

Children's Services

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Report of: Corporate Director of Children's Services

Meeting of: Children's Scrutiny Committee

Date: September 2023

Ward(s): All

Subject: Child Protection Annual Report

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. This report provides an update to the Committee on the progress being made in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Islington's most vulnerable children from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the committee scrutinise the headline performance outcomes
- 2.2. That the Committee scrutinise the governance arrangements for safeguarding children.
- 2.3. That the Committee scrutinise the findings of quality assurance activities.

3. Background

- 3.1. The welfare of Islington's vulnerable children is rightly one of the Council's highest priorities.

- 3.2. As at end of March 2023, Islington Safeguarding and Family Support Service was working with 839 children in need, 325 children who are looked after, of which 38 were disabled children and 35 were Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), 627 active care leavers and 169 children with child protection plans. 88% of child protection plans are due to emotional abuse or neglect. 8 children were living in a Private Fostering arrangement at some point during the year 2022/23. As of March 2023, Islington's Youth Justice Service was working with 37 Youth Offending interventions. This included one custodial intervention, two remand interventions and 34 community interventions.
- 3.3. There are more boys (55%) than girls (45%) supported; and the age profile varies across the status of children, with significantly more adolescents looked after than younger age groups. Some ethnic minority groups are over-represented in comparison to the Islington's free school meal (FSM) eligible child population, while others are under-represented. Children of Black Caribbean and Mixed backgrounds are over-represented across all CIN, CP and CLA groups. Black Caribbean and Black African young people are over-represented in the care-leaver cohort, as are the White Other and Asian Other ethnic groups. Work has been focused in the year on reducing the disparity across the Safeguarding Services and with the Islington Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 3.4. In 2020 Islington had 1 full (ILACS) inspection. The inspectors considered the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families, the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection and the experience and progress of children in care and care leavers.
- 3.5. Our routine Annual Engagement Meeting with Ofsted took place in September 2022. In October 2022 a Focus Visit to Islington's Local Authority Children's Services was undertaken. Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangement for care experienced children and young people. The visit was carried out on site in line with the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework.
- 3.6. The findings were extremely positive and inspectors found "exceptional and aspirational corporate and operational leaders work together to listen to care experienced young people, to understand their work and to act on their views. A stable leadership and an ambitious vision driven by the Chief Executive and the lead members for children are key factors in their success. Islington's Motivational Practice Model ensures that all staff and many partner agencies provide trauma-informed assessments.
- 3.7. Social workers and YPAs actively work to stay in touch which promotes reciprocal and trusting relationships within a safe, therapeutic practice culture, enhanced by joint work with accessible mental health clinicians and housing services". These focus visits are not graded in the way a full ILACS inspection would operate. This

was a positive inspection and Ofsted will take the findings from the focus visit into account when planning the next inspection or visit. It is 3 years since the last ILACS inspection, and work is robustly underway to plan for the next inspection. We expect further Ofsted inspection activity in Children's Social Care and Early Help in late 2023/ early 2024. We are still awaiting the long overdue Youth Offending Inspection by HMIP.

4. Governance Arrangements

- 4.1. The governance and scrutiny of the arrangements for safeguarding children take place through this Committee and the following inter-agency fora:
- 4.2. **Safeguarding Accountability Meetings** chaired by the Leader of the Council and attended by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families, the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director of Children and Young People, Independent Scrutineer of the Islington Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Director of Safeguarding. The meeting is held eight weekly and allows senior members to hold senior officers and the Scrutineer of the Safeguarding Partnership to account, to scrutinise performance related to vulnerable children, to be appraised of any concerns about the safety and welfare of children and to drive improvement.
- 4.3. **Corporate Parenting Board** co-chaired by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families and the In Care Council (Children Looked After and Care Leavers) and attended by four elected members and senior officers in the council as well as across the partnership. The Board meets eight weekly and scrutinises performance and strategic planning related to children in care and care leavers, sets direction and drives improvement.
- 4.4. **Islington Safeguarding Children Partnership (ISCP)** is chaired by an independent chair and scrutineer. The *ISCP Executive* meets quarterly to set the strategic direction of the ISCP which also meets every quarter. The three statutory safeguarding partners, *London Borough of Islington, MPS Central North Borough Command Unit* and *Intergrated Care Board (Health)* have established a local protocol for the functioning of safeguarding arrangements, and this is working well.
- 4.5. During the previous 12 months LBI informed the ISCP of three *Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents* which produced two *Rapid Reviews*, one of which led to a *Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR)*. The review for Child X is ongoing and not yet completed. The ISCP have also overseen the completion of one *Local Safeguarding Practice Review (Child U)*. This year, the *National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel* has endorsed all the ISCPs recommendations of whether to conduct an LCSPR.

- 4.6. In July 2021 the partnership reviewed and agreed its priority areas for the next 3 years (this has been reviewed again in June 2023):
- Address the impact of inequality and structural racism on vulnerable children and to create a better understanding of data across all of Islington Safeguarding Partners.
 - Address the impact of neglect on children and help them become more resilient.
 - Address the consequences of harm suffered by children because of domestic violence, parental mental ill health, and substance abuse, including helping who have suffered harm to become more resilient.
 - Identify and help children who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and gangs.
- 4.7. The strategic work-plan is being developed with the chairs of the ISCP sub-groups to take this work forward. The sub-groups are Quality Assurance, Training and Workforce Development, Missing and Vulnerable Adolescents, Case Review, Education and Early Help.
- 4.8. The ISCP annual report evaluates the effectiveness of safeguarding and child protection in Islington and the ISCP August 2021 – September 2022 report was presented to the Committee in February 2023.

5. Islington’s Motivational Practice Model and Partners in Practice Work

- 5.1. The DfE granted nearly £5m from 2012-2018 to children’s social care in three Phases to transform services to improve outcomes for children and their families. Phase 1 involved building a practice model- “Motivational Social Work” and Phase 2 expanding the reach to include children who receive an early help service, children who are known to the Criminal Justice System, gang affiliated or at risk of criminal exploitation and Looked After Children- “Motivational Practice Model”. Phase 3 now involves working with other Local Authorities to improve their practice and outcomes for their children- Partners In Practice. We have a team who go into other Local Authorities Social Care Services and SEND services to work alongside staff and leaders until their OFSTED rating changes from Requires Improvement to Good.
- 5.2. The Motivational Practice model is relationship based and feedback from children, families, staff, and services has been very positive. Ofsted also commented on the model: *“A stable workforce and manageable caseloads enable social workers to develop positive and enduring relationships with children. The local authority’s preferred social work model is well embedded, and workers demonstrate a good*

understanding of the impact of trauma on children's lives. Practitioners build effective relationships with parents and provide appropriate challenge". This Practice Model has demonstrated impact on our data for example the reduction in re-referral rates to Children's Social Care.

- 5.3. A review of the Motivational Practice model which is now wholly council core funded was undertaken during the year and changes were implemented on 1st April 2023. The review findings reconfigured the model due to a reduction in demand. The conclusion of the review meant staff in the Children in Need service and Children Looked After service could be reduced without increasing caseloads above acceptable levels. Teams in the child in need service are now delivered out of 6 locality teams which were ward areas, and are aligned with the now locality areas North, Central and South which sets the service up for future likely legislative changes which are expected to combine Early Help and Children in Need into "Family Help".

6. Performance Management and Quality Assurance

- 6.1. In order to ensure that Islington's most vulnerable children are safe and that our services continuously improve, a range of quality assurance measures are employed to continually test the quality of our service provision and to learn lessons about how to improve. It should be noted that during this reporting period that the impact of Covid-19 has still been a factor and some of the data collected, and audits carried out throughout the year were designed to understand the impact on children and families of the pandemic and ensure services were continuing to safeguard vulnerable children and families.
- 6.2. Through performance management we are able to use key performance indicators as a proxy measure for quality of service and to support service improvement. Caution needs to be exercised in relying on performance indicators in isolation as it is possible to have good performance indicator but poor quality of service; although conversely it is unlikely that there could be good quality of service and poor performance. Therefore, to ensure that there is a comprehensive understanding of the quality of service both quantitative and qualitative information must be reviewed.
- 6.3. The data tells us that:
- 6.4. We received 12,346 contacts requesting a service for children in 2022/23, an increase from 2021/22. The most common source of contacts was the police (27.3%), followed by schools (14.5%)
- 6.5. The most common reasons for contacts were parenting capacity (13.4%- highest over domestic violence for the first time), domestic violence (12.4%), information

requests (9.7 %), child mental health (7.5%), specific concerns regarding a sibling (5.4%), Physical Abuse (5.3%) and parental mental health (4.8%).

- 6.6. 5423 (43.6%) went on to receive an early help service and 2094 (16.8%) went onto receive a social care service.
- 6.7. We had the 31st highest rate of assessed Children in Need in the country in 2021/22. Rates of CIN and CP were based on the population estimates prior to the publication of 2021 National Census data. Therefore, the population figures used for Islington were considerably higher for the 0-17 age group.
- 6.8. The rate of children with child protection plans as at 31st March 2023 was 37 per 10,000 children. While not the highest among our statistical neighbours (SN), it was higher than the average combined rate of 34 per 10,000 children. Islington's rate of child protection enquiries was the 5th highest among our statistical neighbours. We had a higher proportion of repeat child protection plans compared to our SN in 2021/22 (24% compared to SN average 21%).
- 6.9. Children do not have child protection plans for lengthy periods of time; this means that the harm they suffered is resolved as quickly as it can be. The average duration of a child protection plan in 2022/23 was 11 months.
- 6.10. We applied to court for orders to protect children more than most other boroughs, we had the 47th highest rate out of 150 nationally in 2020/21. As the rate is from 2020/21, the population estimates used were over estimating the current Islington population. Islington has more children looked after per 10,000 than the SN average, and only one SN had a higher rate in 2021/22. The rate was calculated using population estimates based on 2021 national census, which had Islington's population considerably lower than previously estimated.
- 6.11. The proportion of Children Looked After who had to move more than three times during a year was in line with our SN (11%) in 2021/22. 36 children in our care moved 3 or more times in 2022/23. Children and young people with the most complex needs (are more likely to be older when they come into our care, have an Education, Health & Care Plan, known to be physically violent, have exploitation risks or those who have experienced complex trauma in their parents' care) are likely to have the most moves.
- 6.12. The number of children becoming looked after has decreased from 145 in 2021/22 to 89 in 2022/23) with fewer children in almost all age groups becoming Looked After with the exception of 2-4 age group which had marginally higher number of children (8 in 2021/22 compared to 9 in 2022/23). 22 children have remained with their foster carers after their 18th birthday as at the end of March 2023.

- 6.13. Placements for children looked after are becoming much more difficult to find, there is a national shortage of foster homes and significant challenges of supply within the children's homes sector
- 6.14. 64 (22%) children looked after, excluding UASC and placed for adoption at the end of March 2023 were placed more than 20 miles from home outside the LA Boundary.
- 6.15. One child was subject to secure orders to protect them from absconding and harm related to Child Exploitation (sexual or criminal). For the 2 years proceeding this was 4 children.
- 6.16. 2 children were adopted in 2022/23 (2 in 2021/22) and 12 made the subject to a Special Guardianship Order (24 in 2021/22). Looking at just Children Looked After with Special Guardianship Orders, 9 were made the subject of an order in 2022/23, down marginally from 10 in 2021/22.
- 6.17. Average attendance for school age Children Looked After in the academic year 2021/22 was 91.1% compared to 92.7% for all pupils. 18.6% of Children Looked After received a suspension in 2020/21. There were no permanent exclusions.
- 6.18. Average attendance year to date for school age children open to the Youth Justice Service was 54% as at March 2023. Of the 2021/22 YJS cohort, 45% was suspended and 7% was permanently excluded.
- 6.19. A monthly meeting is held within the Safeguarding and Family Support Service and Young Islington Service that holds all Senior Managers to account on the key performance data and the quality of the intervention to families. From monitoring key performance indicators, we are able to identify that:
- 6.20. 9% children who received early help in 2022/23 went on to receive a social care service (increased marginally from 8% in 2021/22).
- 6.21. 96% of children who received a Triage in 2022/23 were diverted from the Criminal Justice System (increased from 2021/22 at 89%)
- 6.22. Children have an allocated social worker within 48 hours of being referred to the service and following assessment have a plan that sets out the actions required to improve their outcomes; children newly allocated to a social worker are seen within 10 days (sooner if needed). This is monitored weekly.
- 6.23. Offence gravity for the YOS cohort has increased in 2022/23, despite a drop in the overall number of offences.

- 6.24. Children who have child protection plans have a core group of professionals who have prescribed tasks in respect of their involvement with the child
- 6.25. 97.5% of children who have child protection plans have their plan reviewed after three months and six monthly thereafter as per London Child Protection Procedures and where the review doesn't take place in time there are clear reasons for this.
- 6.26. 8.9% of the children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan have a disability.
- 6.27. 22% of children in the Criminal Justice System reoffended in 2022/23 (based on the Q4 2022/23 cohort). The average percentage of children and young people reoffending over the 4 quarters was 15% below previous year's average of 23%. 5 young people received a custodial sentence in 2022/23, a slight increase from 4 the previous year but a significant decrease from 26 in 2018/19. This drop moves us in line with our closest comparators.
- 6.28. Children looked after are seen at four weekly, six weekly or at 3 monthly intervals in accordance with their needs and placement stability.
- 6.29. All children looked after are independently reviewed every three, then six months all reviews are now held face to face.
- 6.30. Practitioner caseloads vary from an average of 11-14 children per worker for Children in Need, 17 per worker for Disabled Children, 10-11 children per worker for Children Looked After and 5-7 in the Youth Offending Service. This variance is due to staff turnover and the need for newly qualified staff to have protected caseloads. A caseload of 14 children maximum is the accepted standard in line with our Motivational Practice Model. The voice of the child is clear and social workers evidence direct work with children.
- 6.31. All cases are subject to supervision and management oversight at least monthly.
- 6.32. A key theme that these monthly meetings have focused on during the latter half of the year has been disproportionality in Safeguarding and Family Support. Whilst services were keenly aware there was disproportionality between different ethnic groups amongst the cohorts of Children in Need, Child Protection Plan and Children Looked After, compared to the Islington population, a detailed 'deep dive' looked at the journey through the social care system for children and young people from different ethnic groups, and differences in outcomes. Amongst the findings were:
- 6.33. Black and Mixed ethnicities are over-represented amongst children's social care contacts and referrals compared to the Islington population of children.

- 6.34. A higher proportion of contacts from Police are for children from a Black ethnic group, compared to contacts from other agencies.
- Black young people referred by schools are more likely to be referred due to abuse or neglect than other ethnic groups. However, once we look at the key factors identified during assessment, the factors that are recorded significantly more often for Black young people are ‘gangs’ and ‘socially unacceptable behaviour.’
 - It took on average around 200 days longer for an Islington child of Mixed ethnicity to move in with their adoptive family after they became looked after, compared to White-British children. This is consistent with the findings from a 2000 study across England.
 - Children and young people from Mixed ethnic groups excluding Mixed White & Black Caribbean are more likely to come into the social care system repeatedly – this ethnic group has the highest rate of re-referrals and the second highest rate of becoming subject to child protection plans for a second or subsequent time.
- 6.35. Following these findings and others, services are taking action to reduce the disproportionality this includes work with our partners and the findings will be shared at an ISCP Away Day in June 2023.
- 6.36. To assure the quality of our safeguarding services we routinely review qualitative information alongside performance data through our Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). There are a wide range of activities which constitute the Quality Assurance Framework for Islington Council’s Safeguarding and Family Support Service and Young Islington. This enables the services to build a clear picture of the effectiveness of our practice with children, young people, and their families.
- 6.37. The Motivational Practice model articulates a clear vision of good practice and sets out how practice quality should be measured against it. The child’s databases are a system that allows us to collect and analyse a wide range of simple data, which over time allows us to track changes in demand and service delivery.
- 6.38. Good quality assurance ensures that we are doing the right things to a high standard. It helps us notice and attend to new challenges, build on and replicate our successes, and plan for future needs.
- 6.39. Twice a year, all senior managers across Children’s Social Care and Early Help, including the DCS spend a week on the front-line observing practice and talking to social workers about the children, families, and carers they work with as well as the families directly. The aims of practice week are:
- Ensure Senior Managers understand what it is like for front line practitioners,

walking in their shoes and gaining a deeper understanding of current frontline practice.

- Improve visibility of Senior Managers and role modelling of use of the MSW practice model.
- Assist in consistency of understanding and practice throughout the organisation.
- Gather a deeper understanding of practice in relation to a particular theme.

6.40. All activities are tracked using a range of audit tools aligned to the Motivational Practice evaluation framework and incorporated into an overview report which is compiled by the Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. The report is then discussed at Practice and Outcomes Boards to guide future audit and quality assurance activity.

6.41. We held two Practice Weeks, the first in May 2022 and second in November 2022. Children and families continued to report a consistently high quality of service, feeling listened to and supported with an understanding of the reasons for involvement. Practitioners were found to have a good understanding of the families they are working with and can assess risk and build relationships with a high level of skill. The social work practice continued to be well aligned with the Motivational Practice Model, with social workers and managers demonstrating a high level of professional skill and Trauma-informed practice training is still having a positive impact on workforce's understanding of children and young people who have experienced trauma.

6.42. In May 2022 the theme of practice week was all children where persistent absence (attendance below 90%) was an issue. Information was also collected on family feedback which asked parents and carers to provide a view on whether they felt the social work involvement and intervention was purposeful and helped improve school attendance. We also asked Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) in schools to provide feedback on the quality of the social work intervention and whether they felt social care's involvement was helpful in improving school attendance. Auditors also looked at children open to the Children's Looked After Teams, whose Care Proceedings had concluded in the previous 6 months and where at the first care proceedings hearing an Interim Care Order was granted. 2 Senior Managers led on completing a themed audit on care experienced parents whose children were aged under 1 years old following learning from a Rapid Review on unsafe sleeping. For the November 2022 Practice Week there was a focus on managers observing practice, providing feedback, and scoring practitioners on how well they met the requirements of the practice model. Senior Managers were also able to seek the views of children and families, to understand how well families knew why they had

a social worker, how they worked with their social worker and whether the intervention brought about any positive changes.

- 6.43. The other area of focus for Practice Week came from one of the key findings of the National Safeguarding Practice Review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson. In May 2022 the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published their review looking at the circumstances leading up to the deaths of Arthur and Starr. The review explored why the public services and systems designed to protect Arthur and Starr were not able to do so and in both children's situations the review found that referrals from families as well as anonymous referrals did not lead to action. Therefore, senior managers carried out an audit in the Children's Services Contact Team (CSCT) in response to this finding. This audit was designed to provide assurances that such referrals are responded to appropriately and children receive a proportionate and safe response. The findings were positive.
- 6.44. In May 2022 Practice Week 111 audits were carried out and in November 2022 there were over 40 different types of observations carried out across the services and feedback from over 40 service users.
- 6.45. The two Practice Weeks demonstrated that practice is purposeful, collaborative and services are delivered to a high standard. Most cases audited were graded as good or outstanding and direct observations and family feedback showed social workers and practitioners continue to work well with children and families.
- 6.46. **Quality Assurance Activity:**

The Safeguarding and Family Support Service and Young Islington Service also undertake a substantial number of themed audits in response to what the data tells us, feedback from children and families, feedback from staff and partners and/or following the introduction of legislation or guidance. A wide range of quality assurance activities take place throughout the organisation. These remain focussed on improving outcomes for children and young people, and that information drawn from them leads to a deeper and more detailed focus on skills and behaviours that represent good practice.

A sample of the Themed Audits that took place in 2022/23:

6.47. **Children with Multiple Contacts**

There had been a rise in the number of Multiple Contacts (more than one contact about the same child) into CSCT, this audit was to look closer at the activity of the front door to establish an understanding of why this area had increased and seek assurances that contacts were appropriately considered. Managers obtain weekly data on all contacts, including repeats and they are reviewed by a manager prior to

a decision being made regarding outcome, managers are therefore aware when this is a repeat contact and ensures the reasons for this is explored. There had been 5738 contacts in the last 6 months prior to the audit being undertaken, 740 of these were 2 contacts, 163 there were 3 contacts and 113 had 4 or more contacts. The reasons for the increase were due to:

Contact recordings that are in relation to contacts received from multiple referral sources not received at exactly the same time are recorded as more than one contact.

The Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) are co-located within CSCT and contacts that may have previously solely be directed to health, are now also recorded within our contact system given the overlapping issues of child welfare and children's health.

Unconfirmed unborn babies- when the unborn is too young in gestation to either confirm or progress made up a small number of repeat contacts.

The audit found that the largest rise in contacts was not linked to an increase for demand to the service but the multiple routes and referrals relating to police Merlins that relate to children from other local authorities placed in the borough or were in the borough at the time of reporting of a concern.

6.48. Children not seen in assessment

Out of 1170 assessments completed in the first 5 months of the year, the data reported 15% of children were not seen during their assessment. This audit was carried out to ensure management oversight and appropriate thresholds were applied. 20% of children in the data were sampled, this totalled 175 children. The audit found the majority of children not seen was because parents refused an assessment. Appropriate action was taken such as consultations with a Child Protection Co-ordinator which confirmed threshold for child protection procedures was not met and therefore, we could not intervene with the family any further. In some cases, children were seen, but in error this was not recorded on the LCS system. Auditors found proportionate thresholds were applied and there was no evidence to indicate that children not seen were a concern and checks carried out included those with external agencies for assurance.

6.49. **Child Protection (CP) Plan Re-Registrations**

Data over 6 months in 2022/23 showed 16 of 72 children who started being supported on a CP plan were previously supported on a CP Plan. This audit reviewed those plans to explore if their plans should have ended and whether the multi-agency decision to end those plans was appropriate and a further period of CP planning was needed. The audit found the 16 children came from 10 families. The length of time between plans ranged from four months to over 14 years. In all but one case involving one child, it was considered safe and appropriate to end the previous plan 94%. In 2021/22, 23.8% of new CP plans were repeat plans. 41 children from 23 families became subject to a repeat plan. The high percentage was viewed in the context of an overall reduction in CP plans, which suggested a more concentrated group of children with chronic problems. At the time of the audit the number of CP plans in Islington continued to be the lowest they had been in nine years and the number of children with a repeat plan is much lower than previous years.

6.50. **Children Seen Alone at their last CP visit**

Data showed (24 children) 15% were not seen alone on the previous Social Work visit. An audit was conducted on CP visiting and children not seen alone. In 30% (7) children parental refusal or avoidance was the main issue. Managers had robust plans in place for monitoring and plans for escalation. 16% (4) were of nursery age and they had been seen at their nursery, but this was not recorded on LCS. 8% (2) children with ASD and were seen in alternative provisions but not recorded as alone given other carers were present, for 2 children it was a recording issue, and the children were seen alone, 1 child was on holiday over the summer and had since been seen alone and for 1 child the primary concern related to the older child who was seen alone. For 5 children auditors were of the view that practitioners could have challenged more to see the children alone at home. The audit provided assurance that most children supported by a CP Plan were seen alone and where that had not happened it was a recording issue, the child had been seen in another setting or there were plans in place to monitor the situation.

6.51. **Section 47 Audit**

An audit was carried out across CIN and CLA assessing the quality of section 47 decision making, the effectiveness and the impact of multi-agency working and decision making. 83% were graded as good, 7% outstanding and 10% required improvement. Children from global majority groups were disproportionately represented in this current cohort with mixed parentage, black British Caribbean and Black African as the most represented groups. 79% of audits showed the reason for the strategy discussion was clearly recorded. In progressing to Section 47, 72% had the views of all statutory partners clearly evidenced within the record. Multi-agency

working was evidenced well, and auditors found evidence of good multi agency network in the decision making.

The child's ethnicity was not explicitly considered within the section 47 in 79% of cases, although ethnicity and culture were evidenced in the assessments. The audit identified the need for the continuation of work on challenging inequalities with managers to help them understand the importance of including culture and ethnicity in all interventions including section 47 investigations.

6.52. **Supervision Order Audit**

The overview of the quality of supervision orders are monitored through quarterly and annual reporting. Auditing found in the first quarter 15 children were supported under a supervision order. 80% are under 5 years old, children who are mixed parentage and white and black African or Caribbean made up the largest cohort, making up 60% of the cohort. Some areas for improvement were found to be required around timeliness of supervision order meetings and recommendations are in place to improve this area of practice.

6.53. **Children with repeat episodes of being Looked After (CLA)**

From the data on CLA in the first quarter of the year no children who became looked after had been previously looked after. Part way through quarter 2, 9 children who had been previously looked after entered care again equating to 11% in that period. This audit looked at the cohort of children who experienced a repeated period in care to identify any learning. The audit found 2 Unaccompanied and Separated Children re-entering care following legal challenges regarding age disputes. This was the first time this had happened in Islington. The other children were all adolescents with long standing histories of social care involvement including removal from parents in early childhood and placements permanently under Special Guardianship Orders with family members and for 3 children there were concerns of exploitation, offending and missing episodes. The audit found that re-entry into care could not be avoided for those adolescents with no other family or alternative arrangements available to them. Auditing showed family arrangements had broken down due to an inability of family members to meet their child's complex, challenging needs and risks. The audit found alternative arrangements were explored and attempts to keep them in their families were made. A repeat entrance into care was considered appropriate for all children.

6.54. **Audit for Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings.**

This multi-agency audit was carried out following the request from the Chair of the National Review Panel to provide assurance that children with complex needs and

disabilities currently living within residential specialist schools as children's homes were appropriately safeguarded. In Islington 2 children were within the scope of the audit. The audit involved Children's Social Care, Whittington Health and Education. The audit found that work with Health, Education and Social Care was collaborative in planning and ensuring the safety of children placed outside of the borough and at some distance from the local authority. The mechanism for reviewing and monitoring these children locally is held at strategic level via the Joint Multi Agency Funding Panel (JMAP) as well as by services under Safeguarding and Family Support. Social work visits were above statutory timescales, and social workers were found to have a good understanding of children's lived experience. The virtual school in partnership with Special Educational Needs service worked collaboratively to ensure that the education needs of these children are iteratively reviewed. The oversight of health including primary health services' and CAMHS was robust.

6.55. Care Experienced Young People in Custody

The aim of the audit was to understand the overview of practice and involvement with Care Experienced young people in custody, including their pathways plans, frequency of social worker/young person's adviser contacts and level of supervision/management oversight. At the time of the audit Islington had 31 care experienced young people in custody, all men, ages varied between 17 and 24 years of age. There was found to be disproportionality in terms of black and dual heritage young boys in custody as is the case across London. 75% were visited around every 3 months, 87% had a pathway plan in the last 6 months, 48% had supervision every 2 months. Joint supervision did take place, but it was inconsistent across the leaving care teams. 71% had an up-to-date case summary on their records. A finding from the audit was a recommendation that the Supervision Policy is updated for young people who wish to have less frequent contact with their worker.

6.56. Siblings in Care

The audit focused on CLA who have siblings in care. There were 62 families representing 161 children who had siblings in care. The audit found 56% of siblings in care in Islington are placed together and 44% placed apart. The audit also found 61% of children from a sibling group of 2 were placed together, and as the sibling group grows larger there is more likelihood that they are able to be placed together. The audit also found children from Black British Caribbean backgrounds and from mixed parentage backgrounds are more likely to be placed together. The audit recommended that sibling groups across the service are audited regularly, that where siblings have different social workers managers ensure joint reviews of the cases take place to align decision making, and that a further in depth audit is undertaken to understand the reasons why children are placed separately, the quality of the Together and Apart assessment (an assessment of whether siblings

should be placed together or apart) and that there is evidence of the reasons for the placements so that the service can set a target and monitor this monthly.

6.57. **Family and Friends' Carer Audit**

An audit was carried out on children aged under 14 years old placed in a Family and Friends' Carer arrangement, due to the increase seen over the last 2 years in these types of arrangements. The purpose of the audit was to interrogate the ethnicity, gender and age demographic and to understand the decision making on how those placements started and whether they needed to come into care to remain under this arrangement. The audit covered 69 children. 72% of children were the subject of an Interim Care Order, 13% of children were on full care orders, 9% of children were under section 20 arrangements, 5% were in placement still under Supervision Orders and 1% a placement order (an order granted to allow adoption) was in place. The audit found that 44% of these children had returned home, 4% were placed for adoption, 31% were now living under Special Guardianship arrangements with the family member and 22% achieved permanency through fostering.

- 6.58. The audit identified areas for improvement in early care planning and early use of Family Group Conferences to ensure children are placed with their families where possible without the need to become Looked After wherever possible. The audit recommended that a Care Planning Panel take place to discuss plans for children living with family or friends' carers progressing to permanency and that a Senior Management Family and Friends' Carer Panel is established to track these children.

7. Contextual Safeguarding

- 7.1. Continued analysis undertaken over the last three years consistently highlights that Islington's profiles of children and young people at risk, or a victim of Child Sexual/Criminal Exploitation, harmful sexual behaviours, trafficking and modern slavery, group offending, and serious youth violence are intrinsically linked through vulnerability, peer groups and offending networks. The cohort of children and young people vulnerable to exploitation overlaps significantly with children and young people that go missing from home and care. In response to our profile, we have focused on developing a less siloed, and more flexible model of assessment, intervention and governance; ensuring that children and young people across the spectrum of risk receive timely and targeted interventions, and that those children at acute risk receive a consistent safeguarding response. Islington's shift toward a more fluid approach to Exploitation and Missing risk supports a trauma informed practice model; focusing more on the experience, vulnerabilities, strengths and needs of the individual child, rather than on the specific type of risk label and subsequent intervention pathway. The participation of children is essential and their wishes, feelings and lived experience is represented fully at child protection conferences via consultation forms and other methods of direct work.

- 7.2. The response to Exploitation and Missing is currently led by:
- 7.3. **The Exploitation and Missing Team:** The team work to develop the safeguarding and intervention plans, chairing strategy meetings, developing and delivering training programmes as well as linking with the multi-agency partners to create practice pathways and develop joint working. Managed by the Exploitation and Missing Safeguarding Manager. The team consist of 3 specialist social workers, a missing coordinator and an Exploitation and Missing intervention worker. ASIP joined the team when it launched in June 2021
- 7.4. **Specialist Social Workers:** All three social workers cover Exploitation, Serious Youth Violence, Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Missing. One of the social worker posts is the named social worker for the Integrated Gangs Team.
- 7.5. **Exploitation and Missing Intervention workers:** The work is primarily to undertake Return Home Interviews (RHI) for children reported missing from home and care. Their work helps with early identification of children reported missing and to allow for early intervention and engagement with vulnerable children to prevent future missing episodes.
- 7.6. **Child Exploitation and Gangs Analyst:** This post works across Services and data systems to develop the understanding of Exploitation networks and risk profiles.
- 7.7. **Adolescent Support Intervention Project ASIP:** The Adolescent Support Intervention Project, is a wraparound edge of care service that aims to prevent young people who have contextual risks from becoming looked after and being placed in specialist provisions usually located outside of the borough. The team consists of four ASIP Case Managers, as well as one CAMHS Clinical Psychologist, a contextual safeguarding and education lead and the practice manager. The work consists of working closely with not only the young person, but also with their family, their peer networks, with services that they access such as education and through upskilling the professional networks that surround them. ASIP is a psychologically and trauma informed service that is underpinned by the principles of the community psychology, narrative therapy as well as drawing upon elements of psychoanalysis (Attachment Theory), co-production and family systemic therapy. Children and young people have fed back they feel listened to and supported by their ASIP worker. They have established trusting relationships and utilised the trust helped inform how to improve the way ASIP work with new children coming into the service.
- 7.8. The above teams also work closely with the local Police teams and the Community Safety Unit.
- 7.9. There is a clear and consistent format to the sharing of information to support safeguarding children and young people and recognise that this is crucial to

developing an understanding of peer networks and exploitation profiles. Information is shared at a practitioner level across the partnership through the co-location of staff, safeguarding meetings, consultations, Integrated Gang Team tasking meetings and community safety briefings etc. and fed back into safeguarding meetings to inform the response to children and families. This information is collated by the Child Exploitation and Gangs analyst and feeds into practice panels such as the Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel (formally known as the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel) and the Exploitation and Missing subgroup of the ISCP. This also includes the council's response to contextual safeguarding focus areas such as creating safe spaces for young people through work with departments such as licensing and estate management.

- 7.10. The Exploitation and Missing team have returned to working in the office but still hold some meetings with professional virtually or as hybrids. Strategy meetings are hybrid with the social work team and E&M practitioner generally meeting in person at the office with other professionals such as police and health joining via video. Return Home Interviews were completed over the telephone with young people during lockdown restrictions. Young people have said in feedback that having the choice of both face to face or virtual is helpful for them to share their views.
- 7.11. The Exploitation and Missing team deliver training in person on the topics of exploitation, serious youth violence and harmful sexual behaviour. This training is available to all professionals across the safeguarding board. The team also offer ad hoc training to various services across the borough that may request it including to Community Child Health, Concierge teams, Foster Carers, Designated Safeguarding leads, other local authorities as part of PIP and external partners.
- 7.12. Children who are in need of a targeted service receive this through the early help offer. Our Targeted Youth Support team provide a range of interventions through a number of outreach programmes individually and group based to prevent escalation of contextual safeguarding. Through the parenting programme offer, parents of vulnerable adolescents receive advice and guidance on areas such as boundary setting, the adolescent stage and managing the balance between the push for freedom and the need still for protection. Our Early Help teams work closely with young people and parents to educate them on risks, prevent missing episodes, manage social media safely as well as to ensure that parents are well informed about what to do if their child goes missing.
- 7.13. When a child is identified as at risk, a safeguarding strategy meeting is held. Strategy meetings are held across exploitation and missing risk areas, and dependent on the situation and risk may focus on a single child or a number of children. If a peer group, network or location of risk is identified by practitioners, through safeguarding meetings or practice panels, a mapping meeting will be organised. A mapping meeting is held with partners to pull together agency

information, develop a better understanding of the network or location, and to develop an action plan to disrupt exploitation and improve the safeguarding of children and families. Children and young people from other Local Authorities are also considered as part of mapping meetings, and the relevant professionals are invited to attend and contribute.

8. Missing Children

- 8.1. From April 2022 to March 2023 the total number of children missing from home and from care was 198, who went missing a total of 1031 times. This total includes 63 episodes of “away from placement without authorisation”
- 8.2. The number of children missing from care was 84 and missing from home was 118. Thirty children were away from the placements without an authorisation.
- 8.3. 2022-23 data indicates a much higher concentration of missing episodes for the ten children who were missing most frequently (443 episodes which represents 43% of all missing across the service). This is a higher number, as well as a higher proportion of episodes, than is usually recorded for the ten most frequently missing children, which last year totalled 367 episodes and 38% of all missing. The most frequently missing child in 2022-23 went Missing from Care or was Away from Placement Without Authorisation 93 times within the year and this is compared to the most frequently missing child last year with 66 episodes.
- 8.4. In 2022/23, 101 children who were missing were female, 51%. 93 were male, 47% and four children were non-binary, Transgender or Gender Fluid, 2%.
- 8.5. Last year the service noted a shift over three years of increasing number of girls Missing from Home. This increase spiked started in 2021-22 when girls made up 64% of the total number of children Missing from Home and 70% of episodes. This year it is most evident in Missing from Care where the number of males has reduced from 57 to 39 and the number of episodes from 457 to 420. This is also reflected in a decrease in episodes of Away from Placement from 74 to 26, and in numbers from 27 to 13.
- 8.6. The majority of missing episodes continue to involve 16-17 year olds with just under 59% of the total number of episodes. This is a slight increase on last year (56%) which means the average age of overall missing children is slightly older this year than in 2021-22. Males predominate this older age group with 425 episodes from a total of 607 (70%).
- 8.7. There was a significant reduction in the number of episodes for 15 year olds with 92 episodes (9% of all missing), from 264 episodes last year (26%), and 220 episodes (24%) in 2020-21. This seems to be a demographic situation where some children who were missing very regularly last year aged 15 have continued to do so a year

older at 16 and these episodes have risen from 238 to 356. The number of episodes for 13-14 year old children has more than doubled in 2022-23 from 119 episodes to 262. For this age group, girls went missing 181 times, boys 78 times, and 3 episodes involved two children who are gender fluid/transgender. This represents 69% of missing episodes by young girls aged 13-14. For the youngest age groups, 11-12, and under 10 years, there were 70 missing episodes this year compared to 55 last year. This is due to one female child missing from care on 28 occasions within 4 months, April–July 2022. This child had multiple vulnerabilities including a Level 3 CSE hazard and she was placed in a provision of safety while work could be undertaken with her.

- 8.8. The data for 2022/23 shows that in addition to a higher proportion of girls who were missing at the younger ages, girls were missing more often. Data shows that the duration of missing is also longer on average for these girls.
- 8.9. The over-representation of missing Black children and children who have Mixed Parentage, is something that is being actively considered through our transformation to help ensure inclusive robust work with children and their families to address disproportionality. In 2022/23, the overall number of children from these groups has increased throughout the year to 102 children (52%) and the number of episodes has increased from 551 to 670. The pattern in CLA is slightly different in that the number of Black children or children with Mixed Parentage continued to decrease to 45 (54%), but the number of episodes has risen to 525 (69%).
- 8.10. Children who are Black or Mixed parentage made up eight of the ten most frequently missing children in 2022/23, all of whom are Children Looked-After. In 2021-22, the most frequent children Missing from Care were split evenly between children who were Black/African/Mixed Parentage (5) and children who were White (5). This Missing episodes for 2022/23 may be more indicative of data two years ago, where Black/Mixed Parentage children went missing for 68% of all episodes, and that the changes in data last year may have been specific to other children, ie: children who are British or White with a high number of repeat episodes. The current year has seen a much higher frequency of missing particularly for boys with Mixed Parentage and for Black girls, where the average number of missing episodes per child was 15 and 12.9 respectively.
- 8.11. **Children Missing from Home and Care – Length of Missing episodes:**
 546 (53%) of missing episodes involved young people going missing for less than 24 hours and 75% of children had returned within 48 hours. This is consistent with last year where the proportion was also 53% children returning within 24 hours and a total of 77% within 48 hours. There were a total of 43 episodes (4%) where a young person went missing for more than a week, which is also consistent with 42 episodes last year. There appears to be no variation in 2002/23 between children

missing from home and children missing from care in terms of duration of missing, with all categories (<24 hours to over one month) within 1-2 percentage points.

In response to the connection between missing and additional vulnerabilities the initial sit-down strategy meeting for missing young people is chaired by the Exploitation and Missing team so that a contextual and multi-vulnerability approach is taken. If a young person is at risk of being exploited in a gang linked setting then they are included into the IGT/I-CAN search stream document meaning if they are missing it will be monitored in discussions with IGT/I-CAN Exploitation and Missing team and gangs police team.

- 8.12. Senior managers are immediately notified when a child goes missing. The Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families are briefed every Friday on children who are currently missing. This ensures oversight at the most senior level, the collection and scrutiny of these briefings and associated interventions is undertaken by the Exploitation and Missing Safeguarding Manager.

8.13. **Return Home Interviews (RHI's)**

A return home interview is automatically triggered when a young person returns from a missing episode. A pattern for the last few years has been that the 10 children who go missing most frequently account for about 50% of the missing episodes. Due to the frequency of the missing episodes it is often difficult to complete an RHI due to the young person being missing again when attempts are made. In these cases, the RHI worker will make contact with the allocated social worker and offer some advice and guidance around working with frequently missing young people. The RHI worker will also offer the placement of foster carer advice and in some cases up to 6 sessions of support and upskilling.

- 8.14. The young people who engage with the RHI process are additionally offered 3 to 6 sessions to explore their missing episodes and everything else the young person would like to discuss. What we have found is some of the young people have found it useful to have a person separate from their immediate network to speak to in moments of crisis and have shared important information relating to the risk posed to them.

- 8.15. When we exclude the episodes relating to the 10 young people who are missing most frequently, our analysis tells us that return home interviews are just as likely to be successfully completed with children missing from care as children missing from home, which is positive as they provide a key opportunity for us to learn directly from our children and young people where they have been, what they are doing and what services might help avoid this happening again in the future.

8.16. In 20/23 it was not possible to complete 38% of the RHI's triggered due to the child unfortunately being missing when attempts were made. 1% of the RHI's were not possible due to a parent refusing and 8% were not possible due to the child specifically refusing to engage. 31% of the RHI's were unsuccessful due to not being able to contact with the child, the majority of these will be when the child does not answer the phone which is not unusual behaviour for teenagers. 20% of the RHI's attempted were successful and the missing episode was discussed with the child.

8.17. **Missing from Education**

Children fall out of the education system for a variety of reasons which include:

- a) Failing to start appropriate provision and hence never entering the system at all;
- b) Ceasing to attend, due to exclusion (e.g., illegal unofficial exclusions) or withdrawal;
- c) Failing to complete a transition between providers (e.g., being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new local authority).

8.18. A range of robust procedures are in place for preventing pupils from going missing from education at these key transition points. Schools are very clear about their duties and responsibilities for securing pupils' regular attendance and seeking LA support. Refresher training has been provided to schools. There has been an improvement in the quality of referrals made and more comprehensive enquiries made by schools before referring cases to the LA. In 2022/23, we have joined a project that allows LAs to make referrals to HMRC, and as a result one of our historic missing cases was found.

8.19. We hold our data by academic year in line with educational activity for children of compulsory school age. For the academic year 2022/23, there were 29 Missing Pupil Alerts received by Pupil Services:

8.20. 26 children (90%) were found and returned to school, 2 (7%) had unconfirmed school destinations abroad, with no cases of children with an unknown location for the first time in an 8-year period. At the time of writing, 1 (3%) case is currently open and under investigation.

8.21. Following a dip in 2021/22, the number of successful investigations has increased significantly, with the second highest proportion of children being found and returned to education over a three-year period in 2022/23

9. Child Exploitation and Group Offending

- 9.1. 124 children aged 12-17 were identified as at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation or Serious Youth Violence in 2022/23. 59 of these children are female, 64 children are male and one child is transgender who identifies as a male. 58 children were identified as at risk of child sexual exploitation, 65 children were identified as at risk of child criminal exploitation and 59 children were identified at risk of serious youth violence.
- 39 children were identified as being at risk of CCE and SYV.
- 15 children were identified as being at risk of CSE and CCE.
- 2 children were identified as being at risk of CSE and SYV
- 1 child was identified as being at risk of CSE, CCE AND SYV.
- 9.2. For the past two years, 50% of children at risk of CSE were White although this had increased from 36% in 2020/21. This year 17% of children were Black compared to 18% last year, which had decreased significantly from 23% in 2021/22 and 39% in 2020/21. Although young white females make up the majority of the children identified as being at risk of CSE, this does not mean that young people of other ethnicities are not at risk. A theme of discussion this year has been the adultification of black children and how this may skew professionals' ability to identify when a child is being exploited. The training available to all professionals through the Safeguarding Partnership has been updated to focus on this issue. Alongside this issue the numbers remain consistently low for Asian young people (5%), and we need to question whether there are any barriers in young people from Asian backgrounds accessing support or being identified as victims of exploitation.
- 9.3. Sampling of last year's monthly figures indicated a decrease in the proportion of Black children identified at risk of CCE in the second half of the year, with the recommendation of regular monitoring to establish if this was an outlier relating to specific children in Islington, or would remain at a lower level. We have been able to track full-year data for 2022/23 which fully positively supports last years' finding, that there has been a decrease in disproportionality. Prior to October 2021, the over-representation of Black children at risk of CCE correlated to the national picture.
- 9.4. Young Black male children are still disproportionately impacted as victims and suspects of serious youth violence in Islington: 71% of children who were identified as being at risk of serious youth violence are Black (39%) or children of Mixed Parentage (32%). When analysed further in respect of gender 54 of the 59 (92%) of children at risk of SYV are male, the proportion of Black male children becomes 37% and males with Mixed Parentage 29%. A total of 66 % of all Islington children identified as at risk of SYV therefore are Black males or males with Mixed Parentage. Research published by City Hall in December 2021 evidenced that

young Black Londoners are significantly over-represented as both victims and offenders. Black teenage boys are six times more likely to be killed by violence than White boys in London. The data from 2022/23 shows that children who are Black or who have Mixed Parentage have lower representation in exploitation data for CSE and this increases to overrepresentation for risks associated with CCE and particularly SYV. When data for children who are Black or have Mixed Parentage are combined, the disproportionality towards CCE and SYV becomes increasingly evident.

9.5. **Practice in respect of exploitation and serious youth violence.**

9.6. Strategy meetings are attended by the partnership, including, police, health and education and any other services involved with the family such as IGT/I-CAN, housing and probation etc. A multi-agency approach is agreed at the strategy meeting in order to safeguard the young person at risk of exploitation and/or serious youth violence. If a child has been a victim of SYV and are in hospital, the strategy meeting is held with the hospital, so that a discharge plan can be incorporated into the safety plan for the child and their family. Where the risks to a child and their family are so significant that they are not able to remain residing at the family home due to the location being known, immediate action is required for the family to move out of the borough for their immediate safety. Housing will be consulted prior to the strategy meeting and a housing representative will attend to provide advice and guidance. A rapid response is then provided by Safeguarding and Family Support and Young Islington Services, housing partners and police in order to move the family as part of the safety plan. Feedback from children and their families via LSCPR have recommended a thinking period to allow families time to reflect and play a meaningful role in the moving on plan, if one is agreed. That way relocation of families is more likely to be successful and careful consideration given to where the family eventually live.

9.7. The team have continued to have good working relationship with the British Transport Police and there are effective communication routes between the services. BTP have contributed to meetings focusing on the vulnerabilities of Finsbury Park relating to young people being criminally exploited and trafficked. If a young person is at risk of criminal exploitation the threshold may be met for a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) application under the Modern-Day Slavery Act 2015. Professionals across the whole service have a good understanding of the process and reason for applying for an NRM.

9.8. **Modern Slavery/Trafficking**

Modern slavery is the term used within the UK and is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Act categories the offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking. Human Trafficking is the trade and/or

movement of someone from one place to another for the purpose of enslavement and exploitation through: Forced labour, domestic servitude, organ harvesting, child related crimes such as child sexual exploitation, forced begging, illegal drug cultivation, organised theft, related benefit frauds etc and forced marriage and illegal adoption (if other constituent elements are present)

- 9.9. Islington Council and Police have identified SPOCS to lead on developing a joint response to modern Slavery/Trafficking. There are named SPOCS across Children's Services. Training in Modern Slavery and Trafficking (including county lines) has been delivered through the Exploitation and Missing Team across Safeguarding and Family Support and Young Islington. This training covers the safeguarding response to children at risk of or victims of Modern Slavery and Trafficking including those at risk of county lines. Incorporated within this response are referrals the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and the Rescue and Response team (for county lines cases).
- 9.10. In January 2021 Islington and Camden Social Care were successful in a bid they made to Home Office to be part of the pilot project to explore how decision making for the NRM could be devolved and built into local safeguarding procedures. The pilot, which is still running, saw the formation of a monthly panel attended by representatives from Islington and Camden children's social care, YOS, Central North Police, Community Safety, Rescue and Response and Health. The Home Office will continue to filter the NRM applications, but the majority will be sent to this Monthly panel to make a Reasonable or Conclusive ground decision.
- 9.11. There has been an increase in referrals and an increase in referrals for female victims, as well as high risk safeguarding cases. The panel continue to see a greater variety in referrals, discussions and evidence provided. The panel have also noted links between the referrals for child victims and that the same individuals/groups are being named as suspected exploiters. This has enabled greater analysis of wider concerns and further discussions about disruption. Such trends are fed back to MACE in both Local Authorities and the Modern Slavery Board in Islington.
- 9.12. The quality of referrals has improved, and the assisting evidence produced by professionals around the child has been extremely useful and has sped up decisions. For many of the referrals heard at panel there has been immediate follow up with relevant agency partners to ensure that the child is safeguarded. Between April 2022 and March 2023 46 young people were heard at the NRM panel, 28 of them were open to Islington Children's Social Care and 18 open to Camden Children's Social Care. 38 of the 46 were male and 8 were female. The age breakdown is as follows, one 13-year-old, seven 14-year-olds, ten 15-year-olds, twelve 16-year-olds and sixteen 17-year-olds.

10. Implications

10.1. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report

10.2. Legal Implications

10.2.1. The Children Act 1989 as amended, and the Children Act 2004, place a number of statutory duties on Local Authorities, including overarching responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area. The Children Act 2004 introduced the requirement to set up Local Safeguarding Children Boards. The Act also places partner agencies (including the police and health services) under a duty to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions. A range of other agencies are also required to cooperate with Local Authorities to promote the wellbeing of children in the local authority area.

10.2.2. The Children and Social Work Act 2017, (CSWA 2017), sets out how agencies must work together by placing new duties on the police, clinical commissioning groups and the Local Authority to make arrangements to work together and with other partners locally to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in need within their area.

1.1.1 The Council must have regard to the statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 which replaces Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015).

10.2.3. The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England)(amendment) Regulations 2021 place further duties on Councils with regard to looked after children .

10.3. Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

10.3.1. None

11. Resident Impact Assessment:

11.1. The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant

protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

- 11.2. A very high proportion of vulnerable children known to children's social care live in workless households. All social care interventions aim to address the needs of the whole family which include maximizing benefits and supporting routes into employment, education and training. There is a shared commitment to improve school attendance, we know that children open to Children's Services are over-represented among persistent absentees and there are robust plans in place to improve attendance as part of education plan that involves collaboration across the partnership.
- 11.3. As a council we are committed to recognising and readdressing the disproportionate numbers of children from Global Majority families represented in our Safeguarding and Youth Justice Services. We are committed to addressing all inequalities and supporting our workforce with tackling these issues and to promote better understanding of the diverse community we serve.

12. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 12.1. The Council rightly places a high priority on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable children in Islington. This report provides assurance about the quality and effectiveness of Safeguarding and Children Looked After services provided through a range of performance and quality assurance measures that are in place to ensure that services to Islington's most vulnerable children are as safe as they can be.

Appendices:

- None

Background papers:

- None

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

Jon Abbey

Director of Children's Services

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