
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES: CHILDREN IN NEED AND CHILDREN WITH CHILD PROTECTION PLANS

Part of Harrow's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

Strategic Needs Analysis

Children in need in receipt of social care intervention

The Children Act 1989 is designed to help keep children safe and well and if necessary, help a child to live with their family by providing services appropriate to the child's needs.

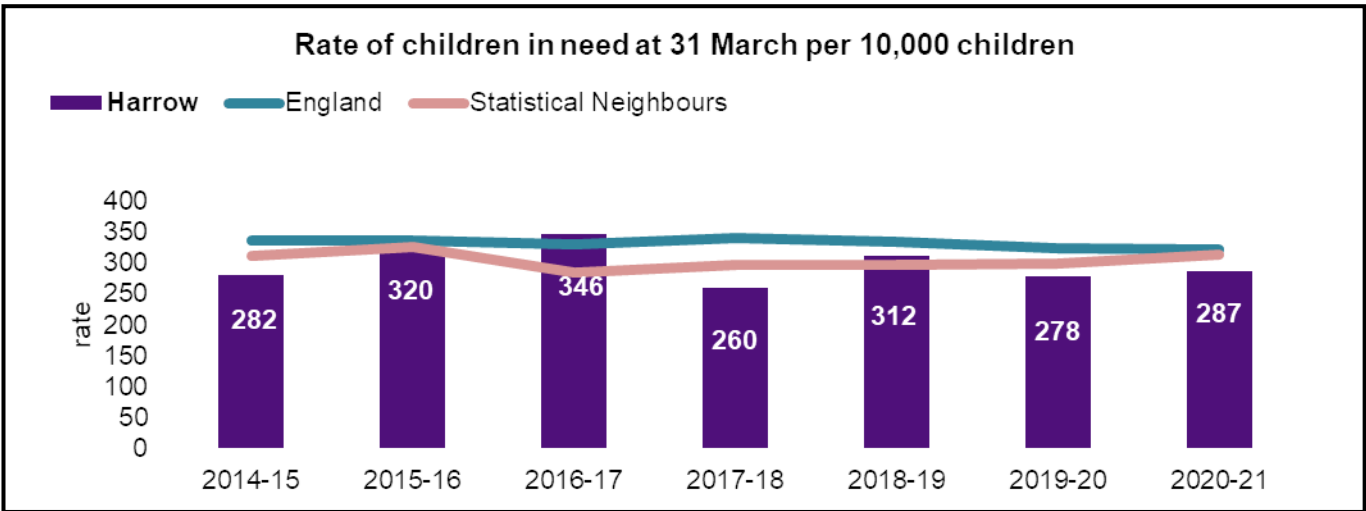
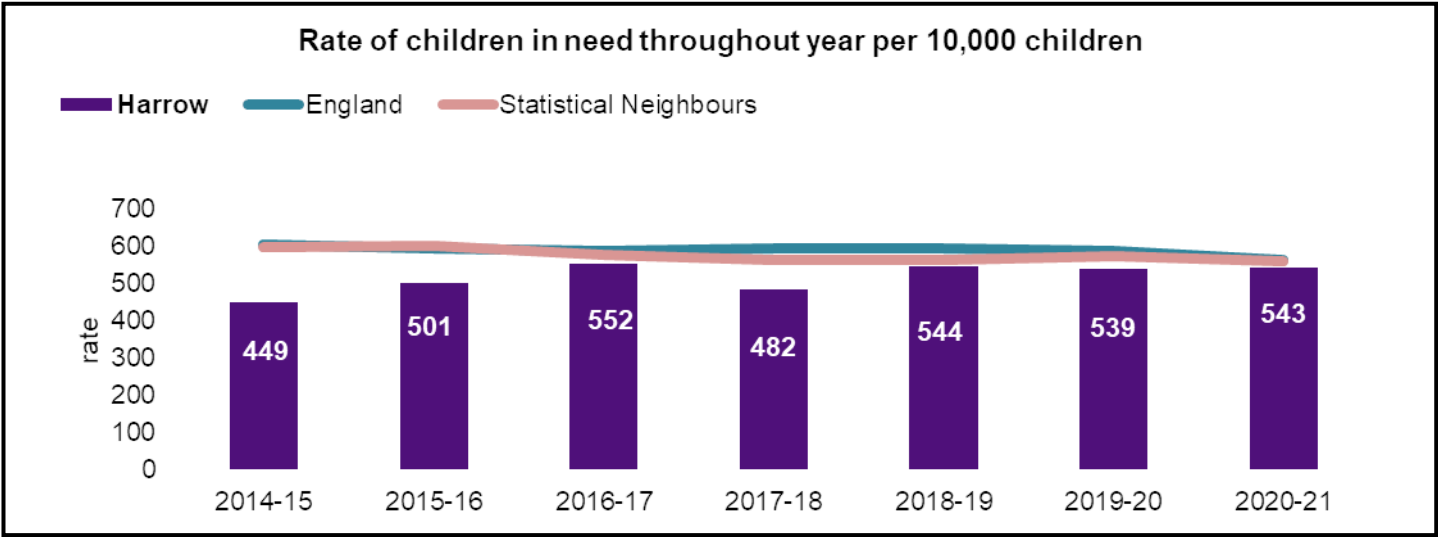
Context

Harrow is home to 59,971 children aged 0-17¹. About 3,388 children needed a service from Social Care at some point between 01/04/2020 and 31/03/2021². This includes children looked after (CLA), those supported in their families or independently, and children who are subject of a child protection plan (CPP). In line with the Children Act, local councils must identify the extent of need in their area and make decisions about the levels of service they provide.

Children in need in Harrow

Rate of Children in Need throughout the year and on 31st March 2021

As seen in the charts below, Harrow's latest position shows a slight increase in the rate of 'children in need' (CiN), Harrow is slightly below statistical neighbours' and England averages.



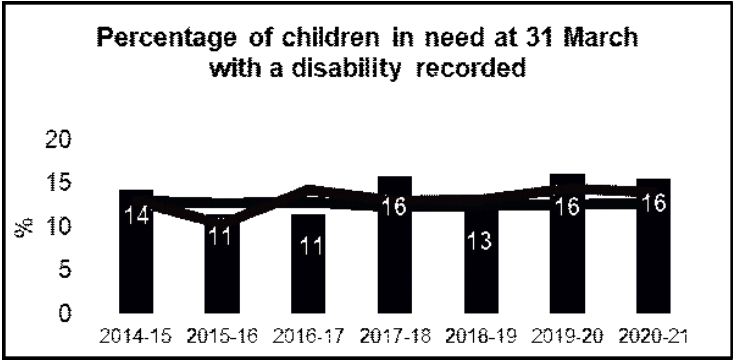
¹ ONS mid-year estimates 2020

² Source: Children in Need (CiN) census

Profile of Children in Need throughout 2020-21

The proportion of males receiving a social work intervention is higher than the proportion of females. This is similar to the national trend. Harrow also has one of the most ethnically diverse populations nationally. Harrow has the fourth highest proportion of residents from minority ethnic groups (ONS 2011 Census). In 2011, 69 per cent of Harrow’s residents were from minority ethnic groups.

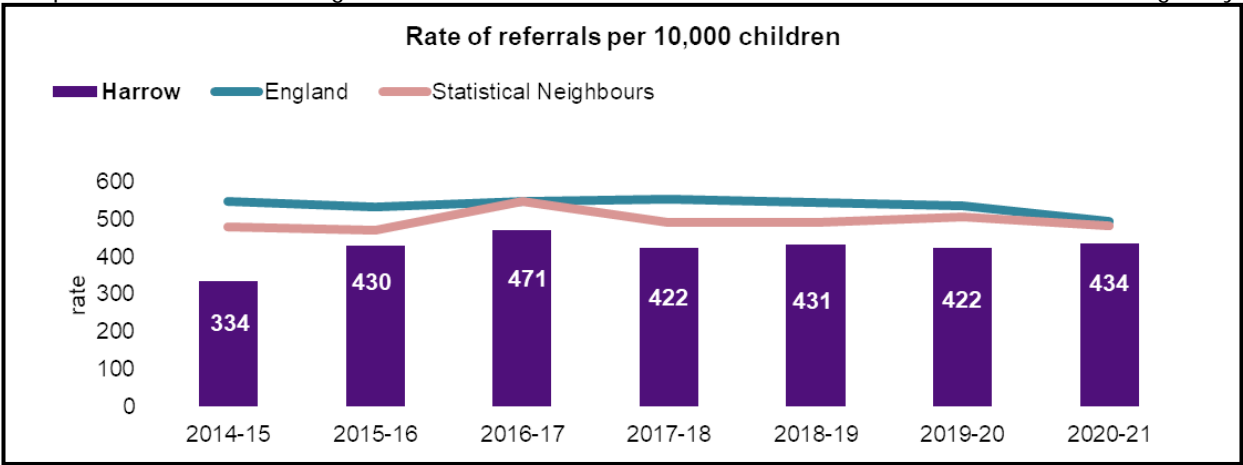
Category of Need	%
Abuse or neglect	46
Child's disability or illness	13
Parent's disability or illness	7
Family in acute stress	12
Family dysfunction	11
Socially unacceptable behaviour	4
Low income	1
Absent parenting	7



The Local Authority had concerns around abuse and neglect for 46% of the children and young people who required a service. 16% of children in need had a disability recorded.

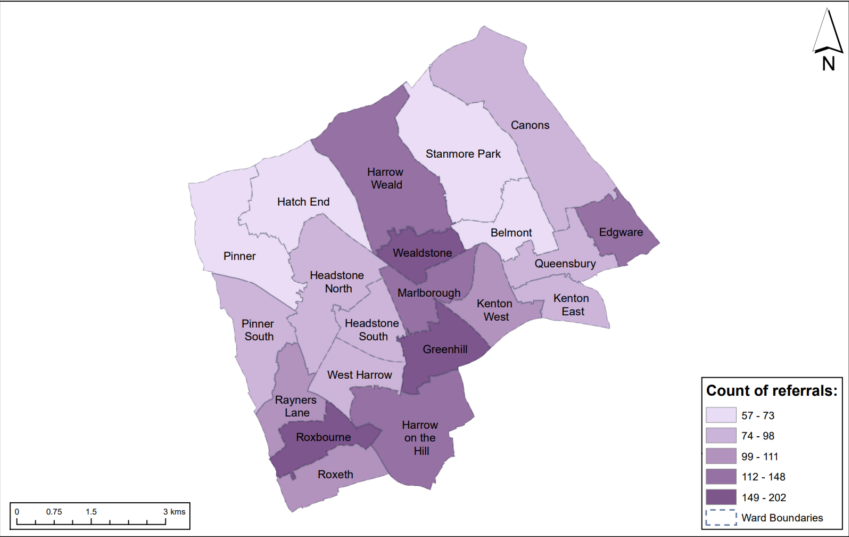
Referrals

The rate of referrals per 10,000 children in Harrow has increased in 2020-21, rates have historically been low compared to national averages. 2,605 referrals were made to children’s social care services during the year.



Source: Children in Need (CiN) census

Social Care referrals during 2020-21 per ward, by client address



Wealdstone, Greenhill & Roxbourne had the highest concentration of referrals

Safeguarding

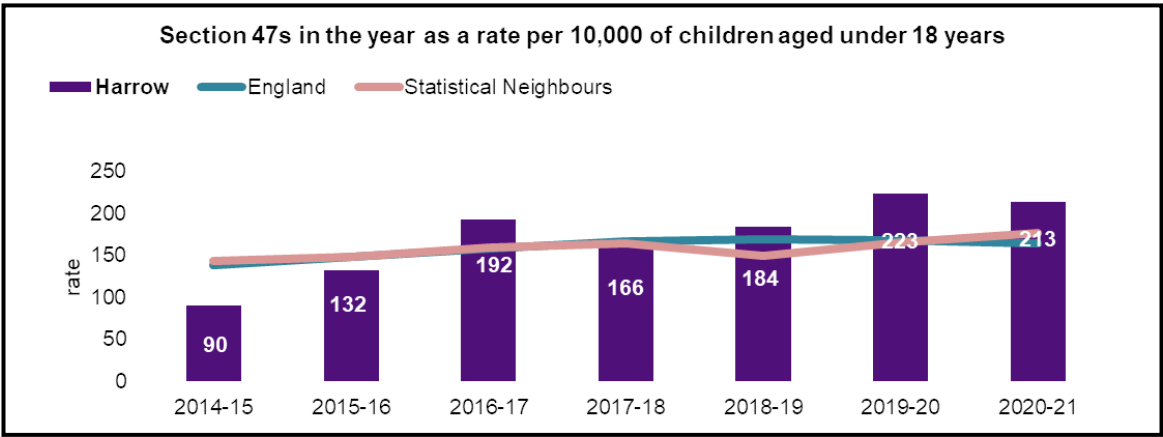
It is the Local Harrow Safeguarding Children Board’s (HSCB) responsibility to ensure effective multi-agency arrangements to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people. ‘Working together to Safeguard Children’ sets out how organizations should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Harrow Children’s Social Care Department has lead responsibility for child protection and has the following responsibilities:

- To assess, plan and provide support to children in need, particularly those suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- Make enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 wherever there is reason to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm.
- Convene and chair child protection conferences under LSCB procedures.
- Ensure that the agencies who are involved with the child co-ordinate their activities to protect the child.
- Convene regular reviews to consider the progress of any child subject to a child protection plan; and
- Instigate legal proceedings where required.

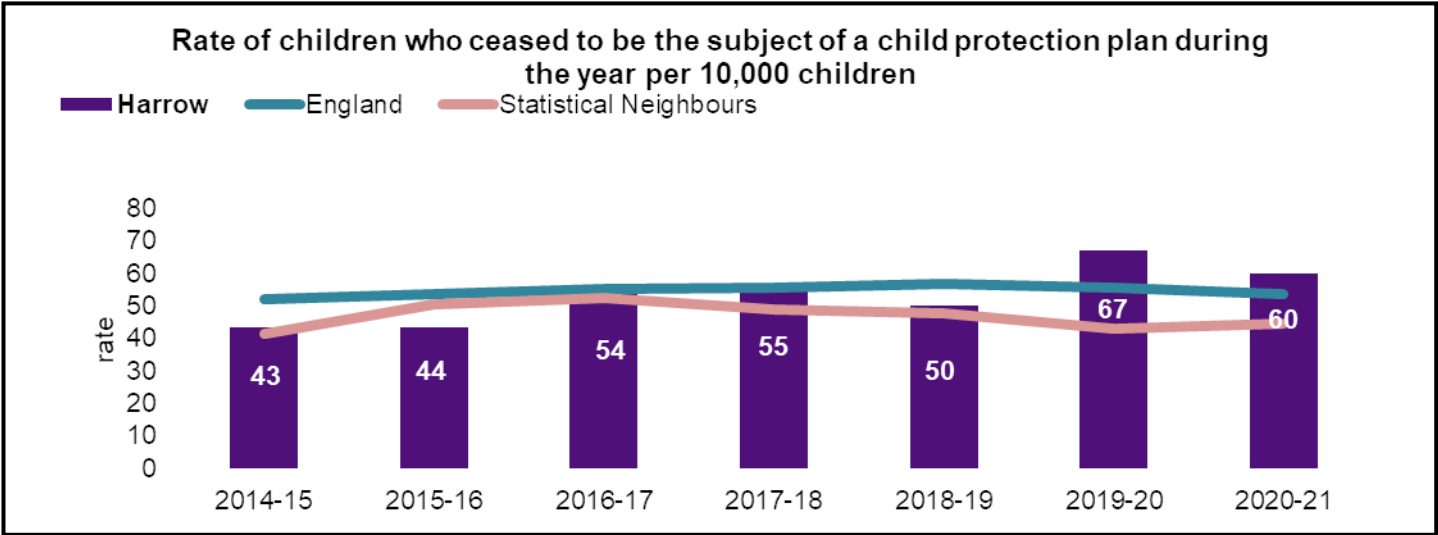
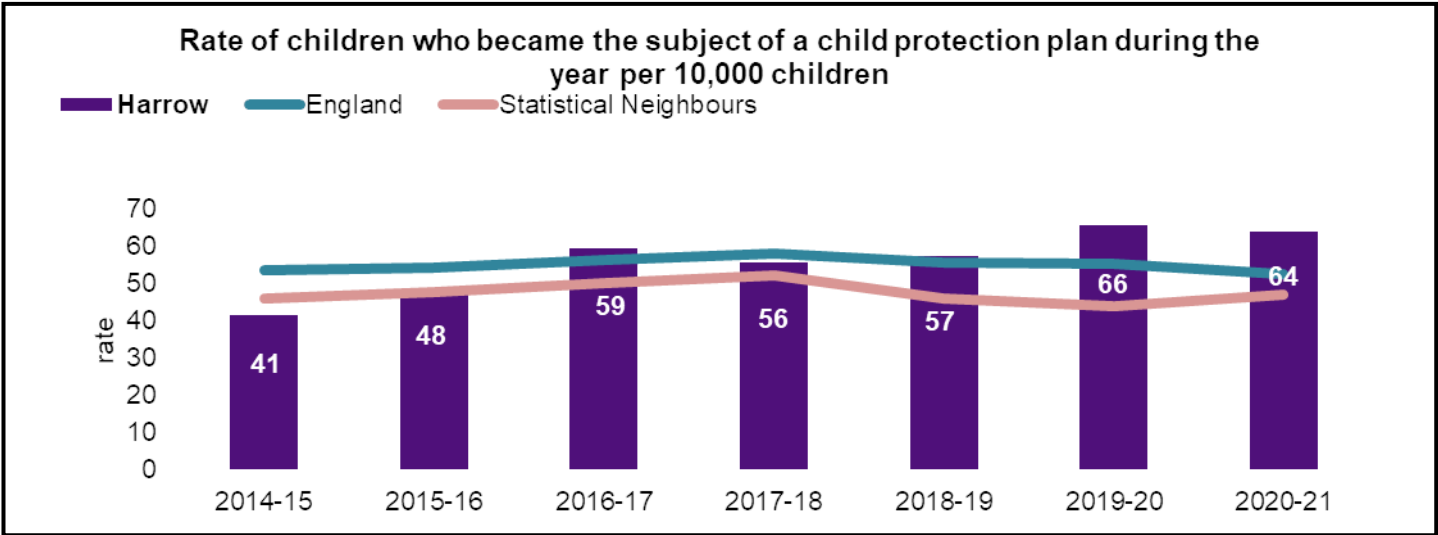
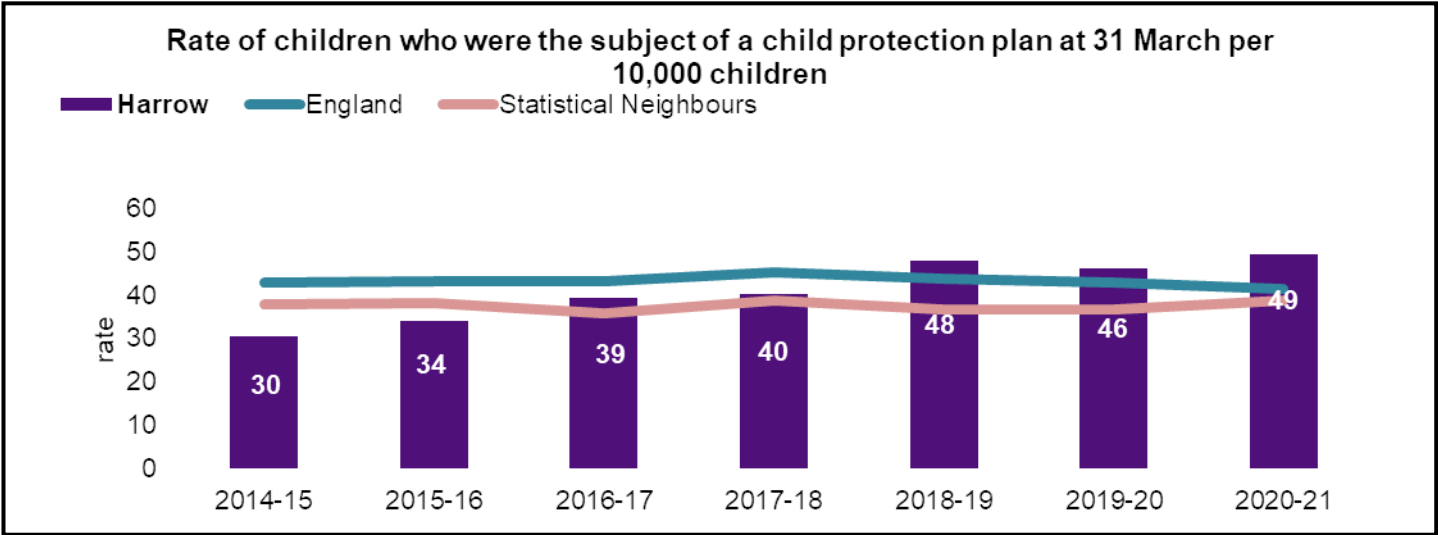
Child protection investigations

The rate of children subject to child protection investigations under S47 of the Children Act has fluctuated. Harrow now has a higher rate of S47 investigations compared to statistical neighbours’ and England averages.



Children with child protection plans

Children are made the subject of a child protection plan (CPP) when they are at risk of physical, sexual, emotional harm or neglect. An Initial Child Protection Conference is convened, and all professionals involved with the child are invited. Parents and children of an appropriate age attend the conference as well, a decision is made at the conference whether a child protection plan is required. 657 children and young people were subject of a Child Protection plan at any point during the year. Harrow’s child protection activity rates are higher compared to statistical neighbours’ and England averages.



Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation is not a new phenomenon. However, a series of high-profile cases have heightened awareness through professional and public agendas this includes the cases in: Derbyshire, Rochdale, Oxfordshire, Rotherham, Manchester and the Midlands. Several strategies have been set up by the various local authorities to manage the growing problems and some have gone as far as setting up a CSE Teams in children social care services / police departments.

Harrow have established an operational team leading on violence, vulnerability, and exploitation (VVE) addressing CSE, Criminal exploitation, county lines etc. Harrow has developed links with the pan London rescue and response (County Lines) service and National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Harrow (and the multi-agency partnership) has adopted the Pan London CSE Operating Protocol (2017 edition).

A Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panel is convened every 4 weeks where Victims, Offenders, Locations, Themes are discussed to share intelligence on CSE in Harrow and contribute to a strategic response. This is an operational meeting where young people and the risks linked to them are discussed. There is a requirement for a multi-agency strategic meeting to share details of emerging themes, review data, interventions, and impact from all the meetings where vulnerable children and young people at high risk, are discussed. It has been agreed that this strategic meeting will convene every six weeks to provide governance over these actions and a link to the VVE strategy.

Once the case has been discussed, the responsibility for the oversight, monitoring and implementation of any plans remains with the professional network working with the young person and in Harrow this often remains with the allocated Social Workers with Children Social Care. In Harrow we also have several services who are completing the on-going work with victims and post abuse support. This varies from Early Help services to Voluntary sector such as the WISH Centre.

Children Who Go Missing

In 2020-21 about 76% of missing episodes were for Children Looked After and 24% were reported missing from home. Data for those missing from home is not collected nationally hence no comparator data is available. These mainly refer to a small number of young people who have several instances of going missing. Robust procedures and multi-agency arrangements are in place to ensure these young people are safeguarded and risks are minimised. Return interviews are undertaken to ensure the young person is listened to and a clear understanding of why they were missing is established and a detailed risk assessment is undertaken.

If there are safeguarding concerns the social worker, local police and other key professionals will hold a strategy meeting and a clear action plan will be developed. This will be reviewed on a weekly basis until the concerns are allayed. If there are concerns regarding sexual exploitation the children will be referred to the MASE Panel for advice and support.