



North London Fostering & Permanence Consortium, (NLFPC)

**Annual Report
2019/20**

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1.0 Introductions

Welcome to the Annual Report of the North London Fostering and Permanence Consortium, (NLFPC)

Dear Members,

It is a great pleasure to introduce the Annual Report for the North London Fostering and Permanence Consortium 2019-2020. The Annual Report is such a wonderful testimony of all the achievements that take place within the Consortium.

It has been a great experience to be the Chair of the Consortium and I would like to thank all colleagues and staff across the six boroughs for their ongoing support and commitment to its work.

The North London Consortium has been built on many years of successful collaboration. Members benefit from the innovation and improvements to adoption, special guardianship and fostering services. Indeed, this year has been a further success.

The transition through the adoption regionalization programme has finally taken place. We welcome our partnership with Adoption London North Regional Adoption Agency, (ALNRAA). Whilst this has been an unsettling period for social workers, they contributed positively to the development of the service, and the transitional arrangements, whilst continuing to offer families an outstanding service.

The challenge of securing sufficient foster carers, especially for teenagers, continues to be a significant challenge for all boroughs. Collaborating on fostering recruitment campaigns for the Consortium to increase the numbers of foster carers remains a high priority.

A significant number of Special Guardianship families have been provided with support and training as a result of new initiatives. Families are also supported by the commissioned Kinship Connected service which sits within Grandparents Plus.

Thank you to Lorna Rook, North London Consortium Manager for the excellent work she did for the Consortium and welcome back to Peter Stevens, who is acting as Interim Manager until a permanent replacement is appointed for Lorna. Looking forward to 2021 and the opportunity for further collaborative arrangements with our partners.

Sally Joseph

Head of Service, (Child Care Provision) Camden

Introduction from Peter Stevens, Interim NLFPC Manager.

The six boroughs that make up the NLFPC are Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington. This Annual Report is an account of the NLFPC activity that goes on across the four service areas; Adoption (until November 2019), Fostering, Private Fostering and Special Guardianship. The information in the report spans the period 1st April 2019 – 31st March, 2020 and details collaborative working arrangements across a spectrum of activity, which continues to be developed and strengthened. However, several key factors have significantly impacted Consortium activities during this year:

1. The transition to the Adopt London North Regional Adoption Agency, (ALNRAA) dominated planning and activity over the last year and a tremendous amount of extra work was accomplished within all our services amidst managing uncertainties over the future. Whilst establishing the NLARAA represented a complex and difficult endeavour, the service is now well placed to succeed.
2. Lorna Rook, the Consortium Manager, left in November, and was greatly missed. Many of the Consortium activities continued and thanks to Managers and staff for their efforts. I was appointed as Interim Manager for 3 months at the end of January, 2020, until a permanent Manager was appointed. As a result, Consortium meetings had not been held for 3 months and, inevitably, the work of the Consortium had slowed down.
3. Finally, in February and March, 2020, Covid 19 arrived and impacted, particularly in London. As a result, the focus of all our social work turned to safeguarding the children and families we all work with, and our staff.

Consortium Fostering activity has continued with the development of online recruitment through Facebook and Twitter and refinement of the Consortium website. Boroughs continue to meet at all levels and training and placements continue to be shared. Sadly, the Parent/Child fostering scheme has run down and this, and initiatives to increase the number of teenage foster carers, will need to be a focus for 2020/21.

Special Guardians greatly benefited from the specialist Special Guardianship social work teams in each of our boroughs who provide assessments, information and support. In addition, one-to-one support and additional support groups are available from the project workers at Grandparents Plus, who are a valued addition to our Special Guardian services. Finally, the advice on overseas placements from IAC has been very important in this complex area of our Teams work.

The NLFPC benefits from the collaborative arrangements with the recruitment, marketing and communication staff. Representatives are always keen to fine-tune their approach and share their learning in this highly competitive market. There is also a huge amount of crucial behind the scenes activity that goes on, in addition to managing the websites, organizing events, developing information materials and delivering an outstanding bi-annual newsletter.

Activity to increase the engagement of service users in contributing to service planning and development has increased and there have been some significant achievements: Chairs of the Foster Care Associations have benefited from meeting to share ideas on setting up activities and engaging foster carers.

The Consortium is now developing joint publicity, information and other services to the newly created Private Fostering Teams and social workers in each of the boroughs. Regular meetings are now held with the Private Fostering leads which are already proving a positive means of innovation, and sharing and improving services.

These successes have been made possible by the goodwill and commitment to partnership working from all front line staff, managers and the Heads of Service. I am grateful to you all for making this role both satisfying

and productive and special thanks goes to Sally Joseph, Head of Service in Camden, who took over the role of chair in March, 2019.

Peter Stevens
Interim NLFPC Manager.

2.0 Overview of the North London Fostering and Permanence Consortium.

Constitution, membership and key services

The North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium changed name to The North London Fostering and Permanence Consortium (NLFPC) in February, 2020. It is constituted by a Memorandum of Understanding and comprises the six London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington. The Statement of Purpose details the aims, purpose and activities of the Consortium.

The NLFPC has benefited from having had a long history of successful collaborative working, initially in 2006 in adoption services, followed by fostering in 2012 and, more recently, with special guardianship in 2015 and Private Fostering in 2019. There are many benefits of working collaboratively. Savings are considerable as they provide the opportunity to negotiate reductions when commissioning services. Sharing foster placements allows more children to remain living locally, and generated savings of £ 322,400 for 2019/20 across the six boroughs. Other benefits include shared learning, the development of expertise and best practice initiatives. The increased diversity and cross fertilisation of ideas also contributes positively to innovation and outward looking behaviour within each agency. A valuable benefit is being able to provide services and training options that a single borough would struggle to manage independently.

Being part of a Consortium enabled favourable contracts to be negotiated with PAC-UK, Grandparents Plus, Fostering Network, Kate Cairns Associates(KCA), New Family Social and The Intercountry Adoption Centre (IAC).

The chairing arrangement is transferred across the 6 boroughs annually. Sally Joseph, Head of Service in Camden took over the role of chair in March 2019.

Structural layout and primary functions:

Until November 2019, when Adoption was separated from the other parts of the Consortium under the Government's adoption regionalization initiative, the Consortium routinely met at various levels in relation to a wide range of activities across the four service areas: Adoption, Fostering, Private Fostering and Special Guardianship. The NLFPC manager has lead responsibility for strategic and operational service development in conjunction with the Heads of Services (HoS) from each of the agencies within the Consortium. Regular scheduled meetings now take place with the following, in relation to the NLFPCs functions:

- Heads of Service (HoS)
- Fostering Support Team Managers
- Fostering Recruitment Team Managers
- Fostering & Special Guardianship Marketing, Communication and Recruitment
- Fostering Training Managers and Coordinators
- Foster Care Association, FCA chairs across the consortium
- Parent and Child Co-coordinators Group

- Private Fostering Leads
- Special Guardianship Leads

London wide activity:

The NLFPC manager regularly met with the 5 London Coordinators to share information and manage and plan activities which included:

- Hosting the Adoption and Fostering Network Meeting quarterly, attended by heads of services and service managers across London.
- Chairing the pan-London adoption and fostering panel advisors' meeting.
- Contributing strategic thinking in respect to developments and training needs through Helen Edwards at the London Adoption and Permanency Board, especially in respect to training and support needs in Special Guardian services.
- Contributing to the planning of RAA services across London.
- Sharing learning about collaborative practices with the newly appointed RAA Project Managers across London.

The Consortium manager is a member of:

- Kinship Care Alliance, (KCA) Chaired by John Simmonds: this is a national steering group in respect to kinship carers including special guardians.

The Consortium manager attended:

- South East Post Adoption Network (SEPAN), CoramBAFF
- Adoption and Fostering Network meetings.
- London Fostering Practitioners Forum, Fostering Network
- Kinship Care professional Group, Grandparents Plus, Chair Lucy Peake.

Organisational Meetings:

The following are a list of the core meetings that routinely take place and achievements in 2019/20.

Heads of Service Meetings:

The HoS and NLFPC manager meet monthly to review, plan and develop the work of the Consortium at a strategic level. The key aims are:

- The review, planning, development and implementation of all Consortium adoption (until November 2019), fostering and special guardianship activities to ensure they are in line with the MOU and represent the most effective use of collaborative working.
- The contracting and monitoring of services: pre-and post-adoption counselling services provided by PAC-UK, the inbound and outbound services with inter-country adoption service provided by IAC, Kinship Connected contract for special guardian support and the agreement with the Fostering Network.

- The sharing of service policies and procedures.
- New initiatives, in light of emerging provision, changes in legislation, government initiatives, practice and identified need.
- Providing the Consortium Chairperson.
- Linking with the National and London Boards

Achievements in 2019/20:

- Commissioning of bespoke support service for special guardians (Kinship Connected).
- Parent and Child fostering scheme reviewed and criteria adapted in order to facilitate a wider range of placements and to fit with care proceedings time table.
- Services provided by Intercountry Adoption Services, (IAC) for inbound and outbound children reviewed and recommissioned (until April 2021).
- Agreement made to collaborate on a Consortium Fostering Newsletter whilst plans put on hold given extra commitments required for the formation of the RAA.
- Adoption (until November 2019) and fostering recruitment strategies presented and reviewed.
- Annual business plan presented and signed off – overarching principles: increase the number and range of our in house foster carers and improve sharing arrangements, find more of the right prospective adopters for the children we have waiting (until November 2019), continue to improve support for special guardian and friend and family carers.
- Using New Family Social Link Maker to share foster placements.
- Planning Consortium participation in the Reflective Fostering Research Project.

Adoption Managers Meetings:

This was the NLFPC operational management group for adoption and met six weekly until November, 2019.

The meetings were used to:

- Oversee all aspects of the consortium adoption operations.
- Share information and develop learning about best practice, policy and procedures.
- Monitor the implementation of the pre and post adoption contract with PAC-UK, and monitor the inter-country adoption contract with IAC.
- Monitor the Consortium joint membership arrangements with New Family Social and Link Maker.
- Share information on the use of Adoption Support Fund bids, referrals and services that are available.
- Discuss and share ideas for implementing new legislation, guidance, standards, best practice and training.
- Develop ideas for further joint commissioning.
- Review and contribute to the recruitment strategy.
- Review the training schedule.

The Adoption Family Finders

This Consortium group met monthly with a representative at IAC and had responsibility for:

- Updating and exchanging information on children waiting and adopters approved in the consortium: at their monthly meetings and by updating and monitoring Link Maker and Adoption Link (whilst in operation).
- Attending Adoption Exchange Events and Activity Days.
- Linking with the adoption recruitment team to inform them of children waiting and adopters approved.

Adoption Support Meetings

Social workers were representative from each of the Consortium boroughs. The key aims were to:

- Share good practice and learning initiatives.
- Explore, pilot and incorporate new therapeutic services
- Promote learning from making bids to the ASF
- Contribute ideas with the training schedule.

Highlights in training:

- 2 Consortium training events on Life Story Work and “Going Back to Go Forward” were attended by 22 adopters.
- In total, 12 parents attended the 4-day Great Behaviour Breakdown therapeutic parenting programme funded by the ASF.

Fostering Managers Meetings:

This group is comprised of the fostering managers in support and recruitment teams; we meet every six weeks as a separate team and alternate meeting jointly, they:

- Share information, learning about best practice, policies and procedures in mainstream fostering and private fostering.
- Discuss issues arising from Ofsted inspections, new legislation, guidance and National Minimum Standards.
- Share information about vacant foster carers and children waiting for carers as part of the fostering sharing placement scheme.
- Developing areas of joint commissioning of services.
- Overseeing the Consortium Parent and Child fostering scheme.
- Planning the training schedule in conjunction with the training leads.
- Planning Consortium participation in the Reflective Fostering Research Project.

Achievements 2019/20: .

- Haringey extended use of their foster carers’ men’s group across the North London Consortium - the group is facilitated by an external trainer and provides tailor made training on issues affecting male foster carers and provides support.

- Sharing Skills to Foster Schedule and openness to offering slots in borough's training programmes to foster carers from other Consortium boroughs
- Acceptance on to the Reflective Fostering Research Project.
- Adapting to the Covid 19 pandemic by developing Consortium meetings , training and other activities online.

Special Guardianship Leads Meeting:

The group comprises of special guardianship leads from each borough in the Consortium, and meets four weekly to:

- Share information and learning about policies, practice and procedures.
- Monitor the training schedules.
- Provide information and ideas with the support groups.
- Plan the annual social event for families.
- Set up and maintain forms, leaflets and information for the website.
- Monitor the 'Kinship Connected' contract with Grandparents Plus.

Achievements 2019/20:

- Great Behavior Breakdown (GBB) therapeutic parenting training and Non Violent Resistance (NVR) reviewed and adapted for eligible special guardians funded under the ASF. 2 courses were run and more are planned.
- Enhanced decision making for children being placed overseas through continued commissioning of the outbound permanency service, (IAC).
- Leaflet for parents produced explaining role of special guardian and SGO.
- Newsletter produced.
- New Family Social contract renewed to include special guardians.

Private Fostering Leads Meeting:

This group is comprised of the Private Fostering leads from each borough in the Consortium. It started meeting in February 2020 and meets 6 weekly to:

- Share information and learning about policies, practice and procedures.
- Develop and share publicity and information materials.
- Develop a training schedule for private foster carers, managers and social workers

Achievements 2019/20:

- Consortium Fostering website updated with page on Private Fostering, and new Consortium website "Private Fostering North London" commissioned.

- Work commenced on sharing leaflets, posters and presentations on Private Fostering.
- Possibility of Consortium App on Private Fostering under consideration.
- Data collection of Private Fostering activity in the Consortium commenced.

3.0 Activities in Adoption: Matching, Placing and Recruitment (up to November 2019).

Information Exchange

One of the key functions of the Consortium was to exchange information about approved adopters and foster carers as well as children waiting for adoption or foster placements. This was done in a variety of ways:

- Regularly updated profiles were circulated to all the adoption teams.
- In adoption family finder meetings, profiles of children to be placed and approved adopters were shared and discussed. The Inter Country Adoption Centre attended these meetings to make links between our children and their vacant adopters.
- Profiles of children were circulated to all the London Consortium Managers to circulate across London
- From April, 2014, all the NLAFC boroughs had contracts with Link Maker

Adoption Preparation Group Organisers Meetings

These were usually held bi-monthly and involved the adoption preparation training organisers from all the Consortium members. They shared information, ideas and resources. Each Borough ran Preparation Training Groups, on a rota basis for adoptive applicants from the whole Consortium area. There was an agreed protocol in place for the content and management of these groups. Preparation groups were delivered in Stage 2 of the adoption process.

Placing children and adopters

Placing children and adopters remained an increasing challenge, especially in London, where the numbers of children who are available had significantly dropped in comparison to the number of approved adopters, which had also dropped. Whilst the number of approved adopters and the number of children waiting were comparable in number across London, matching was not achieved for a number of reasons. The children waiting were from a broad range of ethnic backgrounds, whilst adopters were predominately white British. Furthermore, many of these children were part of a sibling group, were of an older age or had increasingly complex needs. In short there was a mismatch. Tackling this, despite initiatives such as targeted recruitment into the black and ethnic communities and increased focus on supporting prospective adopters to care for a child of a different ethnicity to themselves, had little impact. This scenario was reflective across London. The

requirement of needing a spare bedroom and the cost of housing in London was no doubt a prohibitive factor for some families who would otherwise have wished to adopt a child.

Table 1: Information sessions and adoption enquires were managed by the three northern boroughs within the Consortium collectively. The number of enquiries were divided between the three boroughs in order to reach a meaningful total. Table 1 also shows the number of adopters by household approved in 2019/20 (to November) and in the previous 2 years. The Table gives a picture of Consortium adoption activity in the first half of the year.

Recruitment had become much more selective to match the needs of the children waiting. For several years, there had been a significant drop in the number of enquires. Staff had risen to the challenge to recruit adopters from a smaller pool, and for more complex children, and maintained a high number of information sessions.

Table 1: Enquiries, information sessions and approved adopters:

Borough	Barnet	Camden	Enfield	Haringey	Hackney	Islington	Total
Adoption Enquiries						to end Sept 2019	
April-November 2019	51 (tri)	32	43 (tri)	51 (tri)		48	
2018/19	68 (tri)	146	68 (tri)	68 (tri)	46	90	486
2017/18	41(tri)	87	41(tri)	41 (tri)	43	86	339
Info Sessions							
April-November 2019	6 (tri)	3	6 (tri)	6 (tri)		2	
2018/19	12 (tri)	10	12 (tri)	12 (tri)	3	4	53
2017/18	12 (tri)	2	12 (tri)	12 tri	4	4	46
Approved Households							
April-November 2019	4	4	2			2	
2018/19	12	5	3	13	6	6	45
2017/18	13	4	11	15	3	4	44

The NLAFC Manager also linked in with other London Adoption Consortium Coordinators to exchange information about children needing adoptive homes.

Numbers of Children Adopted

Table 2 provides a breakdown of stages of the adoption processes.

Table 2 shows the number of children adopted in the NLAFC by year

Table 2: Number of children adopted

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	April – Nov 2019
Number of Children Adopted	70	63	76	Enfield – 4 Camden – 0 Barnet - 7

Adoption Recruitment: Review of Year 2018/19

Key Messages

- Recruit families for children with a black African, black Caribbean and mixed parentage, older children (3+), siblings and those with complex/additional needs
- Raise awareness and recruit more foster to adopt placements.
- The quality of service offered by the Consortium was very high. We supported applicants every step of the way. Working in partnership with six local authorities meant that we had a wealth of experience and a wide range of children waiting to be matched.

Target Audience

Focus on families able to provide a home for children with a BME background, older children, siblings or children with complex needs, within one hour's travelling distance of any of the consortium boroughs.

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
Training via consortium	Approval process time
Strong support offering	Lack of BME enquiries
Diverse mix of children	
Regular newsletter contact	
Adopter events (eg. Picnic)	
Six boroughs combined so large reach	
Well-established consortium/14 years+	

<u>Opportunities</u>	<u>Threats</u>
As LAs, broad marketing opportunities	Increased competition from adoption agencies
Improving website to include more information	Impact of selling our approved adopters
Maximise presence on social media	Budget pressures

The Strategy for 2019/20

This strategy was to be flexible and react to the recruitment need for all six boroughs as they transition to the new set up created by the regionalisation of agencies in the London area. As the majority of enquiries were generated via the website and from outreach events, the focus was via these methods. We monitored successes and potential improvements for all campaigns throughout the year until November, and adapted the strategy accordingly. A recruitment event was held in October 2019 to coincide with National Adoption Week.

4.0 Activity in Adoption: Support

We were proud of the wide-ranging adoption support services our teams provide in the NLAFC. We were closely involved with London developments.

A twice annual newsletter was produced. The newsletter provided a range of subjects - inspirational stories, information on new services and is a reminder that support is available. The Editorial group consisted of adopters and social workers and owe their thanks to the Marketing and Communication Group members for producing an excellent high quality newsletter. This method of providing information directly to families was relevant. In both our adoption and Special Guardian scoping exercises and questionnaires service users identified the need for a local service with named staff as their first priority.

“A very informative and friendly newsletter”

The requirements for updated information were met via the website and Facebook page and fully updated NLAFC local and PAC-UK leaflets.

Adopter Forum

Meetings took place every 3 months with a group of adopters from each of the agencies. Responsibility for contributing to the agenda was shared by individual attendees, the Chair, (the NLAFC manager), adopters, the WAF chair, social workers and managers. The Adopter forum provided a number of functions: as a quality assurance measure and in a consultative capacity. Whilst a small group, members represented the views of adopters, they provided ideas, information and feedback that contributes to the strategic planning with adoption services.

A member of the Adopter Forum was also a representative member of the London Adoption and Permanency Board.

Adopted Adults Group

A member wrote - "Adults who have been adopted who live in North London can attend a Consortium bi-monthly support group which meets in Islington. This very successful group has been running for eight years and is one of only a handful in the UK. It provides an opportunity for attendees to discuss how adoption has influenced their lives from the practicalities of searching for birth family members to the complexities and positives of their ongoing reunion stories. The group hosts 3-4 guests a year from experts in trauma, DNA and reunion to poets and art therapists.

The group was run by a steering group of adopted adults and supported by a small group of adoption support social workers from across the Consortium. This was a unique support for adopted adults, many of whom have never met with other adoptees and provided so much experience and learning for adoption teams when considering the impact of decisions on modern day adoptions".

July, 2019.

"What a powerful feeling to sit and talk with a room of other adopted people, probably for the first time in my life." **Adopted adult attender, 2018**

"Very supportive group where people understand a lot of what I'm going through" **Adopted Adult Attender, July 2019**

I have found this group invaluable as a support and inspiration as I reached out to find my siblings. Meeting people who I did not have to explain myself to was a great relief... The whole team of volunteers have created a safe space for people to stay connected and not feel so isolated.

Adopted adult attender July 2019



"I love the way we connect even though our lives are so different. It's an adoption thing and it's what I was looking for." **Adopted adult attender, July 2019**

Support Group for the parents of adopted teenagers

The consortium ran a monthly support group for the parents of adopted teenagers. The group focused on challenges parents face in adoption, strategies on managing and provides peer support. The group was well established and was developed by the insightful facilitation of Rachel Staff who has since written a book 'Parenting Adopted Teenagers'. All the adoption managers and adoption support staff recognised this as a key Consortium group, supporting up to 25 adopters of teenagers and young adults at a critical and often traumatic developmental stage. Such support enhanced family life, provided parenting strategies and reduced the possibility of family disruption.

Jennifer Cassidy and Sue Bineham took over the facilitation of the group in December 2016. Jennifer is a paediatric nurse by profession and has seventeen years' experience working in child and adolescent mental health and adoption therapy services. She also works in commissioning NHS services for children with complex physical and mental health conditions. Sue Bineham has been a qualified social worker for over 26 years. She has worked in the Adoption Support field in Camden for 11 years and in that time she has supported many adopted families. Sue has accumulated experiences over the years in group work and her experience support the facilitation process.

Jennifer Cassidy wrote "Over the last year, the parents' group has gone through a period of considerable change. For some time there have been plans to open up the group to new members. Between December and April, we have welcomed eight new members to the group. This has allowed movement and sustainability at the same time meaning that some of the parents who have attended from the beginning felt that the group was now in a stable place to continue and they could leave. We would like to acknowledge the time and energy of those parents who have left in making the group what it is today.

Welcoming new members into the group gave an opportunity for change and development within the group and many new ideas about the structure and running of the group were being implemented.

The group did a self-evaluation session and this is some of the feedback that was received:

- Parents give each other; 'Support is amazing', 'everyone understands', and it is therapeutic, comforting, offers relief,
- Facilitators offer; their expertise, practical advice, make sure everyone is heard, are non-judgmental and professional.

The group continued to be a space for therapeutic discussion about targeted subjects chosen by the group. It also offered a forum for learning, practical advice and emotional support. The group was also very keen to feed into developments in relation to the regionalisation of adoption.

The following was written by a member of the group.

"Parents of Adopted Teenagers meet once a month on a Saturday for 3 hours with facilitators to share experiences and learn about the difficulties of being an adopted teenager. We focus on how we navigate parenting during these challenging years. We value the shared understanding and experience we all bring as well as the support and input of the facilitators.

The group has been going for 7 or 8 years and many of us who were there at the beginning are still attending. It has been a lifeline for many of our families. We have welcomed several new members to the group recently and this has worked well.

We have very varied discussions, one recently explored contact with birth families which raised so many issues we will be coming back to it. The vulnerability of our young people and the risky situations they find themselves in is a constant background to all our stories. Working more positively with safeguarding professionals is a subject we discuss regularly. We would like to discuss the policy round letterbox contact and believe it should not stop at 18 years if the participants want it to continue.

We have been briefed about the regionalisation of adoption and hope we can continue to influence policy through our lived experience of parenting some of the most traumatised young people". July 2019

NLAFC Adoption Support Handbook

Hard copies of the adoption support handbook was provided to new adopters and the updated link was sent to all existing adopters and could also be found on the NLAFC website – www.adoptionnorthlondon.co.uk on each agencies website and at IAC and the WAF website.

The Adoption Support Fund (ASF)

Table 6 provides figures for the ASF applications for the NLAFC.

Table 3: Individual ASF applications:

Borough	Barnet	Camden	Enfield	Hackney	Haringey	Islington	Total
April-Nov 2019	31	15	28	74		46	
2018/19	254	27	29	66	76	61	513
2017/18	39	32	35	39	72	41	258

The adoption support team collaborated effectively over a range aspects: to share information, extend their directory of resources, seek advice on streamlining ASF applications, provide updates on in-house and local services, identify and pilot new therapeutic resources.

5.0 Relationships with external Agencies in Adoption

We Are Family (WAF)

WAF is a successful and vibrant post adoption support community started in June 2013 by a group of adopters. Whilst WAF started in the NLAFC area but quickly spread across London and the South East and became a registered charity in 2015. WAF represent adopters at local and regional level. Their annual reports and accounts can be found here (<https://wearefamilyadoption.org.uk/about-us/our-governance>). Across London WAF now has 900+ members, of which more than 240 members belong to WAF Hackney/Islington (Aka WAF HI).

WAF are proactive with offering approved and prospective adopters a supportive network which they describe as 'organic buddying' and emphasise that 'rather than offer advice they offer community'. Their support activities include regular meetups, information sharing and other initiatives, for instance they offer playgroup meet ups, parent support meetings and other social activities. WAF HI members also enjoy the offers from the two specialist WAF groups: single adopters and prospective adopters. They stress that they are peer-to-peer and therefore do not offer advice or therapy.

With a small grant from Islington Community Chest they were in the process of building the skills of the facilitators of both the WAF HI parent support group (which meets fortnightly) and the Single Adopters North (which meet monthly). Training was provided in September by Zach Gomm and Denise Gilding of Rewire Your Future.

The NLAFC recognised the enormous value that WAF has to established adopters and those seeking to adopt and worked closely with local parents to assist them develop their network in London. WAF, within the NLAC, has certainly flourished. Regular meetings have taken place. WAF publishes a weekly blog, written by different adopters, thereby giving a voice to different parents from the community. Some write a one off, others return regularly with blogs. It is now possible to subscribe directly through the WAF website (<https://wearefamilyadoption.org.uk/blog/subscribe>).

For further information about WAF please visit their web site: <https://wearefamilyadoption.org.uk>

MLS - WAF Member, July 2019

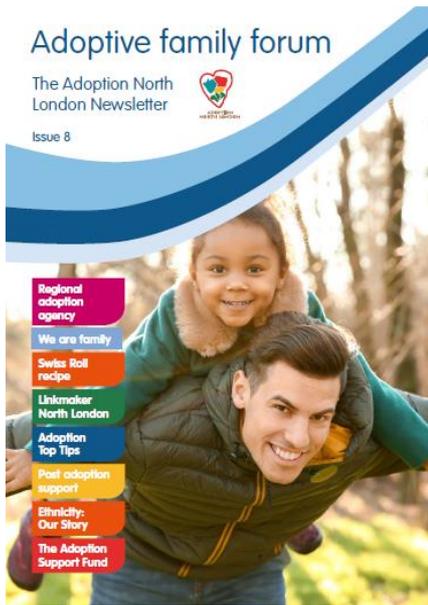
6.0 Activities in Fostering

Fostering Recruitment: Review of Year 2019/20

Recruitment Activity:

The NLFPC Marketing and Communications Group team is responsible for the Consortium's marketing and communication strategies. These detail the planned actions associated with achieving the main objective of recruiting more adoptive and foster families for the children in all six consortium boroughs. The Consortium is

particularly focusing on children with a BME background, siblings and children with complex needs for adoption and foster carers who can care for teenagers



The team's work includes; writing the strategic marketing plan, planning and co-ordinating the Consortium's recruitment events – including those during National Adoption Week and Foster Care Fortnight, organising and attending community events, stands at other events, managing the adoption, fostering and special guardianship Consortium websites, social media pages and digital marketing campaigns.

The team are also responsible for retaining brand identity and producing the Consortium leaflets for recruitment and support, and the Consortium newsletters for foster carers, adopters and special guardians. Their behind the scenes work is crucial to the smooth running and success of many Consortium activities. They provide an excellent service.

Focus on websites and social media overview

The North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium websites are fully administered by the Consortium Marketing and Communications Group.

The adoption and fostering websites are used as an information sharing and recruitment tool and can be found at www.adoptionnorthlondon.co.uk and www.fosteringnorthlondon.co.uk.

The Special Guardianship website can be found at www.specialguardiansnorthlondon.co.uk and provides a range of information about training, support groups, advice and signposting information.

In addition, the Consortium has Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts to aid in the recruitment of adopters and foster carers and help raise awareness through a mix of online sources.

The Consortium Marketing and Communications Group is a pro-active team with many years of experience in publicity and promotional campaigns in the sector. There is a strong working relationship between members and achievements over the past year include website improvements, maintaining and expanding a schedule of social media presence, digital marketing campaign and ongoing updates to literature.

Establishing a Consortium approach is a new initiative on this scale. Activity in these first steps have been achieved, namely communication, direction and working as a team. More recently this approach has been strengthened with a full complement of staff representing all boroughs in the Consortium. A recruitment strategy was proposed, sanctioned and followed through on successfully. A brand is being established and the solid ground work for this has been put in place.

Objectives for the year 2019-20

- To raise the profile of the North London Fostering Consortium
- To generate quality enquiries
- To recruit foster carers for teenagers
- To recruit mainstream carers

In order to achieve this, focus was to be placed on the on the following three strands:

- Improving online presence: Improve website performance and social reach
- Foster carers for teenagers: Recruit six teenage foster carers across the Consortium
- Parent and child: Recruit six parent and child carers across the Consortium

Key Messages:

- Local carers for local children.
- Better all round to foster through the council rather than with independent agencies.
- The quality of service offered by the Consortium is very high.
- We are a partnership of six local authority fostering agencies. We have a wealth of experience, training and support to offer.
- Use your professional experience to help local children. Fostering is a career choice for many.

Recruitment and Retention Activity by Agency

There was an increase in fostering enquiries received in 2019/20 (1353) compared to 1275 in 2018/19. However, the number of approvals decreased to 58 compared to 86 in 2018/19.

Table 4: Fostering enquiries/approvals 2019/20

	Barnet	Camden	Enfield	Hackney	Haringey	Islington
Number of Enquiries	204 (194)	200 (181)	260 (234)	327 (228)	111 (164)	251 (274)
Number of Approvals	8 (31)	10 (9)	15 (14)	9 (12)	10 (15)	6 (7)

Website Enquiries

Unlike adoption, the fostering arm of the Consortium is only able to receive enquiries via the website, or directly to the individual boroughs. Those who visit the website are responded to on a rota basis, unless they specifically request a follow up from a particular borough, or they are interested in an area not supported by the borough next in line i.e. baby carers or supported lodgings. Over the period of April 2019 to March 2020, 26 enquires were received through the website and when probed further they advised that they visited the site as a result of both online and offline sources. This indicates that a mixed approach is still beneficial for the Consortium and its individual boroughs.

Joint information events and stalls

Activity this financial year was very limited as no budget was allocated for Consortium advertising.

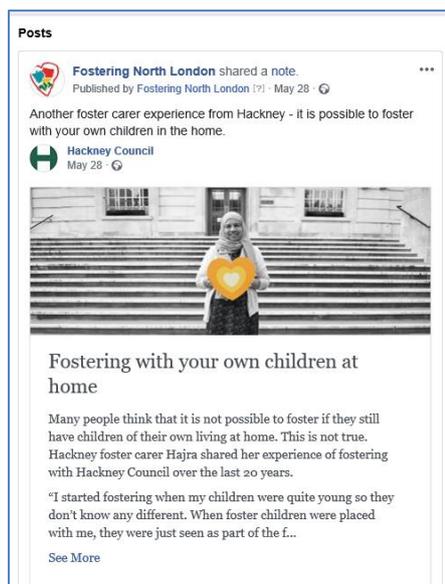
Website improvements



Changes are regularly made to the fostering website (www.fosteringnorthlondon.co.uk) to coincide with scheduled events and video promotions, and to include Private Fostering.

Traffic to the Consortium website increases significantly for each digital marketing and social media campaign but result in a small number of direct enquiries. It is possible that enquires that could have been made on the Consortium site ended up being placed on an agency's website within the Consortium instead.

Maintaining and expanding social media presence



The Consortium profile has risen through the use of social media. We have Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube accounts. Social media messaging is free and we can finely tune what we want to say in a controlled way. Any paid advertising remains mainly through Facebook as the platform allows focus on specific messages and flexibility with costs and duration.

This year on Facebook, as with previous years, we have been busy promoting our information sessions and sharing stories and interesting content from around the country that ring true to all fostering services.

The regular promotion of our scheduled information evenings and pushing out positive stories at key times, especially Foster Care Fortnight, Christmas, and New Year, helps to maintain continual engagement throughout the year

Digital marketing campaigns

Recognising that digital channels are increasingly being used for enquirers' research into fostering the marketing group explored how the Consortium can be more digitally orientated too.

The online campaign in March 2019 had the goal of generating enquiries from residents across North London who would be interested in fostering teenagers and siblings and to drive traffic to the Fostering North London website. This was also used to promote the Consortium's joint adoption event.

The online advertising carried out with this campaign resulted in 1,582 people clicking through from the adverts for more information; this is over 5% of the people that saw the adverts. Average click through rates (CTR) vary according to platform and industry, however anything over 2% is considered to be a good performance.



However, looking closely at the results and the division of clicks between the fostering and adoption adverts, we estimated that less than 10% of these were generated for fostering. This showed that the interest in adoption still remained greater than the interest in fostering and may have accounted for the lack of fostering enquiries received during this period. Despite this, the Fostering North London website visits saw a 6.8% increase during the March campaign thus achieving the aim of increasing traffic to the website.

Branded literature and advertising



Changes to literature in the year paid particular attention to the continuity of branding colour coded to each service area (adoption, fostering, special guardianship) respectively.

Strategy and activity plan for 2019/20

Providing placements locally for children provides the best outcomes. Placement shortage and cost of placement expenditure therefore should remain a key feature for all agencies. Building on the Consortium brand, raising awareness and continuing with the Consortium approach to recruitment is recommended. Budget for 2019/20 was £5,000 although this was withheld to cover the increased cost of support developments to Special Guardians. It will return to £5,000 in 2020/1.

Based on the lower budget, focus and spend were centred more on online activity to make the most of this money with the potential of trying at least one new activity, the 12 Days song and film, and promo,

at Christmas.

By focusing more on using our existing channels and keeping spend to a minimal meant more exposure on our social media platforms and websites. We refreshed the websites and programmed more frequent content to our social media pages, including a form for people to register their interest directly from our social media messaging.

With a limiting budget for Consortium activity, one way of still working together to increase awareness of the Consortium and its benefits was through co-ordinated borough activity.

Consortium Specialist Fostering Scheme: Parent and Child Scheme

The scheme started in July 2013 and currently has 3 approved foster carers, one of whom has a placement. One has a mother/baby placement at present as she was not getting placements. One needs careful matching and is mainstream fostering at present. One potential foster carer is being assessed.

A review of the scheme in 2017 highlighted:

- High levels of satisfaction reported by the foster carers in the support they receive from their link coordinator.
- The placements provide the consortium value for money. These placements cost £850 per week + staff time. This compares to £2,680 average cost of a residential placement per week or an average cost of £2,000 for an IFA placement per week.
- Local arrangements for contact
- Quality assurance of the placement and assessment arrangements.

With such clear benefits to the Consortium boroughs, it is of great concern that the Scheme has significantly reduced operations. The reasons are not clear but:

- There has been no advertising for new carers
- There is low awareness among the Consortium Fostering Teams about the scheme
- There is no longer a specific training for foster carers who wish to join the Scheme.

Fostering Recruitment and Retention Activity by Agency:

Table 5 provides a range of data collected over two years. Although unfortunately some data is not fully complete, there is sufficient data to highlight that the trend for some boroughs experiencing a significantly higher number of placements completed in care proceedings under full care orders, as opposed to SGOs, is continuing. This has continued to lead to increasing the number of friend and family foster carers. Children placed with in-house foster carers and IFAs has continued to rise in most boroughs. The demand for local foster carers, especially for older children is a pressing concern for all boroughs, as is the increasing use of IFA placements, with the high costs this

Table 5: data as of 31st March, 2020 (data as of 31st March 2019 in brackets)

	Barnet	Camden	Enfield	Hackney	Haringey	Islington	Total
Total number of In-house Foster Carers	102 (110)	71 (72)	121 (119)	101 (105)	155 (154)	163 (145)	713 (691)
Total number of children placed with IFAs	91 (94)	23 (21)	104 (97)	152 (134)	111 (119)	124 (94)	605 (559)

Number of teenagers (11 plus) placed In-house.	51 (68)	13 (46)	85 (84)	75 (61)	97 (95)	64 (69)	385 (444)
Number of teenagers (11 plus) placed in IFAs.	58 (56)	17 (18)	64 (66)	94 (83)	85 (82)	105 (69)	423 (374)
Number in Staying Put arrangements.	21 (26)	18 (12)	41 (14)	35 (23)	22 (4)	30 (21)	167 (100)
Number of Reg 24s.	13 (10)	15 (8)	10 (20)	33 (17)	19 (8)	17 (27)	107 (90)
Number of Kinship Foster Carers	7 (8)	15 (10)	12 (10)	24 (21)	30 (20)	26 (19)	114 (88)
Number of UASC	64 (59)	50 (34)	67 (20)	38 (43)	27 (50)	58 Data not provided	304

Private Fostering:

The Consortium Private Fostering Managers and Leads now meet six weekly to share information and practice, and develop resources for all those involved in Private Fostering.

Table 6: Private Fostering activity in each borough in the Consortium 2019/20:

Borough	Referrals	Assessments	Approvals	Current number of PFC's
Barnet	12	12	10	11
Camden	7	2	2	3
Enfield	17	9	4	5
Hackney	9	10	1	9

Haringey	4	4	4	1
Islington	5	5	5	4
TOTAL	54	42	26	33

There are plans to:

- Develop a Consortium Private Fostering website.
- Develop publicity and explanatory leaflets for parents, private foster carers, privately fostered children and professionals.
- Share assessment and other forms and procedures.
- Develop Consortium training to include private foster carers, social workers and managers.
- Develop a peer review process to share good practice.

These developments will hopefully lead to a higher identification and reporting of private fostering arrangements; a better service to all those involved in private fostering; and improved inspection reports to and from Ofsted.

7.0 Relationship with External Agencies

The Fostering Network

Joanna Adande (Fostering Network Consultant for London and Eastern Regions) attends the NLFPC Foster Carer Associations Chairs meetings which take place every quarter, chaired by the NLFPC Manager. A 3 year Membership contract with the Fostering Network has been signed. As well as the financial benefits achieved by having a Consortium membership arrangement, the closer working partnership with Fostering Network has improved information sharing and enabled the Consortium to benefit from the extensive fostering resources and experience of the Fostering Network.

Joanna Adande, our Consortium lead from the Fostering Network writes – “North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium has agreed to continue membership of The Fostering Network for a further three years, starting from 1st April 2019. This gives all NLFPC approved fostering households and NLFPC staff access to a wide range of benefits designed to help them provide the best possible care for the children and young people they look after.

Essential benefits for all children’s services staff, including:

- Tailored support for recruitment of new foster carers including participation in our annual benchmarking survey;
- Expert practice advice and guidance from our practice support team and member helpline;
- The latest information on developments in the sector through forums, e-news and online;
- Special member rates on our training, events and resources, such as The Skills to Foster.

Essential support for all NLAFC foster carers, including:

- Legal protection insurance scheme with a 24 hour helpline, assistance at police interview and cover for legal costs;
- Financial advice on income tax, mortgages, pensions and welfare benefits;
- Access to advice on all aspects of fostering through our member helpline;
- Peer support through an online community of thousands of foster carers from across the UK;
- Discounts tailored for foster families, such as holidays, home insurance and days out.

A full list of benefits is available at www.fostering.net/membership. Advice and guidance through the Member Helpline is available Monday - Friday, 10am-3pm on 020 7402 9582.

In addition to the above benefits, NLFPC also received two free training days in the first year of the agreement and a further three training days will be organised over the subsequent two years of the agreement. “

Joanna Adande, Fostering Network, July 2019

Kate Cairns Associates(KCA):

By purchasing online training packages from KCA in quantity, the Consortium benefits from a special pricing discount of £1 per online course, resulting in a saving of about £300 per annum to the Consortium boroughs. Staff and foster carers are positive in their feedback about the quality of these online training courses, and the efficiency of the support services they receive from KCA. In 2019/20, 296 online training courses were purchased for Consortium foster carers. With the shift to online training for foster carers since the Covid 19 pandemic, it is anticipated that the Consortium boroughs will collectively order 500+ courses from KCA in 2020/1.

8.0 Activity in Special Guardianship Services

A framework for support based on local and national research findings have been established. Key areas of support in place are:

- Support groups
- A social activity day for the family
- Sign posting for services
- Welcome/Information pack
- Leaflet on being a Special Guardian
- Website with advice, training and contact details
- Duty systems for support
- Best practice assessment templates and support needs template
- Training programme providing induction and specialist areas based on what research and kinship carers state they need support with (behaviour, contact and life story work – see appendix 6)
- Enfield host information sessions for those being assessed and other boroughs are working towards doing so

- Life story material

A twice annual high-quality Newsletter is sent to Special Guardians which includes articles of interest, information about services and accounts of personal experiences.

The PAC-UK contract has now been extended to include support services to NLFPC Special Guardians.

Data on Special Guardian Orders (SGOs) Made

Table 7 provides numbers on full assessments completed on prospective special guardians in each agency. Although the Table records 238 in 2019/20 compared to 253 in 2018/9, Barnet were only able to report on 3 months activity. It is probable that the number of full assessments actually increased in 2019/20, and it is noticeable that Enfield, again, had a very high number of assessments.

Table 7: Prospective Special Guardian full assessments completed (not including viability assessments).

Number of full assessments completed	Barnet	Camden	Enfield	Hackney	Haringey	Islington	Total
2018/9	31	29	59	36	51	47	253
2019/20	16 (from Jan to March 2020)	36	67	44	40	35	238

Table 8 figures identify that overall there has been a significant increase in the number of SGOs issued within the NLAFC in 2019/20 from 105 the previous year to 129.

Table8: Number of Special Guardianship Orders granted in the LAC & Non LAC.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Barnet	37 + 3 non LAC	18	29
Camden	12	14 + 5 non LAC	11 + 4 non LAC
Enfield	19 + 13 non LAC	20 LAC + 9 non LAC	37 + 5 non LAC
Hackney	12 + 5 non LAC	21+ 15 non LAC	17
Haringey	21 + 2 non LAC	17	16 + 2 non LAC
Islington	28 LAC + 9 Non LAC	15 + 4 non LAC	19 LAC 3 non LAC
Total (subject to Care proceedings)	117	105	129
	149 inc non LAC	138 inc non LAC	143 inc non LAC

Table 9: Number of known Special Guardian breakdowns (per family not per child) 2018/20.

Number of known breakdowns	Barnet	Camden	Enfield	Hackney	Haringey	Islington	Total
2018/9	4	2	2	4	4	2	18
2019/20	3	1	4	3	0	9	19

Support Services for Special Guardians

There are significant contrasts in the varying levels of support being offered to Special Guardians across the consortium. Note, Haringey’s support data includes signposting and support offered on telephone and from advice bases, and support with contact, whilst the data in all other agencies only includes support offered by an allocated social worker.

There has been an improvement in the number of ASF applications in 2018/19 compared to the previous year. In total, 82 applications were made in 2017/18, as significant rise compared to 35 applications in the previous year. ASF applications for Special Guardians, however, is still a relatively low number when compared with the total number of ASF applications for Adoption Services (513).

Table 10: Special Guardianship support in the NLAFC 2018/20

	Barnet	Camden	Enfield	Hackney	Haringey	Islington	Total
SG Allowance (children)							
2019/20	248	163	208	227	166	216	1228
2018/19	200	165	208	219	170	222	1,184
SG worker support							
2019/20	32	18	45	50		79	
2018/19	31	20	35	59	230	50	425
Supporting Contact							
2019/20	5	5	35	18	No data	42	
2018/19					Data included		

	5	21	32	30	with support	37	
ASF applications							
2019/20	4	6	13	9	9	22	63
2018/19	33	3	11	15	1	19	82

Commissioned Support Services:

Report from Grandparents Plus, Kinship Connected North London 2019-20

“Kinship Connected continues to work across the six North London boroughs; Enfield, Haringey, Barnet, Camden, Islington and Hackney. Through this programme we have been able to offer help and support to 57 special guardians, against an annual target of 60. One-to-one support continues for 28 of these special guardians and is now complete for the remaining 18, with reviews undertaken to record their outcomes. In addition, we continue work with Special Guardians and other types of Kinship Carers who were formerly registered through our pilot, Relative Experience and the first year of our commissioned Kinship Connected Service.

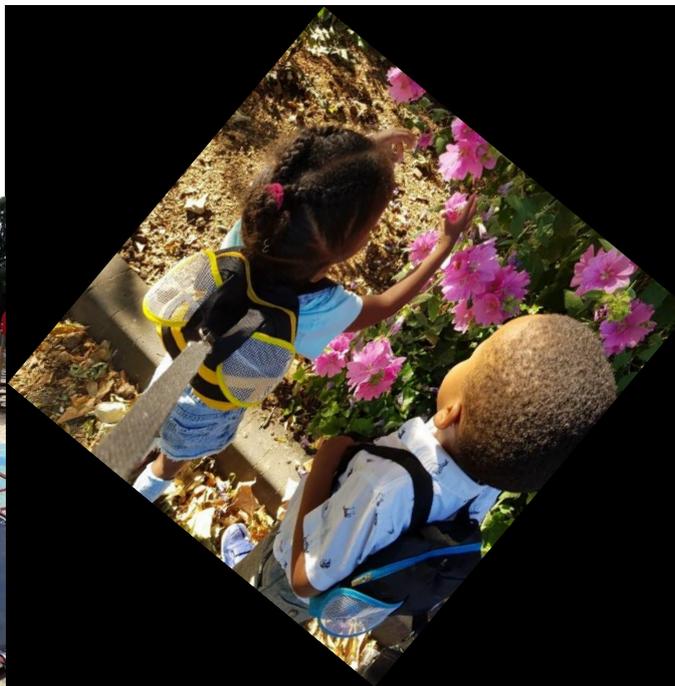
Kinship Connected has been able to offer help and advice over the year dealing with a wide range of issues such as stopped SG allowances, temporary exclusions from schools, advocacy at CIN meetings, identifying therapeutic interventions for SG children by sign posting to ASF courses made available through NLAFC. We have directed SG’s to workshops looking at Contact, Telling Difficult Stories, Mindfulness, GBB and Theraplay amongst others. We are able to advertise the course and inform the local authorities of the SG’s wanting to participate. We have signposted kinship carers to our advice line, who have been able to give advice on Benefits and apply for grants covering items such as fridges, washing machines, beds and activities for the children.

We have been able to help a few carers work through some very difficult circumstance with a couple of Special Guardians making the very hard decision of giving up and SGO in the child’s best interest. This has been very tough but necessary for either the physical and emotional wellbeing of those involved, which has meant that the child has been placed somewhere where all their needs can be met. We have had a number of service users who have either battled illness themselves or someone within their support network has. The Coffee Mornings have offered a great amount of support in those situations.

One of our key focuses for the year has been self-care. Grandparents Plus ran a workshop on self-care and we continue to encourage our service users to remember themselves and take some time for themselves.



We held a very successful Celebration Day last October whereby Families joined us at the Science Museum for a great day out. This along with our days out at the park was a great opportunity for children and SG's to come together.



The first Kinship Care Week was launched in October 2018 and Support Groups and Coffee mornings participated in taking pictures with our selfie frame.



We have attended 36 local authority support groups which we are able to impute into and have run 39 coffee morning across all 6 boroughs. Kinship Connected clients have been involved in focus groups that are informing Government in making policy changes, helping to adapt and develop therapy workshops and have volunteered with Grandparents Plus in various capacities.

Here are a few quotes from Special Guardians that have accessed the service during the course of this year.

“My life has been up in the air at the moment and I don’t know what I would have done without the support of the Kinship Carer Project Worker or Grandparents Plus Advice Line. I must have been a right pain at times but the Project Worker always got back to me and answered every question I had. I can’t thank them enough”.

PO – Enfield Special Guardian

“I look after my sister’s children a 6-year-old boy and 12-year-old girl. I was encouraged and inspired by the project worker to do volunteering with Grandparents Plus as a Grants Application Volunteer. It really gave me insight in the role we do as Special Guardians. The volunteering is so fulfilling when you know you are making a difference in the life of a child with a challenging background. I have also made new friends”.

CK – Hackney Special Guardian

“I’ve had a Special Guardianship Order for my granddaughter since 2016. Being a Special Guardian at my age and when you have raised your child and think the job is done this is very challenging. During the SG assessment I attended workshops which I was signposted to by Grandparents Plus that were crucial in making sense of the dramatic changes in my life. Whenever I need, I seek advice from Grandparents Plus and I feel supported as this is an organisation I can rely on”.

FL – Islington Special Guardian

“I live in Islington and my great niece was placed with me earlier this year from another local authority. I have no help or guidance during the process and was lift feeling abandoned when the child was placed with

no means of support. I got in touch with the Kinship Connected Project Worker and she was able to direct me to services and give me key pieces of advice that I never knew, such as where and how to access therapy and how to challenge the local authority that had placed her to get the right things in place. The help and advice has been invaluable as I felt very down”.

VT – Private Special Guardian Islington”

The Outbound Permanence Service is based at IAC- The Centre for Adoption which is a registered adoption agency. It is concerned with the placement of Looked After Children in England (in care proceedings) in permanent placements, with connected persons overseas. This includes through Special Guardianship, Convention and Non-Convention adoption or other permanent orders. Initially funded by the DfE, from 1st April 2018 it operates as a subscription service and offers services to all subscribing English Local Authorities.

The service has received 457 case enquiries from 84 Local Authorities in England since its inception, covering 79 countries and is staffed by social work specialists and a legal researcher. The purpose of the service is not only to offer case consultation to social workers, managers and legal advisors, but also to promote and advocate for best practice in the placement of these children.

Service aims:

- Improve practice and permanence planning for Looked After Children, resulting in a permanent, loving and stable home;
- Develop specialist advice for local authority social workers and legal departments to assist their care planning for children when considering placement overseas;
- Improve practice by offering a range of resources to assist social workers and lawyers undertaking this work;
- Offer advice in advance of LA's contacting the Adoption Central Authority (the DfE in Darlington);
- Raise awareness and influence policy and practice in this complex and specialist area.

The elements of the service:

- Specialist Advice Line, open to professionals 3 mornings a week, staffed by two experienced social workers and a legal researcher. Contact can be through telephone or email and offers information to social workers/ managers assisting them to 'think through' a developing permanence plan where one option may be to place a child overseas. This covers essential elements such as: planning for the best permanence option, negotiating the legal process, avoiding unnecessary delay, preparing for a successful transition, and planning ahead for post-placement support.
- General Factsheets on Convention and Non-Convention Adoption, Special Guardianship, Features of Orders Comparison Chart, Undertaking an Overseas Viability;
- Country Factsheets: include general information, legal processes, immigration, health, education, adoption support. Ad hoc research on other countries;
- Factsheets for carers overseas for use in assessments e.g. talking to a child about their story, moving to a new country, attachment and managing challenging behaviour;
- Children's story booklets to assist with direct work with children, and to help with transitions.
- Sharing knowledge across LA's and from IAC's library of resources for use by our subscribers, learning from case feedback and harnessing knowledge for future advice.

Offering 'Network Days' to LA social workers and solicitors – these are workshops on Special Guardianship or Convention Adoption, with presentation and discussion on related topics.

- To raise awareness by speaking with the judiciary, at legal conferences and by liaison work with CAFCASS, CFAB, Coram BAAF.

North London Fostering and Permanence Consortium statistics:

Financial year 01/04/19-31/03/20

The number of referrals to the Outbound Permanence Service by the six north London local authorities:

- Barnet - 13 enquiries: Albania, Denmark, Uganda, USAx2, Greece, Poland, India, Ghana, Ireland, Romania, Philippines
- Camden - 7 enquiries: Pakistan, Jamaica, Australia, Ireland, Sierra Leone, Lithuania, Ireland
- Enfield - 7 enquiries: USA, Zimbabwe, Morocco, Tanzania, Scotland, Colombia, Ghana
- Hackney - 8 enquiries: France, Israel, Colombia, Jamaica, Algeria, Turkey, Nigeria, Iraq
- Haringey - 2 enquiries: Italy, Greece
- Islington- 6 enquiries: Italy, Estonia, Cameroon, USA, Pakistan, France

Case examples:

Advice is produced by an experienced social worker with input from a legal researcher.

Greece:

1yr old baby, Turkish father, Albanian mother.

Outbound offered advice to both the SW and the legal team on:

- Immigration issues
- Recognition of an SGO in Greece – explanation of the legal options including an SGO flow chart
- Consideration of adoption
- Greek lawyer contact details
- List of translators
- How to obtain a police check
- Availability of services including health and education

Nigeria:

3 children, one with special needs

- Recognition of an SGO in Nigeria – explanation of the legal options including an SGO flow chart
- Nigerian Factsheet: includes a summary of the legal options and general living conditions.
- Availability of services including health and education
- Viability assessment template with overseas focus
- Carers worksheets for use during the assessment on 'Moving to another country' and 'attachment'
- Advice on the services available in Nigeria including special needs services
- Name of an ISW for the SGO assessment

outbound@icacentre.org.uk

0208 447 4752

PAC-UK: Service agreement arrangements



Since 1st October, 2014, the Consortium has had a contract with PAC-UK to provide a comprehensive range of pre and post-adoption and permanence support services in 4 different locations across the consortium. PAC-UK is a nationally known and well-respected adoption agency and we are very pleased to be working collaboratively with them.

The contract is innovative in that the services are available to all permanent carers in the consortium – adopters, Special Guardians and long-term foster carers. It includes the Education service developed by PAC-UK.

PAC-UK service includes:

- Pre- and post-adoption and SG order birth parent counselling
- Counselling to all service user groups involved in adoption and permanence
- Parent and Family consultations
- Adoption Advice Line 5 days per week
- Education Help Line two mornings per week

Feedback from staff and those who have taken up a service throughout the period of the contract in all aspects of their services has been consistently very good. Furthermore, PAC-UK was awarded an outstanding again in their Ofsted rating in December, 2017.

October 2018 - September 2019			
Advice Line users			
Contact Type	Standard	Education	Total
Special Guardian	11	2	13
New Special Guardian referrals		All Special Guardians offered appointments	
LA	Number of Special Guardians	LA	Number of Special Guardians
Barnet	1	Barnet	1
Camden	1	Camden	2
Enfield	4	Enfield	3
Haringey	2	Islington	1
Islington	1	Total	7
Total	9		

October 2019 - April 2020			
Advice Line users			
Contact Type	Standard		
Special Guardian	14		
New Special Guardian referrals		All Special Guardians offered appointments	
LA	Number of Special Guardians	LA	Number of Special Guardians
Barnet	1	Barnet	1
Enfield	3	Camden	1
Haringey	2	Enfield	4
Islington	3	Haringey	1
Total	9	Islington	2
		Total	9

As can be seen from the Tables above, the usage of Counselling and advice line services by Consortium Special Guardians has doubled in the last 6 months, reflecting the need for a renewed contract for these services after the existing contract with PAC expires on 31st March, 2021.

8.0 Training

The NLAFC manager arranges annual training schedules with training leads and social workers across adoption, fostering and special guardianship services. Please refer to appendix 3, 4 and 5 for the schedules.

All courses are quality assured. Certificates can be issued to attendees to evidence continuing professional development. Because we buy in our training for all six consortium boroughs, which are attended by up to 60 staff, we can buy high quality training at affordable prices, rather than staff attending high cost external courses. Most training costs £20 - £30 per attendee. Since February, 2020, all Consortium training has had to be delivered online. This has resulted initially in a curtailed programme, although this is now developing well.

Joint training of adopters

Six consortium training courses were run each year for approved adopters, hosted on a rolling bases by the Adoption Support Team. These provide useful sources of information. Feedback from parents highlighted that whilst the range of courses on offer was helpful the more comprehensive parenting programmes were the type of training that really made a difference. In response, an arrangement for very sought after training 'The Great Behaviour Breakdown therapeutic parenting training' with Denise Golding and Zach Gomm was set up in 2016 on a rolling bases (three times a year) financed under the ASF. Further to this, a number of training events took place in collaboration with We Are Family, WAF.

Fostering Training

Training leads meet every quarter and share links and best practice. An annual meeting is coordinated with the fostering team managers to coordinate the training schedules. The following has been agreed:

- A consortium protocol for the sharing of training at no cost.
- Each borough hosts one course for foster carers, see training schedule, appendix 5.

Kate Cairns Associates provide a wide range of e-course learning for foster carers which the Consortium foster carers can access at a significantly reduced price.

Special Guardianship Training

The core trainings for special guardians are 'Telling Difficult Stories' which centres on life story work, 'Managing Behaviour Through Demonstrating Therapy Techniques' and 'Managing Contact'.

Attendance has increased through promoting the training with the project workers at Kinship Connected.

In addition, informal training takes place at the support groups. A range of mainly in-house speakers provide information to special guardians on topics such as: claiming the pupil premium and school transitions, claiming benefit entitlements and healthy living styles.

A range of training has also been provided that is accessed through the ASF, (please refer to the schedule, appendix 6).

9.0 Pan London Wide Activity

The London Consortium Coordinators worked together to collaborate and provide a range of services.

Adoption and Fostering Network

Meetings took place every quarter and were attended by Heads of Services across London. The Coordinators organised and managed the agenda and administration. The meeting was chaired by the Consortia chair's host. Reports were routinely provided by CoramBAAF, The Fostering Network and CAFCASS. Since November, 2019, these meetings have been organized by Helen Edwards and the Fostering Network and focus on a fostering agenda.

Training for Panel members

Induction and refreshers training is managed by the London coordinators and is offered 3 times a year.

London Adoption and Permanency Board

Contributing to strategic planning through Helen Edwards on issues such as development of the RAA, recruitment of adopters and staff training needs.

10.0 Recommendations for 2020/1:

- Parent/child fostering scheme:

The scheme needs re-booting. Consortium funds need to be allocated to recruiting new carers to the scheme and providing appropriate training for them. Because some boroughs struggle with recruiting scheme carers, there should be consideration to permitting boroughs to have more than 1 carer each.

- Teenage foster carer recruitment:

The high number of teenagers placed by all boroughs in IFA's is costly and can involve separating children from their families and communities. There is a need for funding to be allocated to ongoing Consortium recruitment and a specialized training programme for carers to take harder-to-place teenagers.

- Contract for counselling/therapy sessions for SG's:

The existing contract with PAC-UK expires on 31st March, 2021. The contract provides therapy/counselling sessions for SG's and is currently included in the contact PAC have with Adoption North London. ANL have funded the whole contract this year but will only fund adoption next year. Therefore, a new contract to provide this service for SG's will be needed in April, 2021. I suggest a Working Group be started in the Autumn to draft a specification for Heads of Service to agree, and the procurement process commenced thereafter.

11.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: The NLFPC Budget 2019/20:

	£	£	
SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP			
Support	3,200		Newsletter x 2 year, Social Event, PAC-U services
Training	5,000	SGs and staff	3 in-house for SGs, 2 staff ,
Kinship Connected	82,000	Annual service fee.	Increased service, 2 project workers, 12 referrals.
	<hr/>	90,200	
FOSTERING			
Training	6,500	Foster carers and staff	6 inhouse and 2 staff training events
Fostering Recruitment	5,000		
Fostering Initiatives	5,000		
	<hr/>	16,500	
ADDITIONAL COSTS			
Administration Costs	2,000	Finance and Admin	
Salary	37,200	60% of current 1.0 fte	
Travel	1,000		
	<hr/>	40,200	
Total		146,900	
c/fwd		-15,000	
Revised		131,900	
by Borough		21,983	
Proposed Borough contribution to the RAA		29,366	total transfer £176,193
Proposed 19/20 Agency Contribution		51,349	
Current 18/19 Agency Contribution		52,910	Total NLAC
<i>Diff</i>		-1,561	
		-9,367	
Increase in IAC contract		12,000	

Recommendation to retain current levels of contribution at £52,910 to part-mitigate increase in IAC contract.

Difference to be met from RAA budget.
 Agency contribution per borough for NLFPC -
 £23,545.

Appendix 2: Benefits of Sharing Fostering Placements data and savings, 2019/20

Placing children and young people within the NLFPC has a number of significant benefits:

- Children remain local, remaining in their community, with less disruption to their education, managing contact and continuity with accessing services.
- Savings are made by the placing authority. Costs are reduced by approximately £400 per week when compared to the cost of placing with IFAs. There was a total of 806 fostering weeks shared across NLFPC in 2019/20. This generated savings of £322,400 across the Consortium. Refer to Table 11 below for individual borough savings. In addition, further savings are likely to include travel costs, accessing in-house contact services and reduced traveling time.
- Foster carers have reduced periods with no child in placement, contributing positively to their retention.

Table 11: NLFPC placements made by borough, 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020.

BOROUGH	NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS PROVIDED	NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS MADE (and to which borough)	NUMBER OF WEEKS PROVIDED	SAVINGS TO PLACING BOROUGH
BARNET	5	2 - Hackney	168	£67,200
CAMDEN	2	0	99	£39,600
ENFIELD	1	0	61	£24,400
HACKNEY	2	3 – Barnet	144	£57,600
HARINGEY	6	2 – Islington 1 – Enfield 1 Camden	325	£130,000

ISLINGTON	9	1 – Camden 1 – Haringey	9	£3,600
TOTAL			806	£322,400

Appendix 3: NLFPC Training Schedule for adopters 2019

- Going back to go forward

Trainer: Louis Sydney

Dates: 14th June, 2019

- Building Resilience to Stress Less

Trainer: Gill Tree

Free online televised training package. Ask your support team

- Talking to your adopted child about their life story – aimed at 11-18 year olds

Trainer – Judith Ellis

Date: 12th June

Host: Barnet Margaret.Sheehan@barnet.gov.uk

- Great Behaviour Breakdown (GBB) model

Trainer: Denise Golding and Zach Gomm

- Dates: 6th Series - 13th, 14th 20th May 3rd June 2019 and 24th September, 2019

SEPAN conference - focus on contact - Date: 28th October. 5 places

Appendix 4: NLFPC Schedule for Foster Carers 2019/20

- **Trauma, attachment**

Trainer: Dawn Samuels

Host: Barnet

Date: 9th July, 2019

Number of places: 6

Training lead: Gail Williamson

Email Gail.williamson@barnet.gov.uk

- **Self-Harm**

Trainer: Dr Mark Natham

Host: Camden

Date: 31st October, 2019 (10-12:00)

Number of places: 12

Training lead: Samantha Grenardo

Email: Samantha.Grenardo@camden.gov.uk

- **Strategies and signs dealing with dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD**

Trainer: ?

Host: Enfield

Tracey.moore

Date: November 5th 2019

Number of places: 12

Training lead: Tracey Moore

Email: Tracy.Moore@enfield.gov.uk

- **Working with birth families and Meaningful Contact**

Trainer: Tracey Miller and Prudencia Woode

Host: Haringey

Date: 22nd Jan 2020

Number of places: 30

Training lead: June.Hosein@haringey.gov.uk

- **Gender identity, sexuality and gender fluid Health and Wellbeing**

Trainer: Peter Bachev,

Host: Hackney

Date: 19th March 2020

Number of places: 12

Train the Trainer: Skills to Foster (selected foster carers and social workers)

Trainer: Astell Evans

Dates: 18th, 19th & 25th November and 2nd December 2019 and a refresher on the 17th Feb, 2020.

Host: NLFPC

Appendix 5: NLFPC Training Schedule Special Guardians 2019/20

Free training provided by the North London Consortium:

- **Therapy Informed Techniques**

Trainer: Julia Davis

Host: Islington

Islington – June 13th, 2019

Numbers: 3 per agency

- **Telling Difficult Stories**

Trainer: Judith Ellis

Host: Enfield

Date: 11th Oct, 2019.

Numbers: 3 per agency

- **Contact**

Trainer: Julia Davies

Host: Camden

Date: 14th Feb 2020

Date: Numbers: 3 per agency

Training organized or promoted by the North London consortium financed under the **ASF for eligible Special Guardians** – Great Behavior Breakdown, (GBB) Mindfulness, Non Violent Resistance, NVR, Body and Soul– all delivered on a rolling program.

- **Great Behavior Breakdown**

Aim: Therapeutic Parenting skills for Special Guardians

Trainers: Denise Golding and Zach Gomm

Venue: Laycock Centre, Highbury & Islington, N1 1TH

Dates: Series 2: 24th, 25th June, 16th, 17th Sep, 28th, 29th Oct (6 days)

Series 3: 4th, 5th, November, 2nd, 3rd December, 10th, 11th February (6 days)

Followed by 6 webinars, monthly over 6 months.

Numbers: 12 participants

- **Mindfulness for Special Guardians**

Aim: Mindfulness can really help regulate mood and better manage stress.

Trainer: Jo Temple, Clinical Psychologist

Venue: Laycock Centre, Highbury & Islington, N1 1TH

Dates: Series 1: 8 sessions weekly from 26th April with a break for half-term.

Series 2: 8 sessions commencing 11th October, 2019

Number of Places: 12

- **Body and Soul**

Aim: Social, fun and creative trauma informed groups for children and teenagers with support to carers

Junior Explorers 5-7 years

Explorers 8-12 years

Teen Spirit 13-18 years

Dates: Commencing on Saturdays in October, 2019

- **Non Violent Resistance, NVR delivered by PAC-UK**

Aim: For eligible Special Guardians: when children and young people are presenting challenging, destructive or violent behavior.

Trainer: Sue Dromey - Practice Manager/Integrative Child Psychotherapist (PAC-UK)

Dates:

23, 30 Jan 6, 20, 27 Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 March 3 April (10 sessions)

Venue: Kings Cross

Number of Places: 12