

<b>Item No.</b> 7	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 25/07/07	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Children Looked After - Performance Report, May 2007	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Committee note this report.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Services for Children Looked After are monitored through a series of national performance indicators. Southwark's latest performance against these indicators, together with other relevant activity data, can be seen in the scorecard in Appendix 1. This information is closely monitored and is subject to monthly senior management monitoring meetings.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

### Summary of the May 2007 indicator set (Appendix 1)

3. The main issue flagged up as a cause of concern in the May scorecard is the educational attainment of children looked after. All other indicators are either being exceeded or are broadly on course to be achieved by the year end and are not significant issues of concern.
4. Educational attainment of children looked after at the point of leaving care is red flagged (*Indicators 40 and 41*). This is an area where intensive work has been undertaken over a number of years and good progress is being made, but outcomes remain poor (both locally and nationally). Only 50.5% of children who left care at age 16+ in the last 12 months had one or more GCSE or equivalent compared to 95% in the population as a whole. This is an improvement from 44% in 2005/2006 and exceeds the 2005/2006 Inner London average of 47% but is still below our challenging target of 62.5% and the national target of 75%. Children achieving 5 GCSE grades at A-C was 6.6% compared to a local target of 12% and a national target of 15%. Further improvement is expected given the GCSE results for 2006, which have shown considerable improvement, with 69% of children looked after obtaining a qualification, and this cohort will be leaving care over the coming year. A support programme, including 1:1 tuition, ensuring transport to examination centres is available and training and support for foster carers, is in place and will be enhanced to ensure sustained improvement.

### Other key indicators

5. **The number of looked after children (*Indicator 9*)** at 615 represents a slight increase on April, but is still low compared to previous years and is

consistent with a long term downward trend towards the target level of around 580. This target was set taking into account Southwark's rate per head of population remaining significantly above the average for Inner-London including that for a number of comparable boroughs.

6. **Adoption rates (Indicator 33):** The forecast annual number of adoptions at this stage is 30, which would result in an adoption rate of approximately 6.5% of all children looked after. This would be similar to 2006/2007 performance and the Inner London average, but slightly below the target of 7%. Eight adoptions have been completed in the year to the end of June, including four special guardianship orders. Improvements have also been made in the numbers placed within 12 months of the best interest decision (increasing from 50% last year to 86% in the current cohort). The numbers placed for adoption, which had increased to 29 during June, is still slightly lower than required to achieve excellent future performance in adoption rates. An adoption "Task Force" has been established to examine if there is further potential to increase adoptions towards top quartile rates.
7. Within the looked after population there are comparatively few placed in **residential care** (13% compared to 18% average) which is consistent with the policy of placing children in a family setting wherever possible (*Indicator 26*). There is a high level of usage of in-house **foster care** services which is a strong feature of the local system in terms of both outcomes and value for money.
8. The number of **unaccompanied asylum seeking children** has fallen to 78 compared to 86 at the year end (*Indicator 11*).
9. Around half of children looked after are **placed outside the borough** but only 9.7% are placed more than 20 miles from their home address, which is consistent with the London average (*Indicators 19 and 20*).
10. **Stability of placements for children looked after:** the two indicators covering this show good performance (*Indicators 16 and 17*).
11. **Children looked after who communicated their views to their statutory review (Indicator 35):** Latest performance is 91.5%, just below target of 92%, but confirming the performance improvement in this area achieved in 2006/2007 is being consolidated.
12. **Timeliness of reviews for children looked after (Indicator 36):** end of year performance at 94.3% was strong. In-year data is not yet available but system improvements are expected to rectify this later this year.
13. **Employment, Education and Training status of Care (Indicator 39):** Provisional performance for 2006/2007 was good at 1.03 (although a decline on 2005/2006 when Southwark was the highest nationally). This value shows that more 19 year old Care Leavers were in employment, education or training than the overall population in this age group. In year data is not yet available for this indicator.
14. **Health of Children Looked After (Indicator 47):** The target of 85% on health and dental checks of children looked after was achieved in 2006/2007. Current performance is recorded as 69.7% but the indicator is

assessed in October and a high level of activity is planned between then and now.

15. **Final warnings and convictions of children looked after (Indicator 48):** performance improved in 2006/2007 but remains slightly above target and the Inner London average.
16. **Children looked after who missed 25+ school days in the last 12 months (Indicator 49):** at 9.7% performance is strong in comparison to the Inner London average of 12%.

### Policy implications

17. This decision has been judged to have no policy implications.

### Community Impact Statement

18. This decision has been judged to have no or a very little impact on local people and communities.

### Resource implications

19. This decision has no resource implications.

### Consultation

20. No consultation has been undertaken on this report.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Every Child Matters Performance Reports	Performance, Planning and Quality	Adrian Ward 020 7525 3720

### APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Children Looked After Performance Scorecard May 2007

### AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Romi Bowen, Strategic Director of Children's Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Adrian Ward, Performance, Planning and Quality Manager	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	17/07/07	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Director of Legal and Democratic Services	No	No
Director of Finance	No	No

<b>Executive Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team</b>		17/07/07