

Item No: 12	Classification: Open	Date: January 31 2008	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Report back from the joint meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee and Speakerbox	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the issues raised at the joint meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee and Speakerbox on 25th October and the action plan agreed as set out in appendix 1.
2. To note that the next meeting between Speakerbox and the CPC will be scheduled for week commencing the 7th April 2008

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Speaker Box is a supported group of children in Southwark's care who provide a forum for enhancing communication, consultation and service development activity.
4. It was agreed as part of Southwark's Children Looked After (CLA) participation policy that meetings of the Corporate Parenting Committee and Speakerbox would be held twice a year at a venue appropriate for young people.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The main issues raised during the meeting in October were:
 - Access to recreation facilities in Southwark;
 - Enhancements to health advice and consultations;
 - Delivery of exit interview process for CLA at 18 years;
 - Clarification of support options available for attending university.

Policy implications

6. The Corporate Parenting Committee has approved a participation strategy for children in Southwark's care. Bi-annual meetings and agreed action plans between the committee and Speakerbox are a major component.
7. Southwark's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) has identified children's participation as a key service development area.

Community Impact Statement

8. Making a positive contribution is one of the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes. Speakerbox provides an opportunity for empowerment and involvement of children looked after.

Resource implications

9. Several recommendations contained within the action plan have resource implications. It is envisaged that service enhancements will be achieved through improved partnership processes within the Council and with key partners to prioritise children in care.

Consultation

10. Speakerbox provides invaluable feedback from children looked after about current services and how they can be improved for the future.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Legal and Democratic Services

10. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Finance Director

11. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Corporate Parenting Committee Meeting with Speakerbox 25 th October 2007 2 – 4 pm Cator Street

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Romi Bowen, Strategic Director for Childrens Services	
Report Author	Chris Saunders, Head of Children Looked After Services	
Version	Final	
Dated	January 22 2008	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Yes	Yes
Director of Finance	Yes	Yes
Executive Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team	January 22 2008	

Appendix 1

Corporate Parenting Committee Meeting with Speakerbox 25th October 2007 2 – 4 pm Cator Street

Four main issues raised:

- Health Issues - Free phone service, LAC nurse monthly surgery, access to leisure centres
- Care Leavers Exit Interviews “Tell it how it was”
- Education – further education funding
- Access to Free Leisure Activities –via Southwark providers

Issue	Action	Responsibility
<p>Health</p> <p>The advice line for young people to call if they do not want to go in person to speak to the LAC nurse is not free. If young people have no money, or no phone credit they cannot use the service.</p> <p>Speakerbox would like to request that a free phone number is set up for them to call.</p> <p>It was noted that nurses will phone back if young people ring them and request this – keeping costs down to a minimum for young people.</p>	<p>The processes and feasibility of setting up this will be undertaken and free phone/text number included in new leaflet for CLA advocating awareness and access to Nurse specialists. Leaflet to be printed with new number by March 08</p>	<p>Chris Saunders</p>
<p>The location of the monthly surgeries was raised as an issue. Speakerbox said young people would prefer more anonymous locations such as at Peckham Pulse.</p> <p>It was noted that nurses will come out and visit young people where requested.</p>	<p>It was agreed that this is a good idea.</p> <p>Speakerbox magazine to consult young people on the possibility of surgeries at Peckham Pulse or other locations.</p> <p>Recognised many young people routinely attend Bradenham consultation to include views upon newly established health room (Oct 07) at Bradenham which is secure and private.</p>	<p>Chris Saunders to oversee the feasibility of finding a room at Peckham Pulse, following consultation.</p> <p>Speakerbox Magazine to be distributed.</p>
<p>Young people would like free access to the facilities at leisure centres and other Fusion facilities-so they can exercise more frequently.</p> <p>Barriers identified: A gym induction is often needed to use the facilities. Young men would like to use the weights most, which is not recommended for certain ages.</p>	<p>This was seen as a positive step. Work will be done to establish whether there is a specific time, say once a week, that will be set aside for young people to use the gym for free. Contract commissioners advised of need to support CLA who are now in negotiations with Fusion for a requested 150 free access cards.</p>	<p>Cllr Pidgeon will oversee how to take this forward, with Rory Patterson. Plan to implement new scheme from April 08.</p>

EXIT INTERVIEWS		
<p>Speakerbox proposed that exit interviews are carried out by recent care leavers as young people will feel more comfortable with this. The programme will be called "Tell it how it was". The initial part of this process would be in a questionnaire form. Once this had been completed care leavers would be invited to have a Tell it How it Was interview.</p> <p>This would have the chance to praise placements as well as raise issues.</p>	<p>The questionnaire details were discussed. Approved the principle behind Tell it How it Was.</p> <p>Develop questionnaires Train YP in interview and recording processes.</p>	<p>Agreed that key services would be consulted as to how this might work across the whole system and encourage carers to see the process as a drive to improve outcomes.</p>
<p>Speakerbox raised the issue that often young people feel that they cannot raise issues or complaints when they are in a placement for fear of "rocking the boat".</p> <p>Need to look at addressing this issue.</p> <p>Exit interview should cover more than just their last placement. Feedback is needed from all their placements in order for information to be useful.</p>	<p>It was agreed that this is an important issue. Progress on how this will be addressed will be raised at the next meeting.</p> <p>Introduce programme of Speakerbox visiting all CLA teams to discuss this proposal.</p>	<p>Report back progress in March 08</p>
EDUCATION		
<p>Speakerbox raised the issue that a lot of LAC in other authorities get a great deal of funding for them to pursue higher education/go to university.</p> <p>It was noted that the break down of the budget for LAC is giving different priorities to those in other authorities. While Southwark don't provide a similar priority for funding further education as some authorities, they put greater funding into other areas.</p>	<p>A clearer policy will be drawn up explaining and identifying current priorities around further education and housing support.</p> <p>Development of specific leaflet describing housing supports and benefits post 18.</p> <p>If it was felt that this was something the Speakerbox would like to see as a priority then the budget as a whole would have to be looked at. Options will have to be considered.</p>	<p>New leaflet printed by Feb 08.</p> <p>Senior managers to meet with Speakerbox to discuss current provision in detail and discuss what additional options would provide the most assistance.</p> <p>Meeting scheduled for Feb 08.</p>