

<b>Item No 8</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> September 10 2007	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Ethnicity of Children Looked After (CLA)	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee receives the document "Children Looked After: Ethnicity Report", attached at Appendix 1.
2. The Committee considers possible causes for inequalities in the CLA population that can inform further investigation, practice and policy change if required.
3. The Committee decides what further reports, analysing the CLA population, are required, to enable the Committee to track trends.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. The Corporate Parenting Committee, at their meeting held on 25 July 2007, requested information on the ethnicity of the CLA population. The report attached at Appendix 1 contains an analysis of this group as at 3 August 2007.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. It is important to note that caution should be exercised in interpreting the information in the Appendix. As the numbers of children in some ethnic groups are small, it is advisable to be tentative about any generalising about certain groups. It is not uncommon that a single, large sibling group can have a substantial impact on small ethnic groupings.
6. There are 587 children looked after by Southwark (at 3 August 2007) representing between 1 and 2% of the child population. Nearly two-thirds of CLA are aged between 11 and 18 years.
7. There are noticeable differences in the proportions of children from some ethnic groups when the CLA population is compared to the school population. In particular, black African children make up a smaller proportion of the CLA population than they do of the school population, whereas this trend is reversed for white British children. However, it is notable that the percentage of black African children in the 11 to 18 year group is substantial: the unaccompanied minors group are included in the CLA population and many of these children and young people are from Africa and fall into the 15 to 18 age group.
8. There is a marked gender difference in the CLA population. Boys are looked after far more often than girls. However, this gender difference is not consistent between ethnic groups. There is a 'bulge' in the gender split between the ages of

6 to 10 when boys form an even larger proportion of the CLA population.

9. There are also differences between ethnic groups in the reasons children become looked after. Black African children tend to become looked after far less often because they are abused or neglected than white British or black Caribbean children.
10. There are also differences in the average distance between home and placement of CLA by ethnicity. White British children tend to be placed further from their home on average than black African or black Caribbean children.

### **Policy implications**

11. The Committee, elsewhere on this agenda, has considered a report on the legal framework and duties of the local authority and Members in respect of CLA and the corporate parenting role. Analysis of the CLA population, such as that at Appendix 1, provides Members with the information they require to assist in their role in challenging the implementation of the policies of the Department, Council and partners.
12. The work undertaken on the analysis of the CLA population by ethnicity has provided a starting point for further areas of investigation, for example, on the age that children enter care or educational outcomes. The Committee is asked to consider what further work, if any, they would like undertaken and, if agreed, the frequency they wish to receive such reports. They may wish to link such work to the priorities established in the Children and Young People's Plan.

### **Community Impact Statement**

13. The findings set out in Appendix 1 show that there are differences between ethnic groups in the CLA population in the reasons for and frequency of them being taken into care. There are also potential differences of their experience of being in care, for example the distance between home and placement. Whether these differences are significant, and the reasons for these, are beyond the scope of the current report.

### **Consultation**

14. No consultation has taken place in respect of this report.

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
DCSF "Referrals, Assessments and Children and Young People who are the subject of Child Protection Plans (on the Child Protection Register), England - Year ending 31 March 2007"	John Smith House 144-152 Walworth Road London SE17	James Brown 020 7525 5090

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Children Looked After: Ethnicity Report

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Assistant Director Children's Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	James Brown and Chris Saunders	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	30/08/07	
<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>	31/08/07	