

<b>Item No:</b> 6	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> November 19 2008	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Children Looked After: 2007/2008 Academic Year GCSE Results	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Assistant Director of Specialist Children's Services & Safeguarding	

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. To note improvements in supporting, recording and tracking arrangements for looked-after children in year 11.
2. To note GCSE results for Southwark looked-after children.
3. To note the celebration and award ceremony held Thursday the 30<sup>th</sup> of October.
4. To note the proposed change in practice concerning the use of grade appeals.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

5. Each year (1<sup>st</sup> of November) all local authorities are required to report to the DCSF concerning performance of looked-after children at all key stages and GCSE achievement. This performance measurement (OC2) is a position statement relating to all children who have been in care for a year or more as at 30<sup>th</sup> September and also includes information concerning inclusion, attendance, special educational needs and health.
6. Following a review undertaken by the virtual head teacher for CLA to consider the most effective way to collect end of year attendance and SATs results, Southwark has commissioned "Welfare Call" to collect all CLA education data between July and October 2008. Welfare Call provide this service for 63 other children's services departments as well as providing daily and weekly reports with regards to young people not attending school. This contract is assisting children's specialist Southwark services to reduce the number of children missing 25 days or more education by specifically tracking every child in years' 10 and 11.
7. During the last 12 months, children's specialist services undertook a review as to how it could track all young people in year 11 concerning their GCSE selections, ongoing support needs and exam attendance. Utilizing CareFirst (client database) a member of the CLA education project was able to maintain an overview and bring any concerns relating to school progress or attendance immediately to senior management in the Adolescent and Aftercare service.
8. This tracking report and lead education advisor enabled CLA services to more accurately predict our performance in 2008.
9. Following the re-launch of the celebration and award ceremony at Glaziers Hall

in October 2007, further changes were introduced for October 2008 which involved more participation by young people in planning and delivery. Whilst this event formally recognizes the GCSE achievements of young people in year 11, it was broadened to include other contributions and achievements. With full involvement of SpeakerBox this year's awards ceremony was again scheduled for Glaziers Hall for the evening of Thursday the 30<sup>th</sup> of October.

10. The collection of the GCSE results in August 2008 was led by a member of the CLA education support team. Using established relationships with Southwark's academies she was able to collect all the results for Southwark's looked after children attending Southwark Secondary Schools on a day results were published.
11. During the following 4 weeks she was able to contact a range of secondary schools in other education authorities to obtain specific results for our year 11 cohort. Whilst this is quite labour intensive for this named officer during a one month period, it has produced far more accurate and speedy results than in previous years. This enabled us to produce an interim report for the Corporate Parenting Committee on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September less than a fortnight after the results were published.
12. Alongside GCSEs, GNVQs and other vocational courses, year 11 pupils are also able to undertake a range of Level 1 courses which enable young people who find academic studies more difficult to obtain basic level achievements in core subjects. These core qualifications are recognized as being equivalent to a grade D-G GCSE. A significant number of Southwark's looked after children year 11 group undertook Level 1 courses which in some cases has increased the number of A-G grades achieved. These results have to be specifically requested and collated into the overall performance for looked after children. These results were not available at the point the interim report was placed before the Corporate Parenting Committee on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September. The Level 1 qualification was only introduced and recognized as a D-G grade in GCSE from September 2007. Southwark children's services did not integrate these into our GCSE performance for the 2006/07 Academic Year. This is therefore, the first year that Southwark have included these qualifications in our formal return (due 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2008).
13. From our communication with other local authorities it would appear that whilst a good proportion of authorities included this in last year's return many (like Southwark) will begin doing this from November 2008.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Performance**

14. The chart below outlines Southwark's GCSE performance for the 2007/08 Academic Year which will be reported as part of the DCSF OC2 report in November 2008:

## GCSE & EQUIVALENTS 2008

OC2 DATA DEFINITIONS	2005/06	%	2006/07	%	2007/08	%
Number in cohort	57		59		61	
Number who sat at least 1 examination	39	68.42%	41	69.49%	43	70.49%
Number who obtained at least 1 GCSE A*-G	38	66.67%	37	62.71%	42	68.85%
Number who obtained at least 5 GCSE A*-G	22	38.60%	19	32.20%	31	50.81%
Number who obtained at least 5 GCSE A*-C	9	15.79%	8	13.56%	12	19.67%

15. Southwark's return will indicate that there has been an overall increase in GCSE performance across all 4 performance indicators relating to GCSEs. Whilst the improvement is due in part to the inclusion of Level 1 qualifications, it should be recognized that the efforts to maximize the range of exam and certificate opportunities for looked after children at all levels are now being counted in the statistical return.
16. In April 2009 the DCSF will publish comparative data which enable Southwark to benchmark our performance against similar authorities.

### Children who did not sit GCSEs or equivalent

17. The chart listed below indicates the presenting issues of young people who did not sit exams at Level 1 or above. As already mentioned in this report there is a designated education advisor who has worked with CLA Management to identify and track all young people who are not pursuing GCSE coursework and needed targeted interventions to get them back on track or to pursue alternative qualifications. This strategy has delivered improved results given the numbers who have achieved the Level 1 qualification.
18. In addition the Virtual Head has taken the opportunity to review some of these cases to determine whether any additional activity could have been undertaken

to secure qualifications.

19. This year, there were 19 who did not achieve any qualification at Level 1 or above.

Year 11 Pupils not achieving Level One or above

Reason	Number
Entry level certificates only (including teenage mother)	3
In secure (Y.O.I.) previous school refuser	1
Significant learning difficulties (basic grade entry / credits)	3
Permanent exclusions: attending SILS4 / and home tuition stiff refusing work / poor attendance – pregnancy / see below)	7
Employed	1
Age assessment issues: believed to be much older and not attending school	2
Did not attend exam	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>

20. Below is an example that the Education Advisor and Virtual Head have identified to describe to the Corporate Parenting Committee the sort of issues some of the young people are experiencing which often result in significant disruption or absence of meaningful education provision. It also provides an insight into the amount of support activity being provided on a case by case basis.

**Case Study – Ms M. Year 11**

21. Until December 2006 M attended Sittingbourne Community College. She is a bright and academically able student; however, the school was becoming very concerned with M's behaviour both in and out of school. She was abusive to teachers and getting herself into minor trouble on the streets. She received several temporary exclusions. These behaviours coincided with problems she was experiencing within the placement. M had lived with her maternal aunt for over 3 years. When this placement broke down she was placed with foster carers in Dartford. This placement broke down quite quickly and M was subsequently placed with a carer in Peckham.
22. M began Walworth School on the 17th April 2007 but was temporarily excluded on the 23rd April 2007 for smoking on school premises. Several meetings were held at the school during this time and a lot of support put in place including mentors, 'time out' cards and catch –up sessions to enable M to access the curriculum. The school, LAC education advisor and social worker were in constant communication with the school to monitor M's progress.
23. M was unable to abide by the school rules and openly flouted them in front of other pupils. She continued to smoke; she left the premises without permission and wore inappropriate uniform including studs in her eyebrow. She was temporarily excluded on several occasions. The school did not feel that they could keep M safe at school and she was at risk of permanent exclusion.
24. It was agreed that M would attend Porlock Hall part time whilst still remaining on the roll of Walworth in the hopes of slowly reintegrating M into a full time school place. Unfortunately M only attended the first day. At the review meeting at

school held on the 14th May 2007 it was agreed for M to be given another chance and arrangements were put in place for her to attend the PEEP project - a 5 week motivational training course. Her school placement would be reviewed following a report and recommendation from PEEP and a fresh start made in year 11.

25. A referral was made to a specialist support worker who worked with disengaged pupils to encourage/motivate M to attend school. She worked closely with M, sometimes accompanying her to the project. M completed the programme and was very pleased and excited about this. The foster carer subsequently managed to arrange for M to undertake work experience for two weeks at Milwall Community Scheme, beginning on the 12th July 2007 in line with other year 10 students at Walworth. Sadly M only attended for one day.
26. M began year 11 at Walworth Academy, however was excluded on the 14th September 2007 again for smoking. M was advised that she would be permanently excluded if she continued to break the school rules, which she did. After several meetings it was agreed that M could go back to PEEP where she had been doing well and also go on dual roll with Porlock & Walworth. The support worker continued to support, however M did not attend.
27. On 27th February 2008, M was detained by the Court to Medway Secure Training Centre, for a variety of offences Following the initial settling in period M appeared to understand that she needed to change her behaviour and became more focused on her education and future ambition, and at her last review in March, Medway reported that M had settled well into the routine of the unit and was doing considerably well in working towards sitting some of her GCSE's. On the 10th April 2008 M appeared in Court to appeal her sentence length. M's appeal was successful and she had her sentence reduced from sixteen months to three months she was released on the 28th May 2008. It was hoped that M would attend Porlock hall and sit the GCSEs she had worked towards in Secure, however, instead of continuing her positive behaviour M again refused to attend and did not take any exams. M is still not engaged in education and is frequently missing from placement.
28. Of the 19 young people listed above, there were also 5 young people who were expected to sit GCSEs who failed to attend despite specific arrangements and support for each child. This was noted at the last Corporate Parenting Committee and a request made for information relating to these specific young people. The reasons for not sitting GCSEs were as follows:

<b>Child</b>	<b>UM</b>	<b>Predicted grades</b>	<b>Reason did not sit</b>
1(D)	✓	1 (D-G)	Refused to attend school or exams. Withdrew from seeing GCSE home tutor.
2 (M)		2 (D-G)	2 placement breakdowns. School on verge of excluding permanently. Managed school move achieved. Refused to go back
3 (E)		2 (D-G)	Shaftesbury unit. Frequent non attendee. Intensive support from Shaftesbury. Absconded on day due to sit exams.
4 (C)		3 (D-G)	Place at college and Porlock

			Hall. Poor attendance at both special education support centers.
5 (N)	✓	None – withdrawn by school during mocks	Became pregnant and refusing school. Referred to learning support centre – will take exams this coming year.

### Policy implications

29. The CLA Service and Education Support Team have reviewed results and were surprised on one or two occasions concerning grades. In our routine discussions with other authorities, we have observed that in some cases their CLA service have formally “appealed” such grades. We are therefore proposing that from the beginning of the 2008/09 Academic Year, children’s services will consider appealing a given grade if we feel there is a significant difference between the estimated and achieved grade. Whilst this decision is normally taken between parents and their school this is not established as common practice for looked after children. It would appear that usually when a grade is appealed whilst submitting evidence as to projected grades, the usual outcome is that the examining authority agrees to a higher grade!

### Community Impact Statement

30. Looked after children in Year 11 will use these results to form decisions relating to future education employment and training choices. At 18 most care leavers return to Southwark (if placed outside the borough) to live and work. The achievement of GCSEs is a key foundational stage to enabling care leavers to be successful in making a positive contribution as adults and their overall economic wellbeing.

### RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

31. None

### CONSULTATION

32. The virtual head teacher has undertaken a number of consultation discussions with secondary school heads concerning the potential for immediate collation and communication of GCSE results. This helped children’s CLA Services to identify a lead person to collate GCSE results whilst asking Welfare Call to collate all end of year education results separately.
33. Young people and Speakerbox have been heavily involved in shaping, planning and delivering the celebration ceremony scheduled this year for the 30th of October.

### SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

#### Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services

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

## Finance Director

35. There are no financial implications.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Appendix 1 – OC2 return October 2008	Children’s Service Performance Team	Adrian Ward / Chris Saunders on 020 7525 3720
Appendix 2 – GCSE comparisons over last 5 years	CSPT services Same as above	Adrian Ward / Chris Saunders 020 7525 3720

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Assistant Director Children’s Specialist Services and Safeguarding	
<b>Report Author</b>	Chris Saunders, Head of Services for Children in Care and Chair of ICS / CareFirst Board.	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	November 11 2008	
<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>
Borough Solicitor	Yes	Yes
Finance Director	Yes	Yes
List other officers here		
<b>Executive Member</b>	Yes	Yes
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