

Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Wednesday 15 October 2014

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G01C - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1
2QH

Supplemental Agenda

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Date: 13 October 2014



Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Wednesday 3 September 2014 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT:

Councillor Lisa Rajan
Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor Anne Kirby
Councillor James Okosun
Councillor Kath Whittam
Councillor Kieron Williams
Lynette Murphy-O'Dwyer
Abdul Raheem Musa

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:

OFFICER SUPPORT:

Darren Coghlan, Head of Secondary and Further Education
Employment and Inclusion
Liz Britton, Manager, Priority Learners
Kerry Crichlow, Director Strategy & Commissioning
Davina Bailey, Southwark Youth Council involvement officer
Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny project manager
Rory Patterson, Director, Children's Social Care
Jean Young, Head of Primary, Community and Children's
Commissioning

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 There were apologies for absence, due to illness, from Councillor Jasmine Ali.

1. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

2.1 There were no urgent items of business, other than to note the supplement agenda
was not posted.

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

1. MINUTES

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

1. SOUTHWARK YOUTH COUNCIL

5.1 The chair welcomed Southwark Youth Council (SYC) members to the meeting and invited the young people to explain their roles and how SYC works.

5.2 The youth council members explained that each prospective candidate makes three pledges when they stand for election and they are questions on these at hustings. There are 18 people on the SYC board. SYC have an action plan brought together by the combined pledges and the suggestions made on the ballots papers - around 3000 young people contributed to this process. SYC agreed four themes in order of priority, these are:

Crime & safety

Youth activities & involvement

Support (e.g. exam stress , mental health wellbeing)

Improving the community (e.g. racism, anti social behaviour, community cohesion)

5.3 SYC had an event to highlight youth opportunity with over 100 young people attending. They have also made a film on bullying, self image and which explores what a healthy relationship is and how to get help. The video will be used as a tool.

5.4 The committee members then asked when the members were elected and SYC said they have been in place since February. Another member asked how to get in touch about a project to do with Hawksmore and SYC suggested contacting one of the local branches of the youth council or coming to the regular Monday meeting or inviting SYC to a meeting. There are five Youth Community Councils (YCCs); these are BRYCC Bermondsey and Rotherhithe, WBBYCC Walworth Borough and Bankside, DYCC Dulwich, CYCC Camberwell and PNYCC Peckham and Nunhead.

5.1 SYC were asked about their aims and they explained they will be carrying out three campaigns on each of the four themes.

5.2 SYC were asked how the committee could best work with SYC and the young people suggested that members of the scrutiny committee sometimes come to the SYC meetings and sometimes young people came to the scrutiny committee meeting. SYC also

suggested holding an open public meeting, possibly at a Youth Centre and tying this to some kind of event. The committee said they would like to hear more about SYC activities, hear a presentation and a showing of the film SYC have made. The young people agreed and suggested the committee look at the website and invited the committee to read the regular newsletter.

5.3 The chair thanked the young people for attending and said that they were very welcome to participate in other items on the agenda.

1. ATTAINMENT GAP - REVIEW

6.1 Liz Britton, manager of priority learners, introduced the work done to improve the performance of children in care. She explained that the data in the paper is based on children who were in 12 months continuous care as of March , as this is the performance measure that central government sets . However the team work with all children who come into care.

6.2 The chair invited questions and the following issues were raised by committee members and SYC young people:

6.3 Please explain the placement of young people in borough and out of borough and the impact on education? The officer explained that it is important to place children with the best and most suitable foster carer and some these are out of borough. In addition to this some children need to be placed out of borough for good reasons. She was then asked if children do better in borough or out of borough and the officer explained that many of the children placed out of borough are young people in years 10 & 11 with challenging behaviour -moving does negatively impact on education, as does the trauma of going into care and the incidents that have led up to this, however sometimes for their safety children do have to be moved out of borough.

6.4 What training and support is available for foster carers? The council have a letterbox training programme, where we write directly and provide guidance on how to support children through their education.

6.5 What about gifted children? Do you have a special programme? No, but children each have an individual learning programme, and children can be pushed.

6.6 Can you help the SYC get into all schools? The committee members expressed surprise and disappointment that given the good work SYC do that they are not able to access all schools and asked the SYC to provide details and in order to try and facilitate this.

6.7 What work is being done to get local foster carers? There is an outreach and training programmes to get more local people to apply.

6.8 Does being in care trigger pupil premium? Yes

6.9 What has most enabled the council to improve the results of children in care? Having half a dozen education offices who are co located with social services has been very effective; the education workers focus exclusively on the education part, but also have a dialogue with social workers and this has improved outcomes. The children's PEP (Personal Educational Plan) has also been re-written so there is a more systemic approach. This is more focused and restricted in the data recorded.

6.10 The chair invited Darren Coghlan, Head of Secondary and Further Education, Employment and Inclusion to present his area of work. He summarised the report and highlighted an error; the new GCSE will not be graded 1 to 10 with 1 being highest grade, rather it will be graded 1-9, with an ungraded level, and 9 will be the highest grade.

6.11 The chair invited the committee and SYC members to ask questions.

6.12 What vocational options are available for preparation for students who are less academic? There is a university technical college and studio schools.

6.13 What about the apprenticeship scheme? There is a 6 week traineeship started by Lend Lease and others.

6.14 Are these paid? No, but there are job centre plus exceptions.

6.15 How are the apprenticeships promoted? There is an employment and training advisor who visits school. The local authority used to offer careers advice but now this obligation now goes to school.

6.16 How many apprenticeships are there? 310

6.17 Why is the system moving to 1-9 grades? To show greater differentiation at the higher grades.

6.18 Are children with no recourse to public funds eligible for free school meals? No child is turned away from free school healthy meals in primary school. In secondary schools there has to an entitlement to a benefit.

6.19 Concern was raised about provision for the bottom 30 percent that there is currently a poor curriculum offer in schools and colleges for less academically inclined children & young people. Officers agreed and said that there needs to improvement at schools and better performance by the local Further Education College. A good offer at schools is dependant on the right teaching and facilities – for example catering equipment and expertise.

6.20 Who pays for re-sits? Schools.

6.21 Are qualification currently 'norm referenced or 'criteria' referenced? Currently these are criteria reference, rather than 'norm' referenced, but this will change.

6.22 Modular exams are easier to study for than an exam which tests everything at the end of the course, why is there a move to one final exam? The rationale is that it will promote deeper learning.

6.23 Will there be changes to OFSTED ? Yes these will be employed directly rather than contracted out.

6.24 Liz Britton, manager of priority learners requested the last page be taken off the website as it has information that could be personally identifying.

6.25 There was a discussion about the Attainment Gap review questions and how to ensure that the head teachers captured improvement in progress for children's & young people who might not be academically inclined and whether it was right to use the word disadvantaged, as children who had special needs, for example, might not be socially disadvantaged.

RESOLVED

SYC to provide details of the schools they have difficulty accessing and scrutiny to work to resolve this.

Continue the dissuasion on the Attainment Gap outside of the committee meeting, and with the chair, once she is better.

1. SOUTHWARK CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP REPORT ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

7.1 Jean Young, Head of Primary, Community and Children's Commissioning summarised the report enclosed with the agenda.

7.2 The chair invited questions and members of the committee raised the following points:

7.3 Teenagers are no longer given a BCG jab, why is this? This is given as babies and will now last through adulthood so this jab is now only given on a selective basis to young people.

7.4 How is mental health integrated with other provision ? All opportunities are used - for example youth offending team will ensure that the psychological, physical and sexual health of young people is attended to.

7.5 Do you have specific priorities? The service's priorities include obesity & teenage pregnancy. Another priority is the integration of the mental & health agenda. There is a strategic plan to increase well-being. Safeguarding is also a priority.

7.6 Do you have a lead for safeguarding? Yes, the CCG have a clinical lead for safeguarding. We feed into the safeguarding board, and produce a report for the Southwark's annual safeguarding report. The CCG also chair the practice and development group.

7.7 Where are you innovating? Services at Evelina are very innovative and in particular the Evelina London Child Health Programme

7.8 How is Evelina Funded? We can supply follow up information.

7.9 There is a concern about the top tier of Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) nationally, how is Southwark coping? There is big demand locally for paediatric acute mental health crisis beds. There is a pressure nationally & locally and the CCG is meeting locally to look to see if there is a need to commission more beds. The national problem is having an impact locally as there is more sharing of information and resources. How often are children in need of an acute bed being placed away from Southwark? Sometimes it has to happen but we do repatriate as soon as possible. There has been an increase in demand since the changes in commissioning. There is an analysis of why this happening.

7.10 Is there a break down of unintentional and deliberate / non - accidental accidents? Every child going to A & E generates a message to a health visitor or teacher. Is there a collection of data on this? Yes, this would be part of Safeguarding. Feedback is kept in the health economy and there would be a multi agency meeting if social services became involved. If a child has a protection plan than there is flag system.

7.11 What is the process for assessing the funding transfer of Public Health money to the council, which was formally held by the NHS? There is a due diligence process and this tracks back a number of years to establish funding spent.

ACTION

Provide details on the funding of the Evelina London Child Health Programme

1. **AUTISM - REVIEW**

8.1 The committee noted the Autism timetable. A member reported that the council has recently produced a report on focus groups held to support the strategy's development.

RESOLVE

Circulate the report to members.

1. **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION & SAFEGUARDING - REVIEW**

9.1 The committee discussed the review and members recommended looking at Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in more detail and, in particular, explore the following issues in more depth: Domestic Abuse; Looked After children; Grooming and the role of faith groups & voluntary organisations in preventing abuse.

9.2 The scrutiny officer reported that she and the chair had requested a briefing from Children's Services on work to date on CSE and suggested the committee also receive an overview report, which would put the committee in a better position to decide if it wanted to focus on a particular area within CSE and/ or Child Trafficking & FGM, which are both

identified in the scoping document for the review to look in more depth. She recommended working towards looking in more depth at one of two areas, but suggested that an overview report would be helpful to set the context on both CSE and Safeguarding.

9.1 Rory Patterson, Director, Children's Social Care, explained that there has been a big investment in CSE and the strategy is now being reviewed, and offered to bring a report to the next meeting.

1. ADOPTION - REVIEW

10.1 The committee recommended receiving an officer report and then planning the next steps.

1. WORK-PLAN

11.1 The committee recommended moving the Free School report to November to relieve pressure on the agenda at the October meeting.

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 15 October 2014	Meeting Name: Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee
Report title:		Child Sexual Exploitation Overview Report	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Report from:		Director of Children's Social Care	

1.0 Background

1.1 The Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee requested a report covering:

- A definition of CSE and an introduction to this area of work.
- CSE and links with abuse generally and Domestic Abuse, in particular
- CSE & Looked after children
- A description of Southwark's work to date on CSE
- Southwark's draft child sexual exploitation strategy - alongside any timeline for consultation & adoption

1.2 The Council's Cabinet has requested a full report on Child Sexual Exploitation for consideration in November 2014. Through this review, Scrutiny Committee will have an opportunity to make recommendations to the Cabinet on the draft Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and future service delivery.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Child sexual exploitation (CSE) has rightly become a major focus of media and policy attention. Widely publicised, systemic failures to protect children, prosecute perpetrators and support victims – such as in Oxford, Rochdale, Doncaster, Derby and most recently in Rotherham – have exposed the potential scale of CSE in our communities and the difficulty experienced by public agencies in addressing it. High profile reports from influential organisations including the NSPCC, Barnardo's and the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England have called upon local authorities to take concrete steps to improve their practice in protecting children from sexual exploitation.

2.2 Though the recent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation has brought the issue into focus once again at a national level, this is not a new area of work for the council and its partners. Tackling CSE was identified as a priority for the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board in 2013/14 and again for this current financial year. It remains high on our agenda across the partnership.

3.0 Definition

3.1 The Department for Education (DfE) defines CSE as involving "exploitative

contexts and relationships where young people under 18 receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities”.

CSE can occur without the child’s recognition or example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength or economic or other resources. Perpetrators use this power they have over the victim to sexually abuse them.

Note that victims of CSE can be *over* the age of consent (16).

- 3.2 CSE is a form of child abuse. It is a specific manifestation of sexual abuse, which involves “persuading or forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or encouraging a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways”

4.0 Forms of child sexual exploitation

- 4.1 Sexual exploitation of children occurs in a variety of manifestations. The victim may or may not know the perpetrator well, and there may be one or several perpetrators abusing the child or young person. It is important to note that CSE does not only affect girls, nor is it confined to specific ethnic or religious communities, nor indeed does it occur exclusively in deprived areas. CSE is widely agreed to be more common than is represented in official datasets.

- 4.2 Research carried out by Barnardo’s in 2011 identified three broad categories of CSE. These were:

1	Inappropriate relationships	Usually involves one perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control (physical, emotional, financial, etc) over a young person – perhaps indicated by a significant age gap. The young person may believe they are in a loving relationship.
2	‘Boyfriend’ model and peer exploitation	Perpetrator befriends and grooms a young person into a ‘relationship’ and coerces them to have sex with friends or associates This can be associated with gang activity.
3	Organised / networked CSE and trafficking	Young people are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances between places where they will be coerced into sexual activity with multiple perpetrators. Young people may be used as agents to recruit others into the network. Some of this type of CSE can be serious organised crime and involve the buying and selling of young people.

- 4.3 Common conceptions that child sexual exploitation is always part of serious

organised crime are, therefore inaccurate. CSE can also take within or in connection with a relationship.

- 4.4 CSE is a challenging area of work for practitioners and frontline professionals, for a number of reasons. Many young people do not want to disclose that they have been a victim, owing to shame or embarrassment. Others will not recognise themselves as victims, and believe that there is nothing 'wrong', particularly where CSE occurs within relationships that young people understand to be loving or genuine.

5.0 Grooming

- 5.1 The grooming of the victim is typically a precursor to child sexual exploitation taking place. Grooming is the building of an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation.
- 5.2 Often (though not always), grooming occurs online. It may involve somebody the victim knows, or somebody the victim has never met. It can therefore also involve a perpetrator in the victim's peer group.

6.0 Links to other forms of abuse

- 6.1 Child Sexual Exploitation is itself a form of child abuse. However, it is linked to other forms of abuse, and young people who fall victim to CSE frequently have other needs and problems in their lives. Problems and needs often associated with CSE include:
- Problems with substance misuse or alcohol misuse
 - Physical or learning difficulties or special educational needs
 - Sexual health concerns
 - Mental ill health
 - A record of youth offending
 - Not attending mainstream education, being on role at a Pupil Referral Unit or being not in education, employment or training (NEET)
 - Being victim of or witness to domestic violence
 - Being a looked after child (LAC) in the care of the local authority.

6.2 Domestic violence

A child or young person affected by domestic violence may be more vulnerable to CSE for a number of reasons. The child or young person may suffer from lower self esteem, in turn increasing their vulnerability to CSE, or he/she may seek means of escape from the home and end up in situations or relationships where sexual exploitation can occur. Research for the Office of the Children's Commissioner also found that in some instances of CSE where there was also domestic abuse, the family member was directly involved in the sexual exploitation of the victim – for example, where perpetrators of domestic violence were also sexually exploiting children in the household.

6.3 Children looked after

- Research has shown that a disproportionate number of looked after children are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation. This was also a significant issue in the recent Inquiry into Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham,

which found that some children become exposed to exploitation when they first became looked after, while for others who were already at risk, the risk was increased.

- In some instances, this is associated with the targeting of residential children's homes by perpetrators, and by the peer influencing that can take place within residential care homes for looked after children. Research has suggested that children placed in residential care are 4.5 times more likely to be sexually exploited
- In other instances, the risk of sexual exploitation is associated with being away from home and the other vulnerabilities associated with being in care, such as a chaotic family background, low self-confidence and friendships with other vulnerable young people.
- Of particular concern is young people who go missing from care. Evidence from serious case reviews, inquiries, prosecutions and research illustrates an increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation among children who go missing from care. Episodes of going missing may be the occasions where victims meet or become close to perpetrators. Engaging with young people after they have gone missing to find out why they went missing is therefore an essential component of assessing and managing risk.

7.0 Southwark's action on CSE

7.1 There has been increasing activity to tackle CSE in Southwark for a number of years. It is currently a priority for the Safeguarding Board to develop and strengthen current arrangements.

7.2 Governance and strategy:

7.2.1 Southwark's Safeguarding Children Board established a Task-and-Finish group in January 2013 to look at the issue of CSE in the borough. This group was formally incorporated as a subgroup to the Board in 2014.

7.2.2 The subgroup is currently writing a multi-agency strategy to tackle CSE, which is appended in draft form to this report. It's core intentions are to:

1. Prevent CSE
2. Build intelligence of CSE and understand how it manifests itself locally
3. Provide timely support to victims
4. Disrupt perpetrators
5. Prosecute perpetrators

7.2.3 The Board has sought feedback from young people on the draft strategy, who emphasised the need to focus on raising awareness in communities. It was clear from the feedback obtained from young people that victims often do not recognise themselves as victims of CSE, nor the risks to which they might be exposing themselves. They emphasised that raising awareness among young people about what CSE is will be very important, and called for greater emphasis of the issue within school PHSE curricula.

7.2.4 The CSE subgroup has also studied in detail the lessons of the Rotherham Inquiry to ensure its strategy benefits from this opportunity to learn from mistakes elsewhere. Key elements of this learning include:

1. The importance of good fundamentals in social work practice: low vacancy rates and timely, robust assessments of risk and impactful supervision.
 2. The need for a clear, focussed strategy – and the importance of checking that the strategy is proving to be effective
 3. Child-centred practice which understands the child as the victim of CSE, not as responsible for it, and which provides a clear route to help for all children and young people regardless of gender or ethnicity
 4. The importance of an open organisational culture which hears the voices of children and young people and which values the contributions of different types of services
 5. The need for bold engagement and communication with communities which does not evade sensitive issues of faith and ethnicity, where relevant
- 7.2.5 Southwark Safeguarding Children Board's training programme included two multi-agency dedicated courses on CSE in 2013-14, with three scheduled for 2014-15, of which one has already taken place. All training is subject to the Board's quality assurance process.
- 7.2.6 The Board intends to initiate specific work with faith communities on the issue, and this will form part of the forthcoming strategy, particularly following feedback from children and young people. The Teenage Pregnancy commission was particularly successful in engaging mosques and churches its prevention agenda, and future work on CSE will aim to build on this success. The CSE subgroup is aware of innovative practice elsewhere in England involving the development of CSE protocols in places of worship. There is voluntary sector representation on the CSE subgroup.
- 7.3 Operational work
- 7.3.1 In 2007, in advance of major political and media focus on the issue of CSE, Southwark established a Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel. This panel meets on a monthly basis, and enables professionals from a variety of agencies to share information on individual cases and make recommendations for action. The social worker responsible for the case also attends the panel.
- 7.3.2 The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), which went live in September 2013, is a team of professionals from over 14 agencies who are co-located (in some cases virtually) in order to share information about cases where there is concern about the welfare of a child. All referrals to children's social care are now diverted to the MASH, so that relevant professionals can feed-in the information they hold about a child or family. This enables a better understanding of risk and enables more informed decision-making in terms of next steps. A detective constable has joined the Southwark MASH from the Metropolitan Police with specific responsibility for CSE and recording of cases. Alongside safeguarding and child protection procedures overseen by social workers, all incoming referrals relating to CSE or possible CSE are now recorded and monitored by MASH, so that a clearer, evidence-based picture can be built of CSE locally. This is consistent with the Metropolitan Police's Pan-London Protocol for CSE, which is being embedded in Southwark.
- 7.3.3 Officers from a variety of agencies including health, social care and troubled families contributed to the identification of a cohort of young people known to be victims to CSE or thought to be at risk of CSE. This exercise, involving a risk assessment of each case, has informed local strategy and planning. The

indications are that CSE in Southwark tends to be, but not exclusively, associated with young adult males who are connected to other criminality and who exploit younger girls for criminal and sexual gain

- 7.3.4 Building on the successful local model of working to tackle gang culture, a regular Tasking and Intelligence meeting takes place, attended by key representatives from the MASE (see 6.3.1), the Police's Child Abuse Investigation Team, Health and Community Safety, in order to share intelligence and undertake strategic analysis of the profile and characteristics of CSE in the borough. T
- 7.3.5 A contract is being let to appoint 2 CSE caseworkers for a period of nine months in order to provide 1:1 support to victims of CSE.
- 7.3.6 A contract has been let to St Christopher's, a children's charity, to conduct return-to-home interviews with children who go missing. This is a cohort widely accepted to be at higher risk of CSE and understanding the causes and nature of missing episodes

7.4 Next steps

- 7.4.1 Southwark Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) aims to finalise its strategy in December 2014, building on input from children and young people and embedding learning from cases in Rotherham and elsewhere
- 7.4.2 The SSCB will develop a plan for evaluating the impact of the strategy, such as through a programme of audits
- 7.4.3 The council plans to appoint a CSE Coordinator to oversee implementation of the strategy and liaise with key partner agencies
- 7.4.4 Work will continue to embed key processes associated with the Pan-London Protocol for CSE, on the back of which more sophisticated analysis of the profile of CSE locally will take place.

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Safeguarding Children Board Draft Sexual Exploitation Strategy

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools
Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Social Care
Report Author	Oliver Hopwood, Principal Strategy Officer, Children's & Adults' Services
Version	Final

Dated	6 October 2014	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	6/10/2014	



SOUTHWARK SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION STRATEGY (DRAFT)

September 2014

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1.0 Introduction and Context

- 1.1 Southwark's Safeguarding Children Board is the statutory body with lead strategic responsibility for coordinating the activities of local agencies in terms of safeguarding children and children's welfare, and for ensuring the effectiveness of those activities.
- 1.2 Southwark Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) is committed to tackle the sexual exploitation of children and young people living in the borough and those in care placed out of the borough.. The Board recognises that only a proactive, co-ordinated, multi-agency approach will be effective in achieving this.
- 1.3 Recent publications, including the [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997-2013](#) emphasise the need to strengthen local arrangements to protect children and young people who are either victims or at risk of CSE. This strategy will need to be evaluated and refreshed in light of the learning from this and any other inquiries.
- 1.4 There is already significant multi-agency working and information sharing taking place within Southwark with the aim at protecting children from CSE. In particular, the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel (MASE) and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are examples of strong practice upon which partners can build in this strategy.
- 1.5 The Department for Education's 2011 Action Plan for Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation states that "LSCBs will want to assure themselves that local services are based on a robust assessment of need in the locality, taking account of the statement in the statutory guidance that every LSCB 'should assume that sexual exploitation occurs within its area unless there is clear evidence to the contrary'. They will also want to assure themselves that local services are designed and delivered effectively to tackle the issue where it arises"
- 1.6 [Supplementary Guidance from 2009](#), referred to in *Working Together 2013*, specifies that LSCBs should ensure that:
 - the needs of children and young people who have been or may be sexually exploited and their families have been considered when planning and commissioning local services;
 - specific local procedures are in place covering the sexual exploitation of children and young people;
 - local safeguarding training includes information about how to identify the signs of sexual exploitation and an understanding of

how to gather evidence which can be used to bring prosecutions against abusers;

- where sexual exploitation is known to be prevalent locally, specialist training is available for key professionals;
- systems are in place to track and monitor cases of sexual exploitation that come to the attention of local agencies; 7 Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation
- a LSCB sub-group is put in place to lead on the issue of sexual exploitation, driving work forward and ensuring effective cooperation between agencies and professionals;
- There is a dedicated lead person in each partner organisation with responsibility for implementing this guidance;
- arrangements are in place to cooperate with neighbouring areas and those areas where children who have been sexually exploited are believed to have lived or been present

1.7 The SSCB's strategic intent is to:

- **Prevent** the occurrence of CSE.
- **Build intelligence** and develop a problem profile of CSE locally
- **Provide support** which is timely and effective for victims of CSE
- **Disrupt** the activities of perpetrators
- **Prosecute** perpetrators

1.8 Southwark Safeguarding Children Board's commitment to tackle CSE is articulated in its pledge on CSE, agreed by all member agencies on Board. This pledge is enclosed as Appendix A.

1.9 The Rotherham Inquiry into CSE found that "as early as 1998, [...] procedures identified the victims as children and the prosecution of perpetrators as a priority. Under the auspices of the SCB and its predecessor, the Area Child Protection Committee, there was a good range of strategies, policies and procedures applicable to child protection and specifically to CSE. These were of generally good quality and had been developed on an inter-agency basis. **The weakness was that the Safeguarding Board rarely seemed to check whether they were being implemented and whether they were working. The challenge function of the Safeguarding Board did not appear to have been fully exercised**". SSCB is aware of the need to fully implement, evaluate and review this strategy.

2.0 Definition

2.1 Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse. Southwark's Safeguarding Children Board is using the definition of CSE set out by the

Department for Education in 2012:

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Source: [Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan, DfE 2011](#)

2.2 There are 5 key points to emphasise in this definition which will affect the understanding of CSE:

- CSE as a form of abuse can apply to all children and young people, not just those under the age of consent – children aged 16 or 17 can still be sexually exploited;
- CSE can occur in a wide range of relationships, contexts and exploitative situations, including bullying;
- There is typically a power imbalance between perpetrator and victim;
- The victim commonly has *limited* choice – resulting from their various vulnerabilities – though may not recognise the limitations of their ability to choose;
- Increasingly, the use of technology (particularly mobile phones and social networking) is involved in incidences of CSE.

3.0 Current intelligence and problem profile

3.1 It is generally acknowledged there are low levels of reporting of CSE nationally and so it remains largely invisible. No datasets available locally illustrate the likely true extent of CSE in the borough.

- 3.2 Our starting point must be, therefore, to assume that CSE is happening in Southwark in different ways, at different locations and across communities. One outcome of this strategy is to improve the collection, analysis and application of data pertaining to CSE.
- 3.3 In Southwark, there are already ways in which agencies work to support victims or potential victims of CSE. Staff regularly convene in the local Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel to share and review information on victims and perpetrators and make recommendations for action. Each year approximately 20 young people are considered by the MASE panel.
- 3.4 Southwark has built on the work of MASE and begun to develop its 'problem profile' of CSE in the borough. This strategy is shaped by the findings so far from this profiling and also identifies what steps need to be taken to build and maintain a more comprehensive problem profile.
- 3.5 From a review of open cases across agencies in April 2014, 98 young people were identified as being at risk of CSE, and were diverse in terms of their of need, age and ethnicity. Characteristics of the children identified as being at risk of CSE included:
- A large proportion of the 98 were children in care, spread evenly between placements in borough, within London and out of London
 - Children frequently going missing from care
 - Around half of the children at risk were still living at home
 - The vast majority were in education, though some had poor or persistent absence
 - A high proportion of the 98 children had a Special Educational Need
- 3.6 In order to build a more comprehensive problem profile we will develop our capacity to capture and analyse intelligence on CSE – victims, perpetrators, models and locations – through a dedicated intelligence and analytical function. We will also assess new referrals into the MASH specifically for risk of CSE. Actions are detailed in the accompanying action plan (Appendix B)

4.0 Principles

- 4.1 The following principles will inform everything we do to tackle CSE in Southwark. These have been agreed across the multi-agency partnership.

- **Partnership-driven** - we will implement a single, coordinated approach across the multi-agency partnership, delivered across all agencies and at all levels of intervention.
- **Evidence-based** – we will build a comprehensive profile of the local problem to inform action plans, commissioning and training. Interventions will be evaluated against desired outcomes.
- **Inclusive** – we will involve children, young people and families in service design
- **Child-centred** – we will regard children and young people as victims and acknowledge that they can be both a perpetrator and a victim, and can move between the two roles (especially in a gang situation).
- **Flexible** - we will recognise different manifestations of CSE and respond appropriately to each (including peer on peer, gangs, and online).
- **Holistic** – we will take a wide view of the problem and address culture change. We will avoid silos by embedding CSE in other policies and strategies across the partnership (including Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and missing children).

5.0 Strategic Intent & Priorities

- 5.1 Our strategic priorities derive from our principles and our problem-profile to date and are informed by our learning from national publications and reviews. These have included the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into CSE in Gangs and Groups Gangs ([*If only Someone had listened*](#)), the London Councils / London Safeguarding Children Board report *Tackling CSE: A study of Current Practice in London*, and the Met Police Pan-London Operating Protocol for CSE. Our safeguarding board has also consulted with boroughs such as Rochdale and Bradford, who have well developed approaches to tackling CSE.

- 5.2 In the light of recently published materials, specifically the Inquiry into CSE in Rotherham, this strategy will be renewed in Spring 2015. We will undertake a review of this strategy with due consideration to the lessons emerging from this Inquiry.
- 5.3 Our 5 strategic priorities are to:
- a. **Prevent** CSE from occurring in Southwark and to children from Southwark.
 - b. **Build intelligence** and quickly identify the victims, perpetrators, models and locations involved, where CSE does occur. Including a focus on children going missing and children with SEN.
 - c. **Provide timely, effective support** to all victims of CSE, enabling them to escape the abuse, recover from its effects and remain free from abuse throughout the rest of their childhood and beyond.
 - d. **Disrupt** the activities of those that are sexually exploiting children, using the full range of powers available across the multi-agency partnership for example including the police, licensing and housing.
 - e. **Prosecute** perpetrators to the full extent of the law.
- 5.4 As the local problem profile is developed and so agencies' understanding of CSE in Southwark is improved, SSCB will revisit these priorities and ensure they reflect the nature and level needs in the borough.
- 5.5 These priorities provide the framework for our action plan, which sets out how we will go about delivering against these priorities. Our action plan is included as Appendix B.

6.0 Operating model

- 6.1 Southwark's Safeguarding Children Board is committed to implementing a coherent operating model for tackling CSE. This will be developed and refined as the problem profile and other immediate work in the action plan is undertaken. However, the Board has agreed in principle to implement the 'See me, Hear me' model as set out by the Office of the Children's Commissioner. This is included at Appendix C. The key features to which we are committed are:
- Strategic lead from Safeguarding Children Board and CSE subgroup

- A 'problem profile', pulling together evidence from all agencies
- A CSE coordinator
- A CSE specialism within MASH
- Co-ordination across other sub groups/networks ensuring that professionals and other adults in contact with children and young people are alert to risk factors and indicators of CSE
- End to end services, from prevention to rehabilitation and including a range of specialist support to target support effectively
- A strong contribution from the Voluntary and Community Sector

Appendix A: Southwark Safeguarding Children Board Pledge on CSE

Southwark Safeguarding Children Board will:

- Take a proactive, co-ordinated multi-agency approach.
- Prioritise intelligence and analysis, and use it to develop our understanding of the prevalence and nature of CSE in Southwark.
- Do everything in our power to prevent CSE from happening in Southwark and to Southwark children.
- Focus on early identification and providing early help.
- Support parents, communities and professionals to identify signs of vulnerability and signs of abuse and know what they should do and where to get help.
- Establish the MASH as a single point of referral
- Develop a shared risk assessment model used by all agencies across a continuum of need (up to 25 years of age)
- Ensure professionals working at all levels of need understand CSE, have confidence in how to respond, and have access to expert support and advice.
- Develop a range of interventions across a continuum of need, taking a child- or family-centred approach to supporting victims and survivors.
- Devise a strategic approach to disrupting and prosecuting perpetrators.
- Monitor outcomes and learn from successes and failures.

Appendix B: Action Plan

Note: This is a draft to be finalised by in Autumn 2014 by CSE sub-group

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: PREVENT CSE FROM OCCURRING IN SOUTHWARK AND TO CHILDREN FROM SOUTHWARK

WHAT WE WILL DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT	LEAD	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	TIME	RAG
1. Raise the profile of CSE by agreeing and promoting a multi-agency pledge on tackling CSE	All agencies on SSCB to sign the pledge.	Chair, SSCB	Pledge signed and on SSCB website. Promoted via a SSCB press release	Nov 14	
2. Engage all staff through a multi-agency training strategy	Provide e-learning package of awareness training on CSE across agencies	SSCB Practice Development and Training Sub-group	% take up of e-learning	Nov 14	
	Develop local package of multi-agency training on CSE, based on a training needs analysis		CSE specific training available to key staff across multi-agency	Oct 14	
	Ensure CSE embedded in basic SSCB training		Feedback on training	Oct 14	
3. Engage children and young people to improve their understanding of CSE and dissuade them from being involved	Ensure CSE is in PSHE curriculum	Schools	CSE in all secondary schools	Dec 2014	
	Target CSE-specific work at schools with highest number of reported 'at-risk' children (from problem profile)	Head of Early Help	CSE prevention programme devised and delivered in targeted schools	Jan 15	
4. Raise awareness of CSE across the community	Specific messages about identifying CSE and how to raise concerns to be communicated through existing networks, e.g. youth services and VCS groups.	Head of youth service, CEO CAS	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	

Note: Ofsted has recognised as good practice efforts to raise awareness of signs of CSE more widely in community, e.g. hoteliers, taxi drivers

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: BUILD INTELLIGENCE AND QUICKLY IDENTIFY VICTIMS, PERPEPTRATORS, MODELS AND LOCATIONS INVOLVED, WHERE CSE DOES OCCUR

WHAT WE WILL DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT	LEAD	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	TIME	RAG
5. Appoint a CSE co-ordinator to form and maintain multi-agency links, lead the creation of an intelligence hub, manage the CSE action plan and support the CSE sub group.	Agree a CSE co-ordinator under the SSCB / LA.	Director of Children's Social Care	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	
6. Adopt the provisions of the Met Police pan-London operating protocol on CSE	Redesign the MASE to be police-led	Police	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Sept 2014	
	Design local process and protocols to fit with pan-London protocol	Police/CSC	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Sept 2014	
7. Develop an intelligence hub in the MASH to provide an analytical function and develop Southwark's problem profile	Map need in the borough	Police with SSCB partners	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	
	Collect and analyse data from across agencies on victims, perpetrators, locations, service gaps, resources.	Police /SSP /LA	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	In place	
8. Identify children at risk at an early stage across all agencies and ensure those children have a full assessment of their needs and referral to relevant services for intervention and support	Develop our protocol/threshold document for referral and early risk assessment.	Head of QA	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014 for refresh	
	Design referral pathways for evidence based interventions at all tiers of need, making connection to other concerns including e-safety, missing children, trafficking and gangs	Head of QA & Head of safeguarding	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Jan 2014	
	Ensure referral pathway to LADO is clear where the alleged perpetrator is professional	LADO	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	September 2014	

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: BUILD INTELLIGENCE (CONTINUED)

WHAT WE WILL DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT	LEAD	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	TIME	RAG
9. All agencies to ensure staff working with children understand the signs of vulnerability and of abuse. Then develop intervention strategies to prevent escalation. This will include identifying actual or potential perpetrators	Develop communication for all practitioners	SSCB Development manager & Comms team	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	
	Disseminate to and train in the use of CSE risk assessment tool: social workers; police; PCSOs; designated personnel in schools; relevant VCS organisations	Org. development team	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Dec 2014	
	Ensure all internal procedures in all agencies reflect CSE signs and symptoms and the procedure for reporting and assessing	Head of QA & audit and learning sub group	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	
	Review all basic safeguarding training to contain signs of CSE, including single agency training programmes.	Organisational development team and all agencies	General review currently in process of SSCB training	Nov 2014	
	Ensure links with E-safety; Missing children; trafficking and gangs are made in training and awareness raising	Organisational development team & Practice development sub group	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	
	Gather insight around CSE from service users and from assessment about the young person's experience and use to shape work with vulnerable children and young people	All partners	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Jan 2014	

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: BUILD INTELLIGENCE (CONTINUED)

WHAT WE WILL DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT	LEAD	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	TIME	RAG
	Analyse report of children's rights officer into experience of children missing from care to shape future work with this cohort	Head of Quality Assurance & Missing from care steering group	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	

NB Ofsted has highlighted as good practice large training events such as dedicated CSE conferences as well as dedicated services for CSE

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: PROVIDE TIMELY, EFFECTIVE SUPPORT TO ALL VICTIMS OF CSE, ENABLING THEM TO ESCAPE THE ABUSE, RECOVER FROM ITS EFFECTS AND REMAIN FREE FROM ABUSE

WHAT WE WILL DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT	LEAD	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	TIME	RAG
10. Establish the MASH as the single point of referral for all CSE	Develop MASH to undertake screening for vulnerability and risk, facilitate information sharing across agencies, develop victim and perpetrator data set, and produce other intelligence.	Head of Service: Referral and Assessment	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	
11. Develop an evidence based model for interventions	Problem profile to identify and monitor gaps in provision	Police/SSP/ CSC	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	
	Work with VCS organisations to commission services sufficient to meet the particular need in Southwark	Head of Community Safety & CAS	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Jan 2015	

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: DISRUPT THE ACTIVITIES OF THOSE THAT ARE SEXUALLY EXPLOITING CHILDREN USING THE FULL RANGE OF POWERS AVAILABLE ACROSS THE MULTI-AGENCY PARTNERSHIP

WHAT WE WILL DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT	LEAD	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	TIME	RAG
12. Use intelligence to identify local hotspots, offenders and victims – through our problem profiling	All agencies to contribute intelligence – soft and hard – to problem profiling. Agencies to include: anti social behaviour unit ,housing, licensing department, community wardens	Met Police with all agencies including those identified for particular relevance	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	
13. Develop local disruption plans and part of prevention strategy	Agree a local multi-agency protocol for disrupting CSE activity	Met Police	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	
	Train local staff in spotting the signs of CSE and in the local protocol for disruption	Organisational development Joint police and social care	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: PROSECUTE PERPETRATORS TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THE LAW

WHAT WE WILL DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT	LEAD	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	TIME	RAG
14. Develop and implement a process for the identification and management of offenders and potential perpetrators	<p>Pan London Protocol.</p> <p>Reporting of CSE suspicions via referral pathways to Police and completion of CRIS (Crime reporting information system) with CSE flags and outcome codes for positive intervention with victim, orders on suspects and positive disruption.</p> <p>Use of locate trace markers on PNC (Police National Computer) for victims and suspects identifying CSE concerns.</p> <p>Bail Management. Conditions etc.</p>	Met Police	Sexual Exploitation Team (SET) data provides numbers of CRIS reports, Flags, outcome codes, PNC data.	Feb 14	
15. Utilise Ancillary Orders to maximize effect. The effective use of these orders will assist investigation, restrict and manage offenders and support victims	<p>Child Abduction Warning Notice under Section 2 of Child Abduction Act 1984 (under 16) and Section 49 of the Children's Act 1989 (LAC under 18)</p> <p>ROSHO (Risk of Sexual Harm Order), SOPO (Sexual Offence Protection Order), VOO (Violent Offender Order) all monitored and managed by Jigsaw.</p>	Met Police	Data can be obtained from Police indices.	Current	
16. Ensure victims are supported throughout the criminal justice process from report to court	<p>Provision of specific services for victims and witnesses.</p> <p>Special Measures and use of intermediaries.</p>	Met Police	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	

	Pre court familiarisation visits Transport to and from court Pre view ABE (Achieving Best Evidence) 1-2-1 with Barrister CICA (Criminal Injuries) assistance				
17. Ensure all investigators have suitable accreditation.	Sexual Exploitation Team staff will have Child Abuse Investigation Induction Course	Met Police	Mandatory	Current	
18. Ensure investigative strategies are shared and embedded in practice	Toolkit of Investigative Strategies Proactive methodologies protected. Sharing current defence tactics Sharing of best practice from successful prosecution data	Met Police	<i>NB Measure to be identified</i>	Nov 2014	

Appendix C: Operating Model

(From *If only someone had listened*: Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Final Report November 2013)

See Me, Hear Me

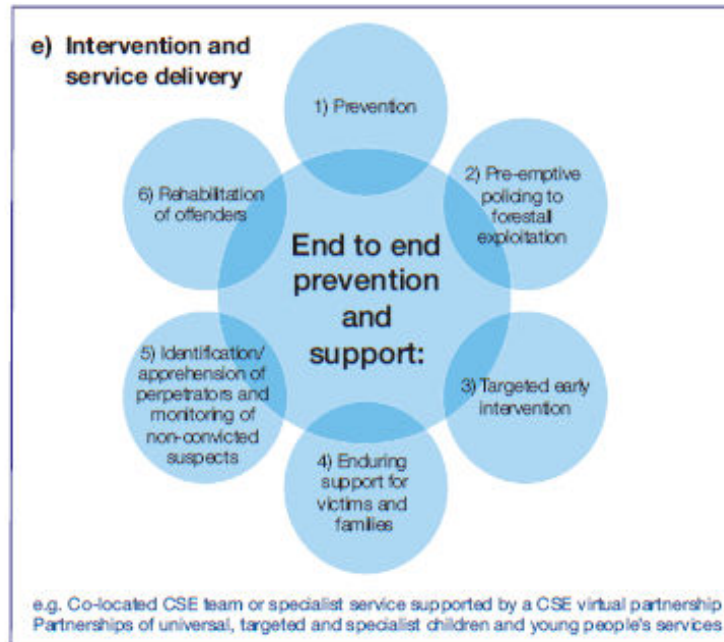
A Framework for protecting children

Figure 11: Functions, processes and structures

See me, Hear Me – A Framework

a) Accountability for all safeguarding and strategic coordination

e.g. Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB)
Health and Well Being Board



b) Multi-Agency strategic planning on CSE

e.g. LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Sub Group

CSE Coordinator

c) Partnership and information-sharing for identification and assessment

e.g. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Vulnerable Adolescents Panel

d) Coordination of multi-agency strategic groups

e.g. LSCB Sub Groups on: Missing/Gangs/VAWG
Coordinators for: Missing/Gangs/Serious Youth violence

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 15 October 2014	Meeting Name: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub- Committee
Report title:		Adoption in Southwark	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Cabinet Member for Children and Schools	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Scrutiny Committee considers the briefing provided below.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. In March 2012 and January 2013 the Government published '*An Action Plan for Adoption: tackling delay*', and '*Further Action on Adoption: finding more loving homes*' which set out a raft of reforms to the adoption system, including the adoption performance 'Scorecard'. Since this time Southwark has run a successful adopter recruitment campaign which has resulted in the number of approved adopters increasing from 21 to 29. The increase in adopters has enabled us to adopt 33 children in 2013/14, which is a significant improvement on 2012/13 when only 21 were adopted. While the timeliness of adoption has also improved, more work is being undertaken to meet the national performance thresholds which are being raised annually.

PERFORMANCE

3. The government measures and compares local authorities by way of the annual adoption Scorecard. It uses 3-year average figures to more accurately depict performance through time. Within the Scorecard there are 10 indicators including four timeliness measures which show how fast children are moving through the system. 2010-13 is the most recently published Scorecard and this report uses it to make comparisons. The 2011-14 Scorecard will be released by the DfE in early in 2015.

The children

Timeliness indicators

A1 - The average time taken between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family is 676 days. Performance on this indicator has been improving over the past five years and the latest 3-year average result shows an improvement of 60 days. This is a positive trend although still short of the Government's 547 day target and 30 days short of the national average. It is above the performance of statistical neighbours.

Work to improve performance in this measure includes concerted action to reduce the length of care proceedings; more robust tracking of children on their adoption

journey; expanding the pool of available adopters as well as more supported and creative family finding approaches.

A1) cannot be looked at in isolation because it does not accurately account for when children are adopted by their foster carers. When this happens, it has an adverse impact on the indicator because of the length of time children will have been with their foster carers before being adopted. Where foster care adoption has taken place the children have usually been living with their foster carers for considerable periods of time before being formally counted as *placed for adoption*. The DfE recognised this A1 limitation and therefore introduced the A10 measure as a counter balance.

A10 - The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster care adoption. Timeliness on this indicator is better than A1 at 504 days. This is considered the true figure measuring time from entry to care to moving in with an adoptive family and is below the A10 England average which was 545 and also the statistical neighbours of 541.

A2 - The average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family has shown improvement. Matching in 2013/14 took 46 fewer days compared to the previous year. This is about a month short of meeting the DfE target of 152 days which has reduced from 182 days the previous year. There is an expectation that local authorities will be able to do more and do it faster.

8 out of the 33 children took longer than 200 days to be matched with an adopter. All were White British (5 boys and 2 girls) except one who was White and Black African. Delay in these circumstances usually occurs when the placement order is contested by the birth parent(s). All individual children are closely monitored and tracked to ensure that any barriers to adoption are identified and dealt with quickly.

A8 - Average length of care proceedings

In April 2014 the updated Public Law Outline (PLO) came into effect and set a statutory 26-week time-limit for completion of care and supervision proceedings. Southwark's 2010-13 3-year average was 49 weeks which is close to the national average. In 2013/14 care proceedings reduced to 45 weeks, however, this is still some way off the statutory time limit. The majority of local authorities are having difficulty meeting the 26 week limit and this is especially true in London where the total number of cases is higher. Southwark is working with three other authorities (Lambeth, Lewisham and Greenwich), and the Principal Registry to improve practice in care proceedings and complete proceedings within the required time frame. The Directors of Social Care in all 4 boroughs meet regularly with the judiciary and CAFCASS to address any issues which may be causing unnecessary delay.

Other indicators

A3 - The percentage of children who wait less than 20 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family has shown an improvement of 4 percentage points from 57% to 61% 2013/14. Southwark is above the national and statistical neighbour averages on this indicator, and shows we are becoming more effective at moving all children through the adoption process from placement order to adoption.

A4 - Adoptions from care (number adopted and percentage leaving care who are adopted) This measures how many children leave care through adoption as a proportion of the total number of children leaving care. So while the number of children being adopted has risen, Southwark also has a high number of children who leave care for other reasons. For example, Southwark has a relatively high rate of 16 and 17 year olds entering care because of homelessness.

However, the trend shows an improvement for the 3-year average of 3 percentage points and brings Southwark closer to the 2010-13 national average of 13%. The total number of adoptions from care in 2013/14 is 33 and represents 12% of all those in care who left care in the same year. The total number of children adopted is a 65% increase on the previous year. Performance is projected to continue to improve.

A5 - Number and percentage of children for whom the permanence decision has changed away from adoption (A5) This is an indication of when the care plan has changed away from adoption and has been increasing for the past three years. Southwark's 2010-13 3-year average was 14% which is above the national average result of 9%. 2013/14 annual performance shows a 15% reversal rate and confirms that performance is in decline.

Southwark has always been ambitious for adoption for children. Looking at 2013/14 performance it can be seen that all 11 children where decisions were reversed relate to changes to care plans made prior to or at final court hearings when a relative emerged late in care proceedings and the final care plan had either been changed by the social work team, or by the court. This is partly explained by courts being less inclined to make Placement Orders when other family arrangements will do following a landmark court ruling in September 2014 (re. BS). In other cases adopters cannot be found for older children or those with complex needs. These children are often in stable placements and the decision is taken to maintain this arrangement in the long-term.

A6 - Number and percentage of BME children leaving care - 43 children (7%). This is in line with the national and statistical neighbour averages. This number and percentage has shown gradual improvement which is projected to continue in 2014-15. At the end of September 2014 11 out of 22 (50%) children adopted were from BME backgrounds. There has generally been a concern about delays for children from BME backgrounds and it is good to see significant progress in this area. Historically, adoption services have waited too long for an appropriate match in terms of ethnic background. While an ethnic match is important, this should not delay placement with a loving prospective adoptive family if one is available which does not match the child's ethnicity.

A7 - Number and percentage of children aged over 5 who are adopted – While Southwark's 3-year average figure has improved from 1% to 2% it is still below national and statistical neighbour averages. However, current performance is encouraging and shows that at the end of September 2014, 4 out of 22 children adopted were age 5 or over (18%).

This improvement has been achieved through promoting adoption by foster carers as well as developing more flexible support packages, which encourages prospective adopters to commit to older children. Foster carer adoption is one of the main ways of increasing the number of older children adopted from care, and more foster carers are being encouraged and supported to take this route.

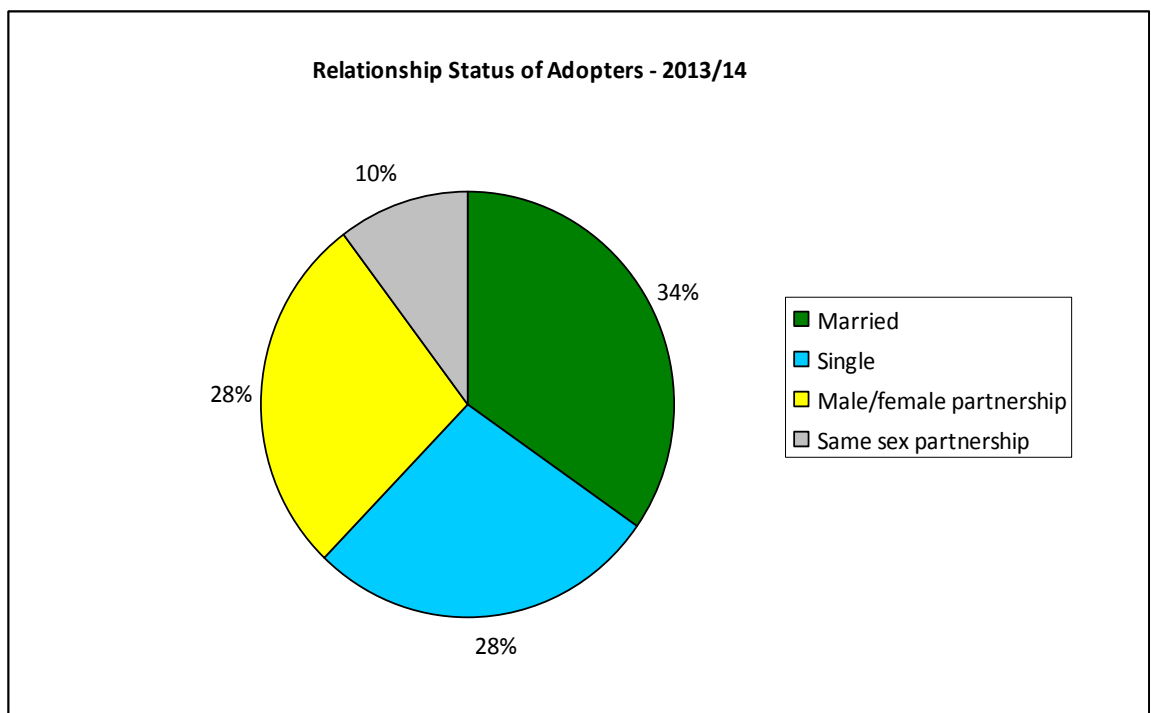
Additionally, recruitment activity in early 2015 will also focus on finding families for sibling groups because older children are often a part of a group.

A9 - Number of children awaiting adoption - According to the 2010-13 Scorecard, Southwark, along with seven other London boroughs, stands in the second highest banding of numbers of children awaiting adoption. This is a result of the high rate of care proceedings in Southwark over the past two years and the proactive pre-birth work undertaken by the assessment and intervention service. Consequently, we would expect higher numbers of children waiting because of the higher rates of admission of younger children entering care.

During 2013/14 the number of children awaiting adoption in Southwark ranged from 39 to 45. Parallel planning, where more than one permanency option considered, is now commonly practiced and is minimising delay. Moreover, the Adoption Taskforce chaired by the Director of Children's Social Care also monitors these children and has been successful in finding solutions for children who are 'stuck' and also in upholding a sense of urgency to achieving permanency for children. Currently, the number waiting for adoption stands at 38. Eight of these are awaiting final court hearings for Placement Orders. Of the remaining 30 only six are not linked with any family as a potential carer.

The adopters

In 2013/14 Southwark approved 29 adoptive families. This is a significant 38% increase in the availability of adopters when compared to the previous year. Of those approved the vast majority (88%) were heterosexual and married and four (14%) were foster carers.



Factors for the rise in adopters include, the Adoption Reform Grant, which enabled increased activity, including successful Christmas and 'Finding 40

Families' campaigns and closer working relationships with Voluntary Adoption Agencies.

In Southwark, as in most London boroughs, there are more people from White ethnic backgrounds applying to adopt than from Black backgrounds. For instance, in 2013/14 there were more than double the numbers of Black Caribbean and Black African children waiting for adoption than adopters of the same ethnic backgrounds. As a result, Black children often wait longer to be matched with a family.

The service recognises this issue and has prioritised the recruitment of more adopters for BME children. The first half of 2013/14 shows that the numbers of BME adopters in the initial stage of the assessment process has increased significantly and it is expected that these adopters will be approved and available for BME children later this year and early next year. Targeted initiatives currently taking place include work with Home for Good, a voluntary sector organisation, to engage churches and promote adoption; using Southwark's Community Engagement Team to develop links in the community; and running a leaflet and poster campaign during Black History Month all aimed at raising the number of potential adopters for BME children.

Timeliness – application to approval

In July 2013 the Government introduced a new two-stage adopter assessment process and aims to approve adopters in six months. Stage One is two months long and involves learning about the needs of looked after children and Stage Two which takes four months involves more intensive assessment and initial matching. The stages can take longer than the prescribed six month timescale if there is good reason from the adopter, for example a bereavement or house move. Below is a breakdown of adopters' timeliness from application (registration of interest) to approval decision.

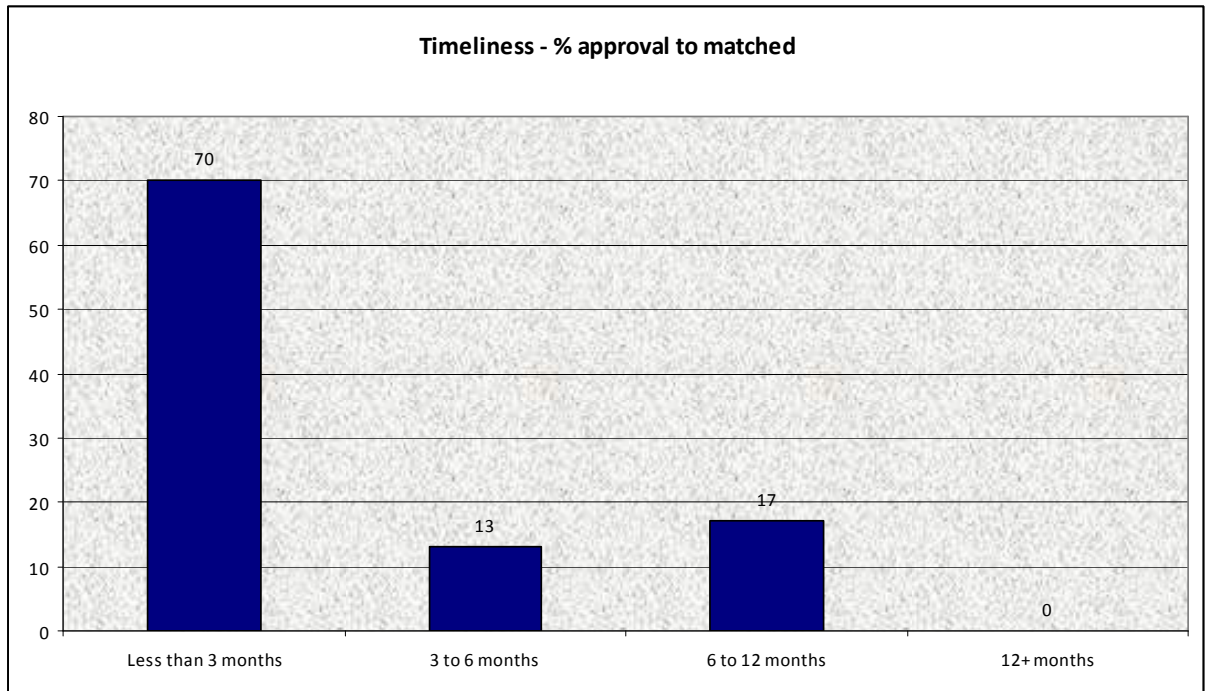
23 adoptive families were approved under the old guidance. 14 of these (61%) were completed in the statutory timeframe of 8 months.

6 families were approved under the new two stage assessment process. Of these 3 (50%) completed the Stage 2 assessment within 6 months.

Considerable work is currently being undertaken to strengthen the assessment system to meet the statutory timescales. There have been a number of challenges integrating the new two stage process during a period of change in the adoption service. The team now has more capacity and more effective tracking systems in place to significantly improve performance in this area.

Timeliness – approval to matched

In 2013/14 almost three quarters of adopters waited less than three months or less to be matched with a child, and of these, one quarter were matched within 1 month. No adopter waited more than 12 months to be matched to a child.



Policy implications

1. The adoption service has a key role to play in supporting the department's permanency policy which is to ensure that children in care have a secure permanent alternative family placement when needed.

Resource implications

2. There are no resource implications arising from this report.

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson Director Children's Social Care	
Report Author	Sadie Dann, Strategic Intelligence Analyst	
Version	Final	
Dated	8 October 2014	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
N/A	N/A	N/A
Cabinet Member		
Date final report sent to the Scrutiny Team	8 October 2014	

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**EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014-15**

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Councillor Victoria Mills	1	Total:	39
		Dated: June 2014	