

Item No. 12	Classification: Open	Date: June 18 2008	Meeting Name Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Speakerbox Update	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Corporate Parenting Committee notes the progress of the Speakerbox action plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Corporate Parenting Committee has undertaken to meet with Speakerbox on a bi-annual basis to develop an ongoing dialogue to shape and review service delivery for Looked-After children.
3. The inaugural meeting in October 2007 was externally facilitated and developed a joint action plan.
4. To support this process, the Head of CLA Services (and Senior CLA Service Managers) would meet on a termly basis to assist action plan implementation.
5. The main components of the action were:
 1. Delivery of programme to routinely seek feedback from young people leaving care to inform service delivery and appraisal – “tell it as it was”
 2. Review and clarification of Southwark’s policy to support care leavers attending university.
 3. Delivery of free access to Southwark’s leisure facilities.
 4. Improving direct access to specialist nurses to improve health outcomes.
6. The second scheduled meeting took place on 10 April to provide updated information with regards to the action plan and to receive a presentation concerning the implementation of “tell it as it was”.
7. This meeting was also attended by the Lead JAR inspector for children in care.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. The action plan has been amended and updated following the meeting on 10 April and is presented as Appendix 1.
9. Speakerbox have undertaken the planned consultation process concerning the “tell it how it was” initiative with key teams in CLA services to shape the proposal and raise awareness/commitment.
10. Speakerbox undertook some research process with other local authorities to establish what services could be provided for care leavers attending university. These were discussed with CLA managers and presented as a revised strategy to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

11. Budgets have been identified to support the revised university strategy from April 2008 and Speakerbox have been involved in agreeing the contents of the leaflet.
12. The suggestions made by Speakerbox concerning how the CLA nurses can be contacted by text to a single (well publicised) phone have been implemented enabling young people to communicate at virtually no cost and determine the time and venue of meeting/conversations with the designated nurse.
13. Negotiations with Fusion have identified free places available to Looked-After children and care leavers from 13-19 years of age (Lifestyle membership).
14. Speakerbox have been involved in developing the leisure leaflet title and imagery for the leaflet which will launch the scheme.
15. Negotiations with Fusion are being undertaken to confirm that free swimming at Southwark's leisure facilities will also be available for younger children and their foster families.
16. The University and "tell it as it was" policies were approved by the March Corporate Parenting Committee.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

17. There are regular meetings between Speakerbox and the Corporate Parenting Committee linked with the overall Corporate Parenting and CLA Participation Policies.

COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT

18. The role of corporate parenting requires all agencies working with Southwark children to assume responsibility for parenting Looked-After children who are recognised as being amongst the most vulnerable. Whilst over 55% of Looked-After children are placed outside of the Southwark boundary, nearly all of them return to live in Southwark post-18. Effective corporate parenting will result in care leavers being able to make a positive contribution as they return to the community in adult life.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

19. The work of Speakerbox is supported through the work of Southwark's Children's Rights Officer. Children's Specialist Services have also identified funding for a part-time Speakerbox representative to work alongside the Children's Rights Officer and facilitate the work of Speakerbox.

CONSULTATION

20. The Speakerbox/Corporate Parenting Committee initiative is targeted to enable young people in Southwark's care to inform service development and service review.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services

21. There are no legal implications contained within this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Minutes of meetings with Speakerbox	Mabel Goldwyn House	Rory Patterson 020 7525 3846
Minutes of Corporate Parenting Committee	Mabel Goldwyn House	Rory Patterson 020 7525 3846

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Speaker Box Action Plan

Audit Trail

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services and Safeguarding.		
Report Author	Chris Saunders Head of CLA Services		
Version	Final		
Dated	June 9 2008		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER			
	Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
	Director of Legal and Democratic Services	No	No
	Director of Finance	No	No
	Executive Member	Yes	Yes
	Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team		June 9 2008