



## Corporate Parenting Committee

**Thursday 11 December 2014 at 5.00 pm**

Board Room 7&8 - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way,  
Wembley HA9 0FJ

### Membership:

#### Members

Councillors:

Moher (Chair)  
Conneely  
Hossain  
Thomas  
Warren

#### Substitute Members

Councillors:

S Choudhary, Colacicco, Crane  
and Dixon

Councillor:

Davidson and Ms Shaw

**For further information contact:** Anne Reid, Democratic Services  
020 8937 1359, [anne.reid@brent.gov.uk](mailto:anne.reid@brent.gov.uk)

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**The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting**

# Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members.

| Item                                     | Page  |
|--|-------|
| <b>1 Minutes of the previous meeting</b> | 1 - 6 |

## **2 Matters arising**

## **3 Deputations (if any)**

## **4 Children in Care - questions and answers**

This is an opportunity for members of the Children In Care Council (CIA) to feedback on recent activity.

|                                      |        |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>5 Adoption 6th monthly report</b> | 7 - 16 |
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The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Council's Corporate Parenting Committee about the general management of the adoption service and how it is achieving good outcomes for children.

### **Ward Affected:**

All Wards

### **Contact Officer:** Nigel Chapman, Head of

Placements

Tel: 020 8937 4456

nigel.chapman@brent.gov.uk

|                                     |         |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| <b>6 Fostering quarterly report</b> | 17 - 48 |
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The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Council's Corporate Parenting Committee about the general management of the in-house fostering service and how it is achieving good outcomes for children. This is in accordance with standard 25.7 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards (2011).

### **Ward Affected:**

All Wards

### **Contact Officer:** Nigel Chapman, Head of

Placements

Tel: 020 8937 4456

nigel.chapman@brent.gov.uk

## **7 LAC education attainment report**

Presentation from Sara Williams (Operational Director, Early Help and Education).

**Ward Affected:**  
All Wards

**Contact Officer:** Sara Williams, Operational Director, Early Help and Education  
020 8937 3510  
sara.williams@brent.gov.uk

**8 Care Quality Commission report; Review of Health Services for 49 - 58 Children Looked After and Safeguarding**

Report back on progress on Action Plan.

**Ward Affected:**  
All Wards

**Contact Officer:** Isha Coombes, Assistant Director, Out of Hospital Services, Brent CCG

**9 Development of Forward Plan**

**10 Dates of future meetings**

12 February 2015

16 April 2015

**11 Any other urgent business**

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Democratic Services Manager or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 64.

**Date of the next meeting: Thursday 12 February 2015**



Please remember to set your mobile phone to silent during the meeting.

- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public.

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## MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE Monday 6 October 2014 at 5.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Thomas (in the Chair) and Councillors Conneely, Hossain and Warren

ALSO PRESENT: Leilani Mensah–Manuel (Chair of Care in Action), Caroline MacGinnis (Vice Chair of Care in Action)

Apologies were received from: Councillor Moher

### 1. **Election of Chair**

In the absence of the Chair, nominations were invited for a chair for the meeting. Following a vote, it was RESOLVED:

that Councillor Thomas be elected Chair for this meeting.

### 2. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 July 2014 were approved as an accurate record.

### 3. **Matters arising**

None.

### 4. **Deputations**

None.

### 5. **Care Quality Commission report**

Isha Coombes (Assistant Director, Out of Hospital Services, Brent Clinical Commissioning Group) summarised the findings of the Review of Health Services for Children Looked After and Safeguarding in the borough that took place between 9 June and 13 June 2014. There had been two inspectors on site and two days' notice had been given. The review had been outcomes focussed and looked at the performance of the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) and the NHS in particularly in terms of effectiveness, the experience of children, need identification and collaboration between agencies. Of the highlights, Ms Coombes was pleased to report that governance across CCG and safeguarding children was seen to have improved and there were some positive reviews from service users including young people. She then drew attention to the recommendations of the review and members raised questions on the action plan in place to address concerns.

Ms Coombes advised that the agencies concerned would be sent the final actions to implement, that these would be reviewed quarterly and evidence submitted of actions taken and she cited an example of successful contingency planning. Efforts would be made to ensure it was embedded and filtered down. CCG and the local authority were also meeting monthly to review quality and identify gaps. Ms Coombes acknowledged that it was proving challenging to ensure that initial health assessments for children looked after were carried out within the statutory timescales due to a number of factors, usually child refusal but there had been a significant improvement which had been noted by the inspectors. Members' attention was also drawn to problems in delays in electronic record keeping and Isha Coombes was pleased to report that the CCG had agreed to meet the costs of all records being electronic which was due to be completed within the next two weeks. Isha agreed to give the Looked After Children Council a full opportunity to comment on the final report.

Members, in questioning, commented on the indicator rate for emergency department attendances for children under four which was worse than the England average and also referred to mixed messages about the purpose and effectiveness of MASH (multi-agency safeguarding hub) and lack of clarity over decision making. The Strategic Director of Children and Young People clarified that MASH had different elements and that insofar as this report referred to safeguarding it was accurate. Discussion also took place on the consistency and timeliness of initial health assessments which was acknowledged to be patchy in 2011 however more recent reviews carried out by the children looked after nurses was assessed as being exemplary. Isha Coombes confirmed that the action plan had been produced within the required 20 days for the CQC and would thereafter be monitored and RAG rated and agreed to report back on progress on all recommendations.

Isha Coombes responded to a question on the progress of integration of public health into local authority responsibility and members heard that the CCG was still currently responsible for commissioning but this would mobilise into local health in the future.

RESOLVED:

that items relating to Brent CCG and Ealing Integrated Care Organisation (recommendations 6.1-6.4 in the review report) be reported to the next meeting and quarterly thereafter, with a clear action plan on how to mitigate concerns.

## **6. Children in Care - questions and answers**

Representatives of the Children in Care Council circulated at the meeting revised Looked After Children (LAC) consultation, Brent Pledge forms and complaints and advocacy leaflet. The LAC consultation form was designed to help young people express their feelings. Following comparisons with other boroughs' publications, a new form had been designed which was felt to be more user friendly, with pictures and different age related designs. It was expected that younger children would be given assistance in filling in the form. The revised Brent Pledge form was felt to be more age appropriate with relevant pictures and in a fold out card design that could be easily carried so children could be clear on their rights. The document was currently with the council's Design Team. The complaints and advocacy form had been simplified, updated and made more relevant since last published in 2009.

The committee also heard about the Well-Being Fun Day held on 2 August 2014 attended by young people which had received very positive feedback. It aimed to promote the health and well-being of young people and the Strategic Director, Children and Young People was pleased to report that the LAC nurses had been very involved. Committee members expressed an interest in attending future events. The committee were advised that as a reward for the children, a trip to a 'pick your own' farm had been arranged which had also been enjoyed.

Regarding the LAC website, members heard that this continued to be developed by the council's Communication Team and was hoped to soon be launched. The committee agreed with the view expressed by the LAC that their wishes should be the main driver in the determining the design of the website and to have a design they felt most met their needs.

Members welcomed the proposed changes to the publications which, it was felt, were long overdue and hoped would be implemented.

## **7. Adoption Annual Report**

The report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People provided information about the general management of the adoption service and how it was achieving good outcomes for children. The report detailed the performance of Brent's adoption service for the year 1 April 2013 - 31 March 2014. The report drew upon information supplied to the Department for Education in the adoption scorecard analysis; the annual Ofsted data return and narrative detail from the adoption panel.

Nigel Chapman (Head of Placements) introduced the report and referred to staff restructuring that had taken place over recent years which had resulted in streamlined assessment and adoption teams. He drew members' attention to the 2013-14 Scorecard Performance and was pleased to report that 11 children had been adopted in the last financial year and that timeliness was improving as had the speed of decision making. As at 31 March 2014, there were 12 adoptive household waiting to be matched. Nigel Chapman also referred to changes in the approach to advertising and marketing and support given to the training of prospective adopters including joint arrangements other boroughs. The committee heard of the national changes facing the service and steps being taken to work collaboratively with other boroughs that would help to reduce the time taken to adopt.

Members expressed concern over the possibility of a higher rate of placement breakdown as a direct result of speedier placements and decision making. Questions were also raised on how the authority could be satisfied that the agency was effective and achieving good outcomes. Also, the ease with which potential adopters could be found and that reference to disability should be included.

Nigel Chapman advised that timeliness, speed of decision making were measured and adopters were assessed after six months. He also advised that there had been no adoption breakdowns in the last three years. Gail Tolley added that the adoption scorecard and Ofsted data return were part of assessment criteria reminding that authority was judged to be adequate in 2012. Data available now was stronger and

there was a push to improve standards. Graham Genoni (Operational Director, Social Care) advised that fostering to adopt allowed for continuity in the process.

In response to questions from Care In Action representatives on cross religion/culture adoption and support given to families that adopt children from a different background, Nigel Chapman advised that the provisions of the Children Act 2014 prevented race based adoption and Brent's focus was the needs of the child. Additionally, post adoption services team offered therapy, behavioural management and the life story book was a useful tool.

RESOLVED:

that the contents of Brent Adoption Service Report 2013-2014 be noted as evidence that the management of the adoption service was being monitored in order to promote good outcomes for children, in line with standard 25.6 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards (2014).

#### **8. Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring report - 1 April - 30 June 2014**

The committee considered a report which provided information about the general management of the in-house fostering service and how it was achieving good outcomes for children in accordance with standard 25.7 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards (2011). The report covered the first quarter of this reporting year.

Nigel Chapman made reference to the new staffing arrangements that had been in operation since 1 April 2014 with a Kinship, Fostering and Adoption Assessment Team and on-going support from the Fostering Support Team. Key messages included a significant increase in close to home placements and children brought up in a family setting and efforts were being made to increase the number of foster carers and service development.

Members questioned the council's performance in comparison to national standards and sought clear evidence based statements of effectiveness. Questions were also raised on the reasons behind terminations of approval, the results of foster carers annual reviews.

Nigel Chapman advised that the March 2013 inspection had judged the service to be good with outstanding features and that the data sets would indicate improved performance and an improvement in the number of children placed in house. The social work team was considered to be stable. Reasons for termination included ill health and breach of trust and were the decision of the Fostering Panel. Concerns arising from Annual reviews were reported to the Fostering Panel.

The committee heard that social worker attendance at Fostering Panel where cases were being heard, was not always regular due to work pressures or lack of familiarity with procedure and was assured that this was being addressed. Committee members, while not complacent, were satisfied that systems were in place for concerns to be raised. A view was expressed that the authority could only be satisfied that current information only allowed for assurance to be in line with national minimum standards.



RESOLVED:

that the Fostering Service Quarterly monitoring report (April – June 2014) be noted as evidence that the management of the fostering service was being monitored in order to promote good outcomes for children.

**9. Attainment of Looked After Children - September 2014 update**

Consideration of this item was deferred to the next meeting when the full data would be available.

**10. Rotherham/ Child Sexual Exploitation Briefing**

The Strategic Director, Children and Young People referred to recent media coverage of child sexual exploitation following abuse reported to have taken place in Rotherham and took the opportunity to set out what the authority was doing to prevent incidence in the borough and to support LACs.

Graham Genoni (Operational Director, Social Care) advised that training had taken place during the previous week and that one key element was seen to be multi agency tracking. In Brent there was no evidence of systematic abuse however concerns continued over gangs and exploitation, particularly for those in residential care. An audit of all cases had been carried out and he was content with the findings. Some children at risk of being drawn into gangs were being relocated. Foster carers had also attended training. Missing children were seen to be most at risk and every effort made to locate and return them. Visits were also made by social workers and independent review officers.

Representatives of Looked After Children Council suggested the need for mandatory awareness raising in residential homes highlighting potential problems. Graham Genoni advised that the staff working in homes were required to attend training, to talk to the children and work with schools, acknowledging that more could be done. Gail Tolley advised that at a recent Secondary Head Teachers Conference, while acknowledging that they were all locally governed, attention had been drawn to their responsibilities. Schools had been directed to 'Chelsea's Choice' a powerful production highlighting issue of child sexual exploitation, now available across London.

Members questioned how information was shared between other boroughs on gangs that were moving between neighbourhoods and how the problem was addressed to which Graham Genoni responded that information was shared on the number of children on short breaks and tracking was possible.


**11. Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 7.04 pm

B Thomas  
In the Chair



|  |  |
|--|--|
|       | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Corporate Parenting Committee</b><br/><b>11 December 2014</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Report from the</b><br/><b>Director of Children and Young People</b></p> |
| <p><b>Brent Adoption Service Report</b><br/><b>1 April 2014 –30 September 2014</b></p> |  |

## **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Council's Corporate Parenting Committee about the general management of the adoption service and how it is achieving good outcomes for children.
- 1.2 This reports details the activity of Brent's adoption service from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014.
- 1.3 Detail has been provided within section (4) below that enables a comparison of adoption performance with national and other statistical neighbour Local Authorities.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee is requested to review, comment on and question the contents of this report. This is to provide evidence that the management of the adoption service is being monitored and challenged in order to promote good outcomes for children. This is in line with standard 25.6 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards (2014).

## **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 Our Adoption Statement of Purpose highlights the key values of the service which are that:
  - Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family that can meet their developmental needs during childhood and beyond.
  - Adopted children should have an enjoyable childhood, benefit from excellent parenting and education and experience a wide range of

opportunities to develop their talents and skills leading to a successful adult life.

- Children, birth parents/guardians and families, and adoptive parents and families will be valued and respected.

**3.2** Since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014, following a planned restructure of the Placements Service, adoption services have been delivered through two reorganised teams:

- A Kinship, Fostering and Adoption Assessment team – responsible for the recruitment, assessment and training of prospective adopters, as well as family finding and support for them post approval up until Adoption Order
- An Adoption and Post Permanency team – responsible for family finding for children with an adoption plan; statutory social work responsibility for children subject to a Placement Order up until Adoption Order; supporting adoptive families, Special Guardians and birth families and providing a counselling and intermediary service for adopted adults and their birth relatives.

#### 4. Performance Data

4.1 The current, published Brent adoption scorecard performance was detailed within the previous report to the Corporate Parenting Committee. This demonstrated that Brent was performing well in relation to improving adoption timeliness. The next set of scorecards will be published within the next two months. The DfE has provided the Local Authority with a draft data set for this scorecard and this corresponds with the additional information provided in the most recent report to the Corporate Parenting Committee. For general information purposes the following data enables a perspective on the Brent position in comparison with the overall national picture.

*Table 1: The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted.*

| Rank      | LA Code    | LA Name        | Indicator value for the 3 year average in 2012, 2013 and 2014 (days) | Indicator value for the 3 year average in 2011, 2012 and 2013 (days) | Indicator value for the 3 year average in 2010, 2011 and 2012 (days) |
|-----------|------------|----------------|--|--|--|
|           |            | <b>ENGLAND</b> | <b>628</b>   | <b>647</b>   | <b>636</b>   |
| <b>72</b> | <b>304</b> | <b>Brent</b>   | <b>600</b>   | <b>694</b>   | <b>854</b>   |

Table 2: The average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family

| Rank       | LA Code        | LA Name      | Indicator value for the 3 year average in 2012, 2013 and 2014 (days) | Indicator value for the 3 year average in 2011, 2012 and 2013 (days) | Indicator value for the 3 year average in 2010, 2011 and 2012 (days) |
|------------|----------------|--------------|--|--|--|
|            | <b>ENGLAND</b> |              | <b>217</b>   | <b>210</b>   | <b>195</b>   |
| <b>137</b> | <b>304</b>     | <b>Brent</b> | <b>306</b>   | <b>367</b>   | <b>343</b>   |

Table 3: The percentage of children who wait less than 18 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family

| Rank      | LA Code        | LA Name      | Indicator value for the 3 year average in 2012, 2013 and 2014 (%) | Indicator value for the 3 year average in 2011, 2012 and 2013 (%) | Indicator value for the 3 year average in 2010, 2011 and 2012 (%) |
|-----------|----------------|--------------|---|---|---|
|           | <b>ENGLAND</b> |              | <b>51</b>   | <b>49</b>   | <b>47</b>   |
| <b>78</b> | <b>304</b>     | <b>Brent</b> | <b>50</b>   | <b>48</b>   | <b>42</b>   |

#### 4.2 There are a number of other indicators within the Adoption Scorecard.

- The number and percentage of children ceasing to be looked after and who were adopted. Brent has a lower percentage of children adopted as a proportion of those ceasing to be looked after (6% 2011-14; compared to a national average of 14%). The numbers of children ceasing to be looked after within Brent has grown at a faster rate than statistical neighbour authorities over the last five years, despite our overall Looked After Child population remaining low in comparison. This issue is being researched further to enable the whole service to better understand the data. However the high number of children ceasing to be looked after, coupled with relatively low adoption numbers explains the low percentage of children leaving care who were adopted.
- Number and percentage of children for whom the permanence decision has changed away from adoption. A lower figure is generally recognised as stronger performance. Brent has a lower number of these decisions (8% 2011-14; compared to a national average of 12%). This data highlights that

our service works with adoption plans for longer with children to enable them to be placed with a permanent adoptive home.

- Our average length of care proceedings (for proceedings concluded in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014) is now 48 weeks which matches the England average.

### **4.3 Child related data – April-September 2014**

In the first six months of this year 5 children were adopted and it is anticipated that this number will rise to 12 or 13 by the end of March 2015. This is a slightly higher figure than the 11 children adopted last year.

- At the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 there were 14 Looked After Children with an adoption plan. All of these children, except one, were subject to Placement Orders. Of these children, seven have been placed with adopters since the 1<sup>st</sup> April, another child is in a 'Fostering for Adoption' placement and two children are to be adopted by their respective foster carers. Six of the seven children placed for adoption and the child in a 'Fostering for Adoption' placement are with Brent approved adopters.
- Of the four remaining Looked After Children with an adoption plan and subject to Placement Order, one of these children is due to be matched with a Brent adopter in November and another has been placed with her paternal grandmother with a view to Special Guardianship. This leaves just two children for whom the Adoption Team is still family finding. This situation is currently being reflected nationally with fewer children with adoption plans. National data released by the Adoption Leadership Board in November 2014 demonstrated a 34% reduction in the number of Placement Orders being granted between September 2013 - June 2014.
- There were 5 children adopted during the first six months of this year. The children's ages ranged from 18 months to 5 years old at the time of their respective adoptions. Of these, two were adopted by Brent recruited adopters and three by adopters from other adoption agencies.

### **4.3 Adopter Recruitment**

- At 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 Brent had 8 approved adoptive households for children where a child had not yet been matched or placed. The number of children requiring adoption and not yet matched or placed continues to be lower than the number of approved adopters.
- During the first six months of this year the service received 71 enquiries about adoption. Many people following this enquiry were signposted to our monthly information evenings. The enquiries received have resulted in 14 ongoing adoption assessments and two adoptive households being approved during the first six months of this year. The new, 2-stage adopter recruitment process

is now well embedded in the service. This process is led by the adopter in stage one and is completed within a 2-month period. The second stage is formed around the social worker assessment and should be concluded and presented to panel within 4 months. Of the 14 on-going adoption assessments, five are in stage one and nine are in stage two of the process.

- During the first six months of this year, two adoptive households had their approval as adopters terminated via Brent's Adoption Panel, with Panel's recommendations being ratified by the Agency Decision Maker. However, there were no referrals to the Independent Review Mechanism, which regulates decision making by adoption agencies. This suggests adopters were satisfied with the service they received and that our Adoption Panel activity is sufficiently robust.
- In terms of measuring the length of time taken for the adopters who were matched to children from the 1<sup>st</sup> April until the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014, 62.5% of the cohort was matched with a child within 6 months of approval. This is a drop from the figure of 80% achieved in 2013-2014 but is indicative of the reduction in children currently available for adoption and the fact that many adopters are showing interest in the same children.
- In addition to the eight adoptive households to be matched with children during this period, Brent's first formal 'Fostering for Adoption' placement was also made when a relinquished baby was placed on a fostering basis with Brent adopters. The adopters had already attended Coram training on concurrency and Fostering for Adoption and therefore had a good understanding of the benefits and also the risks attached, given the possibility that the birth mother could change her mind about relinquishing her baby for adoption.
- Brent continues to attract adopters from a diversity of backgrounds in order to best meet the variety of needs of our Looked After Children. However, in line with the general profile of adopters nationally, the majority of Brent adopters currently waiting to be linked or matched to children are of white British or Asian heritage.

#### **5.4 Adoption Support**

- At the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 there were 89 families receiving an adoption support package from the Local Authority. This support was primarily provided through financial allowances which are reviewed and means tested. This figure has remained stable, as new adoption support packages are balanced by those ending as children reach the age of 18.
- A further 125 families were in receipt of other post-adoption support services within the financial year. These support services ranged from therapeutic services for families to birth records counselling and tracing services for adopted adults.

## **6. The Adoption and Permanence Panel**

### **The Adoption and Permanence Panel**

- 6.1** Brent has one Adoption and Permanence panel constituted in accordance with the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (amended 2011) and Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011. The panel plays a central role in assisting the Agency Decision Maker (who in Brent is the Operational Director, Children's Social Care) to reach the best possible decision in relation to:
- whether a child should be placed for adoption;
  - the suitability of prospective adopters and concurrent carers;
  - whether a child should be placed with a specific prospective adopter; and
  - whether a child should be matched for long term fostering with a specific carer.
- 6.2** The panel also advises the service on matters relating to contact arrangements; whether an application for a placement order should be made in certain circumstances; the profile of children the prospective adopter(s) may be suitable to adopt; and the provision of adoption support.
- 6.3** The Panel meets once a month in respect of all matters concerning adoption. A joint annual training day for adoption panel members and the adoption team staff is held and was delivered last year by the British Agency for Adoption and Fostering. The next training day has been scheduled for January 2015.
- 6.4** Following each panel presentation those attending are asked for feedback. People asked for feedback include prospective and approved adopters, Brent social care staff and social workers from other adoption agencies within England and Wales. The consistent message received is that the panel is robust in nature and that attendees felt able to express their views and opinions.
- 6.5** In line with statutory guidance, a central list of panel members is used on a rotating basis to ensure members maintain regular links with Brent and current issues in adoption. The central list consists of an independent chair, an independent vice chair, various independent members including a birth mother with experience of adoption, a former Looked After Child and a foster carer from another Local Authority. There are also panel members employed by Brent, including representatives from education, health, the probation service and Children's Centres as well as an elected member. All panel members contribute to an annual appraisal and have the opportunity to attend any additional relevant training provided by Brent and the West London Adoption Consortium.



**6.6** During the period 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 four panels were held with fifteen specific cases discussed during these sessions. Within this group:

- Two applicants were recommended as suitable to adopt
- Four children were recommended to be placed for adoption with specific carers
- One long-term fostering match was recommended
- Three prospective adopters were found suitable to continue as prospective adopters following their annual review
- Two prospective adopters were recommended for termination (one withdrew from the process and another was considered unsuitable to adopt for Brent following a breakdown in the relationship between the prospective adopter and the local authority). This latter case did not utilise the opportunity to go to IRM to appeal, accepting the decision.

All of the recommendations made to the Agency Decision Maker were ratified.

## **7. Service narrative**

**7.1** Over the last six months, the service has continued to improve outcomes for children with adoption plans in the following ways:

- Through effective tracking of timescales at monthly permanency planning meetings and quarterly tracking meetings for children with an adoption plan. This activity contributes to a reduction in the period of time from a child becoming Looked After to being placed for adoption.
- By providing training in concurrent foster care via Coram for our adopters where there is the assessed capacity for them to take on this role.
- By meeting regularly with adoption leads from other West London Local Authorities to share children's and adopters' profiles to enhance the pool of prospective placements.
- Through regular feedback from the adoption panel on quality assurance issues which are fed back to the Head of Service and Operational Director. These are incorporated into appraisals and service plans.

**7.3 Recruitment & Assessment Initiatives.** During the last six months, our website has been rebranded to include testimonies from our adopters and improvements have been made to make it more accessible. As a result, the majority of our enquiries now result from our website and we have received positive feedback about this from prospective adopters who often make comparisons between the websites of other adoption agencies. Over the last six months, three prospective adoptive households have attended concurrency training from Coram. The sharing of preparation training with the London boroughs of Hillingdon, Hounslow and Ealing continues so that prospective

adopters are able to access this quickly. The work with the West London Adoption Consortium is continuing to expand and this has included an advertising campaign with Pride magazine and the development of a Consortium website.

**7.4 Adoption Support.** A summary of the activity undertaken in this area was provided in the previous report to the Corporate Parenting Committee and this has continued within this reporting period.

**7.5 Involving Adopters.** Adopters are involved closely in matching and linking and subsequent planning in a variety of ways.

- Adopters are encouraged to attend, with the support of their social worker, Consortium run Profiling Events, Adoption Exchange Events and the Adoption Activity Days that are jointly run in London by BAAF and the four London Consortia.
- A bimonthly Adopters Support Group is held, currently facilitated by adoption social workers, who also provide a crèche, with the aim that this will eventually be run by the adopters themselves without the need for social work input.
- Brent adopters are often asked and are always very willing to regularly contribute to focus groups, Information Evenings, Preparation Group Training for prospective adopters and Life Story Work training for social workers.

**7.6 Adopter Feedback.** One formal complaint was received from adopters approved by another agency during this reporting period. This related to the process involved in the move of a child from foster parents to their care and is currently within the process of resolution.

**7.7 Staff Engagement.** Staff are encouraged to think creatively and innovatively and are engaged to help the adoption service develop in a number of different ways. One of the most significant examples is through the sharing of key development tasks on a Local Authority, consortium or London-wide basis. Examples of this in the last reporting period have included recruitment events, preparation training and DVD profiling events. Staff contributed to the rebranding of the adoption marketing information and provided articles and ideas for inclusion in the regular newsletter. Staff have been encouraged to adapt the service plan at an individual level within team meetings. Training opportunities for staff in the borough and within West London have been provided in areas such as concurrency and transracial placements.

## **8. Broader adoption issues and the future**

**8.1** Brent has taken over the chairing of the West London Adoption Consortium since April 2014 which has provided an opportunity to shape services across the region. A

review of the current structure and operation of the consortium was commissioned with a report due for completion in October 2014.

**8.3** Brent also actively participated in the first London-wide adoption activity day last year and was a member of the steering group involved in the planning of the adoption activity day held in London in June and one scheduled for November 2014, although for these two events, no suitable Brent children were identified to attend due to the low numbers of children currently waiting for adoptive families.

**8.4** Post-adoption support and service delivery will form a key component of the West London Adoption Consortium's (WLAC) planning. Currently there are two services commissioned for adopters across the consortium. A national adoption support fund is being established from May 2015 and is currently in pilot format within a number of adoption agencies. The WLAC will be considering how best to utilise this fund across the boroughs.

### **Contact Officer**

Nigel Chapman, Head of Service, Placements.


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**GAIL TOLLEY**  
**STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

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|                        | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Corporate Parenting Committee</b><br/><b>11 December 2014</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Report from the Strategic</b><br/><b>Director of Children and Young People</b></p> |
| <p><b>Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report</b><br/><b>1 July - 30 September 2014</b></p> |  |

## **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Council's Corporate Parenting Committee about the general management of the in-house fostering service and how it is achieving good outcomes for children. This is in accordance with standard 25.7 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards (2011).
- 1.2 The report covers the second quarter of this reporting year. To enable a comparison to be made against other West London boroughs appendix (i) is attached that provides relevant statistical data from the previous reporting year.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee is requested to review, comment on and question the contents of this report. This is to provide evidence that the management of the fostering service is being monitored and challenged in order to promote good outcomes for children.

## **3.0 Service Values**

- 3.1 The in-house fostering function is positioned within the Placements Service of Children and Young People's Services. The vision for the Placements service as set out in the 2014-15 service plan is that:
- The best foster carers are recruited for our children.
  - All placements receive high quality support, effectively targeted according to need.
  - There is an increase in the number of children placed closer to home with our in-house foster carers.

- Children are found permanent families without delay – whether within their extended family network or outside.
  - Staff within the service are encouraged to become more professionally autonomous and confident.
- 3.2 The Placements Service is committed to provide a range of safe and secure foster placements to help children to develop and enjoy stable relationships with significant adults who can best meet their needs.
- 3.3 The Service aims to provide placements that promote stability and positive outcomes for children and young people by working in partnership with young people, carers, birth families, other professionals and the community.

#### **4.0 Staffing Arrangements**

- 4.1 The in-house fostering functions are distributed across two teams:
- The recruitment and assessment of foster carers is completed within the Kinship, Fostering and Adoption Assessment Team.
  - The ongoing support and supervision of foster carers is the responsibility of the Fostering Support Team.
- 4.4 There have been no significant staffing changes for the service within this quarter.

#### **5.0 Placement Activity**

- 5.1 One of the service priorities is that the proportion of Looked After Children placed closer to home with in-house foster carers increases.
- 5.2 As at the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 there were:
- 122 children placed with Brent foster carers compared to 129 children at the end of the previous quarter.
  - 41 children placed with a relative or family friend on a fostering basis compared to 42 children at the end of the previous quarter.
  - 87 children placed with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) compared to 94 children at the end of the previous quarter.
- 5.3 The overall LAC population reduced in size during the reporting period. As at 30th September 2014 333 children were in care, compared to 341 on 30th June 2014.
- 5.4 As at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 the proportion of children placed with an in-house foster carer or relative/friend, as a proportion of the total LAC population was 49%, compared to 50% at the end of the previous quarter. When IFA placements are included 75% of our LAC population was living in a family setting as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014, compared to 68% at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. There has been a significant improvement over the last two years in enabling more children to be brought up within a family setting, often close to their home communities. This promotes contact with children and young people's social networks, their families and schools which are important elements in improving overall outcomes for children in care.

- 5.5 One of the service priorities is to ensure children are placed as close to home as possible, which will usually involve placement with a suitable in-house foster carer. We continue to meet challenges in placing large sibling groups, adolescents with difficult behaviours and children where the plan is for them to reside outside of the local area. Marketing and recruitment activity as well as development work within the West London Alliance are seeking to address these supply issues.
- 5.6 Where placements are made with IFAs in an emergency the in-house fostering team work closely with other colleagues to consider whether a move to an in-house carer is possible and in the child's best interests.

## **6.0 Recruitment Activity**

- 6.1 The fostering service carried out a number of recruitment focused activities within the reporting period with the aim of raising awareness of fostering and encouraging potential foster carers to come forward. There were 31 specific activities which included the Brent Housing Partnership roadshow, Libraries, Macmillan coffee morning, Brent Health and Well-Being event, schools and IKEA. Alongside our presence at local events the service ensures regular advertising in local media, transport services and advertising boards in Brent and neighbouring boroughs. The Brent fostering and adoption brand has been updated and this provides a fresh and vibrant offer to local people considering the fostering role.
- 6.2 A monthly information evening is held at the Civic Centre for members of the public to find out more about the fostering role and to enable us to determine whether an individual or family has the potential to become a carer for Brent.
- 6.3 The recruitment activity during the reporting period produced 50 enquiries about fostering. These enquiries resulted in a number of initial visits. As at the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 there were 15 formal assessments in process under the 2-stage fostering assessment process. As part of the assessment and preparation process a number of professionals speak to prospective carers about the fostering task, including the involvement of young people who have been within the care system.
- 6.4 The service aims to recruit fifteen non-related foster carers between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 with a net growth of approximately 5 fostering households once carer resignations and terminations of approval are taken into account. There have been four approvals to date this reporting year, with some continuing delays being experienced in stage one of the new 2-stage assessment process which is led by the foster carer. This is being addressed by the service. Subject to the current assessments progressing positively the service will be close to achieving the overall recruitment target by 31<sup>st</sup> March.

## **7.0 Fostering Panel**

- 7.1 The fostering service has a Fostering Panel constituted in accordance with Regulation 23 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. The service maintains a central list of Panel members. The panel chair and vice chair are independent people with

professional experience of fostering. The Panel meets on the first Friday of every month. Detailed minutes are kept of all panel meetings.

- 7.2 The functions of the Fostering Panel are to consider:
- Each application and recommend whether or not a person is suitable to be a Foster Carer, Connected Person(s) (Family and Friends Foster Carer) and the terms of their approval
  - The first annual review of each approved carer and any other review as requested by the fostering service.
  - The termination of approval or change of terms of approval of a Foster Carer.
- 7.3 The panel has a quality assurance role and monitors the standard of reports presented to it and relays any issues or concerns to the Registered Manager. The panel makes recommendations to the fostering service and these recommendations are referred to the Agency Decision Maker who is the Operational Director, Children's Social Care.
- 7.4 During the period 1st July – 30th September 2014 three panels were held with fourteen specific cases discussed during these sessions. Within this group, four new 'Family and Friends' foster carer households were approved, two new foster carers were approved, six foster carers were found suitable to continue as foster carers following review (one of whom was matched with a young person on a long-term fostering basis), and two households' approval was recommended for termination as a result of their resignations. These resignations were due to carers deciding to move to Local Authorities in their home area. All of the recommendations made to the Agency Decision Maker were ratified.
- 7.5 The Fostering Panel has noted more consistent attendance and engagement from children's Social Workers when cases are presented, following this issue being noted within the previous quarterly report. The Heads of Service for Placements and Care Planning will continue to monitor this issue.

## **8.0 Training and Support to Foster Carers.**

- 8.1 All of Brent's foster carers are allocated to a Supervising Social Worker who carries out monthly supervision and support visits, ensures carers provide a good standard of care and creates an important link between the child's social worker and the foster carer.
- 8.2 As part of foster carers' commitment to Brent and reinforced within their foster care agreement is a requirement to attend mandatory and identified training courses. During the period 1<sup>st</sup> July – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 four training courses were held, attended by 47 foster carers.
- 8.3 Every month a foster carers' support group is held, facilitated by Supervising Social Workers but informed by the needs of carers. The groups are well attended and provide an important communication link between carers and the Placements' Service. Foster carers also enjoyed a summer outing to Weston-Super-Mare with their children, supported by the Local Authority.
- 8.4 During this period our foster carers' conference was held – attended by 66 foster carers and focused on how we can keep children at the heart of what we do, through developing



solutions to common problems. A summary of the event can be found at page 8 of appendix two - the Foster Carers' Autumn Newsletter.

- 8.5 The Learning and Development Calendar for Sept 2014 – March 2015 was produced and circulated, containing a range of new and innovative training opportunities. Additionally the service has introduced a new Personal Development Plan for all carers and is working towards the deployment of a Specialist Carers' Resources Programme.

## **9.0 Monitoring Arrangements**

- 9.1 During the reporting period there was one formal allegation made against a Brent foster carer. This has been subject to the appropriate investigation which is ongoing. There were three formal complaints received from Brent foster carers. These related to dissatisfaction with the new finance system and the difficulties in payment of fees and allowances to carers. Following the migration to the new Council-wide Oracle system there were difficulties in some cases in ensuring timely payments. The system issues have now been largely resolved and those carers for whom there are some ongoing issues are in regular communication with the department.
- 9.2 All foster carers, regardless of the length of their approval with Brent must have an annual review of their arrangements. The Fostering Reviewing Officer completed 18 annual reviews during this period and has established tracking systems to ensure reviews continue to be completed in a timely manner.

## **10.0 Service Development**

- 10.1 All active fostering households have produced child-friendly profiles of their family in collaboration with their Supervising Social Workers to ensure children have an opportunity to learn more about the home they will be moving into.
- 10.3 Exploratory discussions took place with a provider of Social Pedagogical training during the reporting period with the aim of collaborating upon a programme of support and development to staff with the aims of improving local placement choice and stability. Further detail of this proposed project will be provided within the next quarterly report.
- 10.4 Collaborative work continued with other boroughs within the West London Alliance to consider how to improve joint fostering services. Benchmarking data has been shared to compare strengths and development areas for each authority and to focus upon gaps where collaborative efforts could be concentrated. An action plan has been produced for the approval of Directors of Children's Services. Early work will focus upon sharing of internal vacancies across boroughs, collaboration on foster carer training and the commissioning of an out of hours support service. The benefits of increased joint working will reduce placement costs and enable a more effective support package for carers that will be an effective retention tool.

## **Appendices**

- i) West London Children's Efficiency Programme Ofsted Fostering Data 2013-14.
- ii) Foster Carers' Newsletter Autumn 2014.

### **Contact Officer**

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### **GAIL TOLLEY**

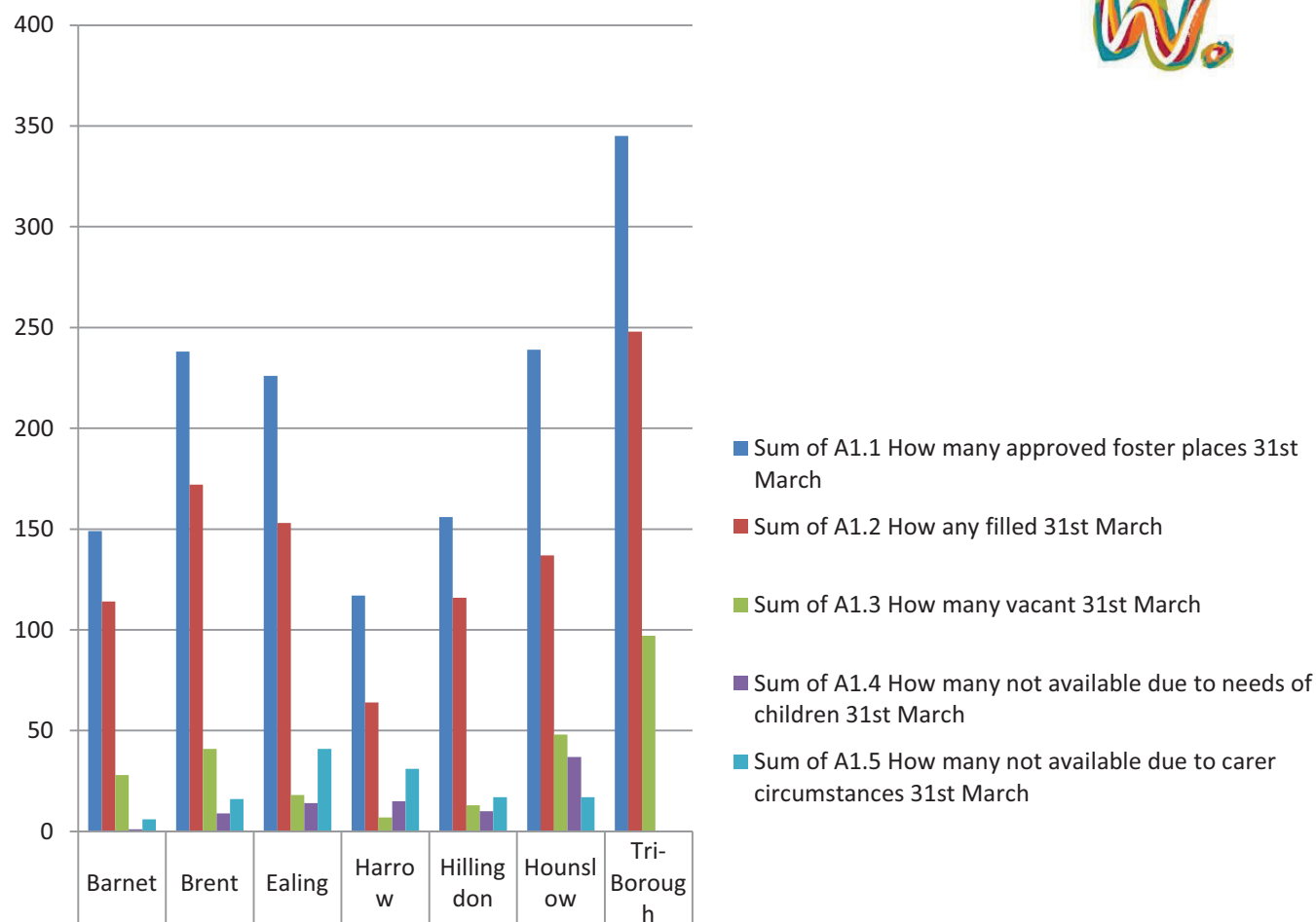
**Strategic Director of Children and Young People**

# West London Children's Efficiency Programme

## Ofsted Fostering Data 13\_14



## Foster Places as at 31<sup>st</sup> March

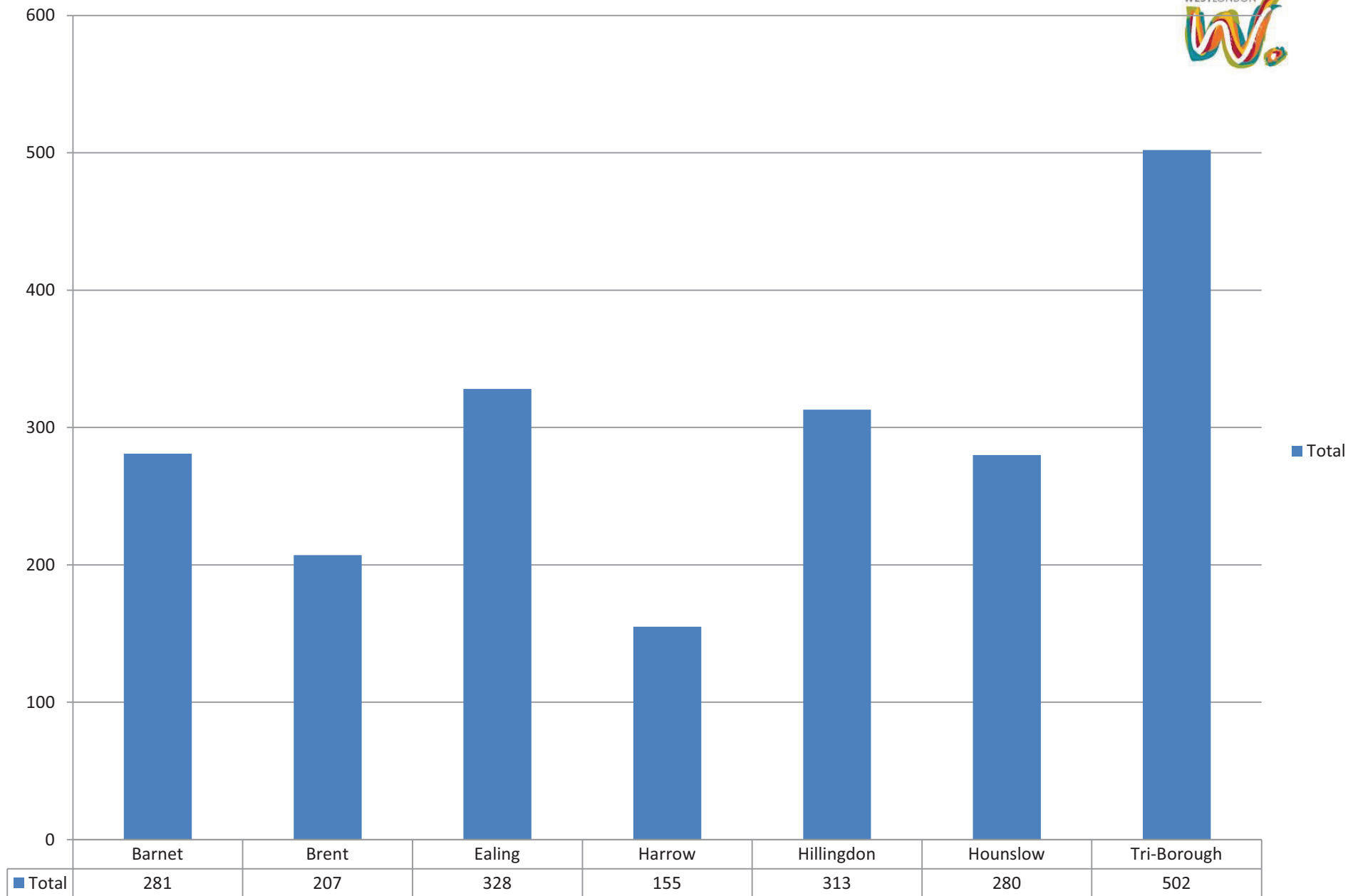


|  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Sum of A1.1 How many approved foster places 31st March                   | 149 | 238 | 226 | 117 | 156 | 239 | 345 |
| Sum of A1.2 How any filled 31st March                                    | 114 | 172 | 153 | 64  | 116 | 137 | 248 |
| Sum of A1.3 How many vacant 31st March                                   | 28  | 41  | 18  | 7   | 13  | 48  | 97  |
| Sum of A1.4 How many not available due to needs of children 31st March   | 1   | 9   | 14  | 15  | 10  | 37  | 0   |
| Sum of A1.5 How many not available due to carer circumstances 31st March | 6   | 16  | 41  | 31  | 17  | 17  | 0   |

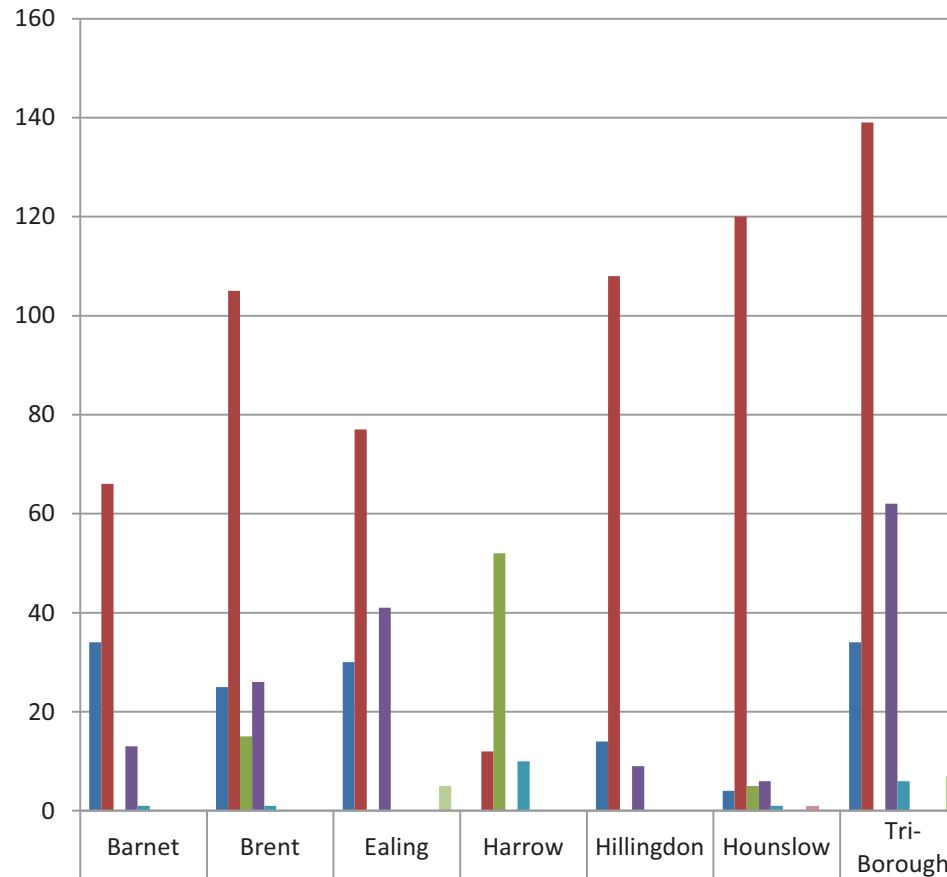
# Total Number of CYP Placed Between April 2013 - March 21014 (Excluding short breaks)



Page 25



# Types of Foster Care Provided

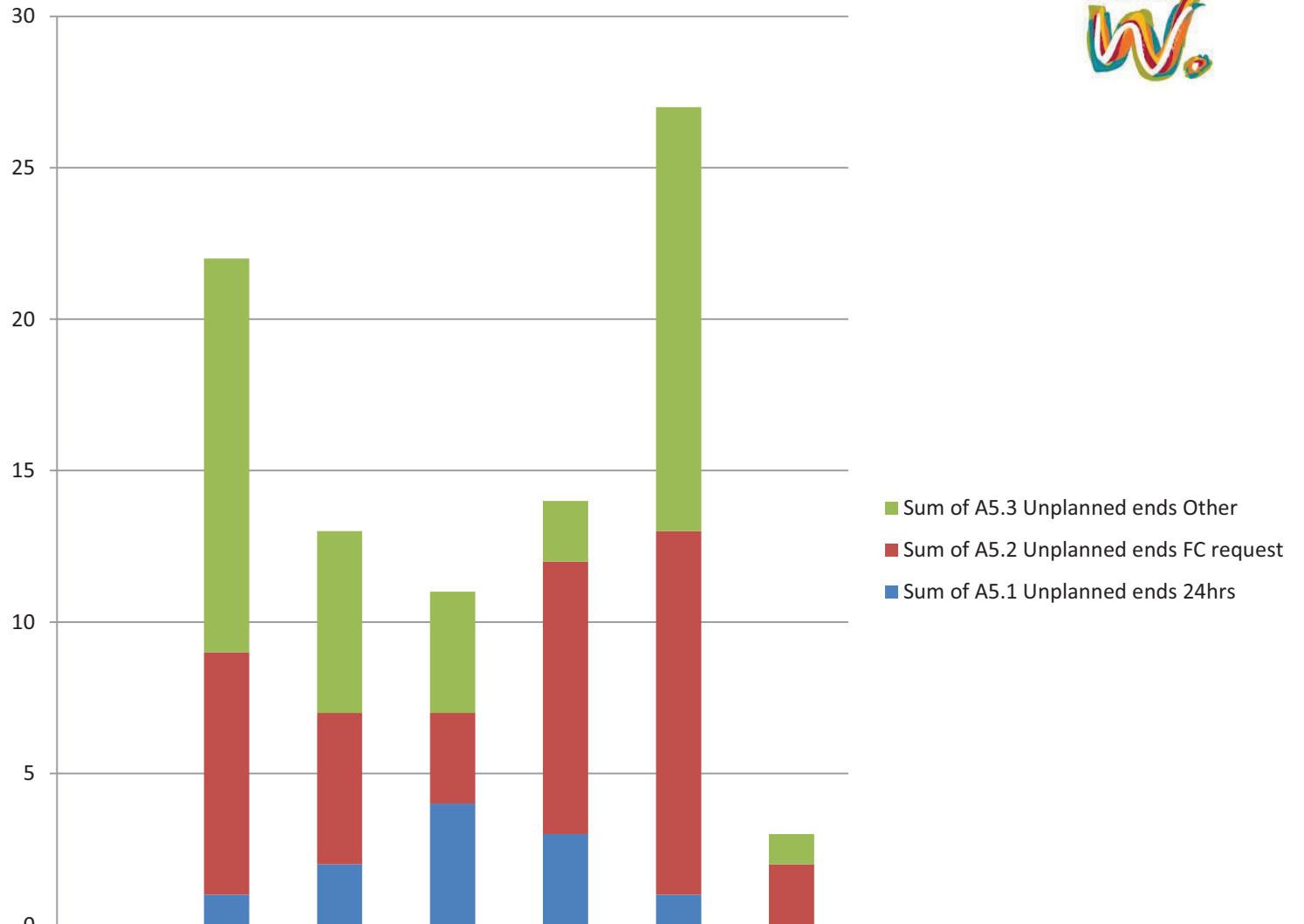


- Sum of A3.1 Permanent long term
- Sum of A3.2 Short term
- Sum of A3.3 Emergency
- Sum of A3.4 Family & Friends
- Sum of A3.5 Parent & Child
- Sum of A3.6 Parent & Child not fostering
- Sum of A3.7 MDTFC
- Sum of A3.8 Remand
- Sum of A3.9 Other

|  | Barnet | Brent | Ealing | Harrow | Hillingdon | Hounslow | Tri-Borough |
|--|--------|-------|--------|--------|------------|----------|-------------|
| ■ Sum of A3.1 Permanent long term          | 34     | 25    | 30     |        | 14         | 4        | 34          |
| ■ Sum of A3.2 Short term                   | 66     | 105   | 77     | 12     | 108        | 120      | 139         |
| ■ Sum of A3.3 Emergency                    | 0      | 15    | 0      | 52     | 0          | 5        | 0           |
| ■ Sum of A3.4 Family & Friends             | 13     | 26    | 41     | 0      | 9          | 6        | 62          |
| ■ Sum of A3.5 Parent & Child               | 1      | 1     | 0      | 10     | 0          | 1        | 6           |
| ■ Sum of A3.6 Parent & Child not fostering | 0      | 0     | 0      | 0      | 0          | 0        | 0           |
| ■ Sum of A3.7 MDTFC                        | 0      | 0     | 0      | 0      | 0          | 0        | 0           |
| ■ Sum of A3.8 Remand                       | 0      | 0     | 0      | 0      | 0          | 1        | 0           |
| ■ Sum of A3.9 Other                        | 0      | 0     | 5      | 0      | 0          | 0        | 7           |



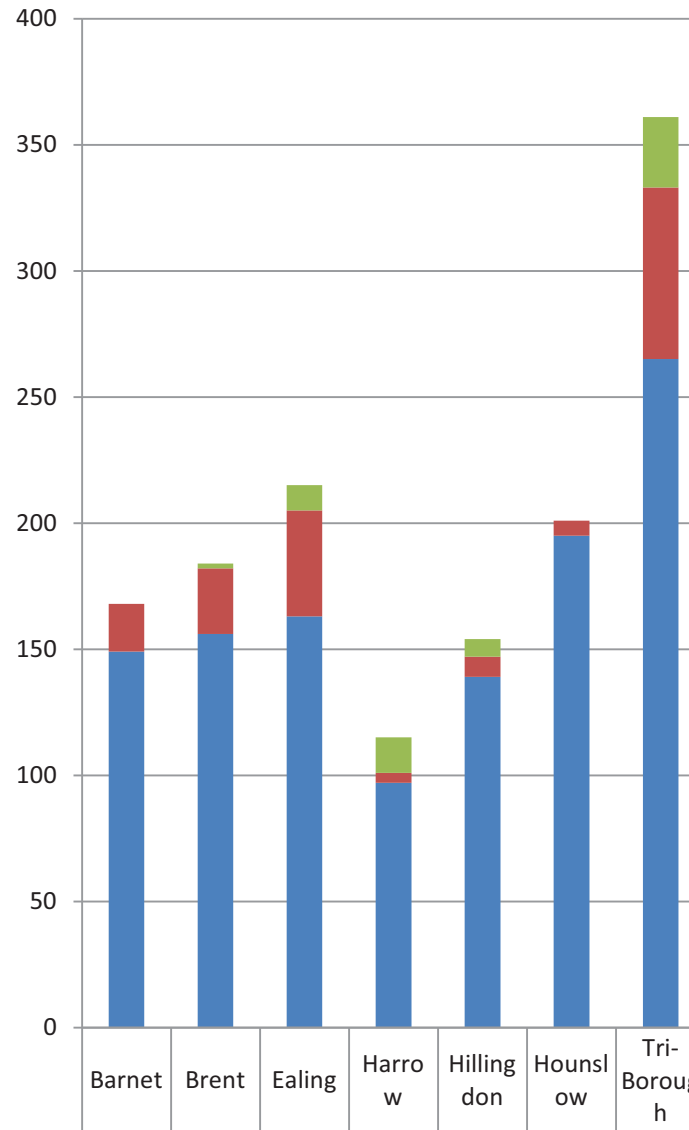
# Unplanned Endings April 2013 – March 2014



|                                       | Barnet | Brent | Ealing | Harrow | Hillingdon | Hounslow | Tri-Borough |
|---------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|------------|----------|-------------|
| Sum of A5.3 Unplanned ends Other      | 0      | 13    | 6      | 4      | 2          | 14       | 1           |
| Sum of A5.2 Unplanned ends FC request | 0      | 8     | 5      | 3      | 9          | 12       | 2           |
| Sum of A5.1 Unplanned ends 24hrs      | 0      | 1     | 2      | 4      | 3          | 1        | 0           |



# Number of Approved Foster Carers as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014



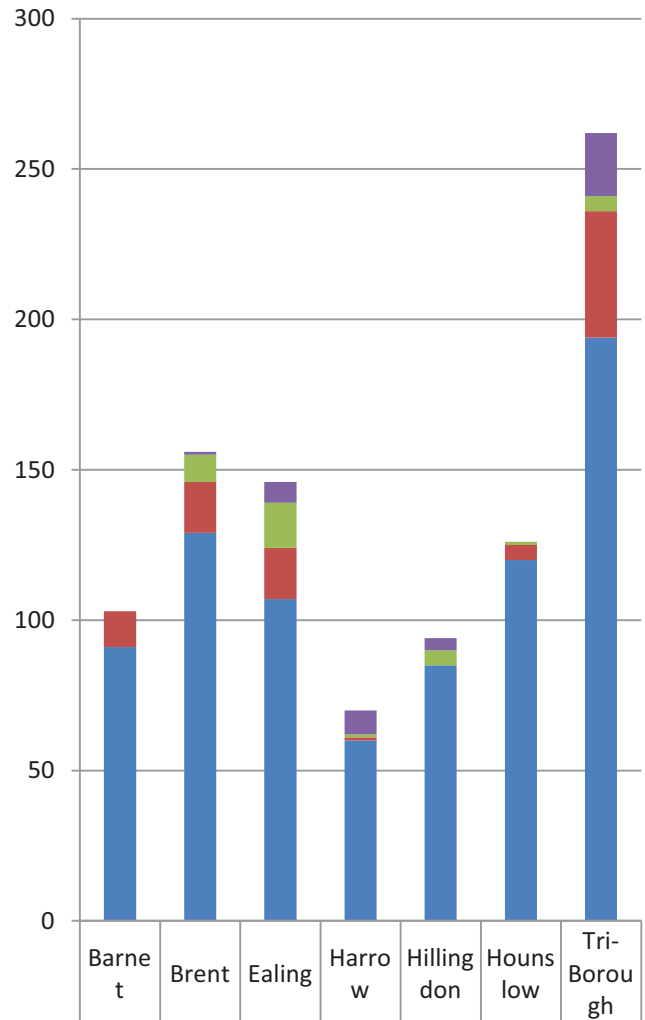
- Sum of B1.3 Approved Exclusive Short Breaks
- Sum of B1.2 Approved Family & Friends Carers
- Sum of B1.1 Approved Foster Carers as at 31st March

|   |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| ■ Sum of B1.3 Approved Exclusive Short Breaks         | 0   | 2   | 10  | 14 | 7   | 0   | 28  |
| ■ Sum of B1.2 Approved Family & Friends Carers        | 19  | 26  | 42  | 4  | 8   | 6   | 68  |
| ■ Sum of B1.1 Approved Foster Carers as at 31st March | 149 | 156 | 163 | 97 | 139 | 195 | 265 |





# Fostering Households As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014

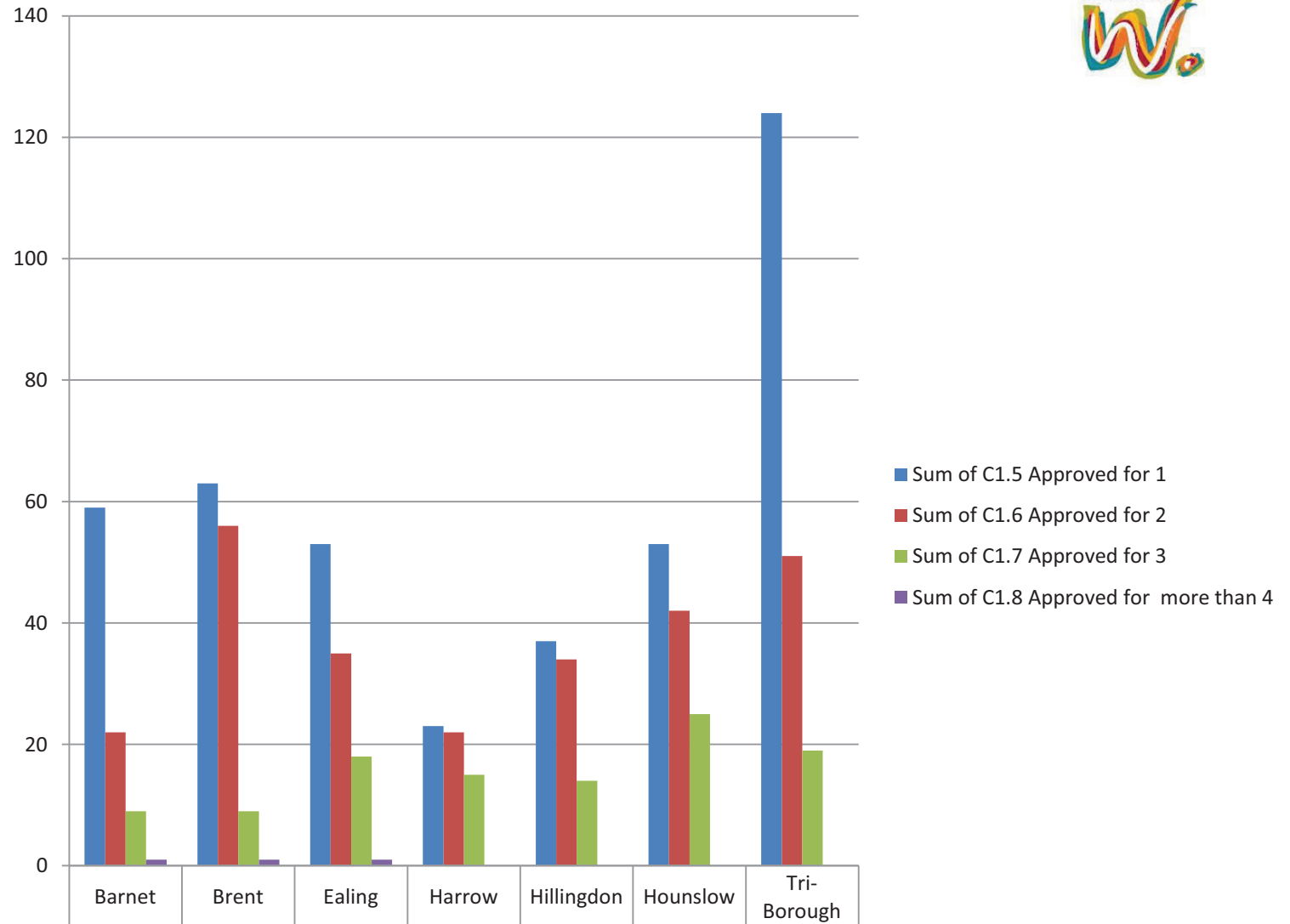


- Sum of C1.4 Households exclusively Short Breaks at 31st March
- Sum of C1.3 Connected Persons Households at 31st March
- Sum of C1.2 Family & Friends Households at 31st March
- Sum of C1.1 Fostering Households at 31st March

|   |    |     |     |    |    |     |     |
|---|----|-----|-----|----|----|-----|-----|
| ■ Sum of C1.4 Households exclusively Short Breaks at 31st March | 0  | 1   | 7   | 8  | 4  | 0   | 21  |
| ■ Sum of C1.3 Connected Persons Households at 31st March        | 0  | 9   | 15  | 1  | 5  | 1   | 5   |
| ■ Sum of C1.2 Family & Friends Households at 31st March         | 12 | 17  | 17  | 1  | 0  | 5   | 42  |
| ■ Sum of C1.1 Fostering Households at 31st March                | 91 | 129 | 107 | 60 | 85 | 120 | 194 |



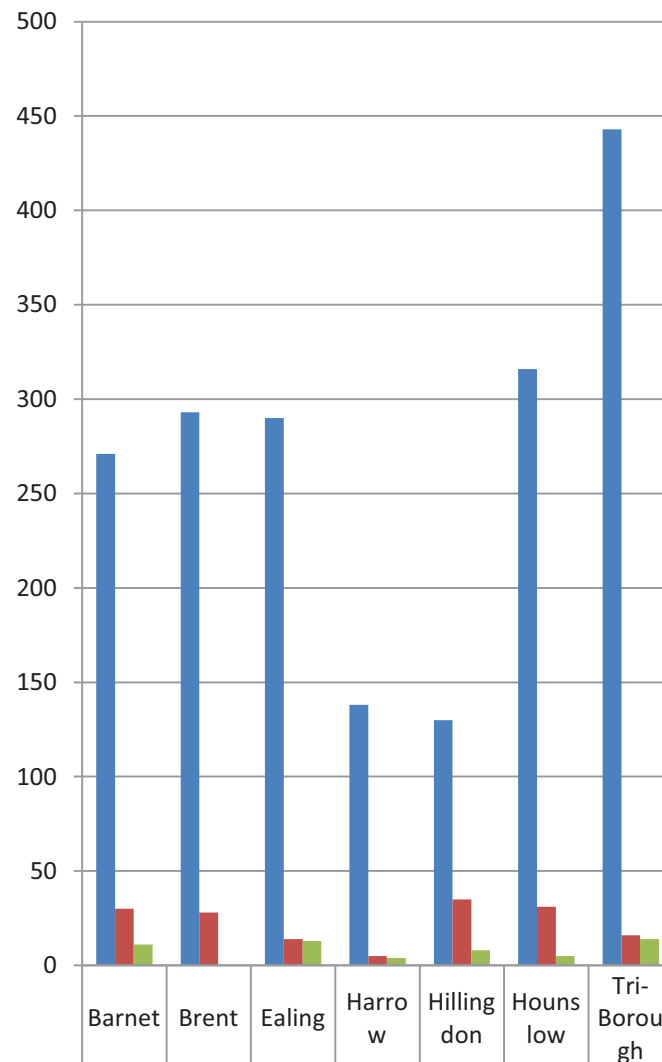
# Approval Ranges



|                                      |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
|--------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| Sum of C1.5 Approved for 1           | 59 | 63 | 53 | 23 | 37 | 53 | 124 |
| Sum of C1.6 Approved for 2           | 22 | 56 | 35 | 22 | 34 | 42 | 51  |
| Sum of C1.7 Approved for 3           | 9  | 9  | 18 | 15 | 14 | 25 | 19  |
| Sum of C1.8 Approved for more than 4 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   |



# Recruitment of Fostering Households April 2013 – March 2014

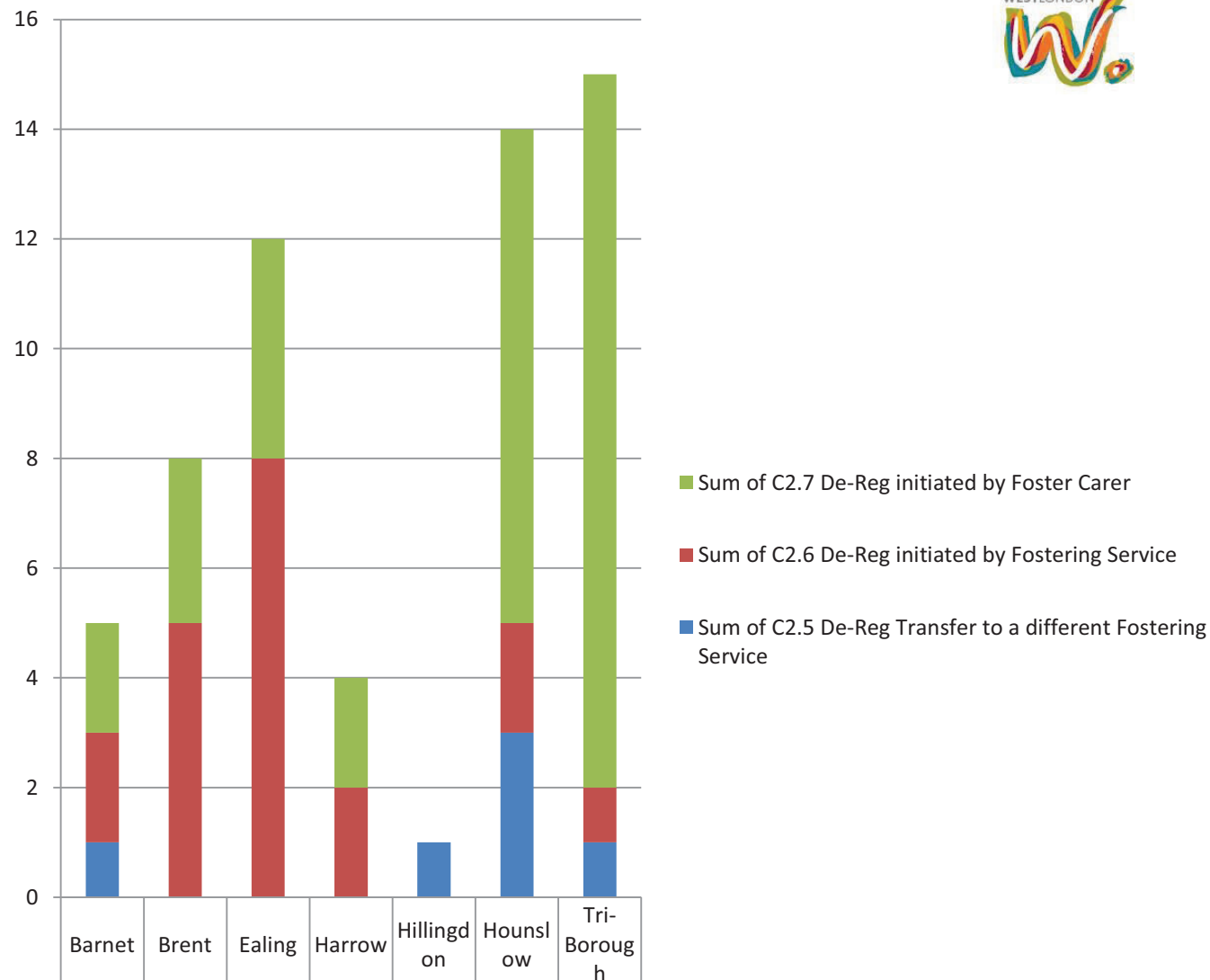


- Sum of C2.1 Initial Enquiries April13- March14
- Sum of C2.2 Applications from Prospective Households April13- March14
- Sum of C2.3 Applications from Prospective Housholds prior to 1 April 2013 not Decided

|   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ■ Sum of C2.1 Initial Enquiries April13- March14  | 271 | 293 | 290 | 138 | 130 | 316 | 443 |
| ■ Sum of C2.2 Applications from Prospective Households April13- March14                 | 30  | 28  | 14  | 5   | 35  | 31  | 16  |
| ■ Sum of C2.3 Applications from Prospective Housholds prior to 1 April 2013 not Decided | 11  | 0   | 13  | 4   | 8   | 5   | 14  |



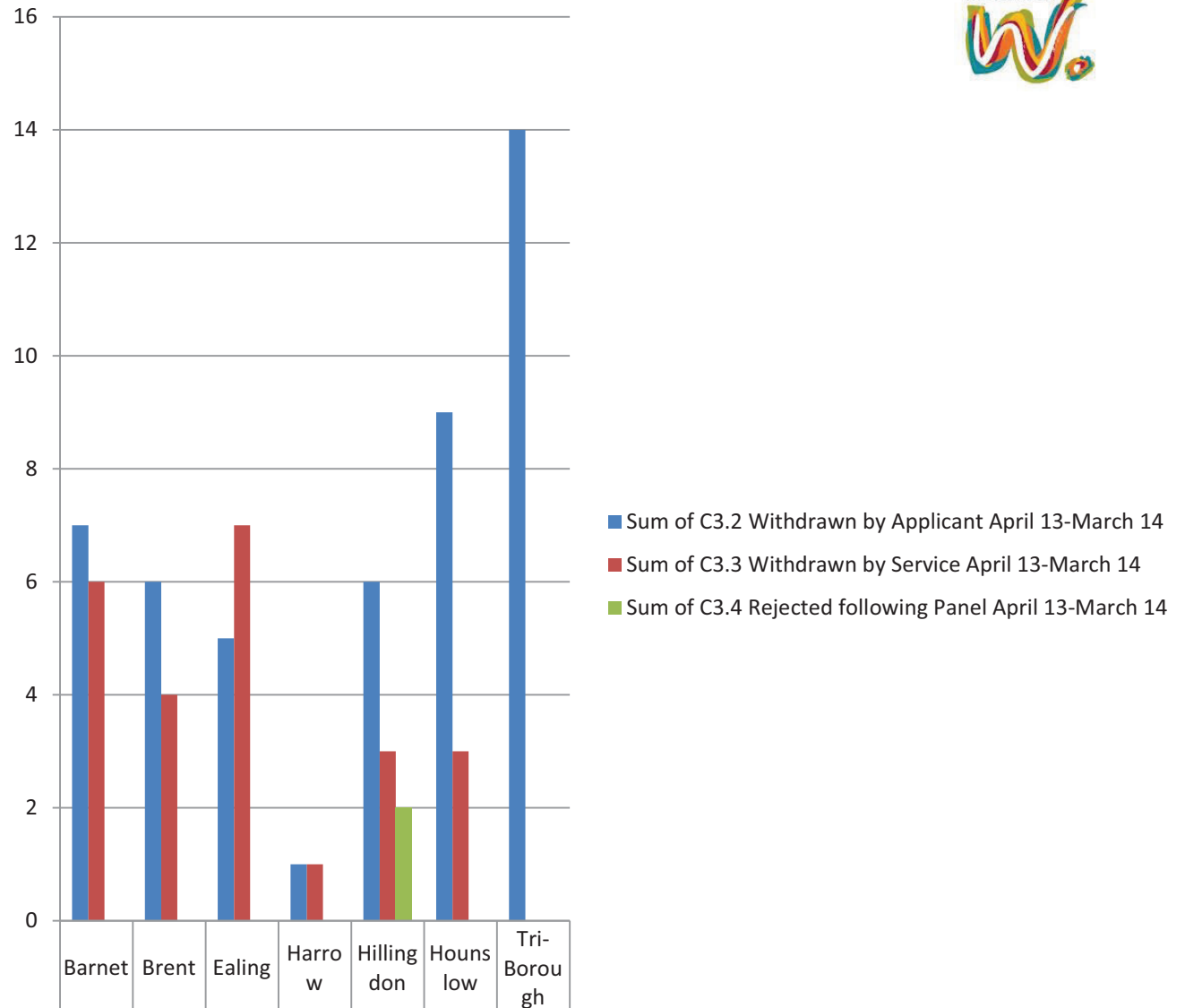
# De-Registrations April 2013 – March 2014 (Households)



|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Sum of C2.7 De-Reg initiated by Foster Carer                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 9 | 13 |
| Sum of C2.6 De-Reg initiated by Fostering Service            | 2 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1  |
| Sum of C2.5 De-Reg Transfer to a different Fostering Service | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1  |



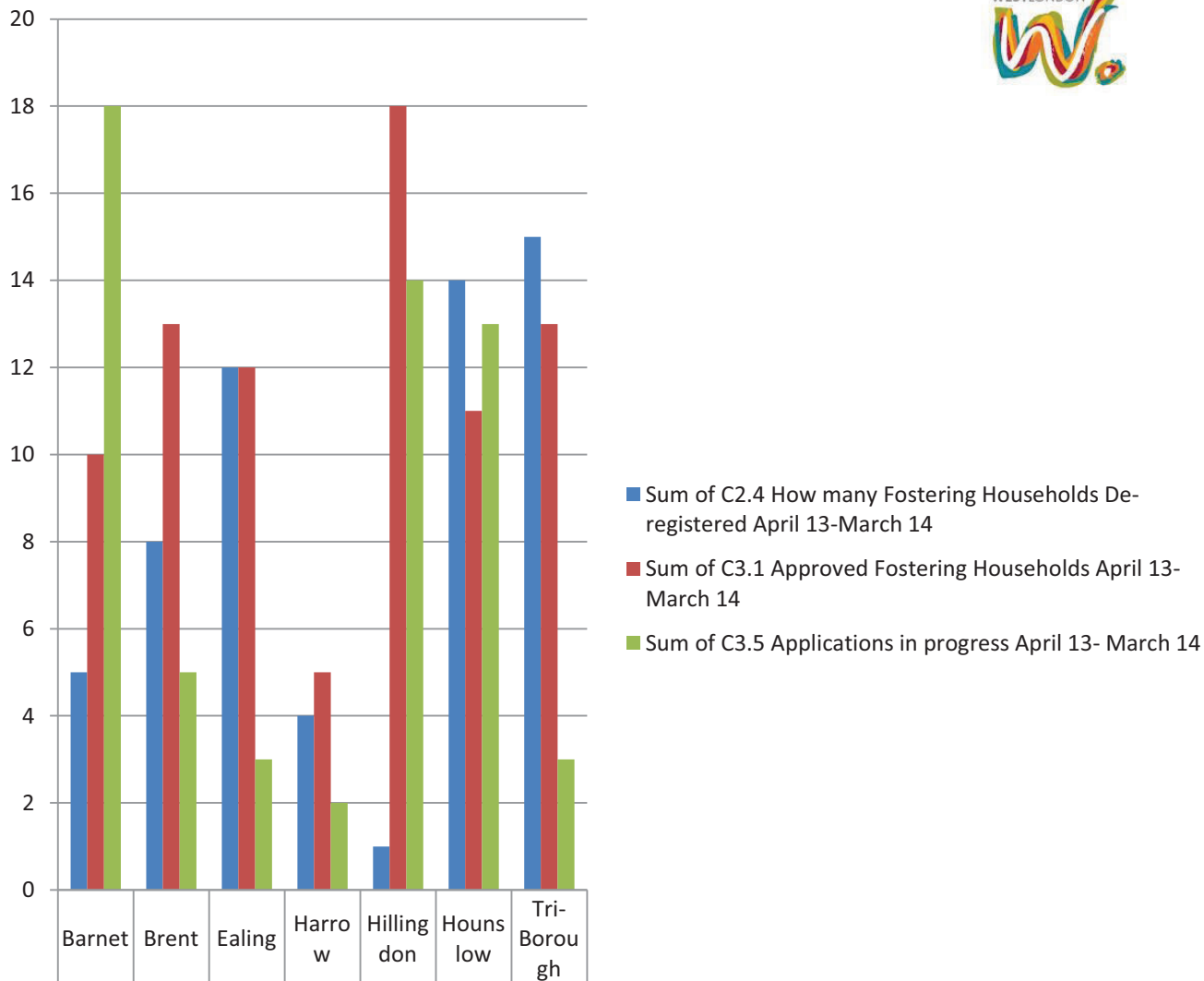
# Applications Withdrawn/Declined April 2013 – March 2014 (Households)



|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Sum of C3.2 Withdrawn by Applicant April 13-March 14   | 7 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 14 |
| Sum of C3.3 Withdrawn by Service April 13-March 14     | 6 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 0  |
| Sum of C3.4 Rejected following Panel April 13-March 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0  |



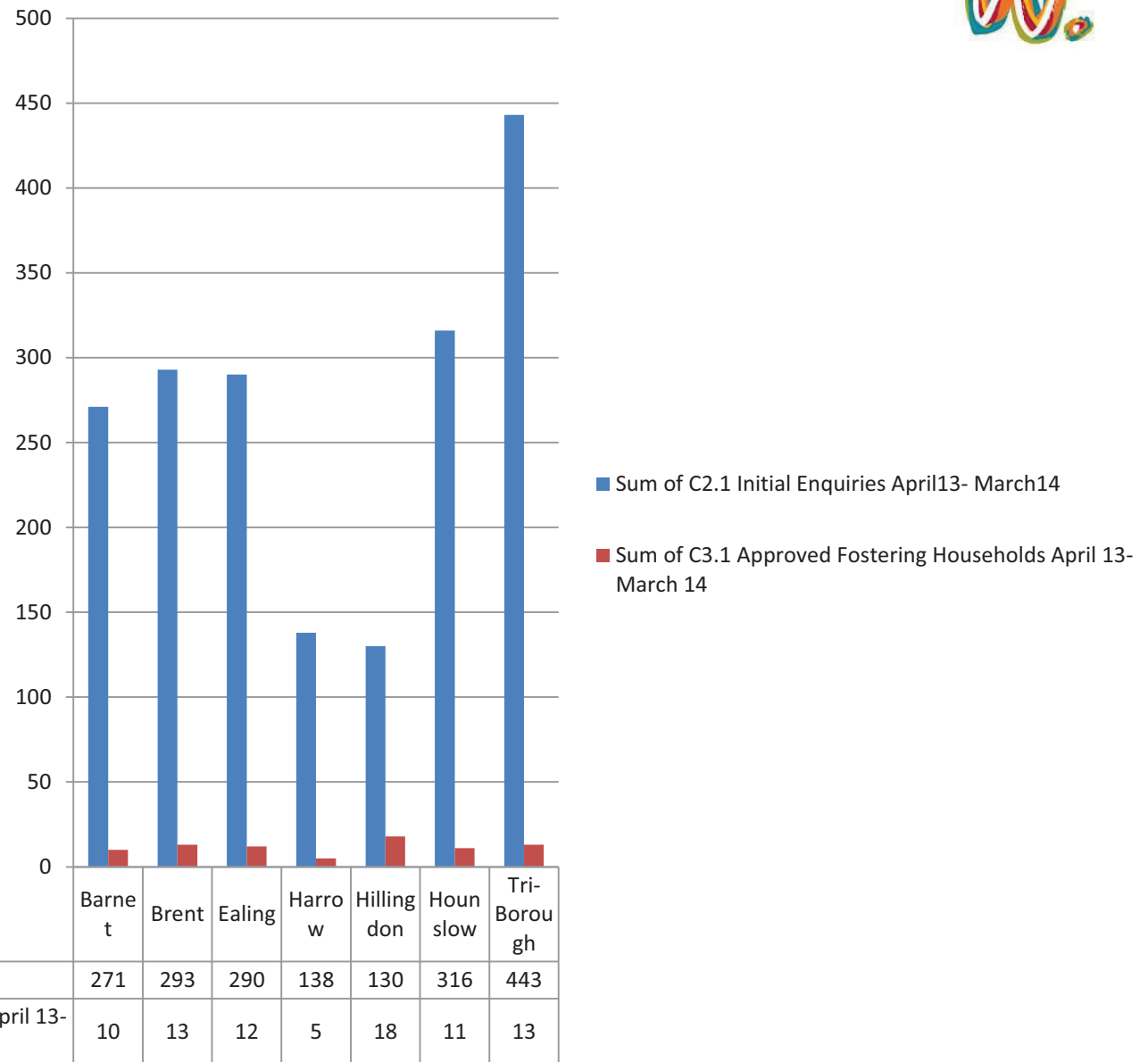
# Approvals (inc In Process) Vs. De-Registrations April 2013 – March 2014 (Households)



|   |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|
| Sum of C2.4 How many Fostering Households De-registered April 13-March 14 | 5  | 8  | 12 | 4 | 1  | 14 | 15 |
| Sum of C3.1 Approved Fostering Households April 13-March 14               | 10 | 13 | 12 | 5 | 18 | 11 | 13 |
| Sum of C3.5 Applications in progress April 13- March 14                   | 18 | 5  | 3  | 2 | 14 | 13 | 3  |



# Initial Enquires Vs. Approvals April 2013 – March 2014 (Households)



## Recruitment Overview 2013/14



| LA          | Fostering Households @ 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014 | Initial Enquiries 2013/14 | Applications 2013/14 | Applications Brought Forward From 2012/13 | Total Number of Applications and Brought Forward | De-Registrations 2013/14 | Approved 2013/14 | Applications in Process to Carry into 14/15 |
|-------------|--|---------------------------|----------------------|---|--|--------------------------|------------------|---|
| Barnet      | 103  | 271                       | 30                   | 11  | 41   | 5                        | 10               | 18  |
| Brent       | 156  | 293                       | 28                   | 0   | 28   | 8                        | 13               | 5   |
| Ealing      | 146  | 290                       | 14                   | 13  | 27   | 12                       | 12               | 3   |
| Harrow      | 70   | 138                       | 5                    | 4   | 9  | 4                        | 5                | 2   |
| Hillingdon  | 94   | 130                       | 35                   | 8   | 43   | 1                        | 18               | 14  |
| Hounslow    | 126  | 316                       | 31                   | 5   | 36   | 14                       | 11               | 13  |
| Tri-Borough | 262  | 443                       | 16                   | 14  | 30   | 15                       | 13               | 3   |
| West London | <b>957</b>   | <b>1881</b>               | <b>159</b>           | <b>55</b>                                 | <b>214</b>                                       | <b>59</b>                | <b>82</b>        | <b>58</b>                                   |





## Recruitment Analysis 2013/14



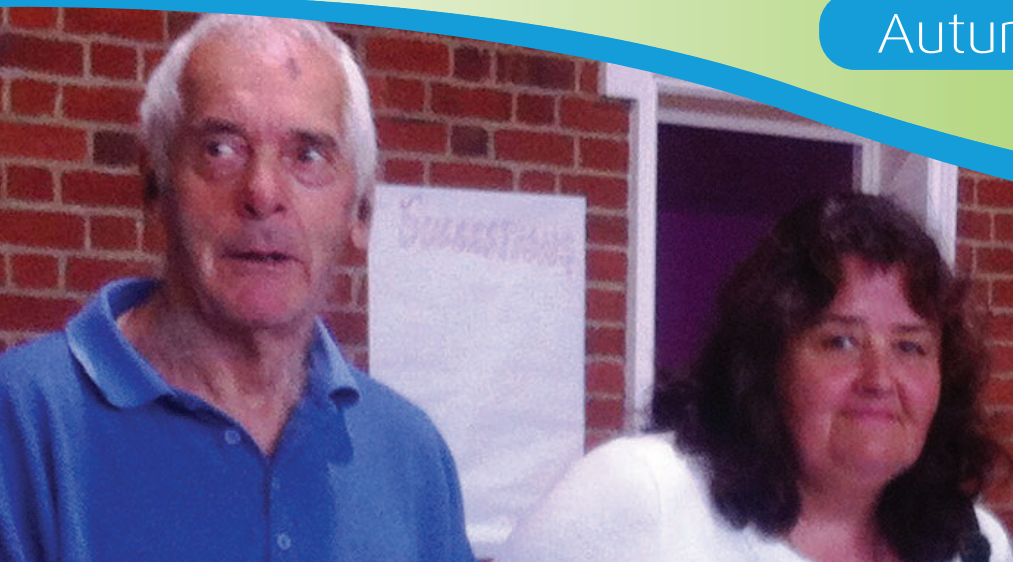
| LA                 | NET Growth/Loss | % Share of WL NET Growth | Initial Enquiries Conversion Rate to Application % | Initial Enquiries Conversion Rate to Approval % |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| Barnet             | 5               | 21.7%                    | 11.1%  | 3.7%  |
| Brent              | 5               | 21.7%                    | 9.6%   | 4.4%  |
| Ealing             | 0               | 0.0%                     | 4.8%   | 4.1%  |
| Harrow             | 1               | 4.3%                     | 3.6%   | 3.6%  |
| Hillingdon         | 17              | 73.9%                    | 26.9%  | 13.8%   |
| Hounslow           | -3              | -13.0%                   | 9.8%   | 3.5%  |
| Tri-Borough        | -2              | -8.7%                    | 3.6%   | 2.9%  |
| <b>West London</b> | <b>23</b>       |                          | <b>8.5%</b>  | <b>4.4%</b>                                     |



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# Fostering Newsletter

Autumn 2014



## Thank you and all the best!! Pete and Pat Cassidy

Mr and Mrs Cassidy were approved as Brent foster carers on the 9 April 1999 and as Enhanced carers on the 31 December 2007. Since this time they have fostered 23 children, many of whom have had a high level of emotional and behavioural needs.

Mr and Mrs Cassidy are experienced and impressive as foster carers and show great devotion to children. They are both committed to improving outcomes for looked-after children and are flexible in their approach to this. The carers have worked well as part of a professional network and have provided invaluable information on children which has enabled children's plans to be progressed more efficiently.

Mr and Mrs Cassidy have ensured the smooth transition of children from short-term care to permanency and in several cases have maintained contact with both the children and their current carers.

Over the years they have completed their CWDC training and have actively engaged on other additional training, support and focus groups and have supported less experienced carers.

Sadly, after 15 years of service Mr and Mrs Cassidy have decided to retire from fostering and instead will be migrating abroad at the end of the year. I have had the pleasure of supervising Mr and Mrs Cassidy since April 2014 and they have proven to be committed, flexible and proactive carers, whom more importantly enjoy fostering and making a difference in children's lives. I would like to thank them for the positive and lasting impression they have left upon looked-after children and their families and for their tireless efforts in helping them become stronger, healthier and more successful each day.

Thank you and good luck

**Jenine Jackson**  
- Supervising Social Worker

## Featured in this issue

- Foster carers conference feedback
- Brent council news
- Dates for your diary

# Half term activities

## What's on?

### **Scooby Doo 25 Oct - 26 Oct 2014 at Brent Cross**

Scooby-Doo, the Great Dane, is coming to Brent Cross this Halloween. He's loyal, lovable and cowardly but can't wait to see his fans young and old!

Appearances will take place in Centre Court, on the Lower Mall at 11am, 12pm, 1.30pm, 2.30pm and 3.30pm on 25 October.

**FREE** online tickets will be available to book from 10 October. Limited additional **FREE** tickets will be available in Centre Court on the Lower Mall on the appearance days.

Remember! If you pre-book, your ticket is the confirmation email that you will receive, so please either bring a printed or digital copy with you.



**Character Visits:** we'll be visited by a much-loved character from a popular children's book or TV show on the last weekend of every month. Plus, there'll be fun, educational activities to entertain young minds and exercise energetic youngsters. To find out more sign up to receive all the latest news by email, or follow Brent Cross on **Twitter** or **Facebook**.

[www.twitter.com/brentcross](http://www.twitter.com/brentcross)

[www.facebook.com/mybrentcross](http://www.facebook.com/mybrentcross)

*Disclaimer: Places for meet & greet sessions are by FREE ticket only. For online bookings the FREE ticket must be presented on arrival. A limited number of FREE tickets will also be available in Centre Court, Lower Mall on Saturday 25 October, on a first come first served basis, by joining the queue from 15 minutes prior to appearance start time. One FREE ticket admits one child. Adults do not require a ticket. FREE tickets have no monetary value and should not be sold on. Brent Cross is not responsible if you are unable to attend at your chosen time or for lost/damaged FREE tickets and no compensation is due, however we will do our best to accommodate you. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. Tickets are not available to commercial organisations.*

### **Black History Month Celebration Workshops**

**Tuesday 28 October, All Brent libraries, 2.30 – 3.30pm**

Design a musical instrument in honour of Black British composer Samuel Coleridge Taylor 1875 – 1912.

### **Black History Month at Poplar Grove**

**Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 9DB**

Poplar Grove Youth Centre Presents a fun filled evening to end Black History Month. Come and see art work, live performers and socialise.

Friday 31 October 2014

Doors Open 5:30pm - 11pm

Adults £1, Children free

For more information contact Jennifer on **0208 937 2896** or email [Jennifer.Parris-buckley@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Jennifer.Parris-buckley@brent.gov.uk)

### **Roller Disco Halloween Special**

When: Friday 31 October  
7pm – 10pm

Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre  
Brentfield, Harrow Road, NW10 0RG  
£2.00

For more information please call **07956 343 942**

Bring your own music! Refreshments available



## Support group dates

Held at Brent Civic Centre

Tuesday 14 October 2014 – (pm)

Tuesday 11 November 2014 – (am)

Tuesday 9 December 2014 – (pm)

## Hip Hop down to Harlesden #2

Saturday 1 November,  
Harlesden Library Plus

12noon – 1pm: Mouth Open,  
Story Drop Out! Stories from  
Africa

See how Anansi became King of all the stories and how the zebra got his stripes. All brought vividly to life as children revel in creating vibrant African scenes.



1 – 2pm: **Black History Month Celebration Workshop:** Design a musical instrument in honour of Black British composer Samuel Coleridge Taylor 1875 – 1912.

2 – 4pm: **Pottery Workshop Fun:** Make a tile and add African and Caribbean symbols, animals or flags or what ever you fancy!

# Fostering and adoption information evenings

Do you know somebody who would like to foster or adopt?

The fostering and adoption team hosts information evenings each month for those who are thinking about fostering or possibly adoption. Sessions provide an insight into the assessment processes and are held on the first Thursday of the month Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, London HA9 0FJ at 5.45pm.

6 Nov

5 Dec

If you would like more information; email or call the team on  
**020 8937 4538**  
[fostering@brent.gov.uk/](mailto:fostering@brent.gov.uk)  
[adoption@brent.gov.uk.](mailto:adoption@brent.gov.uk)

# Staff Updates

On Wednesday 17 September we said goodbye to **Marie Fletcher** – SSW in fostering support team. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

# Points of contact

Fostering, Duty Support – new duty number  
Tel: 020 8937 3881

Fostering Development  
Co-ordinator  
Zak Darwood  
Tel: 020 8937 4458

LAC Nurses  
Tel: 020 8795 6342

LAC Participation Officer  
Tel: 020 8937 4173

LAC Education Team  
Tel: 020 8937 4907

Youth Offending Team  
Tel: 020 8937 3810

Brent Youth Support Services  
[bmyvoice@brent.gov.uk](mailto:bmyvoice@brent.gov.uk)

Wembley Centre for Health and Care  
Tel: 020 8795 6001

Foster Carers Association  
'unofficial' representative:  
Patrice Thomas  
Tel: 07985 512 847





# Care in Action (Brent Children in Care Council) Update

## Corporate Parenting Group

The Chair and Vice-Chair of Care in Action (CIA) attended the Corporate Parenting Board in July where they met with the Strategic Director and Lead Member for Children and Young People, senior managers and newly elected members. The young people gave a presentation on their work and some of their achievements as part of the induction for new members of the Board.

## Meeting with Strategic Director and Lead Member for Children and Young People

On 29 July, the new Strategic Director and Lead Member for Children and Young People attended a Care in Action meeting to introduce themselves to the members. Young people were given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss issues or concerns they had about the following areas:

- Is there an advocacy service for children and young people in care?
- The development of a 'Coming in to Care' pack and how children and young people already in care will receive the pack
- An update on the leisure scheme for young people in semi-independent accommodation
- The development of a website for Looked After Children
- How things raised by young people will be followed up with feedback provided
- Who will be the champion for children and young people in care
- How to monitor money foster carers receive

## Well-Being Fun Day

We hosted a 'Well-Being Fun Day' on Saturday 2 August at Poplar Grove Youth Centre, Chalkhill for children and young people in care. This was our second annual event promoting the health and well-being of children and young people in care. The event was full of fun and interactive workshops and activities such as football, Zumba, drama and face painting and there was an opportunity for foster carers to ask questions and gather information at health seminars hosted by the Looked After Children Health Team. Although the attendance was low, the event was greatly enjoyed by all who attended!

## LAC Expressive Art Group work

In August, members of Care in Action took part in a drama therapy session with the theme of 'Working with Personal Transitions' using drama based exercises. Young people who participated were able to consider and be more aware of how they deal with trauma and suppress difficult feelings. The workshop gave young people skills to help them identify this and how they could start to change their behaviour.

## Millet Farm Centre Trip (19 Aug)

During the summer holidays, as a reward for their hard work so far this year, both Care in Action and Junior Care in Action members attended a trip to Millets Farm Centre in Oxfordshire. Children and young people had the chance to see birds



of prey at the Falconry Centre, pick their own fruit and enjoy a fish and chips lunch!

## Coming into Care Pack

To help support children and young people who come into care, we are working on putting together a 'Coming into Care' pack. The pack will be available in a choice of colours and will provide information about what being in care means, how children and young people will be looked after and the different services and support they will receive. The pack will also contain information about Care in Action and how children and young people can raise any issues or concerns they may have.

## Join us!

Care in Action (13+) and Junior Care in Action (7-12) are constantly looking to recruitment new members. If your foster child would be interested in becoming a change maker or you would like to have more information about what we do, please contact:

Shirley Ricketts on **07867 184047**  
[shirley.ricketts@brent.gov.uk](mailto:shirley.ricketts@brent.gov.uk)

Natasha Thomson on **07951 483406**  
[natasha.thomson@brent.gov.uk](mailto:natasha.thomson@brent.gov.uk)

**Dates for  
your diary**

Please note down the dates of these forthcoming events and RSVP as soon as you can

## End of year - foster carers ball

Get your glad rags out! We will be hosting our annual end of year ball on Saturday 13 December at the Sattivas Pattidar Centre, Forty Lane, Uxley Park, Middlesex HA9 9PE.

This year promises to be an enjoyable night of fun and celebration for all.

Please confirm your attendance by emailing

[Zak.darwood@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Zak.darwood@brent.gov.uk)

by Friday 31 October with your names and dietary requirements.

\*Max 2 person per household

# Brent council news

## The Brent Borough Plan 2015/19 Consultation

Brent residents are being asked for their views on how local public services should evolve and what they can do to improve the borough given the continuing squeeze on budgets.

The borough plan consultation opened on 16 September 2014 and invites residents to help shape the future of the borough in the context of significantly reduced budgets for local public services.

Over the next four years services in Brent face the most challenging financial cuts ever. The council's budget alone is expected to be halved by 2018.

Brent has increasing demands on public services with a growing population, more babies being born, more people moving into the borough and more people living longer. To meet these challenges some services will need to be delivered in different ways and some stopped altogether. Residents are being asked what their priorities are through a series of surveys and public meetings throughout September and October.

Residents are being asked how they could play a vital role in their local community as well as how services should be designed in the future. In some cases, prioritising one area will mean that something else has to be cut back, or stopped altogether.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Muhammed Butt, says: "Brent has been through tough financial times – which are sadly not yet over.

Local public services face the same challenges, those of reducing income and increasing costs, which many of our residents are facing.

For example, by 2018 Brent Council's funding from central government will have been cut in half. To put this in context, we would need to more than double council tax next year to start plugging the gap in the council's budget and this would still not address the shortfalls in other local service budgets such as the Police and Fire Brigade.

This harsh reality means we will inevitably face tough choices in the coming months and years and this is why the borough plan consultation is so important in informing the future of Brent.

All of the organisations involved in the consultation want to work with local people to make sure that our plans are the right way forward given the limits we are all working with.

This is your Brent, your community and your services so please get involved as we are listening."

You can get involved by responding to the call for evidence before October 29.

Visit <http://www.brent.gov.uk/your-council/the-borough-plan-consultation/> to have your say.

## Outreach Borough Tour

### Can you help us with recruitment?

We are looking for volunteers to help us with our forthcoming recruitment events. Do you attend a place of worship? We would like your support to help us spread the news about fostering and adoption. In September we are planning to start an outreach tour of the borough visiting churches, temples and mosques to highlight the need for more foster carers and adopters and need your help to connect with imams, reverends, priests and heads of congregation etc. We are hoping for opportunities to speak for 5-10mins or have a stall in the entrance.

Please get in touch if you think you can help.

Email: [tanya.williams@brent.gov.uk](mailto:tanya.williams@brent.gov.uk) or call 0208 937 4538

## Foster carers children's party

It's that time again....Christmas is soon upon us and this year the foster carers association will be hosting the annual children's party.

\*Please note priority will be given to looked after children regarding gifts from Santa Claus.

Further details regarding venue, time and date will be sent out shortly.

If you have any ideas or suggestions you would like to put forward please contact Patrice Thomas.



# We need long term foster parents... Can you help?

In Brent we have several children in need of long term placements. We need families who can provide long term stability and commitment.

I'm Tanika Buchanan and as the family finder for Brent's looked after children I'm currently family finding for two sibling groups who are urgently in need of long term foster families. If you would like to discuss the profiles or have any questions please contact me on 07788389531 or email - [Tanika.buchanan@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Tanika.buchanan@brent.gov.uk)

## Mustifa and Mohammed

Mustafa and Mohammed are Somali siblings aged 11 and 8 who share a close, loving and caring relationship. Mustafa and Mohammed have unfortunately experienced significant neglect and as a result have emotional difficulties and behavioural concerns at school which is currently being supported with therapy. Both children receive extra educational support and Mohammed is due to have a educational psychologist assessment carried out. While being in care they have made positive progress. Both children wish to be placed with a family that can support

them to develop their emotional maturity and provide them with essential life skills which will prepare them to develop and flourish as they mature. Mustifa and Mohammed are sociable, joyful children with such cheeky smiles who enjoy attending the local park and being creative.

We are looking for carer (s) who can provide the boys with routine, can implement boundaries, are patient, and able to provide a safe, nurturing and stable home to allow them to develop emotionally. The carer must be willing to care for the children long term until they mature providing them with a sense of family membership

## Steph and Ty

This is me Steph, I'm a 11 year old girl that started secondary school this September which is abit scary but as my new school have implemented a support plan so hopefully I will manage the change. My carers have said that I act a lot younger than I should for my age and that I find it tough to manage my emotions but I think this is because me and my younger brother have had to move to 10 different foster homes since 2008. I attend Kids company which I really enjoy. My brother Ty goes to Barham school and as I started

secondary school in September our new long term carer will have to be able to do the school run to two different schools. Ty is mature and a bit more emotionally stable than me but sometimes he seeks attention and as I'm getting older we both need our own bedrooms. This will also help to reduce the quarrels that we have with each other. Ty and I would like a family that can care for us long term so that we can settle into a family that we see as our own. We would also like them to be kind, robust and patient so that we can develop holistically and learn things that will help us to lead a positive adult life. If you can provide any of these siblings with the above requirements please contact Tanika.



Tanika Buchanan

Do you know someone that is looking after someone else's child?





# What's the role of a family finding Social Worker?

The role of a Family Finder is to work closely with the child's Social Worker to assist in identifying suitable long term foster carers for Brent's looked after children. In addition to this, to explore long-term approved carers to care for children on a permanent basis, thus providing children with a secure and long-term feel to their placement.

The Family Finder provides advice and support to Social Workers whilst recommending and participating in permanency planning processes via permanency planning meetings held on a 6 weekly basis. This enables the permanency assessments to be completed and presented to panel for approval of long-term plans for children.

## Long term fostering has vital benefits for children, ranging from:

- Offers an opportunity to develop secure attachments which formulates the foundation for children to develop holistically.
- Have a stable, safe and secure environment.
- The child can form a sense of family membership.

- Develop the confidence in knowing they have a permanent home that they can call home.

## It also has benefits for carers:

- Carers can develop a sense of personal achievement as the child matures and progresses into adulthood.
- Allowing children to receive continuous care
- Receive the same allowance and fees as short term carers.
- Ability to develop an understanding of the child's needs over a period of time which assists carers in providing an enhanced level of care.
- Develop the skills required to meet the long term needs of a child.

# Mental Health Service for Children and Young People with Disabilities (CAMHS LD)

## Information for families

Our CAMHS-LD team is made up of clinical psychology, play therapy and nursing. We offer assessment and intervention for young people with learning disabilities plus mental health difficulties and/or challenging behaviour. We also offer advice and support to other professionals within the network surrounding a young person, e.g. schools, short break services and voluntary services.

## How to be referred to us

If you are a parent or carer and live in Brent, you can access our service by asking your paediatrician or Social Worker to refer the young person to us.

Did you know that looking after a child that is not a close relative for over 28 consecutive days is called **private fostering**?

Private fostering is when a child under 16 (18 if they have additional, complex or severe needs) is cared for and provided with accommodation for more than 28 days by an adult who is not an immediate relative. This is a private arrangement made between the parent and carer.

Brent Council have a responsibility to ensure that all children in Brent are being cared for properly and carers are supported. If you know of a child who is being privately fostered please let us know.

[www.brent.gov.uk/privatefostering](http://www.brent.gov.uk/privatefostering)

020 8937 2749

# Foster carers conference



## Overview

The Foster Carers conference took place on Thursday 11 September with over 60 carers in attendance. The aim of the conference this year was 'Keeping children at the heart of what we do through developing solutions to common problems'.

Co-facilitated by Cecilia Gabriel and Zak Darwood, the conference had a number of workshops to reinforce the reasons why people chose to become carers with Brent and also some of issues that carers face and possible realistic solutions.

Overall the feedback from the conference was positive with 93% of attendees rating the conference as 'excellent' or 'good'.

The Fostering Support Team, Marketing and Recruitment and Panel Advice and Quality Assurance Team are working towards a development plan to tackle some of the issues raised by you with practical and realistic solutions. Working groups are being set up by Cecilia and Zak to address issues in their respective areas.

The first we have managed to address is the introduction of a duty phone number for the Fostering Support Team. If you are unable to contact your own SSW please use the duty number to access advice and information from the duty social worker. After 5pm on weekdays and at weekends this number will divert to the out of hours EDT team.

**020 8937 3881**

Other issues may take longer to develop however in each Foster Carers newsletters please expect an update on the developments. Also remember you can make any comments or suggestions to the service at any time by speaking to your SSW, the team manager or any other member of staff within the Placements Service.

We received a variety of comments around Learning and Development; the following table contains a list of the most frequently raised comments with responses from the Fostering Development Coordinator.

| Issue/ Training Request   | Answer from Fostering Development Coordinator  |
|---|--|
| Incentives for attendance of training/conferences/meetings              | It is the expectation that carers attend meetings, training courses and conferences as part of the Foster Carers agreement they signed with Brent Council. Additionally the fostering fee contains an element for the successful completion of the agreed training per year.   |
| Substance Misuse  | Brent LSCB run courses on this topic. Please refer to the foster carers training calendar for further details.   |
| Managing Challenging behaviour  | The Brent Panel Advice and Quality Assurance Team provide this training on a quarterly basis. Please refer to the foster carers training calendar for further details.   |
| QCF Training (QCF courses where previously known as NVQs)               | Accredited training is something that Brent would like all carers to undertake, The Fostering Development Coordinator is currently reviewing options for these programmes and notification will be sent out in due course.   |
| Mother and Baby Placements  | The Brent Panel Advice and Quality Assurance Team provide this training on a yearly basis. Please refer to the foster carers training calendar for further details.  |
| Carers to lead the sessions   | Any carers interested in training to become facilitators should contact the fostering development coordinator to register their interest.  |
| Specific support groups: Unaccompanied Minors / Babies / BME / Disabled | The Fostering Duty Support Team Manager and the Fostering Development Coordinator are currently looking at options for additional support groups. Notification will be provided in due course.   |
| Cross-Borough training  | Cross-borough training is being looked at by the Fostering Development Coordinator. Notification of the outcome will be made in due course.  |
| IT Training   | The Brent Panel Advice and Quality Assurance Team provide this training on a regular basis to small groups of learners. Please refer to the foster carers training calendar for further details.   |
| More evening and weekend sessions                                       | Learning and Development sessions are delivered at a range of times throughout the day. It is the expectation that carers utilise their nominated carers if they feel that child care is a problem and we ask that carers utilise some of their annual leave entitlement from their work. We understand that this may not be a popular request however some courses are unable to be condensed into an evening session or have suitable trainers available at the weekend. |



| Issue/ Training Request                                | Answer from Fostering Development Coordinator   |
|--|---|
| Online Training  | Online training is currently being looked at by the Fostering Development Coordinator. We are hoping to launch some specific online courses for carers in the 2015-2016 financial year. Please refer to the LSCB website to access some of their online training, <a href="http://brentlscb.learningpool.com/">http://brentlscb.learningpool.com/</a>   |
| Finance Training<br>Tax issues                         | Finance surgeries will be delivered by Foster Talk over the coming months. Please look out for information either in the newsletter, the fostering handbook website or from your supervising social worker.   |
| Housing and Income Support                             |   |
| Pamper Day / Bar / Massage                             |   |
| Fun activities for foster carers                       |   |
| Laughing therapy                                       |   |
| Services to provide training to teenage children       |   |
| Sexual health awareness                                |   |
| Missing young people and dealing with the police       |   |
| Regular meetings with Senior Management ¾ times a year |   |
|  | The Fostering Duty Support Team Manager and the Fostering Development Coordinator are looking at the functions of the Foster Carers Association and how we can support this group to fundraise and develop its own strategy to run additional events that would not fall under the remit of the department. Notification will be provided in due course.<br><br>Brent Council run a range of services for young people, please follow this link to look at the youth and connexions pages: <a href="http://www.bmyvoice.org.uk">www.bmyvoice.org.uk</a> .<br><br>The Brent Panel Advice and Quality Assurance Team provide this training on a regular basis. Please refer to the foster carers training calendar for further details.<br><br>The Brent Panel Advice and Quality Assurance Team are always on the look out for new course ideas; this will be looked at for the next training programme.<br><br>An opportunity to meet with senior management in the Children's Social Care department will be offered on an on-going basis starting in the near future. Please look out for an invite within upcoming newsletters, on the Fostering Handbook website or via your supervising social worker. |



## Gentle reminder

Please note from now on we will be using email to correspond with you more often so please remember to add our email address to your contacts list ([fostering@brent.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@brent.gov.uk)) and check your email account on a regular basis. For those with smart/android mobile phones – emails can be viewed on your phone after quick set-up.

If you would like some help to set up an email account or learn the basics of using the internet; we will be holding an IT surgery on Saturday 15 November 10am – 2.30pm. Having a basic understanding of the internet is very useful as this can aid you with children's homework etc. IT is being used more and more in schools even as early as nursery and primary

school. If you would like to attend the IT surgery in November please contact Zak Darwood on 020 8937 4458 or text 07788 335 171 to book your place. Alternatively another session will be held in February 2015 – check your training calendar for further details.



# Make 'n' bake corner

## Useful contacts

### Sensory Slime



Sensory play is an important part of early learning and is a key factor in healthy development. It can also improve fine motor skills and be soothing for many children! Most importantly- it's fun for those of any age! Some children (depending on their particular attachment issues and experiences) can find sensory play overwhelming, so do bear this in mind and find another activity to enjoy if your child seems unsettled or overstimulated. Below is a recipe on making 'homemade slime', which should provide hours of entertainment!

#### What You Need

Materials:

**1 1/2 cup Cornstarch**

**1/2 cup Tap Water**

**Food Coloring (optional)**

**Liquid Extracts (optional)**

**Empty Container**

#### Instructions

1. Mix: Add cornstarch and water to container of choice. Empty food containers work great. Stir super-gently with a fork, the mixture will come together, but if you stir too quickly, the cornstarch will make things difficult (think quick-sand) and the water won't fully absorb. Mixture should be firm when mixed quickly with a fork and will crumble, while liquid appears when a finger is pushed slowly to the surface.
2. Stir in Additives: If you'd like, you may add in a few drops of food coloring or baking extracts to make things a little more colorful and smelly.
3. Play! "Clean Slime" is a great outdoor or bathtub activity. If less is made (or smaller portions are used... think Dixie cup size), it's easily played with on any sealed piece of furniture. The mixture simply wipes up when finished. Our favorite place to turn kids loose with it, however, is the bathroom. Plunk a kid down in an empty bathtub and let them go to town hitting, slapping and picking up the slime to watch it melt between their fingers and return to liquid. When finished, simply rinse off!
4. Store: This mixture keeps in an airtight container forever. If it dries out, simply add a little extra water and stir to combine.

NHS Brent Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service



At NHS Brent improving sexual health and providing effective substance misuse services are a huge priority.

We want to help you with any questions, worries or problems you may have by offering a range of services that provide personal advice and helpful pointers.

There are many highly trained professionals who are a visit or phone call away. Use our website to find out more about national and regional organisations that offer counselling whenever you need it.

<http://www.sexualhealthbrent.org.uk/>

**Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board – launch online training**



Brent LSCB is very pleased to announce the launch of their new E Learning zone.

Here you will find a range of online courses and learning materials designed to meet your individual needs and priorities.

To get started visit:

<http://brentlscb.learningpool.com/>

Produced October 2014

Placements, 3rd Floor, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 0FJ

020 8937 4538 / [fostering@brent.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@brent.gov.uk)



**Clinical Commissioning Group**

## **REPORT FOR CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE DEC 2014**

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### **HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER IN BRENT PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE CARE QUALITY COMMISSION**

In June 2014 the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out an inspection of health services for children looked after (CLA) and Safeguarding in the London Borough of Brent. The overall feedback from the inspectors in relation to Brent's CLA Health Service was very positive and acknowledged the significant improvements in service delivery since their previous inspection in 2011.

The CQC made four recommendations in relation to CLA for the provider organisation:

- 6.1 *Implement a robust contingency plan to ensure the continuation of the children looked after health service in light of the current and impending vacancies within the specialist health team.***
- 6.2 *Work with Brent Children's Social Care Team to agree the pathway for monitoring the actions identified in the health plans of children looked after by the London Borough of Brent.***
- 6.3 *Ensure that initial health assessments for children looked after are carried out within statutory timescales and that the assessments and health plans are available to inform the child's first Local Authority statutory review.***
- 6.4 *Ensure that health plans arising from supervision with public health nurses are kept on the client's notes so that these can be referred to and shared with colleagues who may also work corporately with a vulnerable family.***

In response to the CQC's recommendations an action plan was developed by the provider CLA Health Team and approved by the CCG, (see appendix 1). The CCG are supporting and monitoring the work to implement the plan and to ensure that all the actions are completed. The Action plan was updated by the provider in November 2014.

The CCG has been working closely with the CLA Health Service and the LA to review and strengthen their Joint Protocol, (**see appendix 2**). The aim of the Joint Protocol is to provide health and social care professionals with a clear process pathway to ensure that health assessments are carried out within the statutory timescales. Adherence to this protocol will support delivery of the CQC recommendations 6.2 and 6.3.

### **Governance Arrangements**

The progress of the CQC Action Plan is monitored through:-

- A joint LA and CCG monthly monitoring meeting with the provider
- Progress reports to the Children's Joint Executive Team of the LA and CCG
- Provider Assurance Meeting - quarterly meeting with all key stakeholders

Report Author and Contact Details:

Kate Tuohy

Designated Nurse for Looked After Children, Brent CCG

020 8795 6817

**Appendix 1 CQC Action Plan Updated December 2014**

| 6.1   | ICO should implement a robust contingency plan to ensure the continuation of children looked after health service in light of the current and impending vacancies within the specialist health team. |   |                               |  |   |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Required Outcome  | Actions  | Lead Agency (Officer)   | By When                       | Evidence of Progress   | RAG rating status for actions complete or outstanding |
| CLA Lead Nurse post is filled                                   | Recruit to CLA Lead Nurse post and design contingency plan to manage service in the interim.   | General Manager   | 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2014 | CLA lead nurse post has been successfully recruited to and started in December 2014. There is on current vacancy and support arrangements are in place through the employment of bank staff and the redeployment of a school nurse and health visitors to assist with the review health assessments. |   |
| 6.2   | ICO will work with the Brent Children Social Care Team to agree the pathway for monitoring of actions identified in the health plans of children looked after by the London Borough of Brent.        |   |                               |  |   |
| There is an agreed pathway for monitoring of actions identified | An urgent joint protocol meeting date was arranged to discuss pathways, roles, responsibilities, required  | Designated CLA nurse – Brent CCG and all stakeholder s to provide | 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2014  | A joint protocol meeting took place in August 2014 with all key stakeholders. The protocol has formally been agreed and signed off and is now operational. The success of the protocol is  |   |

|  |   |   |                              |  |   |
|--|---|---|------------------------------|--|---|
| in the health plans of children looked after by the London Borough of Brent. | improvements to timescales and change of placement protocols.   | representation & GM Children's Services                   |                              | being monitored through the identification of any breach reports which are discussed at each joint monthly monitoring meeting.<br><br>The Designated Nurse CLA and Specialist Nurse have delivered training sessions to social workers and line managers, around our joint statutory requirements for the production of health plans and the positive impact that they will have on the health and well-being of Children Looked After.  |   |
| 6.3  | Ensure that initial health assessments for children looked after are carried out within the statutory timescale and that the assessments and health plans are available to inform the child's first Local Authority statutory review. |   |                              |  |   |
| Required Outcome   | Actions   | Lead Agency (Officer)                                     | By When                      | Evidence of Progress   | RAG rating status for actions complete or outstanding |
| IHA are within statutory timescales  | This will be addressed through the development of the Joint Protocol and monitored through the breach reports held on monthly monitoring meetings.<br><br>Please see action 6.2   | Designated CLA Nurse – Brent CCG & GM Children's Services | 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2014 | As above 6.2<br><br>A joint protocol meeting took place in August 2014 with all key stakeholders. The protocol has formally been agreed and signed off and is now operational. The success of the protocol is being monitored through the identification of any breach reports which are discussed at each joint monthly monitoring meeting.<br><br>In addition, the CLA team will be co-located with the social care team at the Civic Centre from January 2015. This will help to ensure |   |



|  |  |  |                               |  |   |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------|--|---|
|  |  |  |                               | continued improvements in communication and the completion of IHA and RHA's within the statutory timescales.   |   |
| 6.3.1<br>Health plans are available to inform the child's first Local Authority statutory review | The Manager of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) was invited to the August 2014 meeting to ensure quality assurance the timeliness of health assessments and that it was included within the protocol                   | Head of Social Care Placement & GM Children's Services | 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2014  | As above 6.2<br><br>A joint protocol meeting took place in August 2014 with all key stakeholders. The protocol has formally been agreed and signed off and is now operational. The success of the protocol is being monitored through the identification of any breach reports which are discussed at each joint monthly monitoring meeting. |   |
| 6.4  | Ensure that health plans arising from supervision with public health nurses are kept on the client's notes so that these can be referred to and shared with colleagues who may also work corporately with a vulnerable family. |  |                               |  |   |
| Required Outcome   | Actions  | Lead Agency (Officer)                                  | By When                       | Evidence of Progress   | RAG rating status for actions complete or outstanding |
| Health plans are accessible to all working with a vulnerable family                              | The Named Nurses to develop an ICO wide supervision record that can be uploaded to the child's record. This will form part of the ICO wide supervision policy.   | Named Nurse Safeguarding Children - Brent              | 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2015 | The supervision policy has now been completed and due to be ratified at the new LNWHHT Safeguarding Group in January 2015.   |   |



**JOINT PROTOCOL FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER**  
*Between Brent Council (Children & Families, Social Care Division)*

&

*London North West Health Care NHS Trust (Children Looked After Health Team- Brent)*

**ARRANGING STATUTORY HEALTH ASSESSMENTS FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE  
LOOKED AFTER BY THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**

1. All requests for health assessments for children & young people looked after (CLA) by the London Borough of Brent (whether placed ***inside or outside*** of the borough) must be made via the Brent CLA Health Team

When a child or young person first becomes looked after a statutory Initial Health Assessment (IHA) is required. In order to arrange the IHA the allocated Social Worker must ensure that the relevant British Adoption And Fostering (BAAF) Health Assessment forms are completed and signed. The completed Initial Health Assessment (IHA) BAAF forms should then be sent to the CLA Health Team within **5 working** days of the young person becoming looked after.

2. Subsequent statutory review health assessments, known as RHA's, will be required every six months for children under 5 years and annually for children over 5.

- For Review Health Assessments (RHAs) for children placed **in borough** the social worker should complete and return the RHA BAAF form to the CLA Health Team **6 weeks** prior the Health Assessment being due.
- For Review Health Assessments for children placed **out of borough** the social worker should complete the RHA BAAF form **12 weeks** prior to the Health Assessment being due.

**Please note that Health Assessments will not be arranged or undertaken until Part A of the BAAF form has been completed in full and a signed consent provided. BAAF forms received which are incomplete will be returned to the allocated SW on the same day.**

### **BAAF Forms**

1. The parts of the BAAF form which relate to **CONSENT** are sections A – D. These should be completed by the allocated social worker for all children and young people and signed by either a person with parental responsibility or the agency/social worker who shares parental responsibility under a relevant care order.

- Part A, all IHA, RHA – to be completed by Agency/ Social Worker
- Part B – to be completed by Birth Parent
- Part C to be completed by Child or Young Person with the capacity to consent
- Part D to be completed by other adult/agency with parental responsibility

### **Other BAAF Forms & Documentation Required**

- Health Assessment forms: C Annex, D Annex
- IHA-C – Initial Health Assessment – Child from birth to 9 years old
- IHA-YP – Initial Health Assessment Young Person for 10 years and over
- MB – Obstetric report on mother/neonatal report on child must be available for the Initial Health Assessment (IHA) as this information is available from the hospital soon after birth of the child. In addition the Health Admin will access any previous health assessments, core assessments or relevant reports from Frameworki. If access is restricted, they will request these from the social worker directly.

- PH – parental health information - the IHA Health Plan will indicate if this form is required for the first review health assessment (necessity depends on detail of other received information).
- RHA-C - Review Health Assessment for children from birth to 9 years old
- RHA-YP – Review Health Assessment for children for 10 years and over
- SDQ forms – should be completed annually for all children aged 4 and over. The child’s main carer should assist them to complete the SDQ. The completed SDQ should be sent to CAMHS and uploaded onto Frameworki so that it can inform the health assessment.

## 2. The Health Assessment

Health Assessments will be completed according to the following statutory timescales:

| HEALTH ASSESMENT                                    | STATUTORY TIMESCALE   |
|---|---|
| Initial Health Assessment (IHA)                     | To be completed within 20 working days of child/young person becoming looked after                  |
| Review Health Assessment (RHA) for children under 5 | To be completed 6 months after the IHA and 6 monthly thereafter until the child becomes 5 years old |
| Review Health Assessment (RHA) for children over 5  | To be completed 12 months after the IHA and annually thereafter                                     |

2.1 Initial Assessments will be undertaken by a doctor as will follow up assessments, if there are complex medical issues requiring medical intervention. Routine RHAs will be undertaken by a CLA Specialist Nurse. For those children or young people placed outside of the borough of Brent, the CLA health team will carry out the assessment; where this is not feasible a suitably qualified professional appointed by the local CCG will carry out the assessment. This will be commissioned and quality assured by the CLA Health Team. Notification of the appointment will be sent to social care via the secure GCSX account.

2.2. If a young person fails (DNA), or refuses to attend a scheduled appointment a further appointment will be offered, with notification also being sent to the relevant social worker and Commissioning Manager in children & families. The Specialist Nurse will contact the YP to offer and discuss a more appropriate appointment and venue. If the young person does not attend the second appointment, no further appointments will be offered. The social worker will be notified of the non-attendance and will be advised to make an appointment directly with the CLA Health team if the young person changes their mind.

### 3. Young People in Custody

Young people in youth offending or similar institutions are now exempt from having health assessments by the CLA Health Team in Brent but requests are made for HA via Care UK.

### 4. Following The Health Assessment

Completed health reports and Health Action Plans will be sent by the CLA Health Admin to the Performance and monitoring information (MI) Officer in social care to be uploaded onto Frameworki. Recommendations within the Health Action Plan will clearly specify responsibilities to the appropriate person/people and timescales. All recommendations should be outcome based and objectives should be SMART.

4.1 Recommendations within the child's Health Action Plan should be incorporated into the child's care plan. This should be routinely reviewed by the Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) to monitor progress. All progress should be recorded within the IRO's report and shared with the CLA Health Team.

4.2 The CLA Health Team will routinely notify the allocated Social Worker of any new health information or events.

### 5. Reporting & Sharing Information

The Children and Families Commissioning Team will send a report to the CLA Health Team Administrator on the **1<sup>st</sup> day of each month** detailing the Initial and Review Health Assessments which are due in the forthcoming month.

In addition, the Performance and MI officer will also provide information on all children who have ceased to be looked after or who have changed placement (**within 24 hours**) and include details of their new carer and placement address.

Updated October 2014  
Updated November 2014.

