



HILLINGDON
LONDON



Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee

Date: WEDNESDAY, 21
NOVEMBER 2012

Time: 7.00 PM

Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM 4 -
CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH
STREET, UXBRIDGE UB8
1UW

**Meeting
Details:** Members of the Public and
Press are welcome to attend
this meeting

Councillors on the Committee

Catherine Dann (Chairman)
Judith Cooper (Vice-Chairman)
Jazz Dhillon (Labour Lead)
David Benson
Lindsay Bliss
John Hensley
Susan O'Brien
John Riley

Other voting Representative

Anthony Little – Roman
Catholic Diocesan

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Policy Overview

About this Committee

This Policy Overview Committee (POC) will undertake reviews in the areas covered by Education and Children's Services Group and can establish a working party (with another POC if desired) to undertake reviews if, for example, a topic is cross-cutting.

This Policy Overview Committee will consider performance reports and comment on budget and service plan proposals for the Education and Children's Services Group.

The Cabinet Forward Plan is a standing item on the Committee's agenda.

The Committee will not consider call-ins of Executive decisions or investigate individual complaints about the Council's services.

Terms of Reference

The Constitution defines the terms of reference for Policy Overview Committees as:

The Following Terms of Reference are Common to all Policy Overview Committees (referred to below as "The overview role"):

1. To conduct reviews of policy, services or aspects of service which have either been referred by Cabinet, relate to the Cabinet Forward Plan, or have been chosen by the Committee according to the agreed criteria for selecting such reviews;
2. To monitor the performance of the Council services within their remit (including the management of finances and risk);
3. To comment on the proposed annual service and budget plans for the Council services within their remit before final approval by Cabinet and Council;
4. To consider the Forward Plan and comment as appropriate to the decisionmaker on Key Decisions which relate to services within their remit (before they are taken by the Cabinet);
5. To review or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken by the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member, a Council Committee or an officer.
6. To make reports and recommendations to the Council, the Leader, the Cabinet, a Policy Overview Committee or any other Council

This Committee performs the policy overview role outlined above in relation to:

1. All of the functions of the Council as an education authority under the Education Acts, School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and all other relevant legislation in force from time to time;
2. Pre-school and the Council's work with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
3. The Youth Service and the Council's work with the Connexions Service and Partnership;
4. Social Care Services for Children, Young Persons, and Children with Special Needs.

Agenda

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Declarations of Interest in matters coming before this meeting.
- 3 To confirm that all items marked Part 1 will be considered in Public and all Part 2 items will be considered in Private
- 4 Matters that have been notified in advance or urgent
- 5 Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 October 2012
- 6 Annual Complaints Report 2011/12 for Social Care, Health & Housing
- 7 Major Review - Safeguarding Children Who are Reported Missing - Suggested Recommendations and Draft Final Report
- 8 Education and Children's Services Policy Overview Committee - Review Topic 2012/13
- 9 Work Programme 2012/2013
10. Forward Plan 2012/2013

PART II

11. Quality Assurance and Audit Framework - Children's Services

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Minutes

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

10 October 2012

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Committee Members Present:

Councillors Catherine Dann (Chairman)
Judith Cooper (Vice-Chairman)
David Benson
Lindsay Bliss
Jazz Dhillon
John Hensley
Susan O'Brien
John Riley

Witnesses Present:

Detective Inspector Graham Hamilton (Borough Police), Marie Fleming (Youth Worker and Manager of Fountains Mill), and Stephen White (Registered Manager of Hillingdon Children' Resource Centre (aka Mulberry Parade)).

LBH Officers Present:

Linda Sanders (Corporate Director of Social Care, Health & Housing), Paul Hewitt (Service Manager for Safeguarding Children and Reviewing Service), Julien Kramer (Interim Chief Education Officer), Khalid Ahmed (Democratic Services Manager) and Steven Maiden (Democratic Services Officer)

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David Benson declared a general non-pecuniary interest as he was a Governor of Uxbridge High School. He remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.

Councillor Lindsay Bliss declared a general non-pecuniary interest as she was a Governor of Brookside Primary School. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.

Councillor Judith Cooper declared a general non-pecuniary interest as she was a Governor of Charville, St Andrews and St Mary's Schools. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.

Councillor Catherine Dann declared a general non-pecuniary interest as she was a Governor of Newham Junior School and Bishop Ramsay C of E School. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.

Tony Little declared a general non-pecuniary interest as he was a Governor at Pinkwell Primary School. He remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.

	<p>Councillor Susan O'Brien declared a general non-pecuniary interest as she was a Governor at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic School and was working at Ruislip High School. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.</p> <p>Councillor John Riley declared a general non-pecuniary interest as he was a Governor at Field End Infants School. He remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.</p>	
24.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND ALL PART 2 ITEMS WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items would be heard in Part 1.</p>	Action by
25.	<p>MATTERS THAT HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OR URGENT (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Reference was made to the Children in Care Award's which were recently held and the Committee wished to place on record its admiration for the children who had been honoured in the awards.</p>	
26.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING. (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2012 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.</p>	Action by
27.	<p>MAJOR REVIEW - SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN WHO ARE REPORTED MISSING (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Members were provided with the scoping report on Safeguarding Children who are reported missing which contained information on the key issues surrounding missing children in the local and national context.</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to enable the Committee to gather evidence as part of their major review into Safeguarding Children who are reported missing.</p> <p>In addition, Members were also provided with the report of the all Parliamentary Group on the Joint Inquiry into Children who go Missing from Care, which provided details of the national picture in relation to children missing from care.</p> <p>Witnesses</p> <p>To assist Members with this review Detective Inspector Graham Hamilton, Borough Police; Marie Fleming, Youth Worker and Manager of Fountains Mill; and Stephen White, Registered Manager of Hillingdon Children' Resource Centre aka Mulberry Parade were</p>	Action by

present to provide information to the Committee.

Issues raised included:

Police

- DI Hamilton presented comparisons between the periods 1 September 2010 – 31 August 2011 and 1 September 2011 – 31 August 2012 which showed an increase from 18% to 20% in the proportion of missing children in the Borough being made up of children in care. These figures were made up from children at 6 residential care homes in the Borough.
- An additional 5% of missing children were made up from residential care homes in the Borough which housed children from outside of the area.
- In the first period there had been 286 reported missing children compared to 327 in the latter period. However, it was noted that these figures were largely made up of children who were repeatedly reported missing. One child had been recorded as missing 33 times in a single year.
- The search for missing children could have a significant impact upon Police resources with substantial financial implications.
- Hillingdon had seen 22 high risk cases over the last 12 month period with 8 of these being made up of children from residential care homes.
- Concern was expressed at the lack of information the Police had on those neighbouring local authority Looked after Children who were placed within the Borough's children's homes, together with the unaccompanied children who arrived at Heathrow.

Youth Worker

- The Manager of Fountains Mills and Youth Worker informed Members that she worked with children and young people from the age of 11 to 21, but her primary focus was on 13-19 age group.
- Many of the children and young people she worked with had complex needs and she often signposted them to other services.
- In her experience, the majority of children who run away from home have done so because of conflict in the home. Part of her role was providing mediation with the children and their families.
- Feedback from children was that they needed practical support; they needed something to do and somewhere to go.
- Many children who have run away from home have required practical assistance such as guidance on how to open a bank account. These children also often require mentoring.
- Much of the support and services offered by voluntary sector organisations could not be accessed by children in care homes because they were often unable or unwilling to use public

transport.

- A large proportion of children who go missing have also been seen to have significant anger management problems.
- Reference was made to the mobile youth service bus which was used to engage with young people and get them involved in activities.

Registered Manager from Children's Home

- The Registered Manager from this authority's Mulberry Parade informed Members that many of the children his establishment cared for, were unaccompanied children who had arrived at Heathrow Airport
- He advised that a large proportion of children had runaway from home before becoming Looked after Children so there was sometimes already a problem.
- Many children reported missing were not connected to any wider community such as a church group or scouts etc.
- Children who run away from care usually have a troubled background and have had problems with their families in the past. These children have also usually had a troubled time in the education system. It was noted that these children often find it difficult to make the transition from primary to secondary education.
- Many children who were repeatedly reported missing have made a lifestyle choice and have decided to move towards gaining independence. It was noted that this is especially true for older children in care who were preparing to leave care in the near future.
- The Council only runs 2 of the 6 children's homes in the Borough with the other 4 being run by private and voluntary sector organisations.
- Cases of children going missing from residential care homes, even if they were known to be at a social event and likely to return, were reported to the Police as a matter of course. This process created a significant amount of paperwork which is often unnecessary due to a child's return.
- Regular, multi-agency meetings took place to discuss cases involving missing children which was proving to be an effective way to manage and share information on issues relating to missing children.

Discussion took place on the information which the Committee had received and a number of suggestions were made which could improve the process for dealing with missing children. These included:

- There should be implementation of written guidance for staff in all children's residential homes (local authority, private and voluntary) on what to do if a child goes missing from care to ensure the information was shared with the Police. This could include the possibility of "grab packs" being put together for every child entering a care home. This would be an up-to-date file on the child with their telephone number, information on who

they socialised with, where they socialised and what their history of running away was. This would provide a valuable resource for Police looking for the missing child and could lead to significant time and financial efficiencies.

- To investigate the possibility of requiring Local Authorities which placed out-of-borough children in residential care homes in Hillingdon to provide a “grab pack” as outlined above.
- Multi-agency training could be given on the procedure for dealing with missing children to foster carers and residential staff from both private and voluntary children’s care homes within the Borough.
- To review biennial statistics on missing children from the six children’s care homes in the Borough, and if possible from all foster placements within the Borough, placed by other local authorities. This would include data broken down in detail and qualitative data such as why the child ran away from care.
- To explore the viability of a system of dealing with children who were repeatedly reported missing without involving the Police in the first instance.
- To investigate the use of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as a means through which to share intelligence on missing children and, ultimately, to reduce the number of children going missing from care.
- To explore the possibility of using a bus to bring the support and services offered by voluntary sector organisations to children in care homes.
- To consider the possibility of harmonising the terminology used with regards to missing people across all organisations in Hillingdon. This would help to ensure that the reporting of cases and collection of useful data would be improved and made more accurate.
- For the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB) to review statistics on children missing from care in the Borough twice annually.
- In relation to education, and particularly secondary education, reference was made to whether there was adequate communication between schools and the relevant agencies with regard to Looked after Children who did not attend school. This could also form part of the MASH network

Reference was made to the small proportion of children who were not in care who went missing. The Committee was informed that this was a very small number, and if reported to the Police, they did get discussed at operational multi-agency meetings.

Members asked that Officers produce a draft final report on the safeguarding children who are reported missing review, with some suggestion recommendations, for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

In addition, Members asked that Officers provide a short paper on the implications of the recommendations contained in the Report from the Joint Inquiry into Children Who Go Missing From Care, and their

	<p>relevance to the review and the Borough.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the information from the witness session be noted and the witnesses be thanked for their contribution to the Committee’s review. 2. That a draft final report of the review be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration of the recommendations of the review. 3. That officers provide a short paper on the implications of the recommendations contained in the Report from the Joint Inquiry into Children Who Go Missing From Care, and their relevance to the review and the Borough. 	<p>Khalid Ahmed</p> <p>Linda Sanders / Paul Hewitt</p>
<p>28.</p>	<p>LEAVING CARE PROCEDURE AND GRANT - CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT FINAL REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Officers noted the following points with regards to the draft final report of the Committee’s review into the Leaving Care Procedure and Grant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council already had an Officer who dealt with housing for care leavers but the designation of a Housing Officer for care leavers would provide a helpful clarification of the role in taking forward the recommendations of the review. • That Recommendation 7 be removed from the final report as the receipt of the Leaving Care Grant did not have any tax implications for care leavers. • That Recommendation 10 be re-worded so that the designated Housing Officer for care leavers was required to include information on joining a credit union and household insurance in the care leaver’s Leaving Care Plan. • That the reference to the “Community Care Grant” in Recommendation 12 be replaced with the “Local Social Fund” as the Community Care Grant was in the process of being decentralised. <p>It was noted that an implementation plan for the recommendations would be presented at the next meeting.</p> <p>Members noted that the recommendations relating to the designated Housing Officer for care leavers would be submerged into a single recommendation with sub-points for ease of reference.</p> <p>Officers noted that the revised report would be amended as above and circulated to Members via email.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That with the amendments suggested, approval be given to the draft final report and its submission to a future Cabinet meeting for consideration. 	<p>Action by</p> <p>Khalid Ahmed</p> <p>Linda Sanders</p> <p>Khalid Ahmed</p>

29.	<p>LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>Members noted that the Annual Report was generally positive but that the relatively low spend on early intervention and the high turnover of staff was of concern.</p> <p>Officers advised that the retention of front-line Social Workers was difficult across the sector but that work was being undertaken to resolve this in the Borough.</p> <p>It was noted that the Chairman of the Committee, in liaison with the Democratic Services Manager and the Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Housing produce comments on behalf of the Committee to accompany the presentation of the report to Cabinet in November 2012.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>1. That the report be noted and Chairman of the Committee, in liaison with the Democratic Services Manager and the Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Housing produce comments on behalf of the Committee to accompany the presentation of the report to Cabinet in November 2012.</p>	Action by
		Khalid Ahmed
30.	<p>FORWARD PLAN 2012/2013 (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
31.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME 2012/2013 (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>Noted. It was agreed that an item should be included at a future meeting, updating Members on the progress of the implementation of recommendations from past reviews of the Committee.</p>	Action by
		Khalid Ahmed
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.40 pm.</p>	

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Khalid Ahmed on 01895 250833. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

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Agenda Item 6

ANNUAL COMPLAINT REPORT 2011/12 FOR SOCIAL CARE HEALTH AND HOUSING

**Contact Officer: Dan Kennedy,
Service Manager – Performance and
Intelligence**

Telephone: 01895 250495

Purpose of the report

Using feedback from residents to improve services is a key element of putting our residents first in Hillingdon. This includes feedback in the form of complaints.

This report provides information and analysis of complaints and Members Enquiries received between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 for the following procedures:

- **Housing Services (corporate complaints procedure);**
- **Adult Social Care (statutory complaints procedure);**
- **Children Social Services (statutory complaints procedure); and**
- **Member's enquiries.**

Within this report the data shown for each area is shown separately because the complaint procedure for each area is different. For Adult and Children Social Care complaints Local Authorities are required to follow the procedures set by the Department of Health / Department for Education through legislation whereas the corporate complaints procedure is agreed locally. Whatever procedure is used the Council aims to make it as easy as possible for people to provide feedback and aim to resolve all complaints at the earliest opportunity. Learning from complaints is used to drive up customer satisfaction and make service improvements. This report satisfies the requirement to publish annual information about complaints received for social services.

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

Members of the Committee discuss and comment on the annual report and use the report to inform their overview activities.

1. Members of the Committee note the contents of the annual report.
2. Members of the Committee agree to raise any concerns with the relevant Cabinet member

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Overall, when comparing the number of complaints received at Stage 1 for 2011/12 (284) with the number received in 2010/11 (257) there has been a small increase of 27 (11%). Of the 284 complaints, 165 were either upheld or partially upheld and they were largely resolved by apologising for what happened, which in most cases involved putting right what had gone wrong or in communicating a decision more fully or in a more sensitive way.

a. Housing (see annex 1 for further information)

- Fewer housing complaints were recorded for 2011/12 (159) in comparison with previous years - 2008/09 (384), 2009/10 (256) and 2010/11 (166). This is largely due to the integration of housing service enquiries into the council's contact centre which successfully resolved many concerns from residents at the first point of contact preventing the need to escalate to the complaints procedure.
- Of the 159 new housing complaints recorded for 2011/12 - 144 were resolved at Stage 1 with only 15 proceeding to Stage 2. Of the 15 Stage 2 complaints 11 were resolved at this stage. Of the 4 remaining Stage 3 complaints two were not upheld, one was partially upheld and one withdrawn.
- Of the 159 new complaints, 58 were not upheld, 35 were upheld, 58 were partially upheld, 6 were withdrawn and 2 were outside our jurisdiction to deal with.
- The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) received 8 housing related enquiries for 2011/12, which compares favourably with previous years – 2009/10 and 2010/11 when 10 complaints were received. Of the 8 enquiries considered by the LGO, five were not upheld and three were upheld.

b. Adult Social Care (see annex 2 for further information)

- Overall the number of adult social care complaints received during 2011/12 increased when compared to previous years - 2011/12 (69) with 2010/11 (51). This increase is due, in part, to a review of care packages that took place during 2011/12 which resulted in recommendations for clients to benefit from reablement or a reduction in the hours of care directly paid for by the Council. A number of clients or their relatives were dissatisfied with their offer and chose to complain.
- Of the 69 complaints received, almost half (32) were not upheld, 11 were upheld, 22 were partially upheld and 4 were withdrawn.
- For adult social care complaints when a client is dissatisfied with the decision of the Council at the local resolution stage of the process, they can escalate their complaint to the LGO.
- The Ombudsman reported a total of 11 complaints escalated beyond the Council's complaints process in 2011/12 an increase when compared to the five LGO

complaints for adult social care in 2010/11. Of the 11 complaints escalated to the LGO – most (seven) were discontinued, one was partially upheld and three were upheld.

c. Children and Family Services (see annex 3 for further information)

- The number of complaints related to children's social care during 2011/12 has risen when comparing 2011/12 (56) with 2010/11 (40). This is accounted for by the increase in complaints recorded against the Children in Need team – 6 recorded complaints in 2010/11 but 22 in 2011/12.
- Of the 56 new children social care complaints received for 2011/12, 39 were upheld (either fully or partially), 12 were not upheld and 5 were withdrawn by the complainant.
- No complaints escalated to Stage 2 during 2011/12 but subsequently three complex complaints logged in 2011/12 have since been escalated to Stage 2 and the investigations are ongoing. However, the Committee should note that in comparison with other Local Authorities in London, who receive up to 12 Stage 2 complaints annually, we have far fewer Stage 2 complaints overall.
- There were no Stage 3 complaints during this period and for the previous two years.
- The Committee are asked to note that the focus of officers is to bring complaints to a resolution at an early stage. This approach is often what the complainant wishes and also saves the Council money by avoiding the need to commission an independent investigation of the complaint at stage 2 of the complaints procedure. The impact of this approach is that it can take longer to resolve stage 1 complaints through extended negotiation and discussion with complainants to resolve the complaint - of the 51 complaints, 47% were dealt with within the 10 working days target (from receipt to final resolution).

d. Members enquiries (see annex 4 for further information)

- Social Care Health & Housing received 1,099 enquiries from Members for 2011/12. When comparing the figure for 2010/11 of 903 with 2011/12, this is a 21% increase.
- Of the 1,099 enquiries, Housing accounted for 885 (80%), Adult Social Care 141 (13%), Children and Families 41 (4%) and Commissioning, Contracts and Supply 31 (3%).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The Council's Vision

The Council's vision is about 'putting our residents first'. We do this by working closely with customers and listening to their views including customers' complaints, resolving these as soon as possible and using their feedback to prevent similar complaints for the future.

2. What is a Complaint?

In general terms a complaint can be considered as:

“an expression of dissatisfaction by telephone, personal visit or in writing, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the council or its staff affecting an individual or group of customers.”

3. How can people complain?

Complaints can be made in person, by telephone, in writing, by fax, via our website or email, either directly to the service area, Contact Centre or to the Complaints and Service and Improvement Team.

4. The Complaints Procedure

There is not one single complaints procedure that applies to all three services across Social Care Health and Housing. This is because some complaints are dealt with differently for legal reasons (adult social care and children and family complaints) whereas Housing complaints are managed in accordance to the Council's locally agreed corporate complaints procedure.

5. Compensation payments

If after an investigation by council staff or the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), it is concluded that as a result of maladministration by council staff it has resulted in a complainant suffering a financial loss, the LGO may recommend that compensation should be offered to the complainant.

6. What has the Council done to improve complaint handling?

The Council sees every complaint as an opportunity to learn from customers about what works and what does not. As a result of complaints received during 2010/11 the Council has:

- made efforts to improve written communications to ensure that it is in plain language i.e. explanation of housing benefit decisions and changes;
- one-to-one discussions with individual members of staff and review their written communication before letters are sent to customers;
- updated and published a written complaint procedure for Adult Social Care complainants to use;

- targeted action and visits to care providers to review and follow up on quality of care issues to ensure care standards are met; and
- identified that complaints involving contractors needed to identify at the outset who will respond to which aspect of a complaint. This has resulted in early resolution of complaints.

7. What is the Council doing to improve complaint handling?

The Council will continue to seek feedback from those residents who have had cause to complain. During 2012/13 we will use feedback to improve our complaint handling processes and make service improvements by focusing on:

- all managers handling complaints will attend bespoke and targeted briefings concentrating on conducting thorough investigations, not to be defensive about complaints but deal with them fairly and providing high quality responses dealing with all issues raised;
- providing Adult Social Care and Children and Family Service staff with written advice and guidance on handling complaints. The written material includes guidance on how to conduct investigations, useful responses and a 'tried and tested' approach to use in written responses to complainants and information about their role in the complaint process;
- raising awareness of complaints as a positive tool for the organisation to use to make service improvements;
- providing a responsive complaints service that delivers early resolution and by doing so reduces the likelihood of complex complaints escalating to the LGO; and
- conducting surveys of complainants to obtain their feedback on how their complaint was handled and using feedback to see what we can do to improve our processes.

Background Documents

Annex 1 – Complaints about Housing Services

The figures shown in this section have been separated into Hillingdon Housing Service and LBH Housing services for the purposes of this report.

1. The Complaint Procedure

Housing complaints are managed in line with the Corporate Complaints Procedure. This procedure operates as follows:

- Stage 1 – response from the Head of Service
- Stage 2 – response from the Corporate Director
- Stage 3 – response from the Chief Executive of the Council
- Local Government Ombudsman

A more detailed explanation of how the complaint procedure operates, the main complaint themes and statistical data for each stage of the process is provided below.

The Informal complaint

The process of complaints resolution involves talking to the customer/resident and talking through the issues they have raised, clarifying any points and understanding what outcome they are seeking to achieve. As a result, in addition to the formal complaints procedure, the Complaints and Service Improvement Team take customer enquiries or 'concerns' and deal with them promptly and informally. This is because feedback we have received from residents indicates that most want action to resolve the issue quickly and are happy that this is undertaken informally.

This emphasis to resolve issues and concerns quickly and avert the need to escalate these to a formal complaint has resulted in a significant reduction of complaints at Stage 1 when comparing 2008/09 (384) with 2011/12 (159). See Table 1 below.

When comparing 2010/11 (92) with 2011/12 (104) there is a small increase in complaints received by Housing Services but when compared with 2008/09 (171) there has been a significant reduction.

Table 1 - Comparison of Stage One Complaints

Service Area	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Housing Services	171	126	92	104
Hillingdon Housing services	213	130	74	55
Total Housing	384	256	166	159

Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee – 21 November 2012

a. Stage 1 – Head of Service

Managers of the service complained of or external contractors providing services on behalf of the Council are expected to resolve as many problems and complaints as possible at this point. The complaints procedure requires complaints to be acknowledged within 3 working days and responded to within 10 working days.

During 2011/12 we recorded in total 159 new housing complaints. Statistics show that 144 (89.5%) out of 159 complaints were resolved at this stage of the complaint process by the intervention of a manager. Of the 159 complaints, 58 were not upheld, 35 were upheld, 58 were partially upheld, 6 were withdrawn and 2 were outside our jurisdiction to deal with.

Interrogation of complaint data has highlighted three main causes why residents complain about housing issues. This is set out below in Table 2 together with further information about the reasons why residents complained.

Table 2 – Summary of complaints received by theme at stage 1 (2011/12):

Theme	Housing Services	Hillingdon Housing Services	Total
Policy decisions	3	0	3
Staff attitude or slow service	10	4	14
Service Failure	91	51	142
Total	104	55	159

Policy decisions (3 complaints)

The reasons for complaining were as follows:

- two people were unhappy with the criteria used to assess their Locata banding; and
- dis-satisfaction with the Council's decision to assess a person as not homeless. They felt that they were homeless and should, therefore, have had access to social housing options. Wherever possible advice and information about alternative housing options is offered as well as well as how to access more suitable housing in the private sector.

Staff attitude/slow service (14 complaints)

The main reason for complaining was because residents felt that Council Officers communicated decisions in a non-empathetic way to people who approach the council for assistance. As a result of these complaints we have raised awareness with teams and

individual members of staff for the need to convey information/decisions in a sensitive way and to provide an explanation for the decision.

Service failure (142 complaints)

The main reasons for complaining were as follows:

- about delays or a lack of understanding about the way in which benefits are calculated with customers/residents feeling that they should be entitled to more benefits. Improvements have and continue to be made to help people who apply for housing benefits to understand how their benefit is calculated;
- complaints from residents about disputes with their neighbours. Generally these are referred to our anti-social behaviour team to deal with.
- complaints about the decision not to replace kitchens, bathrooms and windows. In most cases the existing kitchen / bathroom / windows were found to meet the required minimum standard and will be considered for replacement during the next scheduled planned maintenance programme;
- complaints about mould and dampness in some properties. In response the Council has provided advice to tenants about ventilating and heating their property;
- complaints about water leaks from neighbouring properties (usually flats above) from tenants / residents;
- contractors not keeping to scheduled appointments. This has been followed up with the contractors throughout the year; and
- dis-satisfaction with the repairs undertaken. However, when comparing 2011/12 with previous years this has fallen significantly. This has been helped by Council staff trying to resolve any representations quickly and satisfactorily at the point of contact before they become complaints. Further information about these improvements is provided below.

Example of Service Improvements Made to Reduce Complaints

What has been done to improve Housing repairs performance?

In order to be more customer focussed, to reduce the potential for complaints and to allow the service to better manage customer expectations, the following action has been taken when responding to requests for repairs:

- Explaining to tenants what they can expect and how long it will take to complete a repair;
- Giving ownership of the case to one individual in the repairs team to oversee the work;

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- A case remains visible and is not lost amongst all the other work being dealt with;
- To have an open case file in which all actions and correspondence is recorded onto the housing IT system. This is helping to ensure that a complete record of actions is available for contact centre staff when a tenant or leaseholder calls to enquire on the progress of their repair;
- Regular discussion between staff and managers regarding open cases and to act on delays;
- The allocated person in the repairs team to keep the tenant or leaseholder regularly informed of progress in resolving the case;
- Before closing a case to review it and identify any lessons learned; and
- To share with staff the impacts that can result from delays – both for residents and for the Council – and to emphasise the need to manage these cases well.

Table 3 – Key Performance Indicator – Housing Repairs

Measure	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Appointments kept	99.3%	99.1%	99.2%
Average number of days to complete a repair	14	13	11
Number of repeat calls/visits	901	603	223
Jobs completed	30,401	31,314	29,422
Voids completed	615	474	526

High level analysis

- Over the past three years 99% of appointments made have been kept by the repairs service and its contractors;
- The average number of days to complete a housing repair has reduced from 14 in 2009/10 to 11 in 2011/12. This is a significant achievement; and
- The number of repeat visits to fix a repair has reduced from 901 in 2009/10 to 223 in 2011/12, which is a significant reduction.

b. Stage 2 – Corporate Director

The Corporate Director or their representative will carry out an investigation and respond to complaints within 10 working days.

Table 4 – Total Number of Housing Complaints Progressing to Stage 2

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Service Area	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Housing Services	12	5	7
Hillingdon Housing Service	14	8	8
Total	26	13	15

During 2011/12, 15 complaints progressed to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure. Of the 15 Stage 2 complaints, five (33%) were not upheld, seven (47%) were partially upheld, three were upheld (20%).

A breakdown is provided below of the seven Housing Service and eight Hillingdon Homes complaints that progressed to Stage 2 with an explanation provided of the action taken to resolve them.

Housing Services

Complaint details	Outcome	Action taken
HC-000857 Alleged lack of support and advice given during a homeless application.	Partially Upheld	Upheld complaint that the decision could have been conveyed more sensitively. Did not uphold complaint about communication being unclear.
HC-000865 Complaint about the decision of being 'intentionally homeless' by LBH.	Not Upheld	No maladministration identified.
HC-000915 Complaint that all people bringing sensitive confidential data should be given an appointment.	Partially Upheld	Benefit Service is to introduce an appointments system, which is to be robust and customer focussed.
HC-000973 Complaint about the housing priority banding scheme and advice given regarding the bidding process.	Not Upheld	No evidence of maladministration – housing application dealt with properly.
HC-000980 Complaint about the management of housing needs.	Not Upheld	No evidence of maladministration – housing application dealt with properly.
HC-001049 Unhappy that the council did not follow procedures when dealing with a homelessness application.	Partially Upheld	Upheld complaint that the decision could have been conveyed more sensitively. However, did not uphold complaint that procedure (legislation) was not followed.
HC-001067	Partially Upheld	Upheld complaint that client was

Complaint details	Outcome	Action taken
Complaint about an alleged breach of confidentiality.		not told the implication of giving consent to share information for his housing application.. However, did not uphold complaint that his confidentiality had been breached as he had given written consent for this to be done.

Hillingdon Housing Service

Complaint details	Outcome	Action taken
HC-000628 Complaint about the failure to identify dampness.	Upheld	We agreed to carry out works to address the damage caused by the leaks from the flat above.
HC-000764 Complaint that the manager was not providing entertainment for the residents living in sheltered accommodation.	Partially Upheld	Upheld complaint that communication to the residents should have been clearer about what will be provided. Did not uphold complaint that manager was contractually obliged to arrange provide entertainment.
HC-000890 Complaint about damp problems that had not been resolved for over 2 years.	Partially Upheld	Upheld complaint that there had been a delay in dealing with damp. Did not uphold cause of dampness that this was due to Local Authority.
HC-001015 Tenant complained about anti-social behaviour activities.	Upheld	Officers advised of steps to take when dealing with a management transfer i.e. what assistance the council will provide.
HC-001087 Utilities were not working for three weeks after the tenant moved in and as a result she incurred costs of temporary heating.	Upheld	We accepted that the complainant was entitled to the reimbursement of the temporary heating costs and have paid these to the tenant.
HC-001090 Complainant unhappy with water supply to the block of flats (lack of water pressure).	Not Upheld	This problem required a difficult technical investigation to find the cause of the fault.
HC-001090 Complaint that two further	Not Upheld	This problem required a difficult technical investigation to find the

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Complaint details	Outcome	Action taken
breakdowns (water pressure) in water supply to the block of flats after it had been repaired.		cause of the fault.
HC-001179 Complaint that her telephone call was terminated by a Council Officer and that this was a breach of her Human Rights.	Partially Upheld	Upheld complaint that we should have told the resident why her telephone call was being terminated. Did not uphold complaint that her Human Rights had been breached.

c. Stage 3 – Chief Executive of the Council

The Chief Executive commissions an investigation by an officer in Democratic Services and responds to the complainant in light of the findings of the investigation.

During 2011/12, four complaints progressed to Stage 3 of the complaints procedure, this compares favourably with 2010/11 (4) and 2009/10 (3). Please see table 5 below

Table 5 – Total Number of Complaints Progressing to Stage 3

Service Area	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Housing Services	2	2	4
Hillingdon Housing Service	1	2	0
Total Housing	3	4	4

A breakdown is provided below of the four Housing service complaints which progressed to Stage 3 with an explanation provided of the action taken to resolve them. Only one of the four complaints was partially upheld. Hillingdon Housing Service received no Stage 3 Complaints.

Complaint details	Outcome	Action taken
HC-000642 Complaint about inability to resolve vermin problem in a private sector property.	Partially Upheld	Upheld the part of the complaint that council staff did not keep the tenant informed of what action was being taken to resolve the vermin problem. Did not uphold the complaint that the tenant's questions had not been answered.
HC-000711 Complaint about vermin.	Withdrawn	Complaint withdrawn as action taken by the Council to deal with rodents.
HC-000980	Not Upheld	No maladministration

Complaint about a 'rushed' homeless application and incorrect banding on housing waiting list.		identified.
HC-001114 Complaint about perceived failures in processing a homeless application	Not Upheld	Council acted in accordance with legislation and guidance.

d. Taking it further - Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

The LGO is empowered to investigate complaints where it appears that our own complaints procedure has not resolved the complaint. Complainants can refer their complaint to the LGO at any time, although the LGO normally refers the complaint back to us if a complaint has not been through all three stages of the local complaints procedure.

We work with the Ombudsman to ensure that they are informed of the rationale of our decision-making and we openly apologise when we need to. As a result of our approach and the lack of evidence from complainants to support their complaint, the LGO have decided to investigate fewer complaints made against this council during 2011/12. Please see table 6. We will continue to adopt this approach and co operate with the Ombudsman in their investigations.

Table 6 Hillingdon complaints/enquiries received by the LGO

Service Area	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Housing Services	7	8	6
Hillingdon Housing Service	3	2	2
Total Housing	10	10	8

When comparing 2011/12 (8) with the previous two years (10), there has been a small reduction in the number of complaints escalating to the LGO. See table 6 above. The table below provides a breakdown of the eight complaints that were dealt with by the LGO – none of these complaints were upheld.

Complaint Details	LGO Decision	Recommendations
HC – 000628 Complaint about damage caused by the leak by the tenant above her flat.	Not upheld	Discontinued on the basis that we carried out works to address the damage caused by the leaks.
HC – 000658 Complaint by a neighbour that she was not consulted by the Council of a rear extension to her neighbours property.	Not Upheld	LGO discontinued their investigation on the basis that we apologised to the complainant and pay £250 in compensation.
HC – 000865 Complaint that a tenant should not	Not upheld	Discontinued on the basis that the complaint had

Complaint Details	LGO Decision	Recommendations
have been evicted because her arrears had been paid three days before she was evicted.		been submitted prematurely to the LGO
HC – 000894 Complaint that the Council had awarded a tenant a Band D priority for re housing.	Not upheld	Discontinued on the basis that we reassessed need and upgraded the complainants Banding to B.
HC – 000980 Complaint that the Council treated the complainant unfairly by failing to allocate him a council property despite his mental health problems.	Not upheld	Complaint submitted too late i.e. outside 12 month.
HC – 001148 Complaint that the council has not re-housed a tenant because she has asthma.	Not upheld	LGO decided that there was no evidence of fault by the Council.
HC – 001149 Complaint that the Council was wrong to decide that she was intentionally homeless and that the Council failed to provide emergency accommodation pending review.	Not upheld	Discontinued on the basis that there were alternative remedies open to the complainant i.e. appeal the decision to the courts.
HC – 001176 Complaint that the Council refused to accept a homeless application from her or provide her with temporary accommodation.	Not upheld	Discontinued on the basis that there were alternative remedies open to the complainant i.e. appeal the decision to the courts.

Annex 2 – Complaints about Adult Social Care Services

The procedure for dealing with Adult Social Care complaints is regulated by the 'The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009'. This sets out the two stage complaint procedure that Local Authorities are required to follow and it applies to older people, people with a physical disability, people with a learning disability and other vulnerable people. This is the same procedure used by health care services.

The Complaint Procedure

The complaint procedure is as follows:

- Stage 1 – Local Resolution.
- Local Government Ombudsman.

This procedure is far less prescriptive, and operates a one stage procedure, with escalation directly to the LGO should the complainant be dissatisfied with the response from the Local Authority. The intention of this procedure is to allow the Local Authority the opportunity to:

- seek effective and complete resolution at the first attempt;
- to remove bureaucracy; and
- designed to empower complainants in shaping from the outset the approach to the complaint.

Stage 1 – Local Resolution

Table 7 - Comparison of Stage One Complaints

Service Area	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Learning Disability	18	15	4	6
Mental Health	5	1	0	3
Older People	74	37	30	42
Physical/sensory Disability	13	6	17	18
Total Social Care	110	59	51	69

Table 7 sets out the number of complaints received at Stage 1 of this procedure. When comparing 2011/12 (69) with 2010/11 (51) this is an increase of 18. Of the 69 complaints 32 were not upheld, 11 were upheld, 22 were partially upheld and 4 were withdrawn

Table 8 – Summary of complaints received by theme at stage 1

Theme	Adult Social Care
Policy decisions	1

Staff attitude/slow service	5
Service Failure	63
Total	69

Policy decisions (1 complaint)

One family complained that they should not have to pay for their mother's care.

Staff attitude/slow service (5 complaints)

The reasons why people complained were as follows:

- Three people did not agree with the outcome of occupational assessments because they felt that the assessment did not take into account the full needs of the person being assessed. It was their view that the assessment was not conducted in line with the Council's eligibility criteria/policy for social care; and
- Two people complained because they felt that decisions were communicated to them in a non-empathetic way.

Service failure (63 Complaints)

The reasons why people complained were as follows:

- Four complaints about home carers not attending a client's home in line with the care plan;
- Five people complained about the quality of residential and nursing care provided;
- Five complained about the lack of communication or that regular updates were not provided;
- 10 people were unhappy at the length of time they had to wait for assessments to be carried out;
- 12 people were unhappy that a review of peoples needs was carried which led to changes to existing care packages. They were unhappy with the recommendations made (Reablement) and care packages (changes to Direct Payments);
- 12 people complained about Direct Payments (DP) – disputed monies requested, reductions in the care package, not informed that they were entitled to DP and unhappy that DP were discontinued following reviews/re-assessments; and
- 15 complaints related to a range of different issues such as the perceived lack of help from social services, dissatisfied with the advice provided by a member of staff, unhappy with the conduct of an advocate, delay in responding to their concerns, unhappy that therapy was withdrawn without any consultation.

As a result of these complaints we have:

- asked private/voluntary sector home care providers and residential/nursing home providers to look into complaints and address the concerns;
- undertaken regular visits to care providers by the Council's Care Inspection Team and this has contributed to improvements in the quality of care provided;
- staff have been reminded of the need to ensure that information is provided at regular and timely intervals;
- care packages cannot continue year on year without being reviewed but there is a requirement to carry out a re assessment at regular intervals. Staff from the Reablement Team are asked to provide intensive support to people for up to six weeks, which may enable that person to lead a more independent life; and
- the Direct Payments Agreement provides people with information on how Direct Payments will operate and what they can use it for. Where people are unclear they are advised to contact the Direct Payments team.

Local Government Ombudsman

Table 9 – Comparison of Stage 2 complaints escalated to the LGO

Service Area	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Learning Disability		1	3
Mental Health		0	0
Older People	4	3	6
Physical/sensory Disability	1	1	2
Total Social Care	5	5	11

During 2011/12 there has been an increase in the number of complaints progressing to the LGO compared to the previous year. However, only three of these complaints was upheld. A breakdown is provided below of the 11 Adult Social Care complaints that progressed to Stage 2 with an explanation provided of the action taken to resolve them.

Adult Social Care LGO Referrals

Complaint Details	LGO Decision	Recommendations
HC-000704 Complaint about the assessment process and the conduct of the Care Manager.	Outside their Jurisdiction	N/A
HC-000722 Complaint about the appropriateness of the placement of client and the time it took to carry out the assessment.	Upheld	Discontinued on the basis that the Local Authority apologised for the delay in carrying out the

Complaint Details	LGO Decision	Recommendations
		assessment.
HC-000757 Complaint about the move to a nursing home and poor communication	Outside their Jurisdiction	N/A
HC-000761 Complaint about the decision to request monies as a result of a 'misuse' of funds (Direct Payments).	Upheld	Discontinued claim on the basis that the Local Authority waives the recovery of misused funds because it had not been clearly explained to the client what they could use Direct Payments for nor was it clearly set out in the Care Plan.
HC-000877 Complaint about the assessment process for Occupational Therapy team.	Not upheld	No maladministration identified.
HC-000893 Complaint about the conduct of external carers who have attended homes without wearing appropriate ID badges.	Not upheld	Discontinued on the basis that we agreed that carer's would wear ID badges at all times and give their names if asked.
HC-001041 Unhappy with the quality of care provided to Aunt.	Upheld	Apologise for the conflicting statements and differing views expressed.
HC-001005 Complaint relating to the conduct of staff carrying out a Direct Payments review.	Not upheld	Discontinued on the basis that the Council agreed to carry out an assessment of the complainants need for outreach services.
HC-001080 Complaint about Social Cares team's involvement with a case relating largely to a claim for monies owed.	Not upheld	LGO did not find any maladministration.
HC-001085 Five issues raised within this complaint about the care provided by a care home.	Not upheld	Discontinued because no evidence of injustice suffered by the complainant.
HC-001108 Complaint about therapy being withdrawn without any consultation.	Not upheld	No fault was found by the LGO in the way the Council reached its decision.

Mediation

For some complaints it will not be appropriate, or possible, to resolve them through the complaint process. Particularly where there has been a breakdown in the relationship between the service provider and the service user or where emotions are running high. In these the Complaints and Service Improvement Manager will consider whether mediation is an option that should be considered.

The Complaints Manager will contact both parties to see if they will agree to mediation. (Mediation is not possible without the agreement of those concerned). If both parties are agreeable, mediation by an independent mediator will allow both sides to:

- express their own views;
- think about how to put things right;
- come together to reach a solution.

During 2011/12, there were no complaints that were referred for mediation.

Annex 3 – Complaints about Children and Family services

Complaints made by children or on their behalf are governed by the Children Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1738). This sets out the three stage complaint procedure that Local Authorities are required to follow when dealing with complaints made by for example any child or young person, any local authority foster carer, children leaving care, Special Guardians, persons wishing to adopt a child, etc.

The Complaint Procedure

Informal Complaints

We will try to resolve enquiries/concerns on the spot by discussing the problem with a complainant and trying to resolve it. If we can solve the problem we will do so, immediately.

Stage 1 – Local Resolution

We will listen to the complainant to find out what is wrong and if necessary arrange for an advocate to speak for the complainant. An advocate is often a children's rights officer who does not work for the local authority.

Upon receipt of a complaint, a manager will look into the issues raised and see what needs to happen to sort it out. The manager will investigate the complaint then write to the complainant or their advocate within 10 working days and it will explain what they have done to resolve the complaint.

Between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012, the Local Authority received 56 complaints (compared with 40 complaints in the corresponding period 2010/11). The increase in complaints is largely due to the Children in Need Team who recorded 6 complaints for 2010/11 but 22 in 2011/12. See Table 10 below.

Of the 56 complaints recorded 39 (70%) were upheld (either fully or partially), 12 (21%) were not upheld and 5 (9%) were withdrawn by the complainant.

Whilst we are striving to improve the speed of our response times, it should be noted that a lot of our effort is employed at Stage 1 to resolve complaints and stop it escalating to Stage 2. This approach can lengthen the stage to resolve the complaint and that is why not more than 24 complaints were fully resolved within the 10 working day target. However, early resolution is preferred by complainants and in turn this does save the Council money by avoiding the need to commission an independent investigation of the complaint at stage 2.

Table 10 – Stage 1 Complaints recorded by Teams

Service User Group	Complaints Received 2010/11	Complaints Received 2011/12
Asylum Service	5	4
Resources	0	0
Adoption and Permanency	1	1
Fostering	0	0
Looked After Children	3	4
Children in Care 1	2	0
Children In Care 2	3	3
16+	4	3
Family Support	0	0
Referral and Assessment Team (Assessment and Intervention Team)	4	5
Children in Need	6	22
Intensive Family Support	0	0
Children with Disabilities	11	13
Child Protection	0	1
Other	1	0
Total	40	56

An analysis of the 56 complaints has identified three main reasons why people complained. These were as follows:

- **Policy decisions** - 1 complainant was unhappy with the outcome of their occupational therapy assessment and the resulting decision.
- **Service Failure** – 38 complainants were unhappy with the way staff communicated unwelcome decisions such as the outcome of assessments and decisions that directly affect clients and their families. They also felt that staff did not keep them informed of developments and the decisions being made that affected their family members.
- **Staff Attitude/Slow Service** – 17 complainants were unhappy with the length of time it took to provide information or services or assessments.

Stage 2 – Independent Investigation

If a complainant is not happy with the letter from the manager, the Complaints and Service Improvement Manager will arrange for two people who do not work for the local authority to look into the issues raised. The Investigating Officer and Independent Person will look into everything and talk to everyone involved and then write a report on what they have found. This will normally take up to 65 working days from the date the written statement of complaint was agreed to complete. Upon receipt of the report, the Deputy Director for Children Services will then write to the complainant and tell them what will happen next.

No complaints escalated to Stage 2 during 2011/12 but three complaints logged in 2011/12 have since been escalated to Stage 2. However, the committee should note that in comparison with other Local Authorities in London, who process up to 12 Stage 2 complaints annually, we have far fewer Stage 2 complaints.

Stage 3 – Review Panels

If the complainant remains unhappy with the findings, the Complaints and Service Improvement Manager will arrange for a panel to meet and look at all the issues raised in the complaint and read the report that was written for stage 2. The panel will be made up of three new people who do not work for the local authority and their role is to speak to all the people involved and ask them questions about what has gone wrong and why the complainant is not happy. The three people on the panel will talk about the whole situation and together they will come up with some ideas of how things can be improved. From beginning to end this stage takes up to 72 working days to complete.

There were no Stage 3 complaints in 2011/12 and for the previous two years. This compares favourably with other Local Authorities who recorded up to 7 Stage 3 complaints.

Local Government Ombudsman

A further option for complainants is the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) who is empowered to investigate where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint. Complainants can refer their complaint to the LGO at any time, although the Ombudsman normally refers the complaint back to the Council if it has not been considered under our procedure first.

During 2011/12, three complainants chose to escalate their complaint from Stage 1 direct to the LGO, rather than follow the complaint procedure. The LGO decided not to investigate these complaints and informed the complainants that they needed to follow the Council's complaints procedure.

Mediation

For some complaints it will not be appropriate, or possible, to resolve them through the complaint process. Particularly where there has been a breakdown in the relationship between the service provider and the service user or where emotions are running high. In such situations the Complaints and Service Improvement Manager will consider whether mediation is an option that should be considered.

The Complaints and Service Improvement Manager will contact both parties to see if they will agree to mediation. (Mediation is not possible without the agreement of those concerned). If both parties are agreeable, mediation by an independent mediator will allow both sides to:

- express their own views;

- think about how to put things right; and
- come together to reach a solution.

During 2011/12, there were no complaints that were referred for mediation.

Annex D – Members Enquiries

Enquiries can be submitted to officers on behalf of residents to Elected Members for further information. This can include questions about an assessment, decisions or quality of service experienced by our resident.

Table 11 – Members Enquiries received for 2011/12

Service Type	Total number received	%
Housing Service	632	57%
Hillingdon Housing Service	253	23%
Adult Social Care	141	13%
Children and Family Service	41	4%
Commissioning, Contracts and Supply	32	3%
Total	1,099	100%

During 2011/12, we received 1,099 enquiries from Elected Members on behalf of residents. When comparing the figure for 2010/11 of 903 with 2011/12, this is an increase of 196 (21%). See table 15 above.

Of the 1,099 enquiries, Housing accounted for 885 (80%), Adults Social Care 141 (13%), Children’s and Families Service 41 (4%) and Commissioning, Contracts and Supply 32 (3%).

Table 12 – Members Enquiries by Service Type

a. Children and Family

Service Type	Total number
Children and Family Service	41
Total	41

b. Adults Social Care

Service Type	Total number
Specialist Services	56
Access and Assessments	40
Adults Personalised Services	13
Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol	12
OPS Personalised Services	9
Directorate ASC	7

Safeguarding ASC	4
Total	141

c. Commissioning, Contracts and Supply

Service Type	Total number
Joint Commissioning	19
Housing Supply	13
Total	32

d. Housing

Service Type	Total number
Housing Advice	442
Private Sector Housing	102
Community Housing Office – Uxbridge	64
Benefits	63
Hillingdon Housing – Repairs	48
Community Housing Office – Hayes	33
Community Housing Office – Ruislip	28
Hillingdon Housing – Directorate	20
Directorate (Housing)	19
Hillingdon Housing – Caretaking	16
Hillingdon Housing – Surveyors	12
Hillingdon Housing – Leasehold	7
Sheltered Housing	6
Hillingdon Housing – Match Team	4
Hillingdon Housing - Allocations	4
Hillingdon Housing – Heating	4
Hillingdon Housing – Tenancy Service	3
Hillingdon Housing – Careline	3
Hillingdon Housing – Arrears	2
Hillingdon Housing – Estate Services	2
Hillingdon Housing – Programmed Repairs	1
Hillingdon Housing – Community Involvement	1
Hillingdon Housing – Planned Works	1
Total	885

Table 13 – Top Five enquiries by Service Type 2011/12

Service Type	Total number
Housing Advice	442
Private Sector Housing	102
Community Housing Office Uxbridge	64
Benefits	63
Specialist Services	56

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APPENDIX A

Report of the Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee 2012/13

Safeguarding Children Who are Reported Missing



Members of the Committee

Cllr Catherine Dann (Chairman)
Cllr Judith Cooper (Vice Chairman)
Cllr John Hensley
Cllr John Riley
Cllr David Benson
Cllr Susan O'Brien
Cllr Jazz Dhillon
Cllr Lindsay Bliss

Draft Final Report – Safeguarding Children Who are Reported Missing

Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee – 21
November 2012

Part I – Members, Public and Press

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Chairman's Foreword



Catherine Dann

*Councillor Catherine Dann
Chairman of the Education & Children's Services Policy Overview
Committee*

Draft Final Report – Safeguarding Children Who are Reported Missing

Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee – 21
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Part I – Members, Public and Press

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Following its review the Education and Children's Services Policy Overview Committee has made the following recommendations to Cabinet:

RECOMMENDATION 1 – That the written guidance for staff in residential homes on what to do if a child goes missing from care, should be fully implemented to ensure that the information shared with the Police incorporates all information needed to help find / trace a missing child, including mobile phone numbers and oyster and numbers etc

RECOMMENDATION 2 – That the written guidance should also be extended to all the staff working in private and voluntary care homes for children in the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – That the Local Safeguarding Children's Board be asked to extend multi-agency training on missing children to foster carers and residential staff from the private and voluntary sector in the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION 4 – That the Metropolitan Police public protection desk in the Borough be asked to produce biennial statistics on the prevalence of children reported missing from the six "care homes" across the Borough, and if possible extend this to include all foster placements placed in the Borough by other local authorities.

RECOMMENDATION 5 – That officers be asked to explore some of the findings of the review and the feasibility of adopting the following:

- **To explore the viability of a system of dealing with children who were repeatedly reported missing without involving the Police in the first instance.**
- **To investigate the use of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as a means through which to share intelligence on missing children and, ultimately, to reduce the number of children going missing from care.**
- **To explore the possibility of using a bus to bring the support and services offered by voluntary sector organisations to children in care homes.**
- **To consider the possibility of harmonising the terminology used with regards to missing people across all organisations in Hillingdon. This would help to ensure that the reporting of cases and collection of useful data would be improved and made more accurate.**

Draft Final Report – Safeguarding Children Who are Reported Missing

Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee – 21
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- **For the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB) to review statistics on children missing from care in the Borough twice annually.**
- **In relation to education, and particularly secondary education, reference was made to whether there was adequate communication between schools and the relevant agencies with regard to Looked after Children who did not attend school. This could also form part of the MASH network**

BACKGROUND

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the review was to look at the statutory duties of the Council and partner agencies with regard to children and young people who are reported missing; and to review local practice as it reflects national policy and guidance.

The terms of reference of the review were as follows:

- To learn about national policy and statutory guidance relating to children who are reported missing.
- To learn about the research relating to children who run away, or who are reported missing.
- To understand the reporting arrangements for data about children missing at national level.
- To understand the local reporting arrangements for collecting data on children reported missing in Hillingdon.
- To learn about best practice initiatives for safeguarding children reported missing across the country, and in other local authorities and partner agencies.
- To review the practice around safeguarding children reported missing in the locality of Hillingdon.
- To be updated about the arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable children who may go missing at a port of entry; and to understand the data related to Heathrow Airport as a port of entry.
- After due consideration of the above, to bring forward positive and practical policy recommendations (if needed), in relation to the Council's approach to children reported missing from care.

To meet the objectives of the review Members held meetings on 12 September and 10 October 2012, when background information and evidence was received to help the Committee in forming their findings.

The information, evidence and findings of the review are set out in the next sections under the following headings:

1. Information and analysis.
2. Evidence and enquiry.
3. Recommendations.

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INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

In June 2012, an All-Party Parliamentary Group published findings into its enquiry into children missing from care. This initiative was supported by the Children's Society and other non-Governmental organisations with an interest in safeguarding children.

http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/u32/joint_appg_inquiry_report...pdf

The Policy Overview Committee conducted a review in Hillingdon on child trafficking in 2009/2010; and asked to be updated in the future about progress relating to children who had been reported missing after arriving at the airport. This review brought together both the national initiatives around children missing from care; alongside the local issues which arise due to the close proximity of Heathrow Airport. The intention of the review was to provide reassurance to the local Council members about Hillingdon's responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable children who may be at risk, as a consequence of running away, or repeatedly going missing.

The review received reports, presentations, supplementary handouts, and heard from witnesses about the issues relating to children missing; both in Hillingdon and more widely across the London region.

Data was supplied along with an analysis of the issues to enable members to understand the difficulties in using data to properly depict the prevalence of this issue as a local and national trend.

The review also received documentation relating to research on children missing from care, and its links to serious case reviews such as the recent ones in Rochdale and Derby, where children were sexually exploited whilst being reported missing from care.

Background Reading

The help Members with their review reference was made to a wide-ranging selection of background information.p

- Report from the joint enquiry into children who go missing from care (June 2012 – APPG)

http://s3.amazonaws.com/rcpp/assets/attachments/1461_joint_appg_inquiry_report..original.pdf

- DCSF (2009) Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home and care

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<http://www.education.gov.uk/search/results?q=statutory+guidance+on+children+who+run+away+and+go+missing+from+home+care>

- London Child Protection Procedures – Version 4 – supplementary procedures on safeguarding children who go missing from home or care

http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures/supplementary_procedures.html

- Barnados (2012) *Cutting them free* : How is the UK progressing in protecting its children from sexual exploitation

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/cutthemfree.htm

- Barnados (2011) What's going on to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation? – Jago, S et al

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/news_and_events/media_centre/press_releases/press_releases_archive.htm?ref=73573

- CEOP (2011) Child trafficking update – strategic threat assessment

http://ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/child_trafficking_update_2011.pdf

- The Children's Society (2011) *Make runaways safe launch report*

<http://makerunawayssafe.org.uk/>

- DfE (March 2012) Children's homes in England – data pack

<http://www.education.gov.uk/search/results?q=childrens+homes+in+england+data+pack>

- DfE (March 2010) *The Children Act 1989: Guidance and regulations, Volume 2, Care Planning, placement and case review* – London: HM Government

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<http://www.education.gov.uk/search/results?q=children+act+1989+volume+2+care+planning>

- ACPO Guidance on the management, recording and investigations of missing persons (2010) NPIA

<http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2011/201103CRIIMP02.pdf>

- Rochdale – serious case review – executive summary
- Derby – serious case review – executive summary 2011

http://www.google.co.uk/search?q=derby+serious+case+review&hl=en&qbv=2&gs_l=hp.1.1.0i2j0i5i4j0i5i30j0i8i3.1125.7391.0.10735.12.9.0.3.3.0.187.1016.3j6.9.0...0.0.iHX8vwLPohs&og=derby+serious+cas

- Child sexual exploitation – Government Action Plan – 2011 – Tim Loughton

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/tackling%20child%20sexual%20exploitation%20-%20action%20plan.pdf>

- ‘Puppet on a String’

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/ctf_puppetonastring_report_final.pdf

- Missing children – ECPAT

<http://www.ecpat.org.uk/content/missing-children-dalals-story>

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Key Issues

Going missing is a key indicator that a child may be at risk of abuse or exploitation. When children do go missing, they are often at very serious risk of significant harm in the form of physical abuse, sexual exploitation, trafficking or neglect.

Very recently there has been publicity on the need to protect these vulnerable children. For example, the media interest in the Rochdale case and the Derby serious case review are examples of this societal concern and the possible relationship with gangs, etc. The Children's Commissioner has been asked by Government (Tim Loughton) to conduct a national survey of the prevalence of gang activity; and children going missing can be an indicator of serious crime being committed in an organised way.

<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/info/csegg1>

There have been problems associated with the police data and local authority data around the prevalence of children who are reported missing during any year, not only missing from the care system but also missing from parental care in the community. It is estimated by the police that 10,000 individual children are reported missing in a year, but this does not seem to be reflected in the data collected by Local Safeguarding Children's Boards or by other national bodies such as the Department for Education.

The remit of this review was to cover the issues relating to data collection at the national and local level; and also the implications for practice and the intelligence that should be shared to help protect and safeguard Hillingdon's children.

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EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY

Witness sessions for the review were held on the 12 September and 10 October 2012 when Members heard from the following:

- The Council's Service Manager for Safeguarding Children and Reviewing Service
- The Council's Training and Developing Manager for Safeguarding
- Detective Inspector Graham Hamilton from the Missing Persons' Unit
- Steve White, Manager of Hillingdon's Children's Resource Centre (Mulberry Parade)
- Marie Fleming, Youth Worker and Manager of Fountains Mill

Safeguarding Arrangements for Children Missing from Care

The Local Safeguarding Children Board has developed a 3 tier model to address the issue of children being reported missing from care. At a strategic level, the Local Safeguarding Children Board (main Board meeting comprising core agencies and attended by senior managers) receives data relating to children who have been reported missing in the local area, and also children who may be at risk of trafficking and going missing after arrival at Heathrow airport.

A secondary tier of response includes a number of sub-groups which have been created for middle managers, both in the local authority and across partner agencies, to determine policy and levels of response to key issues relating to children reported missing, or likely to be at risk of exploitation and trafficking. These sub-groups meet 6 times a year, and also include representatives from non-Governmental organisations such as ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking), the NSPCC, Action for Children and CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection).

At the operational level, there are regular multi-agency meetings to examine the intelligence relating to children reported missing, both those who arrive through the airport and those who are reported missing within the locality of Hillingdon. The Operational Meeting relating to the airport includes representatives from the Heathrow Intelligence Unit, Paladin (law enforcement) representatives from the UK Border Agency (UKBA) and also the local authority. This examines potential indicators for when children who have newly arrived through the airport terminals, could be at risk of being trafficking or going missing. This multi-agency response has helped to reduce

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considerably the number of children going missing, since the last review by the Policy Overview Committee in 2009/2010.

In addition, there is a multi-agency operational meeting which meets 8 times per year, to discuss all the children and young people who have been reported missing to the local police Missing Persons Unit based in West Drayton. The purpose of this meeting is to share information about possible indicators of exploitation; and share intelligence about other possible gang related issues or exposure to criminal activity.

Both the operational meetings mentioned above have a remit to create a risk management plan for each individual child, to ensure that the safeguarding needs of these children are kept paramount through regular de-briefings and feedback within the professional network.

The Terms of Reference for these operational groups do include membership from local providers who look after children within Hillingdon's boundaries. (Eg Blandford House, Elm Tree Unit etc).

The work of these operational groups and this 3 tiered model has been officially recognised by the Home Office in its strategy for addressing child trafficking, and also in the allied guidance for this purpose. In addition, representatives from Hillingdon were called as witnesses at the recent All Party Parliamentary Select Committee on children missing from care.

The Terms of Reference for the multi-agency groups are maintained on the Local Safeguarding Children Board website along with other information for professionals, who need to be mindful of the risks associated with children going missing from care.

<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=15535>

What we know about children that go missing

The review was provided with background to the statistics behind children that go missing.

- 38% return within one night
- 75% of children return home in 48 hours
- 90% were found after 5 days
- 16% were gone for 4 weeks
- 50% go missing more than once
- 20% go missing three times or more

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In terms of gender, boys run away from a younger age (pre-teens), whilst teenage girls run away more frequently than boys. The review was informed that in relation to ethnicity, in terms of absolute numbers, most runaways were white British, however, children from ethnic minorities were proportionately over represented.

One of the reasons that there were concerns about missing children was that whilst they were missing statistics showed that there was a chance that they would be involved in crime, were victims of crime and were subjected to sexual exploitation and serious organised abuse. Statistically an enormous amount of young people who go missing were hurt on the one or last occasion they ran away (11%), 1 in 8 were physically hurt, 1 in 9 were sexually assaulted and 1 in 5 stole, begged or did other things to survive whilst missing.

Statistics showed that a half of 16-17 year old runaways were homeless; 1 in 6 runaways slept rough or with a stranger while away; 45% with friends and 36% were more likely to stay with other family members because they were more likely to be forced to leave.

Statistics showed that of the total of people that went missing, 36% were adults, 30% were aged 15-17 and the rest were other children under the age of 15.

The review was informed that the general reasons of why children went missing was running away from problems or conflict at home or at school, trafficked children or children who were part of organised abuse and children who had been abducted by a family member or a stranger.

In relation to home circumstances, 81% of runaways went to live with a parent, partner, carer or relative, 25% were forced to leave and some, especially girls were groomed by strangers.

An area which was of great concern was that statistically, 70% of children who ran away overnight were never reported to the Police.

Prevention

The most important way to prevent children from running away was to find out the reasons for why they had run away. This could be done by carrying out return interviews. The review was informed that the independent and voluntary sector had an important role to play in this, as children would be much more likely to speak to someone independent.

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At a national level, steps had been taken to strengthen the arrangements to support missing children. Responsibility had been transferred to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre.

CEOP Preventative programmes would take place in schools such as “Thinkuknow” which would send a prevention message directly to children and young people on risks around going missing.

With regard to training, CEOP would focus training and best practice advice for police on identifying risks and on the consequences of a child or young person going missing.

Reference was made to the Department of Education who collected information on the number of Looked after Children who had gone missing for more than 24 hours.

The strategic guidance suggested that for prevention at a local level, local authorities should:

- Identify places where children go missing from
- The Local Safeguarding Children’s Board to create a multi-agency response plan
- Identify high risk individuals through local partnerships

There were difficulties with cross boundary issues within Hillingdon. There were providers in other local authority areas that looked after Hillingdon children and vice versa. Regular multi-agency meetings took place, including with care homes, to ensure numbers correlated. The challenge for the authorities was to find the numbers of those children who had not been reported as gone missing.

Particular mention was made of the work this Council had done in relation to children and young people who had gone missing after arriving in the country. Between 2007 and 2009, 79 young people had gone missing from care shortly after arriving in the country. Many of these children were potential child trafficking victims. An operation model was established, working in partnership with law enforcement agencies, based on multi-agency working and pro-active identification of risks. This Council’s approach had significantly reduced the number of potentially trafficked children going missing, and reference had been made to this work in the Government Strategy document on Missing Children and Adults.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The Local Safeguarding Children’s Board provided training to all agencies to understand the roles and responsibilities when children suffered harm when

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they had gone missing. Reference was made to effective multi-agency information sharing which would come on-line at the end of the year, and which would greatly improve information about families. This was called the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

At a national level, the Government would ensure national capability added value by means of the Missing Persons Bureau and CEOP having processes in place to review cases. In addition the statutory guidance on children who runaway or go missing from care would be revised to give local authorities a clearer understanding of their duties. Local authorities would now have to make regular reports to Council Members with responsibility for Corporate Parenting on patterns of children gone missing from care.

Reference was made to the Child Rescue Alert system which would be used to send out information to other colleagues and agencies nationwide about concerns regarding young people who had gone missing.

Discussion took place on the numbers of children and young people which went missing in the Borough and some concern was expressed by Members that the data which the Council had detailed only the number of Looked after Children who went missing. The Police had details of the number of total children and young people who went missing, but this was for Greater London.

The review noted that the CEOP would improve the data on missing children. The point was reiterated that not all the incidents of children and young people who had gone missing, were reported.

The MASH hub would also provide better data, with all relevant agencies feeding their information into the hub. Particular mention was made to those children who missed school and the review was reassured that operational meetings took place monthly between officers from education and safeguarding officers so information was shared. The review asked whether it would be appropriate for the Youth Offending Service to be represented at these operational meetings and officers said they would investigate this.

Reference was also made to the need to secure formal arrangements with the Borough's Academy schools, to ensure that information on missing children was shared with the local authority.

Information from Witnesses

An integral part of the review was hearing evidence from the Police and from workers who worked in the home care environment. The review received the following evidence:

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Police

- Comparisons between the periods 1 September 2010 – 31 August 2011 and 1 September 2011 – 31 August 2012 showed an increase from 18% to 20% in the proportion of missing children in the Borough being made up of children in care. These figures were made up from children at 6 residential care homes in the Borough.
- An additional 5% of missing children were made up from residential care homes in the Borough which housed children from outside of the area.
- In the first period there had been 286 reported missing children compared to 327 in the latter period. However, it was noted that these figures were largely made up of children who were repeatedly reported missing. One child had been recorded as missing 33 times in a single year.
- The search for missing children could have a significant impact upon Police resources with substantial financial implications.
- Hillingdon had seen 22 high risk cases over the last 12 month period with 8 of these being made up of children from residential care homes.
- Concern was expressed at the lack of information the Police had on those neighbouring local authority Looked after Children who were placed within the Borough's children's homes, together with the unaccompanied children who arrived at Heathrow.

Youth Worker

- The Manager of Fountains Mills and Youth Worker informed the review that she worked with children and young people from the age of 11 to 21, but her primary focus was on 13-19 age group.
- Many of the children and young people she worked with had complex needs and she often signposted them to other services.
- In her experience, the majority of children who run away from home have done so because of conflict in the home. Part of her role was providing mediation with the children and their families.
- Feedback from children was that they needed practical support; they needed something to do and somewhere to go.
- Many children who have run away from home have required practical assistance such as guidance on how to open a bank account. These children also often require mentoring.
- Much of the support and services offered by voluntary sector organisations could not be accessed by children in care homes because they were often unable or unwilling to use public transport.
- A large proportion of children who go missing have also been seen to have significant anger management problems.

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- Reference was made to the mobile youth service bus which was used to engage with young people and get them involved in activities.

Registered Manager from Children's Home

- The Registered Manager from this authority's Mulberry Parade informed the review that many of the children that his establishment cared for, were unaccompanied children who had arrived at Heathrow Airport
- He advised that a large proportion of children had runaway from home before becoming Looked after Children so there was sometimes already a problem.
- Many children reported missing were not connected to any wider community such as a church group or scouts etc.
- Children who run away from care generally had a troubled background and had problems with their families in the past. These children have also usually had a troubled time in the education system. It was noted that these children often find it difficult to make the transition from primary to secondary education.
- Many children who were repeatedly reported missing have made a lifestyle choice and have decided to move towards gaining independence. It was noted that this is especially true for older children in care who were preparing to leave care in the near future.
- The Council only runs 2 of the 6 children's homes in the Borough with the other 4 being run by private and voluntary sector organisations.
- Cases of children going missing from residential care homes, even if they were known to be at a social event and likely to return, were reported to the Police as a matter of course. This process created a significant amount of paperwork which is often unnecessary due to a child's return.
- Regular, multi-agency meetings took place to discuss cases involving missing children which was proving to be an effective way to manage and share information on issues relating to missing children.

Findings

The review considered the evidence provided and suggested the following recommendations of the review:

- There should be implementation of written guidance for staff in all children's residential homes (local authority, private and voluntary) on what to do if a child goes missing from care to ensure the information was shared with the Police. This could include the possibility of "grab packs" being put together for every child entering a care home. This would be an up-to-date file on the child with their telephone number,

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information on who they socialised with, where they socialised and what their history of running away was. This would provide a valuable resource for Police looking for the missing child and could lead to significant time and financial efficiencies.

- To investigate the possibility of requiring Local Authorities which placed out-of-borough children in residential care homes in Hillingdon to provide a “grab pack” as outlined above.
- Multi-agency training could be given on the procedure for dealing with missing children to foster carers and residential staff from both private and voluntary children’s care homes within the Borough.
- To review biennial statistics on missing children from the six children’s care homes in the Borough, and if possible from all foster placements within the Borough, placed by other local authorities. This would include data broken down in detail and qualitative data such as why the child ran away from care.
- To explore the viability of a system of dealing with children who were repeatedly reported missing without involving the Police in the first instance.
- To investigate the use of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as a means through which to share intelligence on missing children and, ultimately, to reduce the number of children going missing from care.
- To explore the possibility of using a bus to bring the support and services offered by voluntary sector organisations to children in care homes.
- To consider the possibility of harmonising the terminology used with regards to missing people across all organisations in Hillingdon. This would help to ensure that the reporting of cases and collection of useful data would be improved and made more accurate.
- For the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB) to review statistics on children missing from care in the Borough twice annually.
- In relation to education, and particularly secondary education, reference was made to whether there was adequate communication between schools and the relevant agencies with regard to Looked after Children who did not attend school. This could also form part of the MASH network

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP REPORT ON THE JOINT INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN WHO GO MISSING FROM CARE

INTRODUCTION

An All Party Parliamentary Group produced a report in June 2012, outlining their enquiry into children who go missing from care. This document was circulated to members of the Policy Overview Committee before the previous meeting in October 2012, and was referred to in the scoping report in July 2012.

This report produced thirty-one separate recommendations which picked up some of the main issues identified within the Parliamentary enquiry.

The full list of recommendations is listed below, along with commentary from the perspective of the London Borough of Hillingdon on how far these recommendations could/should be implemented, at a local/national level.

Recommendation 1: Guidance 238 should be amended so that all children in care have a statutory right to independent advocacy as part of care reviews and placement planning, not just as part of complaint processes.

It is already the expectation that all children in care should have access to independent advocacy, as part of their statutory review and placement planning process. The practice in Hillingdon is for the allocated social worker and/or Independent Reviewing Officer to provide information about the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service at the first statutory review, and ensure that the young person has an information leaflet with a confidential contact telephone number, in terms of how to contact the Children's Rights Service.

Any amendment to guidance would be merely confirming what should be best practice in most local authorities, as it is in Hillingdon.

Recommendation 2: Before placing a child in another local authority, the home local authority should, in collaboration with the receiving local authority, make an assessment of the geographical area to determine whether or not it is safe for the child based on what is known about the risks facing the child.

Any placements that are made on a planned basis do take into account some limited information about the receiving local authority and the geographical area. However, for placements that are made in an emergency, this may

prove to be difficult to achieve, and these are the cases that are usually the most risky.

The information about each geographical area is complex and would require some extensive research, prior to a placement being made from a number of sources; so whilst this is desirable, it may not be achievable for every placement. However, for those children where there is a pattern of running away or possibly trafficking/exploitation, completing such an assessment could easily be built into the checklist for placing such children. This will be explored with the Placement Service in Hillingdon, to improve practice for this targeted cohort of children.

Recommendation 3: The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 should be amended to ensure they adequately meet the needs of children when they go missing. For example they should require the placing authority to call a placement review meeting whenever they are notified that a child in care has gone missing to assess the level of risk and agree an action plan with the host authority and local police.

It is our belief in Hillingdon that the existing procedures are sufficient to enable a placing authority to call a placement review whenever a child has been reported missing, and to develop a risk assessment/action plan for that child. This expectation is already captured in the Child Protection Procedures and national guidance for children who go missing. The overriding issue is about compliance and ensuring that it happens rather than making any further changes to the regulations. A program of regular staff briefings, as we have in Hillingdon, would help to achieve better adherence to the existing procedures.

Recommendation 4: A weighted scorecard, similar to the one recently introduced for adoption, to be introduced for local authorities to assess their provision for children in care who go missing. This should include performance against sufficiency of accommodation duties, the numbers and management of missing incidents, the number of out of area placements and placement stability.

A weighted scorecard would be helpful as an agreed way of rating local authority performance against sufficiency of accommodation alongside the number and management of missing incidents. However, there would need to be absolute clarity about the definitions of whether it is children who are being counted or episodes of children going missing. This would have to be a Central Government national target, which could be implemented locally to provide information to the Local Safeguarding Children Board about the incidents of missing children. A data set about children who go missing from home or care is already being presented to the Local Safeguarding Children Board in Hillingdon, and is replicated in many other Local Safeguarding Children Boards across the country; and so the weighted scorecard may help to consolidate best practice. Overall, having more centrally driven targets

from Government may become unwieldy, and take energies away from best practice in the local area.

Recommendation 5: *The pilot scheme run by Department for Education and Barnardo's to train more foster carers to support trafficked children and/or sexually exploited children should be rolled out nationally with support to help local authorities engage effectively with the scheme.*

This recommendation is wholly desirable to support foster carers who provide care for trafficked or sexually exploited children. In Hillingdon, foster carers already receive such training in the indicators of trafficked children and sexually exploited children; and this has proven to be successful in terms of reducing the numbers of children who go missing from care, especially asylum seeking children. Again, this recommendation reflects what should be best practice.

Recommendation 6: *A legal advocate with parental responsibility should be appointed for all unaccompanied migrant children.*

This recommendation is likely to be unachievable, given the numbers of unaccompanied migrant children, and could also be expensive and unwieldy to administrate through court processes with no evidence of outcomes being improved for this cohort of children. As it stands, in Hillingdon, if there is a particular need for an unaccompanied migrant child to have legal advocacy or a person holding parental responsibility, then legal processes are already followed, and are available in the existing framework; eg special guardianship, etc, on a case by case basis. This recommendation would not be helpful as a prescription for every migrant child, and is probably disproportionate.

Recommendation 7: *For the government to move away from using the term 'out-of-area placements', which defines a process, to defining 'cross-boundary children in care' as an especially vulnerable sub-group within the wider children in care population and for the Children's Improvement Board to lead on sharing best practice on safeguarding cross boundary children in care.*

The change in terminology may well improve the understanding around risk and the risk factors linked to 'cross-boundary children in care'. However, changing the terminology may not improve the practice in any straightforward way. The existing processes and procedures are there already, available to local authorities and should be used consistently to protect the needs of this vulnerable group of children who are prone to running away or being exploited.

The Children's Improvement Board is already taking a lead in terms of sharing best practice, on safeguarding cross boundary children in care as evidenced by the recent review undertaken in Kent of which our own Lead Member, David Simmonds, was a key person in highlighting the issues of cross-boundary children in care.

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Recommendation 8: *For Health and Wellbeing Boards to assess whether the number of available care placements within their area is sufficient to meet the needs of the local population as part of their Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.*

This represents best practice and should already be included in the commissioning arrangements for Health and Well-Being Boards, when they become statutory, underpinned by a comprehensive joint strategic needs assessment. The Children's Commissioning Team in Hillingdon have already included this issue within their own emerging joint strategic needs assessment for the forthcoming year.

Recommendation 9: *LSCBs to request annual statements from local authorities on the number of children from its local authority that are placed 'out of area', the distance from the placement to the 'home' local authority, the type of placements and how many go missing from care. This should include information about unaccompanied migrant children. It should also set out the steps taken to safeguard these groups of children and prevent them going missing, as well as an analysis of return interviews.*

The exact data set which would need to be developed to capture this information is complex. However, a number of Local Safeguarding Children Boards, including the one in Hillingdon, is in the process of collecting data and performance information about children who go missing, to ensure that practice around return interviews is robustly monitored. This work will be done by the Performance & Intelligence Team within the local authority and via the Performance & Quality Sub Group of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Recommendation 10: *The Children's Improvement Board should lead a programme of work to support local authorities to meet the needs of trafficked children through child protection frameworks.* 238 Children's Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations

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This is a very positive initiative and the involvement of the Children's Improvement Board in supporting local authorities to meet the needs of trafficked children is a welcome one. In London, there is already an assessment framework in place which supplements the child protection procedures (Trafficking Tool Kit) and this needs to be applied consistently in practice to drive up standards with this cohort of children. This was demonstrated in a recent London survey carried out by Children and Families Across Borders (CFAB). (Survey findings available on request).

Recommendation 11: *An independent investigation of residential care in England should be undertaken. This should examine the availability of*

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specialist placements for children with complex needs; consider the creation of a nationally funded centre of excellence for children in care to support improvements in their care; address the negative and damaging attitudes of some professionals towards safeguarding older children; address the issue of placing children out of area and the systems in place to safeguard them.

This is a matter for Central Government and for the DfE to consider an independent investigation of standards of practice within residential care. The themes around safeguarding children who are placed in residential care (especially teenagers and older children) are now well documented in serious case reviews; it is the training of staff in implementing this researched and informed best practice which is the most effective solution in safeguarding children placed out of area, as reflected in the operational group already in place within Hillingdon. The training needs to be multi-agency to be most effective (as it is in Hillingdon).

Recommendation 12: *For all Joint Strategic Needs Assessments to include assessment of data on the number of children in care and how many of these have gone missing.*

It would be helpful to have the data quantified in the manner described; however, there would need to be clarity about the definition of ‘missing’ and whether it is children or episodes of going missing, which are being counted. There should be no room for equivocation, as such data can be misleading and will not be helpful if the definitions are not clarified and made consistent throughout a local joint strategic needs assessment; as we have already seen in the review undertaken by this Policy Overview Committee.

Recommendation 13: *The SSDA903 return should be reviewed by the Department for Education in conjunction with the Home Office and a new reporting system which incorporates data from the police and local authorities created. There should be clarity and consensus on how to record why a child goes missing, how long for and any harms they experience whilst away from their placement.*

This recommendation would assist enormously if the various Government Departments, including the Home Office (HO) and Department for Education (DfE) were both aligned in terms of collecting data, and used it uniformly to analyse the types of exploitation for children who are reported missing; to assist in finding out about their experience, whilst being away from their placement or home.

Recommendation 14: *For CEOP and ACPO to review the data collection systems used by forces and ensure they are fit for purpose and adequately safeguard children going missing from care and that there is effective compliance with the ACPO guidance on the management, recording and investigation of missing persons²³⁹.*

It is vital that the police forces across the country have data collection systems that are consistent and align with local data collection systems within the borough police. The Local Safeguarding Children Board in Hillingdon is collaborating already with the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Service (CEOP) who have been given the national lead for missing people and standardising the data collection systems across the country. A representative from CEOP is in discussion with Hillingdon Borough about the issues raised in our operational meeting.

Recommendation 15: *For a comprehensive and independent national system of data collection on trafficked children who go missing to be established.*

This would help local authorities such as Hillingdon to make sense of the information which is collected by the UK Human Trafficking Centre and the Borough Police. The Hillingdon Safeguarding Children Board has already been campaigning for alignment of the data collected on trafficked children, and for using that data to identify the potential threats to children within the borough. Anything that can be done by Central Government to deliver this system would be beneficial for all agencies and practitioners, providing that it is accessible.

Recommendations 16: *For independent care providers to be required to notify their local area authority of all new cross-boundary placements they receive and when placements end as a means of strengthening the notifications system.*

This recommendation would be helpful in capturing the data from non-local authority care providers who set up within the boundaries of the borough. This is a loophole which should be closed and would be helpful in strengthening the local arrangements, such as the operational meeting, which includes independent care providers on an 'invitation basis', at the present time.

Recommendation 17: *Ofsted's inspection framework should be revised to state that inspectors must always contact the local police for data on missing incidents relating to a children's home as part of their inspection, as well as local schools to ask for information on the number of absences recorded for children living in the home.*

The revised Ofsted multi-agency inspection framework includes the intention of picking up safeguarding issues through the local police Missing Persons Unit and will focus on the child's journey through the system. On this basis, no particular requirement should be placed within the Ofsted framework as it is already implied in the framework that has recently been signed off by Ofsted.

Recommendation 18: *Ofsted's inspections should give a greater weighting to children's homes' performance against NMS 5 and 10. These relate to how children's homes effectively manage missing incidents by children in their care, and also the risks that an area presents to children placed there.*

It is Hillingdon's experience that Ofsted inspections are already giving significant weight to children's homes performance against the national minimum standards relating to missing children. Further changes to the Ofsted inspection regime are not required, as there is sufficient scope already in the guidance and the practice of Ofsted has already changed to reflect the recognition of children going missing as a particularly vulnerable cohort of children who need to be safeguarded.

Recommendation 19: *The Department for Education should take steps to overcome the barriers to Ofsted sharing information on the names and locations of children's homes with local police forces.*

Our local experience in Hillingdon has been that Ofsted do share information with children's services who also share this information appropriately with the local police through the various operational meetings that already exist. There are no barriers in principle, to this information being shared at a departmental level between the DfE and the Home Office, as there are clear safeguarding issues at stake for this cohort of children.

Recommendation 20: *Ofsted's reports on individual children's homes should be shared proactively with the local authority, the LSCB, local police force and local schools.*

This is already happening in practice. The outcomes of Ofsted reports on performance of children's homes is proactively shared within the local authority and reported to the LSCB on an ongoing basis, through the performance profile.

Recommendation 21: *Local authorities must ensure that they have a nominated contact to receive information from Ofsted regarding the names and addresses of children's homes in their area.*

Most local authorities have a Head of Safeguarding or Head of Placement Service who acts as a single point of contact for receiving information from Ofsted, regarding the names and addresses of children's homes in their area. Hillingdon already have this in place. The issue is one of communication. The infrastructure and system is already in place for this to happen.

Recommendation 22: *When Ofsted receives an application for a children's home to be registered, it must both notify the local authority's children's services and ensure that the home has been granted planning permission before granting registration.*

239 ACPO guidance on the management, recording and investigations of missing persons (2010), NPIA

APPG Inquiry into children missing from care 52

This seems like an eminently sensible suggestion, and should be enforced by the regulator (Ofsted) as part of the registration process for children's homes being set up in any local authority. Hopefully, this would be something that can be done on a national level, which will benefit each local authority in terms of maintaining oversight of children's homes registering in their area.

Recommendation 23: *Local authorities to be supported by central government and ACPO to set up a local multi-agency information sharing process, for instance a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to ensure that information is shared between agencies on individual running away incidents and patterns of running away in the local area. This should also include information on trafficked and sexually exploited children. In port authorities, the multi agency information process sharing should include UKBA staff.*

Most local authorities in London are moving towards a multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). Hillingdon are on course for delivering a MASH by the end of March 2013; and this will include accessing information from the UK Border Agency, due to Hillingdon's position as a port of entry. The infrastructure for sharing information is already in place via the LSCB in Hillingdon, and works well, and has been commended as best practice on a national level.

Recommendation 24: *For Police and Crime Commissioners, as part of carrying out their duty to safeguard children in their area, to examine the procedures in place for children missing from care and the sharing of information with local authorities and LSCBs with regards to organised criminal networks, trafficked and sexually exploited children.*

For most local authorities in London, the local borough police is signed up to the London Child Protection Procedures, which already include the sharing of information in relation to trafficked and sexually exploited children, as well as organised criminal networks. This sign up to the London Procedures will be refreshed in the New Year (2013) once the Pan London Procedures have been revised in the light of 'Working Together' – Government guidance.

Recommendation 25: *Children's homes, fostering services and local police forces should draw up joint protocols for the management of individual missing incidents.*

For Hillingdon, and most other local authorities, these protocols are already in place, and need to be refreshed and tightened-up for the management of incidents of individual missing children. This is reviewed regularly at the

Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee – 21 November 2012

Missing Children Operational Meeting in Hillingdon as already described and witnessed to the Policy Overview Committee on previous occasions.

Recommendation 26: *That pilots reclassifying the terms ‘missing’ and ‘absent’ and the corresponding police response should not be rolled out unless there are designated officers in place to ensure safeguarding standards are being met and guidance on safeguarding with particular reference to repeat absences as an indicator of high risk is issued alongside.*

This clarification of classification already happens via the operational meetings in Hillingdon. High risk cases are defined by repeat absences of children going missing, as well as the length of time for which children are missing. The terms used to describe children who run away, go missing or are absent from care continually need to be re-examined to ensure that the same meaning is being used across all professional groups and captures the level of risk involved in each case. This dialogue happens within the operational meetings as described, to ensure that correct meanings are given to each of the terms being used, and that the risk factors are identified as part of that case discussion. Most importantly, an action plan is devised based on the level of risk, which will help to protect the individual child or young person.

Recommendation 27: *The revised Children Who Run Away or Go Missing From Home or Care guidance should state that every child or young person who runs away from care should receive a return interview from a responsible adult the child or young person is comfortable speaking with and disclosing information to, within 72 hours of a missing incident.*

This practice is reviewed already in Hillingdon via the operational meetings, which ensures that children do have ‘return interviews’ with an appropriate adult and that the intelligence from these return interviews is disseminated across the agencies. This needs to be kept under review at all times, as sometimes the person needing to do the interview may not need to be a law enforcement officer. This can be decided on a ‘case-by-case basis’ and is already determined in this way, within Hillingdon.

Recommendation 28: *Under Schedule 5 of the Children’s Homes Regulations 2001, which relates to ‘Events and Notifications’, the obligation for homes to notify agencies of ‘Involvement or suspected involvement of a child accommodated at the home in prostitution’ should be changed to ‘suspicion that a child accommodated in a home is ‘at risk of abuse or child sexual exploitation’.*

The terminology around involvement with prostitution does not reflect the level of risk, which is included in child sexual exploitation or child abuse, as it can be equally damaging for children who are exposed to sexual exploitation without necessarily being prostituted, as such. The use of the term ‘prostitution’ does tend to stigmatise young people who have been exposed to

sexual exploitation; and may deter them from disclosing their experiences of abuse.

Recommendation 29: For police to consider trafficking indicators at initial assessments for a missing persons report and identify these children as 'high risk'.

The Trafficking Tool Kit already enables the identification of risk indicators of trafficking whenever missing children are being assessed or considered. This is best practice and is already being used within the London Borough of Hillingdon. Multi-agency training on child trafficking and use of the Trafficking Tool Kit is delivered four times per year in Hillingdon. Over the past 4 years, there have been 400 practitioners trained in the identification of trafficking and exploitation.

Recommendation 30: All unaccompanied migrant children who go missing should be circulated on the Police National Database as missing ensuring the case is kept active and monitored.

The police national database needs to accurately reflect the levels of risk of migrant children who go missing; and there needs to be ongoing proactive monitoring of the list of children who have not been found after an episode of being missing.

Recommendation 31: For a proportion of funds from the National Lottery to be ring fenced for innovative projects that work with vulnerable children who go missing or run away from care.

This is probably desirable and a worthy cause, but this is out of the control of the local authority and will need to be progressed at a national level, through the relevant Government mechanisms for allocation of the National Lottery Funding.

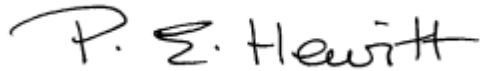
CONCLUSION

In the main, the recommendations made by the All Party Parliamentary Group on missing children do reflect best practice; and in many instances are already adopted within Local Safeguarding Children Boards and host local authorities. The London Borough of Hillingdon already has many of these processes and procedures localised and needs simply to tighten-up and continually review what is deemed to be best practice. The recommendations already suggested for the Policy Overview Committee do capture the main issues for safeguarding children who go missing within this locality, and extend best practice to children who go missing from home, as well as those who go missing from care.

The issue of data collection and having agreed definitions for counting instances of children going missing is a key issue for Central Government

Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee – 21 November 2012

Departments; especially the Home Office (police) and DfE (Ofsted). It would help local authorities enormously if these Government departments could agree on the systems for data collection; and also the process for analysis, so that cohorts of children who are genuinely at risk who go missing are properly identified, with a proportionate response from the key safeguarding agencies.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. S. Hewitt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and 'S'.

Paul Hewitt
Service Manager
Safeguarding Children & Quality Assurance Service

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ITEM 9

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - REVIEW TOPIC 2012/13

Contact Officer: Khalid Ahmed
Telephone: 01895 250833

REASON FOR ITEM

To enable the Committee to agree the second major review it wishes to undertake in this Council year.

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

1. To discuss a possible topic for the Committee to undertake its second major review of 2012/13.

INFORMATION

1. The Committee is responsible for undertaking the 'policy overview' role in relation to the services provided by the Education & Children's Services Group. The full range of services under the Committee's remit is outlined in the terms of reference which is contained in the agenda front sheet for this meeting.
2. The Chairman of the Committee after discussions with the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services has suggested the following possible areas which the Committee could review :
 - 1) Effectiveness of local arrangements to ensure access to education for vulnerable children. **(Appendix A)**
 - 2) Arrangements for auditing and overseeing the safeguarding arrangements of partners (via the Local Safeguarding Children's Board) **(Appendix B)**
 - 3) Process of risk assessment for placing children in residential homes. **(Appendix C)**
3. For the meeting Members will be provided with additional information on the above topics and Members are also asked to consider any other topics or areas which could be subject to a review.
4. To help Members with the selection of their next review topic, attached is a proforma which could be used to help in the suitability of a review topic.

POLICY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY REVIEW PROFORMA

	Name of review					
Selection Criteria for a review						
1. Strong public interest						
2. Government pressure / Change in policy						
3. Included in the Hillingdon Improvement Programme (HIP) / Council objectives						
4. Inspection report recommendation (e.g. performance standards poor or below target)						
5. Area within Council's control / influence						
6. High impact on residents						
7. Expertise available on which to draw						
8. Good practice available elsewhere						
9. Any likely recommendations would be achievable within existing resources and budgets						
Total score (one 'Y' = 1 point)						

APPENDIX A

Effectiveness of local arrangements to ensure access to education for vulnerable children.

Members may want to look at the impact of the trend of increased pupil numbers on casual admissions (those needing a place within the school year - as opposed to normal transfer times) This could include UASC (unaccompanied Asylum seeking children), pupils with special educational needs moving into the Borough or pupils in Key stage 3/4.

Officers are happy to provide further information if required

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APPENDIX B

Arrangements for auditing and overseeing the safeguarding arrangements of partners (via the Local Safeguarding Children's Board)

Brief description of issue:

The Local Safeguarding Children Board [LSCB] has a statutory¹ duty [Safeguarding Children regulations 2006] to ensure the effectiveness of what is done' by board partners. Guidance² [Working Together 2010] issued under this legislation describe the duty to 'Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the local authority and Board statutory partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advise them on ways to improve.'

Working Together 2010 suggests that the LSCB ask 'individual organisations to self-evaluate under an agreed framework of benchmarks or indicators' with 'particular focus on ensuring that those key people and organisations that have a duty under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 or section 175 or 157 of the Education Act 2002 are fulfilling their statutory obligations about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.' Specific statutory guidance³ issued to Chief Executives and senior managers of all bodies named in section 11 of CA 2004 outline the following:

- a) Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.
- b) A clear statement of the agency's responsibilities towards children is available for all staff.
- c) A clear line of accountability within the organization for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- d) Service development takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families
- e) Staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or, depending on the agency's primary functions, in contact with children and families.

¹ S14 of the Children Act 2004 and Local Safeguarding Children Regulations 2006, SI2006/90

² Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010, p. p.93

³ Statutory Guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004

- f) Safer recruitment
- g) Effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- h) Information sharing.

The guidance suggests that the following Local Authority [LA] services have a particularly significant part to play in the lives of children and families in each LA:

1. Culture and leisure services,
2. Early years and childcare
3. Education and schools
4. Licensing authorities
5. Housing authorities
6. Children's Social Care
7. Youth Services
8. Connexions
9. Child employment.

The New Ofsted framework emphasises the supreme importance of partnership working across the statutory agencies, and further emphasises the leadership role of the LSCB in monitoring the effectiveness of this working. One of the main ways it does this is by carrying out a section 11 Audit on a regular basis, and analysing the results from this, as a way of challenging partner agencies. In many recent inspections, LSCBs have been criticized for not fulfilling their Section 11 duties, and not carrying out the required audit.

In London, most LSCBs conduct a section 11 Audit every three years. A standard template has been created for the Audit by the London Board which enables organizations such as Central North West London [CNWL] Trust foundation, that are part of several LSCBs, to collate the information once and report it back to each board, without duplicating the work needed to complete multiple Audits.

Hillingdon LSCB previous section 11 Audit [2008]

The last section 11 Audit was carried out in Hillingdon in 2008. It was due to be repeated in November 2011, but this was superseded by the Ofsted Pilot inspection.

The findings of the previous Section 11 Audit in 2008 were as follows:

Strengths

- Good accessibility to All London Child Protection Procedures, both electronically and hard copies.
- Good access to "what to do if you suspect a child is being abused".

- Generally good lines of accountability and named people in place with expertise in child protection and safeguarding.
- Good awareness of Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- Good awareness of how to make child protection referrals.
- Good awareness and take up of inter-agency training including Working Together and core LSCB courses.

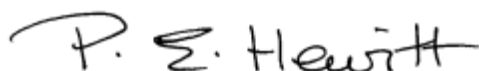
Principal recommendations from the Audit

- The overarching recommendation was that each agency should have in place its own internal arrangements for auditing issues of safeguarding; with more focus on qualitative measurements.
- The LSCB must put greater emphasis on service user participation and widening the safeguarding agenda to include parents and young people in creation of safeguarding policies and their implementation.

Conclusion:

The LSCB in Hillingdon has prioritised the completion of the section 11 audit in its formal Business plan for this Autumn [2012]. The template for the section 11 Audit has been agreed by the multi-agency Performance and Quality sub-group; and was sent out to each partner agency by end of October 2012, with a return date of 10th December 2012. The results will then be analysed by the Performance sub-group after Christmas, and presented to the LSCB main Board in March 2013.

The challenge for Hillingdon Council will be to ensure that the Section 11 self audit is appropriately completed by services across all directorates within the Council; including Early Years Services, Youth, Education Welfare, the Contact Centre, Housing etc, as well as Children's social care. Moreover, it is vital that the expectations around safeguarding children and the Section 11 audit are built into the service level agreements with all children's services which are being commissioned by the Council, within the third sector, and that the follow up to the results of the Section Audit are robust in relation to these Services. Potentially this could be the subject of review for the Policy Overview Committee.



Paul Hewitt

November 2012

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APPENDIX C

Placing children in childrens homes / risk assessments.

The Act 1989 Guidance and Regulation (Volume 2 Care Planning, Placement and Case Review) states that “all placements decisions are subject to the duty set out in Section 22(3) that the placement is the most appropriate way to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare.”

Placements out of the area of the responsibility of the local authority have to be approved by the “nominated person “and the Independent Reviewing Officer for that child consulted. In the case of the London Borough of Hillingdon the Nominated Person is the Deputy Director, Children and Families, Social Care and Health. This decision is normally made at the weekly Access to Resources panel.

The placement of children in children’s homes is managed by the Access to Resources Team (ART) in consultation with the Team Manager for children’s residential services.

The London Borough of Hillingdon has three children’s homes which are managed within Children’s Resources. Merrifield House, an eight bedded resource centre for children with disabilities and their families, Charville Lane, a 13 bedded home for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and local young people, and Hillingdon Children’s Resource Centre, a six bedded unit for local young people.

The registered Managers for these units are responsible for ensuring risk assessments are conducted regarding all new referrals. This takes into account the presenting behaviours, individual needs of the young person and the needs of the group.

For all Private and Voluntary (P&V) placements a checklist is completed on the proposed provision which informs the assessment of risk. This covers a range of areas including Ofsted reports, references from 2 other LAs who have used the provision, details of what the unit provides (Statement of Purpose), details of current resident group, staffing levels, and details of any complaints or allegations. The unit also provides ART with a risk assessment based on the child’s profile and takes into account the other residents and any other relevant issues. If it is a unit which has not previously been used by the London Borough of Hillingdon one of the Access to Resources officers will undertake a visit to assess the resource. Residential provision is not used for emergency placements, unless absolutely necessary. In this instance a monitoring visit will be undertaken as soon as possible.

ART additionally have access to London Care Placements website which provides up to date inspection and monitoring reports on P & V residential units. The West London Alliance residential group meets monthly and has a representative from Hillingdon on it. This allows for professional discussion regarding providers and outcomes for young people.

Every child placed in a P & V Children's home has an allocated ART Officer who is responsible for monitoring the conduct of the home and the progress of the young person placed there. They are required to maintain contact and undertake monitoring visits to the resource. This information is fed into an update to ART panel, a minimum of three monthly.

When the decision to place children in a residential home that is not one of the borough's own provisions, the placement will be, wherever practicable, in one of the borough's preferred providers so that the provision and their ability to meet the needs of children is known. Part of the assessment will take account of geographical risk elements. Hillingdon have made no new residential placements in the Thanet ward of Kent, which is known to carry geographical risks, and as a result of ongoing review of all placements, the overall number of external residential placements has fallen dramatically from 23 in April 2011 to 15 in October 2012. Hillingdon now has no children placed in residential homes in Kent, including Thanet. All placements are in foster care except one young person who has lived in Kent for a long term who is in semi independence accommodation near to his apprenticeship and supports. The 6 children & young people placed in the Thanet ward of Kent are all in settled fostering placements and are attending school.

19.11.12

WORK PROGRAMME 2012/2013

Contact Officer: Khalid Ahmed
Telephone: 01895 250833

REASON FOR REPORT

This report is to enable the Committee to review meeting dates and forward plans. This is a standard item at the end of each agenda.

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

1. To confirm dates for meetings
2. To make suggestions for future working practices and reviews.

INFORMATION

Meeting Dates and Rooms - *Meetings start at 7pm unless indicated below*

Meetings	Room
7 June 2012	CR5
30 July 2012	CR6
12 September 2012	CR5
10 October 2012	CR5
21 November 2012	CR5
16 January 2013	CR5
20 February 2013	CR5
20 March 2013	CR5
17 April 2013	CR5

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

2012/13

WORK PROGRAMME

7th June 2012	School Admissions Update
	Major Review – To discuss agree topics for potential review topics for 2012/13
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year.

30th July 2012	Review Topics 2012/13 – Draft Scoping Reports
	Single Meeting Review – Leaving Care Grant
	Budget Planning Report for Education & Children's Services 2013/14
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year.

12th September 2012	Major Review - Witness Session 1
	Draft Final Report for Minor Review
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year.

10th October 2012	Major Review – Safeguarding Children Who are Reported Missing - Witness Session 2
	Local Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year.

21st November 2012	Safeguarding Children who go Missing - Draft Final Report and recommendations
	Topics for next Review
	Quarterly Assurance and Audit Framework – Children’s Services
	Annual Complaints Report 2011/12 for Social Care, Health and Housing
	Cabinet Forward Plan
	Work Programme
16th January 2013	Draft Budget for Consideration
	Draft Scoping Report for next review
	Quarterly Child Social Care Audit Update 2012/2013
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year.
20th February 2013	Standards and Quality in Education
	Major Review – Witness Session 1
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Update on the Implementation of Recommendations from past reviews of the Committee
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year.
20th March 2013	Major Review – Witness Session 2
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year.
17th April 2013	Major Review – Draft Final Report
	Quarterly Child Social Care Audit Update 2012/2013
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions

Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year.

FORWARD PLAN 2012/2013

Contact officer: Khalid Ahmed
Telephone: 01895 250833

REASON FOR ITEM

The Committee is required by its Terms of Reference to consider the Forward Plan and comment as appropriate to the decision-maker on key decisions which relate to services within its remit (before they are taken by Cabinet or Cabinet Member).

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

- To comment on items going to Cabinet or Cabinet Member for decision.
- Or to note the items and decide not to comment.

INFORMATION

1. The latest published Forward Plan is attached any additions to the current published Forward Plan will be provided at the meeting.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

To consider whether there are comments or suggestions that the Committee wishes to make.

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Ref **Decision**

Further information

Ward(s)

Report to Full Council

Cabinet Member(s) Responsible

Officer Contact for further information

Consultation on the decision

NEW ITEM

Private decision?

Cabinet meeting - 22 November 2012

SI	Academy Conversions	A standard report to Cabinet to seek approval for the Council granting a long leases to schools who wish to convert to Academy Status.	Various		Cllr David Simmonds / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	Michael Patterson		New	Private (3)
825	Parenting Services and Traveller Education Service - Single Tender	The consider a tender to provide Pro-parenting and Traveller Education provision within Hillingdon.	Various		Cllr David Simmonds	Sam Taylor			Private (3)
SI	School Capital Programme Update	This report will update Cabinet and request any necessary decisions in order to progress the School Capital Programme in order to upgrade facilities and keep on track to deliver sufficient places for children educated in the Borough.	Various		Cllr Jonathan Bianco and Cllr David Simmonds	Boe Williams-Obasi / Norman Benn	Corporate consultees		Private (3)
807	Local Safeguarding Children Board: Annual Report	Cabinet will receive the Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). It is for information and gives a view on effectiveness of children's safeguarding in Hillingdon and identifies priorities for future action and attention.	All		Cllr David Simmonds	Linda Sanders / Paul Hewitt / Lynda Crellin	Education and Children's Services Policy Overview Committee		

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Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	Report to Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Private decision?
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Cabinet Member Decisions - November 2012

SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	Democratic Services	Various		
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Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	Report to Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Private decision?
Cabinet meeting - 20 December 2012									
SI	Academy Conversions	A standard report to Cabinet to seek approval for the Council granting a long leases to schools who wish to convert to Academy Status.	Various		Cllr David Simmonds / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	Michael Patterson		New	Private (3)
801a	The Council's Budget - Medium Term Financial Forecast 2013/14 - 2016/17 BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK	This report will set out the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF), which includes the draft General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2013/14 for consultation, along with indicative projections for the following three years.	All	21-Feb-13	Cllr Jonathan Bianco	Paul Whaymand	Public consultation through the Policy Overview Committee process and statutory consultation with businesses & ratepayers		
SI	School Capital Programme Update	This report will update Cabinet and request any necessary decisions in order to progress the School Capital Programme in order to upgrade facilities and keep on track to deliver sufficient places for children educated in the Borough.	Various		Cllr Jonathan Bianco and Cllr David Simmonds	Boe Williams-Obasi / Norman Benn	Corporate consultees		Private (3)

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<i>Ref</i>	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	Report to Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Private decision?
827	Contract Award - advocacy services for Adults and Children	Cabinet will be asked to agree the provision of a range of advocacy services for adults and children including people facing concerns regarding their safeguarding following a competitive procurement process. Under the 1989 Children Act, local authorities have a duty to appoint "Independent Visitors" for children and young people in their care. Under the 2004 Children Act, local authorities have a duty to deliver an independent Advocacy Service for children and young people in care.	All		Cllr David Simmonds, Cllr Philip Corthorne and Cllr Scott Seaman-Digby	Paul Feven	Service Users, NHS Hillingdon, CNWL		Private (3)

Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	Report to Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Private decision?
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Cabinet Member Decisions - December 2012

828	Hillingdon Families Service IT System	Procure and implement an IT database application to support the work of the new Children's Pathway Programme Preventative Services Hub, as well as Hillingdon Families Service practitioners to carry out the key tasks of assessment, planning, intervention and review.	N/A		Cllr David Simmonds & Cllr Ray Puddifoot	Malcolm Rodger	Various		Private (3)
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	Democratic Services	Various		

Ref **Decision**

Further information

Ward(s)

Report to Full Council

Cabinet Member(s) Responsible

Officer Contact for further information

Consultation on the decision

NEW ITEM

Private decision?

Cabinet meeting - 24 January 2013

712	Standards and Quality in Education 2013	An information report to Cabinet on the latest educational academic attainment in Hillingdon.	All		Cllr David Simmonds	Steve Buckingham	Department for Education		
SI	School Capital Programme Update	This report will update Cabinet and request any necessary decisions in order to progress the School Capital Programme in order to upgrade facilities and keep on track to deliver sufficient places for children educated in the Borough.	Various		Cllr Jonathan Bianco and Cllr David Simmonds	Boe Williams-Obasi / Norman Benn	Corporate consultees		Private (3)
SI	Academy Conversions	A standard report to Cabinet to seek approval for the Council granting a long leases to schools who wish to convert to Academy Status.	Various		Cllr David Simmonds / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	Michael Patterson			Private (3)

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Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	Report to Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Private decision?
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Cabinet Member Decisions - January 2013

SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	Democratic Services	Various		
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Ref **Decision**

Further information

Ward(s)

Report to Full Council

Cabinet Member(s) Responsible

Officer Contact for further information

Consultation on the decision

NEW ITEM

Private decision?

Cabinet meeting - 14 February 2013

801b	The Council's Budget - Medium Term Financial Forecast 2013/14 - 2016/17 BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK	This report will set out the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF), which includes the proposed General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2012/13, along with indicative projections for the following three years.	All	21-Feb-13	Cllr Jonathan Bianco	Paul Whaymand	Public consultation through the Policy Overview Committee process and statutory consultation with businesses & ratepayers		
516 Page 88	Schools Budget 2013/14	To agree the Schools budget following consultation.	All		Cllr Jonathan Bianco / David Simmonds	Peter Malewicz	Schools Forum		
SI	School Capital Programme Update	This report will update Cabinet and request any necessary decisions in order to progress the School Capital Programme in order to upgrade facilities and keep on track to deliver sufficient places for children educated in the Borough.	Various		Cllr Jonathan Bianco and Cllr David Simmonds	Boe Williams-Obasi / Norman Benn	Corporate consultees		Private (3)
SI	Academy Conversions	A standard report to Cabinet to seek approval for the Council granting a long leases to schools who wish to convert to Academy Status.	Various		Cllr David Simmonds / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	Michael Patterson			Private (3)
SI	Monthly Council Budget - monitoring report	The Cabinet receives a monthly report setting out in detail the council's revenue and capital position.	All		Cllr Jonathan Bianco	Paul Whaymand			

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 as amended.

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