

Corporate Parenting Committee

Tuesday 8 November 2011

2.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room GO1B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Membership

Councillor Catherine McDonald (Chair)
Councillor Lisa Rajan (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Barrie Hargrove
Councillor Claire Hickson
Councillor Eliza Mann
Councillor Rosie Shimell
Councillor Althea Smith
Barbara Hills
Chris Sanford

Reserves

Councillor Poddy Clark
Councillor Patrick Diamond
Councillor Helen Hayes
Councillor Wilma Nelson

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Access to information

You have the right to request to inspect copies of minutes and reports on this agenda as well as the background documents used in the preparation of these reports.

Babysitting/Carers allowances

If you are a resident of the borough and have paid someone to look after your children, an elderly dependant or a dependant with disabilities so that you could attend this meeting, you may claim an allowance from the council. Please collect a claim form at the meeting.

Access

The council is committed to making its meetings accessible. Further details on building access, translation, provision of signers etc for this meeting are on the council's web site: www.southwark.gov.uk or please contact the person below.

Contact

Bola Roberts on 020 7525 7232 or Paula Thornton 020 7525 4395
email: bola.roberts@southwark.gov.uk; paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk
Webpage: <http://www.southwark.gov.uk>

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Annie Shepperd

Chief Executive

Date: 31 October 2011



Item No.

Title

Page No.



Corporate Parenting Committee

Tuesday 8 November 2011

2.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room GO1B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

Item No.

Title

Page No.

PART A - OPEN BUSINESS

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones should be turned off or put on silent during the course of the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

A representative of each political group will confirm the voting members of the committee.

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

In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear days of the meeting.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Members to declare any personal interests and dispensation in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.

Item No.	Title	Page No.
5.	MINUTES	1 - 4
	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 20 July 2011.	
6.	CHILDREN IN CARE ACCESSING LEISURE PARTNERSHIP	5 - 12
7.	COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE	13 - 39
8.	PERFORMANCE REPORT, SERVICES FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER	40 - 47
9.	FOSTERING SERVICES - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE	48 - 79
10.	ADOPTION SERVICE REPORT	80 - 143
11.	UPDATE ON SOUTHWARK COLLEGE COURSES AND THE PREFERENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	144 - 146
12.	REVIEW AND MONITOR OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN LIGHT OF THE FEE REGIME	147 - 148
13.	PUPIL PERFORMANCE IN 2010/11 AND THE DEVELOPMENTS LINKED TO SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN IN CARE	149 - 151
14.	CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2011/12	152 - 155

ANY OTHER OPEN BUSINESS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following motion should be moved, seconded and approved if the sub-committee wishes to exclude the press and public to deal with reports revealing exempt information:

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-7, Access to Information Procedure rules of the Constitution.”

PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS

Item No.

Title

Page No.

**ANY OTHER CLOSED BUSINESS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF
THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT.**

Date: 31 October 2011



Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on Wednesday 20 July 2011 at 1.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Catherine McDonald (Chair)
Councillor Claire Hickson
Councillor Eliza Mann
Councillor Althea Smith

OFFICER SUPPORT: Rory Patterson (assistant director of specialist services & safeguarding), Chris Saunders (head of looked after children service), Jackie Cook, Caroline Essiet, Jaimee Hendry, Patrick Hinds and Allan Robertson (children's services), Paula Thornton and Bola Roberts (constitutional team).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barrie Hargrove, Lisa Rajan and Rosie Shimell.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

The members listed as present were confirmed as the voting members for the meeting.

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

There were no urgent items.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the open minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. FEEDBACK FROM JOINT MEETING BETWEEN SPEAKERBOX AND MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE AND SPEAKERBOX ACTION PLAN

RESOLVED:

1. That the notes from the consultation meeting between members of the corporate parenting committee and speaker box be accepted.
2. That the recommendations and actions for individual officers, members and speaker box contained within the body of the report be noted.
3. That the meetings between speaker box and corporate parenting committee members continue to be scheduled twice yearly. The next meeting is set for 26th October 2011.
4. That officers continue to develop and refine communication protocols in terms of clearly advising looked after children and school leavers of changes in personnel and services. This was in response to the concern voiced by speaker box in respect of budget cuts/reduction in staff.

7. SPEAKER BOX MISSION STATEMENT

RESOLVED:

1. That the following documents be welcomed and noted:
 - The Speaker Box mission statement
 - The Speaker Box '10 golden rules'
 - Children Looked After participation strategy 2010 -12
 - The Southwark pledge
 - Participation action plan 2011/12
2. Ways in which to develop, support and strengthen the role of all councillors as corporate parents were considered by the committee. It was agreed that officers would develop a guidance note to include a summary and address key questions as a core document to assist all councillors in their role as corporate parents. Officers to circulate the guidance when drafted to all members of the committee for comment.
3. That members of the corporate parenting committee participate in training to clarify the role of the corporate parent as recommended by speaker box council.

4. That all members of the committee, subject to sufficient notice of events, make all reasonable efforts to attend looked after children events.

8. ADOPTION SERVICES - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RESOLVED:

1. That the annual Statement of Purpose for Southwark's Adoption Service for October 2010 as a requirement of National Adoption Regulations (see Appendix 1 of the report) be noted.
2. That it be further noted that a revised statement of purpose for Southwark's Adoption Service will be submitted to the committee in February 2012.
3. That the committee in February 2012 consider the future annual arrangements for the agreement of the statement of purpose.
4. That the Adoption Chair be invited to the relevant meeting when adoption annual report scheduled (currently February 2012).

9. FOSTERING SERVICES - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RESOLVED:

1. That the annual Statement of Purpose for Southwark Fostering Service is a requirement of National Fostering Regulations (see latest version set out at Appendix 1 of the report) be noted.
2. That it be noted that a further revised statement of purpose for the Southwark Fostering Service will be submitted to the committee in February 2012 for consideration.
3. That the committee in February 2012 consider the future annual arrangements for the agreement of the statement of statement of purpose.
4. That the committee at their February 2012 meeting receive a power point presentation on the new regulations to review progress.

10. CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

RESOLVED:

1. That the work plan for 2011/12 as set out in paragraph 5 of the report be noted.
2. That the revised Statements of Adoption and Fostering currently scheduled for 8 November 2011 be rescheduled for 21 February 2012.

11. 16-19 BURSARY SCHEME**RESOLVED:**

1. That from September 2011 the fact that all young people in care and care leavers will be entitled to a bursary of £1,200 per year whilst in full time post 16 learning be noted.
2. That looked after children and care leavers continue to be made fully aware of the scheme and the need for them to apply. Officers undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure that this awareness continues.
3. That the committee undertake an initial review of the scheme in November 2011 as part of the virtual head's report to identify any issues relating to entitlement and take-up.

The meeting ended at 2.30pm

CHAIR:

DATED:

Item No. 6.	Classification: Open	Date: 8 November 2011	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Children in Care accessing Leisure including Fusion Partnership	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Corporate Parenting Committee notes the revised and improved partnership with Fusion for a further 3 year period from April 2011.
2. That Corporate Parenting Committee notes the revised use and allocation of a pupil premium for each child in care
3. That Corporate Parenting Committee notes the ongoing framework for supporting additional sport and leisure activities for all school age looked after children as part of the "Being Healthy" agenda.

SUMMARY

4. This report highlights the Children in Care Services strong performance and commitment to promote and deliver leisure opportunities for children in care.

Key points include: -

- Revised and updated three year partnership agreement with Fusion (Southwark Leisure Services – see Appendix 1)
- Innovative approach to link annual pupil premium payment to targeted school activities (paragraphs 9 & 10)
- The Children in Care Service continues to fund extra curricular activities for children in care based upon interest (paragraphs 23 & 24).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. Sports hobbies and leisure are recognised as key components of a child's care plan. Evidence indicates that looked after children are often able to improve self esteem, rebuild their confidence and develop aspiration through taking part in performing arts, sports, music, constructive recreation and hobbies.
6. Active lifestyles support the Being Healthy agenda by encouraging physical fitness combating obesity and promoting stronger emotional health.
7. The Children in Care Service has developed a number of initiatives under the Being Healthy and Enjoy and Achieve agendas to enable care planning to address every area of a Child's health and well being.
8. Social workers are required to formally report twice a year at the young persons statutory review what efforts have been undertaken to promote leisure, sporting

and hobby activities. This area has to be specifically discussed by the Independent Reviewing Officer at each review who is expected to ask the foster carer or placement provider to articulate what steps they have taken to deliver positive extra curriculum and lifestyle activities. Each young person is invited at their statutory review to feedback how they are accessing and enjoying opportunities being made available and whether there are any other interests they would wish to pursue.

9. In addition the child's access to sports, music and after school activities form a key part of the Personal Education Plan documentation (PEP). PEP meetings are held at the school and ask staff to identify extra curricular activities which might support attainment and the child's engagement with school life. Many schools have significant direct funding to deliver after school provision programmes. The impact of the pupil premium payment will be managed by the Virtual school. Its delivery will be supported through the CLA's service delivery target requiring 100% of initial PEP's being undertaken during the winter term.
10. From September 2011, each child in care has an annual pupil premium allowance of £430. This will be managed at the first PEP meeting held at the school during the Winter Term (Sept – Dec 2011). The school will be asked to identify how the £430 will be used to promote learning, engagement and personal development. This will have to be reviewed following the implementation of the new pupil premium scheme in September 2012.

The virtual school and Children in Care finance will trigger the payment to schools once the PEP (random audits will quality assure for clear action points which links the pupil premium to specific activities to raise attainment) has been completed and uploaded onto Carefirst.

11. Whilst all placement fees include the promotion and delivery of sport and extra curricular leisure activities, Southwark's fostering service also has a designated budget to assist foster carers to fund specialist music and sport tuition.
12. Core fostering standards and placement contracts for all looked after children have a requirement that carers should provide a regular and diverse range of extra curricular activities.
13. Carefirst, the social care database, has been developed to enable recording of extra curricular activities for school aged children in care. This is inputted by Independent Reviewing Officers after each review.
14. Communication for all Southwark foster carers (delivered by Southwark Fostering Team) provides information for Southwark foster carers relating to holiday provision delivered by Southwark Council.
15. Since January 2010 Southwark's Adolescent and Aftercare Service has been delivering a drop in service for looked after children (16+ and care leavers) who may be isolated and/or not in employment, education and training. The drop in is being delivered in partnership with Southwark's targeted youth support programme to link/signpost leisure and recreational opportunities to facilitate young people remaining engaged with services and promoting confidence to resume education or employment activity.
16. Speakerbox magazines (under 12 and adolescent and aftercare versions) provide information relating to key events and promote healthy lifestyles.

17. Since June 2008 all looked after children and care leavers (13-19) have been able to access a free Fusion leisure centre pass under a three year partnership. The “lifestyle membership” enables unlimited access to Fusion’s gyms, swimming facilities and aerobics/body pump classes.
18. The annual CLA GCSE and Celebration Award has special awards for sporting achievement and performing arts, reflecting Southwark’s commitment to support and recognise progress in extra curricular activity.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

19. The three year Fusion partnership has been renegotiated from 1 April 2011 offering up to 150 “lifestyle memberships” for looked after children at any one time.
20. This further three year arrangement will be subject to review (April 2014). Speakerbox will be involved in all evaluation processes. Following feedback from Speakerbox, the new “offer” is for 14-20 year olds rather than 13-19. See Appendix 1 for newly agreed partnership.
21. Managers from Children in Care service and Fusion will meet six monthly to track progress and usage of the partnership agreement.
22. As at 1 September 2011, Fusion have issued 134 cards but only one in five are using their cards once a month (26 regular users). Speakerbox will therefore be profiling the new offer in magazines and reinforcing key messages around the importance of uptake and regular use.
23. Southwark currently has (1 October 2011) 183 looked after children out of 295 school aged children who have a current recorded regular (up to 2 hours a week) hobby, leisure activity or sport. This is currently in excess of our target of 50% all school aged children accessing regular leisure activities (2 hours per week).
24. During 2010/11 Southwark’s fostering services paid an additional £21,500K on supporting additional music and sport activities.
25. The Children in Care Service are currently reviewing with the targeted Youth Support service the impact and continued provision of youth work support to the drop in service.

Policy implications

26. There are no policy implications relating to this report.

Community impact statement

27. Southwark Children in Care Service works to promote the five outcomes for children in care as outlined in Every Child Matters. It is recognised that placement stability, engagement in education and extra curricular access to activities (linked with healthy lifestyles) all contribute to building resilience in young people.

Resource implications

28. This years review of all Children in Care spend protected the resources available to Fostering Services to promote extra curriculum activity.

29. Whilst Children in Care may be a prioritised service because of the vulnerability of this group of children, many universal community services they use are not statutory and may be affected by current fiscal pressures.

Consultation

30. Young people are individually engaged in their care plans which encourage them to participate in extra curriculum activities, develop hobbies and sporting interests. Whilst not compulsory, carers, social workers and schools are asked to encourage wherever possible.
31. In 2008 Speakerbox played a major part in promoting the need for a referral partnership with Fusion, arguing that looked after children and care leavers should have free access to leisure. This initiative has proved successful (popular) and Speakerbox/young people have been involved in reviewing the partnership and its targeted age group from April 2011.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
1	Revised agreement with Fusion

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
Report Author	Chris Saunders, Head of Services for Children in Care	
Version	Final	
Dated	24 October 2011	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law and Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	26 October 2011	

APPENDIX 1**CHILDREN IN CARE – ACCESS TO SOUTHWARK
LEISURE FACILITIES****PROTOCOL****Introduction**

Since April 2008 Southwark's Looked After Services and Fusion have had a working protocol to provide free "lifestyle memberships" to older children in care and care leavers.

Under Statutory Guidance issued under the "Care Matters" and "Every Child Matters" framework, Southwark has responsibilities as Corporate Parents to provide a range of targeted interventions for Children in Care to promote healthy lifestyles and access to sport and leisure opportunities.

Fusion is commissioned by the London Borough of Southwark to provide leisure facilities and services. This protocol has been made possible through Fusions wish to support one of the most vulnerable groups of young people in Southwark.

Service Description

The protocol provides for children looked after and care leavers to receive free memberships to attend any Fusion facility in the London Borough of Southwark.

Up to 150 lifestyle memberships (top membership available) will be issued to children in care and care leavers aged 14-20.

In addition to accessing gym and swimming facilities a comprehensive range of classes i.e. step, body pumping etc will also be available under the terms of the free membership.

Application Process

The application process is led by child in care services through the young person's allocated social worker (14-18) or personal advisor (18-20). The leaflet describing the protocol and services available also acts as an application form which is approved by the Head of Service.

Under the protocol Peckham Pulse has been identified as the enrolment centre which can ensure reception staff are fully briefed and that any confusion with regards to how the scheme works or young people feeling stigmatised is kept to an absolute minimum.

Peckham Pulse staff will be able to accept the leaflet/application form as authorisation and issue a membership card in the same way as any other Southwark resident.

Membership and renewal of their card will be on an annual basis with free membership lasting until the young person reaches the age of 20.

Monitoring and Evaluation

All approvals issued by the Child in Care Service (Adolescent and Aftercare) will be logged on their data base (Carefirst) including date of referral.

Fusion and Child in Care Services will identify lead administration officers who will regularly exchange information relating to new approvals and new membership cards issued.

Leisure Service usage (uptake) will be monitored by Fusion who will be able to report and track on which young people/care leavers are using the service, the frequency and which leisure facility they are attending.

The protocol will be monitored on a bi annual basis by lead officers in Fusion and Children in Care Services.

Under protocol arrangements, young people who do not use the service over a six month period will be written to by the Head for Children in Care Services to confirm that their membership has been concluded or will not be renewed at the end of their membership period (as appropriate following six monthly review meetings).

During the bi annual meetings standard reports will be provided to provide the following key information:

- 1) Total number of cards approved by CLA Services over the preceding six month period by age, gender, ethnicity, placement address (CiC Service).
- 2) The number of young people/care leavers approved who have actually attended Peckham Pulse and obtained their membership card (Fusion).
- 3) Of the total memberships issued under the scheme, how many sessions were attended by each member and centre location.
- 4) Overview management of the scheme to determine whether child looked after services are utilising 150 memberships and are they regularly accessing the service.

Each year an annual report will be provided for Southwark's Corporate Parenting Committee and Corporate Commissioning Services outlining the progress of the protocol.

Agreement/Protocol Period

Following a formal review of the protocol by the Corporate Parenting Committee in November 2010 and service review in Jan 2011 it is proposed that this agreement be extended for a further three year period from 1 April 2011 until the 31 March 2014.

An update authorisation/information leaflet will be developed by Southwark Communications Team, Child in Care Services, Fusion and Speakerbox representation for use from 1 April 2011

.....
Chris Saunders
Head of Service Children in Care

.....
Claire Jenkins
Divisional Sports and Community Development Manager

.....
Tara Quinn
Leisure Contract & Facilities Manager

Item No. 7.	Classification: Open	Date: 8 November 2011	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Commissioning Strategy for Children in Care	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Committee notes the updated Commissioning Strategy for Children in Care (Appendix 1) setting out the key priorities for:
 - redirecting resources to reduce the need for children coming into care
 - improving outcomes for children in care
 - improving the quality and value for money of services for children in care.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The commissioning strategy for services for children in care has been reviewed in the light of a number of key factors, including the following factors in particular:
 - The 2011/2014 budget strategy requires significant reductions in children in care placement expenditure as part of the contribution to overall savings requirements.
 - The need to exploit the potential for further reducing the long term numbers of children in care by more effective early intervention, support for children and families on the cusp of care and alternatives to care.
 - The need to further improve the value for money of placements in terms of cost and quality, and promote outcomes for children looked after.
 - Meeting statutory guidance on the sufficiency of child care commissioned locally.
3. Given these factors it is essential that the commissioning of services is done within a framework that leads to the required changes, rather than simply re-commissioning the existing pattern of services. The strategy will provide a basis for evaluating all future detailed commissioning proposals and contracting processes.
4. The commissioning strategy is underpinned by a needs analysis which is updated on an ongoing basis as new data is received, and used for evaluating effectiveness of the strategy. The strategy will be developed and updated on an ongoing basis as set out in the document.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The commission strategy is based around the 3 key priorities of; redirecting resources to prevent children coming into care; improving outcomes for children looked after and obtaining increased value for money from placements.
6. The Executive Summary of the document (Appendix 1) highlights the key issues.

Policy implications

7. The commissioning strategy has implications in terms of the policy on procuring services for looked after children, and services that prevent children coming into care.

Community impact statement

8. The commissioning strategy is designed to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children in Southwark (those in need or potentially in need of being looked after by the council) whilst reducing expenditure. This will be achieved by improving quality and value for money of placements, and by diverting more children from the high cost care system through support in the community. This in turn will deliver savings in line with the council's budget strategy which has been subject to a separate equalities impact statement.

Resource implications

9. The commissioning strategy is intended to enable the children in care placement budget to be reduced in line with the children's services budget strategy.

Consultation

10. The commissioning strategy is based on the principles set out in the Children and Young People's Plan which was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders. It is also the delivery mechanism for the 2010/11 – 2013/14 budget decisions which have been consulted upon.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Commissioning strategy background	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Jodie Harris 020 7525 3967

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Commissioning Strategy for Children in Care

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Kerry Crichlow, Assistant Director, Strategy and Support.	
Report Author	Jodie Harris, Principal Strategy Officer Adrian Ward, Head of Strategy, Planning and Performance	
Version	Final	
Dated	25 October 2011	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	25 October 2011	

APPENDIX 1

Children in Care

Commissioning Strategy

London Borough of Southwark

2010/11 – 2013/14

Updated September 2011

Content

- 1.0** Executive Summary
- 2.0** Introduction
- 3.0** Methodology
- 4.0** Local Strategic Framework
- 5.0** Children Looked After Commissioning priorities
- 6.0** Needs Analysis
 - 6.1** Profiles
 - 6.2** Looked After Children Analysis
- 7.0** Budget Savings and Efficiencies
- 8.0** Commissioning Activities

1.0 Executive Summary

Southwark's commissioning strategy for children in care seeks to deliver the following key priorities and actions:

Priority one – Redirect resources to reduce the need for children to come into care and to remain safely within their families

- further develop “cusp of care” services aimed at providing alternatives to care for children and co-ordinated help for their families.
- through early intervention ensure that effective help is provided quickly, and the need for statutory intervention is reduced
- Increase adoptions, and support other ways of enabling children to leave care.

Priority two – Improve outcomes for children in care

- maintain a strong focus on placement stability help improve outcomes such as educational attainment by increasing the range of suitable placements, and by strengthening placement support
- support the market to deliver placements and other services locally, including increased specialism in the in-house foster care services to reduce the need for independent fostering and residential services out of borough
- ensure universal services work together to support the needs of children in care, and care leavers.

Priority three – Ensure provision for children's care is good quality, efficient and effective

- improve procurement to obtain better value for money from external providers
- ensure unit costs of all providers are understood and monitored alongside outcomes, and high cost areas are subject to challenge and review.
- further reduce the proportion of children looked after in residential care settings
- ensure the views of children help shape the development and monitoring of service standards

These changes are essential for improving outcomes for children and delivering financial sustainability in the context of the £18m savings required across children's services by 2013/14.

It is recognised that this strategy involves a change to the current range of provision locally, and this will be achieved through the better market management, including in-house services. Re-commissioning of existing

services will be tested against the extent to which they support the priorities in this strategy.

An underlying requirement is that statutory requirements are met, including progress being made towards securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children in line with “sufficiency” guidance.

1.0 Introduction

‘Commissioning is the process for deciding how to use the total resources available for families in order to improve outcomes in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way.’

DfE, *Good Commissioning Principals*

The purpose of this commissioning strategy is to effectively understand and plan for the current and future needs of looked after children in Southwark. The strategy covers 2011-2014 and provides a robust framework to ensure the system, as a whole, is effectively responding to the needs of looked after children and those at risk of becoming looked after.

Locally we continue to work hard to ensure we are delivering the most effective and efficient provision for the most vulnerable children and young people in the borough. Much progress has been made in improving the outcomes for looked after children however we recognise there is still a discrepancy between outcomes for this group and others. We are committed to closing this gap. *Care Matters Time to Deliver for Children in Care (2008)* sets out the ambitious national agenda to improve services for children in care, on the cusp of care, and leaving care or custody. In line with this agenda, we are clear that improving the life chances for those most at risk children and young people requires working with partner agencies and this strategy attempts to align a number of partner strategies and service plans where there are cross cutting issues, shared targets and objectives.

The strategy recognises that commissioning for Looked after Children takes place on multiple levels including **individual commissioning** to meet individual children’s needs, **service level** to meet a specific cohort or outcome and **strategically** across the borough. The document therefore provides a vision which is underpinned by principals and standard to ensure activity across all three levels of commissioning is consistent. Having a successful strategic commissioning process will allow us to effectively respond to local need and ensure we are targeting services while providing value for money. It will highlight opportunities to redesign services, develop our local market and provide greater efficiencies through reduced duplication and better integrated working. In order to ensure we are able to continue to achieve good outcomes for looked after children and control costs, the document will ensure a long term strategic approach to planning and commissioning services is maintained. This will reduce the likelihood of expensive spot commissioning and ensure we are effectively responding to the sufficiency duty for local authorities.

2.0 Methodology

The development of the strategy is underpinned by the 4 point DFE commissioning model (right). This structured methodology will be applied to all commissioned activity. In addition it will be used to achieve the three commissioning priorities and applied to identify and support the yearly forward plan of activities against the three priorities. The phases are summarised below.



1. Phase 1 – Understand	
Aim	To identify local needs, resources and priorities and agree what the desired end product should be.
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake needs analysis ▪ Undertake Market Analysis ▪ Identification of gaps
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive understanding of needs and provision in the system ▪ Agreed end product
2. Phase 1 – Plan	
Aim	To map out and consider different ways of addressing the need identified through the needs assessment.
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding of research and best practice ▪ alignment of provider capacity with needs projections ▪ engagement with existing and potential future providers
Outcome	Comprehensive view of preferred provision
3. Phase 1 – Do	
Aim	To make investment decisions based on appropriate action identified in the 'plan' stage to secure delivery of desired services.
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ organise – establish reporting relationships, spans of control and strategic business areas ▪ resource – identify resources required (human, capital, ICT) ▪ change management – identify causes of potential resistance and find solutions to manage or eliminate them ▪ appoint commissioning champion
Outcome	Activity identified in phase 2 complete and embedded
4. Phase 1 – Review	
Aim	To monitor service delivery against expected outcomes and report how well it is doing against the plan.
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of formal arrangement to monitor performance against set criteria ▪ Identify those services that are not meeting or are finding it difficult to meet targets set ▪ Support services to improve performance and outcomes ▪ Develop areas where performance is not meeting need
Outcome	Ongoing effective and efficient services which are meeting need

3.0 Local Strategic Framework

Locally, we have agreed a strategic framework for children in care to underpin the future commissioning of their provision. The challenge going forward is how we use the strategic commissioning approach to redesign services to achieve strategic objectives, as well as the efficiencies needed. A summary of the strategic framework is set out below:

Children and Young People's Plan

Our CYPP has two specific priorities for children in care. The Children and Families Trust is accountable for progress against these priorities, which are:

1) *Children in care achieving their educational potential* – by more children and young people in care attending school, realising their educational potential and overcoming the gap in achievement with their peers. For partners to be working together to maximise local expertise and provision, offer flexible, quality educational opportunities appropriate to their need, and support them when changing schools.

2) *Young people in care succeed as young adults* – by more young people in care living in a stable placement, taking up education, employment or training, and managing independent lives successfully. All partners bringing together their services to support those under 22 years of age into adulthood, and specialist expertise will be available to ensure the most vulnerable are safeguarded.

4.0 Children Looked After Commissioning Priorities

Priority one – Redirect resources to prevent children coming into care and to remain with their families

In line with Children's Act, Southwark believes that wherever possible children should remain with their families. Every effort should be made to offer targeted, joined up support for children on the cusp of care, so children come into care when there is no other alternative. When children come into care, we will seek to reunite children with their parents and extended family as an alternative to remaining in the care long term. Whenever possible placements with family will be explored unless there is clear indications that this is not in the child's best interests

Priority two – Improve outcomes for children in care

We strive to ensure the outcomes for children in care are the same as for all children. Whilst in care children and young people are helped to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing. Stable placements, that meet a child's needs, with accessible multiagency support is central to achieving these outcomes. This will be delivered through a mix of corporate parent and external resources, delivered in partnership with placement providers to ensure that those in care have access to the right support, at the right time. Increasing the number of Southwark foster carers will reduce our use of expensive out of borough placements and keeping children closer to home will reduce potential disruption. Supporting looked after children to make a successful transition into adulthood is essential to improve life chances and is therefore central to this strategy.

Priority three – Ensure provision for children care is good quality, efficient and effective

All provision, especially placements should be of good quality. We will ensure providers improve the efficiency and effectiveness of provision. We will monitor quality and ensure it is in line with agreed standards and manage the costs of providers

5.0 Needs Analysis

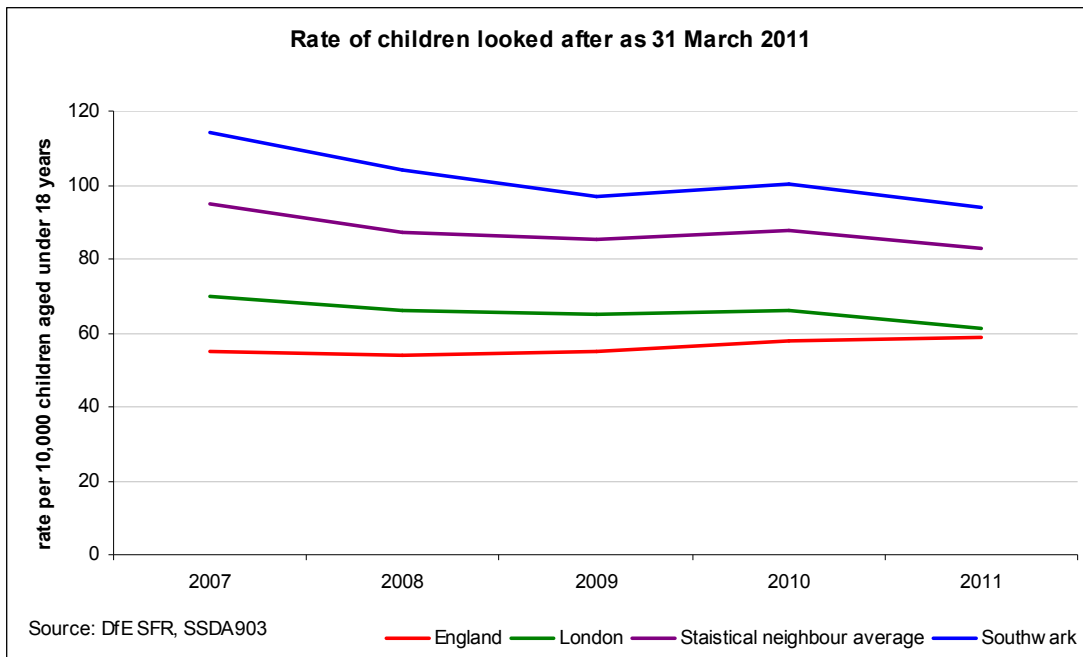
The needs analysis forms part of the ‘understand’ phase of the commissioning process. The overarching needs analysis, which is summarised below, will provide a foundation for understanding the looked after children population, including predicting future needs and will indicate the geographical distribution of need, identify gaps in provision.

The needs analysis will be built upon on an ongoing basis as new data is obtained, and fed into the commissioning process.

The following section provides an overview of the LAC population in Southwark and highlights current performance. An in-depth analysis is attached in Appendix 1.

Summary of Needs Analysis

5.1 Looked after Children



Numbers of children looked after 2010 and 2011 and Rates per 10000 children

	Number		Rate	
	2010	2011	2010	2011
England	64,410	65,520	58	59
London	10,960	10,390	66	61
Inner London	4,910	4,600	81	75
Camden	265	275	67	69
City Of London	15	10	159	93
Hackney	295	265	57	51
Hammersmith & Fulham	260	250	82	79
Haringey	590	615	121	125
Islington	315	325	94	94
Kensington & Chelsea	155	130	52	43
Lambeth	565	500	105	92
Lewisham	525	485	90	81
Newham	560	490	85	74
Southwark	555	520	100	94
Tower Hamlets	350	325	70	63
Wandsworth	205	205	41	40
Westminster	245	210	71	57

Around 520 children were looked after by Southwark (Mar 2011). The table shows the numbers are generally above that of statistical neighbours. The trend for the past few years has been of decline, but numbers are rising slightly again. As a rate per head of population this is some 85% above that of Hackney, a relatively comparable borough in many ways. **There is therefore clearly potential to significantly reduce total numbers in care, and this is the outcome this commissioning strategy is seeking to achieve.** Nevertheless it is recognised that significant reductions would take some time to work through the system and the demand for placements in the short term is likely to remain at around 500.

Analysis of trends of those entering care shows that of our children in care population as at end March 2010 204 children entered into care at aged five or under (39.1%), of these 66 were under one (12.6%) and 136 (26.1%) were aged 13 or above at time of entry. On average around 5-6 children became subject to care proceedings each month. Analysis shows that the majority of children entering care aged 13-17 years old have been looked after for three years or less.

Most children are placed with foster carers (73.6%) or within semi independent placements.

Placement stability has declined over the previous years rising to 14.1% of children experiencing three placements or more in 12 months. However, long term stability has been strong, with 72.2% of children aged 16 or under and looked after continuously in the same placement for 2 years or more or placed for adoption. Outcomes for children in care across the five ECM outcomes remain in line or slightly above statistical neighbours in most cases.

Adoption: Recent comparative data for 2011 shows adoption rates are below average, with 17 adoptions completed in the year. This indicates there is scope for reducing numbers of children looked after by this route. However this needs to be considered alongside the growth in special guardianship orders of which there were 21 last year. These offer an alternative form of permanency planning but one that is arguably less suitable for younger children and this issue is to be subject of a more detailed analysis.

Appendix 1 provides further information, including information on the relatively high referral rates.

6.0 Currents Services and costs and the savings agenda

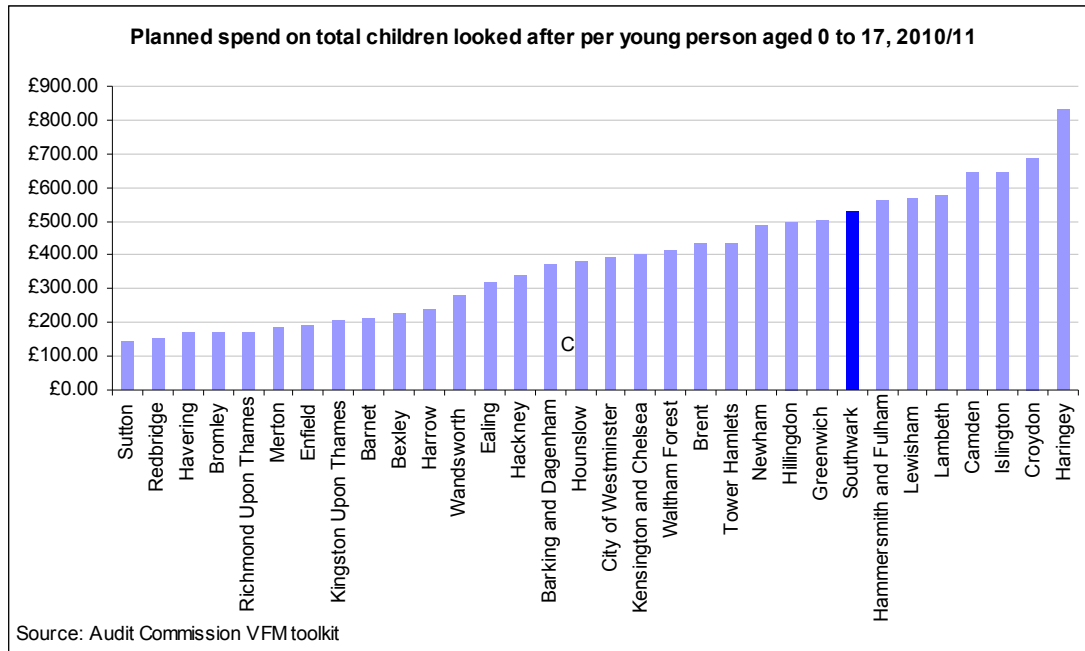
Children's Services currently commissions all children's placements from a range of in house and external providers. Almost half of the specialist children's services budget is spent on the children in care population. External placement commissioning accounts for 60% of all expenditure for the children in care service which is broadly made up of placement related costs as set out in the table below. The nature of children's placements is that they are very high cost, therefore the management of the placement market is crucial to ensure cost effective placements that achieve the best possible value for money.

2010-11 social care placements budgets	£m	budgeted cost per placement £	placement FTE
In- House Fostering	4.63	14,261	325
Independent / Agency Fostering	4.12	50,245	82
Residential Placements	6.28	139,450	45
Secure	0.28	279,579	1
Semi- Independent	1.71	46,251	37
Family Placements	0.34	10,021	34
Mother & Baby	0.54		
18+ Sec 24	0.20	10,116	20
Special Guardianship	0.56	4,911	115
Residence Orders	0.63	7,467	85
Adoptions	1.03	6,624	155
Disabilities	1.64	102,568	16
Youth offending	0.35	99,316	3.5
	22.33		

The above costs on children looked after services are significantly higher than the budgets for other aspects of specialist support services for children in need. For example the budget for Family Support services is £5.6m, less than 25% of the looked after children budget.

It can be seen that, in line with the strategy, there are potentially significant gains to be made by increasing the proportion of provision that the in-house fostering service delivers.

Total spend on looked after children per head of population is top quartile, as would be expected given the high numbers looked after.



Savings

Under the current local government funding settlement Southwark Council is required to make unprecedented savings of 25% in core funding over 3 years, and is also losing significant resources from the reduction or withdrawal from a range of specific grants. For Children's Services as a whole this translates as £18m core funding over 3 years (£5.76m 2011/12, £6.17m 2012/13 and £6.06m 2013/14). Planned savings include £2.5m on placement care packages (£1m 11/12; £600k 12/13 and 900k 13/14).

To deliver this agenda in a sustainable way, whilst still delivering the outcomes set out in the Children and Young People's Plan, provision will need to support a smaller number of children and young people through more effective targeted intervention that prevents children coming into care by supporting them better in their communities and families. This objective underpins the commissioning strategy.

7.0 Commissioning Activity

The following table sets out the issues to be addressed through our commissioning strategy in regard to each priority area. These have been developed through an in house review of current ways of working and provision.

Commissioning priority	Issues to be addressed
<i>Priority one – Redirect resources to prevent children coming into care and to remain with their families</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better use of preventative and parenting support resources across the borough to ensure that only those children for whom there is no alternative within their own family come into care • Develop effective Early Help models in line with the Munro report as part of our broader early intervention strategy and strengthen multi-agency work and use of common assessment tools. • Reduce number of children coming into care, particularly those entering within the older age groups for short periods of time and joined up support for children on the cusp of care • Increase rate of adoption from care through increasing the recruitment of prospective adoptive parents
<i>Priority two – Improve outcomes for children in care</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve placement stability by minimising disruption through monitoring of placements and early intervention activities • Increase the in house service's ability to provide for the most complex children that are often placed within the independent market. These include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a local, in house market of long term foster carers, particularly for those with specialist placement needs such as sibling groups and those with LDD (i.e. autism). This should include commissioning of multi agency provision to support these children with complex needs. - Improve range and type of placements for teenagers with challenging behaviours that are alternative to semi independent and residential care • Where possible place more children within the local area in line with sufficiency requirements • Targeted services to support carers and children in placement. That is, Care Link (CAMHS), CLA education advisers, Designated LAC nurse, out of hours foster carer support • Screening at 13 years to identify vulnerability to teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and crime • Influence the commissioning of universal services to support the quality and stability of placements of children looked after, for example health and schools support.
<i>Priority three – Ensure provision</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve range of procurement vehicles used to commission external providers that support cost reduction, increase

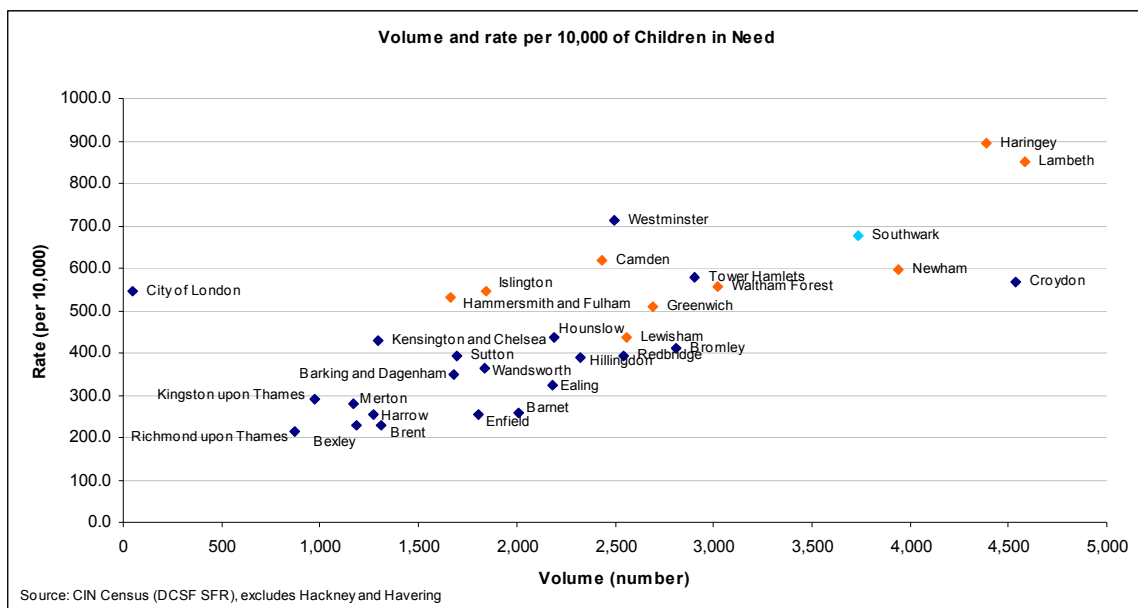
Commissioning priority	Issues to be addressed
<i>for children in care is good quality, efficient and effective</i>	<p>quality and meet local needs of the care population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the use of independent placement providers and residential care proportionate to the numbers of children in care • Ensure value for money reviews are undertaken in all areas of children in care commissioning where high costs are identified and that costs of providers are effectively reviewed and managed • Strengthen mechanisms for obtaining the input of children and young people's views into the commissioning and monitoring of all aspects of services for children in care, at all stages the in child's journey.

Children in Need

Nationally, there were 382,300 children in need at 31 March 2010 of which Southwark accounted for 1.0% of children in need. In Southwark there were 3,737 children in need at 31 March 2010, which was an increase of 20.5% from 2009. This represented a rate of 677.4 per 10,000 children, which was considerably higher than the national rate of 339.0 per 10,000 children.

Southwark had the 5th highest number of children in need, improving from 2nd highest in the previous year and had the 4th highest rate per 10,000 children.

Figure 1 – Volume and rate of children in need by London boroughs



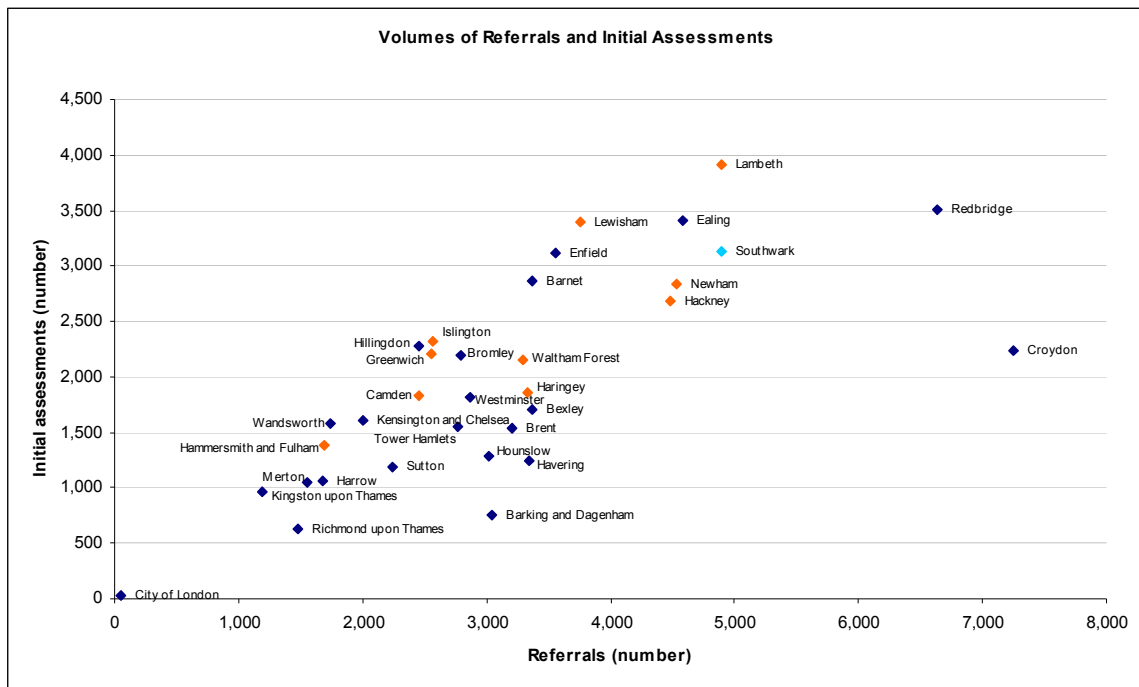
There were a total of 5,702 episodes of need throughout the year (includes children with multiple episodes).

During 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2010 there were 2,517 episodes of need starting and 1,965 episodes of need that came to an end.

Nationally there were 607,500 referrals to children's social care services in the year ending 31 March 2010, an increase of 11% from the previous year and in Southwark there was a decrease of 13% of referrals received (4,892). Although the majority of boroughs had an increase in the volume of referrals in 2010 compared with 2009 Southwark still remains with the 4th highest volume of referrals in London, improving from 2nd highest in 2009.

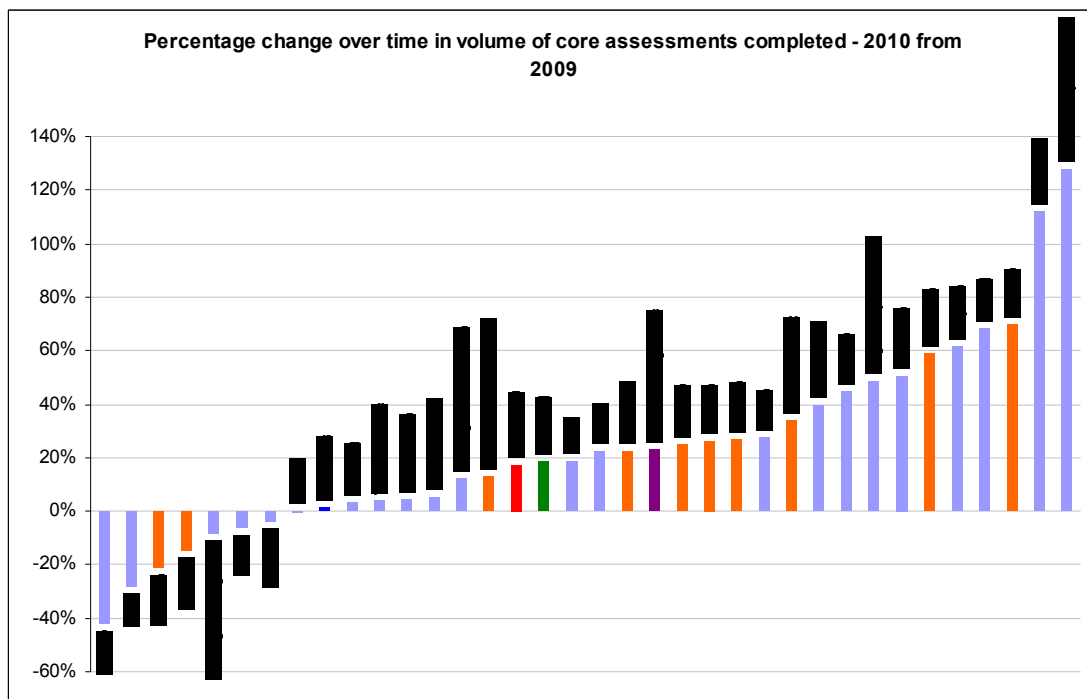
Nationally there were 390,600 initial assessments completed in the year ending 31 March 2010 and in Southwark there were 3,136 initial assessments completed. Southwark had the 5th highest number of initial assessments completed in 2010 improving slightly from 4th position in 2009. Similar to the volume of referrals a large number of London boroughs have shown a considerable increase in volumes of initial assessments.

Figure 2 – Volume of referrals and initial assessments by London boroughs



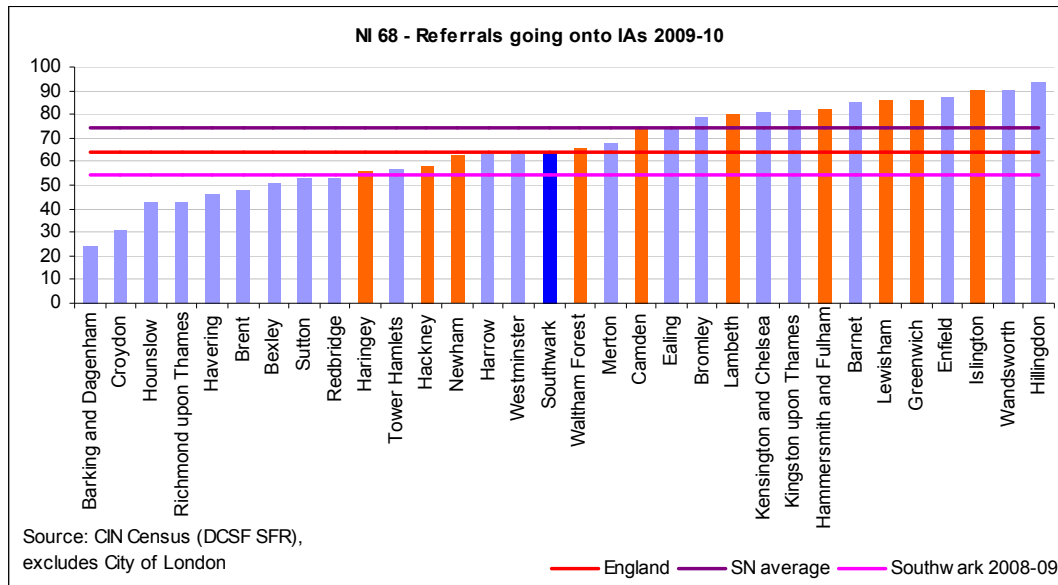
Nationally there were 141,500 core assessments completed in the year ending 31 March 2010, an increase of 17.3% from 2009 and in Southwark there were 2,502 core assessments completed (increase of 1.3% from 2009). For the fifth consecutive year Southwark had the highest number of core assessments completed in 2010. A large number of boroughs have shown a considerable increase in the volume of core assessments completed compared to 2009.

Figure 3 – Change in volume of core assessments completed by London boroughs



The rate of referrals going onto initial assessments has improved by 10 percentage points (64.1%) in 2010 bringing us in line with the national rate (64.3%). Although this is our highest rate over the last 5 years we still remain below the statistical neighbour average (74.1%). Southwark is now ranked 17th out of the 32 London boroughs (excluding City of London) compared with 23rd in 2009.

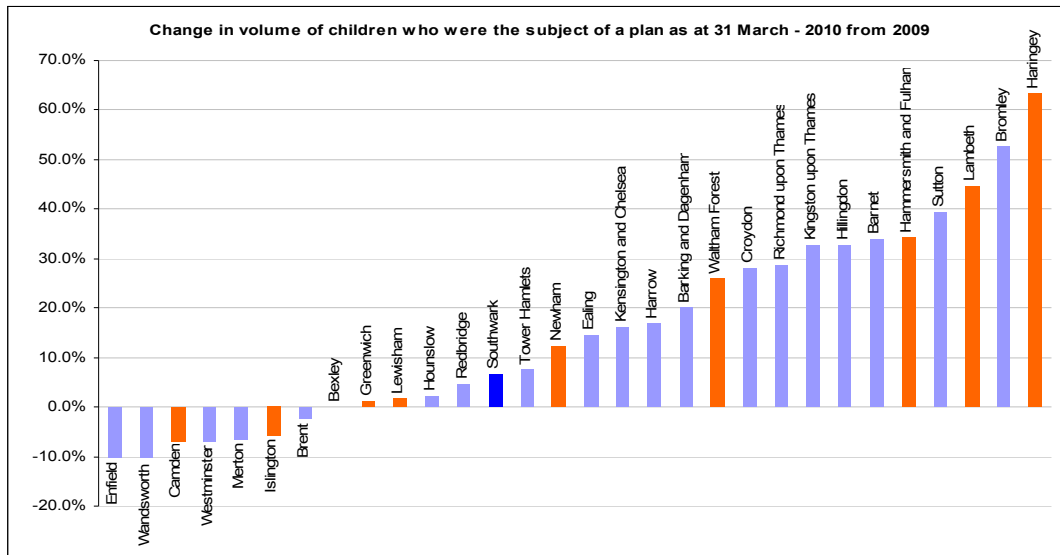
Figure 4 – Rate of conversion of referrals to initial assessments by London boroughs



Children who were the subject of a child protection plan

Nationally, there were 35,700 children who were the subject of a child protection plan at 31 March 2010. In Southwark there were 336 children who were the subject of a child protection plan at 31 March 2010, which was an increase of 6.7% since 31 March 2009 (315 children subject to a child protection plan). This increase in volume was also evident in a number of London boroughs with Haringey and Bromley showing over a 50% increase in volume over the last 12 months.

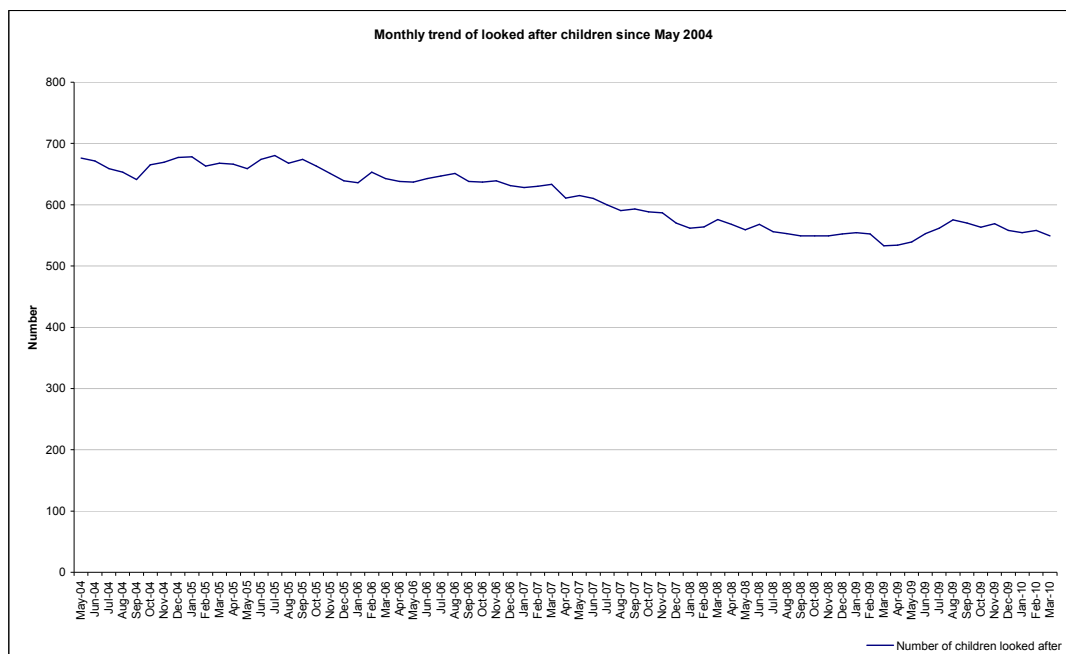
Figure 5 – Change in volume of child protection plans by London boroughs



Children Looked After

Monthly trends show a steady decline in the number of children in care since 2004.

Figure 6 – Monthly trends of children in care



Nationally, there were 64,400 children in care at 31 March 2010 of which Southwark accounted for 1.0% of children in care. In Southwark there were 555 children in care at 31 March 2010, which was an increase of 3.7% from 2009. This represented a rate of 101 per 10,000 children, which was considerably higher than the national rate of 58 per 10,000 children.

Southwark had the 6th highest number of children in care, improving from 4th highest in the previous year and had the 5th highest rate per 10,000 children.

Figure 7 – Number and rate per 10,000 children in care as at end March 2010 by London borough

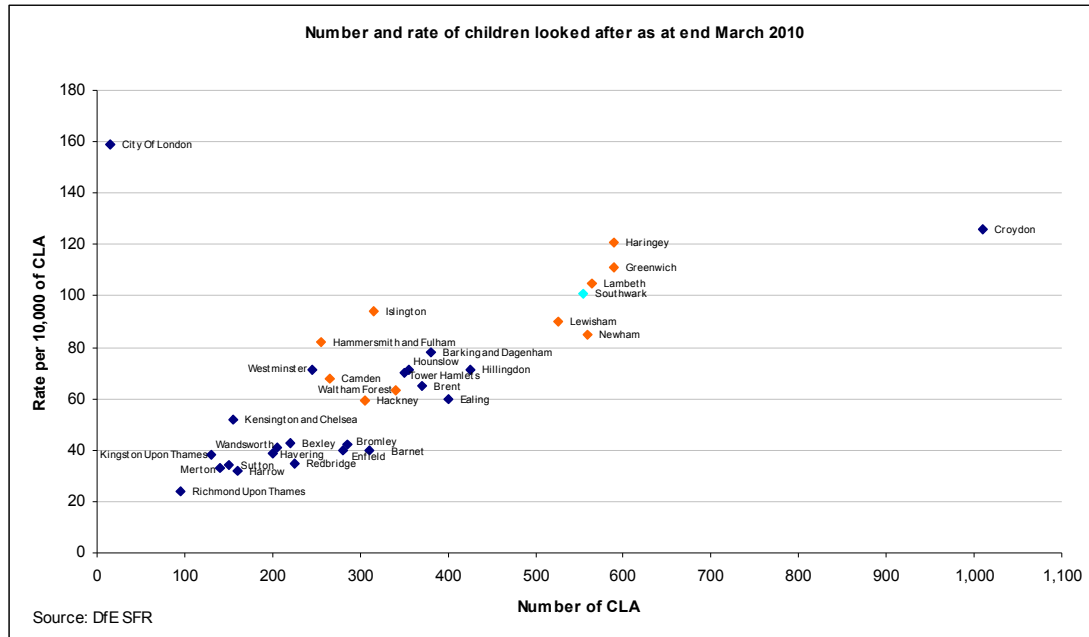


Figure 8 – Number of children in care as at 31st March 2010 by London boroughs

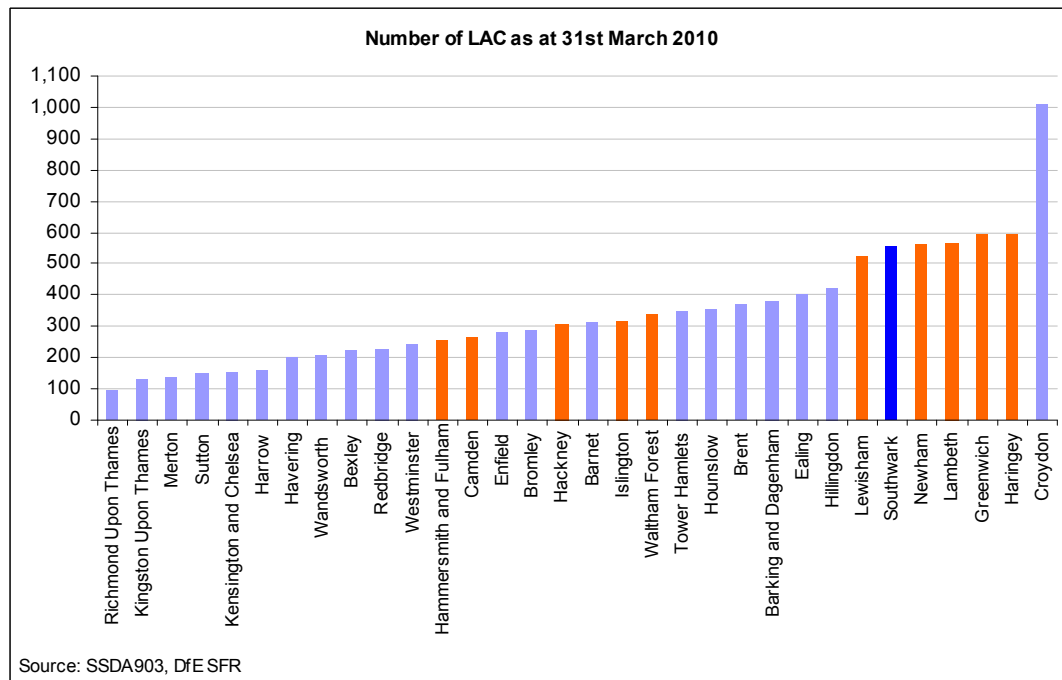
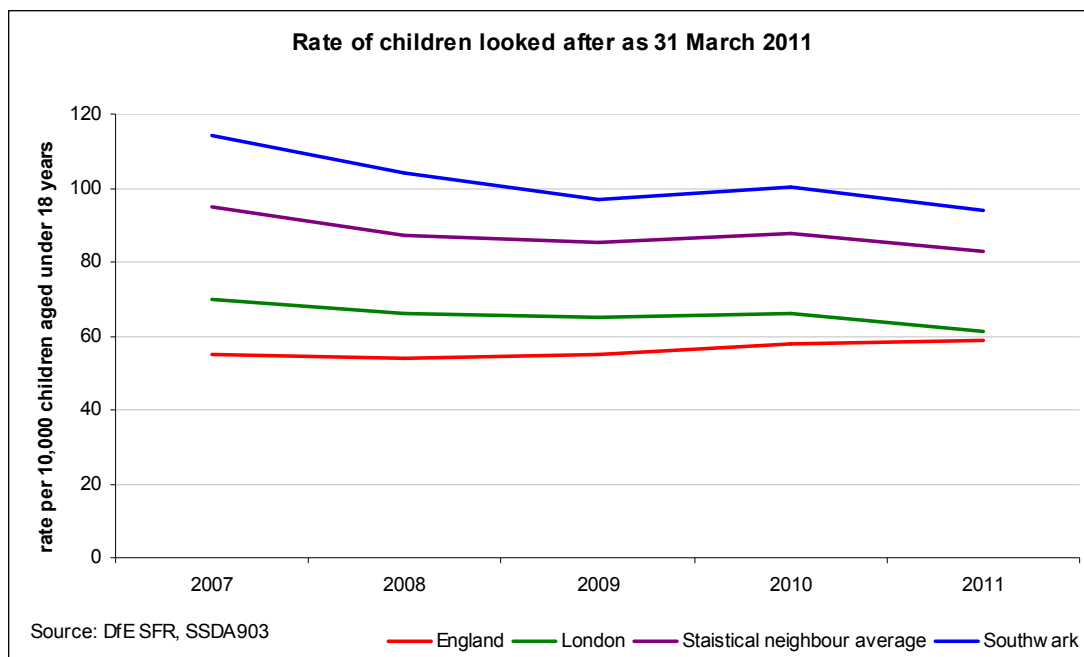


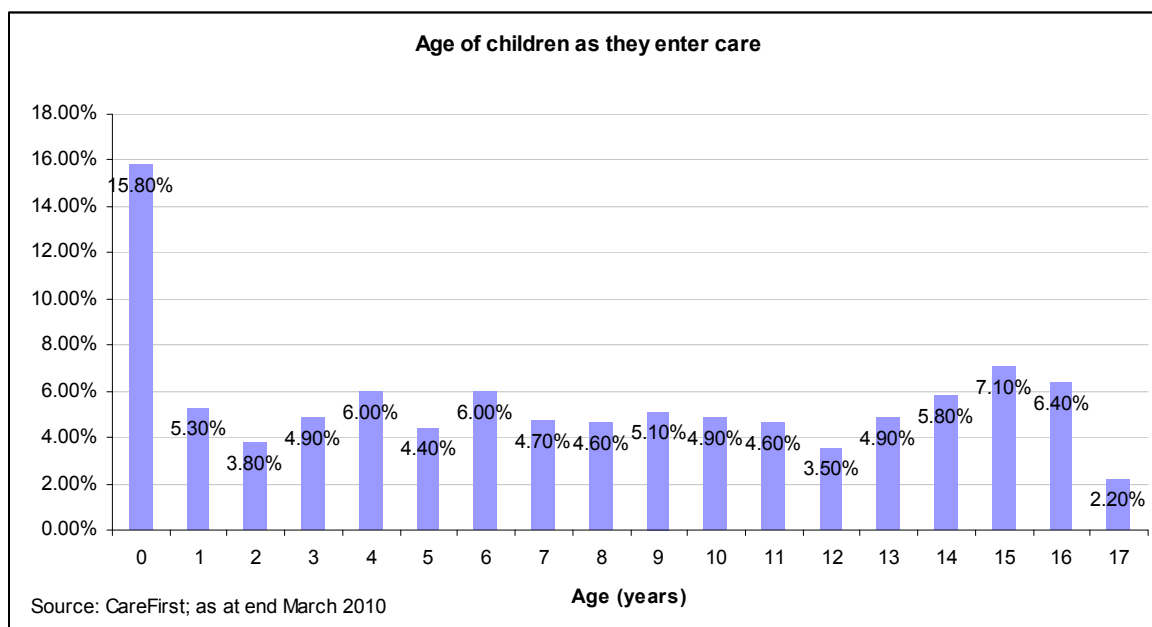
Figure 9 – Rate of children in care over time as at end March 2011



Age Distribution

Two-fifths (40%) of children in care at end March 2010 were under 6 years when they came into care. One third (33%) of children were aged between 6 and 12 and a quarter (26%) were 13 or over.

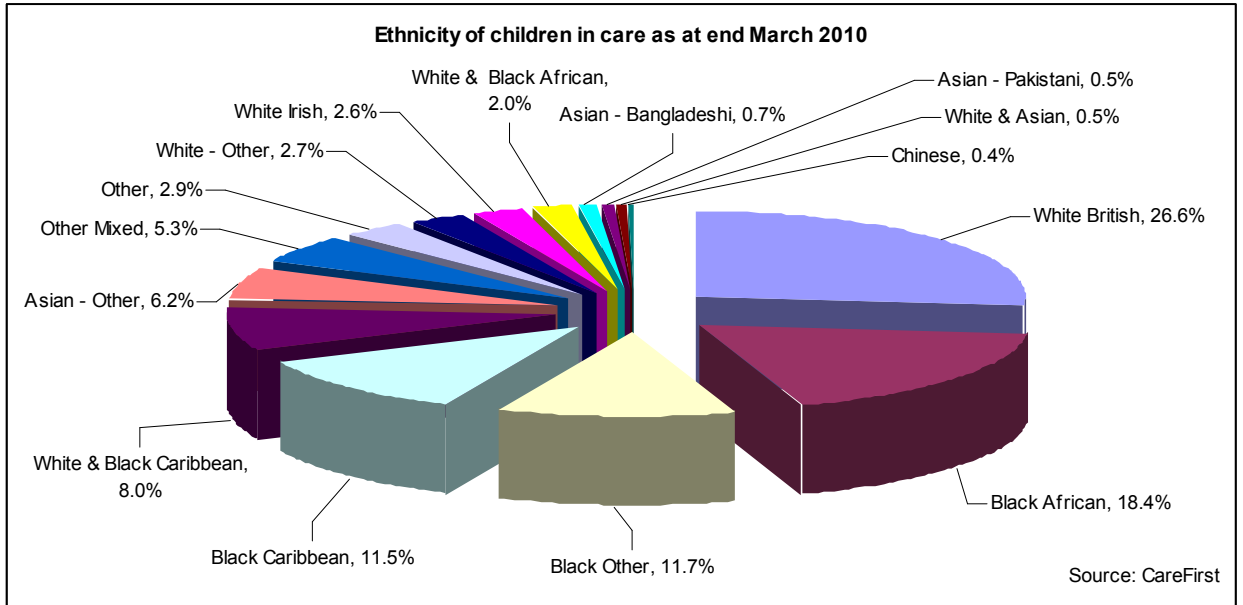
Figure 10 – Age distribution of children looked after as they entered care end March 2010



Ethnicity

Although 42% of children in care were of a black ethnic background as at end March 2010, white British children in care accounted for over a quarter (27%) of children. Black African accounted for nearly one fifth of children in care and over one in ten children were from an other black background and black Caribbean.

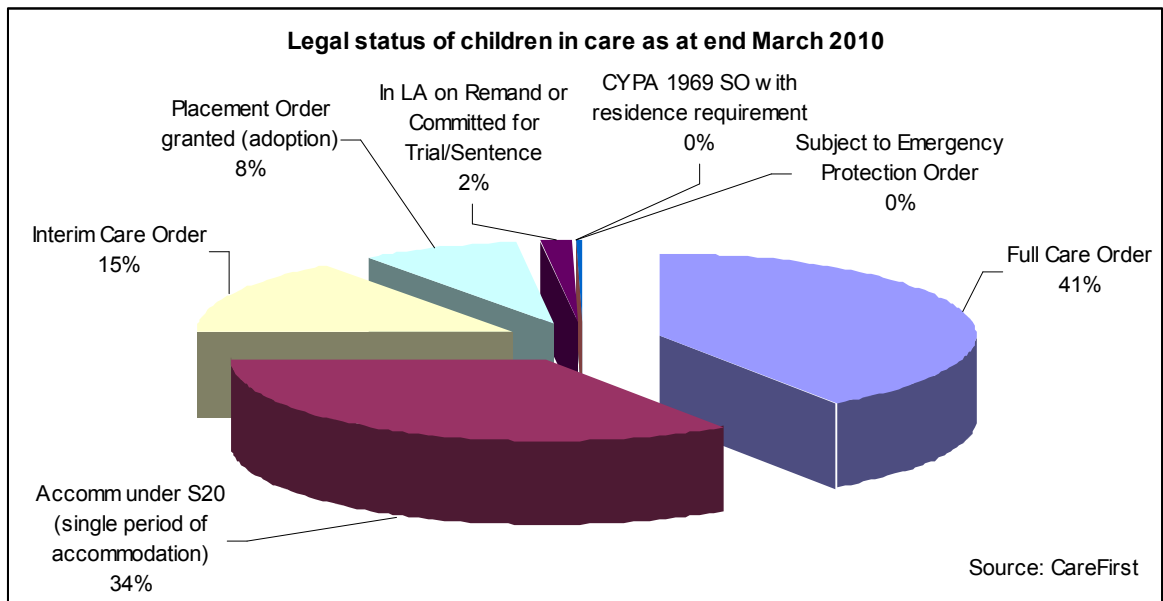
Figure 11 – Ethnicity of children in care end March 2010



Legal Status

Of those children looked after as at end March 2010 two fifths (41%) were looked after on full care orders and one third (34%) were accommodated under section 20. There was also a high number of children looked after on interim care orders (15%).

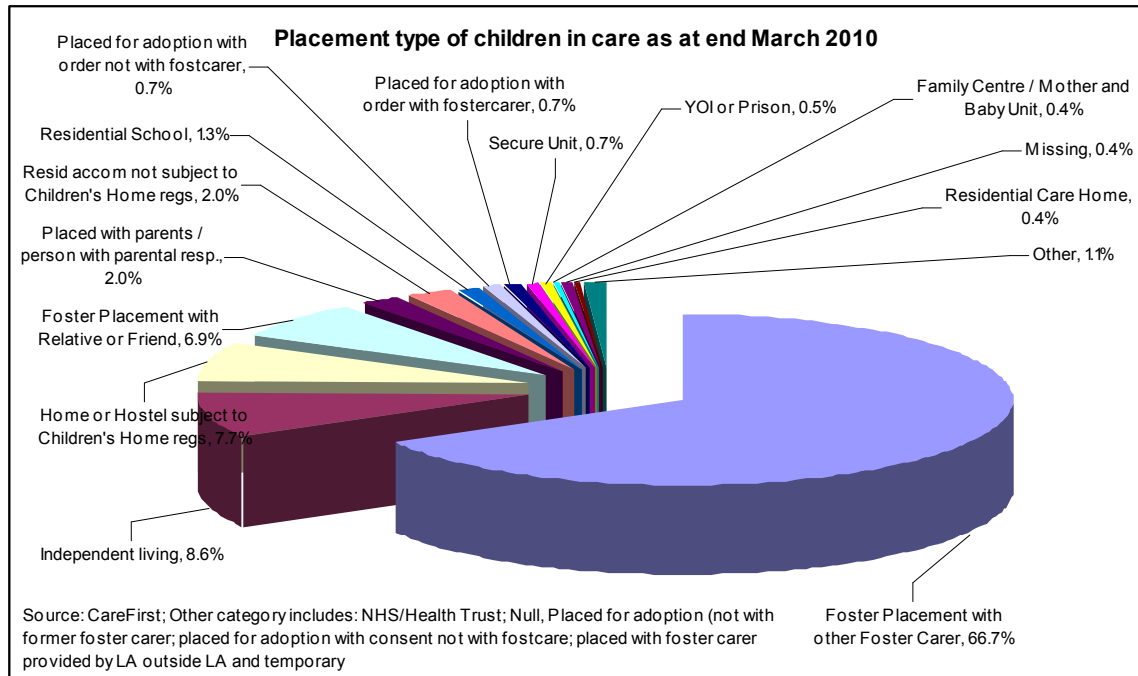
Figure 12 – Legal status of children in care as at end March 2010



Type of Placements

Two thirds (67%) of children in care were placed with a foster carer and an additional seven per cent were placed with a relative or friend.

Figure 13 – Type of placements as at end March 2010



Distance between home and placement

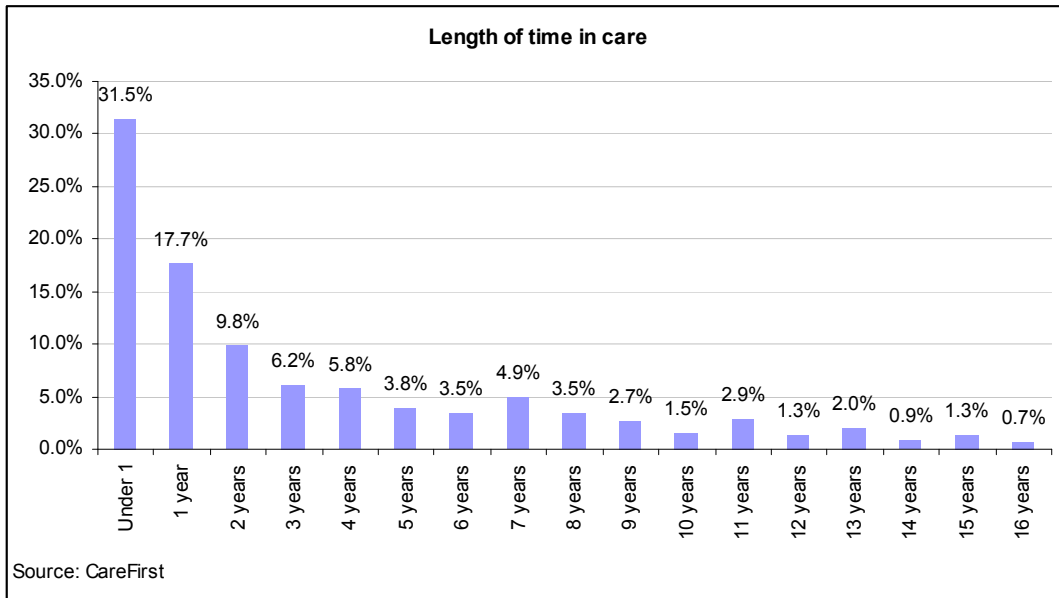
A high proportion (79%) of children in care were placed under 20 miles from their home.

Distance from home	Number	%
Less than 7 miles	338	61.6%
7 - less than 20 miles	96	17.5%
20 miles or more	74	13.5%
Unavailable	41	7.5%
Total	549	100.0%

Length of Time in Care

Nearly a third (32%) of children were in care for under one year. An additional 18% were in care for one year and one in ten children were in care for 2 years. Five per cent of children were in care for 13 years or more.

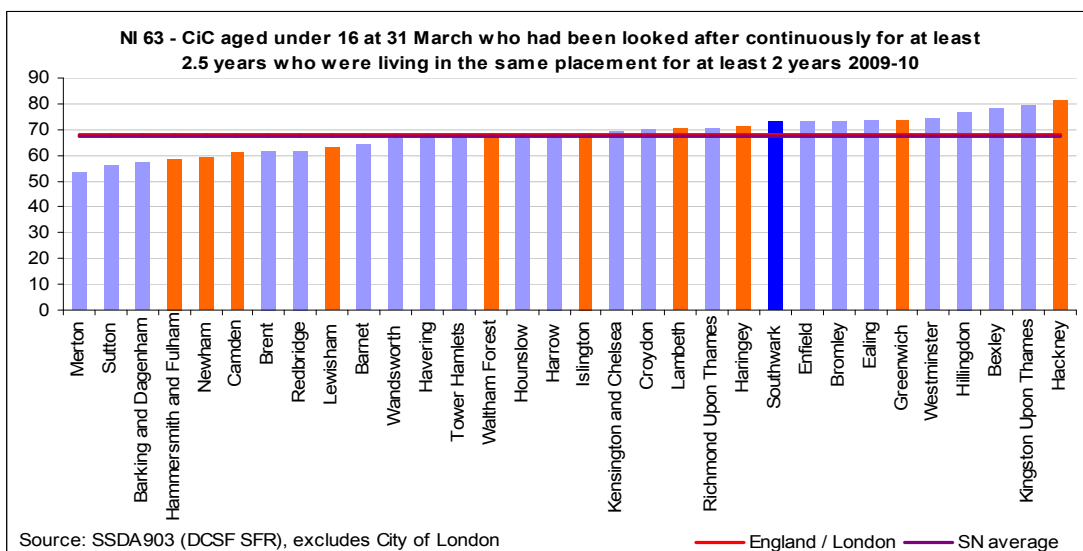
Figure 14 – Length of time spent in care as at end March 2010



Length of placement for children looked after

Southwark has improved by 5 percentage points reaching its highest proportion over the last 5 years (72.8%). This improvement shows Southwark exceeding national (68.0%), London (68.5%) and statistical neighbour (67.4%) performance in 2010. Southwark is now ranked 10th in London out of 32 London boroughs (compared with 20th in 2009) and is now in the top quartile nationally for high performance (compared with 2nd quartile in 2009).

Figure 15 – Length of placement for children in care

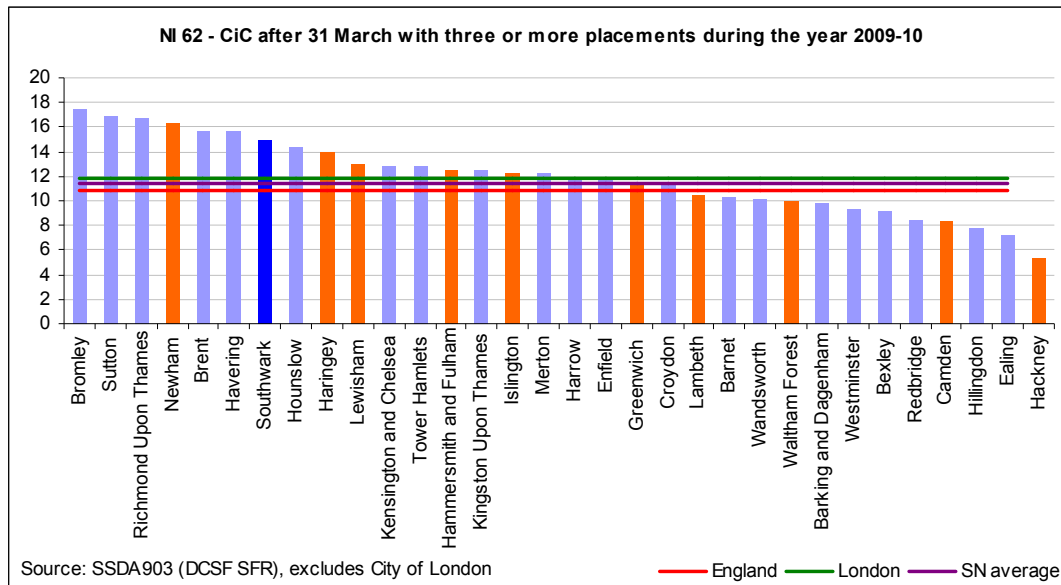


Children looked after with 3 or more placements

Southwark’s performance for children looked after with 3 or more placements in 2010 (14.9%) remains in line with the previous 12 months (14.1%). Although we remain below national (10.9%), London (11.9%) and statistical neighbour (11.4%)

performance the gap has remained stable over the last 12 months. Southwark's performance is ranked 26th in London out of 32 boroughs (excludes City of London). We have the 7th highest proportion of children in care with 3 or more placements in London and we remain in the bottom quartile nationally for lower performance.

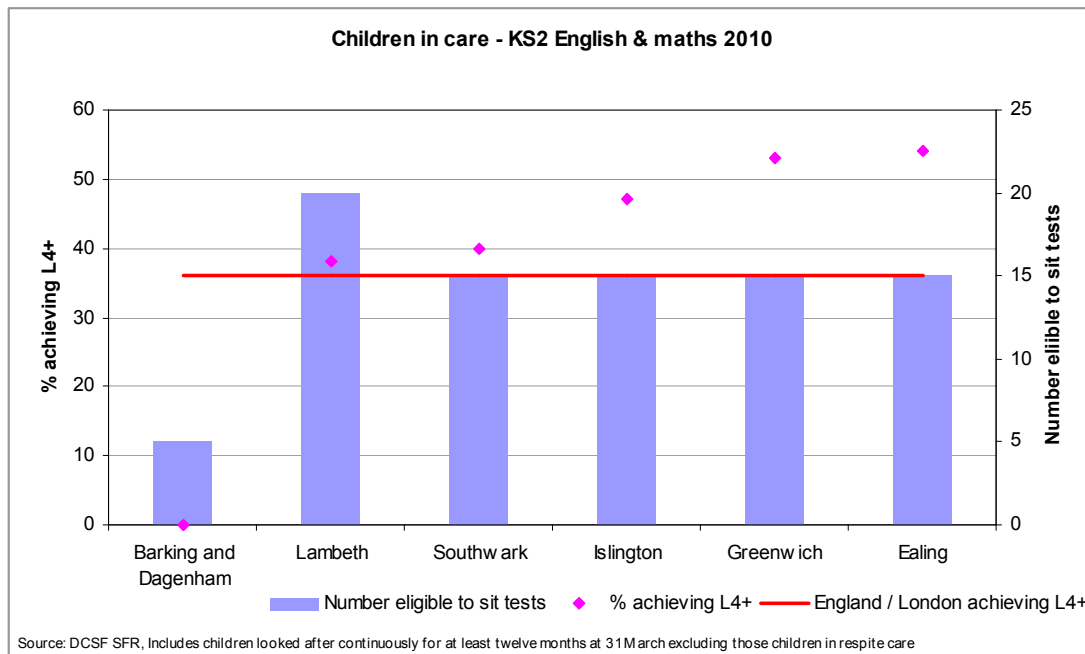
Figure 16 – Children in care with 3 or more placements



Outcomes of children in care

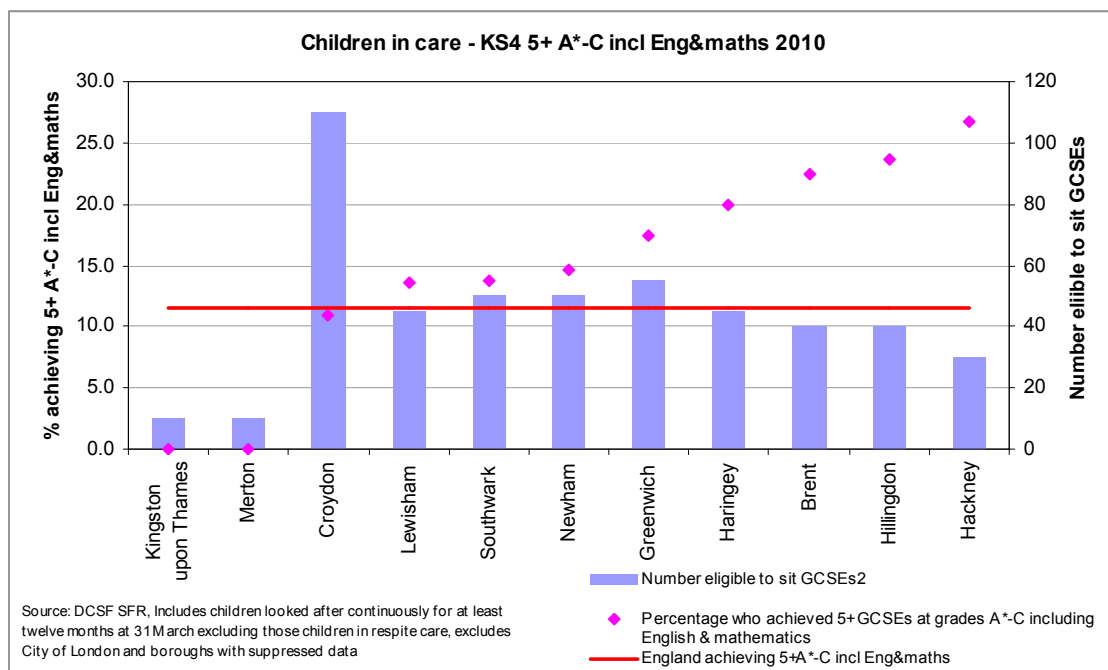
In 2010 the percentage of children in care achieving the expected level in Key Stage 2 English and maths (40%) combined was above the national and London average (36%). Due to small cohort sizes it's quite difficult to make comparisons to other London boroughs. However, for those boroughs where data was available (6 London boroughs) Southwark was ranked 4th.

Figure 22 – Key Stage 2 English and maths outcomes for children in care



In 2010 the percentage of children in care achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths (13.7%) was above the national average (11.6%) and in line with the London average (13.9%). Out of the 11 London boroughs where data was not suppressed Southwark was ranked 7th with high performance.

Figure 23 – Key Stage 4 5+ A*-C English and maths outcomes for children in care



Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 8 November 2011	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Performance Report, Services for Children Looked After	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 That the committee note the report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2 This report contains an analysis of performance against key indicators for 2010/11, and 2011/12 to date.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3 The performance report is attached in Appendix 1. The key issues for consideration are set out in the report. Of particular note are:
 - numbers of looked after children reduced 6.3% to 522 in 2010/11, although this remains above benchmark levels
 - benchmarking data suggests the number of adoptions of children looked after could be increased
 - performance on National Indicators has been relatively strong overall, particularly with respect to the measure on long term stability of placements. Some areas for further improvement have been identified, including education, employment and training of care leavers.

Policy implications

- 4 This decision has been judged to have no policy implications.

Community impact statement

- 5 The decision to note this performance report has been judged to have no impact on local people and communities. Clearly the quality of these services has a strong impact on children looked after from all communities.

Resource implications

- 6 This decision has no resource implications.

Consultation

- 7 The management teams of Children's Safeguarding and Specialist Services have

discussed the analysis set out in this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Performance (Children Looked After)	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Michelle Harris 020 7525 5013

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Children Looked After Performance Report

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Deputy Director Specialist Children's Services and Safeguarding	
Report Authors	Michelle Harris, Performance and Information Analysis Officer Adrian Ward, Acting Head of Strategy, Planning and Performance	
Version	Final	
Dated	25 October 2011	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
	Officer Title	Comments Sought
	Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No
	Finance Director	No
	Cabinet Member	No
	Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	26 October 2011

APPENDIX 1

Children Looked After Performance Report

2010/11 End of Year Performance Summary

1. Children looked after – key activity data

- End of year 2010/11 shows a 6.3% decrease in the number of children looked after over the last 12 months (522 compared to 557 children looked after). However, this is still a high rate compared to England, London and our statistical neighbours.

Chart 1: Children Looked After (rate per 10,000 children)

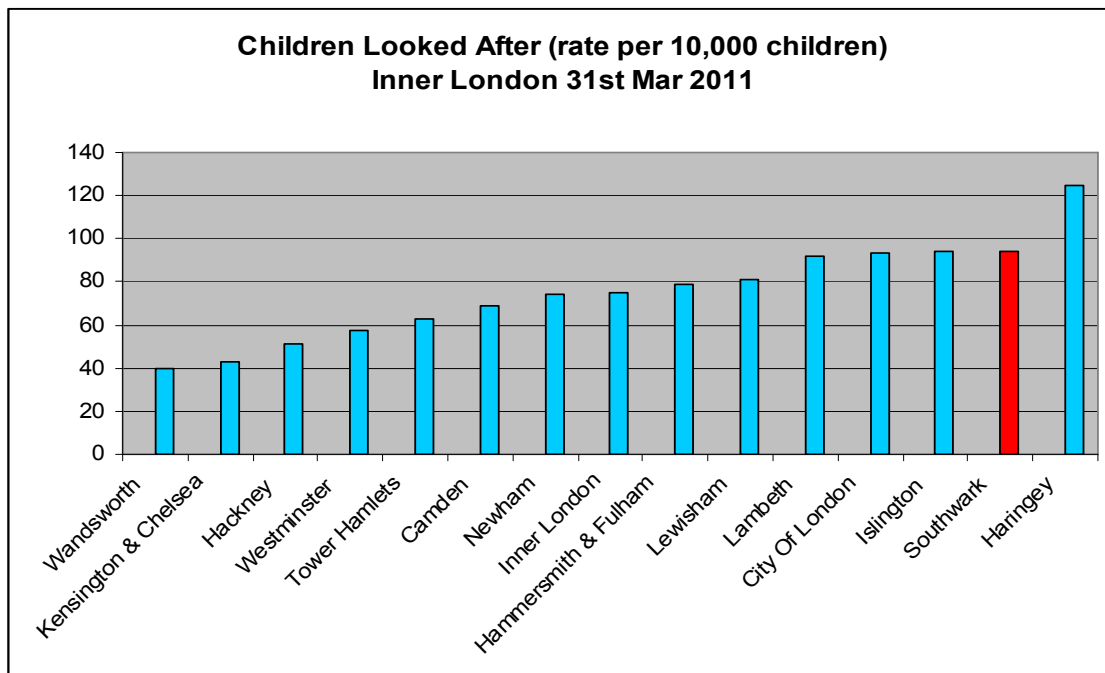


Table 1: Numbers of children looked after 2010 and 2011 and Rates per 10,000 children

	Number		Rate	
	2010	2011	2010	2011
England	64,410	65,520	58	59
London	10,960	10,390	66	61
Inner London	4,910	4,600	81	75
Camden	265	275	67	69
City Of London	15	10	159	93
Hackney	295	265	57	51
Hammersmith & Fulham	260	250	82	79
Haringey	590	615	121	125
Islington	315	325	94	94
Kensington & Chelsea	155	130	52	43
Lambeth	565	500	105	92
Lewisham	525	485	90	81
Newham	560	490	85	74
Southwark	555	520	100	94
Tower Hamlets	350	325	70	63
Wandsworth	205	205	41	40
Westminster	245	210	71	57

Source Dfe 28 Sept. 11 (LA numbers rounded to nearest 5).

The benchmarking data suggests that further in-roads can be made into reducing the total numbers of looked after children – this is in line with the commissioning strategy for the service.

2. Adoption of children looked after

Although the rate of adoption was not an indicator in the National Indicator set it is an area of increasing national focus. The recent report by the government's ministerial advisor on adoption (Martin Narey) was highly critical of the perceived low rates of adoption and the Children's Minister Tim Loughton has identified this issue as a priority. It can be seen from the table below that Southwark's rate of adoption is below the Inner London average, and whilst not an outlier it suggests there is scope to increase the rate.

	Adoptions 2010/11 Number	% of looked after children*
Inner London	170	7
Camden	5	5
City Of London	0	0
Hackney	5	6
Hammersmith & Fulham	10	11
Haringey	15	5
Islington	X	x
Kensington & Chelsea	5	8
Lambeth	20	7
Lewisham	25	11

	Adoptions 2010/11	
	Number	% of looked after children*
Newham	30	11
Southwark	15	5
Tower Hamlets	10	5
Wandsworth	15	14
Westminster	X	X

Source Dfe 28/9/11 (LA numbers rounded to nearest 5 by Dfe). X = small value suppressed (< 5)

*Percentages based on the number of children that ceased to be looked after during the year.

Alongside 17 adoptions completed by Southwark in 2010/11, there were also 21 Special Guardianship Orders, which are a valid form of permanency comparable to adoption. This gives a total of 38 children (or 8.9% of children looked after for over 12 months) moving onto adoption or special guardianship orders. However the Narey report questions the extensive use of such orders and suggests that in some cases they may be inferior to adoption. It is planned to undertake a more detailed analysis of the relationship between Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders. In particular the analysis should look at the issues around legal processes that may increase the use of Special Guardianship Orders at the expense of Adoption.

3. National Indicators (NI)

The National Indicator set has been abolished by the government, but the underlying data for Children's Services is still collected nationally and locally, and considered to be an important reflection of performance. The headline results are set out below:

3.1 Summary

- 2010/11 performance remains comparatively strong with no major areas of concern arising.
- Improvements have been made in indicators relating to long term stability of placements, cases reviewed within timescales, children in care achieving the expected level in English at KS2, the health of looked after children, timeliness of placements for adoption, short term stability, care leavers who are in education employment and training, children in care achieving 5+A*-C grades at KS4 including English and maths.
- Reductions are seen for care leavers in suitable accommodation, children in care achieving the expected level in maths at KS2, the score on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and the proportion of children in care aged 10 to 15 placed for adoption or in a foster placement.
- Educational attainment of looked after children remains the key outcome indicator requiring improvement, although performance is in line with national data.
- Employment, Education and Training of Care Leavers is also an area that could be improved further.

3.2 Detail of indicators

NI 58 Emotional and behavioural health of children in care – the average score on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for children aged 4 to 16 who been looked after continuously for at least 12 months as at 31 March 2011 was 14.4.

Although a slight deterioration on 2009/10 (12.1) our performance is in line with end of year 2009/10 national, London and statistical neighbours.

NI 61 Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption – performance has slightly improved (from 81.8% to 82.4%) and we remain above end of year 2009/10 national, London and statistical neighbour averages (65.3%). However as part of the increased national focus on adoption associated with the Narey report there is an increasing expectation that 100% should be achieved on this target as a standard, which is reflected in the latest methodology for Ofsted's inspection of adoption services. This will present a major challenge in complex adoption cases.

NI 62 Short term stability: % Children looked after with 3 or more placements in last 12 months– end of year 2010/11 (13.4%) shows that performance has slightly improved with end of year 2009/10 (14.9%) and is now in line with London and statistical neighbour averages. It is however still below the 2009/10 national average (10.9%).

NI 63 Long term stability: % of children looked after aged under 16 at 31 March who had been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption. Performance has improved over the last 12 months to 75.2% from 72.8% last year on this key measure. This is strong performance compared to 2009/10 national performance (68%) and London (68.5%) and a good long term improvement following local prioritisation of this area. Southwark's performance was 67.4%. in 2008/09.

NI 66 Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales – 95.7% of cases were reviewed within the required timescales during 2011. This is an improvement on last year (92.8%) and we are now above end of year 2009/10 national, London and statistical neighbour averages.

NI 99 / 100 Children in care reaching level 4 in English / maths at Key Stage 2 – 2010 results have shown an improvement in the proportion of children achieving the expected levels at Key Stage 2 in English (from 40 per cent to 60 per cent) but a decline in those achieving the expected levels in maths (from 45 per cent to 40 per cent). Performance in English is now above the national, London and statistical neighbour averages but maths is below.

NI 101 Children in care achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 including English and Maths – results in 2010 showed 13.7 per cent of children in care obtained at least 5 A* to C grades including English and mathematics at GCSE or equivalent which is a slight improvement from last year. This was higher than the national average and in line with London but below the statistical neighbour average. This indicator is featured in the Council Plan as a key success measure.

Note: analysis of 2011 academic results for children looked after reported on separately in the Corporate Parenting Committee agenda.

NI 148 % of care leavers in education, employment or training (EET) – has slightly increased over the 12 month period (from 60.5% to 62%), but remains below average for Inner London.

2010/11	Care Leavers in EET %
Westminster	48
Hammersmith & Fulham	58
Hackney	59
Southwark	62
London	66
Islington	67
Newham	67
Inner London	70
Wandsworth	71
Haringey	73
Kensington & Chelsea	73
Lewisham	74
Camden	77
Lambeth	79
Tower Hamlets	87

Dfe Sept 2011

NI 147 % of care leavers at age 19 in suitable accommodation – performance has declined slightly from 97.5% to 95.2%, linked to a small increase in young people in custody. However figures for 2010/11 show performance remains above national, London and statistical neighbour averages.

	CLA in suitable accommodation (%)
Westminster	83
London	90
Kensington & Chelsea	91
Haringey	92
Islington	92
Inner London	93
Hackney	93
Lambeth	93
Lewisham	93
Tower Hamlets	94
Hammersmith & Fulham	95
Southwark	95
Camden	97
Newham	97
Wandsworth	100

Dfe Sept 2011

Health of Children Looked After (CYPP indicator): the % of children with all medical checks and immunisations up to date increased from 91.9% to 94.7%, above the last recorded London average of 90%, and the previous CYPP target of 91%.

Children in foster placements (aged 10-15) (CYPP indicator): the % of children looked after aged 10-15 who are in foster placements or placed for

adoption decreased slightly from 85% to 83.8%, and was below the previous CYPP target of 88%.

Other relevant indicators:

CLA placed more than 20 miles from home: there was a marginal increase from 9.2 % to 10.1% on this measure. The level of out of borough placements is a consideration within the commissioning strategy in order to make progress towards the Sufficiency Duty.

Children looked after who communicated their views to their statutory review: the indicator dropped from 94% to 90.2% in 2010/11. This has been examined and the change is attributed to a recording issue regarding children who gave a view after the review which was taken into account.

Children looked after offending: figures suggest an offending rate of 9.4%. This indicator is based on a new definition, so is not directly comparable to previous data (suggesting 5%). The Committee may wish to consider recommending that officers undertake a more detailed analysis for the next corporate parenting committee.

4 Social care performance mid year update: September 2011

Children Looked After activity

- Mid year 2011/12 data (August 11) shows a small increase in the number of children looked after over the 5 months since March 31st 2011 (535 compared to 522 children looked after at year end).
- Adoptions completed by the end of August stood at only 2, although 20 children were placed for adoption.

Item No. 9.	Classification: Open	Date: 8 November 2011	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Fostering Services - Statement of Purpose	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Corporate Parenting Committee notes Southwark's Fostering Service Statement of Purpose (as required under National Fostering Regulations, see Appendix 1).
2. That the Corporate Parenting Committee notes that the statement of purpose for the Southwark Fostering Service will be reviewed and submitted to the Corporate Parenting Committee on an annual basis.
3. That the Corporate Parenting Committee notes Southwark's Fostering Services current strong performance for delivering good outcomes for children placed with the service (Appendix 2)

KEY MESSAGES

4. The Statement of Purpose is a requirement of the new DFE Fostering Services Regulations 2010, introduced in April 2011.

The Regulations require that the statement of purpose (SOP) must include:

- i) the aims and objectives of the fostering service, and
 - ii) what facilities and service it provides.
5. The SOP is required to be kept under review and revised annually. Any revision to Southwark's SOP statement of purpose has to be sent to the National Care Standards Commission within 28 days, following approval.
 6. The Fostering Service will be subject to an Ofsted inspection in December 2011.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The legal framework

7. The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 came into force on 1 April 2011, replacing the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. These Regulations require all Fostering services to publish a "statement of purpose", which spells out the aims and objectives of the service and lists the services and facilities that are provided. This includes any provision for family and friends foster carers and for parent and child arrangements.

The new Regulations were accompanied by new statutory guidance contained in the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011), and also by the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (2011).

8. The Regulations, Guidance and National Minimum Standards emphasise the importance of the Statement of Purpose in guiding all the work of the fostering service, its staff and foster carers. The statement of purpose is expected to explain for everyone how the service goes about meeting the needs of children and so help people to understand how they can best work as a team and make use of the support available to children and foster carers.
9. There is also a requirement to publish a children's guide to the fostering service, which includes a summary of the statement of purpose and of the representation and complaints procedure. Southwark's fostering service has a children's guide in three different versions for children in different age groups. The revised statement of purpose (Appendix 1) contains a summary, written in straightforward language, intended to accompany the existing children's guides.

Review of statement of purpose

10. The regulations merely require the statement of purpose to be kept under review, and revised when appropriate. However, the guidance says that both must be reviewed at least annually, although there is no particular method by which the review must take place. In practice, most local authorities present their Fostering Service statement of purpose, on an annual basis, to their equivalent of Southwark's Corporate Parenting Committee or Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Requirements for the statement of purpose and children's guide

Requirements	Statement of purpose	Children's guide
Publication	Must be published on website, if there is one	Good practice to publish on website
Send to all foster carers?	Not required, but good practice	Must be sent
Send to children placed?	Not required	Must be sent at the time of placement, subject to age and understanding
Copy to Ofsted	Must be sent	Must be sent
Available on request to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anyone working for the fostering service - Prospective and approved foster carers - Children placed - Parents of children placed - Anyone else (good practice) 	Anyone interested (good practice)
Provide to children's social workers and others working with children in foster care	Good practice	Good practice

11. The revised statement of purpose once approved by Committee, will be distributed widely, including to all Council staff who work with looked after children, foster carers and prospective foster carers.

12. Southwark's Statement of Purpose has been thoroughly reviewed and rewritten to take account of the new Regulations and Guidance and also to reflect changes in the structure and operation of the service that have been implemented since 1 April 2011.
13. Key changes in the structure and delivery of the service implemented since 1 April 2011:
 - Deletion of one Practice Manager post and five social worker posts.
 - Establishment of 3 new senior practitioner posts to support retention of experienced staff.
 - Establishment of a new Fostering Recruitment Manager post to spearhead the recruitment and assessment of new foster carers.
 - Commissioning social work assessments of new foster carers from independent agencies – enabling a quicker and more efficient response and freeing up staff time for the support and supervision of existing carers.
 - Establishment of a new Fostering Duty Information Officer post to improve the efficiency of the fostering duty service and to release professional social work time for supporting carers.
 - Deletion of Fostering and Adoption Service Manager post.
 - Establishment of a new post of Service Manager (Foster Care and Children's Disability), initially for one year and to be reviewed in the light of service needs and new guidance and regulations.
 - Separation of management responsibility for Adoption and Fostering at Service Manager level.
14. Southwark's Fostering Service also produces a "Fostering Handbook" (also required under fostering regulations) which provides detailed procedures and expectations relating to care provision in the home and working arrangements.
15. Southwark's Fostering Service is also required under regulations to provide an annual report for the Corporate Parenting Committee which provides a comprehensive strategic overview of the services capacity to deliver the statement of purpose and positive outcomes for children placed within the service.
16. Appendix 2 provides a detailed analysis of Southwark's fostering services strong performance in delivering key outcomes for children in care including stability, health and education outcomes.

Community impact statement

17. The Fostering Service continues to target recruitment of foster carers from within Southwark and is one of the largest services in London (reflecting Southwark's strong reputation of supporting their foster carers) The greatest challenge for the service is to recruit and develop local foster homes which fully

reflect the diverse range of Southwark's cultural heritage and additional needs of children looked after. Consequently we target our advertising to reflect and attract foster carers from all of Southwark's community.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance

18. The legal implications are contained in the body of the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Fostering Services Statement of Purpose 2011-12
Appendix 2	Southwark Fostering Service - Annual Performance Report 2010/11

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
Report Author	Chris Saunders, Head of Service for Children in Care	
Version	Final	
Dated	25 October 2011	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	Yes	Yes
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date report sent to Constitutional Team	26 October 2011	

APPENDIX 1

CLA Service**Southwark Fostering
Services**

Statement of Purpose 2011-2012

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Aims and objectives of the service	3
3.	Principles and standards of care	6
4.	Management and staffing structure	7
5.	Services provided	8
5.1	Recruitment	8
5.2	Assessment of new foster carers	9
5.3	Supervising social workers	10
6.	Assessment and approval of foster carers	10
6.1	Assessment processes	12
6.2	The Fostering Panel and approval	14
6.3	Annual Reviews of Approval	14
6.4	Termination of Approval	15
7.	Support to foster carers	15
7.1	Supervision of foster carers	15
7.2	Foster Carer Support Groups	16
7.3	Southwark Foster Carers Association	16
7.4	Training	16
7.5	Financial support	17
7.6	Mentoring	17
7.7	Respite breaks	17
7.8	Foster Carers Handbook	17
7.9	Other support services	17
8.	Placement types	18
8.1	Short Term and Emergency Fostering	18
8.2	Teenage Fostering	18
8.3	Long term Fostering	18
8.4	Family and Friends Foster Care (sometimes referred to as kinship foster care)	18
8.5	Family Link (Short Breaks for children with disabilities)	19
8.6	Mother and baby placements	20
9.	Complaints and Allegations in respect of foster carers	20
10.	Ofsted	20

1. Introduction

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 require all Fostering Services to provide a written Statement of Purpose setting out the aims and objectives of the service and details of the service and facilities provided. The Statement of Purpose has to be reviewed and updated every year.

The statement is intended to provide a clear description of the service for the information of foster carers, service users, Council staff, elected members (councillors), professionals in other agencies and members of the public.

This statement of purpose has been endorsed by the senior management group of the Children's Services Department and by the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Copies of the statement of purpose will be provided to

- Children's Services staff who are involved in providing services to looked after children and young people
- Foster carers and people who are being assessed as foster carers
- Speakerbox (Southwark's Children in Care Council)
- Southwark Foster Care Association
- Independent and voluntary sector organisations providing services to foster carers and to looked after children in Southwark

In addition the document will be placed on Southwark's web site.

Children and Young People's versions of the Statement of Purpose are also to be found on the website and are provided to looked after children and young people.

2. Aims and objectives of the service

Southwark's Fostering Service is committed to providing excellent standards of care to looked after children and young people so that they will have the best possible chance of being happy and successful in their lives.

The Fostering service will work in partnership with colleagues within the council and in other agencies in planning and caring for looked after children in order to meet the Council's responsibilities as a corporate parent. All the relationships that the fostering service has with other agencies and with foster carers should be marked by respect and a shared commitment to delivering the best possible support to looked after children and young people.

Southwark's looked after children and young people are an extremely diverse group and Southwark therefore needs to have foster carers who are capable of meeting these diverse needs. Southwark takes the view that the most important thing in helping children is foster care is what foster carers do, and the relationships they build with the looked after children and young people in their care.

The aims of the service can be summarised as:

- to provide a sufficient number of high quality foster placements that will fully meet the diverse needs of Southwark's looked after children and young people
- to provide a consistently high quality service and support to Southwark's foster carers by employing suitably experienced, skilled and qualified social work staff, business support staff and managers and by commissioning appropriate support services.

To achieve these aims the Fostering Service has the following key objectives:

Recruitment and assessment of foster carers

- to have a recruitment strategy in place that supports the recruitment of a sufficient range and quantity of local foster carers to meet the diverse needs of Southwark's looked after children and young people
- to respond in a friendly, prompt, professional and respectful manner to anyone enquiring about becoming a Southwark foster carer
- to develop and maintain quality partnerships with a limited number of independent organisations who will be able to deliver high quality assessments of prospective foster carers
- to carry out thorough assessment and preparation of prospective foster carers focussed on relevant competencies and ability to meet the needs of looked after children
- to treat all prospective foster carers with care and respect at all times and, in the event of a prospective carers not being approved, to explain sensitively and in plain language the reasons for the decision
- to maintain and support a Fostering Approval Panel consisting of the right mix of qualified, experienced and knowledgeable individuals and chaired by an suitably experienced independent person

Supporting and valuing foster carer colleagues

- to maintain good communication, mutual respect and excellent working relationships with all foster carers – always keeping the needs of the child or young person as the central concern
- to provide a written report at the beginning of each placement on the purpose of the placement that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of each professional involved
- to support foster carers to constructively challenge decisions and proposed care plans for children when foster carers feel they need to do so
- to ensure that foster carers are aware of Southwark's complaints procedures and are supported in using the complaints procedures when necessary
- to ensure that foster carers have access to the wide range of multi-disciplinary support services available in Southwark
- to provide a wide range of training courses for foster carers and supporting and encouraging foster carers to use these training opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge

- to hold an annual Review of Approval for every foster carer, using this an opportunity for two way feedback and to work out how the foster carer can best be supported and helped to develop their skills and knowledge
- to give practical support and advice to Southwark Foster Care Association so that it can be an effective voice in supporting individual foster carers and in promoting the needs of looked after children and young people

Meeting the needs of children and young people

- to promote the concept of the "team around the looked after child" so that all the important adults and professionals involved with the child work constructively together to make sure the child's needs are fully met
- to ensure that the ethnic origins, cultural background, religious faith and language of looked after children will be fully recognised and positively valued and promoted when placement decisions are being made. Also, any additional or special needs that children may have will be carefully considered when making foster placements and in supporting placements.
- to enable looked after children and young people to maintain and develop positive relationships with their birth families and with other significant people, so long as this is in the best interests of the child or young person
- to place siblings together insofar as this is practically possible and consistent with their needs
- to do everything possible to enable children / young people to experience placement stability and consistency of care
- to enable young people to stay put in their foster families for a period of time beyond their eighteenth birthday subject to this being in the best interests of the young person and with the full agreement of the foster carers
- to ensure that children and young people are enabled to participate fully in all decisions about their care plan and their day to day care including taking positive steps to enable children and young people to have access to advocacy and independent visitors
- to support children and young people and their families to constructively challenge decisions and proposed plans in regard to their care and ensuring they are aware of Southwark's complaints procedures and are supported in using the complaints procedures when necessary
- to promote the educational achievements of looked after children and young people and enabling foster carers to call upon the support of the CLA Education Support team in helping to improve the education achievement of young people in their care
- to support foster carers in promoting the emotional and physical health of young people, so that they are able to develop and maintain positive self esteem and identity, promote their physical and mental wellbeing and achieve their full potential

- to fully meet the requirements of the Fostering Regulations, National Minimum Standards corporate policy and accepted best practice standards

3. Principles and standards of care

- The child's safety and welfare are paramount and the experience of being looked after by Southwark should not disadvantage any child or young person.
- Staff and foster carers have a professional and personal duty to do everything possible to ensure that every child or young person has the opportunity to reach their full potential.
- Children and young people will always be placed in foster families that reflect as closely as possible the child's cultural, racial, ethnic and religious background
- Children and young people have the right to continuity in their lives so that their identity can be maintained and developed, their physical and mental well-being promoted and their full potential achieved.
- Every effort should be made to enable looked after children and young people to maintain positive contact with their birth parents, brothers and sisters, extended family members and other significant people, subject to this being in the best interests of the child / young person.
- Foster care must be a partnership between the carers, supervising social workers and the child or young person's social worker all working together in the best interests of the child or young person.
- The Fostering service will embrace a partnership approach based on working in an open, positive and respectful way with children, their parents and extended families, foster carers, children's social workers and colleague professionals in schools and in other agencies
- Foster carers, children and young people and their parents should be able to challenge decisions and plans proposed by the fostering service and are made aware of the procedures whereby they can exercise their right of challenge.
- Formal decisions relating to individual children and young people in foster care should be taken in full consultation with them, their parents and the foster carers.
- Young people leaving care must be offered a continuing service that recognizes that all young people continue to need various kinds of advice, practical help and emotional support into adulthood.
- The responsibilities of the placing agency to the foster carers, the purpose and goals of each placement and the responsibilities of all parties must be stated in writing.
- The Fostering service will provide quality and consistency in the provision of trainings, support and information to foster carers to enable them to meet the individual needs of the child and to develop their own skills as carers
- Services will be administered in a fair manner consistent with the Council's equality and valuing diversity policies.

4. Management and staffing structure

The Fostering service is part of the Children's Services Department under the overall leadership and direction of the Director of Children's Service. The Director of Children's Services reports to the Chief Executive (the most senior officer of the Council) and also to the Corporate Parenting Committee (a committee of councillors).

Children's Specialist Services is a large and complex range of services. All those services that are particularly concerned with meeting the needs of looked after children and children with disabilities are organised as a Business Unit under the direction of the Head of Service (Children in Care and Disabled Children).

The staff in the fostering service work very closely with their colleagues in the CLA social work teams and with the Children's Services Quality Assurance Unit (Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Co-ordinators).

The fostering service consists of

The Short term team which is responsible for supporting and supervising all short term and emergency foster carers

The Adoption and Permanency Team which is responsible for supporting long term and kinship foster carers

The Fostering Recruitment Manager who is responsible for the assessment of new foster carers

Family Link which recruits and assesses specialist carers who provide regular short breaks (sometimes known as respite care) for children and young people with disabilities

Independent Annual Review of Approval Chairs who chair annual review of approval meetings and make recommendations to the Fostering Panel

The Fostering Panel chaired by an Independent Panel Chair. The Fostering Panel makes recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker on matters concerning the approval of foster carers.

Agency Decision Maker - this is the senior manager who makes the final decisions about the approval of foster carers after taking account of all the information available and the recommendations of the Fostering Panel.

Care Link - a multidisciplinary team including social workers, family therapists and clinical psychologists. Care Link is a part of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and plays an important part in supporting foster carers and children and young people who are in foster care

Southwark will always try to place looked after children and young people with Southwark approved foster carers. Sometimes, however, this is not possible and children and young people may be placed with foster carers who are approved and supported by **Independent Fostering Agencies** (IFA). Southwark has contracts with a range of approved IFAs. When required, placements with IFAs are negotiated by the Placements Team (part of Children's Services Commissioning Unit).

The social workers in the Fostering Service are known as “**supervising social workers**” as their main task is to supervise and support foster carers. Sometimes they are still referred to by their former title of “fostering link worker”. All supervising social workers hold a recognised social work qualification and are registered as social workers by the General Social Care Council (GSCC).

The **Team Managers and Service Manager** also hold social work qualifications and have undergone additional training in management.

Names and contact details of key managers and Fostering Panel Chair

Name	Designation	Contact Details
Ms Romi Bowen	Director of Children’s Services	Romi.bowen@southwark.gov.uk
Mr Rory Patterson	Deputy Director (Children’s Specialist Services)	Rory.patterson@southwark.gov.uk Tel 020 7525
Mr Chris Saunders	Head of Service (Children in Care and Disability) and Agency Decision Maker	Chris.saunders@southwark.gov.uk Tel 020 7525
Mr Paul McCarthy	Service Manager (Foster Care and Disability)	Paul.mccarthy@southwark.gov.uk Tel
Ms Maureen Nawrat	Team Manager (Short Term Team) and Fostering Panel Advisor	Maureen.nawrat@southwark.gov.uk Tel
Currently vacant post – being covered by Paul McCarthy	Fostering Recruitment Manager	
Ms Sue White	Team Manager (Long Term and Kinship Care)	Sue.white@southwark.gov.uk Tel 020
Ms Jackie Cook	Head of Service (Quality Assurance)	Jackie.cook@southwark.gov.uk
Ms Elizabeth Murphy	Manager of Care Link	Elizabeth.murphy@slam.nhs.uk
Ms Dawn DeLeon	Independent Chair of the Fostering Panel	Contactable through the Fostering Panel Advisor Maureen.nawrat@southwark.gov.uk

5. Services provided

5.1 Recruitment

The fostering service has access to a Marketing Officer who designs and coordinates recruitment campaigns. A Fostering website has been created to give potential foster carers information on Southwark fostering and allows them to register their interest online. A free phone has been set up for enquiries (Tel 0800 952 0707).

The recruitment strategy is designed to attract prospective carers who are able to meet the identified needs of the children and young people who require placements, based on the age, ethnicity and cultural needs. In addition to this the strategy also identifies the need to increase specialist professional foster carers to offer placement to young people with more complex needs.

The strategy uses statistical and current census information about the borough in order to target the recruitment drive to specific audiences.

Foster carers are recruited through general advertising both locally and in national newspapers, and through meetings with local community groups, churches and professionals organisations within Southwark. Specific recruitment for individual children and other activities are coordinated by the long term fostering team. Southwark Council is the largest single employer in Southwark and regular information is distributed to Council staff inviting enquiries from people who are interested in becoming foster carers.

Existing foster carers are extremely important in encouraging new prospective carers to come forward for assessment. Southwark acknowledges the important role that foster carers often play in encouraging friends, neighbours and family members to consider becoming foster carers. A special recognition payment is made to any foster carer who is instrumental in bringing a new foster carer into the service.

5.2 Assessment of new foster carers

Southwark aims to expand its pool of approved foster carers in order to better meet the needs of looked after children and young people. Southwark places a very high proportion of its looked after children in foster placements but there is not always sufficient choice when making placements and sometimes it is necessary to place children and young people some distance from the borough through lack of sufficient placements within or close to the borough. In addition, it is vital that new foster carers are approved in order to replace carers who are retiring or leaving fostering for other reasons.

Southwark has therefore set a target of recruiting at least 20 new fostering households per year from 2011/12. The approach to recruiting and assessing foster carers was reviewed during 2010/11 and led to the creation of a new Fostering Recruitment Manager post and the development of partnerships with a number of independent social care organisations from whom Southwark now spot purchases full fostering assessments. The aim is to be able to respond quickly and professionally to all enquiries and to allocate new assessments to specialist and highly experienced assessors who will generally complete and deliver an assessment to the Fostering Panel within five months.

The assessment process consists of the following stages. Greater detail is contained in section 7.

1. Initial Enquiry received and logged
2. Response to Initial enquiry by telephone
3. Initial Home Visit by a senior social worker to the applicant(s)
4. Outcome of initial home visit notified in writing
5. Applicant(s) submits a formal written application to become approved as a Southwark foster carer
6. Allocation to an independent assessor
7. Applicant(s) attend Pre-approval training
8. All references, health and safeguarding checks are taken up by fostering team
9. Assessment is presented to Fostering Panel
10. Agency Decision maker decides whether to approve as a foster carer and range of approval
11. Applicant(s) notified in writing of the outcome of the assessment

12. Applicant(s) allocated a supervising social worker

5.3 Supervising social workers

Supervising social workers (and a Social Services Officer) support foster carers in order to help them carry out their responsibilities to the highest possible standard. This includes a minimum of a six weekly visit and weekly telephone calls. Supervising social workers are provided with mobile phones to make it easier for foster carers to contact them when they are out of office.

In practice, supervising social workers often visit much more regularly than six weekly, particularly when there are difficulties in placements or new placements being made. Supervising social workers are also required to make at least one unannounced visit each year.

Supervising social workers receive regular supervision from their line managers to help them plan how best to support foster carers, always keeping the welfare and best interests of looked after children as the central concern.

During periods when their supervising social worker is on leave or absent for other reasons, foster carers can access the fostering duty service if necessary.

6. Assessment and approval of foster carers

Who can apply to become a Southwark foster carer?

Southwark welcomes enquiries from all suitable people who are interested in becoming foster carers. There are many myths and misunderstandings about who can and who cannot be a foster carer. The Fostering Service therefore takes every available opportunity to stress that,

- the essential requirement is the ability to give children a full experience of family life, keep them safe from harm and help them to grow and realise their potential
- it is not necessary to be a home owner – but fostering does require having a spare room that is suitable as a bedroom for a foster child (the exception being specialist foster carers who only care for babies for short periods)
- the service requires and warmly welcomes foster carers from all racial, ethnic and religious groups, reflecting the diversity of Southwark's looked after children and young people
- foster carers need to be over the age of 18. There is no upper age limit but in practice it is unusual to start an assessment of someone who is over the age of 60 unless it is with a view to becoming a friends and family foster carer
- having health problems will not necessarily rule anyone out from being a foster carer, but foster carers have to be reasonably healthy and fit to be able to meet the needs of any child who might be placed with them
- foster carers can be single, married, in civil partnerships, or living with a partner
- a person's sexual orientation is not a barrier in any way to becoming a foster carer

- Certain criminal convictions will rule a person out – these include serious offences of violence and offences in regard to children or vulnerable adults. However, not all offences will necessarily prevent a person from becoming a foster carer. The circumstances relating to any cautions or convictions will need to be explored fully in the assessment
- Being a smoker in itself will not prevent a person from becoming a foster carer – but foster carers are positively encouraged and supported to stop smoking. Foster carers must never smoke within the foster home as passive smoking is harmful to children and seeing a foster carer smoking sets a bad example for young people.

Responding to Initial enquiries

All initial enquiries about becoming a foster carer, however they are received, will receive a response from a fostering social worker within 3 working days. Usually this will be by telephone and the social worker will clarify

- Is the person interested in a particular type of fostering (such as teenagers, children with special needs, young babies etc)?
- Does the person have any paid employment?
- What is the family composition?
- What is the person's race and ethnicity?
- Does the person have a spare room suitable for a foster child?

Initial Home Visit

Following this discussion the Fostering Recruitment Manager will decide whether or not to offer an Initial Home Visit. If it is decided not to offer an initial home visit at this stage the reasons for this will be explained to the person.

An Initial Home visit will usually take place within 10 working days of the telephone conversation (assuming this is convenient for the prospective carer). Initial Home Visits are carried out by the Fostering Recruitment Manager or a senior social worker. An Initial Home Visit will usually last for up to two hours, during which time the social worker will

- Provide information about fostering for Southwark and the diverse needs of Southwark's looked after children and young people
- Look around the home to assess its suitability for fostering
- Obtain information about family background and composition
- Ask for information about the current employment and employment history of all adult members of the household
- Enquire about personal history and experiences relevant to Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) competencies for foster carers
- Enquire about any convictions or cautions for criminal offences in regard to all relevant members of the household
- Provide information about the fostering assessment and pre-approval training process.

Common Reasons for not proceeding with a full assessment

Sometimes, as a result of discussion during the initial home visit, the person concerned will decide that fostering is not right for them, or not at the present time.

It sometimes becomes clear at the initial home visit that the home is not suitable for fostering. This may be because it is not possible to provide a suitable bedroom for a foster child or it may be that there are serious health and safety hazards present in the home.

A fostering assessment is a detailed and lengthy process and sometimes prospective foster carers decide that it is too intrusive or time consuming a process.

At the initial home visit the social worker will always explain the range of safeguarding checks including enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks on all adult members of the household that are an essential part of the assessment process. The social worker will always ask if anyone in the household has any cautions or convictions for criminal offences. It may be that some serious offences come to light at this stage and this could lead to a decision not to proceed.

Informing applicant about outcome of initial home visit

The social worker making the initial home visit will inform the applicant(s) in writing within 5 working days of the outcome of the initial home visit. If the decision is NOT to proceed with a full assessment, the reasons will be given in writing.

Appealing or making a complaint about a decision not to proceed with a full fostering assessment

An applicant may write to the Service Manager (Fostering) to request a review of a decision not to proceed to a full assessment. The Service Manager will review the information available and will respond in writing within 5 working days.

An applicant who is unhappy with the way in which an initial fostering home visit has been conducted may also lodge a formal complaint using the Council's Complaints Procedure (further information about making a complaint can be found on the Council's website).

6.1 Assessment processes

Since April 2011 Southwark has been commissioning assessments of new foster carers from a small number of independent organisations that have a strong track record in this area. These organisations have contracts with Southwark that set out mutual expectations and the quality standards that Southwark expects for fostering assessments. The social workers who carry out foster carer assessments are all highly experienced in the field of fostering and have undergone specialist training. Assessors receive regular supervision and consultation from an experienced manager throughout the course of the assessment.

Southwark aims for foster carer assessments to be completed and presented to the Fostering Panel within five months from the date of allocation to the assessor. In some circumstances, it may take longer - for example, if the applicants have personal problems that arise during the assessment process, or if there are unavoidable delays in obtaining all the necessary references and safeguarding checks.

Southwark uses the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) Form F (2008 version) to record the assessment. The Form F consists of a number of sections that, taken together, sets out in writing all the relevant information about the applicant(s) that is required by the Fostering Panel. This includes detailed information about the applicant(s) in respect of,

- Family background
- Education and employment background
- Any relevant health issues
- Experience of parenting or caring for children
- Support network (extended family, friends, neighbours, faith groups etc)
- Home and accommodation available for fostering
- Local community resources
- Pets (if applicable)
- Ability to meet the needs of looked after children
- Understanding and commitment to meeting children's identity needs, being mindful that Southwark is a diverse multicultural community
- Outcome of all safeguarding checks and personal references

Throughout the assessment the assessor will be working with the applicant(s) to identify specific evidence that the applicants have the necessary attitudes and competencies to be able to meet the needs of looked after children and young people.

Southwark recognises that fostering is a challenging and complex activity and requires foster carers to have a wide range of skills and abilities. Southwark does not expect carers to have experience or competence in every conceivable area. Rather, it is about identifying

- the relevant competencies that the applicant already has and that can be evidenced
- Areas where the applicants will need further training and support
- How best to help the applicants develop confidence and skills

The social worker carrying out the assessment will typically visit the applicant(s) at their home on seven or eight occasions over a five month period. The applicant(s) may be asked to do preparatory work for assessment interviews, for example completing a chronology, reading an article about fostering, or keeping a diary to record a typical week in their family life.

The assessor will also meet with three personal referees and will aim to interview any former cohabiting partners and any grown up children who may have left home.

At the end of the assessment process the assessor will draw together all the relevant information and the assessor's analysis and recommendations into a Form F report. The draft report is shared with the applicant(s) and they are invited to add their comments. The final report is then submitted to the Fostering Recruitment Manager for a final check before it is copied and sent to all those members of the Fostering Panel who will be considering the application.

Pre-approval training

Applicants are required to attend a four day preparation and training group which involves looking at the key elements of fostering. The preparation group programme is based on the "Skills to foster"

format designed by Fostering Network but developed to meet Southwark's specific needs. Two supervising social workers facilitate the group. There are sessions involving foster carers who can talk about their experiences, and other professionals such as clinicians from Care Link, Education Support Team, child protection specialists and senior managers.

Areas covered in the training include the roles and responsibilities of a foster carer, child protection, safe caring, managing difficult behaviour, managing and promoting contact, valuing diversity, health and safety, working with children who have been abused and legislation relating to Looked After children.

The report also includes references for people who know the applicant and a range of checks are undertaken on their suitability, including enhanced CRB checks and checks with the local authority where they reside. CRB checks are also taken out on all family members and frequent visitors over the age of 16. This information is used to produce a report giving as accurate picture as possible of the prospective carer and their family. The report also includes recommendations for type of placement the applicant and the assessor believes they are best suited to, along with an analysis of the carer's strengths and limitations.

6.2 The Fostering Panel and approval

Southwark's independent Fostering Panel consists of people with a wide range of relevant personal and professional experience. The panel is constituted in line with the Fostering Regulations. It is headed by an Independent Chair to ensure that a thorough and objective approach is taken in considering applications from prospective new carers and variations of terms of approval.

The role of the panel is to consider approvals of new applicants and annual reviews of both current short and long term foster carers and any terminations of approval. In addition, the panel also considers proposed long term matches for specific children and foster carers.

Applicants seeking approval to become foster carers are presented to the fostering panel by their assessing social worker. The assessment report is always shared with the applicant prior to the panel meeting and applicants are encouraged to comment in writing on the written assessment, indicating any areas of the assessment with which they may disagree.

Applicants are always invited to attend panel along with their assessing social worker. Southwark believes that having applicants attend panel is an important part of making the whole process as open and transparent as possible. It is acknowledged that attending a Fostering Panel can be a stressful experience for applicants; the Panel Chair and Panel members will therefore do everything possible to make it a positive and non-threatening experience for the applicants.

6.3 Annual Reviews of Approval

The fostering placement regulations requires foster carers to be reviewed annually, when the suitability of the carer to continue to foster is considered. Additional reviews can be called at any time if there is a change in circumstances or an issue of concern arises.

Annual Reviews of Approval are chaired by an experienced independent Chair. Information and views are sought from any children and young people who have been in placement and also from their social workers. Foster carers are helped to prepare for their Annual Review meeting by their supervising social worker and they are encouraged to arrange for a support person (for example

someone from Southwark Foster Care Association) to be present at the review meeting to support them if they feel that would be helpful.

In the case of a carer's first annual review or when there have been significant changes or concerns then the fostering panel will consider the report that is prepared following the annual review and make recommendations to the agency decision maker.

6.4 Termination of Approval

Resignation as a foster carer

If a foster carer makes the decision to give up fostering for Southwark, their approval will be terminated 28 days after the fostering service receives written notice and their name will then be removed from Southwark's Register of Foster Carers. The Fostering Panel is routinely informed of all resignations.

Becoming approved by another fostering agency

The Council respects the right of any foster carer to decide to cease to be a Southwark foster carer and to become approved by another fostering agency. In these circumstances Southwark will allow the new agency to have access to all relevant background information concerning the foster carer's work as an approved Southwark carer.

Termination of approval due to unsuitability

If the managers of the fostering service form the view that a carer is no longer suitable to continue to be an approved foster carer, the matter will be taken without unnecessary delay to the fostering panel for careful consideration and the panel will make recommendations to the agency decision maker. The foster carer's views and feelings will be taken fully into account at all stage of the process. The foster carer will be provided with support from their supervising social worker and also from Southwark Foster Care Association during this process. Southwark will consider funding support from a suitable independent person or from The Fostering Network. The agency decision maker will provide written notice of the proposed decision giving reasons and explaining that the foster carer has 28 days within which to make representation to the decision maker or to apply to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for an independent review on behalf of the Secretary of State.

In all cases, the panel will consider how to safeguard and protect the interests of the children placed with carer and ensure that any necessary placement moves are managed sensitively, focussing on the children's needs.

7. Support to foster carers

7.1 Supervision of foster carers

Foster carers are managed and supported by supervising social workers from the short term fostering team, from the Family Link team and, in the case of long term and friends and families foster carers, from the Adoption and Permanency Team.

The supervising social worker will visit at least every six weeks, and more often when a child is first placed, to help the foster carer meet the children's needs in placement. They will work jointly with the child's social worker to ensure that the child's health, education, leisure, identity, cultural, religious and racial needs are met.

Supervising social workers will work jointly with the child's social worker and ensure that the carers are fully involved in planning and decision making for the children and young people placed with them, to facilitate constructive and participatory working relationships.

7.2 Foster Carer Support Groups

Foster carers are encouraged to attend support groups which will enable them to share discuss issues and share experiences with other foster carers. These groups change and develop over time in response to the needs of foster carers. They may be informal, involving only foster carers, or they may be more formal, facilitated by a member of the fostering team or another professional. Foster carer support groups play an important role in enabling foster carers to develop their networks, obtain support and learn from the knowledge and experience of other carers. One of the senior practitioners in the fostering team has a special responsibility for supporting and developing foster carer support groups.

7.3 Southwark Foster Carers Association

Foster carers also have their own organisation, the Southwark Foster Carer's Association. The purpose of SFCA is to promote fostering and to represent the views and needs of Southwark's foster carers. SFCA has an elected committee and a Chair. The committee meets regularly with the Service Manager and Head of Service. The SFCA sends out regular information to members and hosts get togethers for foster carers. SFCA is able to provide "buddying" and support for foster carers who are experiencing particular difficulties, for example if they are the subject of a complaint or an allegation.

7.4 Training

Training is an integral part of the foster carer's role and begins during the preparation and assessment process. Southwark takes the development of foster carers very seriously and all carers are expected to attend ongoing and core training. All foster carers have a training profile which is reviewed yearly at the time of their annual review.

Foster carers must keep training and development portfolio which shows how they meet the skills they require to foster. All foster carers are expected to complete the foster carers Children's workforce Development Council (CWDC) programme within 12 months of becoming approved as a foster carer. This programme involves attending workshops and completing a personal portfolio that evidences that they meet the relevant Training, Support and Development Standards of the CWDC.

Most of the core training provided to Children's Services staff is available to foster carers, who can apply online on "My Learning Source" (MLS). Applications to attend core training (including training provided by the Local Safeguarding Children Board) should be discussed first of all with the supervising social worker.

7.5 Financial support

Southwark foster carers receive weekly allowances to help with the costs of caring for children in placement. These allowances vary depending on the age of the child.

Allowances can be enhanced to take account of the additional costs involved in caring for children who have special or additional needs or who are particularly challenging. Decisions about enhancements are made by the Service Manager.

Foster carers receive additional payments for holidays and for special festivals. Southwark regularly reviews the level of allowances paid with the aim of ensuring that Southwark's foster carers receive financial support that is comparable with neighbouring local authorities.

7.6 Mentoring

Newly approved foster carers get extra support from an established foster carer who can provide practical help and advice.

7.7 Respite breaks

Through discussion with the supervising social worker, respite breaks can be arranged for foster carers in certain situations to enable them to have short breaks from caring for a foster child, usually through making arrangements for the child to stay for a short period with another foster carer.

7.8 Foster Carers Handbook

The handbook contains comprehensive information and guidance for foster carers and is regularly reviewed to ensure it is kept up to date.

7.9 Other support services

Foster carers can also call on support from other services such as:

- The CLA Education Support Team and the Virtual Head (CLA) for children's educational needs
- Care Link (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- The Youth Offending Service which works with young people who have committed offences or who are at risk of offending and can provide support and advice to foster carers
- The specialist nurses for looked after children and young people
- The Emergency Duty Team for support and assistance outside office hours
- The Fostering Team offers an out of hours telephone advice and support service to foster carers
- The Children and Young People's Participation Officer, who can ensure that children and young people are involved in decisions about their future.
- Specialist service for young people with substance misuse problems
- Contact service which enables children and young people to enjoy positive helpful contact with their birth families while they are in foster care.

8. Placement types

The fostering team makes use of a variety of different placement types to ensure placements are able to meet the individual needs of children who are looked after. Thorough assessment of a child's particular needs by their social worker can help the Fostering teams to choose the right placement. In making any placement the key questions are always

- Will the placement meet the child's needs?
- What impact will the proposed placement have upon other children in the household?
- What level and type of support will the foster carer require?

8.1 Short Term and Emergency Fostering

Short term foster carers look after a child or young person for a limited period of time while arrangements are made for the child to return to their birth family or to an alternative permanent placement.

Most children will return home to the care of their parents or members of their extended family while others may move to long term foster placements or become adopted. Short term foster carers play a crucial role in caring for children and young people who are going through a period of crisis and uncertainty.

8.2 Teenage Fostering

Some foster carers are specifically approved to care for teenagers who are being prepared for independence. This may involve a foster carer offering a brief period of care for an adolescent and helping with a particular problem or difficulty.

These carers will work closely with CLA social workers and with Personal Advisors from the After Care Teams to help young people to prepare for independent living.

8.3 Long term Fostering

For some children, particularly older children, who maintain close and significant relationships with birth parents or relatives, long term fostering may be a more appropriate placement choice than adoption. In these cases, existing foster carers can be approved as long-term (or permanent) carers for the child. This provides the child or young person with a sense of security and stability and of being "claimed" by the long term foster care family. Long term foster carers usually support the child or young person in maintaining contact with their birth family, where this is consistent with the best interests of the child or young person.

The fostering service will sensitively discuss with the foster carer the options of applying for a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order where this would be in the best interests of the child in terms of providing the child with legal, placement and emotional permanence.

8.4 Family and Friends Foster Care (sometimes referred to as kinship foster care)

Family and Friends Care Policy

Southwark has published a family and friends care policy explaining the way in which the Council supports family and friends carers. The policy includes information about family and friends foster care.

Southwark Council believes that being looked after by a relative or family friend can often produce better outcomes for a child than being placed with an ordinary foster family. The Fostering Service works with colleagues in other parts Children's Services to promote the placement of children with relatives or with people who are familiar to them as an alternative to being looked after by strangers.

Southwark's Kinship Care service, which is located within the Fostering Service, assesses and provides support to Kinship carers, offering training and support to enable them to care for the child. Kinship placements may be a short-term or long-term care option for a child or young person.

Connected person assessments

The Fostering Service works with the CLA teams in assessing "connected persons" so they can be approved on a temporary basis as a foster carer in order for an immediate placement to be made.

A "connected person" is defined in the Regulations as a relative, friend or other person who has a connection with the child. In carrying out this urgent assessment the key focus is on determining whether the connected person can provide safe care and meet the needs of the child or young person, also it will be essential to consider the quality of any existing relationship between the child and the connected person.

Full assessment of connected persons as Friends and Family foster carer

The Fostering Service commissions full assessments of prospective Friends and Family foster carers. The assessment covers the same broad areas as for other foster care assessments, as outlined in section 6.1 above, but there is a special focus on the quality of the relationship between the prospective friends and family foster carer and the child or young person.

Support and services provided to Friends and Family foster carers

The support and supervision provided by the fostering service to friends and family foster carers (whether temporary or otherwise) is essentially the same as for other foster carers, including training, practical support and allowances and fees according to the published criteria.

8.5 Family Link (Short Breaks for children with disabilities)

Family Link offers disabled children the opportunity to have short, planned, regular breaks with a Family Link carer. The service is for children and young people living in Southwark, aged between 0 and 18 who are either on the Register of Disabled Children or meet the registration criteria. The children may have a significant learning and/or physical disability, a sensory loss or a severe chronic medical condition.

A child will visit the Family Link carer's for either a day or overnight stay on a regular basis usually at weekends. Family Link carers are carefully matched with a specific child after gradual introductions. Carers receive an allowance depending on the amount of time the child spends with them.

Family Link carers are approved foster carers, they have an allocated supervising social worker and they are subject to an Annual Review of Approval in the same way as other foster carers.

8.6 Mother and baby placements

Southwark's fostering service has some approved foster carers who are able to provide specialist placements for young mothers and their babies. In some cases the mother and the baby will both be looked after. In other situations it may be just the baby who is looked after, either under s20 of the Children Act or under a Care Order.

The mother and baby foster carer has a primary responsibility to ensure the welfare and safety of the baby. At the same time, the foster carer plays a crucial role in supporting the young mother and in helping her to bond with her baby and to develop her capacity as a young parent.

9. Complaints and Allegations in respect of foster carers

The Fostering Service recognises that any allegation or complaint made by a child, or any other person, in respect of a foster carer must be taken seriously and investigated, although sometimes it does happen that false or mistaken allegations and complaints are made. The fostering service works closely with the Children's Services Quality Assurance Unit to ensure that a transparent and robust approach is maintained in regard to the prompt but thorough investigation of all complaints and allegations regarding foster carers.

The Service Manager (Foster Care and Disability) is responsible for managing allegations, liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and making sure that the person against whom an allegation has been made is kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

At the end of the investigation a comprehensive summary of the allegation, investigation and outcome will be produced and a copy provided to the subject of the allegation. The foster carer's suitability to continue to foster will then be reviewed. Any serious substantiated allegation will always be notified to the Fostering Panel which will then make recommendations to the agency decision maker regarding continuation or variation of approval.

A summary of any allegation and its resolution will be kept on the foster carer's records, but unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious allegations will not be included in references.

10. Ofsted

Ofsted is the registration authority for Southwark's Fostering Service. Any query relating to the registration of this service should be communicated to Ofsted:

Compliance, Investigation and Enforcement
Ofsted
Freshford House
REdcliffe Way

Bristol
BS1 6NL
08456 404040
Email: southist@ofsted.gov.uk

Fostering Statement of Purpose 2011-12

Approved

Signed

Romi Bowen

Director of Children's Services

Dated

Signed

Cllr Catherine McDonald

Cabinet Member (Children and Young People's Services)

Dated

Document date: October 2011

Document to be reviewed: October 2012

APPENDIX 2

CLA Service**Southwark Fostering
Service**

Annual Performance Report
2010/11

October 2011

Children Fostered by Southwark

Data is based on the full SSDA903 statutory return as at 31 March 2011. Additional fields were matched on in order to calculate performance measures. These may slightly differ from published figures due to matching. This cohort is defined as those children where the place provider on the return is "Own provision (by the Local Authority)" and where placement type is either "Placement with other foster carer" or "Foster placement with relative or friend". Children referred to as placed in "external placements" are all the other children (220 children). "All children" refers to all children in care as at 31 March 2011 (522 children).

At 31 March 2011 there were 522 children in care of which 58% were fostered by Southwark.

Age (years)	Gender					
	Girls		Boys		All	
	Number	% of All	Number	% of All	Number	% of All
0	7	2.3%	10	3.3%	17	5.6%
1	12	4.0%	6	2.0%	18	6.0%
2	9	3.0%	9	3.0%	18	6.0%
3	4	1.3%	2	0.7%	6	2.0%
4	4	1.3%	8	2.6%	12	4.0%
5	7	2.3%	6	2.0%	13	4.3%
6	4	1.3%	9	3.0%	13	4.3%
7	5	1.7%	5	1.7%	10	3.3%
8	5	1.7%	5	1.7%	10	3.3%
9	5	1.7%	9	3.0%	14	4.6%
10	6	2.0%	8	2.6%	14	4.6%
11	5	1.7%	7	2.3%	12	4.0%
12	4	1.3%	11	3.6%	15	5.0%
13	5	1.7%	12	4.0%	17	5.6%
14	13	4.3%	18	6.0%	31	10.3%
15	7	2.3%	11	3.6%	18	6.0%
16	24	7.9%	15	5.0%	39	12.9%

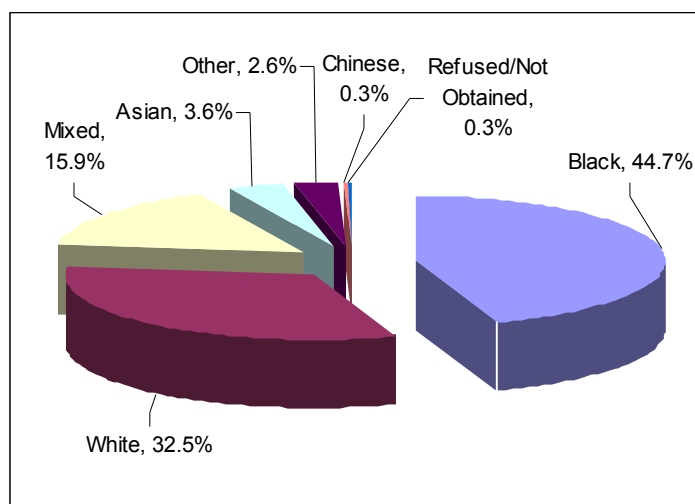
17	12	4.0%	13	4.3%	25	8.3%
All	138	45.7%	164	54.3%	302	100.0%

Over half (54%) of the children fostered by Southwark were boys, which was slightly lower compared to all children in care (58%). The age of these children also differed from all children in care with a higher proportion of younger children (aged 5 and under) and a lower proportion of older children (13 years and above).

When compared to all those children in external placements (220 children) there was a considerably higher proportion of boys (63%).

Age (years)	Fostering cohort			All children in care			Not fostered children		
	Girls	Boys	All	Girls	Boys	All	Girls	Boys	All
0-5	14.2%	13.6%	27.8%	10.3%	10.9%	21.3%	5.0%	7.3%	12.3%
6-12	11.3%	17.9%	29.1%	10.2%	16.1%	26.2%	23.2%	42.3%	65.5%
13+	20.2%	22.8%	43.0%	21.5%	31.0%	52.5%	8.6%	13.6%	22.3%
All	45.7%	54.3%	100.0%	42.0%	58.0%	100.0%	36.8%	63.2%	100.0%

Forty five per cent of children fostered by Southwark were of a black ethnic background followed by one third of a white background.



However, the highest proportion of children fostered by Southwark were white British (28%) followed by black African (21%). This was similar to all children in care. Six children fostered by

Southwark were also unaccompanied asylum seekers (4 of an Other Asian background and 2 were black African).

Those children in external placements also follows this ethnic pattern.

Ethnicity	Gender					
	Girls		Boys		All	
	Number	% of All	Number	% of All	Number	% of All
White British	31	10.3%	53	17.5%	84	27.8%
Black African	31	10.3%	32	10.6%	63	20.9%
Black Caribbean	18	6.0%	23	7.6%	41	13.6%
Black Other	18	6.0%	13	4.3%	31	10.3%
White & Black Caribbean	16	5.3%	13	4.3%	29	9.6%
Other Mixed	5	1.7%	7	2.3%	12	4.0%
White - Other	7	2.3%	5	1.7%	12	4.0%
Other	3	1.0%	5	1.7%	8	2.6%
White & Black African	3	1.0%	3	1.0%	6	2.0%
Asian - Other	0	0.0%	5	1.7%	5	1.7%
Asian - Bangladeshi	2	0.7%	1	0.3%	3	1.0%
Asian - Pakistani	1	0.3%	2	0.7%	3	1.0%
White Irish	1	0.3%	1	0.3%	2	0.7%
Chinese	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Information not yet obtained	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
White & Asian		0.0%	1	0.3%	1	0.3%
Grand Total	138	45.7%	164	54.3%	302	100.0%

20 miles distance

The majority (93%) of children fostered by Southwark were placed less than 20 miles from their home address. This is higher compared to all children in care (82%) and considerably higher than those in external placements (64%).

Health assessments

The majority (97%) of children fostered by Southwark that were looked after continuously for at least 12 months had their annual health assessment. This was slightly higher than all children in care (96%) and higher than children in external placements (94%). All children in care aged 5 or under had their health assessment.

Teeth checks

The majority (96%) of children fostered by Southwark that were looked after continuously for at least 12 months had their teeth checked. Similar to health assessments this was slightly higher than all children in care (94%) and higher than those children in external placements (91%).

CYPP11 / PAF C19 Health of children looked after

The combination of the percentages for dental checks and health assessments make up PAF C19. This was 97% for children fostered by Southwark which was higher than for all children (95%) and those in external placements (92%).

Immunisations

80% of children fostered by Southwark were up-to-date for their routine immunisations compared with 75% of all children in care. This was also considerably higher than those children in external placements (70%).

CYPP 54 / PAF C63 measure – communicated views

The majority (96%) of children fostered by Southwark communicated their views specifically for each of their statutory reviews. This was higher than all children in care (90%) and considerably higher than those children in external placements (86%).

NI 58 - Emotional and behavioural health of children in care

Southwark's Strength's and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for children aged 4 to 16 who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months as at 31 March 2011 (202 children) showed borderline levels across the authority with a mean score of 14.2. Of these children 55% were fostered by Southwark. The mean SDQ score for fostered children was 13, showing normal levels. However, the mean SDQ score for those children in external placements at 15.9 showed levels of concern for this group of children.

NI 62 – 3 or more placements

End of year 2010/11 (13.4%) shows that performance has slightly improved for all children in care compared to end of year 2009/10 (14.9%) and is now in line with end of year 2009/10 London and statistical neighbour averages but is however still below the national average.

Of the children fostered by Southwark, 8% were in 3 or more placements compared to 23% of those in external placements.

NI 63 – Length of placements

Performance has improved over the last 12 months (75.2%) bringing us above end of year 2009/10 national, London and statistical neighbour averages.

Of those children fostered by Southwark 80% were looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years. This compares to 58% of those children in external placements.

KS4 Outcomes

Out of the 47 young people who sat KS4 exams, 14 (30%) achieved 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths. 49% (23 children) achieved 5+ A*-C grades and 70% (33 children) achieved at least the level 1 threshold (5+A*-G).

29 of these 47 young people are fostered by Southwark. Their performance was higher than all children in care. Just over a third (34%) achieved 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths, 62% achieved at least a level 2 threshold and 83% achieved at least a level 1 threshold.

Costing

Unit costs for our in-house provision are approximately £427.61 per week which is slightly lower than the London average of £475.80 and approximately 48% cheaper than the IFA provision being used locally.

£22,235.60 Per year

£1,852.97 per month

£427.61 Per week

£60.92 Per day

Item No. 10.	Classification: Open	Date: 8 November 2011	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Adoption Service Report	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the revised Adoption Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide to Adoption which reflects changes in regulations, statutory guidance and National Minimum Standards as well as the restructure of the Service from 1 April 2011 (Appendix 1).
2. To note the annual report provided for Corporate Parenting Committee on the Adoption Service for the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011 and Mid Year Report 1 April 2011 – 30 September 2011 (Appendices 2 and 3)

KEY MESSAGES

3. There has been a significant rise in the number of children placed for adoption which should see an increase in the number of adoptions in the year 2011/12.
4. Special guardianship while increasing over the past 12 months is projected to significantly decrease over 2011/12 as a whole, with full care orders slightly increasing overall with an over-representation of black African children.
5. New regulations now require adoption agencies to submit two annual reports (full year and mid year) to their respective executive (see paragraph 18)
6. Interest in adoption has increased with more activity in recruitment, preparation and assessment. This is anticipated to continue for the coming months.
7. Scrutiny has increased on family finding activity with tracking, auditing and analysis improving with the intention to deliver better outcomes

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

8. Southwark's Adoption Service is delivered primarily through the Adoption and Permanence Team. It is part of the Children Looked After (CLA) Business Unit in the Children's Specialist Services (CSS). The Service has a key role to play in meeting CSS's strategic aims in relation to:
 - Providing permanent families and placement stability for CIC (children in care)
 - Reducing the number of CIC by adopting children from care;

9. Southwark is an approved adoption agency under the Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 (amended 2011)
10. The Adoption Service undertakes key functions as set out in the proposed Statement of Purpose 2011/12 (Appendix 1)
11. Significant changes to the management and structure of service delivery in respect of adoption were implemented from April 2011. The Adoption and Fostering Service Manager and the Adoption and Permanence Team Manager retired in Autumn 2010. The Service was reorganised and the Adoption and Permanence Team moved to the management of the Service Manager for CIC 0-12 years. This was both to meet the requirements of renewed regulation, statutory guidance and National Minimum Standards relating to all aspects of CLA, and to respond to the need to reduce costs. In doing so this created a natural synergy with social work teams heavily involved in the above strategic aims particularly around adoption.
12. Adoption is one of the most highly regulated and high profile areas of childcare practice. It has received increased national political scrutiny. An adoption order irrevocably transfers full parental responsibility for a child to a new parent and therefore is a very carefully considered process.
13. Adoption performance (adoption and Special Guardianship Orders granted) is reported to the Department for Education (DfE) on an annual basis as part of the set of performance indicators relating to children in public care. Southwark's adoption performance is then benchmarked against other similar local authorities.
14. Ofsted is expected to undertake an inspection of Adoption Services in the second half of 2011/12

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Changes in regulation, statutory guidance and NMS

15. Significant changes in adoption regulations were introduced by the DfE at the same time as many other areas affecting CIC, such as children's homes, friends and family care, fostering services, care leavers and children looked after generally in respect of care planning. The renewed emphasis on *permanence* reiterates the importance of system wide awareness that the clock should be heard ticking for children from the moment they come to the attention of Children's Services, with time '*reckoned in days and months rather than years*'. (The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: *Care Planning, Placement and Case review: Statutory Guidance (DfE 2010) paragraph 1.5*)
16. The proposed Statement of Purpose 2011/12 takes into account all these changes and central values and its revision has been instrumental in enabling the agency to reflect on a number of areas of its approach.
17. Each care plan for a child is expected to have a clear pathway to permanence. Adoption standards and guidance have to be seen as part of a much broader agenda to improve outcomes for CIC. In summary there is an impetus for better care planning and more responsive adoption services.

18. A key part of this imperative is explicit oversight by those responsible for the adoption agency. NMS 25.6 states as follows: *The executive side of the local authority, the voluntary adoption agency's/Adoption Support Agency's provider/trustees, board members or management committee members:*
- a. *receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency every 6 months;*
 - b. *monitor the management and outcomes of the services in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users;*
 - c. *satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration*
19. Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) Adoption and Children Act 2002 3.3 expands on the above outlining the information required to be provided to the 'executive side'. This has guided the structure and information set out in the report below.
20. Accordingly Southwark's Adoption and Permanence Service have produced the required reports/documentation: -
- | | |
|--|------------|
| Revised Statement of Purpose | Appendix 1 |
| 2010/11 Annual Report | Appendix 2 |
| 2011/12 Mid Year Report | Appendix 3 |
| Children's Guide to Adoption (Leaflet) | Appendix 4 |

Policy implications

21. Statutory guidance, regulations and procedures have lead to some changes in policy for example transracial placement of children. This is integrated into the Statement of Purpose 2011/12 which captures all key changes.

Resource implications

22. There are no resource implications outlined in this report.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance

23. The legal implications are set out in the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
1	Statement of Purpose 2011/12
2	Adoption and Permanence Report 2010/11
3	Adoption and Permanence Report 2011/12 Mid Year
4	Children's Guide to Adoption (Leaflet)

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
Report Author	Chris Saunders, Head of Services for Children in Care	
Version	Final	
Dated	25 October 2011	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law and Governance	Yes	Yes
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	26 October 2011	

APPENDIX 1

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Southwark Adoption Service

2011/12

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	2
2.	AIMS & OBJECTIVES.....	2
3.	PRINCIPLES & VALUES.....	3
3.1	Children.....	3
3.2	Birth families.....	4
3.3	Adopters	5
3.4	Corporate parents	5
4.	MANAGEMENT, STRUCTURE & STAFFING	6
4.1	Names and contact details of key adoption roles.....	7
5.	SERVICES PROVIDED	8
5.1	Recruitment	8
5.2	Preparation and training.....	9
5.3	Assessments	10
5.4	Adoption Panel	10
5.5	Post-approval and adoption support	11
5.6	Matching children with families.....	11
5.7	Overseas adoption.....	12
6.	MONITORING & EVALUATING THE SERVICE	12
7.	COMPLAINTS	13
8.	REGISTRATION.....	14
9.	APPROVAL.....	14

1. INTRODUCTION

This Statement of Purpose explains the vision, objectives and services provided by Southwark's Adoption Service. In doing so it sets out how Southwark as an Adoption Agency meets the requirement of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the Children Act 1989, Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (amended 2011), the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011 and other relevant legislation, regulations and guidance.

Southwark's Adoption Service is delivered primarily through its Adoption and Permanence Team. This is part of the Children's Specialist Services and its primary role is to find permanent homes for our looked after children through adoptive placements.

The Statement of Purpose is provided to staff, adopters, other professionals, Speakerbox (Southwark's Children in Care Council) and the public upon request. In addition the document will be posted on Southwark's web site and its understanding actively promoted.

The Adoption Agency's policies, procedures and written guidelines accurately reflect the Statement of Purpose.

2. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The aim of Southwark's Service is to provide a comprehensive, high quality service to give children the very best chance of being happy and successful in their lives through adoption.

The specific objectives of the Adoption Service are set to be within the legislation, regulations, guidance and standards and as follows.

- To put the needs, wishes, feelings, welfare and safety of the child at the centre of the adoption process.
- To consider adoption as an option for all children requiring permanent alternative care away from their own birth family.
- To make timely decisions and actively deliver plans in respect of permanence for children within prescribed timescales, minimising delay.
- To deliver a sensitive and responsive service to families who wish to relinquish children for adoption.

- To recruit, prepare, approve and prepare adopters able to meet the needs and maximise the life chances of Southwark's children, including such factors as ethnicity, culture, religion and language.
- To prepare children practically and emotionally for a move to a new permanent family
- To provide suitably experienced and qualified social workers in the Adoption Service to assist and advise in the planning of each adoptive placement and promotion of permanence planning and delivery.
- To deliver a wide range of adoption support services to adopters, adopted children and their birth families to achieve stable and successful placements.
- To undertake non-agency (step parent/partner) adoption assessments.
- To provide a sensitive and personal response to adults seeking information about their adoption, and birth families wishing to contact adult adopted children, by steering them towards an 'an intermediary service'.
- To provide advice and information to those seeking to adopt from overseas by steering them towards a specialist assessment agency.

3. PRINCIPLES & VALUES

3.1 Children

- Every child has the right to have a family throughout their childhood that will: meet all their needs in terms of stability and security; promote their physical, social and emotional development; and provide them with a supportive lifelong relationship.
- Where children's needs cannot be met within their birth family, adoption will be considered as possibly the best alternative for meeting those needs.
- The child's welfare is the paramount consideration in all planning and action.
- Children's wishes and feelings are always taken into account in decision-making, according to the child's age and understanding.
- Children are treated with respect. Their diversity and difference is valued and enjoyed.
- Children's sense of identity and self-respect is actively promoted throughout their childhood with particular awareness to issues of ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, ability and sexual orientation.

- Children are placed within their own cultural, racial, linguistic and religious communities, wherever that is possible. Where this is not possible, plans are put in place to keep the child's culture alive for them within families who can meet their other needs.
- Children are only be separated from their siblings where clear evidence supports doing so on the basis of the children's individual assessed needs.
- Children are entitled to information about their birth family in order to promote their sense of identity.
- Children's contact with their birth relatives is encouraged if compatible with the their need for physical safety and emotional security.
- Children are made aware of their rights as Looked After Children and have information that allows them to make representations and complaints where necessary.
- Children with disabilities are placed in an environment which recognises and caters for their disability and, at the same time, promotes their social inclusion.
- The disadvantages experienced by Looked After Children are recognised and appropriate care and adoption support plans made.

3.2 Birth Families

- Birth families are assisted to properly participate in the planning and decision-making processes concerned with their child's future.
- Birth families are properly informed and consulted and their wishes ascertained and respected.
- Birth parents parental responsibility are limited as a result of court directions and decisions taken by the local authority in the exercise of its duties considering the child's needs as paramount.
- Birth parents are supported to maintain an appropriate level and type of contact with their children.

3.3 Adopters

- Adoptive parents are valued and respected.
- Prospective adopters are treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process.
- Prospective adopters are discriminated against on the grounds of ethnicity, culture, language, sexuality, gender, financial status or marital status.
- Prospective adopters needs do not take precedence over the need to find suitable families for children.
- Applicants to adopt will know what issues are taken into account in their assessment, including age, health, relationships and family history.
- Applicants to adopt are regarded as partners in the assessment process and are kept fully informed of their progress, and of any concerns identified during their assessment.
- Enquirers about adoption and applications to adopt are considered positively against the current needs of children waiting for adoptive families.
- Different child rearing practices, family values and attitudes, across differing racial, cultural, religious and social groups are respected and understood.

3.4 Corporate parents

All areas of the council, statutory agencies including health, education and Child and Adolescent Mental Health, and voluntary agencies where involved actively work in partnership to support the adoption of children to achieve positive outcomes for children in public care.

4. MANAGEMENT, STRUCTURE & STAFFING

Southwark's Adoption Service is delivered primarily through its Adoption and Permanence Team. This is part of the Children's Specialist Services which under the overall direction and management of the Director of Children's Service. The Director of Children's Services reports to the Chief Executive (the most senior officer of the Council) and also to the Corporate Parenting Committee (a committee of councillors).

Children's Specialist Services is a large and complex range of services. All those services that are particularly concerned with meeting the needs of looked after children and children with disabilities are organised as a Business Unit under the direction of the Head of Service (Children in Care and Disabled Children).

Every Looked After Child in Southwark has an allocated social worker who is responsible through their management for case planning and implementation, including permanence planning for those children who have been assessed as unable to return to the care of their own birth families. These social workers are based in five Children Looked After 0-12 Teams and a Children with Disability Team. These teams are also responsible for supporting birth relatives in accessing the independent support services that have been commissioned in accordance with regulations.

All social workers involved in adoption work are professionally qualified, and all have access to regular supervision from qualified and experienced managers.

The Adoption and Permanence Team is part of the CLA 0-12 and Adoption Service. The service manager is a qualified social worker with a Diploma in Health and Social Care Studies.

The Adoption and Permanence Team takes primary responsibility within Southwark Council for Adoption Services including the case management of children with an adoption plan, relinquished babies and post-adoption support.

The Adoption & Permanence Team consists of

- 1 Team Manager
- 1 Practice Manager
- 1 Adoption Support Services Advisor
- 2.5 Senior Practitioners
- 7 Social Workers

The Team Manager, Practice Manager, Adoption Support Services Advisor and all social work staff have first qualifications in social work and are registered with the General Social Care Council. All meet the requirements of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (amended 2011) with regard to the preparation of adoption reports. The Team Manager and Adoption Support Services Advisor have Certificates in Health and Social Care Studies.

An administrative team of one senior and two executive officers supports the Adoption and Permanence Team and Adoption Panel. The administrative team is supervised by the Children Looked After Support Services Manager.

All staff, including sessional and temporary staff have enhanced CRB checks.

4.1 Names and contact details of key adoption roles

The responsible manager for Adoption Services is Alasdair Smith, CLA 0-12 Service and Adoption Service Manager

alasdair.smith@southwark.gov.uk

0207 525 0654

The Agency Adoption Advisor and Adoption & Permanence Team Manager is Sue White

sue.white@southwark.gov.uk

0207 525 4448

The Adoption Support Services Advisor is Pauline Wedderburn

pauline.wedderburn@southwark.gov.uk

0207 525 4460

The Adoption Agency Decision Maker is Chris Saunders, Head of Services for Children in Care and Disabilities.

The Independent Chair of Southwark's Adoption Panel is Bernard Monaghan

The Adoption Service is based, and can be contacted at:

The Learning and Business Centre,
Cator Street,
London
SE15 6AA

Reception Tel. No. 020 7525 4453

5. SERVICES PROVIDED

5.1 Recruitment

A recruitment strategy is agreed each year based on the needs of the children to be adopted and lessons learnt from the past. Criteria for recruitment are kept under review depending on the needs of children on referral. Advertising campaigns are conducted for general recruitment to a pool and for specific children needing families.

The key messages of the recruitment strategy are:

We are knowledgeable and experienced, make Southwark Council your first point of call for adoption

Everyone has the right to complete their family. Come and talk to us if you're considering adopting a child.

The Adoption Service the Southwark Council's Communications Team aims to broadcast the message that we seek individuals and couples, from whatever background, who wish to make a permanent commitment to a child or sibling group through adoption. There is particular focus on seeking adopters for black and mixed race children and for adopters.

There is an emphasis on recruiting adopters who can meet children's health, educational, racial, cultural and religious needs, as well as meeting the needs of disabled children. Applicants can be married, in civil partnerships, single or unmarried couples.

Adopters for specific children looked after by Southwark are routinely sought by both advertising in the specialist Adoption journals 'Be My Parent' and Adoption Today as well as putting information on their website.

Southwark subscribes to the LondonKids website, which links to the UKkids and Adoption and Fostering Information Line (AFIL) websites. Recruitment advertising is placed in a range of different publications, including local newspapers and South London Press in order to make sure we reach all sections of the community.

Southwark is part of the South London Adoption Consortium, where members share information on approved families and children on a monthly basis.

Enquiry systems are in place to respond promptly to enquiries. Enquiries can be made by phone, letter, fax, email, or in person. Enquirers are given appropriate advice if they are not considered to be suitable to adopt and the reasons given (for example if the enquirer is living in obviously unsuitable accommodation). Enquirers are normally invited to an Information evening where they are able to obtain information from specialist adoption social workers and from experienced adopters. Those who have adopted previously or who are foster carers for Southwark children would get a more tailored approach depending on their previous experience while meeting all the relevant statutory and standard requirements.

Adoption Information Sessions are held six times per year, providing an overview of the assessment, approval and matching process as well as information about the backgrounds of Looked After Children and the opportunity to meet with an adopter.

The Assessing Social workers discuss what applicants can offer in terms of the known profiles of need for children approved for adoption. If they do not meet Southwark's current need or anticipated need they will be advised of other Adoption Agencies who may be able to accept their application. If the application meets the profile of need, the family will be contacted and arrangements made for an initial visit at home by a family placement social worker to make a preliminary assessment.

Initial appointments (usually home visits) are offered to all who attend Information Events and it is agreed will proceed. Social workers discuss the outcome of these appointments with their manager and a decision is made about whether to proceed with the application.

Applicants are given the opportunity to meet with an experienced adoptive parent within two months of their enquiry if they have not already done so at an Information meeting.

5.2 Preparation and Training

The formal application to adopt must be completed on a written Application Form prior to any preparation course. All applicants are invited to a preparation course. The course uses the British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) preparation model, materials and workbooks.

At the end of the preparation course applicants are invited to confirm in writing that they want to proceed. Those who do not feel ready to proceed have detailed information about what it takes to be an adopter and are encouraged to return if and when they feel ready. Those who are not ready to proceed in the view of the course facilitators will be advised about actions they can take to assist them in preparation for an adoptive assessment at some time in the future.

Preparation courses are run courses at least twice a year. Prospective adopters are supported to attend courses run by other agencies within the South London Adoption Consortium if unable to attend Southwark groups and also to prevent delay.

It is a requirement of our Adoption Panels that all first time adopters have completed a preparation course before they recommend their suitability as adopters.

If it is not possible to provide a place on a course in a reasonable time proper consideration will be given to beginning the assessment and the applicants undertaking the course during the assessment. This is usually to meet the needs of foster carers applying to adopt their foster child or applicants who appear to be a match for a Southwark child who is waiting.

5.3 Assessments

Adopters' assessments are completed using the Prospective Adopters Report format developed in Southwark. Assessments are completed within eight months from initial application to approval unless the prospective adopter requests the assessment and approval is delayed for a clear reason (e.g. significant life event). Applicants are encouraged to think about what they have to offer in terms of their personal experience, faith, culture, ethnic origin, knowledge and skills gained through their lives. If there are areas which need development, we work with them to explore ways of adding to their competencies and building their capacity. We have an open inclusive approach, evaluating applicants for what they have to offer.

Applicants are required to have sufficient time and space to meet the demands of adoption. All applicants are encouraged to think carefully about their support networks, including family, and single-sex households are asked to consider who will provide role models for a different gender to them.

For safeguarding and verification purposes a number of checks are undertaken including for example CRB, Social Services, NSPCC, and the local education authority. Two personal references are requested and these referees visited. A family member will also be asked to act as a referee, and will usually be visited. The current employer will be contacted to verify the national insurance number and asked if they wish to comment on the application. All employers will be contacted if the applicant has worked with children or vulnerable adults and asked if they have comments to make; the applicant's GP will undertake an adoption medical. Previous partners will be contacted if they parented a child with the applicant.

Applicants are given a copy of their assessment report with two weeks to add their comments. Applicants are invited and encouraged to attend the Adoption Panel when their approval as adopters is being considered.

5.4 Adoption Panel

Southwark's Adoption Panel meets on the third Thursday of each month and at other times if necessary to prevent delay for children. Southwark's Panels are properly constituted under the Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 (amended 2011). There is an independent chair for the panel (not employed by the authority) who has substantial specialist knowledge and experience of adoption. There is a Consultant Paediatrician medical advisor, the Adoption Team Manager is the Adoption Advisor and there are specialists in education, social work and the law as well as an experienced adopter and at least one adult who experienced adoption as a child.

At this panel, the recommendation will be made as to whether the applicants should be approved as adopters. Recommendations are made solely on the basis of parenting capacity. All Adoption Panel papers and the final minutes will then be passed to the Agency Decision Maker who makes the final decision. Applicants will be informed of this decision in writing within five working days.

Where the decision is made that the applicants should not be approved as adopters, the applicants have 40 days to make further representations to the agency or apply to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM). All applicants are given information about the IRM and the Southwark Complaints Procedure.

5.5 Post-approval and adoption support

Identifying support needs to sustain lifelong placements is an integral part of the adoption service and assessment process.

All approved adopters have an allocated social worker in the Adoption & Permanence Team. Once approved, this worker helps them consider children and works jointly with the child's social worker where a child is identified as a possible placement.

The Adoption social worker and the child's social worker carry out a needs assessment to consider support to the placement immediately and in the future. A variety of issues must be considered including financial support (one-off payments and on-going); health, therapeutic and educational needs, identity issues and life story work and contact; counselling; advice and general information. These are all outlined in the Southwark Adoption Placement Report for each child placed for adoption.

Various resources are available to Children Looked After by Southwark including the Agency Medical Adviser, Carelink Therapeutic Services and the Children Looked After Educational Advisors. Any or all of these can provide appropriate support to the adoptive child, including after adoption.

Adopters who live in Southwark are provided with a service until a child is 18 years of age. Where a child is placed with adopters who live outside the borough, support by the Southwark adoption social worker may continue for a period of three years from the date of the Adoption Order, if the adopters request it. After that time any further support is provided by the local authority in which they reside.

5.6 Matching children with families

At the point of considering the linking of a child, prospective approved adopters will be given full written information about the child, their background and needs and an opportunity to discuss this privately and with their adoption social worker. There would also be opportunity to meet with the Agency Medical and Education Advisor if requested.

If a decision is made to proceed a matching meeting is held. The proposed match is then considered by the Adoption Panel. Approved prospective adopters will be supported throughout the process including the introductions when both the child is ready for placement and the applicants are happy to proceed, the child is placed. The child will be supported and prepared by their social worker and foster carer.

The child's placement will be reviewed in accordance with the requirements of the Looked After Children's Statutory Reviewing Process. The prospective adopter's social worker and the child's social worker will provide on-going support for the placement until Adoption Order. The adoption social worker will continue to provide support as needed.

5.7 Overseas Adoption

Southwark has a service level agreement with the Inter-Country Adoption Centre who offer a comprehensive specialist service and all enquiries about this are given their contact details.

Telephone: 020 8449 2562

info@icacentre.org.uk

6. MONITORING & EVALUATING THE SERVICE

The child's care plan sets out roles and responsibilities of the various professionals involved at any point in time. All care plans are reviewed as required by regulation and chaired by Independent Reviewing Officers.

Family-finding plans for children are monitored through regular progress meetings following the referral meeting and at child in care reviews. The Permanence Tracking Panel monitors and catalyses the implementation of permanence plans reducing delay and overseeing coordination of the care planning system from point of first contact. The Adoption Team Manager attends the legal planning panel to anticipate early planning for adoptive placements.

Children and carers are provided with information as to how to make a complaint and this is clarified and reinforced at each review.

Management information on the performance of the Adoption Service is reported regularly to the Management Team and to the Deputy Director (Children's Specialist Services). The Deputy Director keeps the Cabinet Member for Children's Services apprised of Adoption Service performance through their regular performance monitoring meetings. Reports dealing with the performance of the Adoption Service, any proposed changes and national policy and best practice issues are presented to the Executive side of the Council.

The Adoption Panel chair meets with the Agency Decision Maker and key managers to provide termly feedback on the experience of the panel and the adoption process and standards.

7. COMPLAINTS

Southwark's Adoption Service aims to provide the best possible service. If anyone approaching or using the service is unhappy with any aspect of the service or decision made they can make a complaint.

Most people don't like to complain but sometimes things do go wrong or can be done differently. It is the responsibility of the staff and managers in the Adoption Service to try to put right any concerns that people may have at the time they are raised.

All those involved with Southwark Adoption Services are encouraged to raise concerns early directly with those who are delivering the particular service to promote early resolution.

This local resolution is the first stage of the complaints process. If the complaint cannot be resolved at the first stage it may become necessary for the complaint to be formally registered. This formal investigation stage is known as stage two. Those complaining have the right to go straight to this stage of the process if they wish. If the complaint is still unresolved after the formal investigation at stage two, a Review Panel may be requested, which is chaired by an independent person. This is stage three of the process which overall is guided by Southwark's Customer Services Complaints Procedure.

All formal complaints can be sent to:

The Complaints Officer
Children Services Complaints Department
PO Box 64529
London SE1 5LX

Telephone: 020 7525 0042 e-mail complaints@southwark.gov.uk

Further information about complaints is detailed on the following webpage:

www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200025/comments_and_complaints

8. REGISTRATION

Ofsted is the registration authority for Southwark’s Adoption Service.

Their address is:
National Business Unit,
3rd Floor,
Royal Exchange Buildings,
St Ann’s Square,
Manchester,
M2 7LA

Telephone 08456 404040 Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

9. APPROVAL

Approval of Adoption Statement of Purpose 2011-12

Signed

Romi Bowen
Director of Children’s Services

Dated

Signed

Cllr Catherine McDonald
Cabinet Member (Children and Young People’s Services)

Dated

Original signed copy held by Southwark Adoption Service

APPENDIX 2

ADOPTION & PERMANENCE REPORT

CLA Business Unit

2010/11

31st March 2011

1. **Key Messages**

Adoption performance is lower than previous years but special guardianship is higher resulting in overall stable levels of permanence outcomes for these key legal permanence options as a whole.

The rate of full care orders have continued to rise.

Approvals of adopters is healthy in line with previous years

The Independent Chair of the Adoption Panel reports positively on the quality and activity of Southwark as an Adoption Agency.

2. **Background Information**

This report is prepared through analysis of data including qualitative information gained through Southwark's Permanence Tracking Panel. It fulfils obligations in Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) and Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) Adoption and Children Act 2002 to report 6 monthly to the "executive side" of the local authority. This has guided the structure and information set out in the report below.

Data and information within this report is accurate as of 31st March 2011. Plans for children are dynamic and develop every day and the picture will have changed at the point this is read.

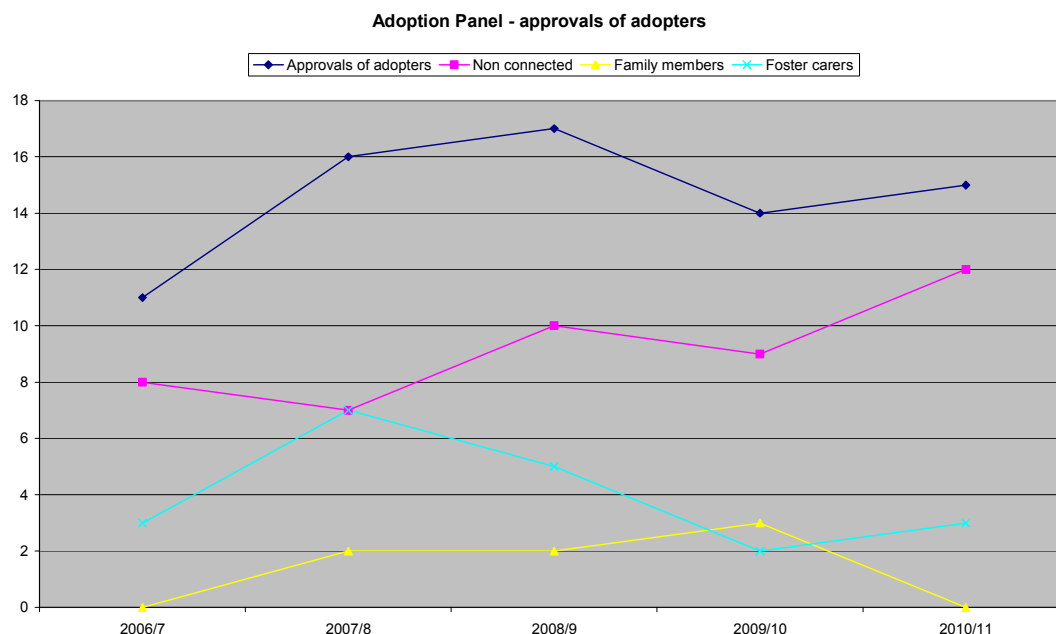
3. **Adoption enquiries, responsiveness and recruitment**

There have been 188 adoption enquiries in the last 12 months. Enquiries are defined as a person contacting Southwark to discuss their interest in becoming an adopter. There are good systems in place to ensure written information about the adoption process is sent within five working days to the enquirers in response to their enquiry. The Statement of Purpose 2011/12 sets out the process and frequency of information meetings where enquires hear more about adoption and meet adopters and adoptees. All enquirers who wish to attend such information events.

Recruitment activity is being reviewed and has lead to the development of a new recruitment strategy. Recruitment of prospective adopters appeared at a low ebb. This reflected the experience of all members of the South East London Adoption Consortium.

4. Approvals of adopters

15 new prospective adopters were recommended for approval. This is broadly in line with the number of new approvals over each of the previous five years. These new prospective adopters are then available as adopters for Southwark children or children from other local authorities. Whenever a child is placed by another local authority with an adopter approved by Southwark, this is known as an inter-agency placement and the placing local authority pays an interagency fee to Southwark.



5. Who adopted Southwark children?

It is essential to know where adopters come from that adopt Southwark children. Below is a breakdown of this.

Adopters of adopted children - how recruited	2010/11
Adoption Register	1
Advert/Magazine	2 (sib gp)
Family Member	4
Regional Event	2
Southwark Foster Carer	4
Southwark Recruited Direct	4

5 of the above adoptive placements (4 families) were purchased externally. 2 from other local authorities at £13,138 each and 2 from voluntary adoption agencies at £27,000 each. There is an approximate lifting in the price of 50% for a sibling and fees are staged for payment on placement, 12mths after, and 12 months of post-adoption support. London local authorities are 10% more.

Names and details of all approved adopters must be entered on the national Adoption Register and they can be matched with children waiting to be adopted through other local authorities.

In 2010/11 Southwark traded 1 households of approved adopters to another local authority generating income of £14, 452. In 2009/3 3 households were traded generating £51, 521. None have been traded so far this year although 1 is planned for November 2011.

7. Adoption data

Children waiting to be adopted	31/03/2011
Total Children waiting to be adopted	19
Age	
Under 2 yrs	7
2 to 4 yrs	9
5 yrs +	3
How long?	
Under 6 mths	8
6 to 12 mths	6
12 to 24 mths	4
24 + mths	1
Ethnicity of all waiting	
White British	5
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	7
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	7
Ethnicity 6+ mths waiting	
White British	3
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	4
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	4
Gender	
Female	8
Male	11
Sibling groups waiting	1

Children placed for adoption	31/03/2011
Total Children placed for adoption	10
Age	
Under 2 yrs	4
2 to 4 yrs	4
5 yrs +	2
How long did they wait until placement?	
Under 6 mths	4
6 to 12 mths	4
12 to 24 mths	2
24 + mths	0
Ethnicity of all placed for adoption	
White British	3
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	1
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	6
Ethnicity those who waited 6+ mths	
White British	0
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	1
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	5
Gender	
Female	4
Male	6
Sibling groups placed	2

Adopted children	2010/11
Total children adopted	17
Age at placement	
Under 1 yr	5
1 to 2 yrs	5
2 to 4 yrs	2
5 yrs +	5
How long did they wait until placement?	
Under 6 mths	10
6 to 12 mths	4
12 to 24 mths	3
24 + mths	0
Ethnicity of all placed for adoption	
White British	8
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	7
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	2
Ethnicity those who waited 6+ mths	
White British	2
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	5
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	0
Gender	
Female	7
Male	10
Sibling groups adopted	1

8. Children whose plan has changed from adoption

1 adoption placement disrupted in the previous 12 months. This was with adopters assessed by a voluntary adoption agency. The placement was ended due to safeguarding reasons. A full disruption meeting has been held to understand the reasons and learn from the breakdown.

9. Adoption Panels

Adoption Panels recommend children for whom adoption is in the child's best interests, recommends prospective adopters for approval as adopters and recommends matches for approved adopters with children. The final decision, based on the panel's recommendations is made by the Agency Decision Maker (Business Unit manager for the CLA Service).

In August 2010 Southwark's two adoption panels reconstituted and became one panel which meeting on a monthly basis on the third Thursday of the month with a facility to convene at other times should the need arise. This reduction was due to the decline in children being presented for an adoption decision which resulted in a number of panels being cancelled and fewer cases on the agenda. Capacity dropped from 8 cases per month to 6.

The Independent Chair of Southwark's Adoption Panel is Bernard Monaghan. In the Adoption Panel Annual Report he reported as follows:

The challenges of change came to the Southwark Adoption Panel and the adoption service this year. A decision was made by the agency to reduce to one Panel and for it to meet monthly. The membership of the Panel was reconstituted with the amalgamation from two panels into one.

The number of cases being presented to the Panel increased significantly, during the latter part of the year, as the number of care proceedings escalated. This required the Panel to have all day meetings and to convene extra meetings to avoid any delay in the process for the children. This has meant an increase in the workload for the panel members and for the staff who service the Panel. Their enthusiasm to make the new Panel work well has to be applauded. I am pleased to acknowledge the time and attention that every Panel Member takes in their preparation for the meetings. The Panel Members all make an excellent contribution to the conduct of the Panel's business. The support we have had from the professional advisers has been of the highest standard and they ensure that Panel members receive relevant and appropriate advice in each individual case and I thank them. The Panel administrators ensure the timely arrival of Panel papers and the increased demands to produce accurate minutes promptly.

The regular meetings which are held between the Panel Chair and managers of the agency provide a valuable forum to consider practice and look at ways of improving the service.

Change has also come in February in the form of new adoption Guidance and Standards issued by the government. This is aimed at improving and increasing the use made of adoption for looked after children. It will require all of us involved in the service to work collaboratively to implement the new requirements and improve the lives of the children for whom we work.

The attendance of prospective adopters at the Panel continues to be a most helpful occasion for them to create a vital impression of what they have to offer and despite obvious nervousness, they conduct themselves in an open and sincere manner. When children are being considered for placement many adopters are able to convey their understanding of what the needs of the child will require of them and of their sincere commitment to the child to be placed with them.

There is evidence that efforts have been made to improve the standards and quality of the Child Permanence Reports but this is not uniformly consistent. The year saw some very fine Child Permanence Reports of which their authors could be justly proud of their effort. In these the child was written about with warmth and vitality. The information about the history and the parents is recorded factually and clearly and there is also an element of compassion, so important for the child to read later in life. The Panel is always conscious of the differing audiences for whom the Child Permanence Reports are written and appreciate the fine balancing act which social workers have to perform in providing the Panel with clear information in each case while being mindful of the future impact of that information on the child. The potential importance of this document to adoptees in later years is not always fully appreciated. The demands made by the increase in the number of cases are recognised but continuing attention has to be applied to improve and maintain the consistent quality of these reports.

The agency has decided, as its own standard, to aim to provide a Later Life Letter in draft form to the Panel at the time matching is considered. Many of these have been written with care and consideration. They show sensitivity for the child who will receive this information.

The quality of the reports prepared on potential adoptive families has been of a generally high standard. Adoptive families have commented, when attending Panel, of their satisfaction with the manner in which they have been treated and their confidence in the professional service they have received from the Adoption Team.

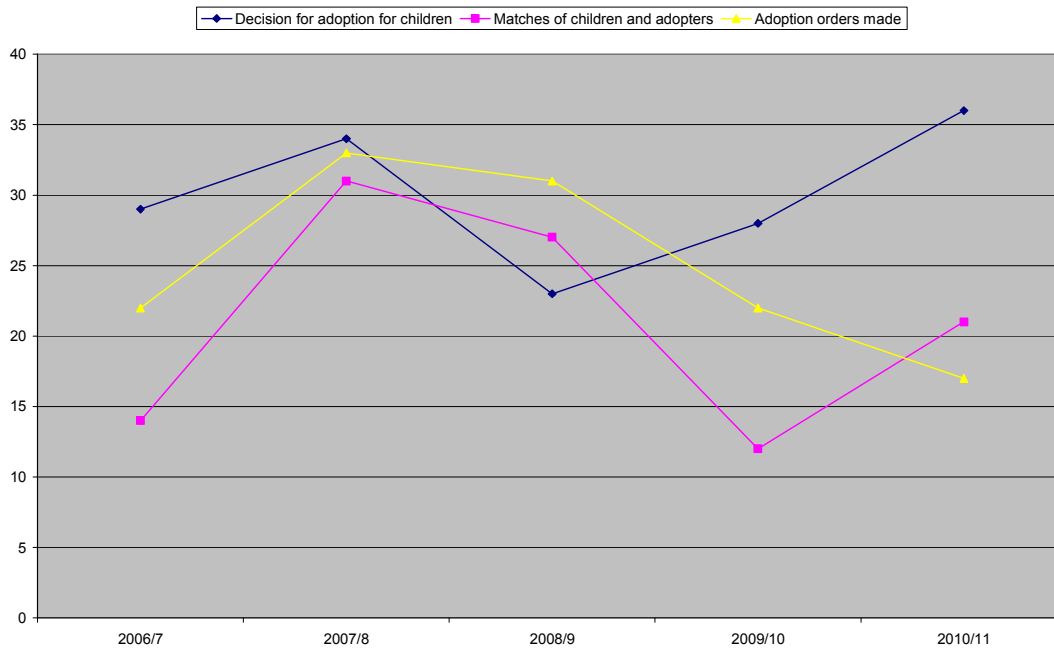
There was a positive panel training day held in February where panel members and adoption team staff attended.

The newly constituted Adoption Panel has achieved a consistency in its approach to the matters presented. The members are able to bring a rigorous scrutiny to the care planning and adoption plans presented and address any shortfalls or concerns that arise. The Panel has been able to maintain its independent, scrutiny role, whilst contributing to the thinking and practice of the staff that provide the service.

Bernard Monaghan

Chair Southwark Adoption Panel taken from Adoption Panel Annual Report July 2011

10. Adoption Panel activity and related outcomes



The graph shows the relationship between the sequential process of: decision for adoption for a child; match of a child with an adopter; the gaining of an adoption order. The trends are clear such that it is anticipated that during 2011/12 we would expect to see a rise in the number of children placed for adoption and adoption orders made.

It is pleasing to see the reversal of the decline in the number of children who were matched to adopters following a recommendation by the adoption panel. It is noted that the low point of matches for adoption in 2009/10 is markedly lower than decisions for adoption the previous year. It is hoped the anticipated increase in matching and placement activity will outpace the rate of decisions for adoption to make up for this difference.

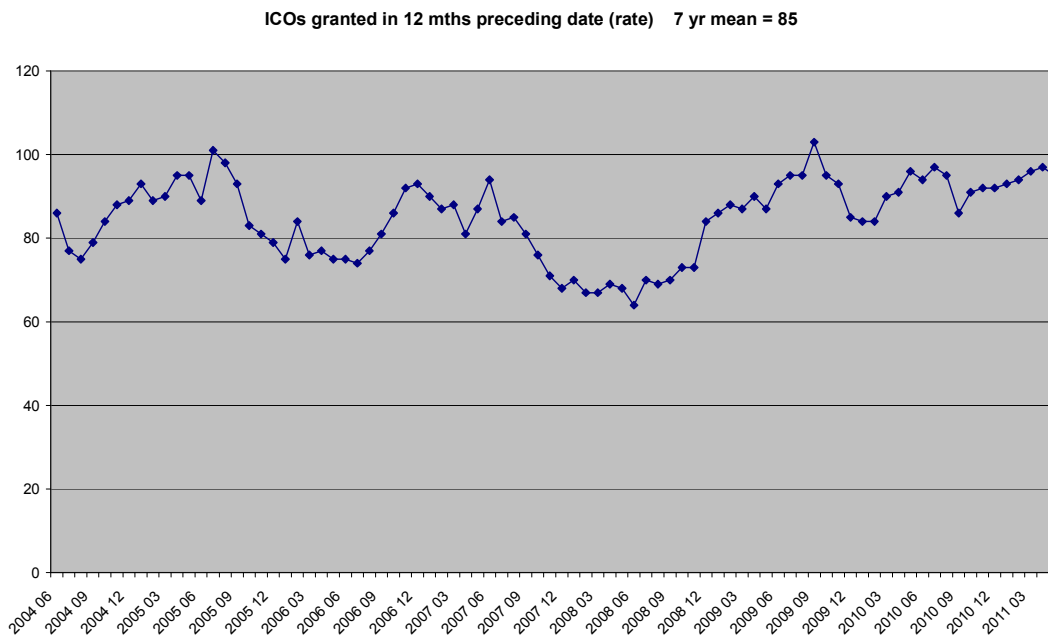
The number of decisions to adopt is directly related to the number of court proceedings with proposed care plans for adoption. There is approximately a 2 year period between a child entering the care system and being adopted on average. Thus lower levels of care proceedings during 2008/9 appear to correspond with lower levels of adoption in 2010/11. Trends in adoption performance are most significantly influenced by levels of care proceedings.

Notwithstanding this the number of matches for 2010/11 was lower than expected and this is most probably further explained by the delays experienced in court proceedings experienced from Autumn 2009, following the publicity around the death of baby Peter, all through 2010. It is estimated that the well publicised reduced capacity of the courts and CAFCASS to deal with cases in a timely way lengthened the time it took for final orders (Placement Orders) to enable children to be adopted. This is supported by the bar chart below showing that SGOs as well as adoptions reduced in 2009/10 demonstrating that issues were probably related to court proceedings and outcomes generally not just adoption. SGOs are obtained quicker than adoption orders through the court process as they are made at the conclusion of care proceedings rather than subsequent adoption proceedings. The rise in SGOs made during 2010/11 probably reflects the feeding through of permanent outcomes for children from higher levels of

care proceedings that we should see reflected by some rise in adoption orders made in 2010/11.

11. Care proceedings

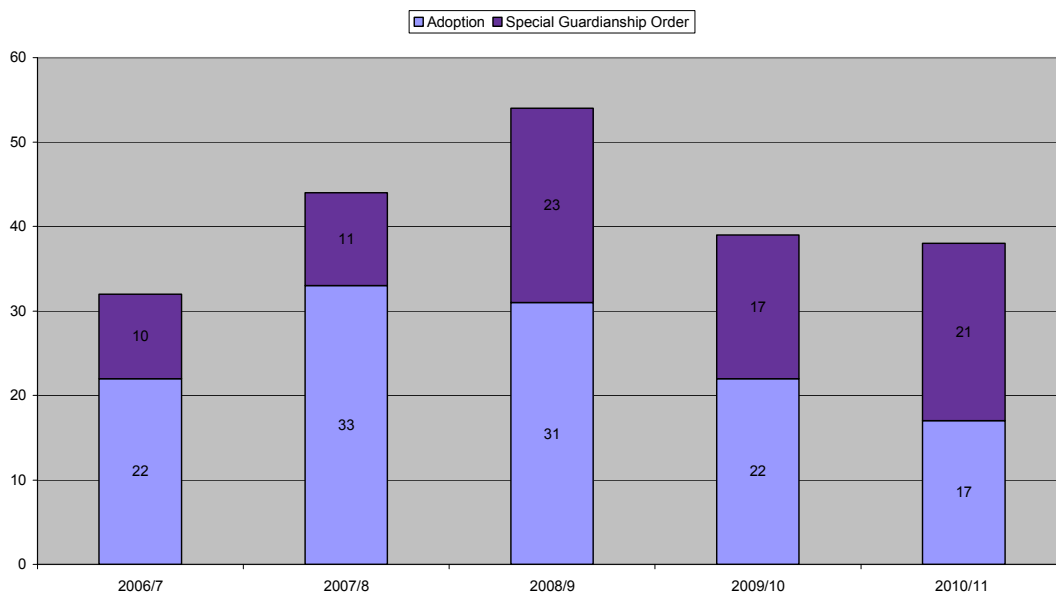
The rate of care proceedings remains high and this should directly relate to higher numbers of SGOs, Adoption and Full Care Orders.



12. Permanency outcomes – adoption and special guardianship

The 2002 Adoption Act, which came into effect in 2005, introduced a new order known as special guardianship. In considering permanence for children adoption must be considered alongside special guardianship. The latter is a form of legal order that confers parental responsibility on a relative or friend to look after a child for the duration of their childhood. Historically the government measured the two orders together as an indicator of the permanent outcomes for looked after children.

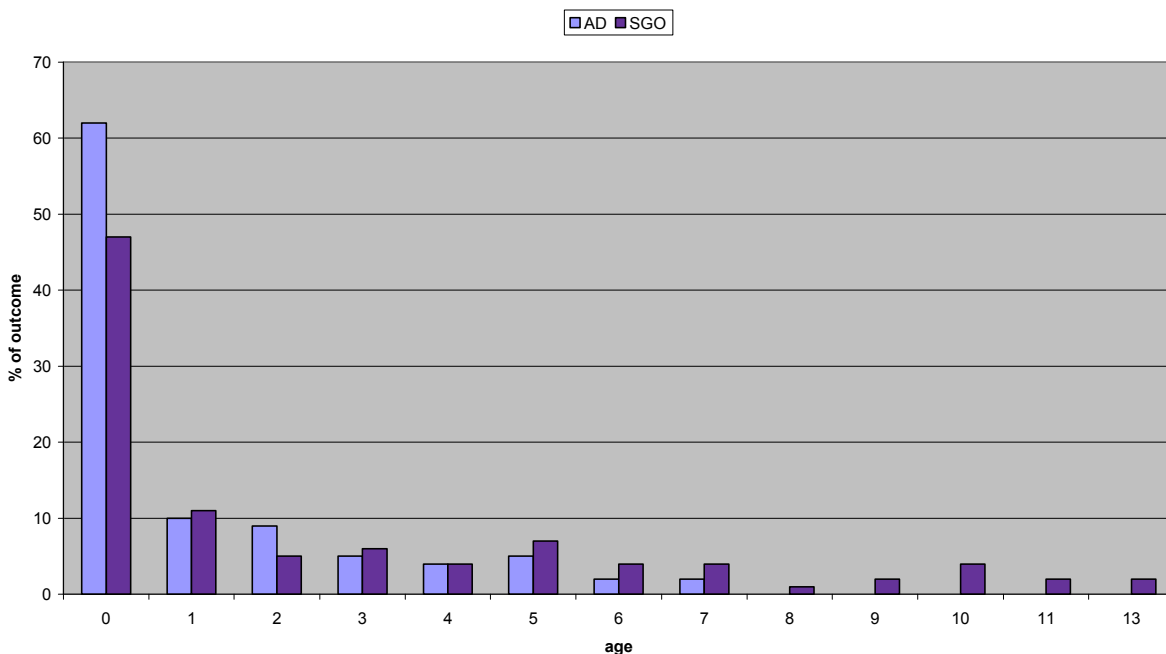
Adoptions & Special Guardianship Orders 5 yrs to end March 2011



13. Permanence outcomes adoption and special guardianship by age & entry to care

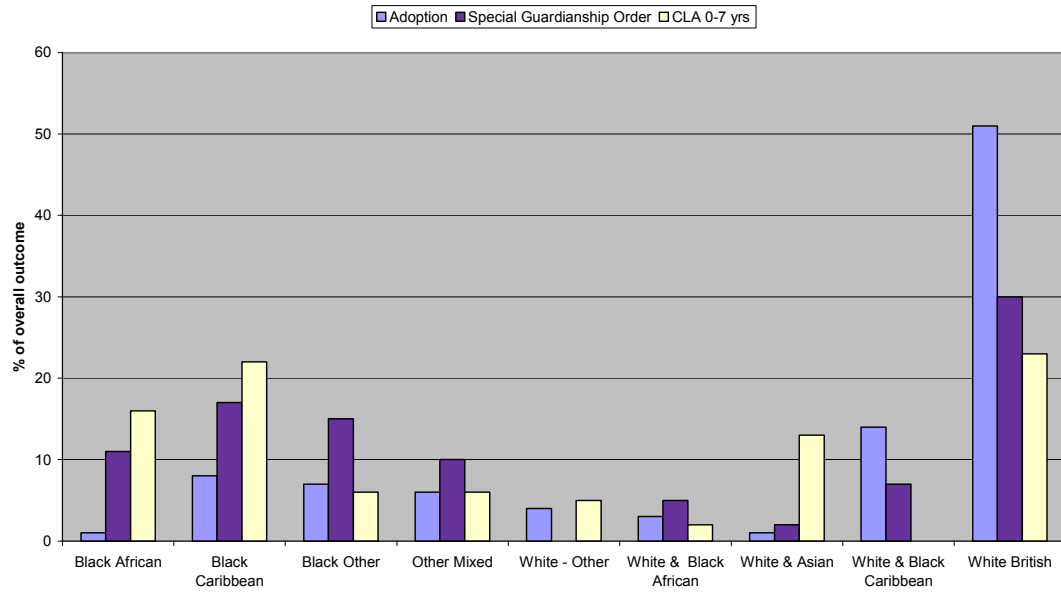
This graph shows some difference in the age group of children for whom adoption of special guardianship is the plan around the 0-1 yr old age group. It also shows special guardianship being favoured for older children. However large numbers of the youngest children are still placed in special guardianship arrangements.

Permanence Outcomes - Adoption and SGOs - age at entry to care to end March 2011



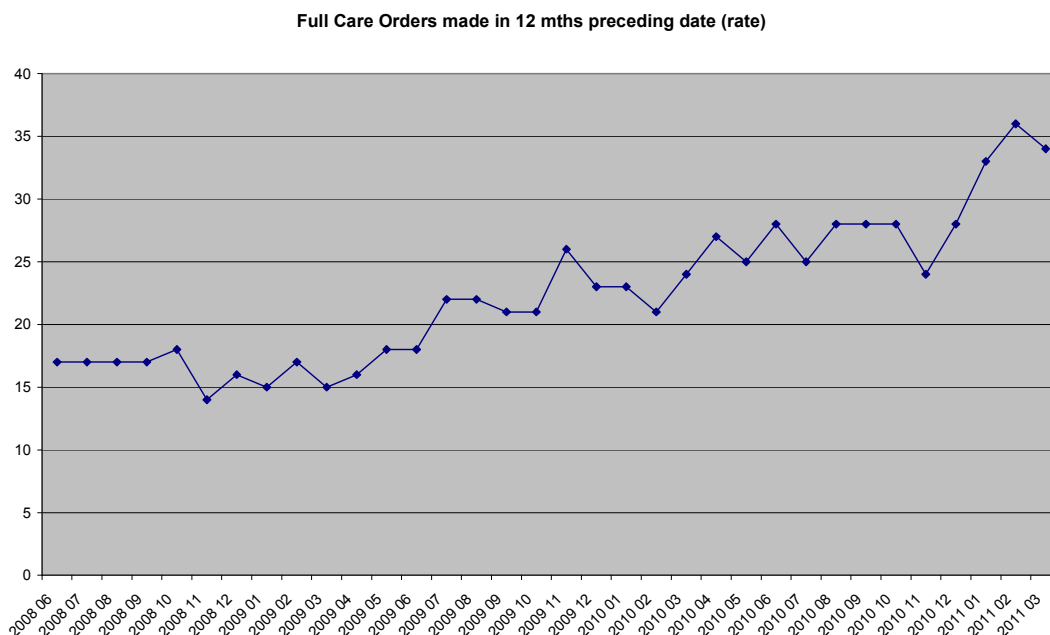
14. Permanency outcomes adoption and special guardianship by ethnicity

Permanence outcomes & ethnicity 6 years to end March 2011



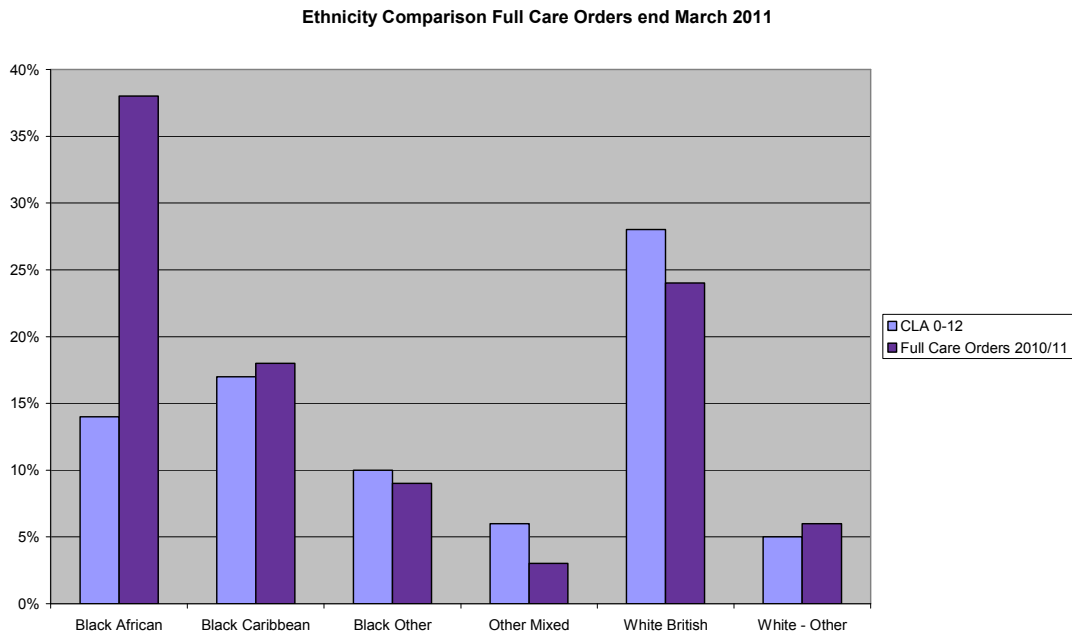
There is an on-going challenge to the care system to enable the adoption of children of black and minority ethnicity. This is a national issue and the above graph illustrates the evidence supporting this within Southwark. What it also shows however is that special guardianship as a route to permanence in Southwark for BME children illustrating there is a legitimate and well used facility through the courts that enables such children to leave the care system and achieve permanence with family members. The introduction of Special Guardianship Orders was made deliberately with the value base of enabling a route to permanence for BME children in recognising that some minority ethnic communities have religious and cultural difficulties with adoption.

15. Permanence outcomes Full Care Orders – long term foster care



The rate of Full Care Orders being made on children has seen a steady increase. These children are some of the most damaged and challenging children to look after. The average age of children made subject to Full Care Orders in 2010/11 was 10 years old when the order was made.

16. Permanency outcomes Full Care Orders by ethnicity



It is clear that Black African children are particularly over represented when their legal permanence is settled predominantly with plans for long term foster care. The average age of this group is 10 yrs old. 70% are boys against 58% for the CLA 0-12 age group as a whole and 59% for Black African children within that group.

17. Permanence Tracking

There is a bi-monthly Permanence Tracking Panel chaired by the CLA 0-12 and Adoption Service Manager, involving CLA 0-12 Team Managers, Adoption & Permanence Team Manager and the Quality Assurance service Manager for Independent Reviewing Officers. This tracks and catalyses permanence planning for all children within the service. Its purpose is to promote greater accountability, share key information, reduce delay and promote the rigorous scrutiny and overview of permanence within Children's Specialist Services. These meetings often highlight complex legal and interagency issues

18. Audit and learning activity and organisational development

For the period April to September 2011 there is intended to be scrutiny on family finding. This will include an audit and study of those who haven't been adopted despite having an adoption plan and consideration of how processes can be renewed to create more focus on family finding.

The new National Minimum Standards and statutory guidance in the context of updated Care Planning Guidance will need to be embedded within the service. Considerable activity has already been undertaken but there will need to be a taking stock to ensure all procedures and processes are up to date and there is support for practice development where needed.

Alasdair Smith
CLA 0-12 and Adoption Service Manager

APPENDIX 3

ADOPTION & PERMANENCE REPORT

CLA Business Unit

2011/12

Mid Year

30th Sept 2011

1. Key Messages

There has been a significant rise in the number of children placed for adoption which should see an increase in the number of adoptions in the year 2011/12.

Special guardianship while increasing over the past 12 months is projected to significantly decrease over 2011/12 as a whole.

Full care orders have increased generally with particular over-representation of black African children.

Interest in adoption has increased with more activity in recruitment, preparation and assessment. This is anticipated to continue for the coming months.

Scrutiny has increased on family finding activity with tracking, auditing and analysis improving with the intention to deliver better outcomes

2. Background Information

This report is prepared through analysis of data including qualitative information gained through Southwark's Permanence Tracking Panel. It fulfils obligations in Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) and Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) Adoption and Children Act 2002 to report 6 monthly to the "executive side" of the local authority. This has guided the structure and information set out in the report below.

Data and information within this report is accurate as of 30th Sept 2011. Plans for children are dynamic and develop every day and the picture will have changed at the point this is read.

3. Adoption enquiries, responsiveness and recruitment

There have been 70 adoption enquiries in the last 6 months. This is a reduction of 36% on the same period last year. Enquiries are defined as a person contacting Southwark to discuss their interest in becoming an adopter. The best explanation for this difference is a general low ebb of enquiries as experienced generally by members of the South East London Adoption Consortium and beyond. Of the 6 months of the year 2011/12 56% of enquiries have been received in the last 2 months probably reflecting a broader national and political interest in adoption.

Information packs were sent to each enquirer within 5 days including and an invite to an information meeting or an informal chat/telephone call with the recruitment officer unless after discussion they did not want to pursue their enquiry with Southwark. There are good systems in place to ensure written information about the adoption process is sent within five working days to the enquirers in response to their enquiry.

The Adoption Statement of Purpose 2011/12 sets out the process and frequency of information meetings where enquires hear more about adoption and meet adopters and adoptees.

In the last 6 months 3 Information Meetings have been held Peckham Library on a Saturday mornings in May, June and September. Two further informal coffee mornings held in July and August. The total number of household unit attending was May (15) June (19) September (29). Coffee mornings (9)

From this total of 63 households attending key information events to gain more information about adoption – 16 Initial visits to the prospective adopter's home were made. This number of visits represents 62% of the 2010/11 total showing an increase in early stages of recruitment activity.

In June a Preparation Group was held for adopters and 8 households attended. 3 were from other local authorities, 1 was a foster carer and of the 4 remaining 1 has withdrawn, 1 has requested a delay in commencing assessment, 2 are progressing although 1 of these may cease soon.

A Preparation Group is running in October with 9 households attending. It is anticipated 6 new assessments will arise from this.

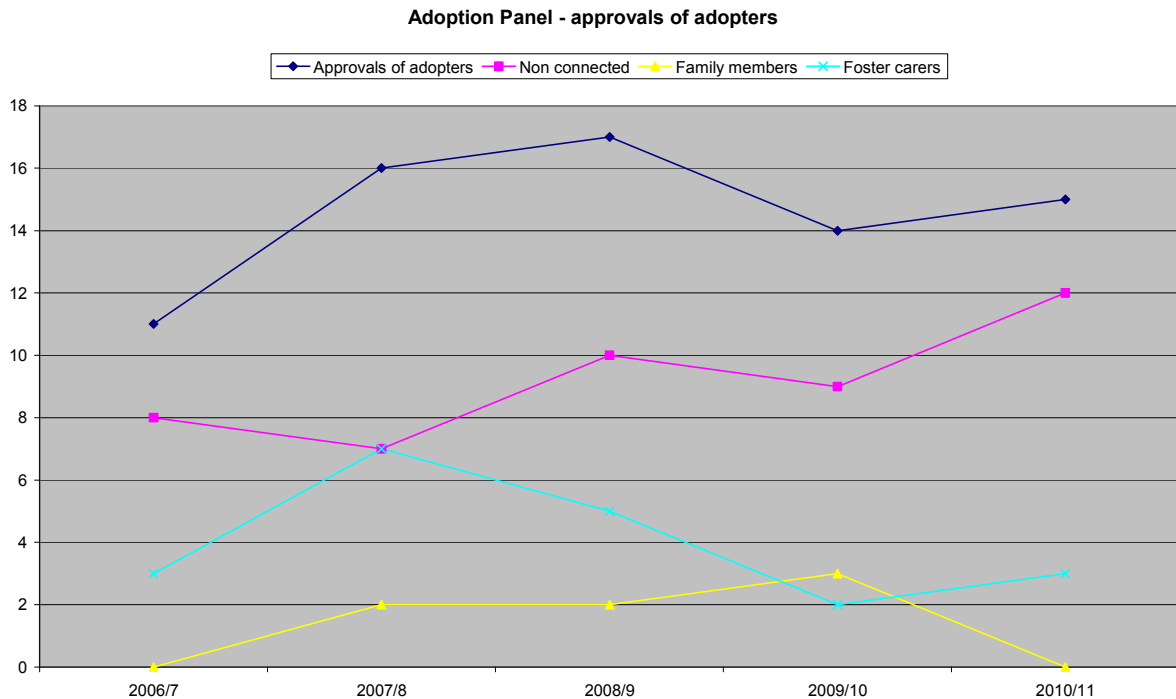
The 2011/12 Recruitment Strategy is being delivered and this helpfully coincided with renewed national interest in adoption. Enquiries, initial visits and assessments have now all increased. Note above the increased attendance at the September Information event.

Recruitment activity in Southwark has been geared to respond to this particularly with Adoption Week in November. Analysis of those waiting to be adopted has shown particular need for carers for Black African boys and this has influenced recruitment activity. A full page advert was taken out in Black History Month brochure and links are being made by the Recruitment Coordinator with community groups, churches and individuals who may help to develop further awareness in the Black African community of Southwark children waiting for adoption and how well placed Southwark is to assess any prospective adopters.

Publicity materials (leaflets, postcards, flyers case studies) and Southwark's adoption website have all been refreshed.

4. Approvals of adopters

6 new prospective adopters were approved in the last 6 months. Of these 2 were foster carers. 15 were approved in 2010/11. 10 prospective adopters are currently in the process of being assessed. Of these 6 should be approved by end March 2012 making the projection for 2011/12 12 adoption approvals. 3 of these will be a Southwark foster carer. Approved adopters are then available as adopters for Southwark children or children from other local authorities.



5. Who adopted Southwark children?

Adopters of adopted children - how recruited	2011/12 mid year	2010/11
Adoption Register	1	1
Advert/Magazine		2
Family Member		4
Regional Event		2
Southwark Foster Carer	1	4
Southwark Recruited Direct	2	4

The 1 adoptive placement sourced externally so far this year has been from another local authority at a cost of £13,138.

5 of the above adoptive placements (4 families) in 2010/11 were purchased externally. 2 from other local authorities at £13,138 each and 2 from voluntary adoption agencies at £27,000 each. There is an approximate lifting in the price of 50% for a sibling and fees are staged for payment on placement, 12mths after, and 12 months of post-adoption support. London local authorities are 10% more expensive. BAAF set these rates and revise them annually.

Names and details of all approved adopters must be entered on the national Adoption Register and they can be matched with children waiting to be adopted through other local authorities.

In 2010/11 Southwark traded 2 household of approved adopters to another local authority generating income of £14, 452. In 2009/10 2 households were traded generating £51, 521. None have been traded so far this year although 1 is planned for November 2011.

6. Adoption data

Children waiting to be adopted	31/09/2011	31/03/2011
Total Children waiting to be adopted	17	19
Status		
Matched not placed	3	
Match planned	4	
Linked not matched	3	
No family identified	7	
Age		
Under 2 yrs	6	7
2 to 4 yrs	6	9
5 yrs +	5	3
How long?		
Under 6 mths	9	8
6 to 12 mths	3	6
12 to 24 mths	3	4
24 + mths	2	1
Ethnicity of all waiting		
White British	2	5
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	9	7
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	6	7
Ethnicity 6+ mths waiting		
White British	1	3
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	3	4
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	4	4
Gender		
Female	9	8
Male	8	11
Sibling groups waiting	2	1

No family identified	31/09/2011
Total children	7
Age	
Under 6 mths	2
6 to 12 mths	1
12 to 24 mths	2
24 + mths	2
Ethnicity of all waiting	
White British	1
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	1
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	5

Note: Of these of 24+ mths waiting both children experienced adoption placement disruptions (see section below). Both are Black African. 4 of 5 children no family identified are Black African.

Children placed for adoption	31/09/2011	31/03/2011
Total Children placed for adoption	20	10
Age		
Under 2 yrs	8	4
2 to 4 yrs	10	4
5 yrs +	2	2
How long did they wait until placement?		
Under 6 mths	8	4
6 to 12 mths	6	4
12 to 24 mths	4	2
24 + mths	2	0
Ethnicity of all placed for adoption		
White British	7	3
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	6	1
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	7	6
Ethnicity those who waited 6+ mths		
White British	2	0
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	3	1
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	7	5
Gender		
Female	8	4
Male	10	6
Sibling groups placed	2	2

Adopted children - 12 months to	31/09/2011	31/03/2011
Total children adopted	16	17
Age at placement		
Under 1 yr	6	5
1 to 2 yrs	4	5
2 to 4 yrs	4	2
5 yrs +	2	5
How long did they wait until placement?		
Under 6 mths	8	10
6 to 12 mths	6	4
12 to 24 mths	2	3
24 + mths	0	0
Ethnicity of all placed for adoption		
White British	8	8
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	6	7
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	2	2
Ethnicity those who waited 6+ mths		
White British	2	2
White & other ethnicity, & other mixed	5	5
Black (African, Caribbean, other)	1	0
Gender		
Female	5	7
Male	11	10
Sibling groups adopted	1	1

7. Timeliness of Adoptions N61

This is measured as period of time from decision for adoption to placement for adoption once adoption order is made. The percentage is those made within 12 mths of decision for adoption. In 2010/11 Southwark performance for N61 was 82%. The national average for 2010/11 was 68.4%.

8. Children whose plan has changed from adoption

1 adoption “disrupted” in the previous 6 months. 2 adoption placement disrupted in the previous 12 months. The first was an adopter assessed by another local authority, the second was a placement assessed by a voluntary adoption agency. The first ended due to emergent behaviour of considerable concern. The second ended due to safeguarding reasons. Disruption meetings have been held to understand the reasons and learn from the breakdown of both children’s placements. The practice issues raised, as well as lessons from successful placements of hard to place children, will be shared in a programme of learning with CLA 0-12 and Adoption and Permanence Team social workers and managers.

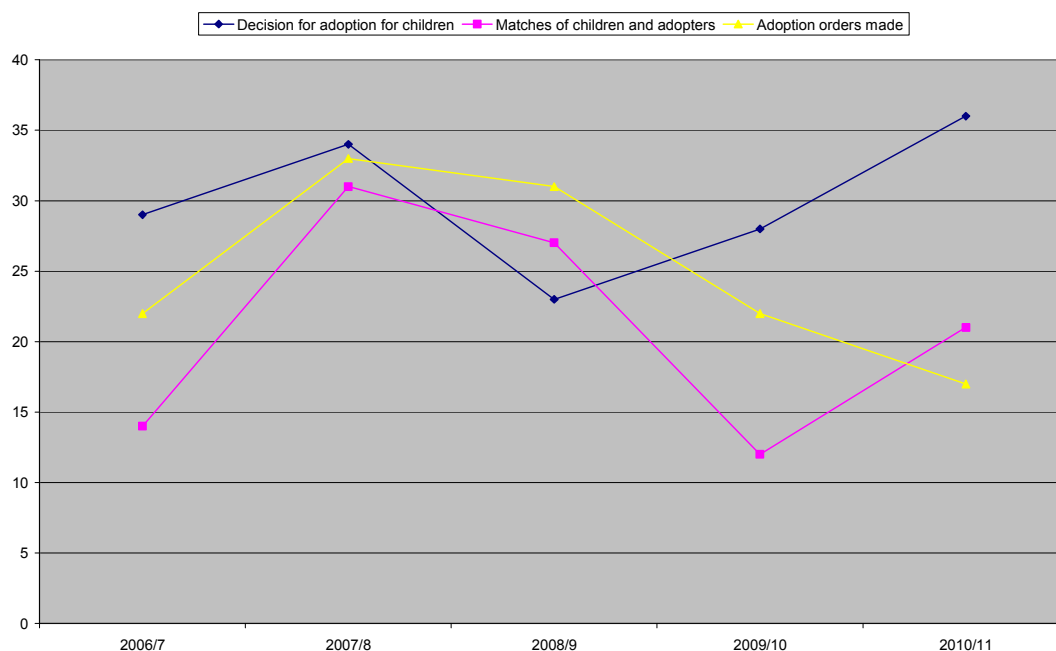
There have been no changes of care plan from adoption to long term foster care.

9. Adoption Panels

Adoption Panels recommend: children for whom adoption is in the child’s best interests; prospective adopters for approval as adopters; and matches for approved adopters with children. The final decision, based on the panel’s recommendations is made by the Agency Decision Maker (Business Unit Manager for the CLA Service).

Southwark’s Adoption Panels meets on the third Thursday of the month. An additional panel was held in August and a further one is planned for November due to volume of work and the need to minimise delay for children.

10. Adoption Panel activity and related outcomes



The graph shows the relationship between the sequential process of: decision for adoption for a child; match of a child with an adopter; the gaining of an adoption order. The trends are clear such that it is anticipated that during 2011/12 we would expect to see a rise in the number of children placed for adoption and adoption orders made.

At this mid year month point there have been:

13 decisions for adoption. This is the 50% of the 2010/11.

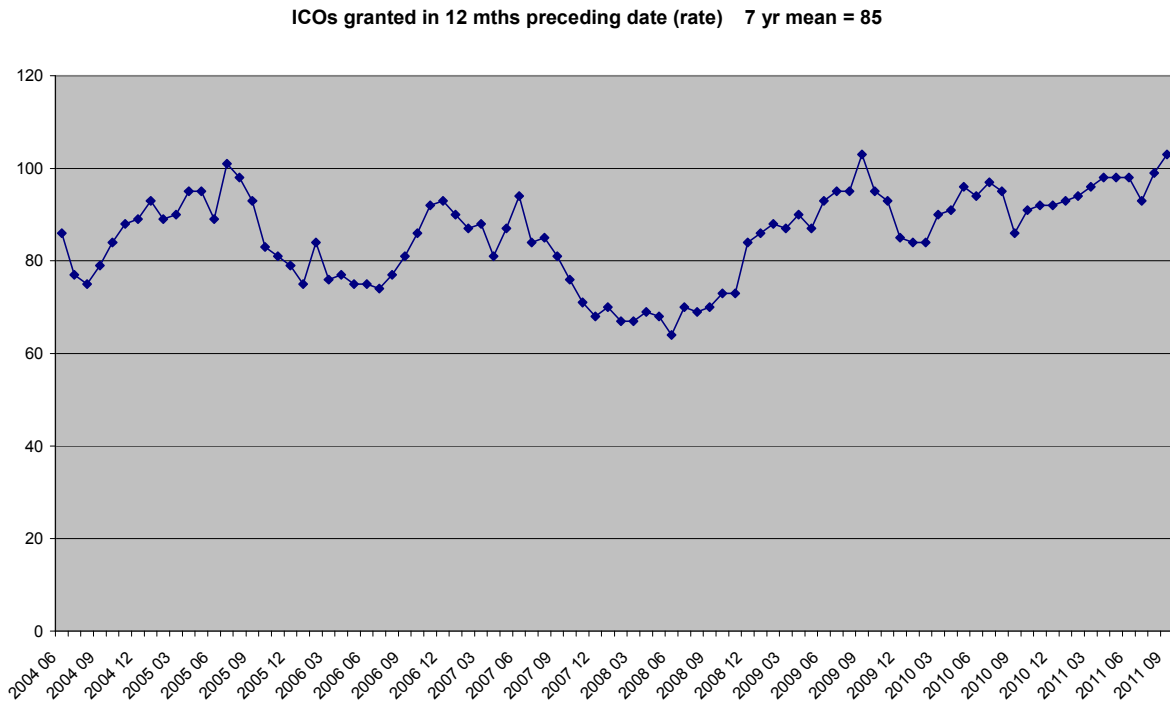
15 matches for adoption placements. This is 71% of the total number for 2010/11. The number of children placed for adoption has risen by 100%.

4 Adoption Orders have been made which is 24% of the 2010/11 total. In the 12 months to end Sept 2011 16 adoption orders were made. The Permanence Tracking Panel estimates 15 more adoption orders to be made this year. This is based on consideration of progress on plans for 20 children currently placed. Thus the estimate is for a 12% rise in adoptions 2011/12.

The number of decisions to adopt is directly related to the number of court proceedings with proposed care plans for adoption. There is approximately a 2 year period between a child entering the care system and being adopted on average. Thus lower levels of care proceedings during 2008/9 appear to correspond with lower levels of adoption in 2010/11. The rise in care proceedings from 2009 should see some rise in adoptions. Trends in adoption performance are most significantly influenced by levels of care proceedings.

11. Care proceedings

The rate of care proceedings appears to be the equal highest ever with 103 ICOs made in the last year. This should mean continued higher numbers of SGOs, Adoption and Full Care Orders. 104 ICOs ceased in the last year. The average length of an ICO was 349 days. 4 ICOs were under a month, excluding those the average length of an ICO was 362 days. In the last 6 months 57 ICOs have been made and 48 ceased.



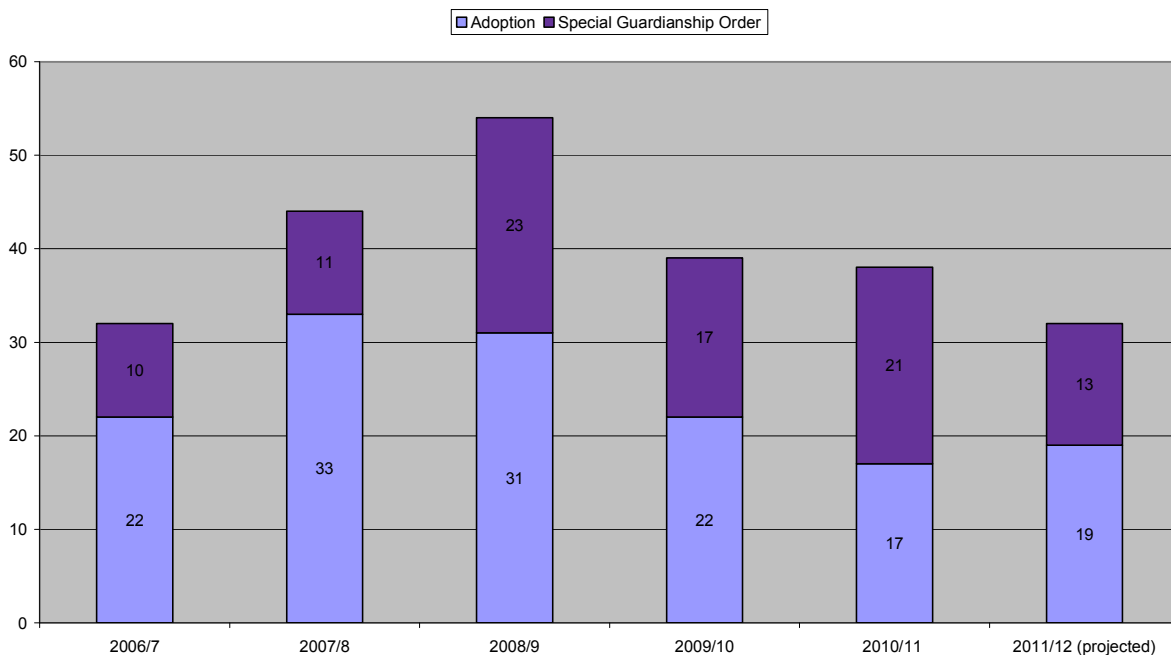
12. Permanency outcomes – adoption and special guardianship

In considering permanence for children adoption must be considered alongside special guardianship. Historically the government measured the two orders together as an indicator of the permanent outcomes for looked after children. Currently there is no requirement to for a certain percentage of children to reach permanence through adoption or special guardianship although there is considerable national interest in the numbers being too low.

The chart below shows projected outcomes for 2011/12. This information comes from the Permanence Tracking Panel. The adoption figure is felt to be more reliable give or take 1 or 2. The SGO figure a little less so and if anything more likely to be higher than lower. 24 SGOs have been made on children leaving care in the last 12 months. The 2011/12 projection seems low and this may warrant more warrant a more detailed consideration over the next 6 months.

Higher numbers of adoptions in 2007/8 and 2008/9 are directly related to higher numbers of foster carers adopting children following the introduction of a conversion scheme.

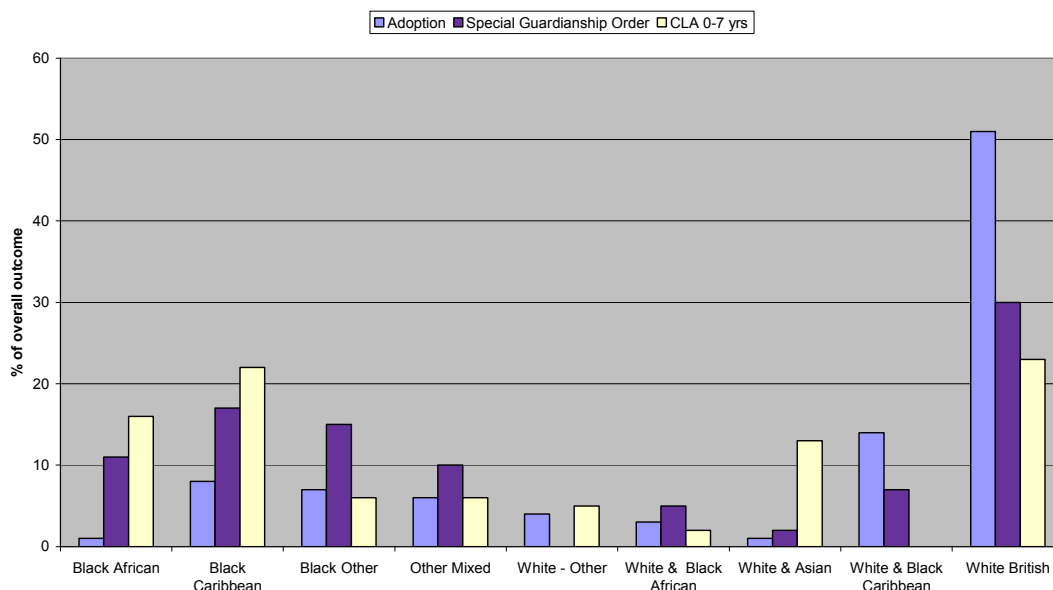
Adoptions & Special Guardianship Orders 5 yrs to end March 2011



13. Permanence outcomes adoption and special guardianship by ethnicity

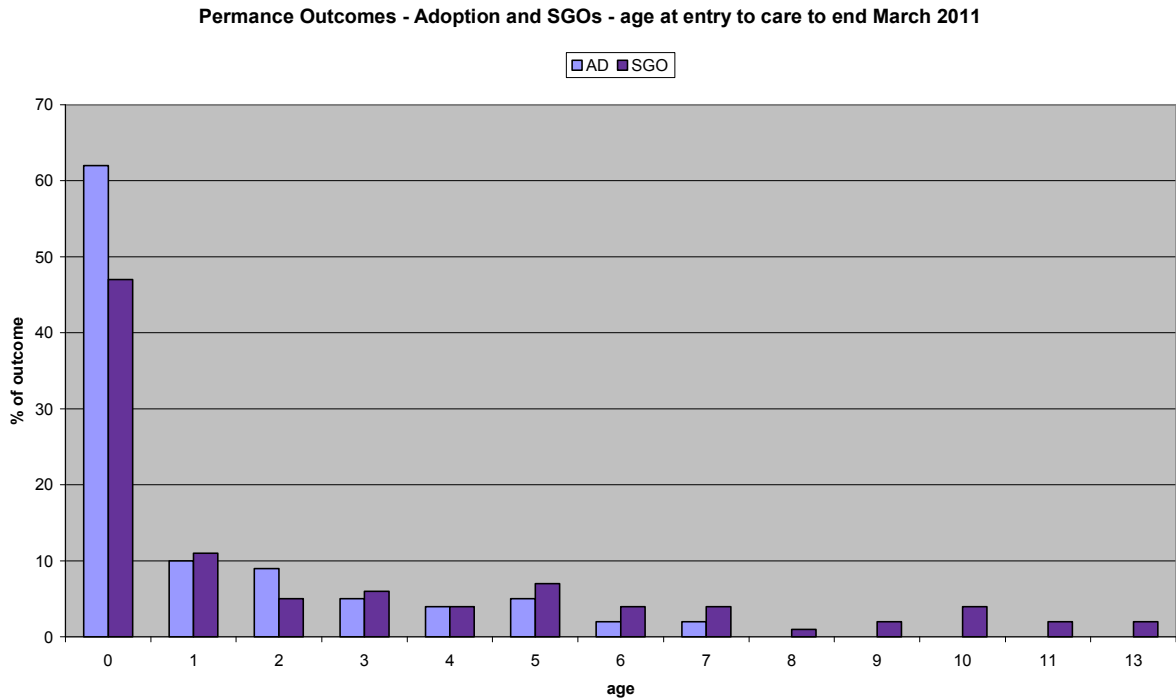
There is an on-going challenge to the care system to enable the adoption of children of black and minority ethnicity. This is a national issue and the above graph illustrates the evidence supporting this within Southwark. What it also shows however is that special guardianship as a route to permanence in Southwark for BME children illustrating there is a legitimate and well used facility through the courts that enables such children to leave the care system and achieve permanence with family members. The introduction of special guardianship orders was made deliberately with the value base of enabling a route to permanence for BME children in recognising that some minority ethnic communities have religious and cultural difficulties with adoption.

Permanence outcomes & ethnicity 6 years to end March 2011

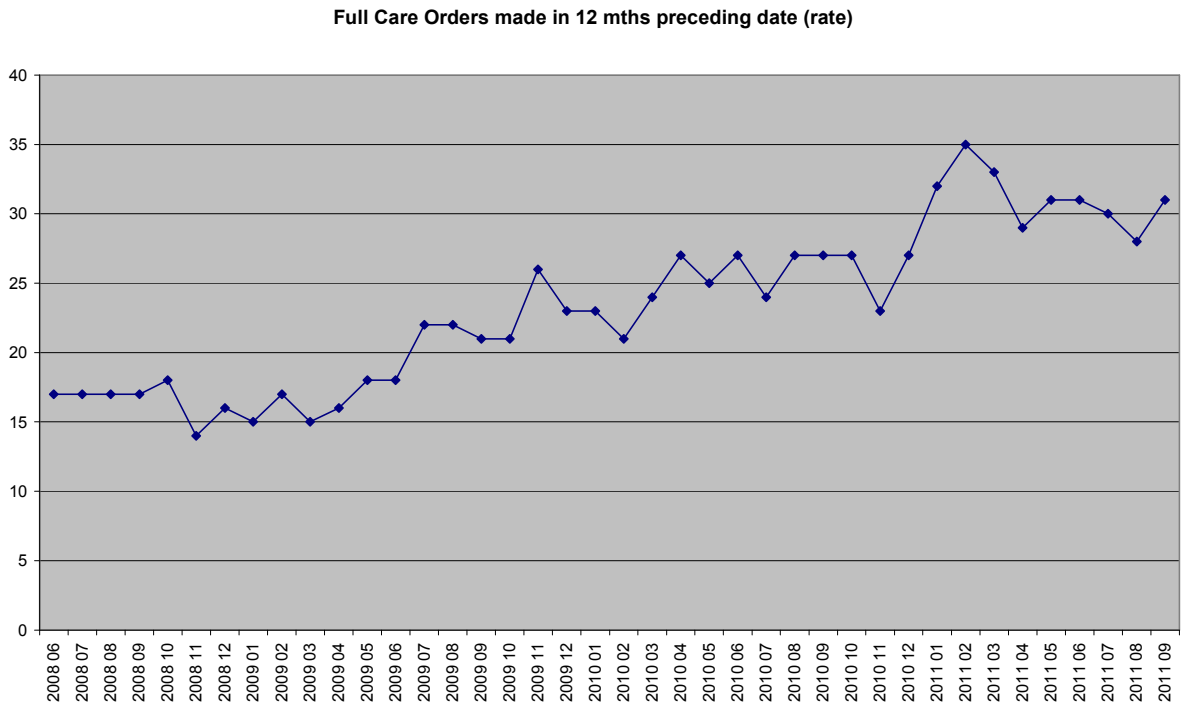


14. Permanence outcomes adoption and special guardianship by age & entry to care

This graph shows some difference in the age group of children for whom adoption of special guardianship is the plan around the 0-1 yr old age group. It also shows special guardianship being favoured for older children. However large numbers of the youngest children are still placed in special guardianship arrangements.



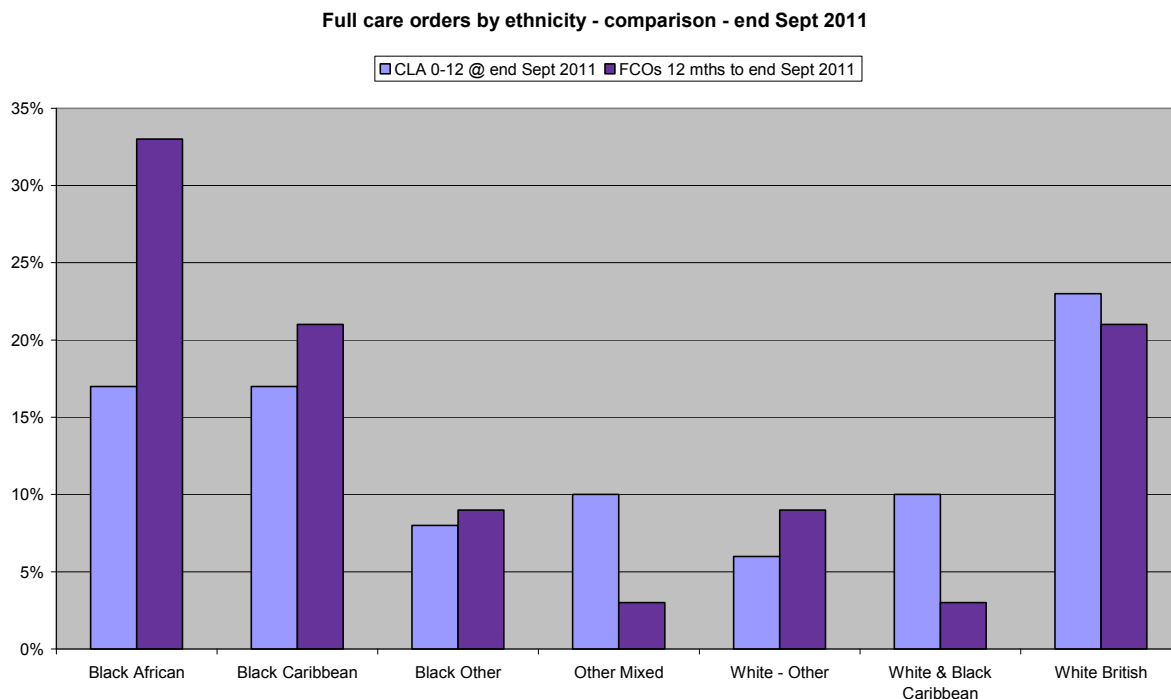
15. Permanence outcomes, full care orders and long term foster care



The rate of full care orders being made on children has seen a generally steady increase. These children are some of the most damaged and challenging children to

look after. The average age of children made subject to full care orders in the last 12 months was 10 years 4 months when the order was made. Of the 33 made in the last 12 months 27 are in foster placements. 60% are boys. The CLA 0-12 figure is 58%.

16. Permanency outcomes full care orders by ethnicity



It is clear that Black African children are particularly over represented when their legal permanence is settled. Of this group 63% were placed in foster care. The average age of this group is 10 yrs 10 months old. 54% are boys against 58% for the CLA 0-12 age group as a whole.

17. Permanence Tracking

There is a bi-monthly Permanence Tracking Panel chaired by the CLA 0-12 and Adoption Service Manager, involving CLA 0-12 Team Managers, Adoption & Permanence Team Manager and the Quality Assurance service Manager for Independent Reviewing Officers. This tracks and catalyses permanence planning for all children within the service. Its purpose is to promote greater accountability, share key information, reduce delay and promote the rigorous scrutiny and overview of permanence within Children's Specialist Services. These meetings often highlight complex legal and interagency issues

18. Audit and Learning Activity

The CLA Health Steering Group advised by the Agency Medical Advisor Dr Anthony Tam has identified a learning need in relation to **how children are effected by blood borne viruses**. The Permanence Tracking Panel has also noted that there are isolated cases of delay in family finding for children while further medical tests are undertaken where this arises later as a concern. It is agreed that further learning across the system would help deliver better outcomes for children.

Implementation of new statutory guidance has continued with the Adoption Focus Half Day providing learning on this as well as various training events including a programme of system wide training. It is noted that the September Adoption Panel saw its first trans-racial placement under the new guidance that was managed with great care, thoroughness and sensitivity. This case will be noted as a good practice exemplar in service meetings.

The **Family Justice Review** is expected to report and it is hoped it may set in motion changes that will reduce delay for children through Family Justice System a which the interim report heavily criticised for failing children. The debate around this has been important and generated interest within the service and its finding must be promoted to awareness raise about key issues.

A **contact working group** has been established in collaboration with the CLA Contact Service, social workers and managers in the CLA Teams and Southwark Legal Services. Its aim is to provide better evidence and support for social workers to make more child centred contact plans. This is based on a body of research that has accumulated over the last 2/3 years. It is noted that contact has been a concern of the Adoption Panel Chair and this initiative hopes to make an impact on the outcomes for children by having better thought through contact plans with possibilities for less contact and better quality contact where it can be directly related to the child's best interests.

In June/July 2011 a study was undertaken of Southwark **children whose care plan had changed from adoption to long term foster care** since the implementation of the Adoption & Children Act 2002. This group numbered 18 children. An audit was undertaken, the data compared and contrasted with the group of children who have been successfully adopted. The views of the family finding social workers in the Adoption and Permanence Team were gathered about the findings of each audit. This wasn't an academic or exhaustive study but it was sufficient to provide some general conclusions about this group and the work that went on to find them an adoptive family as well as thoughts about how they family finding system might be developed.

The full report is available for more detail but in summary the study found that where adoptive placements hadn't been found around 2 thirds of children remained in the same placement as the end of care proceedings. Their needs are high and some placements are not without strain but these children have generally been given stability – one of the most important predictors of positive outcomes for children in care. Additionally practically all siblings have been enabled to live together in stable arrangements. What is missing is their legal permanence through adoption rather than matched long term foster care.

There are a small number of cases where the outcomes for the children are more concerning. In some of these cases family finding was always ambitious. To have a number of children whom we have been unable to find adoptive families for can say a

number of things. Firstly that it is a sign of a healthy system that we are still aspiring to place children with difficult needs. Secondly, and in a way the flip side of this is that we should not be complacent about this and challenge ourselves more to scrutinise what we did in those cases. 3 of those children are in “unstable” placements and they entered the care system relatively early to the age of children who generally comprise the unstable group.

The study concluded there is a need for improved tracking and scrutiny of the smaller number of harder to place children. This is a relatively small number that deserve a higher profile around family finding scrutiny and ensuring their needs are being well met within their placement and network.

There is no evidence for any systematic drift or complacency around family finding and planning and delivering permanence for children. There is considerable evidence for the reverse but there is a requirement for a sharper visible focus on family finding in the child’s record and the social work team for the child, the family finding team and IRO service will need to reflect on how each can adapt to this challenge while not getting bogged down in excessive and repetitive recording. There is no evidence that children who aren’t adopted then “bounce” around the care system or that ethnicity is a significant factor in this group of children. There is evidence that a small number of cases with children with very complex needs are still a challenge to the child care system to ensure their needs are fully met and our practice in these cases with the benefit of hindsight could and should have been different.

The conclusion was that family finding while being healthy has in the study undergone a medical. It has passed its tests generally well but there is residual concern that some treatment is needed to support long term health to meet the challenges of new statutory guidance and political imperatives around widening our approach to adoption particularly around harder to place children.

This study has been shared and discussed with social workers, managers, agency decision maker and Adoption Panel at the well attended Adoption Focus Half Day 7th July 2011. It was also the main topic of Southwark’s Permanence Forum on 5th October 2011. The Permanence Forum is a key gathering of CLA Team Managers, Adoption managers and Quality Assurance Manager and IROs with a purpose to discuss key topics to reach consensus and develop agreement for improvement.

Arising from this a Family Finding Standard has been developed and will be promoted throughout the service. An audit tool has been agreed and will become a form on ICS. The audit process is now directly linked to the quality assurance of family finding and key standards that have been developed. The Permanence Tracking panel will monitor implementation of key aspects of family finding standards. The IRO service is to review its own recording and approach to improving the focus and scrutiny on family finding. In the main the remaining actions are the implementation of above.

19. Organisational Development

Plans for the next 6 months are as follows:

The family finding standards and family finding audit tool and process must be implemented and embedded within the service

Audits must be completed on all children are waiting more than 6 months for an adoptive placement

The Permanence Tracking Panel should review its functioning to consider how to create greater purchase on family finding.

More detailed understanding of black African children on full care orders and their needs should be set out in the final year report.

Learning from disruptions and good practice with hard to place children must be delivered to CLA and Adoption and Permanence Team.

Learning around impact of children of blood born viruses and other key health matters must be delivered across CLA, Adoption and Permanence Team and Adoption Panel.

Learning around issues raised and recommendations of Family Justice Review should be promoted across the service

Learning promoted and key tools and guidance for social workers and managers to make evidenced based, child centred contact plans.

Children's Specialist Services Divisional Management Team to consider this report and additional actions.

Alasdair Smith
CLA 0-12 and Adoption Service Manager



Lingala
Mokanda ya ndakisa mpo na babokoli ya Bana

Turkish
Eviat Eđinme Konusunda Çocuklar İçin Rehber



Amharic
የግብፁ ልጅ ለማዕከላዊ ልማት ለሥነ ምግባር

Vietnamese
Hướng dẫn Trẻ em về Nhận con nuôi



Creole
Pekin Rhode toh Adopshon

Bengali
শিশুর মতক বা গানক নেওয়ার নিয়মাবলি



Portugese
Guia de crianças sobre a adopção

Spanish
Guía sobre la adopción permanente, para niños



Yoruba
Iṣeṣe nipa iwà ní ipò òbí fún ọmọ èlòmíràn



Eritrean

French
Guide d'adoption pour Enfants

Igbo
Usoro ikuru umuaka



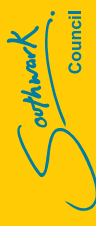
Albanian
Manuali i Udhëzimeve të Adopimit të Fëmijëve

Luganda

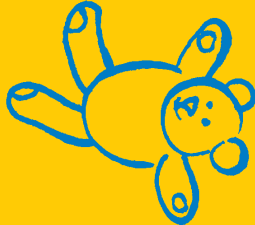


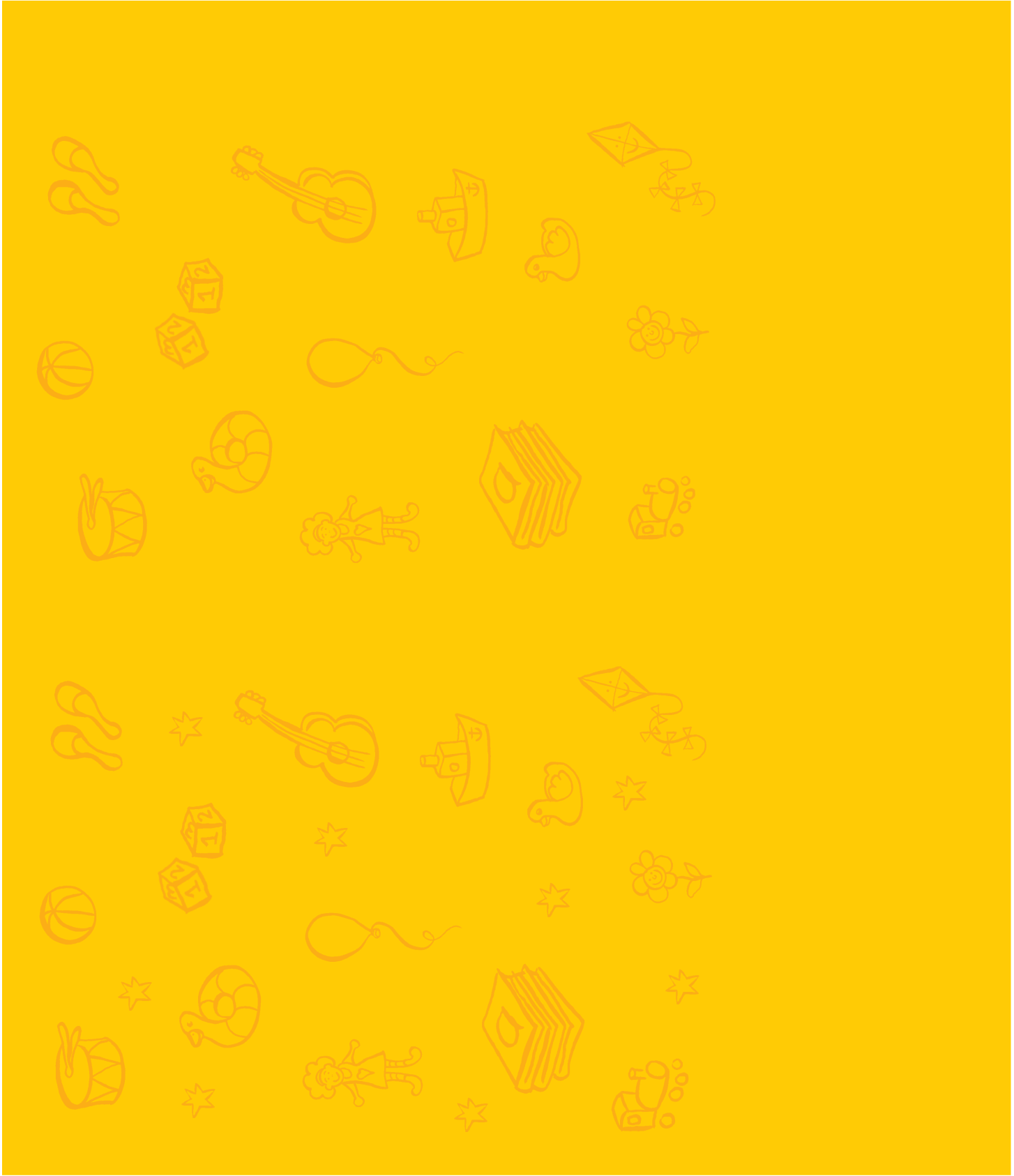
Children's Guide to Adoption

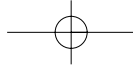
(0-10 years)



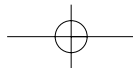
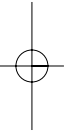
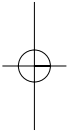
This guide can be made available in any language please ask your social worker for a copy in your language.





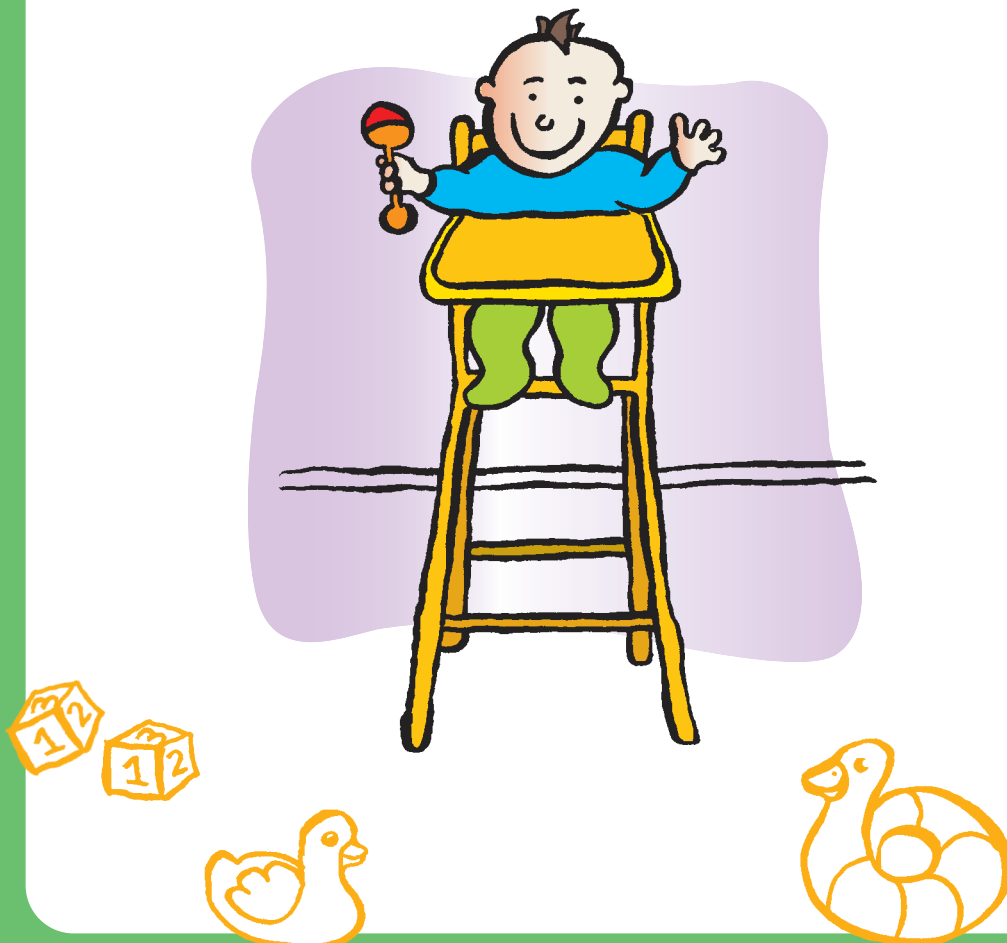


This book belongs to



Moving to an adoptive family can be confusing. This is a guide to help you understand what happens. Southwark Children's Services hopes this book is helpful, remember if you have any questions you can talk to your social worker, carer or an adult you trust like your teacher.

Contents of this guide forms part of the Statement of Purpose for the Southwark Adoption Team.



What is adoption?

If you can't live with your birth family, the plan may be for you to be adopted. Adoption means you grow up in a new family where you are loved, kept safe and cared for.



Their home will be your home and you will be part of their family.

Why can't I go back to my birth family?

Your mum or dad are not able to care for you and keep you safe, therefore it is not okay for you to live with them. It is not because you have done anything wrong; it is because your mum or dad can't look after you safely.

Who gets adopted?

Hundreds of children are adopted every year. Some are babies, lots are boys and girls and some are teenagers. Some children come from another country to be adopted here. Because all children are different adopters are different too, so that children can be adopted by adults who are similar to them.



Who decides I am going to be adopted?

The court decides whether you should be adopted. A judge listens to your parents, your social worker and your Children's Guardian. Everyone tells the judge what he or she thinks about the adoption plan.

Sometimes your parents think it is best for you to be adopted, sometimes they tell the judge they don't want you adopted.

Sometimes your social worker believes you can't live safely at home so the best plan is for you to be adopted.

The judge decides whether the adoption should go ahead, even sometimes when your parents don't agree.

What is a Children's Guardian?

A Children's Guardian is someone who listens to your feelings about what is going on. They make sure the court knows what you think and feel about adoption. You can trust them and talk to them.

Who can I talk to about adoption?

You can talk to your social worker or your Children's Guardian or anyone else you trust like your teacher or the person that attends your review meeting.



Your social worker and Children's Guardian will make sure you know what's going on and make sure you have someone to talk to.



Who chooses my new family and how long will it take?

Children's Services know about the people who want to adopt a child like you.

It can take a long time to find the right family for you...sometimes more than a whole year. The adoption social worker will visit a family lots of times to make sure they can look after you well.

Not all families are the same. In some there is just a mummy, others have two mummies, a mummy and daddy or two daddies.

Everyone wants a family that is best for you.

This is what happens:

- A new family tells social services they want to adopt a child like you.
- A special meeting, called a panel, agrees they are a good family for you.
- You meet your new family and take time to get to know them.
- If everyone is happy you go and live with them in their home.



Can I see my birth family?

Your social worker will tell you if you can carry on seeing your birth family once you are adopted. Sometimes you will meet up with your birth parents and brothers and sisters, if you have any, one or two times every year.

If you don't see your birth family a letter can be sent telling them how you are getting on. Your new mum or dad will help with this.

You will have pictures and information about your birth family in your life pack or life history book, which you can look at whenever you want to remember.



What if I don't want to be adopted?

You should tell your social worker or Children's Guardian. They will talk to you and explain how you feel to the judge.

The judge may not always make the decision you want – but it will be what the judge believes is best for you.

If you are unhappy about the plans that are made for you or anything else you can tell somebody.



This is called making a complaint. Your foster carer or social worker must help you. You can also have an Independent Advocate, who is someone different from social services, to support you.

The telephone numbers you will need are at the back of this booklet. There is also a separate form for making a complaint.

What happens next?

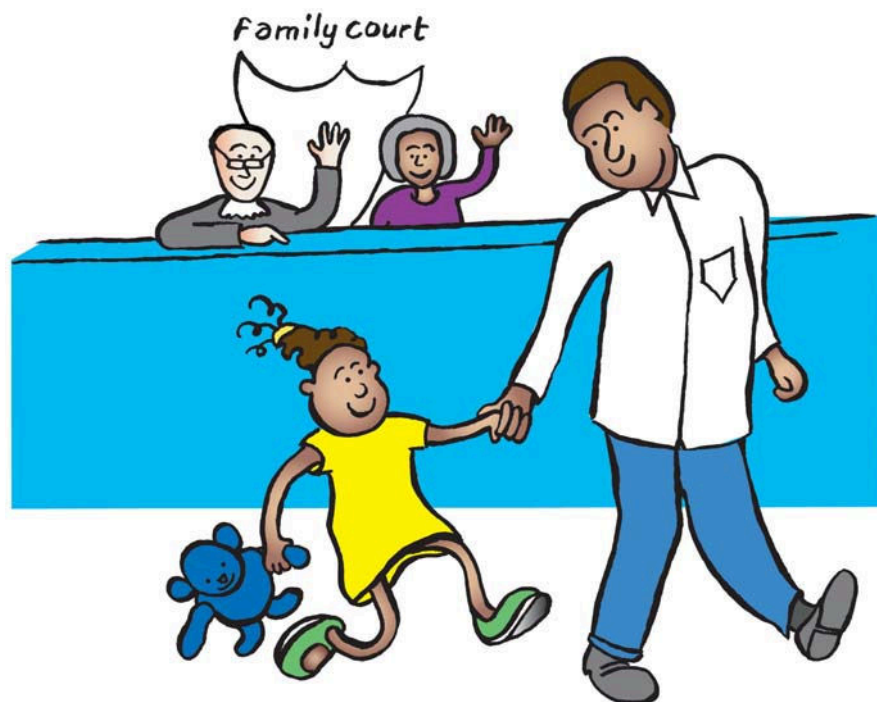
After moving in with your new family your social worker will still visit you. It can take time to get used to living with a new family so when everyone feels the time is right a very important day arrives – this is your adoption day.

The court makes a date for your whole new family to visit the judge. It is a special occasion, so you go too!

There are two kinds of court.

One is a criminal court for people who may have done something wrong. The other is a family court, where the judge and magistrates help sort out family problems. They want children to be safe.

Adoptions are made in a family court.



If the judge is sure you are happy with your new family they go ahead and make an Adoption Order.



This means that your new family becomes yours by law, and you can call them your own family forever.





Item No. 11.	Classification: Open	Date: 8 November 2011	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Update on Southwark College courses and the preferential opportunities for looked after children/school leavers	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee notes that:
 - Southwark College has an agreement in place that all looked after children and care leavers will be guaranteed an interview for an appropriate course at the College.
 - Significant development has taken place at the college to develop a vocational curriculum that has been co-designed with local employers to better meet local employment needs.
 - A specialist dyslexia centre for post 16 looked after children has been opened at the college in partnership with the council.
2. The Committee invites the Principal of the College to attend the Corporate Parenting Committee meeting next year to report back on the impact of these changes.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Preferential Opportunities for Looked After Children

3. Southwark College has agreed to offer all looked after children an interview for any course from the college prospectus.
4. This is not a guarantee of a place on any particular course as allowing young people to enroll on a course for which they are not qualified will almost certainly result in them not completing the course.
5. In instances where this occurs the college will endeavour to match the young person with an appropriate course.
6. Connexions advisors will offer all looked after young people intensive training in interview techniques prior to application to Southwark or other colleges.
7. The Education Business Alliance will work with the college to ensure that all looked after children will be able to access a high quality and appropriate work experience placement.

8. It is hoped that this scheme will result in at least twenty additional young people accessing provision at Southwark College.

Demand lead Vocational Curriculum

9. The College offers a range of curriculum provision from 'entry level' to 'level 5' in a variety of areas.
10. The focus of the curriculum is a vocational offer to provide learners with sustainable jobs.
11. Nine new vocational curriculum areas developed since January 2011, which include:
- Hair
 - Beauty
 - Sports Academy (Millwall - Football/basketball/boxing),
 - Construction trades,
 - Hospitality/Catering Apprenticeships,
 - Sports (massage) Therapy,
 - Personal Training/Sports Leadership and Management,
 - Cleaning Services,
 - Security Services.
12. Over 60% of the course file is new for 11/12, including a wide range of short (QCF) unitised programmes and new apprenticeships
13. The college has developed an innovative approach to targeted business development to raise the profile of college:
- £1.9m Shard S.106 monies - half a million spent on new real work environments to support new curriculum, rest will be received when Shard opens (2012)
 - Daimler/Mercedes senior team partner with Southwark College students - now annual programme
 - Shard is a vertical city likely to house 10000 employees with another 4000+ in a new building next to it (London Bridge Quarter) – A deal is in place for all contractors/service providers to LBQ to interview 75% of all applicants College puts forward for jobs
 - Construction forum and training on local building sites (Mace, Travis Perkins, Lend Lease).

Super Reader Dyslexia Centre

14. Working with the college, the Specialist Education Services Team have developed a new teaching approach to tackle the high incidence of Dyslexia linked to a lack of engagement with learning in the post 16 looked after children cohort. This is based on two separate strands of education research.
15. "Super Reading" is a new teaching technique that has proved to be very successful in tackling Dyslexia in young adults.
16. Research has shown that commercial gaming technology can have a big impact on engaging those who have previously been disengaged with learning.
17. The centre will work with a cohort of between ten and fifteen looked after young

people who have been identified as being dyslexic.

18. The target for the first cohort is that at least 80% of the cohort progress to full time learning after completing the course.

Community impact statement

19. This scheme supports some of the more vulnerable young people in the community and aims to narrow the gap between them and the general population.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Deputy Director Specialist Children's Services and Safeguarding	
Report Author	Darren Coghlan, Head of Specialist Education Services	
Version	Final	
Dated	24 October 2011	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date report sent to Constitutional Team		26 October 2011

Item No. 12.	Classification Open	Date: 8 November 2011	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Review and monitor of access to Higher Education in light of the change in fee regime	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Deputy Director Specialist Children's Services and Safeguarding	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Committee note the information and advise of further actions required

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Corporate Parenting Committee at their meeting on 21 April 2010 requested that access to higher education be monitored by the Committee in order (to raise relevant issues with regard to looked after children) to ensure that looked after children are not disproportionately affected by the recent changes in the university fees regime.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3. The new higher tuition fees for universities do not come into effect until 2012/13 so access to Higher Education for 2011/12 should not have been affected. Southwark Council introduced a new Southwark Scholarship Scheme which will pay the tuition fees for this year and subsequent years of 6 Southwark students starting university in October 2011. This scheme will continue next year when the higher tuition fees come into force.
4. From 2012/13 universities will be allowed to charge annual tuition fees of up to £9,000. Any university charging more than £6,000 has to produce an access plan agreed by the Office for Fair Access to use some of the income from increased fees to improve access for students. Two local universities – Goldsmith's College and London South Bank University (LSBU) both specifically mention help for care leavers in their access plans. Goldsmith's are providing 5 scholarships of £4,000 for care leavers while at LSBU care leavers entering the University will receive a £1000 travel allowance and a £750 bursary for all three years of study.
5. The rise in tuition fees should not affect care leavers disproportionately given the duty now laid on universities to have plans for ensuring access and the arrangements for paying tuition fees. Students do not pay the fees up front. The Government pays the tuition fees while the student is at university and the student only starts to repay this loan once their income has risen over £21,000. After that the student pays 9% of their income over £21,000 until the loan is paid off or for thirty years when the debt is written off. The amount to be paid back is therefore constant – it is always 9% of income over £21,000. Changes in interest rates only affect the debt total and not the repayments.

Policy implications

6. The proposals are in line with CYPP (Children and Young People Plan)

Community impact statement

7. This scheme supports some of the more vulnerable young people in the community and aims to narrow the gap between them and the general population. The Children Looked After Service will continue to monitor uptake of university places to see if the changes in 2012-13 have an adverse effect on care leavers.

Resource implications

8. The proposal will be met within existing resources.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Corporate parenting committee Agenda	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Bola Roberts 020 7525 7232

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Deputy Director Specialist Children's Services and Safeguarding	
Report Author	Chris Saunders, Head of Service for Children in Care	
Version	Final	
Dated	24 October 2011	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law and Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	26 October 2011	

Item No. 13.	Classification: Open	Date: 8 November 2011	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Pupil performance in 2010-2011 and the developments linked to the School for Children in Care	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee is asked to note the information in the report.
2. To feedback any comments and recommendations to the Strategic Director of Children's Services.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. **Attainment at GCSE and equivalent:** There were 63 Year 11 pupils in care at the time of the examinations. However, the DfE calculates performance on the basis of those pupils who had been in care for at least 12 months continuously and were still in care as at 31 March 2011. 47 pupils fell within these criteria which means in statistical terms each pupil represents over 2% of the cohort. Of the 47 pupils only 11 were in Southwark schools.
4. Based on the headline attainment measures of 5+A*-C inc English and maths and 5+A*-C for Southwark Children in Care (CIC) have risen substantially and compare favourably with London and national figures in 2010. (2011 national figures not yet published) It is also pleasing to note that the proportion of pupils not attaining any GCSE or equivalent has fallen. Southwark CIC in Southwark schools performed slightly better than in schools elsewhere.
5. Pleasingly there was a marked closing of the gap in performance between Southwark CIC compared to all Southwark pupils.

Attainment at GCSE or equivalent									
Attainment measure	Children in Care (47 pupils in 2011)			All Southwark pupils			Gap between CIC and all Southwark pupils		
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
% 5+A*-C inc EM	13	13	23* (+10%)	46	56	57	33	43	34
% 5+A*-C	13.	25	43* (+18)	68	79	81	55	54	38
%5**A-G	37	60	60* (+0%)	93	94	94	56	34	34
% 1+A*-G	67	68	75* (+7%)	99	99	99	32	31	24

*Provisional results subject to change.

6. **Progress Key Stage 2-Key Stage 4:** The national expectation is that all children are expected to make at least 3 levels of progress between KS2 and KS4 in English and in maths. We are awaiting release of the national data set for CIC in schools outside Southwark to confirm these figures.
7. **Attainment at Key Stage 2:** There were 16 Year 6 pupils in care at the time of the Key Stage 2 tests. Only 11 pupils will be included in the DfE measure of KS2 attainment which makes meaningful interpretation problematic given each pupil is worth over 9%. English results fell whilst Maths rose reversing the pattern in 2010. Maths remains above 2010 national and London averages, whereas English and combined English and maths are in line. The gap with Southwark pupils is relatively similar as in 2010.

Attainment Indicator	Children in Care (11 pupils in 2011)			All Southwark pupils		
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
KS2 Level 4+ English	40	60	46* (-14)	80	80	83
KS2 Level 4+ Maths	45	40	55* (+15)	79	80	82
KS2 Level 4 + English/Maths		46	36* (-10)	72	73	76

*Provisional results subject to change.

8. **Progress Key Stage 1 - Key Stage 2:** The national expectation is that all children are expected to make at least 2 levels of progress between KS1 and Key Stage 2 in English and in maths. We are awaiting release of the national data set for CIC in schools outside Southwark to confirm these figures
9. **Attendance Exclusions:** We are awaiting confirmation of these figures. However the number permanent exclusions remains very low. There is a small cohort of pupils particularly in Key Stage 4, where despite intervention, persistent absence continues to be an issue.

Attendance and Exclusions				
	Southwark CIC			National
	2009	2010	2011	2011
% of permanent exclusions	2	0.05	TBA	TBA
% CLA missing at least 25 days of school	7	10	TBA	TBA

10. **Home Tuition:** The contract with Fleet Tutors has been extended for a further year Provision will now be targeted on those who have the greatest need across Years 7-11 as identified through the PEP process. Tuition will be offered mainly in English and/or maths but other subjects will be offered where appropriate
11. **Pupil premium:** In this financial year schools with CIC (who have been in care for sixth months on 31 March 2011) will receive the pupil premium of £486 (recently raised from £430). This funding is not ring fenced. In Southwark we are proposing to make the payment following a professional dialogue about its use in the autumn term PEP meeting.
12. **Establishment of the Virtual School for Children in Care:** The school has

subsumed the key functions of the education services for children in care. The new structure takes note of the financial pressure on the local authority and the statutory responsibilities. The Virtual School is led by the Leader of the School for Children in Care (commonly termed the Virtual Headteacher), supported by a Secondary and Primary Education Officer. The post of Project Officer has been created with oversight for data tracking, attendance, home tuition and other initiatives. A position has also been created within the SEN/CareLink teams for an officer with specific responsibility for CIC with SEN.

13. This reflects the vision of making much greater use of services from specialist LA teams or externally. This is viewed as the sustainable approach in the longer term.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

14. The Committee is asked to note the information in the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Deputy Director Specialist Children's Services and Safeguarding	
Report Author	Alastair Wilson, Virtual Headteacher	
Version	Final	
Dated	24 October 2011	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	26 October 2011	

Item No. 14.	Classification: Open	Date: 8 November 2011	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Corporate Parenting Committee – Work plan 2011/12	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children’s Services	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the corporate parenting committee review the work plan for 2011/12 as set out in paragraph 5 of the report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Role and function of the corporate parenting committee

2. The constitution for the municipal year 2011/2012 records the corporate parenting committee’s role and functions are as follows:
 1. To secure real and sustained improvements in the life chances of looked after children, and to work within an annual programme to that end.
 2. To develop, monitor and review a corporate parenting strategy and work plan.
 3. To seek to ensure that the life chances of looked after children are maximised in terms of health educational attainment, and access to training and employment, to aid the transition to a secure and productive adulthood.
 4. To develop and co-ordinate a life chances strategy and work plan to improve the life chances of Southwark looked after children.
 5. To recommend ways in which more integrated services can be developed across all council departments, schools and the voluntary sector to lead towards better outcomes for looked after children.
 6. To ensure that mechanisms are in place to enable looked after children and young people to play an integral role in service planning and design, and that their views are regularly sought and acted upon.
 7. To ensure performance monitoring systems are in place, and regularly review performance data to ensure sustained performance improvements in outcomes for looked after children.
 8. To receive an annual report on the adoption and fostering services to monitor their effectiveness in providing safe and secure care for looked after children.
 9. To report to the council’s cabinet on a twice yearly basis.
 10. To make recommendations to the relevant cabinet decision maker where responsibility for that particular function rests with the cabinet.
 11. To report to the scrutiny sub-committee with responsibility for children’s services after each meeting.
 12. To appoint non-voting co-opted members.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3. The corporate parenting committee agreed on 7 July 2010 to move towards thematic meetings and followed this framework for the remainder of the municipal year 2010/11. Additionally, the committee agreed at its meeting on 21 April 2010 that the 'enjoy and achieve' committee meeting would coincide with mid year performance review (November). The committee also agreed to receive 'on an exception basis' report/s of any significant variations evident from the monthly review of looked after children/care leavers.

Policy implications

4. The policy agenda has been measured against the government's five "Every Child Matters" outcomes: Be Healthy; Stay Safe; Enjoy and Achieve; Make a Positive Contribution; Achieve Economic Well-Being. The committee's programme of work has been developed to meet these outcomes.

Future agenda items

5. The following work plan sets out the allocation of items for future meetings. The committee may wish to review the scheduling.

8 November 2011

Enjoy and Achieve Theme

- Key stage results and confirmed GCSE results
- Report from the Virtual Head Teacher (Celebration, Special needs, attendance, exclusion and identification of any issues relating to entitlement and take-up on 16-19 Bursary Scheme)
- Accessing Leisure, including Fusion Partnership
- Children in Care Placements Commissioning Strategy
- Mid year performance review
- Review and monitor of access to higher education in light of change in fee regime – initial report back
- Update on courses and the preferential opportunities for looked after children/school leavers - Head of Southwark College to be invited to committee

21 February 2012

Stay Safe Theme

- Annual report on adoption services (Adoption Chair to be invited to meeting)
- Annual report on fostering services
- Revised Statement of Purpose (Fostering and Adoption) – including power point presentation to meeting on the new regulations to review progress
- Stability and Permanency for Children in Care
- Children in Care and Youth Offending (including data analysis and joint working)
- Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Annual report
- Report from the Lead Commissioner (CAMHS) (Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services) on the impact of any proposed service reductions upon Carelink and its capability to deliver targeted interventions for children in

care and foster carer support. The review to include impact on young people in gangs or at risk of gang activity.

23 April 2012

Economic Wellbeing Theme

- Unaccompanied minors (including request from April 2011 with regard to the feasibility and practicalities of the reference of minors to other boroughs legal teams (to utilise legal experience from other authorities on an independent basis)
- Adolescent and After Care Service
- Children Looked After (CLA) performance indicators for the Economic Wellbeing theme and wider performance data
- Report back on decision from April meeting to report back on the feasibility and practicalities of the reference of minors to other boroughs' legal teams (to utilise legal experience from other authorities on an independent basis)
- NEET Strategy (Not in Education, Employment or Training) (including university support, apprenticeships, coaching, drop-in services, connexions, Southwark Works and training partnership)

July 2012

Be Healthy Theme

- To receive the draft 2011/12 Young People's Substance Misuse Commissioning Update Treatment Plan for comment prior to its presentation to the Southwark Children and Families trust and the Drug and Alcohol Action Team Board
- Financial costings for extending the 16 plus transition phase (Carelink) and to mainstream more comprehensive work in respect of the work of the under 5's
- Report on the intergenerational review and the results to be reported back to corporate parenting committee (as requested under Designated Doctor for Children Looked After Annual report 2009/10 and Draft teenage pregnancy strategy items considered 22 September 2010)
- Annual Performance Report 2011/12

Ongoing/monitoring

- Economic wellbeing of looked after children – committee to monitor access to higher education including actions taken to lobby Government in order to ensure that looked after children are not disproportionately affected by recent changes in the university fees regime (initial review scheduled for 8 November 2011)
- Performance monitoring – committee to receive 'on an exception basis' report/s of any significant variations evident from the monthly review of looked after children/care leavers

Community impact statement

6. The work of the corporate parenting committee contributes to community cohesion and stability.

Resource implications

7. There are no specific implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Minutes of meetings of Corporate Parenting Committee	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street SE1 2QH	Bola Roberts 020 7525 7232

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
Report Author	Paula Thornton, Constitutional Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	6 October 2011	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	6 October 2011	

This page is intentionally blank.

**CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST MUNICIPAL YEAR
2011/12**

NOTE: Original held by Constitutional Team; all amendments/queries to
Bola Roberts 020 7525 7232

To	Copies	To	Copies
Membership	1 each	Constitutional Officer to Bola Roberts, Tooley Street	10
Councillor Catherine McDonald		Total:	30
Councillor Lisa Rajan			
Councillor Barrie Hargrove			
Councillor Eliza Mann			
Councillor Claire Hickson			
Councillor Althea Smith			
Councillor Rosie Shimmell			
Reserves	1 each		
Councillor Poddy Clark			
Councillor Patrick Diamond			
Councillor Helen Hayes			
Councillor Wilma Nelson			
Co-opted members			
Barbara Hills			
Chris Sanford			
	1 each		
Children's Services			
Romi Bowen			
Rory Patterson			
Chris Saunders, Bradenham Close			
Legal			
Sarah Feasey			
		Dated: 28 June 2011	