

Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service

IRO Annual Report 2014/2015

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1. Purpose of Service and Legal Context

- 1.1 The Annual Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) report is produced by the Children's Safeguarding and Quality Service which sits within the Schools and Children's Services division of Enfield Council. The report was approved for publication by Director of Schools and Children's Services management team (DMT) on 15.04.2015. The report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO Service within the Local Authority as required by statutory guidance. This report should be read in conjunction with the Enfield Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) annual report.
- 1.2 Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) were nationally introduced to represent the interests of looked after children. Their role was strengthened through the introduction of statutory guidance in April 2011. The Independent Review Officers (IRO) service is set within the framework of the updated IRO Handbook, Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) and linked to revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance which were introduced in April 2011.
- 1.3 This report identifies good practice as well as highlighting areas for development in relation to the IRO function. The responsibility of the IRO is to offer overview, scrutiny and challenge with regard to case management and regularly monitoring and following up between Reviews as appropriate. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of Care Planning for Looked After Children (LAC) with particular emphasis upon challenging drift and delay.
- 1.4 In Enfield the IRO's are also responsible for Chairing Child Protection Case conferences and complex Child Sexual Exploitation MAP (multi-agency planning) meetings. In addition the report provides an overview of the other activities and functions of the Children's Safeguarding Quality Service including information on the performance of the unit in a range of responsibilities.
- 1.5 The service has additional responsibilities which are not reported on within this document this includes the role of the Principal Social Worker and coordinating the functions of the Enfield Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB)
- 1.5 This report includes some historical analysis and the most current up to date information from 2014-2015.

2. Role and Function of the Service

- 2.1 The Service promotes continuous improvement in safeguarding performance and service delivery and is committed to achieving the best outcomes for all children and young people in Enfield, particularly the most vulnerable, such as those children who are looked after and those subject to Child Protection Plans.

2.2 The Service has an independent role to ensure that all children, whatever their background, receive the same care and safeguards with regard to abuse and neglect.

2.3 The Safeguarding Service is responsible for the following statutory functions:

- Convening and chairing of child protection conferences
- Convening and chairing of reviews for looked after children
- Convening and chairing of reviews for children placed for adoption
- Convening and chairing of complex abuse meetings
- Convening and Chairing the final review for supervision orders
- Carrying out the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) functions in respect to allegations against staff and volunteers
- Chairing disruption meetings

2.4 In addition to the above the Service has responsibility for participation of children and young people including promoting Viewpoint

The Service has representation in the following meetings:

- MAPPA (multi-agency public protection arrangements)
- Placement Panel
- CDOP (child death overview panel)
- MASE (multi-agency sexual exploitation) police led meeting
- Risk Management Panel
- Viewpoint Steering Group
- Participation and Kratos (Children in Care Council) meetings
- Corporate Parenting Panel

2.5 The statutory Independent Reviewing function of the Service is core business, meeting the Government's requirements and performance indicators, but the scope of service is far wider than this. The IRO's chair child protection conferences which strengthens continuity of care planning and promotes sustained professional relationships for children and young people. The IRO child protection conference chair becomes the LAC reviewing officer should a young person need to come into the care system.

The service has additional responsibilities which include the role of the Principal Social Worker and coordinating the functions of the Enfield Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) that are not reported on in this document.

The Service has a key role in ensuring effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements on behalf of Children's Services through the Operational Management Group (OMG) which is chaired by the Assistant Director of Children's Services.

The Head of Service is also the named Child Sexual Exploitation lead in the Local Authority and the Principal Social Worker.

3. Professional Profile of the IRO Service

- 3.1 Responsibility for the activity and development of the Service lies with the Head of Safeguarding, Quality and Principal Social Worker who reports directly to the Assistant Director of Children's Services.
- 3.2 The direct link to the ESCB presents the Service with a key role in the analysis of inter-agency performance monitoring and quality assurance activity.
- 3.3 The current staffing structure includes:
- Head of Service, Quality and Principal Social Worker
 - Deputy Head of Service and LADO
 - 6.5 Independent Reviewing Officers (no vacancies)
 - 0.5 IRO agency worker
 - 0.4 IRO sessional officer
 - 1 Education Safeguarding Lead Officer (term time only)
 - 1 Business officer term time only leading on project management (LADO, CSE, Participation)
 - 1 Performance Manager with 6 support staff (5 fulltime equivalent)
 - 1 ESCB Business Manager with 3 support staff (2 fulltime equivalent)
- 3.4 Whilst the above represents the current staffing structure, as part of the Enfield 2017 transformation agenda, the performance team will become corporately managed while core functions continue to be delivered.

The conference minute takers may be line managed within the service from 2016 if they do not join the Enfield 2017 corporate business unit.

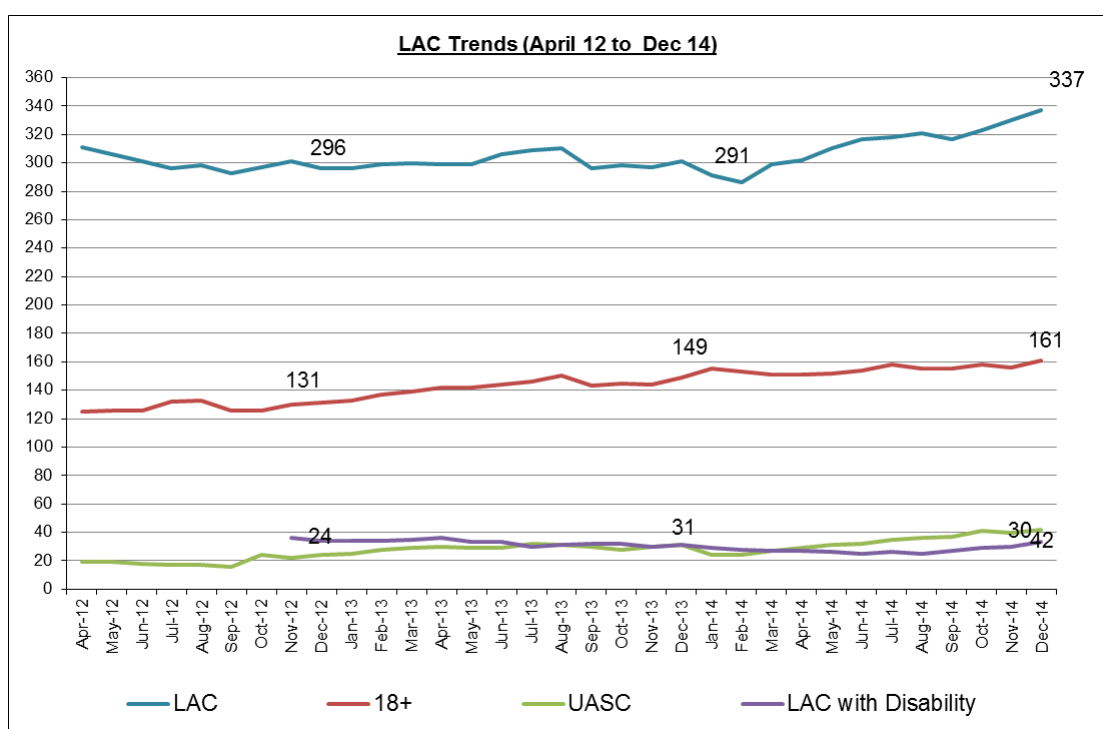
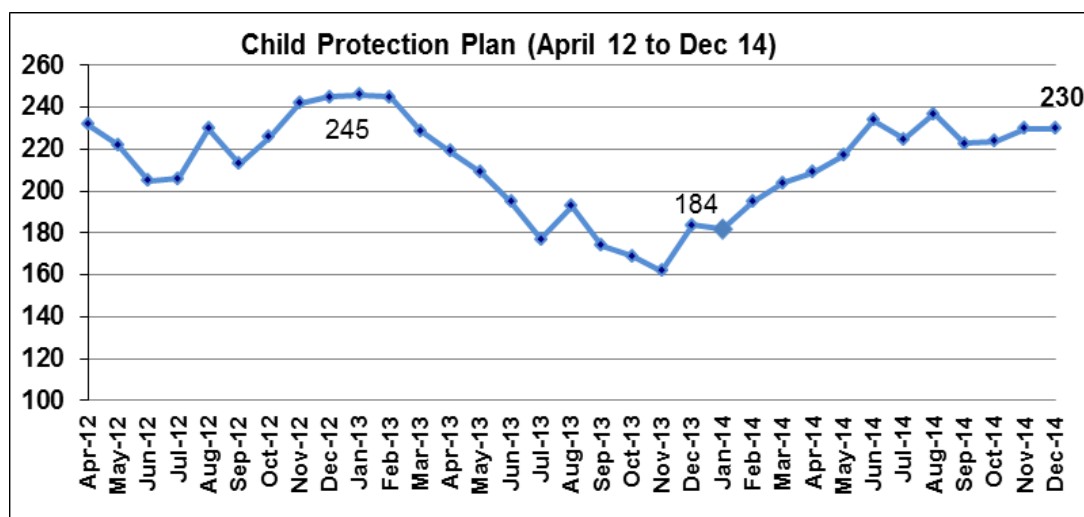
- 3.5 The IRO guidance makes it clear that an effective IRO service requires IROs who have the right skills and experience, working within a supportive context. The Enfield IROs have many years of relevant social work and management experience, and professional expertise.

The IROs are all at an equivalent level to Children's Social Care Team Managers in Enfield. In terms of diversity there is a mix of male and female and a mix of BME (Black, Minority Ethnic) backgrounds. We have:

- 1 IRO with specialist MASE link
- 1 IRO with a specialist CDOP link
- 3 IRO's leading on participation
- 1 IRO leading on the reunification project

4. Activity and Key Performance Indicators

4.1 Child Protection and Looked After Numbers



4.1.1 The charts above provide the numbers of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) and Looked After (LAC) at the end of each month since April 2012. At the end of December 2014 both the numbers of CPP and LAC have risen from the same month of the previous year.

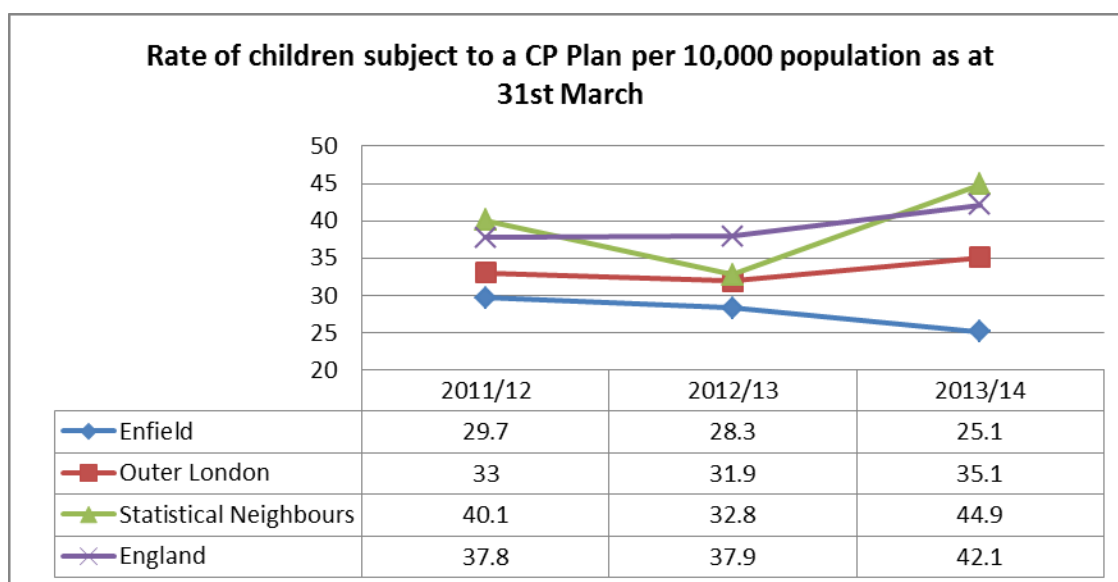
230 children were subject to a CPP an increase of 25% (46 in actual numbers) from December 2013. On 31st March 2015 the number of children subject to CP Plans was 260.

337 children were LAC at the end of December 2014 an increase of 13% (39 actual numbers) from December 2013 and 15% (44 actual numbers) from December 2012. On 31st March 2015 the number of LAC was 355.

- 4.1.2 The chart also shows while end of year figures for December 2014 are higher than those of the previous year, during the year both populations have noted some significant swings at certain points. In the case of LAC, figures fell to 286 at the end of February 2014, 13% lower than the end of December 2014. However the reduction was more significant in the case of CPP where figures fell to 182 at the end of January 2014, 21% lower than the end of December 2014. This is the lowest monthly figure of children subject to a CPP since November 2013, when the figure stood at 162.

Child Protection and Looked After rates per 10,000

- 4.1.3 Rates per 10,000 are used as a method of benchmarking local authorities CPP LAC numbers against each other, using a more comparable method than simply comparing actual numbers. Figures are expressed as a ratio and are calculated by dividing the local authorities' actual numbers by its total 0-17 child population estimate sourced from the Office of National Statistics (ONS). The 2 charts which follow benchmark Enfield's rates per 10,000 of Children subject to a CPP and rates per 100,000 of LAC against average rates for its 3 comparator groups of Outer London, Statistical Neighbours and England as a whole.



- 4.1.4 The chart above shows Enfield has historically had lower than average rates (and therefore numbers) of children subject to Child Protection Plans (CPP) compared to various local authority comparator groups, and continues to do so. Between 2011/12 and 2013/14, our rate had dropped by 15%, going against the trend of all our comparator groups.
- 4.1.5 Enfield's figures to date for the year 2013/14 have shown a marked increase in the rate of children subject to a CPP. As at the end of February 2015, our rate stood at 30.3 per 10,000, an increase of 20% over the March 2014 rate.

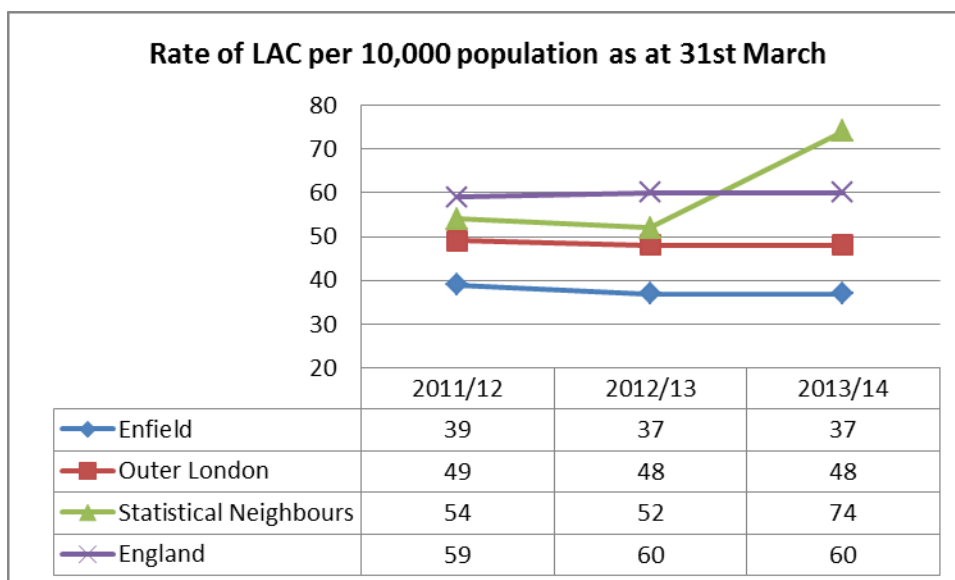
4.1.6 At the end of February 2015, mapping has shown that the 237 children subject to a Child Protection Plan lived in the following wards:

Ward	Total
Bush Hill Park	5
Chase	11
Cockfosters	1
Edmonton Green	39
Enfield Highway	20
Enfield Lock	24
Grange	1
Haselbury	10
Highlands	1
Jubilee	8
Lower Edmonton	16
Out of area	14
Palmers Green	8
Ponders End	6
Southbury	18
Southgate	7
Southgate Green	2
Town	1
Turkey Street	24
Upper Edmonton	18
Winchmore Hill	3
Grand Total	237

67% of all young people subject to child protection plans live in 7 wards which are east of the A10 and are some of our most deprived parts of the Local Authority.

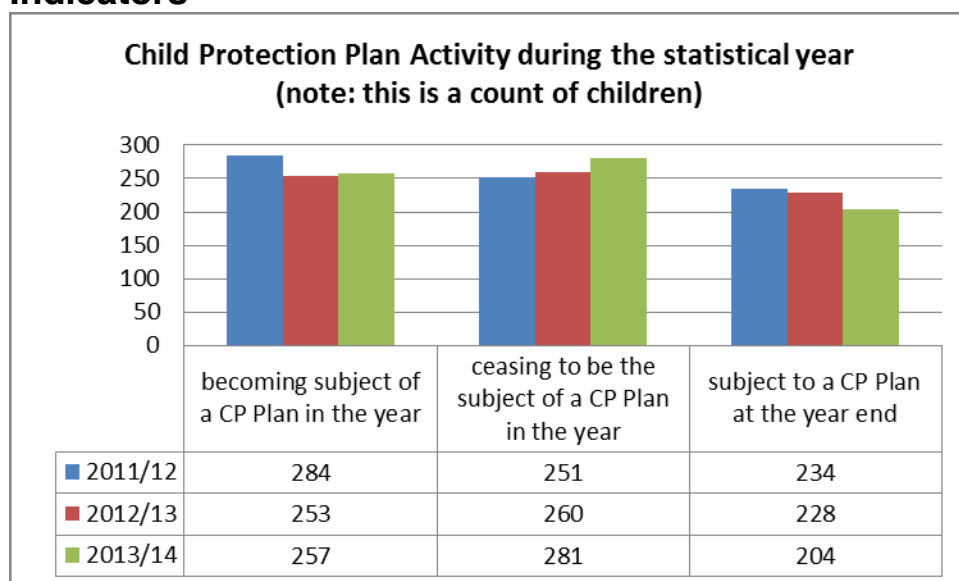
4.1.7 At the end February 2015, of the 247 children subject to a CPP:

- 53% were male, 55.3% female and 1.6% unborn
- 11.3% aged less than 1yr old, 26.3% aged 1-4 yrs., 30.4% aged 5-9 yrs., 29.6% aged 10-15yrs and 2.4% aged 16yrs+
- 89.5% had a category of either Neglect or Emotional Abuse (45.7% and 43.7% respectively)
- 6.9% had a category of physical abuse, 1.2% sexual and 2.4% multiple categories
- 4.5% (11 children) were recorded as being a Child with a Disability (CWD)



- 4.1.8 The chart above shows Enfield has historically (as with rates of CPPs) had lower than average rates (and therefore numbers) of looked after children compared to the various local authority comparator groups, and continues to do so. At the end of 2013/14, 300 children were looked after by Enfield a rate of 37 per 10,000, equal to the figures from the previous year.
- 4.1.9 While always lower, our rates for 2011/12 and 2012/13 remained roughly parallel with all our comparator groups. Enfield's statistical neighbours changed in 2013/14 which has led to a bigger difference in rates with this group.
- 4.1.10 In line with our CP rates, figures to date for 2014/15 are showing a marked increase in our LAC population. As at the end of February 2015, our LAC figure had risen to 343, a rate of 42.1 per 10,000
- 4.1.11 Analysis of cases shown as currently looked after as at 28th February 2015 has shown that 45% of the children had previously been the subject of a Child Protection Plan.

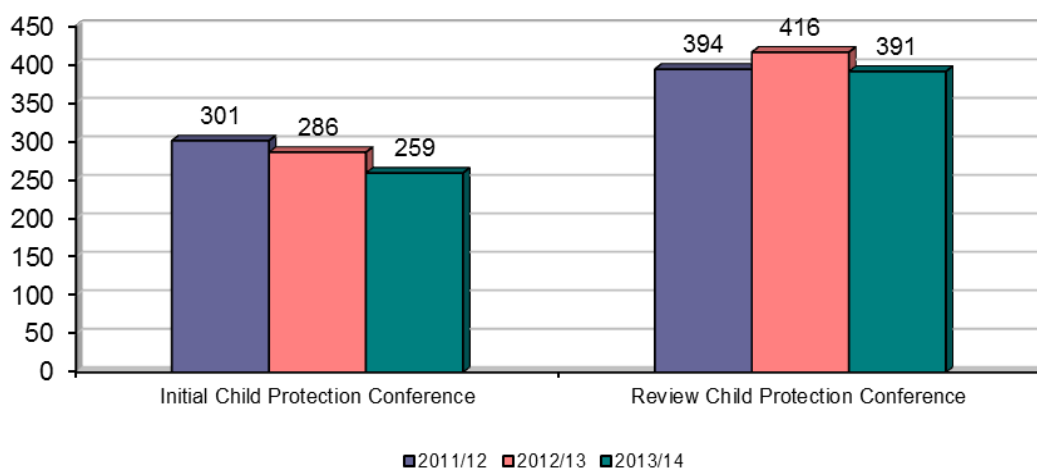
4.2 Child Protection Conferences and Key Performance Indicators



4.2.1 The chart above shows overall activity in relation to CPPs (numbers starting and ending) in each of the last 3 statistical years, up to and including the latest year of 2013/14.

In total 538 CPPs were either started or were discontinued in 2013/14, this represents a 4.9% increase in overall numbers compared with the previous year 2012/13 when the total number stood at 513. The chart shows that over the period, while the number of CPPs starting each year have fluctuated slightly, the number children whose CP plan ceased has increased steadily each year, until the latest year 2013/14.

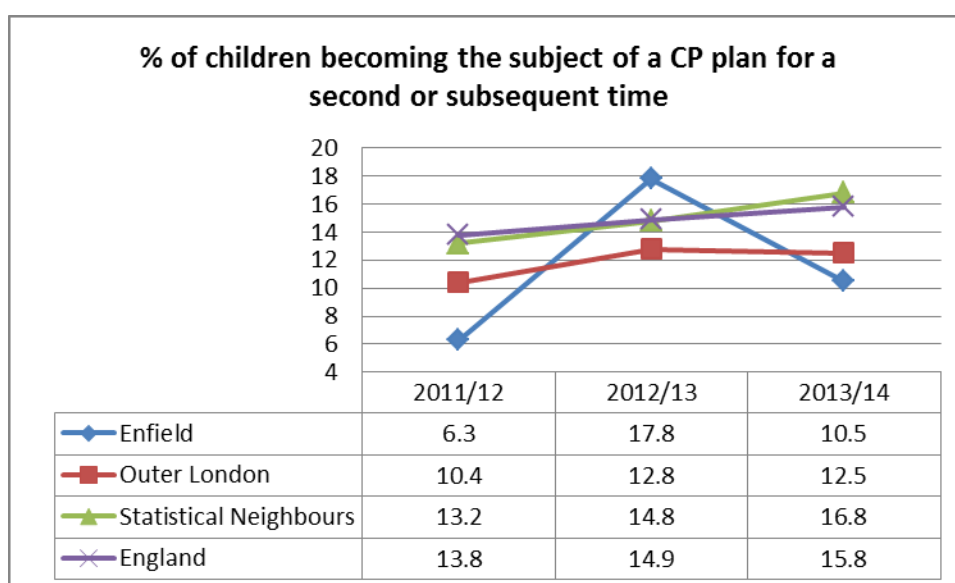
4.2.2 A total of 257 children became the subject of a CPP in 2013/14, a 1.6% increase from the previous year, when the figure stood at 253. 257 is still significantly lower than the 284 CPPs starting in 2011/12, but we are forecasting that the 2014/15 figures will exceed the 2011/12 totals. 281 children had their CPP discontinued in the latest year 2013/14, an 8.1% increase from 260 in the previous year.



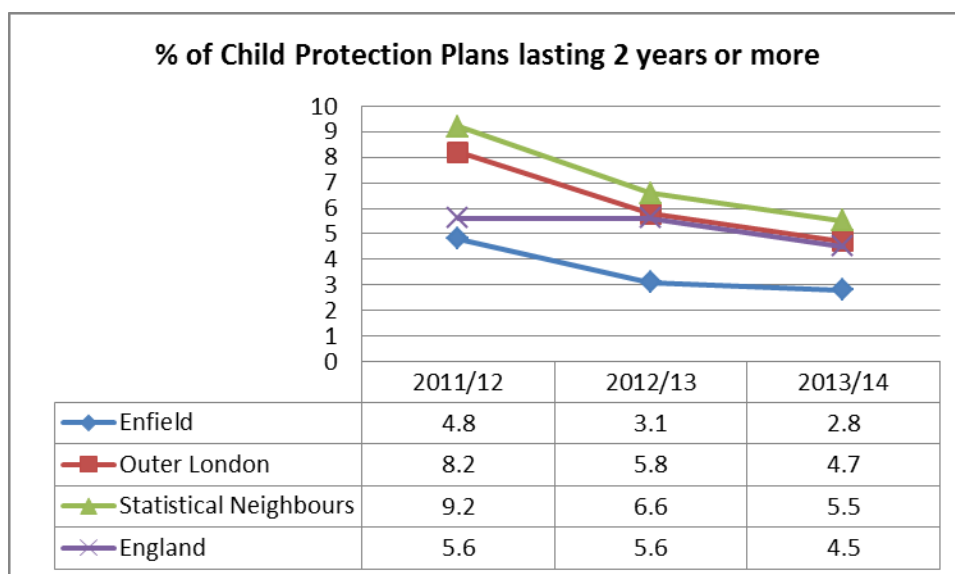
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Initial Child Protection Conference	301	286	259
Review Child Protection Conference	394	416	391
Total	695	702	650

4.2.3 The chart and table above shows overall Child Protection conference activity over the last 3 statistical years. The total number of children subject to a Child Protection Conference in 2013/14 was 650, a decrease of 7.4% from 702 in the previous year. A decrease in numbers was reflected across both of the types of conference represented in the chart however, the number of children subject to conferences for the year 2014/15 already stood at 709 at the end of February. This represents a 9.1% increase on 2013/14, with a month of the year still to go.

Key Child Protection Performance Indicators

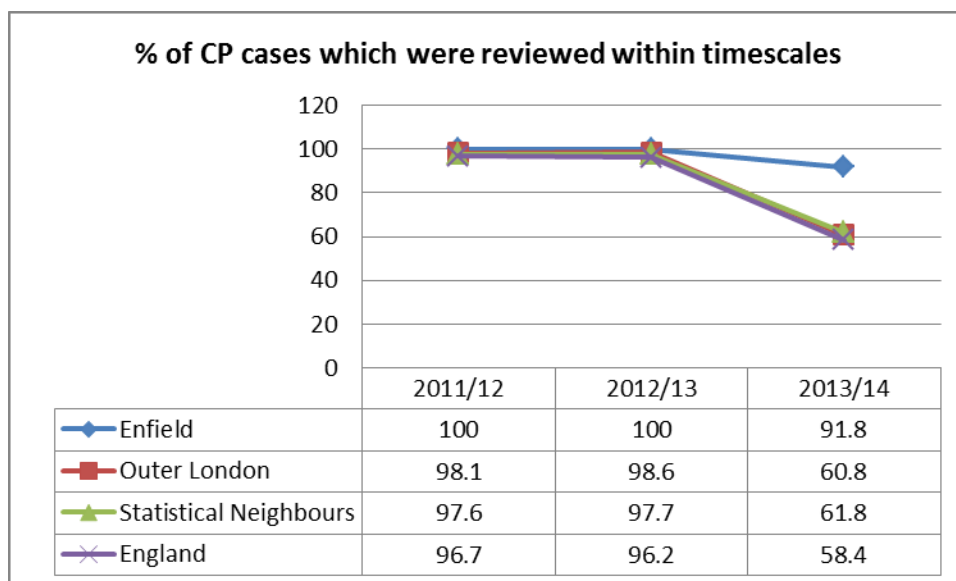


- 4.2.4 The chart above monitors the proportion of CPPs that are second or subsequent CPPs. This indicator is calculated by dividing the number of children who became the subject of a second or subsequent CPP by the total number who became subject to a CPP in the period. Good performance for this indicator is typified by a lower figure. However, it is acknowledged that a second or subsequent child protection plan will sometimes be necessary to deal with adverse changes to the child's circumstances. The chart shows when benchmarked against comparator authority averages, Enfield's performance has been quite volatile.
- 4.2.5 In 2012/13 the rate of second CPPs increased to 17.8%. While performance was better than all 3 comparator groups in the latest year 2013/14 performance as at the end of February 2015 was 20.8%. 27 individual children became subject to a second CPP in 2013/14.
- 4.2.6 Traditionally this indicator has included any second CPP occurring throughout a child's life. The 'Munro' indicator focuses on any second CPP within a two year period. If this is applied to the Enfield cohort the percentage was 3.5% at the end of 2013/14, a reduction from 6% at the end of 2012/13 (comparator figures are currently unavailable).



- 4.2.7 The above chart tracks the percentage of CPPs that were discontinued during the year, having been open for 2 years or more. Good performance is typified by a lower percentage, however it is recognised that some children will need CPPs for longer than 2 years. Due to the low numbers involved, not all authorities within comparator groups had figures published by the Department for Education in each year.
- 4.2.8 Performance for this indicator has been consistency good across the last 3 years. In the latest year ending 2013/14, 2.8% of CPPs ending did so after 2 years or more (8 in actual numbers). 2.8% remains below all comparator groups for 2013/14. Performance as at the end of February 2015 was 2.3%.

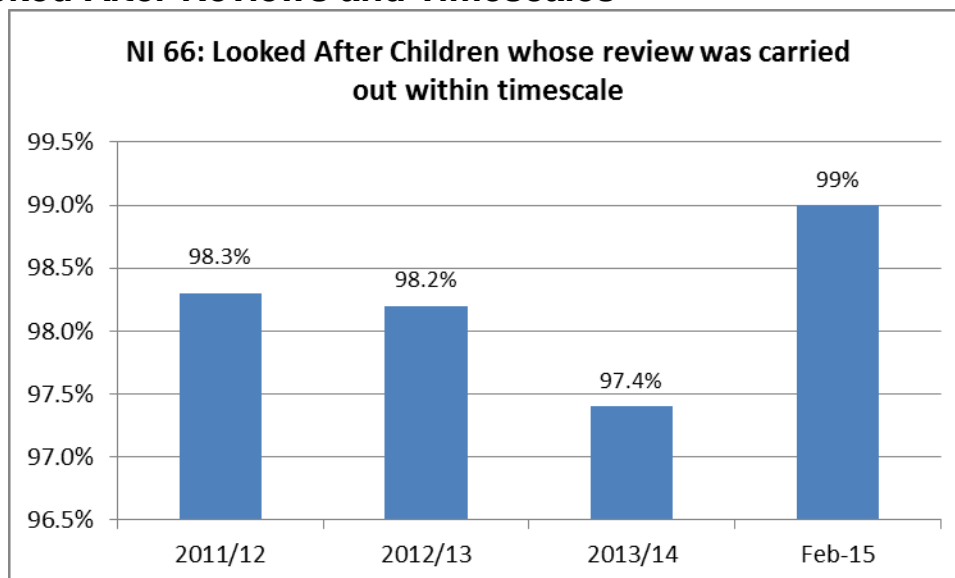
- 4.2.9 As at the 31st March 2014, 2 children with an open plan had been the subject of their CPP for 2 years or more, 2 less than the number as at the 31st March 2013. Both of the children were subject to Child Protection Plans because of neglect.



- 4.2.10 The above chart tracks the percentage of Child Protection cases which were reviewed within statutory timescales in the year. Good performance for this indicator is typified by a higher percentage, ideally 100%. Over the last 3 years robust administration and monitoring systems have ensured that Enfield continues to perform well on this measure. In each of the years reflected in the chart, up to and including the latest year 2013/14 Enfield's percentage has been higher than each of the 3 comparator group averages. In the latest year

2013/14, 91.8% of cases were reviewed within timescales which, although a decrease on the previous 2 years, performance has not dropped off at the same rate as has been seen in our comparator groups.

4.3 Looked After Reviews and Timescales



The percentage of Looked After Children reviews completed within timescale continues to be high, as shown in the table above.

4.4 IRO case loads

- 4.4.1 The IRO Handbook recommends that case loads for IROs need to be between 50 and 70 LAC children. The size of caseload alone does not indicate the overall workload for each individual IRO as individual roles and responsibilities vary within the team.
- 4.4.2 During the last three years, there has been a high turnover of both permanent and agency staff within the IRO service. IRO Caseloads for LAC are at the lower end of the recommended range outlined in the IRO Handbook, however in addition to the duties Enfield's IROs fulfil with LAC they also chair case conferences and develop child protection plans. .
- 4.4.3 The IRO guidance puts an emphasis on ensuring that the size of the case load enables IROs to have sufficient time to provide a quality service to each LAC including, amongst a number of responsibilities, monitoring drift, undertaking follow up work after the review, consulting with the social worker following a significant change and meeting with the child before the review. At the end of February 2015, 247 children were subject to CPPs and 343 children were looked after. The recent increase in the LAC population (due to unaccompanied minors and young people being remanded into care) and the number of children subject to CPPs is stretching the capacity of the IRO service and this is being closely monitored to ensure timeliness targets and high practice standards are maintained.

4.6 Participation (including Viewpoint)

- 4.6.1 A key role of the Service is to seek regular feedback from children, young people, families and carers about their experience in care and also the difference the IRO has made to the lives of the children with whom they work. This information is collated and used to drive improvement.
- 4.6.2 Ensuring LAC are able to participate as fully as possible in planning and reviews is a key priority for the Service and as a result there has been a significant improvement in this area. This has included more children being supported to attend their reviews, and more ways children can participate, especially for those who have additional communication needs. There is still room for improvement in this area which continues to be a priority. Data as at the end of January 2015 suggests around 96% of LAC who were reviewed during the year participated in all their reviews held during the year. This figure has been fairly consistent over the last 3 years. IROs have a key role to actively seek the views for children who do not wish to attend their reviews and to see what would assist in getting them there. Participation of young people who are subject to a child protection conference continues to increase 2013-14 = 74.4% (406/545)
- 4.6.3 The IRO Handbook makes it an expectation that the IRO will meet with the child prior to the Review meeting or as part of the process. IROs are to record on ICS where they have met and spoken to the child.
- 4.6.4 The Safeguarding & Quality Service continues to gain the views of LAC using the Viewpoint programme. Viewpoint is a computer assisted interviewing process. It allows the child, if they wish to present their views both positive and negative, in respect of their full time or respite care. The Viewpoint programme is undertaken with all looked after children. The system is also currently used for children on CP Plans and we are looking to roll this out further to Children with Disabilities and Privately Fostered children
- 4.6.5 Take up of the system is now being driven by a steering group which meets quarterly. This is attended by social workers, care co-ordinators and managers from across Children's Services as well as the Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Service.
- 4.6.6 Reports are now being set up to provide quarterly information on take up of the service as well as demographic information.

5 Local Authority Designed Officer (LADO)

- 5.1 The Enfield LADO is the Deputy Head of the Safeguarding and Quality Service. The role of the LADO is to provide management and overview of cases where there are allegations against staff and volunteers who work with children from all agencies.

The LADO ensures that advice and information is given to Senior Managers within organisations and monitors the progress and timescales of these cases. The LADO ensures that there is a consistent approach to the application of policy and procedures, when managing allegations, and maintains a secure information database for all allegations.

All referrals are considered in line with Pan London Child Protection procedures and follow the local Enfield protocol.

- 5.2 The total number of allegations referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for period 1st April 2014 to 31st December 2014 is 35. From 1st April 2013 until 31st March 2014 there have been 69 referrals.
- 5.3 Secondary and primary schools remain the primary referrers with physical abuse being the main reason for concerns
- 5.4 The outcomes of the 35 cases are:
- 11 substantiated
 - 17 unsubstantiated
 - 4 unfounded
 - continue to be investigated.
- 5.5 In addition to these referrals, the LADO has been consulted on a regular basis where advice was provided, when threshold for a referral was not warranted. There has been appropriate liaison with OFSTED and the Barring Service when this has been warranted.
- 5.6 Workshops and training around managing allegations has been provided to several services/agencies, to ensure compliance with national and local procedures and guidance and to increase confidence in dealing with these allegations. The LADO has attended London LADO network meetings.
- 5.7 Further areas of development for 2015/16 are updating the ESCB Managing Allegations Protocol and reviewing and embedding LADO processes.

6 Management Oversight, Quality Assurance and Dispute Resolution Process

- 6.1 All children looked after and children subject to child protection plans are allocated a designated IRO from the moment they enter the system with the key aim that the allocated IRO will remain consistent, until the child is no-longer looked after or subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- 6.2 The quality and effectiveness of the IRO service is closely monitored through supervision, case file audits, together with performance reporting which highlights good practice as well as any areas of concern, therefore enabling prompt action to rectify any poor IRO performance.
- 6.3 Audits undertaken by the Safeguarding Service include both children looked after and children subject to child protection plans. There is continuous scrutiny of the role of the IRO under key themes, including the evidence of the child's voice within reviews and also evidence of challenge by the IRO. There is evidence of good practice whereby IRO's have supported some young people to chair their own reviews. This is an area for further development in 2015-2016.
- 6.4 One of the key functions of the IRO is to resolve problems arising out of the care planning process. IROs within Enfield continue to have positive working relationships with social workers and team managers of the children for whom they are responsible. Where problems are identified in relation to a child's case for example in relation to care planning, resources or poor practice, the IRO will, in the first instance, seek to resolve the issue informally with the social worker or the social workers manager. If the matter is not resolved in a timescale that is appropriate to the child's needs, the IRO will escalate the matter accordingly following the local dispute resolution process.
- 6.5 Staff together with IROs recognises that any problems or concerns regarding care plans need to be addressed initially through negotiation before instigating the escalation resolution process.
- 6.7 The escalation process gives weight and strength to the role of the IRO and emphasises the need for the IRO to be accountable for the recommendations that are made at reviews. IROs will refer to the process when actions or recommendations have not been followed up on behalf of a child/young person or where care plans have been delayed and whilst in the main the majority are dealt with at Social Worker/Team Manager level, there are some examples of where there has been escalation to Heads of Service.
- 6.8 As part of the monitoring function IROs have a duty to monitor the performance of the local authority's function as a corporate parent and identify any areas of poor practice. This includes identifying patterns of concern emerging not just around individual children but also more generally in relation to the collective experience of looked after children and the services they receive. Equally

important, the IROs recognise and report on good practice.

- 6.9 The expectations within the IRO Handbook have mostly been implemented the area which continues to be a challenge is caseloads. The annual reports of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the independent reviewing officer (IRO) have been rewritten to meet the requirements of the relevant statutory guidance, provide a critical analysis of their respective services and identify specific areas for improvement.
- 6.10 See case examples of IRO intervention and the impact of their role by reading the 4 case studies in Appendix 1

7. Planned developments and key priorities for 2014/15

- 7.1 The Service continues to make significant steps in implementing improvements in practice. The next 12 months will be a challenging time for the Service, the areas of development identified include:
- Implementation of the Ofsted 2015 improvement plan. Ensuring that the annual reports of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the independent reviewing officer (IRO) meet the requirements of the relevant statutory guidance, provide a critical analysis of their respective services and identify specific areas for improvement.
 - Developing a plan to implement strengthening family's model creating a more constructive culture around child protection organisation and practice – particularly through the implementation of Signs of Safety.
 - Maintaining high LAC participation and improving CP conference participation by further embedding the use of viewpoint and increasing the support to young people to enable them to chair their own looked after reviews as appropriate.
 - Embracing the Enfield 2017 transformation agenda while fulfilling the statutory requirements of the service.
 - Implement findings from the many audits that review children subject to child protection plans and those looked after and continue to have a key role in the work of the ESCB and specifically the work of the OMG. The audits provide ongoing scrutiny of the role of the IRO in the care planning process.
 - All IRO's will attend social work knowledge and skills workshops over the forthcoming year in order to identify learning and development needs specific to the role. This ensures that the Service is in the strongest position possible to deliver on its priorities and objectives with Independent

Reviewing Officers increasing their relevant skills, knowledge and understanding.

- Head of Service to review the budget and trade services through schools particularly with regard to training activity.
- Develop the role of Kratos (children in care council) during 2015-2016 in reviewing the effectiveness of the IRO service
- Updating the ESCB Managing Allegations Protocol, reviewing and embedding LADO processes.
- Embed the process from the new Child Sexual Exploitation multi-agency protocol

The specific detail for all areas of development including actions, activity and timescales are reflected in the work plan for 2015/16 and can be found in Appendix 2.

8. Overview and Summary

- 8.1 Overall, it has been a positive year for the Service this was reflected in the recent (2015) Ofsted inspection which judged the Local Authority as overall good. Whilst there have been challenges due to increased numbers of LAC and CP conferences the team has focused on strengths and opportunities and the team are currently fully staffed.
- 8.2 “The independent reviewing officers (IROs) bring rigour and challenge to care planning. Recommendations arising from the regular reviews provide a good overview of progress made and actions needed which ensures that drift is avoided in most cases. A very high proportion of children take part in their reviews”. London Borough of Enfield Ofsted (2015) inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.
- 8.2 IRO caseloads remain a challenge but continue to be closely monitored through a robust management information process.
- 8.3 Participation remains strong. For the LAC population there are strong links between the Service and Kratos (children in care council) which provides the opportunity for their views to inform the development of services for looked after children.

APPENDIX 1

All case studies below are provided in very broad, slightly changed terms to preserve anonymity.

CASE STUDY 1: Importance of Continuity of Professionals to improve outcomes for children

Background

The older children had been subjected to emotionally erratic and sometimes physically abusive parenting that had been recognised in Child Protection and court arenas. The harm to the older children had been done over a long period and the eventual intervention and separation for those children had come about from the determined and skilful work of their then Social Worker. That work had penetrated the sometimes reasonable presentation of the parents and revealed the harm the children had suffered.

Main areas of concern/risk:

The Child Protection and then legal proceedings regarding the younger children came after a change of Social Worker and management of work with the family. Those new to the case could see the need to prevent history repeating for these children but the continuity of involvement was not there.

The evidence was available and the history of the case was crucial, signposting the inevitable experience for the children and the intervention that would be needed in the future.

Intervention

The current Reviewing Officer had been previously involved as a Child Protection chair for the older children and had worked closely with their Social Worker at that time. That Reviewing Officer also had a working relationship with the children's parents and was familiar with their variable presentation associated with fluctuating mental health and resistance to necessary treatment. They could present as compliant but were definitely not.

Once Child Protection and legal proceedings started on the younger children the Reviewing Officer continued as the Child Protection chair and also the Independent Reviewing Officer when the children became Looked After.

The Reviewing Officer linked the previous work, assessments and outcome with the current work, continuing discussions with the previous Social Worker, the new one and on to subsequent workers when further changes of personnel took place. There were also discussions with the managers involved in the case, representations to higher managers and perhaps most importantly liaison with the child's Guardian when reappointed by the court. He had been the Guardian for the older children so had the same sense of continuity albeit from a different, external perspective.

Outcome

By forming a link between the work and experience of workers involved with a family over a long period and connecting this with the thinking and assessment of the child's Guardian a more appropriate plan was established.

The strength of the evidence was recognised anew, the need for continuity of thinking regarding the Child Protection planning was re-established and the local authority Care Plan reverted to removal of the children. Connecting with the Guardian allayed the fears about the court's reaction to the Care Plan.

Separation of the children from their parents has been achieved and there is the prospect of a less harmful outcome for these children.

CASE STUDY 2: Importance of the work of the IRO with parents to protect children

Background

The child was referred to the London Borough of Enfield's Children's Services by another London Borough who were in the process of carrying out a Core Assessment on the family when they moved.

The original referral came from the Health Visitor who was concerned that the child's parents were not engaging with health professionals to promote the child's health.

The child became a subject of a Child Protection Plan in January 2014 due to high levels of neglect.

Main areas of concern/risk:

- Domestic Violence
- Mother's parental ability was lacking and the local authority were concerned that she was unable to appropriately look after the child.
- Professionals raised concerns that Mother would often leave the home late at night and not return home until the early hours of the morning. There were unknown males in the home and it was unclear what the child had been exposed to.
- Missed professional appointments had significantly heightened professional concern for the child.
- Concerns raised as to whether the child was being fed appropriately.
- Lack of stimulation for the child, which may or may not be the reason for under development.
- The child's developmental needs were not being met and the child has not been taken for medicals or other appointments.
- The home is observed to inappropriately darkened, during the day and toys packed away.

Intervention

The Child Protection Chair spoke to both parents before the initial conference to explain the purpose of the conference, confirm the agenda and confirm that the cultural and racial aspects of the child would be a consideration in the decision making.

By the three monthly CP review the Child Protection Chair met with both parents individually about their responsibility to their child and the fact that they were putting their own needs above their child.

The child was accommodated under section 20 of Children Act 1989 and the Child Protection Chair became the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The synergy between the two roles highlighted the continuity between the two roles in the best interest of the child.

The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) was able to explain the history of the case to the newly allocated social worker and give an insightful overview.

The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) gave advice on the child's history of abuse and what future placement would be in the child's best interest regarding the global delay, contact with parents and intervention of disability services.

The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) had contact with the court Guardian in terms of the child's permanency planning.

Outcomes

The child is currently living with a family who are able to meet the child's medium term care. Disability services are in place on a weekly basis.

The child is communicating much better, engaging and beginning to recognise words.

Parental contact has been reduced and supervised when it does take place. A family member is currently being assessed for an SGO (Special Guardianship Order).

CASE STUDY 3: Participation: Importance of creativity to enable young children participate and express their views

Background

Both children are young and are now subject to a CP plan. The children are too young to attend conference.

Main areas concern/risk

- Domestic abuse
- Perpetrator of violence continuing to visit family home despite a legal order in place to prevent this.
- Drug abuse
- Multiple visitors to the family home late at night and during the early hours of the morning

Intervention

The social worker used a creative, gentle and non-threatening approach to ascertain the wishes and feelings of these young children.

Using farm animals the social worker began talking to the children and then the concepts of 3 islands was used to hear about the children's wishes and feelings. One island was their dreams, one island they sometimes visited the 3rd island they never wanted to go to.

Outcomes

The IRO felt it was an exceptional example of how to get younger children to participate in conference.

This Three Islands view was not only helpful to bring the children's views and concerns into the conference but also useful for the children's mother to hear what the children feel about some of the things they are witnessing in the home.

CASE STUDY 4: Importance of legal planning and contingency planning in child protection plans

Background

Three children were subjects of a child protection plans. The concerns were around mother's drinking and inability to be emotionally available for the children. The children's father lived in another part of the country following the separation.

Main areas of concern/risk:

- Alcohol abuse
- Poor parenting and inability to prioritise needs of the children
- Physical violence between siblings
- None of the children reaching their education potential

Intervention

The Independent Reviewing Officer who chaired the Child Protection Conferences set a timescale by which the family would either agree where the children would live or for the local authority to take legal action.

The local authority initiated the Public Law Outline which prompted father to apply for a Child Arrangement Order. A Family Group Conference was convened to consider who else within the extended family network could be an appropriate carer.

Direct work was undertaken by the allocated social worker with all three children and as a result the two eldest expressed a wish to attend the Child Protection Conferences.

The independent reviewing officer met with the oldest two children and agreed that they could attend part of the conference, to express their views, hear about what the professionals say about them, and then return to hear the chair's summary and child protection plan.

Outcomes

Mother wanted the children to be cared for by the maternal side of the family. The independent reviewing officer expressed concerns at the child protection reviews about mother's ability to prioritise the emotional needs of children in the long term. The local

authority supported the father's application for Child Arrangement Order by way of a Section 7 report to the court.

Child young person's views re outcomes

All three children are now living with their father and their local authority report that they are doing well and are happy living with their father.

Appendix 2

IRO Annual Work plan 2015/2016

Green	Action on track and progressing to plan, no problems that will impact on schedule.	Red	Major problems and issues threatening the action, behind schedule and not expected to recover.
Amber	Some problems and or delays with the action but expected to recover.	Complete	Action fully completed

Area for development	Action	Lead officer	Timescale	RAG Status
Implementation of the Ofsted 2015 improvement plan. Ensuring that the annual reports of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the independent reviewing officer (IRO) meet the requirements of the relevant statutory guidance, provide a critical analysis of their respective services and identify specific areas for improvement.	Re write and publish 2014/15 IRO report Write and publish 2014/15 LADO report	Anne Stoker Head of Safeguarding Maria Anastasi LADO	April 2015 April 2015	
Implement strengthening family's model creating a more constructive culture around child protection organisation and practice – particularly through the implementation of Signs of Safety.	Develop an implementation plan to be presented and agreed at OMG Present to ESCB and begin to plan into place with full cooperation of partners	Anne Stoker Head of Safeguarding	June 2015 September 2015	
Maintaining the high levels of participation in LAC reviews and improving where possible the numbers of children and young people that participate in Child Protection conferences.	Further embed the use of viewpoint by IROs championing its use Increase the number of young people supported to chair their own LAC reviews Include the above as stretch targets within IROs individual PARs	Maria Anastasi Deputy Head of Service and IROs	April 2015 onwards	
Embracing the Enfield 2017 transformation agenda while fulfilling the statutory requirements of the service.	Identify key areas that will require specific specialist support and ensure all statutory functions are met	2017 Leadership Team Tony Theodoulou Assistant Director Children's Services	April 2015 and ongoing throughout the year	

		Anne Stoker Head of Safeguarding		
Implement findings from the many audits that review children subject to child protection plans and those looked after and continue to have a key role in the work of the ESCB and specifically the work of the OMG.	Review sections of audits relating to the service	Anne Stoker Head of Safeguarding Maria Anastasi LADO IROs	October 2015	
Ensure IROs leadership and competencies remains strong and they meet the standards of the new knowledge and skills framework.	IROs to attend training and development workshops New knowledge and skills set to be used when setting PARs			
Increase income generation where possible through traded services and charging for training	Review the budget monitor IROs case loads as income generated may be offset against service pressures			
Include Kratos in the review of the effectiveness of the IROs	Develop a framework to			
Update the ESCB Managing Allegations Protocol, reviewing and embedding LADO processes.	Update the protocol Launch and embed use of the LADO referral form Explore use of liquid logic to case manage LADO records Continue to deliver multi-agency training re the management of allegations	Maria Anastasi Deputy Head of Safeguarding		
Embed the process from the new Child Sexual Exploitation multi-agency protocol	Review processes and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the IRO			