered a wealth of information, such as photos and birth family stories. At the end of our work, I presented this information to the young person in a 'Lifelong Links Journey Book'. They appreciated it so much.'*

Training for Foster Carers

- The focus on continuous professional development for foster carers has produced good outcomes with a strong uptake for courses as well as an increase in the number of carers who have completed the 6-week Foundations for attachment parenting course. Alongside the other course topics, which run frequently throughout the year, this supports the service to be a trauma-informed and a therapeutic fostering service.
- The annual training offer provided more opportunities for flexible learning to ensure we are providing all carers equality of access to high quality learning and development opportunities. We increased the provision for those who work or have other commitments during the day, and for the support network of carers.
- In addition, to add to the variety of support groups currently offered, the Skills Support Group was relaunched in Sep 2022 to help plug knowledge gaps and support carers with English as a second language.

Health and wellbeing

- Work commenced during the year on development of a 'NHS North East London Children Looked After & Care Leavers Strategy.' Engagement has taken place between health colleagues, council officers and children and young people to steer and inform the draft strategy. The input of 'peer nurses' has been sought and more work with young people is planned to ensure that what matters most to them is understood.
- The Just4U Event 2022 was an opportunity to engage directly with children, young people and carers about health and wellbeing. Responding to what we know are priorities in this area we focused on providing information and advice about dental and oral hygiene.
- We held discussion session with children and young people (via the CLICC Groups) to explore some key questions relating to health and wellbeing in March 2023. Health colleagues and council officers shared information in advance and prepared questions based on existing feedback, and performance information, in advance.
- The discussion session with young people (as above) was central to the agenda when Corporate Parenting Board held a thematic meeting on Health & Wellbeing. A presentation

was given by the young people's representatives on the board. Health colleagues attended for the discussion with young people and consideration of what could be done to respond. All of the feedback from this meeting has informed the work of the Health Steering Group (for children in our care). The refreshed priorities and actions for this group include details of the response including work to improve take up and outcomes for health assessments. This will include a health assessments video and guide to be launched in July 2023.

Virtual School - Case Study

J has significant Special Educational Needs and joined a specialist secondary school for pupils with social, emotional and educational needs. The school uses a trauma informed approach and an emphasis on working with each pupil on their individualised targets.

J has had consistent support from the specialist Virtual School Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and consistency in foster care. J's SAT scores were low in English & Maths and their Pupil Education Plan, and Pupil Premium spend, focused on supporting these core skills and nurturing interests and engagement through a variety of activities. They have also been a consistent and valued member of Army and Policy Cadets.

J has had serious incidents at school (related to behaviour) which could have resulted in exclusion. However, his reintegration to school was professionally managed and supported. His school has nurtured his ability in Maths and the Virtual School has funded additional support for this. Although J has experienced many barriers to learning they have attained a 4+ grade in Maths which is a fantastic achievement.

Lifelong Links - Case Study

The thoughts below are from two young people who have been involved in Lifelong Links, sharing their views on the difference the service has made for them.

'M' (Age 14) 'It felt amazing to see everyone. I'm grateful to Lifelong Links as they really helped make it possible to get in touch with people who I thought I would never be able to get back in contact with. I want to go into university one day and study to become a dentist. I've wanted to be a dentist for so long and study about it as it interests me. Having the support of a family and knowing other successful people in the family is so great'.

'A' (Age 17) 'Through Lifelong Links I now see my family frequently. It felt like my voice was heard and my thoughts were relevant. I am so grateful to the coordinator for just being independent and supportive. It has changed my life and empowered me to be confident and able to get support for any other problems I may face. I'm currently in college and I'm hoping to go to university and become a midwife. I'd like to support vulnerable women as I feel that giving birth is empowering'.

Health Assessment – Case Study

Whilst residing in semi-independent living 'P' had a review health assessment. Concerns were highlighted around suitability of the placement, a significant loss of weight, eating difficulties and low mood. 'P' was declining any offers of support in the area and wanted to return to live with family or previous foster carers. Their aspirations were noted as 'to feel secure, have a family, and to have a job'.

The review health assessment was quality assured by the Designated Nurse for 'Looked After Children' and concerns were raised with Children's Social Care. Following a Care Planning Meeting, a new search for a suitable placement for began. After a brief stay with previous foster carers, 'P' decided to go and live with their father - with support from their social worker and other professionals.

Many positive changes have come from the response to 'P's wishes and concerns, including gaining weight, feeling happier and settled, and working on projects with their father. Lifelong Links has been involved and promoted contact with siblings, and arrangements are regularly reviewed through required processes by social care professionals.

Stability & Permanency - Case Study

F was living with the same Foster Carer until the carer separated from their partner and other issues emerged. The relationship between F and the carer deteriorated and eventually the living arrangement broke down. Social care professionals spent time assessing how to minimise further disruption to F's life and find a suitable home.

Social care professionals were aware that F had consistently voiced a wish to return to his parents. F moved to a new living arrangement but ultimately it was not successful. Over time F's parents engaged positively with professionals and made changes in their parenting with the support provided to them. Through joint working between professionals, including Social Workers, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services and Independent Reviewing Officers a staged transition plan for F to return to their parents was implemented.

The Edge of Care Team, Fostering Team and school all contributed to the transition plan and through collaborative working F's wishes were met and further disruption was minimised.

Appendix A: Membership list for the Corporate Parenting Board (including officers who also report to the board)

Name	Job Title / Organisation	Name	Job Title / Organisation
Samantha Anderson	Young Carers Engagement Officer, Young People Services, LBTH	Reagender Kang	Designated Nurse for CLA, NHS NEL CCG
Suluk Ahmed	Councillor	Leo Major	Head of Children Looked After and Through Care Services
Musthak Ahmed	Councillor	Nji Oranu	Head of Children's Regulated Services and Resources, Supporting Families Division, LBTH
Susannah Beasley-Murray	Director, Supporting People, LBTH	Geraldine O'Donnell	Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service, LBTH
Bodrul Choudhury	Councillor	Shirley Quarshie-Dunne	Child Protection and Reviewing Service, Children's Social Care, LBTH
Peter Cox	CAMHS in Social Care Team Lead, LBTH	Karen Sanderson	Senior Commissioning Manager, Children and Young People, LBTH
David Cregan	Headteacher Virtual School, LBTH	Ann Sutcliffe	Corporate Director, Place, LBTH
Hasan Faruq	Youth Participation & Engagement Manage, Young People Services, LBTH	Tracy Stanley	Strategy & Policy Officer - Children and Culture, LBTH
Asma Islam	Councillor	Maium Talkudar	Chair of the CPB and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor))
Sirajul Islam	Councillor	James Thomas	Director of Children and Culture, LBTH
Foster Carer Representatives		Young People's Representatives	Children in Care Council

Appendix B – CPB Meetings and Agendas 2022/23

MEETING	KEY AGENDA ITEMS
Standing Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update from Foster Care Representatives • Update from Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) • Performance Report • Case Study (based of theme of each meeting)
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tower Hamlets Local Offer for Care experienced young people 2022 • Update on Corporate Parenting Board Action Plan 2021/22. • TNW CCGs Safeguarding Annual Report 2020/2021 (Tower Hamlets Children Looked After)
April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop Session on priorities for children we care for & care experienced young people • Report on Tower Hamlets CAMHS in Social Care Team • Draft Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021 • Proposal for development of Corporate Parenting Strategy for Tower Hamlets
July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual School Annual Report • Annual Fostering and Permanence Panel Report • Independent Reviewing Officer's Annual Report • Update on Draft Sufficiency Strategy
October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual School: Interim reporting of outcomes for Children in our Care (including Case Studies) • Feedback from Just4U Event • Fostering Recruitment Strategy 2022/25
February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on Placement Stability & Permanency • Adopt London East (ALE) Annual Report • Update on Development of Corporate Parenting Strategy

Appendix C – Children's Social Care Key Tower Hamlets Performance Indicator Report: Extract March 2023 (benchmarking shown where data is available)

Performance Measure	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Current	Period	National	Regional/ Statistical Neighbours
Looked After Children							
Number of Children Looked After	307	306	335	301	Snapshot		
Children Looked After (CLA) - rate per 10,000	43.3	43.1	45.2	46.8	Snapshot	67	63.3
No. of new Children Looked After (CLA) episodes in period	151	131	186	136	YTD		
No. of Children Looked After (CLA) exits in period	172	131	161	169	YTD		
% repeat Children Looked After (CLA) (entries that were re-entries within 2 years)	6.0%	2.3%	2.7%	2.2%	YTD		
Average no. of placement moves	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.6	Rolling Year		
Max. no of placement moves	6.0	5.0	8.0	8.0	Rolling Year		
% Children Looked After (CLA) long term placement stability	71.6%	73.1%	64.8%	54.5%	Snapshot	70%	71.5%
% of Children Looked After (CLA) with a named Social Worker (key worker or personal advisor)	100.0%	100.0%	100%	100%	Snapshot		
% of CLA entries with health assessment done within 20 days	82.0%	91.5%	45.7%	55.5%	YTD		
% of CLA >12 months who had an annual Health check	78.7%	86.0%	97.3%	88.9%	Snapshot	91%	93.9%
% of CLA >12 months who had an annual Dental check	83.1%	60.0%	82.1%	92.8%	Snapshot	40%	34.3%

Performance Measure	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Current	Period	National	Regional/ Statistical Neighbours
Section 6 - Care experienced young people							
% allocated care experienced young people "in touch" (17,18,19,20,21 yr. olds with activity updated within last year)	95.7%	98.8%	88.9%	98.1%	Snapshot		
% allocated care experienced young people 'in touch' and known to be EET	67.3%	72.6%	64.3%	77.3%	Snapshot		
% allocated care experienced young people 'in touch' and known to be in suitable accommodation	91.4%	95.8%	83.6%	94.4%	Snapshot		
% allocated care experienced young people with a pathway plan	98.8%	98.2%	96.9%	95.0%	Snapshot		

% allocated care experienced young people with pathway plan updated in last 6 months	96.7%	95.6%	87.5%	88.3%	Snapshot		
Performance Measure	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Current	Period	National	Regional/ Statistical Neighbours
Missing Children							
Number of missing children during period	276	210	205	237	YTD		
Missing from home	176	141	156	179	YTD		
Children Looked After (out of borough)	73	41	39	48	YTD		
Children Looked After (in borough)	16	15	15	20	YTD		

Performance Measure	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Current	Period	National	Regional/ Statistical Neighbours
Fostering and Adoption							
Number of Foster Carer Enquiries (initial contact)	95	193	240	127	YTD		
No. of Foster Carer Enquiries leading to Initial Visits	48	53	44	24	YTD		
% Initial visits completed within 5 working days	75.0%	44%	46%	52%	YTD		
Total Approved Foster Carers (excl. family & friends, staying put, on hold/unavailable)	97	116	113	115	Snapshot		
Foster Carer Vacancy rate	23.7%	45.3%	21.1%	24.7%	Snapshot	19.7%	19.9%
Foster Carer Occupancy rate	75.3%	54.7%	78.9%	75.3%	Snapshot	61.1%	62.9%
No. of children placed with In-house Foster Carers	115	109	116	123	Snapshot		
No. of children in Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) Placements	92	85	72	77	Snapshot		
Children in Residential Placements (incl dual registered schools and mother & baby units)	30	27	22	18	Snapshot		

Performance Measure	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Current	Period	National	Regional/ Statistical Neighbours
Fostering and Adoption (continued)							
Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family	376.3	432.3	509.5	572.4	YTD (3 years)		
Average time between court authority to place a child and deciding on a match	164	245	300	369	YTD	175	182
% waiting less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their family (14 months)	46.2%	36.1%	35.7%	41.2%	Snapshot		
Adoptions from care (number adopted and percentage leaving care who are adopted)	6.4%	6.1%	8.7%	7.1%	YTD	13%	7.6%
Number of Adoptions and Special Guardianship Orders granted for Looked After Children (S)	37	17	18	17	YTD		
The percentage of black and minority ethnic children leaving care who are adopted	4.4%	3.9%	7.1%	5.4%	YTD		
The percentage of children who ceased to be looked after because of an SGO	15.1%	8.4%	2.5%	3.0%	YTD		17.7%
Percentage of Children Looked After (CLA) placed for adoption within 12 months of agency decision	91%	88%	50%	75%	YTD		

Performance Measure	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Current – Autumn 2022/23	Period
Virtual School					
% of pupils making expected progress in English and Maths	56%	62%	67%	75%	Termly

% of pupils where a Pupil Education Plans (PEP) meeting took place in the term	93%	95%	96%	98%	Termly
% of Pupil Education Plans (PEPs) which were signed off and RAG rated green	73%	91%	78%	84%	Termly