

	Corporate Parenting Committee 14 July 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Community Development
	Lead Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action – Cllr Jake Rubin
Outcome of April 2026 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)	

Wards Affected:	ALL
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the duration of the meeting, on the grounds that the attendance of representatives from the council's Children in Care council, necessitated the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2, Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, of the Act, namely: Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
List of Appendices:	Brent ILACS 2026
Background Papers:	Ofsted focused visit Nov 2025
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Palvinder Kudhail Director, Early Help and Social Care Palvinder.Kudhail@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) that took place between 27 April and 1 May 2026 and was published on 17 June 2026. Appendix one is a link to the full report.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That the Corporate Parenting Committee:

- 2.1 Note the findings of the Ofsted report and the "Good" judgements across all four areas.
- 2.2 Note and comment on the planned actions to address the areas for improvement arising from the ILACS relating to children in care and foster carer mandatory training.

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

The inspection activity is related to the work carried out by Brent's Children Young People and Community Development directorate. This work contributes to the following Borough priorities:

- The Best Start in Life
- Prosperity and Stability
- A Healthier Brent
- Thriving Communities

4.0 Background

4.1 The Ofsted framework for the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) focuses on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements in the following areas:

- The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families
- The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection
- The experiences and progress of children in care
- The experiences and progress of care leavers.

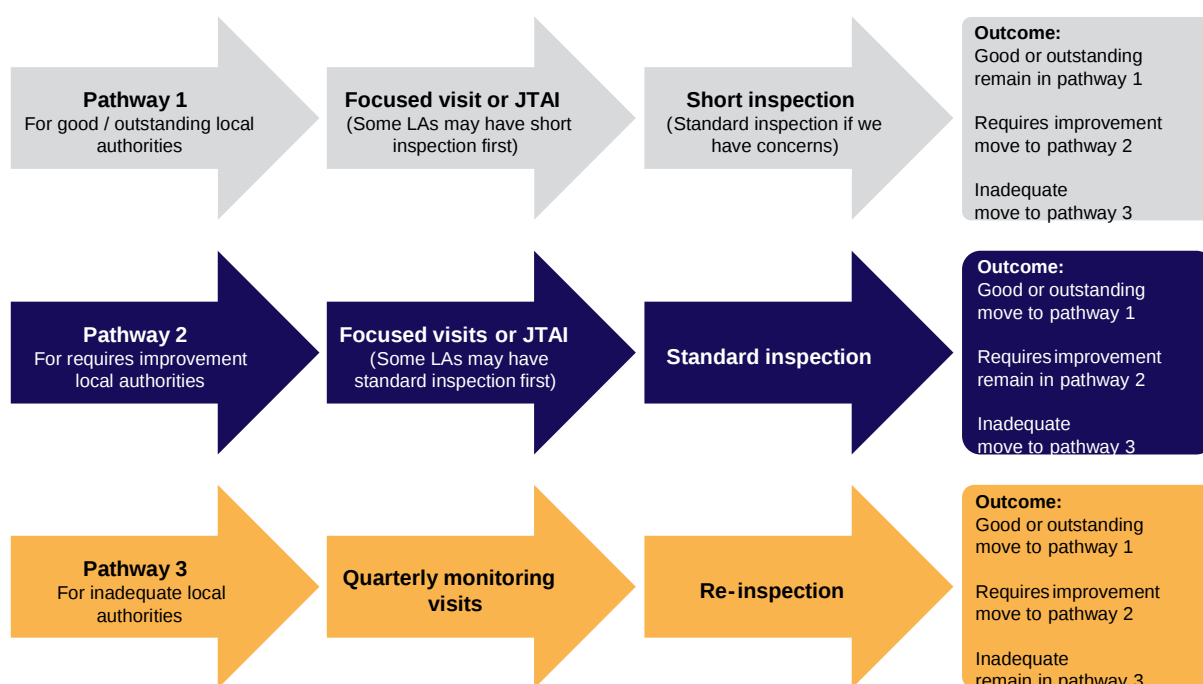
While the framework is primarily focused on social work and the quality of professional practice, the effectiveness of leaders and managers, the impact they have on the lives of children and young people as well as how well equipped and supported the workforce is to deliver effective practice are also evaluated.

4.2 ILACS is an inspection 'system', introduced in January 2018 aimed at making inspection risk-based and proportionate through more frequent contact tailored to each local authority. It comprises:

- an annual engagement meeting (Brent's most recent was January 2026) between the local authority and an Ofsted regional representative to reflect on what is happening in the local authority and to inform future engagement
- standard inspections (usually for local authorities judged requires improvement to be good)
- **short inspections** (for local authorities judged good or outstanding)
- focused visits that look at a specific area of service or cohort of children, taking place over 2 days, usually between standard / short inspections
- monitoring visits for authorities rated 'inadequate'
- Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI).

Local authorities are also encouraged to participate in activity outside inspection, such as sharing a self-evaluation for discussion at the annual engagement meeting.

4.3 The following diagram summarises the three inspection pathways in the ILACS framework. Brent is on Pathway 1, having been previously graded as overall 'Good' at the last ILACS inspection in February 2023.



- 4.4 The last focused visit took place in November 2025 with a focus on the local authority's arrangements for children in care ([Ofsted focused visit Nov 2025](#)). Brent was notified on 20 April 2026 that a short ILACS would be undertaken, commencing with immediate effect, with inspectors on site at the Civic Centre from the 27 April to 1 May 2026. There were up to 6 inspectors on site throughout the week who spent time with front line staff reviewing the quality of casework. Inspectors also met with partners, foster carers, adoptive parents, children in care, and care leavers to hear their views and experiences.
- 4.5 As part of the visit the inspectors also evaluated the impact of leaders, the arrangements for continuous learning and effectiveness of quality assurance activity, as well as performance management and decision making.
- 4.6 The inspection team tested the validity of Brent's most recent self-evaluation (September 2025) with the main focus on social workers' direct practice with families and the impact on outcomes for children. The inspection involved reading case files and supporting documentation, including evaluating individual children's records that have already been audited by the local authority.
- 4.7 The inspection identified many strengths within the local authority and how it delivers services for children in care and care leavers, particularly services to prevent children entering care, support for disabled children and the education and training opportunities available for children in care and care leavers. In relation to the leadership judgement inspectors found that Members of the Council and senior leaders are listening, committed and caring corporate parents, highlighting the impact of Brent Care Journeys Empire and our participation offer which supports practitioners to improve and strengthen services.
- 4.8 The Local Authority was judged to have remained 'Good' across all four judgement areas, including 'the experience and progress of children in care' and 'the experience and progress of care leavers'. Since April 2026 Ofsted have removed the single word judgement for overall effectiveness ahead of a revised framework, due for implementation in spring 2027.
- 4.9 An action plan has been prepared to address the recommendations arising from the inspection as well as other areas of practice improvement that were identified.

Key Findings

- 4.10 In the Ofsted focused visit in November 2025, inspectors noted that since the last ILACS inspection in 2023, children in care continue to benefit from effective services led by an experienced, stable senior team, with strong political and corporate support. They also noted the progress that leaders had made in overcoming previous recruitment challenges and strengthening workforce stability and retention, which had been particularly important for children in care. The areas for development from the focussed visit inspection included:
- The consistency and rigour of responses to children who go missing from care
 - Life-story work for children in long-term care
- 4.11 Following the focused visit an improvement plan was created to address these two areas. The progress made was reflected in the ILACS inspection. However, due to the short duration of time between inspections and the systems work required to drive life-story work, this remains an area for improvement.
- 4.12 The ILACS identified many strengths within the Local Authority and how it delivers services for and supports children in care:
- Social workers take time to build strong relationships with children in care, visiting them across a range of settings and often seeing them alone. Social workers spend time understanding children's behaviours, discussing their experiences and ensuring that cultural, religious and identity needs are well understood and actively supported.
 - Children are supported to remain living with their parents or extended family when it is safe for them to do so. Kinship arrangements are used effectively in order to support permanence, with kinship carers either becoming connected foster carers or special guardians.
 - Children's health needs are prioritised, and they have access to specialist health appointments when medical needs are identified.
 - Children in care are supported well to progress in their education. The experienced and aspirational headteacher of the virtual school, supported by a stable and well-regarded team, knows children and their individual circumstances well.
 - Children in care who go missing or who are at risk of exploitation benefit from a well-coordinated multi-agency response. Social workers and partner agencies typically manage risks effectively.
 - Children at risk of exploitation receive tenacious, relationship-based support, informed by a strong understanding of extra familial harm.
 - Disabled children and their families receive assistance that is highly effective, from practitioners who build trusting, respectful relationships with children and parents. Risks for disabled children are clearly identified and comprehensively assessed, and intervention from skilled workers across the wider partnership is implemented with appropriate determination, resulting in sustained positive change for children.

- Most children, when possible, live locally with Brent's own foster carers, who know the children well and are proud of their achievements. Foster carers value the support they receive and the sense of working collaboratively for and with children.
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children benefit from strong support. Practitioners build enduring relationships with children, ensuring that their needs and circumstances are understood and considered in their care plans.

4.13 The ILACS also identified many strengths in services for care leavers including:

- Care leavers benefit from a committed and relational leaving care service. PAs are persistent in their attempts to engage care leavers and build meaningful relationships at the point of a change and increasing responsibility in a child's life.
- Pathway plans are completed promptly and reviewed within appropriate timescales. Young people's own words, views, rights and entitlements are captured exceptionally well in their pathway plans, which are detailed and sensitively written. Care leavers are encouraged to continue their involvement with their PAs beyond the age of 21, to benefit from ongoing support as young adults.
- A supportive local offer provides care leavers with valuable opportunities to learn and develop new skills for life.
- Care leavers spoke positively of the support that PAs have given to help and encourage them to remain in further education. There is a tailored focus, with PAs supporting individual care leavers to access the right pathways for them.
- Care leavers' housing needs are well supported, with many living in accommodation that reflects their capacity for independent living and their individual preferences.
- Care leavers' mental health needs are understood and met effectively.
- Care leavers in custody are supported by PAs who show *determination* in working with them, seeking updates on their welfare even when young people decline contact.
- Care leavers who are parents receive tailored support from their PAs, who are responsive to care leavers' individual circumstances and advocate effectively for their needs.
- Care leavers are supported well to develop independence skills as they transition into adulthood, through practical programmes, including cooking, DIY, financial management and formal qualifications. Care leavers value the range of independence support available to them, recognising these opportunities as giving them skills for life.

4.14 The ILACS highlighted that participation with children and young people is a particular strength. The report notes that Brent's children in care council, Brent Care Journeys Empire, provides meaningful opportunities for children in care to have their voices heard on the services they receive, with direct engagement by the Corporate Parenting Committee and purposeful involvement in service development and recruitment activities. The final report concludes by saying that "*Children's voices are at the centre of practice and wider decision-making. The children in care council and engagement*

activities for care leavers provide meaningful platforms for children and young people to influence services and support their peers. Leaders value and act on the feedback of children, young people and their families.”

4.15 The ILACS highlighted four areas for improvement:

- The consistency with which work with children subject to care proceedings, and the pre-proceedings stage of the Public Law Outline (PLO) is progressed, in particular the management oversight and decision making of this work.
- The consideration of children’s previous history in decision making in the Brent family front door.
- The consistency and quality of life-story work for children in long-term care.
- The completion of mandatory training for approved foster carers.

4.16 An action plan to address the above areas is being developed and must be submitted to Ofsted by 24th September. This will be monitored through the directorate’s existing quality assurance processes.

4.17 To address consistency and quality of life-story work, improvement planning includes continuing to embed new guidance for practitioners , ongoing training for practitioners, continued focus on the quality of 3-monthly case summaries which provide a written narrative for children and young people of their journey through care, driving use of a life-story work virtual platform, and participating in national research.

4.18 Activity to address the completion of mandatory training for approved foster carers has also begun, working with foster carers to identify the best ways to support them to attend training around their fostering responsibilities.

5.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

5.1 During the ILACS inspectors met with social workers, managers, partners and service users. Separate discussions also took place with the Leader, the Lead Member for Children, Young People and Schools and the Council’s Chief Executive.

5.2 Inspectors were particularly interested to hear from children and young people in care and care leavers. They also looked for evidence of children’s views in their inspection of files and in discussions with professionals.

6.0 Financial Considerations

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report.

7.0 Legal Considerations

7.1 There are currently no legal considerations arising from this report.

8.0 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

8.1 There are no additional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) considerations arising from this report.

9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

9.1 There are no climate change or environmental considerations.

10.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

10.1 There are no additional human resources or property considerations.

11.0 Communication Considerations

11.1 The outcome of the ILACS has been published and shared across the Council. The link to the online report can be found here: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50304386>

There are no additional communication considerations.

Report sign off:

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Community Development