



Child Safeguarding

1. Introduction

Safeguarding aims to have systems in place to ensure children and young people are protected from abuse or neglect, their welfare is safeguarded and promoted and that their long-term outcomes are improved.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as protecting children and young people from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health or development, and ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care.

Child protection is a key part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm to their health and wellbeing. Effective child protection is essential as part of the wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

There are four categories of abuse, originally defined by the [Department of Health](#):

- Physical Abuse – involves deliberately causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child;
- Emotional Abuse – the persistent ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration of learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, although it may occur alone
- Sexual Abuse – involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware what is happening. May involve physical contact, non-penetrative acts or non-contact activities; and can be committed by men, women and other children.
- Neglect – is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, often resulting in serious impairment to the child's health or development. Neglect may involve failure to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, and may occur during pregnancy or after birth. Neglect also includes failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, and unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

2. The Local Picture

During 2010/11, there were approximately 16,000 contacts made to Hounslow's Social Care teams - a 21% increase on the previous year and an 80% increase compared to 2008/09.



The increased volume of contact places significant pressure on social care assessment services, which have to identify and prioritise the most vulnerable children.¹

There were 2,059 social work assessments during 2010/11, which determined the level of vulnerability and need in Hounslow's children. Of these children, 861 (42%) required complex comprehensive assessments while 412 (20%) were the subject of child protection investigations.

Children in need are defined as children aged under 18 and who require Local Authority services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, to prevent significant or further harm to their health or development or who are disabled. There are currently 1,445 children in need in Hounslow who are supported through the provision of specialist services. Additionally, at the end of 2010/11, there were 205 children in the Borough with a Child Protection Plan. Monitoring data indicates that neglect and emotional abuse continues to be the primary reason for requiring a Child Protection Plan. Domestic violence remains a key concern for children in the Borough of Hounslow. The Hounslow Domestic Violence Outreach Service had 4,318 referrals, including the indirect support of 378 children, during 2010-11.

There are currently 344 children in the care of the Council in Hounslow. Workforce planning has ensured that all looked-after children have been appropriately allocated to qualified social workers. Nine in ten children and young people in the care of the Council aged between 0 and 16 years have been placed in foster care or placed for adoption. This is comparable to the national average. The stability of placement in Hounslow is good, with two-thirds of all cases looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years. Since 2007, Hounslow's strategy for recruitment of foster carers has proven successful, with a 10% increase in overall numbers of carers.

3. Strategic Leadership

Across all partnership agencies, priority is given to safeguarding and child protection, underpinned by an ethos of responsibility and accountability. The Local Safeguarding Children's Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Hounslow, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. A 2009 Ofsted inspection of safeguarding services reported that the "overall effectiveness and provision of safeguarding services to ensure that children and young people are safe in Hounslow is 'good'".

The overall aims of Hounslow's Safeguarding Services and its partners are:

- Keeping children and young people safe, ensuring they get the care and support they need to promote and safeguard their welfare and wellbeing;
- Being effective corporate parents to children in Hounslow's care to enable them to achieve their potential and maximise their life chances;
- Supporting young people leaving care to become confident, successful adults who participate socially and economically in society;
- Provision of effective and responsive assessment and care management services to work with parents and carers to overcome problems and reduce the risk of neglect or child abuse;

¹ Swift Database; updated March 2011



- Reducing re-offending in children and young people and enhancing life prospects for young people who have offended; and
- Providing an integrated approach to the assessment and provision of care, education and support for children with Special Educational Need (SEN) and disability.

The overarching areas of work for safeguarding children in Hounslow are:

- The responsibility to safeguard children and young people is understood and prioritised by all agencies and professionals working with children;
- To maximise the benefits of resources for children in care; ensuring choice, effectiveness and value for money;
- The assessment and care management of children in need is continually improved;
- Good parenting and support for families in the community is promoted;
- Early preventative action is taken to avoid children and young people becoming looked after or involved in care proceedings;
- Planning for young people with disabilities who are looked after is effective;
- Looked after children are placed in permanent accommodation as soon as possible;
- Children and young people are supported to remain in safe, stable and secure placements;
- The distance of placements from home of newly looked after children is reduced;
- The life chances of looked after children continues to be maximised;
- There is a permanent and stable child safeguarding workforce;
- There are highly trained, skilled and supported social workers and other professionals who work together to safeguard children;
- To ensure that children of parents who receive drug and alcohol treatment service within the Borough are safeguarded;
- To continue to develop multi-agency training across the Borough;
- To increase accountability, transparency and more outcome measures which focuses on the journey of the child or young person Error! Bookmark not defined.

4. Priorities

The key priorities in 2011/12 in Hounslow are to ensure that the recommendations of the [Munro review](#) are met, including:

- Provision of early local help services for children, young people and families in the area for early intervention based on the local profile need;
- To further develop more quality assurance approaches to safeguarding children; and
- To ensure that dedicated safeguarding children expertise are not reduced or diluted in new organisational structures.

5. Summary of Need

The table summarising the needs in this area has not been completed as it does not adequately incorporate the complexities surrounding Child Safeguarding.