

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: September 4 2008	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Children Looked After: Performance Report June 08	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATION

1. To note Southwark's performance against Children Looked After national and local indicators.
2. That the Committee agree to continually monitor the long term stability of placements for children looked after (paragraph 10).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Services for Children Looked After (CLA) are monitored through a series of national and local 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 monitored on a monthly basis at senior management meetings. Summary information is monitored by the Young Southwark Executive.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. Overall the data set for Southwark's Children Looked After as at June 2008 is continuing to show the strong performance achieved in 2007/08. Key points to note include:
 - The downward trend continues in the number of children looked after, now at 568 - bringing rates more into line with the comparator average
 - The strong 2007/08 performance in adoptions and special guardianship orders (SGOs) is being maintained, with 14 adoptions in Quarter 1
 - Educational attainment levels of children upon leaving care are showing further improvements with 64% with one or more GCSE
 - Short term stability of children looked after has improved over the quarter (down to 9.3% with 3 or more moves in 12 months) but the Long Term Stability indicator has shown some decline and is a key area for improvement

SUMMARY OF THE JUNE 2008 INDICATOR SET (APPENDIX 1)

5. The number of Children Looked After (CLA) increased slightly at the end of June to 568, a slight increase on the record low in May of 559. This is a rate of 104.6 per 10,000 under 18 population in June, exceeding the 07/08 target rate of 105, and on track to meet the 08/09 target of 101 rate (~550 CLA). (Indicators 9 & 17)
6. Adoption rates – strong year end performance with 44 adoptions in 2007/08 (including 11 SGOs). This equates to a rate of 10.1% which exceeds our CYPP target of 7% and is above the Statistical Neighbour average of 7.3% in 06/07. There have been 14 adoptions (inc. 4 SGOs) between April and June.

7. The numbers in **residential care** increased slightly in June to 88, up 2 from May, but remains lower than the 94 in April. This is 15.5% of CLA in residential accommodation. (Indicator 1 and 28). Numbers in foster care increased in March to 431, dropped in Apr to 411 and have increased in June to 422. (Indicator 2). There are 11 CLA living with their parents in June. (Indicator 6)
8. **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children** – 86 at March 07, fell to 59 at March 08. Continued to fall to 55 in June (Indicator 11)
9. **Short term stability of placements for children looked after:** The short term measure of looked after children with 3 or more placement moves in the last 12 months has improved to 9.3% in June. 12.2% at the end of March, in line with CYPP target (12%) and our Statistical neighbours (12%). (Indicator 18, National Indicator 62)
10. **Long term stability of placements for children looked after:** The longer term measure of CLA under 16 who have been looked after for 2.5yrs & been living in the same placement for 2+yrs, or placed for adoption increased to 70.2% in March. Meeting our 70% local target. However National Indicator 63 is similar to the old PAF D78 indicator, but their adoptive placement together with their previous placement together now count towards the 2 years and with the new tougher definition, June performance has reduced to 63.7%. (Indicator 19)
11. **% of CLA aged 10 – 15 in foster placements or placed for adoption** remains around 84%, a slight decrease from 85.7% at the end of March, but this is still a good improvement on 2006/07, which was 79.8% (Indicator 32).
12. Percentage of **CLA who communicated their views to a statutory review** increased in March to 94.7%, exceeding our CYPP target of 92%. Remains around 95% in June (Indicator 37).
13. **Qualifications of children leaving care with at least 1 GCSE A*-G** was 57.1% at the end of the year, an increase on the 47% of 06/07, but below CYPP target of 62.5%, and a fall from what it had been during the year. In May this increased strongly to 64.3%, falling slightly to 63.9% in June (Indicator 44). **CLA leaving care achieved 5+ GCSE's A-C** has increased to 12%, compared to 6.6% the previous year. (Indicator 46)
14. **Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training (EET)** – As at end of March, 67.5% of care leavers were in EET, which is an improvement on 64.4% last year (National Indicator 148). However, this is below the (improved) Southwark population of the same age group in EET (76%). This equates to a ratio of 0.89, which is below target of 1.0. Currently at 68% in June. The new NI 158 looks only at the % in EET, not as a ratio against the local population in EET (Indicator 42 and 41)
15. **83.4 % of CLA had a plan for permanency** recorded on CareFirst in March – now 85.1% in June. There are 76 CLA who have been looked after for 4+ months & should have a plan. (Indicator 39)
16. **88.4% of CLA with a Personal Education Plan (PEP)** in March - now 88.2% in June. In total 43 looked after children (CLA for 28+days, who are of statutory school age) without a PEP in place in June. (Indicator 40)
17. **Ethnicity of children looked after:** The ethnic composition of children looked after remains fairly stable, with over representation of mixed race children and under representation of white children compared to population data being the chief features (Indicator 51).

18. Following the June meeting of the Corporate Parenting, it was agreed that additional information on adoptions of black African children would be provided.
19. The British population of Black African families is 1% of the total. Southwark is in competition with all boroughs and local authorities throughout England for a very scarce commodity - Black adopters. We therefore use specialised private adoption agencies who concentrate solely on Black adopters.
20. Of those children with an African heritage who have been considered for adoption in the last 18 months, (10 in total) 6 are of mixed heritage with at least one parent with an African heritage. These parents come from a number of different countries with different ethnic and cultural and religious backgrounds.
21. 3 of the ten children have been formally placed with adopters (two together in a kinship placement) two others are placed together with a foster carer who wants to adopt them (she has already been matched with one; both children are still subject to court proceedings). This leaves 5 others who have plans for adoption but they are all still in court proceedings so active family finding cannot begin.
22. This fairly represents the small number of African children who need an adoption plan and the increased likelihood of this being necessary if they come from a mixed heritage.
23. Southwark always welcome applications from African prospective adopters, even if we cannot match them ourselves we are happy to arrange "inter agency placements". We are aware that many people in the various African communities in Southwark are not aware of our need for African adopters and particularly West Africans (especially Nigeria and Ghana) still go to their home country to adopt and have to go through inter country adoption procedures. Our recruitment strategy has a target to continue to inform Southwark's diverse population of the needs of children with an adoption plan.
24. Southwark's experience from the tracking of young children in proceedings is that families of young black children - from all backgrounds, are often prepared to come forward for SGOs so that children who cannot remain with their birth parents do not need to go to "stranger adoptions".
25. Where necessary, the authority has made cross cultural placements of African heritage children with other black or mixed heritage families. These arrangements are overseen by the independent Southwark adoption panel, the courts, the independent court appointed guardian and the host family's legal representatives.

Legal Status	Ethnicity	Total	
Interim Care Order	Asian - Bangladeshi	1	1.37%
	Black African	21	28.77%
	Black Caribbean	11	15.07%
	Black Other	11	15.07%
	Other	4	5.48%
	Other Mixed	3	4.11%
	White - Other	5	6.85%
	White & Black African	4	5.48%
	White & Black Caribbean	5	6.85%
	White British	8	10.96%
Interim Care Order Total		73	
Placement Order granted	Black African	2	9.52%

(adoption)			
	Black Caribbean	3	14.29 %
	Black Other	4	19.05 %
	White - Other	1	4.76%
	White & Black African	1	4.76%
	White & Black Caribbean	3	14.29 %
	White British	7	33.33 %
Placement Order granted (adoption) Total		21	

26. Health of CLA (dental & annual health checks) increased to 89% for 07/08, exceeding our CYPP target of 87%. 86% in June. (Indicator 52)

27. 14.5% of CLA missed 25+ days of school in the last 12 months in 07/08, above our target of 10% and the 06/07 return of 8.3%. 14.2% in June (Indicator 54)

Note: Statistical Neighbours (SN) – Southwark’s SNs are Hackney, Lambeth, Haringey, Islington, Lewisham, Hammersmith and Fulham, Greenwich, Waltham Forest, Camden and Newham.

Policy implications

28. There are no policy implications.

Community Impact Statement

29. The performance report has been judged to have no or a very small impact on local people and communities. Clearly the quality of these services has a big impact on children looked after from all communities. The ethnicity breakdown of the children looked after population is shown in appendix 1.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Legal and Democratic Services

30. Not applicable.

Finance Director

31. Not applicable.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Every Child Matters Performance Reports	Performance Team	Maria Greenaway 0207 525 2225

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Children Looked After Performance Scorecard June 08

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson	
Report Author	Maria Greenaway / Adrian Ward	
Version	Final	
Dated	August 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/No
Director of Finance	No	Yes/No
Executive Member	Yes	Yes/No
Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team	August 22 2008	