



**North East London**  
Integrated Care Board

# Looked after children annual report 2023/24

## Contents

Executive summary	3
NEL Looked after children annual report – Part A NEL Overview	4
B&D ICB Annual Looked After Children Report 2023-24	7
City of London Looked After Children Report 2023/24	9
<u>    </u> Hackney Looked After Children Report 2023/24	11
Havering Looked After Children Annual Report- 2023/24.	14
Newham Looked After Children Annual Report	16
Redbridge Looked After Children Annual Report 2023-2024	19
Tower Hamlets Looked after children Annual Report 2023/24	21
Waltham Forest Looked After Children Annual Report for 2023/24	26

## **Executive summary**

### **Introduction**

This is the third looked after children annual report for NHS North East London (NEL) Integrated Care Board which was established in July 2022. The purpose of this report is to provide a system overview and also update the NHS ICB Board on how statutory responsibilities have been discharged during the reporting period of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

### **Key issues**

Workforce capacity has been an area of challenge for both Health and Care. Whilst, significant recruitment has taken place there remain hard to fill posts, particularly in relation to Designated doctor roles commissioned by the ICB for three of the inner London places and Named doctor for Looked after children roles in the outer London footprint within the NELFT workforce. During the year aside from the independent review commissioned by the ICB into NEL medical safeguarding provision which included Looked after children in its scope, there have also been two ICB consultations during this period impacting the ability to recruit personnel. Although, interim capacity has been sourced by the ICB where possible and contingency arrangements are in place for areas with vacant posts this poses as a system risk. Additional investment is to be requested for an uplift in the establishment for the medical team in line with the recommendations of the independent review of medical safeguarding provision commissioned by the ICB in 2022/23. There are plans in place for recruitment into all vacant posts during 2024/25.

Some areas of success from the peer review workstreams and examples of quality improvement work are:

- Bespoke training was delivered to NEL ICS contract Leads
- A network has been established to provide mutual aid and peer support to ICS contract leads while enabling system conversations with quality, safeguarding and commissioning leads. This work is supported by the ICS safeguarding standards procedure and its safeguarding and Looked after children's standards checklist which enable provider organisations to self-assess themselves.
- The system holding itself to account and resolving the initial system backlogs which were a post covid legacy.
- A standardised service specification incorporating a model of what good looks like for a Looked after children's health Teams has been developed.
- The Audit tool and best practice guidance have also been developed and was implemented for RHAs in January 2024. Improvement plans are being progressed at place with reporting and oversight by the NEL Looked after children forum.
- A prospective prescribing audit of IHA's was undertaken in September 2023 and is set to be replicated in September 2024. This audit covered the four outer London places, and the re-audit will enable the system to be assured that learning from the initial audit has been embedded.
- Dental and health promotion audits focussed on improving outcomes were undertaken in City and Hackney in Q4 of 2023/24. The best practice has been shared in both NEL and regional forums

### **Priorities for 2024/25**

1. Ratifying and implementing the NEL ICS Looked after children strategy.
2. Establishing a community of practice for Looked after children professionals across the ICS.
3. Recruit substantively into all vacant posts in the establishment of the Looked after children workforce.
4. Undertake a deep dive to identify areas requiring a greater improvement focus.
5. Successfully launch the NEL Looked after children dashboard.

## **NEL Looked after children annual report – Part A NEL Overview**

### **Introduction**

This is the third looked after children annual report for NHS North East London (NEL) Integrated Care Board which was established in July 2022 following the amalgamation of the seven legacy CCGs in April 2021. The purpose of this report is to provide a system overview and also update the NHS ICB Board on how statutory responsibilities have been discharged during the reporting period of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

During the reporting period, all ICS/ICB statutory responsibilities for Looked after children have been discharged at place primarily and across the system when it makes sense to work at scale. Each place now has an established designated professional for Looked after children and working closely with the NEL Deputy Director for Safeguarding children, Designated professionals for safeguarding children, Named GP/Nurse consultant for safeguarding in primary care, Health provider partners, Corporate Parenting Boards and Place based Partnerships to deliver on statutory responsibilities.

Part A of the report provides a NEL overview and Part B incorporates all seven place-based Looked after children reports. This Annual report provides the Board with assurance on how corporate parenting responsibilities have been fulfilled in relation to Looked after children and Care Leavers.

### **Overview of NEL Looked after children**

We are ambitious for our vulnerable placed in Local Authority care. The ICB has multiple roles in relation to Looked after children, this includes a statutory role under the Health and Care Act 2022 and a convening role across the ICS. Under both the Children Act 1989, Social Care Act 2017 and Statutory Guidance, promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked after children 2015, it also has a corporate parenting role to work to improve services as a commissioner of health services, including statutory health assessments of Looked after children.

The reporting period has provided an opportunity to review the data and utilise the themes to inform the Looked after children strategy which is in development.

Strategy development has enabled engagement with Looked after children and Looked after children provider Health Teams. However, to address the themes of variation in performance there is a need to look at the root causes of some of these system issues as a Health and Care System.

### **Key system issues**

Workforce capacity has been an area of challenge for both Health and Care. Whilst, significant recruitment has taken place there remain hard to fill posts, particularly in relation to Designated doctor roles commissioned by the ICB for three of the inner London places and Named doctor for Looked after children roles in the outer London footprint within the NELFT workforce. During the year aside from the independent review commissioned by the ICB into NEL medical safeguarding provision which included Looked after children in its scope, there have also been two ICB consultations during this period impacting the ability to recruit personnel. Although, interim capacity has been sourced by the ICB where possible and contingency arrangements are in place for areas with vacant posts this poses as a system risk. Additional investment is to be requested for an uplift in the establishment for the medical team in line with

the recommendations of the independent review of medical safeguarding provision commissioned by the ICB in 2022/23. There are plans in place for recruitment into all vacant posts during 2024/25.

There are data quality issues which are being worked through by the NEL Looked after children dashboard Task and Finish Group. Last year, phase one of this work brought together system leaders to develop a prototype of the dashboard. This year in phase two, the system is participating in national data collection and reporting thereby contributing to the shape of the national dashboard through our learning journey and also as a national pilot site. In tandem with this initiative, members of the task and finish Group have also joined the NEL Cloud project to work with IG Leads, Public Health, Local Authority and Business Intelligence Leads on User cases. As a Health system we have started conversations regarding the transformational and outcome focussed data we would like to see reflected in our reporting and the NHSE digital team leading on the national dashboard are sighted on this work.

The system is now ready to pilot the dashboard in Newham and Havering starting from Q2 of 2023/2024.

During the reporting period Health system quality related issues were addressed through an ICS Peer Review Group which addressed quality related issues such as standardised audit and assurance tools, training and bespoke packages for relevant groups working with Looked after children and also alternative models and governance for areas hard to recruit to.

Some areas of success from the peer review workstreams and examples of quality improvement work are:

- Bespoke training was delivered to NEL ICS contract Leads
- A network has been established to provide mutual aid and peer support to ICS contract leads while enabling system conversations with quality, safeguarding and commissioning leads. This work is supported by the ICS safeguarding standards procedure and its safeguarding and Looked after children's standards checklist which enable provider organisations to self-assess themselves.
- The system holding itself to account and resolving the initial system backlogs which were a post covid legacy.
- A standardised service specification incorporating a model of what good looks like for a Looked after children's health Teams has been developed.
- The Audit tool and best practice guidance have also been developed and was implemented for RHAs in January 2024. Improvement plans are being progressed at place with reporting and oversight by the NEL Looked after children forum.
- A prospective prescribing audit of IHA's was undertaken in September 2023 and is set to be replicated in September 2024. This audit covered the four outer London places, and the re-audit will enable the system to be assured that learning from the initial audit has been embedded.
- Dental and health promotion audits focussed on improving outcomes were undertaken in City and Hackney in Q4 of 2023/24. The best practice has been shared in both NEL and regional forums.

### **Update on Progress with Priorities for 2023/24**

There has been progress in all three areas of focus in relation to :

1. Our ongoing work with our Corporate parenting partners across the ICS to resolve corporate parenting issues such as the failure of foster carers to prioritise and bring children to appointments, improving the quality and timeliness of the paperwork from Local authorities which constitutes the referral to Health which enables Health assessments to be completed within the statutory timescales.
2. Even though the outer London provider partner has invested significant resources in clearing the backlog and increasing clinic capacity, challenges remain with unfilled clinics when children are

not brought to appointments or there are late cancellations when interpreters have not been booked by social workers. These are complex events which we will be looking to address through co-production of the Looked after children strategy.

3. As a system we are proud of the work undertaken with unaccompanied asylum seekers in Newham will be working to support the roll out of this best practice model across NEL. In relation to care leavers we would like to build on the successful implementation of free prescriptions to 18-25 year old care experienced children in the context of the care leavers offer and compact in supporting our children to successfully transition and thrive in adulthood, in our view this would include promoting a robust emotional wellbeing model for this group of young people.

As these are complex areas we expect to continue to work through these issues through the implementation of the Looked after Strategy which has been co-produced with key stakeholders and is due to be ratified in Q3 of 2024/25.

The reporting period has provided the opportunity to review the audit data and utilise the themes to inform the Looked after children strategy which is in development working with looked after children. We are ambitious for our vulnerable children placed in Local Authority care and this is reflected in the draft strategy. NEL ICB has led the work to ensure access to free prescriptions for care leavers in the pan London care leavers compact and has made significant progress on promoting a robust emotional wellbeing model for this group. Funding is being explored from charitable sources to enable the roll out of the successful wellbeing model originally pioneered in Newham across as many NEL places as possible. This also applies to the good practice model for supporting the health and wellbeing of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).

### **Priorities for 2024/25**

- Ratifying and implementing the NEL ICS Looked after children strategy.
- Establishing a community of practice for Looked after children professionals across the ICS.
- Recruit substantively into all vacant posts in the establishment of the Looked after children workforce.
- Undertake a deep dive to identify areas requiring a greater improvement focus.
- Successfully launch the NEL Looked after children dashboard.

### **Conclusion**

As a system we remain passionate about improving outcomes for Looked after children and care Leavers in our NEL footprint. We have a number of achievements to celebrate but will need to maintain the focus on evidencing the impact and sustainability of new initiatives, support workforce capacity and the resilience of staff. The co-creation of the Looked after children strategy provides a framework for the system to work collectively on increasingly complex issues.

## **B&D ICB Annual Looked After Children Report 2023-24**

### **1. Objectives from last year's annual report and how we are measuring up against these.**

For 2023-2026 the B&D Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) agreed the following priorities:

- Health and stability of the safeguarding workforce,
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing of our children and young people,
- Children with complex needs and disabilities,
- Child sexual abuse (CSA)
- Neglect
- The Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children supports the NEL CSA Steering Group which is chaired by an ICB commissioner. This meeting is well supported by ICB Safeguarding Team, commissioners, local authority representation, CSA hub clinicians and support staff, the NEL Social Care Liaison Officer (SCLO) and by the Tiger Team. The CSA Hub will be rebranded as Sunrise, NEL children and young people voted this as the most popular name and an artist will be commissioned to undertake the rebranding. The revised integrated referral form (CSA hub and emotional support service) will have a soft launch, hopefully Spring 2024.
- B&D Safeguarding Children Partnership supports the ongoing work of the Neglect Improvement Programme to revise the early help offer, strategy and training offer on Grade Care Profile 2 (neglect risk assessment tool). In March 2024, a Neglect Symposium was held for B&D practitioners with excellent attendance from all agencies where the Neglect Strategy was launched.

### **2. Synopsis of work at place with impact/issues/mitigations**

- Initial Health Assessments (IHA) and Review Health Assessments (RHA) backlog and issue of paperwork is being monitored by completing monthly deep dive, Zoning and Looked After Children Health subgroup meetings. Targets for IHA are 65% completion, and 80% was achieved. The target for RHA are 85% completion, and 57.5% was completed.
  - Delivery Partner allocated significant resources to help mitigate this risk and increase clinic slots to address increasing demands and there is significant improvement.
  - Audit of review health assessments completed in winter. Taken through the governance process and shared at Looked After Children Health subgroup, NEL ICB Looked After Children forum, and with the delivery partner.
  - Care Leavers Health Summary was developed and piloted in Sept 2023, and is currently being evaluated.
  - Care Leavers Transitions Meeting was established during this period which looked to address issues such as financial capability skills, housing, immigration, education/apprenticeship to ensure that children and young people are given solid foundations on which to build on as they transition into adulthood.
  - Progress made regarding the offer of free prescriptions for Care Leavers and UASC pilot.
2. Key system issues to include successes/issues/mitigations and impact – to include work done in CRG's.
- Delivery partner/NEL ICB have recruited to Named Doctor for Looked After Children and are in the process of recruiting Band 8A Named Nurses for Looked After Children across BHR footprint.

- Level 3 Looked After Children training package in line with Intercollegiate Document have been developed, to be rolled at to Specialist Looked After Children Nurses.
- B&D is part of the UASC project to support unaccompanied children, being led by Newham.
- Designated Nurse for Looked After Children supported in developing B&D Adolescent Strategy for B&D children and young people to improve health outcome.

### **3. Priorities for the coming year (2024-2025)**

- Completing IHA audit and repeating the RHA audit in 2025
- Ensuring children and young people are supported with transition to adulthood, mental health and wellbeing including UASC and Care leavers and SEND.
- Collaborative partnership working with delivery partner.
- Supporting workforce/retention of staff.
- To continue to issue the care leavers' health summary, evaluating as appropriate.



## City of London Looked After Children Report 2023/24

1.0 Progress against objectives from 2023/24	
Objective	Progress
Review of Care Leaver Health Summaries in conjunction with CYP survey outcomes. Monitor progress of HUHT Band 5 EHWB nurse recruitment.	Recruitment of 0.6 band 5 post to now focus on health promotion and follow up of IHA and RHA work
Looked After Children and young people feedback to be obtained by nursing team via questionnaire/tool.	Findings to be reviewed and implemented in Quarter 2
Review Health Assessment (RHA) system and ensure that CYP views are included in the standardisation and should be child led (Proforma from Essex to be considered as an example).	Priority action in work plan and implemented in Quarter 1
Establishing a successful network for Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) and mental health issues for Looked After Children placed out of borough.	Completed. Regular monthly meetings in place.
A second workshop to be planned with YP and HOT (Youth council) to obtain their views and experiences on the EHWB element of the health assessments.	In progress- discussions with patient participation officer – evidenced- in Quarter 2

## 2.0 Synopsis of work at place impact/issues/mitigations

### 2.1 Initial Health Assessments (IHA)

Joint meetings with the LA and commissioners have been established. There has been development and implementation of an IHA pathway. Weekly reporting to continue regarding timeliness of referrals. During the year training was provided to LBH Social workers and Looked After Children health staff.

Mitigations at place:

- Monitor weekly IHA uptake.
- Monthly meetings with HUHT/ICB and London Borough of Hackney and escalation pathways in place

### 2.2 Care Leavers (CL)

Looked After Children health staff to continue to report on Care Leavers Health summaries in key performance indicators. In mitigation bank nurses were employed to complete CL summaries.

### 2.3 Recruitment of a band 5 nurse role to undertake the health promotion and follow up on outstanding health needs following their review health assessment. All the looked after children team have undertaken Mental Health awareness training and have a dedicated team champion to assist in signposting children should mental health services be required.

2.4 A Health Needs Assessment for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is in progress.

The key priority areas identified for Hackney includes the following themes. (These are closely reviewed through the Children and Young People Maternity and Family Care Work Stream). The priorities include.

- Immunisation's, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Maternal health
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing,
- Looked After Children, Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking children
- Asthma
- Healthy Weight and Obesity

2.5 The Looked After Children Team are working in Partnership with Public Health and Social Care Partners to improve Immunisation uptake and Dental /Oral health. The Healthy Smiles program is now being rolled out and Dental packs and Dental registration details are distributed to the children and their foster carers.

2.6 A Looked after Children workshop took place in 2023 and the CYP experiences were included in NHS NEL collation of responses across NHS NEL. This informed the work and development of the Quality Improvement for Looked after Children and Care Leavers strategy 2024-2026

2.7 Following the Looked after Children Strategy development, the Designated professionals will ensure the themes of variation across NEL will be reviewed to ensure a standardised improvement in quality and performance for our most vulnerable children in the care system.

2.8 The Named Dr has also agreed to undertake the Designated Dr Looked after Children role for a period of 6 months. The Interim Designated Nurse for Looked after Children is supporting her during this transition.

### 3.0 Priorities for 2024/25

3.1 Ensuring that the transition to the caseload management pilot and the outcomes for looked after children are embedded and are being achieved. The caseload management pilot will be monitored at the joint Clinical Governance meeting for Looked after Children. An analysis of the findings will be completed in July 2024.

3.2 To ensure that all Care Leavers are provided with a comprehensive Care leavers Summary. The summary document has been audited and will be reviewed building on best practice. Consideration will be given to strengthen the current documentation to improve quality standards and the health experience for our young care leavers.

3.3 The Leadership arrangements and Looked After Children Business has required strengthening. A new joint Clinical Governance Meeting for Looked After Children meeting has been established in accordance with the ICB constitution and to support governance and quality reporting.

3.4 To implement a regular quarterly audit programme for Looked After Children this will include IHA, RHA, Immunisation, dental audit, children's voices and experiences as well as leaving health care summary audits. This will be reviewed through the new joint governance arrangements.

## Hackney Looked After Children Report 2023/24

<b>1.0 Progress against objectives from 2023/24</b>	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Review of Care Leaver Health Summaries in conjunction with CYP survey outcomes. Monitor progress of HUHT Band 5 EHWB nurse recruitment.	Recruitment of 0.6 band 5 post to now focus on health promotion and follow up of IHA and RHA work
Looked After Children and young people feedback to be obtained by nursing team via questionnaire/tool.	Findings to be reviewed and implemented in Quarter 2
Review Health Assessment (RHA) system and ensure that CYP views are included in the standardisation and should be child led (Proforma from Essex to be considered as an example).	Priority action in work plan and implemented in Quarter 1
Establishing a successful network for Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) and mental health issues for Looked After Children placed out of borough.	Completed. Regular monthly meetings in place.
A second workshop to be planned with YP and HOT (Youth council) to obtain their views and experiences on the EHWB element of the health assessments.	In progress- discussions with patient participation officer – evidenced- in Quarter 2

## 2.0 Synopsis of work at place impact/issues/mitigations

### 2.1 Initial Health Assessments (IHA)

Joint meetings with the LA and commissioners have been established. There has been development and implementation of an IHA pathway. Weekly reporting to continue regarding timeliness of referrals. During the year training was provided to LBH Social workers and Looked After Children health staff.

- Mitigations at place:
- Monitor weekly IHA uptake.
- Monthly meetings with HUHT/ICB and London Borough of Hackney and escalation pathways in place

### 2.2 Care Leavers (CL)

Looked After Children health staff to continue to report on Care Leavers Health summaries in key performance indicators. In mitigation bank nurses were employed to complete CL summaries.

### 2.3 Recruitment of a band 5 nurse role to undertake the health promotion and follow up on outstanding health needs following their review health assessment. All the looked after children team have undertaken Mental Health awareness training and have a dedicated team champion to assist in signposting children should mental health services be required.

2.4 A Health Needs Assessment for Children with Send is in progress.

The key priority areas identified for Hackney includes the following themes. (These are closely reviewed through the Children and Young People Maternity and Family Care Work Stream). The priorities include.

- Immunisation's, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Maternal health
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing,
- Looked After Children, Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking children
- Asthma
- Healthy Weight and Obesity

2.5 The Looked After Children Team are working in Partnership with Public Health and Social Care Partners to improve Immunisation uptake and Dental /Oral health. The Healthy Smiles program is now being rolled out and Dental packs and Dental registration details are distributed to the children and their foster carers.

2.6 A Looked after Children workshop took place in 2023 and the CYP experiences were included in NHS NEL collation of responses across NHS NEL. This informed the work and development of the Quality Improvement for Looked after Children and Care Leavers strategy 2024-2026

2.7 Following the Looked after Children Strategy development, the Designated professionals will ensure the themes of variation across NEL will be reviewed to ensure a standardised improvement in quality and performance for our most vulnerable children in the care system.

2.8 The Named Dr has also agreed to undertake the Designated Dr Looked after Children role for a period of 6 months. The Interim Designated Nurse for Looked after Children is supporting her during this transition.

### **3.0 Priorities for 2024/25**

3.1 Ensuring that the transition to the caseload management pilot and the outcomes for looked after children are embedded and are being achieved. The caseload management pilot will be monitored at the joint Clinical Governance meeting for Looked after Children. An analysis of the findings will be completed in July 2024.

3.2 To ensure that all Care Leavers are provided with a comprehensive Care leavers Summary. The summary document has been audited and will be reviewed building on best practice. Consideration will be given to strengthen the current documentation to improve quality standards and the health experience for our young care leavers.

3.3 The Leadership arrangements and Looked After Children Business has required strengthening. A new joint Clinical Governance Meeting for Looked After Children meeting has been established in accordance with the ICB constitution and to support governance and quality reporting.

- 3.4 To implement a regular quarterly audit programme for Looked After Children this will include IHA, RHA, Immunisation, dental audit, children's voices and experiences as well as leaving health care summary audits. This will be reviewed through the new joint governance arrangements.
- 3.5. To implement the findings of the Ofsted Inspection of 12 July 2024, in partnership with the Corporate Parenting Board.

## **Havering Looked After Children Annual Report- 2023/24.**

### **1.0 Work at place to improve outcomes for children**

**1.1** The London Borough of Havering received an inadequate OFSTED rating in December 2023. An improvement plan has been developed and NEL ICB are working collaboratively with partners to address relevant actions in relation to the health pathway for looked after children.

**1.2** The Looked After Children Health sub-group is co-chaired by the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children. The frequency has been increased and the membership expanded to include a variety of health colleagues and ensure the voice of children and young people is included with support from the local youth participation officers.

**1.3** Monthly looked after children zoning meetings are attended by the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children with delivery partner and local authority colleagues to discuss and manage escalations/delays/high level risk cases/concerns. There has been a significant improvement in delayed initial health assessment paperwork in the last 6 months.

**1.4** The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children and the looked after children's delivery partner have undertaken an audit of review health assessments, highlighting high standards of assessment and identifying areas for improvement- this has been shared with relevant stakeholders.

**1.7** The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children has been quality assuring all review health assessments for Havering children and young people that are placed out of borough. An audit was undertaken in April following a 3 month pilot and is working well, therefore this arrangement continues.

**1.8** The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children is working in partnership with place-based babies, children and young people commissioning and Start Well colleagues to identify and address gaps in relation to section 117 aftercare processes for looked after children and young people who are stepping down from Tier 4 placements.

**1.9** The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children contributes to the Care Leavers Covenant agenda across North East London, including work streams relating to pre-paid prescription certificates, access to free leisure centre passes and apprenticeship/employment opportunities.

### **2.0 Key system issues**

**2.1** Immunisation reporting- data quality issues in the number of children who are up to date with immunisations. Conversations are taking place within the local authority to see how this can be better captured on liquid logic.

**2.2** Quality Improvement Programme (QIP)- system work is ongoing to a NEL wide dashboard for Looked After Children data to provide a single view.

**2.3** Timeliness of statutory health assessments remains a system issue.

**2.4** Inconsistencies in the health passport offers remain across the system. NELFT are looking to standardise their offer.

### **3.0 Workforce capacity and system risks**

**3.1** The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children is currently held by an interim member of staff.

**3.2** For the majority of the last year, there has been no Designated Doctor for Looked After Children in post.

#### **4.0 Priorities for 2024-2025**

- Working with local authority colleagues and partner agencies to support relevant health components of the OFSTED improvement plan, including offering bespoke training regarding health assessments to newly established Corporate Parenting teams within the local authority.
- To continue to strengthen the timeliness of Looked After Children Health Assessments, including the associated administration processes.
- Locum Designated Doctor for looked after children to undertake an Initial Health Assessment audit with delivery partner.
- Recruitment to substantive roles.

## **Newham Looked After Children Annual Report 2023/24**

Newham Place ICB priorities 2023-24 annual report:

1. Continue to monitor and profile the outcomes for better physical and mental health for all and safeguard children and Care leavers against exploitation, including those children placed out of borough.
2. Support and lead on NHSE Dashboard Pilot Exercise, ensuring it captures the required data for Looked after children to assure they are receiving timely assessments in line with statutory guidance.
3. Lead with Local Authority (LA) and Looked after children Health Provider team with a timely way of working to ensure a 903 Department of Education (DFE) submission accurately profiles health data, specific to Looked after children population in Newham.
4. Work collaboratively with Health Provider Partners and LA to embed the ICB/ICS strategy for Looked after children.
5. Continue to work closely with East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) and Commissioning to support further discussions around mental health for Care Leavers, Looked after children Nursing Capacity, and funding for the role of Medical Adoption Adviser.

### **Progress against objectives set out in 2022-23 annual report.**

1. The Designated Nurse for Looked after children (DN) has collated and provided monthly validated data from both Health Delivery Partner and LA to inform the ICB North East London (NEL) Looked After Children risk and demographic dashboard.
2. DN for Led and supported other DN colleagues with provision of data for NHSE Dashboard Pilot Exercise on behalf of NEL ICB and ensured four quarterly submissions successfully achieved. NHSE will analyse this data to inform the next stage of their implementation plan.
3. DN for Looked after children supported and led on the development of a new 903 DFE submission process this year. A working group between health delivery provider and Local Authority was set up to review this process and implement a more cohesive one. A successful 903 DFE submission (includes data on immunisations, health assessments, Dental & Optician information) was made and agreement by all that new process worked well.
4. DN for Looked after children has provides regular updates and feedback at six weekly meetings on progress of ICB strategy & NHSE and NEL ICB dashboard work.
5. Medical Adoption Adviser Role recruited to, and a successful adoption pathway agreed to by Looked after children Health Delivery and LA and now in place in Newham.  
DN for Looked after children supported and strengthened commissioners bid to bolster MH support being delivered by Looked after children Health Delivery Providers earlier this year.

DN for Looked after children continues to promote and highlight the mental health model of the leaving Care Specialist Nurse in Newham, across NEL. This is a key aim in Looked After Children & Care Leavers strategy (2024 - 2026).

### **Synopsis of work at place with impact/issues/mitigations**

- Earlier this year East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) Looked After Children's Team changed its title to reflect the title that Children in Care want to be known as in Newham, which is Children in Care. This means Newham Local Authority, Designated Nurse for Looked after children, ELFT all use this same title when referring to its Looked after children as Children in Care. This



demonstrates a whole system approach to valuing and evidencing Children's views on what they want to be known as following their consultation and vote on this several years ago.

- DN for Looked after children was the single point of contact for health when Newham had a focused visit from Ofsted in January 2024. Inspectors looked at Newham's arrangements and support for Children in Care aged 16 and 17, those moving into adulthood, and care-experienced young people aged 18 to 25. Ofsted found that since its last inspection in 2022, improvements to the care-experienced young people service had been sustained and the leaving care services remain highly effective.
- DN for Looked after children has strengthened collaborative working with Newham's Adult Safeguarding DN by setting up quarterly meetings with Leaving Care Nurse and Adult Safeguarding Nurse to monitor and support better physical and mental health outcomes for Newham's cohort of Care Leavers. This has been a positive step in improving transitional safeguarding between children and adult services.
- DN for Looked after children quality assures Review Health Assessments (RHAs) for in and out of boroughs every quarter and feeds back issues to local and out of area health teams on any areas highlighted for improvement
- DN for Looked after children continues to work with ELFT and NEL ICB children's commissioners to support further discussions around Mental Health provision to Care Leavers, assessing Looked after children Nursing Capacity.
- DN for Looked after children contributes to the Care Leavers Covenant agenda across North East London, including work streams relating to pre-paid prescription certificates. Newham successfully issued 12 Free Prescription Certificates and finding for this will continue. Newham were the second highest area in issuing Pre-Paid Certificates across NEL.
- DN for Looked after children supported Health Delivery presentation on the importance of strengths and difficulties (SDQ) which is a tool to aid emotional wellbeing & behaviors in RHAs at the Young Peoples Corporate Parent Board meeting.
- DN for Looked after children led and delivered with fellow DNs across NEL, a Named Nurse and Specialist Nurse workshop to feedback on issues for Looked After Children & Care Leavers strategy and also to explore how Named Nurse and specialist Nurses can improve outcomes for Looked after population.
- Further leaning was recommended from this workshop and a further Community of Practice event is scheduled to run in July 2024. To support effective growth and measurement of the Looked after children population.
- DN Looked after children led on and supported the implementation of a decliner pathway which was rolled out in June 2024. DN Looked after children supported and supported and monitored collaboration between LA and delivery Health Provider on consent pathway for IHAs and RHAs.
- DN for Looked after children attended Care Leavers forum and obtained valuable feedback from Newham Care Leavers that will feed into Looked after Children & Care Leavers strategy 2024-2026.
- DN for Looked after children supported and strengthened commissioners in bid earlier this year to bolster mental health support package to Care Leavers earlier this (unfortunately not successful)

## **Key system issues to include successes / issues/ mitigations and impact – to include work done in (Clinical Reference Groups) CRG's**

- The DN contributes to the Care Leavers Covenant agenda across North East London, including work streams relating to pre-paid prescription certificates, access to free leisure centre passes and apprenticeship/employment opportunities.
- NEL Strategy for Looked after children and Care Leavers is being undertaken. The DN for Looked after children is leading and co-chairing this workstream. Engagement with young people critical – various participation events have occurred with the Looked after children population to ensure they have a voice in the next NEL strategy. The DN for Looked after children attended and presented at Newham Care Leavers forum and obtained valuable feedback from Care Leavers. This will feed directly into Looked After Children & Care Leavers Strategy (2024-2026).
- The DN for Looked after children supported the integrated unaccompanied asylum seeking children's (UASC) pathway for Newham expanding across North East London (NEL). The funding has made the integrated pathway available in the following boroughs, in addition to Newham: Tower Hamlets, Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Waltham Forest – in partnership with ELFT, NELFT and Barts Health. Pilot work has now commenced in several areas and the designated nurse has supported conversations for workshops learning and inclusion to other areas in NEL who are not of this specific pilot but who will have access to learning and awareness of the specific needs of UASC population.

### **Priorities for the coming year (2024- 2025)**

- Continue to monitor and profile the health needs for CIC to ensure better physical and mental outcomes.
- Work collaboratively with new Designated Doctor when appointed and deliver joint quality assurance of IHA & RHAs.
- To work collaboratively with Health Partners and LA to embed the ICB/ICS strategy for Looked after children.
- To continue to work closely with ELFT and Commissioning to support further discussions around mental health for Care Leavers.

## **Redbridge Looked After Children Annual Report 2023-2024**

Redbridge had 315 Looked after children at the end of 2024. 149 were placed in borough, 166 placed out of borough. 42 were unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). 73% of initial health assessments (IHA) were completed within statutory timeframes. 82.3% of all children looked after continuously for at least 12 months had received a review health assessment (RHA) within the period. 540 children in the care of other Local Authorities placed in the borough of Redbridge during the reporting period.

### **Progress against objectives set out in 2023 -2024 annual report.**

**Developing a Looked after children Service Specification with the Commissioners and the delivery partners to provide an agreed framework for the delivery of service:** This has been completed and is currently awaiting sign off.

**Capture the voices of the child and care leaver:** The Designated Nurse for Looked after children across Redbridge has captured the voice of Looked after children & Care Leavers to influence the NEL Looked after children Strategy. The voice of Looked after children & Care Leavers represented at Corporate Parenting Board meeting and to the Health Strategy subgroup and is used to inform service improvements.

**Quarterly strategic meeting with NELFT, Local Authority & ICB Representatives under the heading** "Care Experienced (Children and young people- CYP) Health Meeting". This is ongoing and is being chaired by the Designated Nurse for Looked after children.

### **Synopsis of work at place**

- The designated nurse attends monthly Zoning meeting to discuss Initial Health Assessment (IHA) & Review Health Assessment (RHA) uptake and timelines. It also informs the adoption processes and outcomes. In quarter one of the year, the Looked after children Provider Health service in NELFT went into Business Continuity and shared their business continuity plan (BCP) with mitigations in place. This BCP was due to significant staffing issues with the health visiting and school nursing workforce.
- The designated nurse and the provider health service have worked with multi-agency team and care leavers to develop a health summary document produced in the third quarter of 2023-2024. The scheduled pilot was delayed due to workforce capacity and has been re-scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2024-2025.
- London Borough of Redbridge have funded Two systemic practitioner's post to support children looked after and young people who were identified to have emotional and well-being support needs.
- The designated nurse continues to attend the Corporate Parenting Board on a quarterly basis.
- The designated nurse for Redbridge continues working with counterparts on the NEL wide NEL Looked after children Strategy, this work is scheduled for completion in second quarter of 2024-2025.
- Redbridge start well group, commenced in the fourth quarter of 2023-2024, and one of its priorities are children looked after and the designated nurse is a member of this group.

- NEL Integrated Care System- (ICS) is an active participant in the [London Care Leavers Compact](#).

### **Key system issues**

- A tracker has been developed by Designated Nurses for looked after children to improve awareness of the movement of children in and out of the NEL ICB footprint. The NEL Chief Nursing Officer requested for a review and audit to be completed in- quarter four 2024-2025 with recommendations to follow.
- During the second half of the reporting period of 2023-2024, there was an absence of a Designated Doctor for children looked after services due to unplanned long term sickness. IHA were being completed by interim cover provided by community paediatricians. No IHA Audits completed during this period.
- The ICB has not yet recruited to the substantively to the post of Designated Nurse for Looked after children. This vacancy is covered by an interim with the plan for recruitment in 2024/25
- The NELFT Provider Health Service came under BCP the fourth quarter of 2023-2024.
- CAMHS in Redbridge is providing a limited service resulting in longer waiting times for appointments children against the set targeted waiting period of 6 weeks.
- Placement issues resulting in long hospital stays due to challenges across the system., which occasionally leads to Looked after children under 16 years being placed in unregulated placements.

### **Redbridge Looked After Children Priorities for 2024-2025**

- Regular Dip Sampling Audits and annual Audits of RHA's in quarter 3 of 2024-2025.
- Undertake an IHA Audit in collaboration with the Designated doctors and the delivery partners utilising the standardised NEL IHA Audit tool.
- Continue to work with delivery partners to improve access to CAMHS.
- Work with delivery partners to improve access to dental services.
- To continue to capture the voice of the child and care leaver and include in service planning.

## Tower Hamlets Looked after children Annual Report 2023/24

### 1.0 Work at place to improve outcomes for children

1.1 Our third Tower Hamlets place based Looked After Children Report provides a synopsis of the progress made against agreed priorities for 2023-24, areas of practice improvements and key challenges. We conclude the with a brief overview of our plans for the coming year.

1.2 Our Designated Nurse for Looked After Children Nurse has been working closely through both strategic and operational groups with our delivery health care partners and agencies at place to improve our children in care experience and access to support to improve their health and wellbeing.

1.3 Progress against our 2023-24 priorities is summarised below in Table 1.

**Table1: Progress against priorities from 2023- 24**

Progress against 2023 -24 priorities		
Priority	Progress	Status
Development of Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (The JSNA is a process that enables the local authority and ICB and to assess both current and future health and social care needs of our children in care and care leavers. The aim is to reduce health inequalities experienced by our children and enhance their wellbeing).	<p>Development of our JSNA was delayed due to a lack of public health capacity, however we are now on track to be finalised end of 2024. This will be the first time that Tower Hamlets has undertaken a JSNA for children in care and care experienced children.</p> <p>An outline of the project was shared with our Corporate Parenting Board. Webinars have been held and planned to understand the specific needs of the children we care for and those with care experience and to work together to review and improve our strategies for enhancing the lives of the children under our care.</p>	In progress
New service model for unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)	We have developed and operationalised our new integrated pathway in which our UASC are seen jointly by a paediatrician, Child Adolescent Mental Health practitioner and Health Improvement Practitioner. 4 to 6 weeks after being seen a multidisciplinary professional meeting is held to ensure the needs are being met.	Completed
Roll out of Prepaid Prescriptions Certificate programme	<p>We have developed local materials to raise awareness of free prescriptions via the Pre-payment Prescription Certificate. Information has been added to our Local Offer for Care Leavers &amp; Know Now App.</p> <p>Uptake of this offer is improving (3/ 4 children so far). Our Through Care Services have agreed to do a bigger push on.</p>	Completed
Quality and timelessness statutory health assessments	<p>Oversight of our statutory health assessments performance is done through our Health of Children we care for and Care Leavers Steering Group, Children and Families Executive and Corporate Parenting Board.</p> <p>The timelessness of our statutory health assessments has also been monitored via our monthly children in</p>	Completed

	<p>care dashboard and joint operational meetings. Deep dives were completed on areas contributing to breaches such as lack of interpreters.</p> <p>10% of Review Health Assessments (RHA) completed by our specialist nurses for children in care were audited. The audit found that the voice of the child is being captured within RHAs.</p> <p>Key themes/learning from this audit were shared with Corporate Parenting Board at March meeting 2024. An action plan is being developed by our Named Nurse to support practice improvements and embed the learning.</p>	
Co-production of statutory health assessments resources	<p>A leaflet and Tik Tok video were co-produced with one of our care leavers to help improve our children in care understanding and up take of health assessments which was launched at CPB Meeting March 2024, with wider sharing across health and social care teams.</p> <p>The TikTok film was made following discussion at a previous CPB meeting and feedback given from the young person present.</p>	Completed
Mental Health Practitioner for Care Leavers	<p>Possible funding via non-recurring Section 256 was considered but ruled out. Instead, our Barnardo's service has been extended to deliver sustained mental health and wellbeing support to care leaver with a dedicated officer at Kitcat Centre (vibrant hub for care experienced young people).</p>	Completed
Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) Strategy - year one priorities	<p>Our CPB strategy has been developed and was launched in October 2024. Please click <a href="#">here</a> for information on the progress made against year one priorities.</p>	In progress
Development and Launch of our NEL ICB Looked After Children & Care Leavers Strategy	<p>Our Designated Nurse has worked closely with our local authority Participation Officers to get insight into our children in care and care leaver's experience of health services and what matters most to them to stay healthy and happy. The feedback has informed the draft development of the strategy</p>	In progress

## 2. Key system successes and improvement work

2.1 This year we jointly (health and social care leaders) revised our health delivery partner's Looked After Children dashboard so that we can monitor other local authority children placed in Tower Hamlets and our children placed out of borough access to timely statutory health assessments.

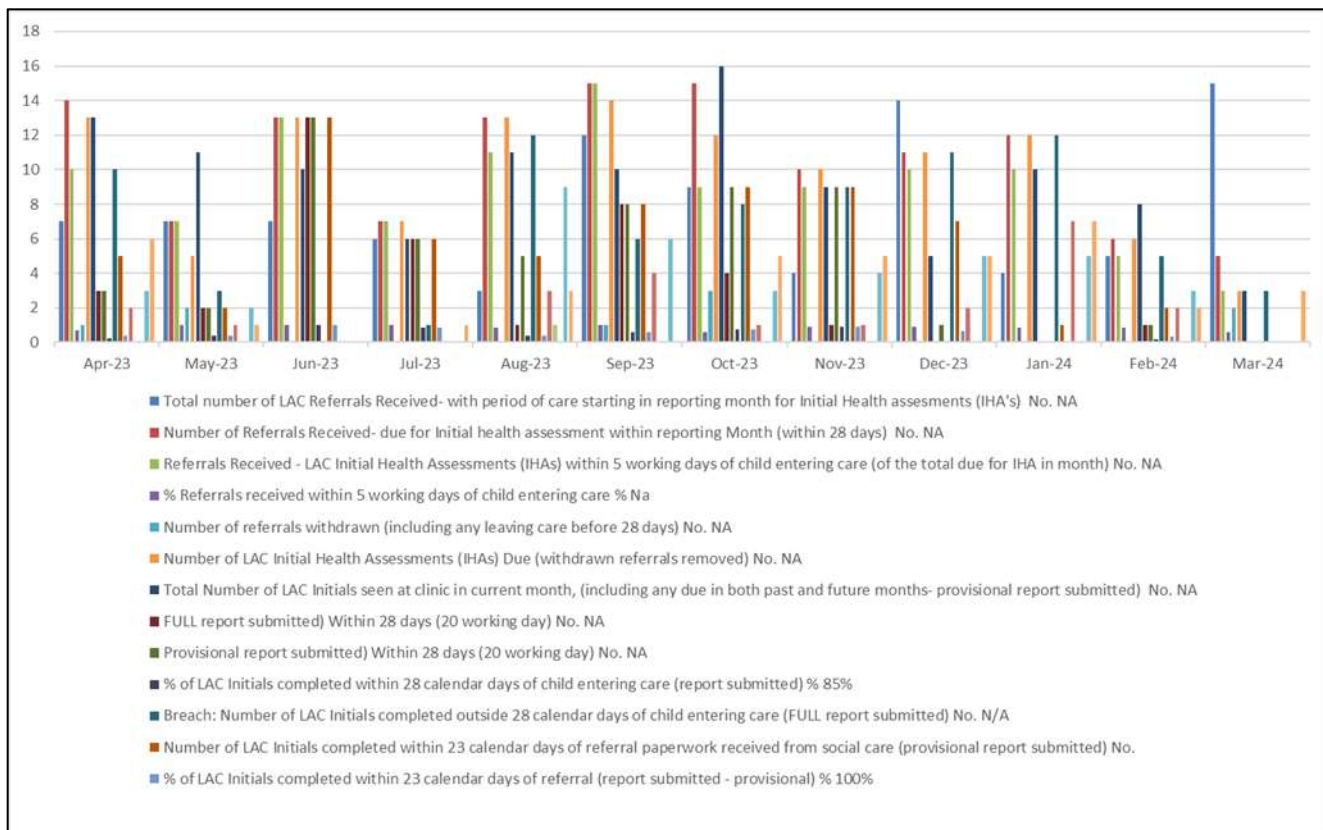
2.2 Our Designated Nurse for Looked After Children quality assures all out of borough Review Health Assessments and has provided feedback to the relevant clinicians and or local partnership as required. For example, when Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs) were not completed and not included has part of the health recommendations this was flagged up to be addressed. The annual performance for the completion of SDQs has improved from 42% in 2022-23 to 94% 2023 -24.

2.3 Working collaboratively with our commissioners and health delivery partner we were able to secure funding and recruit a Named Nurse to provide both operational and strategic leadership to the specialist nurses for Looked After Children and Trust

### 3. Synopsis of work at place impact/issues/mitigations

3.1 There is insufficient clinical capacity for completing Initial Health Assessments. Deep drives have been undertaken on other issues impacting IHA performance and actions agreed. Figure 1 below illustrates our performance over the last 12 months and the factors that have impacted on the timelessness of assessments.

**Figure 1: Initial Health Assessment Performance April 23 to March 24**



\* No NA refers to no target as the number is variable

3.2 A spotlight report on Initial Health Assessments has been presented to Children and Families Executive on 16th April detailing the measures taken to improve performance. Additional capacity to support the team will be available via 3 new trainees.

3.3 There is also insufficient clinical capacity for completing Review Health Assessments due to maternity leave and sickness. Figure 2 and 3 below illustrates our performance for Review Health Assessments over the 12 months and the factors impacting the timelessness of assessments.

3.4 The Named Nurse is now in post and arrangements to cover the maternity are being made. Performance will continue to be monitored by the division (Barts Health), joint operational group and via the revised monthly dashboard.

**Figure 2: Under 5 Review Health Assessment Performance April 23 to March 24**



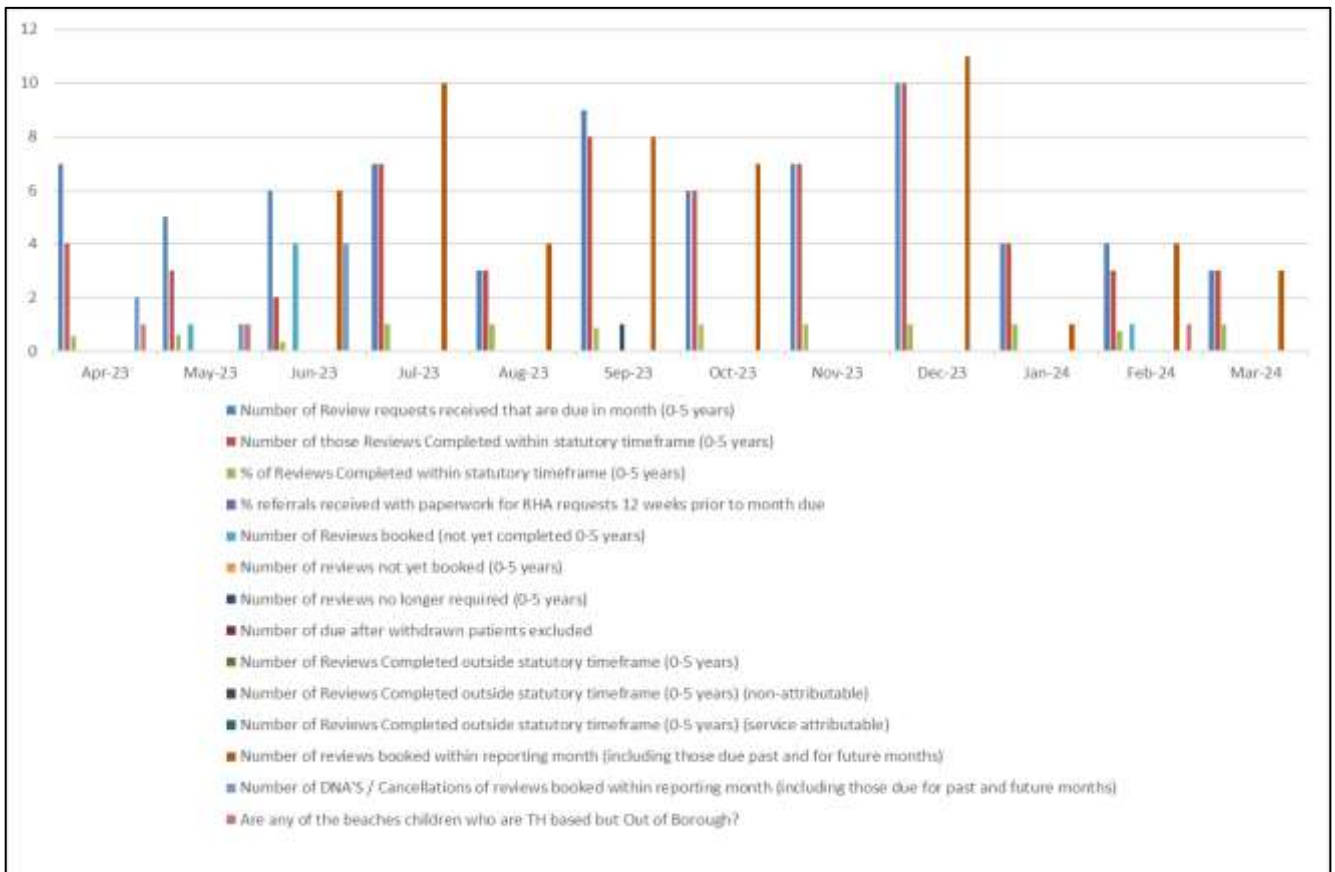
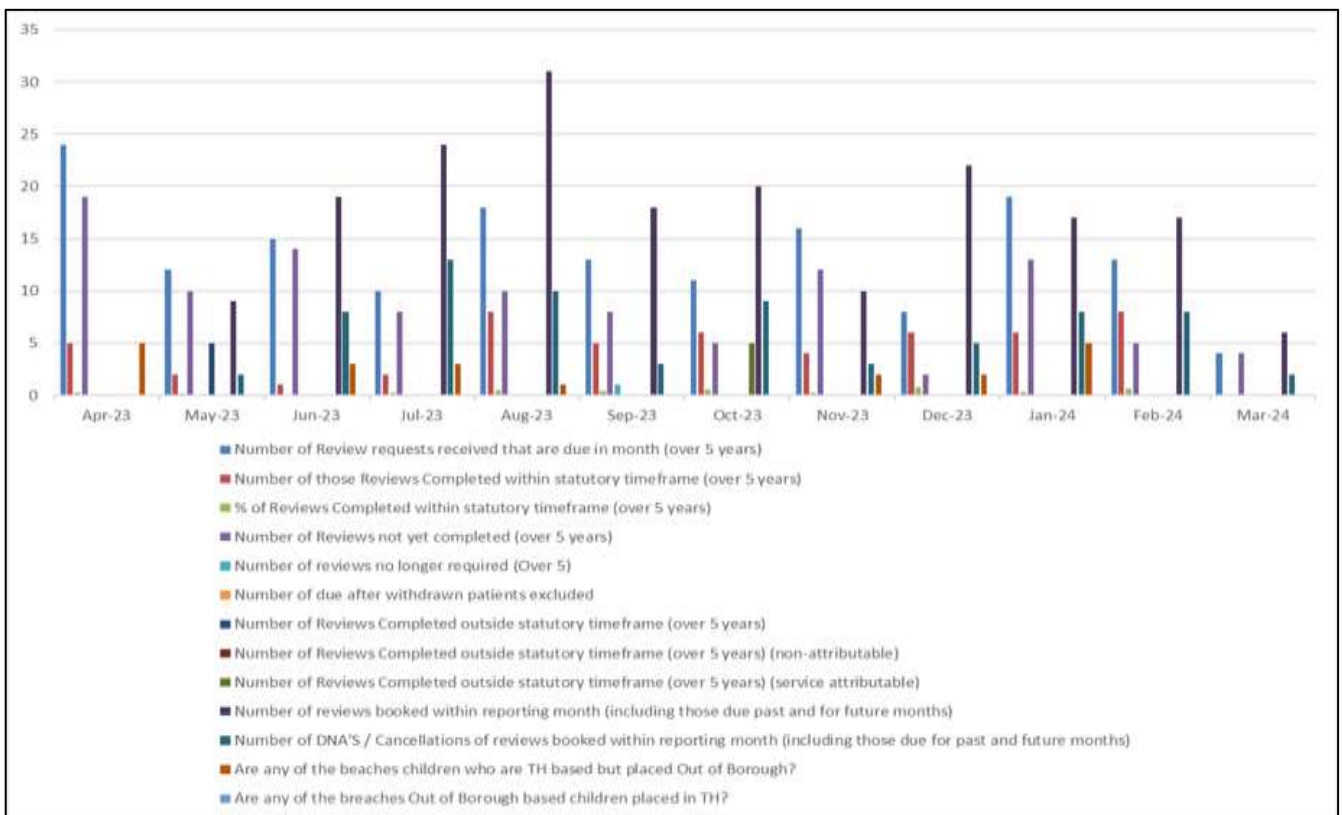


Figure 3: Over 5 Review Health Assessment Performance April 23 to March 24



3.5 There is insufficient designated professional for Looked After Children capacity which impacts on the delivery of statutory functions, including providing strategic leadership across the partnership,



oversight and quality assurance. At the time of writing this report, an Interim Designated Doctor for Looked After Children has started in this post. Arrangements for the vacant 0.6 whole time equivalent Designated Nurse for Looked After Children are currently being considered.

3.6 There has been a delay in Care Leaver Summaries (Health Passports) being shared with children who were due to leave care. Leads from Barts Health, Children Social Care and ICB have come together to discuss mitigation and plan to prevent this from reoccurring.

3.7 Health Passports have been updated by the specialist nurses and copies received from the printers for the team to complete and share with young people.

#### **4. Priorities for 2024-2025**

4.1 To support the development of our Joint Strategic Needs Analysis for our children in care and care leavers.

4.2 To ensure we recruit to vacant and interim designated professionals for Looked After Children capacity.

4.3 To review and audit the quality of our statutory health assessments.

4.4 To continue to support the delivery of our Corporate Parenting Strategy and NEL ICB Looked After Children and Care Leavers Quality Improvement Strategy.

4.5 To work collaboratively with our health and social care leads to ensure Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires are available at statutory health assessments.

4.6 To support our health delivery and social care partners to address the improvements required in respect of health passports.

## Waltham Forest Looked After Children Annual Report for 2023/24

### Progress against objectives set out in 2023-24 annual report

- The voice of the child captured in every initial and review health assessments( IHA and RHA) report; through the voice and influence participation officer; at the Corporate Parenting Board care leaver co-chair and the children in care council. The London Care Leavers Compact, including the free prescription and gym membership offer is promoted.
- Improved performance of health indicators and continued partnership working with a weekly scrutiny meeting, and a Joint Strategic Partnership board, ensures no backlog of IHAs/RHAs arises and produces a narrative report for the Corporate Parenting Board. An annual audit was completed in December 2023
- Waltham Forest CAMHS and the Fostering service are delivering Therapeutic Parenting groups to foster carers . All unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) children have an integrated physical and emotional Initial health assessment (IHA) and follow up. The Designated Nurse quality assures the reports completed out of borough and ensures that those children placed out of borough are receiving the right services for their physical and mental health needs.
- The ICB/ICS strategy for Looked After Children will be shared with partners September 2024.
- Ensuring the health plans of children are monitored and actioned at each review. An audit with Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) is planned for Q3 of 2024/25. The Nursing team contact carers/keyworkers 3 months after the IHA to ensure the recommended health actions are being completed.
- To strengthen the transition of leaving care, the Named Nurse attends the Local Authority (LA) transition panel. Every rising 18yr old now receives a Leaving Care Health Summary whether they live in or out of borough.

### Key system issues

- Collaboration between delivery partners and the acute providers is required for Looked after children who are on emergency departments or wards when medically fit for discharge.
- In relation to immunisations and dental appointments, the Named Nurse attends the LA weekly data meetings for the monitoring and oversight of outstanding immunisations and dental appointments. Dental appointments remain difficult in some areas as this is a national issue.
- Quality Improvement Programme (QIP)- system work is ongoing to a NEL wide dashboard for Looked After Children data to provide a single view.
- NELFT are looking to standardise the Care Leavers Health Summary offer.

### Workforce capacity and system risks

- The Provider Nursing Team are fully recruited to. An interim administrator is being sourced for maternity leave cover. A jointly funded administrative post for LA and NELFT has been established and is being recruited to.
- LA are planning to employ a GP with special interest to complete the adult medicals required to recruit adult carers for Waltham Forest. This post will be facilitated through NELFT.

### Priorities for the coming year (2024-2025)

Included from the voice of the child and the NEL ICB strategy for both in and out of borough.

1. **CAMHS / Mental Health:** to promote better access to CAMHs and mental health services.

2. **GP Practices:** To improve the experience of CLA with the GP services ensuring they have time with to discuss their health.
3. **Physical Health:** access to good physical health facilities, either through free or discounted membership to gyms, or after school clubs or youth clubs.
4. **Dental issues :** Designated Nurse to highlight and address the problems around getting dental appointments.
5. **Looked After Children Reviews:** To monitor and profile the outcomes for better physical and mental health by auditing our IHA and RHA reports. Promoting 'language that cares' (TACT 2019) in reports.
6. **Transition to adulthood:** to work collaboratively with local authority, delivery partners and Care Leavers Compact in ensuring transition planning is started early and adult services are notified of the physical and mental health needs of the child.
7. To safeguard children and care leavers against exploitation, considering contextual safeguarding especially for those children placed out of borough.
8. Improve performance of health indicators and continue partnership working to improve timeliness and quality of statutory health assessments.
9. Work with the children in care council and care leavers champions to develop more health promotion activities on their chosen topics and involve the public health and provider health team.

