

Corporate Parenting Committee

Monday 29 April 2013

2.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room, GO2C, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Membership

Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle (Chair)
Councillor Eliza Mann (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Catherine Bowman
Councillor Barrie Hargrove
Councillor Claire Hickson
Councillor Wilma Nelson
Councillor Althea Smith
Barbara Hills
Carolyn Martin

Reserves

Councillor Poddy Clark
Councillor Patrick Diamond
Councillor Helen Hayes
Councillor Lisa Rajan

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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Contact

Sean Usher on 020 7525 5338 or email: sean.usher@southwark.gov.uk
Webpage: <http://www.southwark.gov.uk>

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Eleanor Kelly

Chief Executive

Date: 19 April 2013



Corporate Parenting Committee

Monday 29 April 2013

2.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room, GO2C, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
	MOBILE PHONES	
	Mobile phones should be turned off or put on silent during the course of the meeting.	
	PART A - OPEN BUSINESS	
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.	
	To agree the appointment of non-voting co-opted member Carolyn Martin of Family Action to represent the voluntary and community.	
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 interests and dispensation in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.	
5.	MINUTES	1 - 3

Item No.	Title	Page No.
	To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 26 February 2013.	
6.	ANNUAL REPORT OF ADOLESCENT AND AFTERCARE SERVICE	4 - 17
7.	INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT	18 - 30
8.	LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND OFFENDING - IMPACT OF THE LEGAL AID, SENTENCING AND PUNISHMENT OF OFFENDERS ACT 2012 (LASPOA)	31 - 35
9.	ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT	36 - 49
10.	ANNUAL REPORT ON FOSTERING	50 - 59
11.	WORK PLAN 2012/13	60 - 62

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

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

Date: 19 April 2013

Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on Tuesday 26 February 2013 at 2.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room GO2C, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle (Chair)
Councillor Eliza Mann
Councillor Catherine Bowman
Councillor Barrie Hargrove
Councillor Claire Hickson
Councillor Althea Smith
Barbara Hills
Councillor Poddy Clark

OFFICERS PRESENT: Rory Patterson, Director, Children's Social Care
Alisdair Smith, Acting Head of Service Children Looked After
Liz Britton, Education Lead – Looked After Children

OFFICER SUPPORT: Sean Usher, Constitutional Team
Paula Thornton, Constitutional Team

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Gordon McCullough.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

The members listed above were confirmed as the voting members.

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

There were no late items.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2012 be approved as a

correct record and signed by the chair.

6. PUPIL PERFORMANCE IN 2011/2012 AND THE DEVELOPMENTS LINKED TO THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN EDUCATION TEAM

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That future reports identify key areas requiring improvement and areas that are doing well.
3. That an interim position statement with regard to data collection issues be reported back to committee.

7. MID YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT - LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

8. MONITOR OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN LIGHT OF THE CHANGE IN FEE REGIME

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

9. IMPACT OF WELFARE REFORM ON LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That a report is received with regard to the implications of welfare reforms on looked after children, providing some examples/case studies.

10. PROGRESS ON THE SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POST-INSPECTION REPORT

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That a report is received on the initiatives being undertaken to effect continuous improvement within the service.

11. CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2012/13**RESOLVED:**

1. That the work plan be noted.
2. That with regard to the reports scheduled for April 2013 on adoption and fostering, officers include a specific reference to Special Guardianship issues.
3. That officers offer an invitation for Speakerbox to attend the July 2013 meeting of the corporate parenting committee. The committee were keen to ensure that Speakerbox felt welcome to attend if they so wished when matters relating to Speakerbox were listed on the agenda.

CHAIR:**DATED:**

Item No. 6.	Classification: Open	Date: 29 April 2013	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Annual Report of Adolescent and Aftercare Service	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Corporate parenting committee to promote key partnerships/protocols with other council services to target looked after children (CLA) and care leavers to deliver tangible outcomes regarding apprenticeships, training and further education.
2. Corporate parenting committee to promote all council departments considering targeted interventions/inclusions for CLA and care leavers.
3. Corporate parenting committee to note the widened responsibilities placed upon local authorities, by the Care Planning Regulations 2011, in particular additional responsibilities towards young people resuming education.
4. Corporate parenting committee to note the legislative changes contained within the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders 2012 Act.
5. Corporate parenting committee to note the commencement of the tendering process for the provision of high quality, cost effective semi-independent accommodation.

KEY MESSAGES

6. The adolescent and aftercare service (AAC) continues to perform well, delivering good outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
7. The AAC service continues to develop a broad range of partnerships which enhance services and target support where most needed to vulnerable young people.
8. The AAC service relocated to its new premises in Talfourd Place/Curlew House, March 2012. This brings all services for CLA under one roof. The new building enhances service capacity to deliver successful interventions to young people in care and care leavers.
9. The AAC service has implemented statutory changes detailed in the Care Planning Regulations 2011, with particular respect to transitions to adulthood, via the implementation of its 'succeeding into adulthood' policy.
10. The AAC service, alongside Southwark Youth Offending Team, is implementing a

protocol which ensures Southwark's specialist children's services respond to changes brought about by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders 2012 Act (LASPO).

11. The AAC service alongside Southwark's commissioning service has commenced the process of tendering for high quality cost effective semi-independent accommodation provision.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Adolescent and Aftercare Service

12. The AAC service was established in 2007 as part of a single service business unit for Southwark's looked after children and care leavers.
13. The AAC service provides the care planning function for looked after children from the age of 13-18 and aftercare support until the young person achieves the age of 21 (25 if attending university/higher education).
14. It has six teams which provide the full range of services for looked after children and care leavers (13-21). These being:
 - Two teams for children in care aged 13-18
 - Two aftercare teams for care leavers aged 18-21 (25 if in university or higher education)
 - One team for unaccompanied minors and unaccompanied minor care leavers
 - One project team delivery specialist and targeted interventions.
15. The core responsibilities of the AAC service are to:
 - Deliver personalised care planning to include health, education, pathway and transition plans
 - Maintain meaningful contact and support for young people who have left care up to the age of 21
 - Deliver support to young people who wish to attend university/higher education up to the age of 25
 - In partnership with primary health, specialist health trusts and drug treatment agencies, deliver effective health interventions to include reducing teenage pregnancy and substance misuse
 - Deliver specialist partnerships with police, community safety and youth offending services to address issues relating to youth offending including children in care who are on the cusp of crime or associating with gangs.
 - To work alongside colleagues in Southwark's CLA Education Team to narrow the gap relating to attainment
 - Deliver a range of interventions post 16 to promote semi-independent skills including group work, life skills training and to deliver placement stability
 - Deliver effective participation arrangements with young people and Speakerbox to improve, evaluate and shape services
 - Working in partnership with Southwark housing, supporting people (including Adult Services) and the private sector (commissioned services), deliver

- appropriate living accommodation and support for care leavers
- Contribute towards an effective strategy to support young people in employment, education or training from the age of 16-21, involving partnerships with employment and training support workers, Southwark Works, Southwark's Apprenticeship Scheme and targeted youth support (TYS)
- Provide specialist advice, intervention and support, specific to unaccompanied minors and unaccompanied minors leaving care, and those with no recourse to public funds
- Provide corporate parenting committee with an overview of the services and performance of the AAC service for the period 2011-2012 including post inspection actions
- Provide corporate parenting committee with overview on service implementation of care planning regulations 2011
- Provide corporate parenting committee with overview of the services response to legislative changes towards young people who offend
- Provide corporate parenting committee with knowledge of tendering process for high quality semi-independent provision for children young people in care/leaving care.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Care Planning Regulations

16. From 1 April 2011, the care planning regulations placed greater responsibility upon local authorities towards young people for whom they are corporate parents.
17. The regulations placed a greater emphasis on local children's services to raise their aspirations for children in care and those leaving care, to enable them to reach their potential and have same opportunities as their peers. Successful transitions for young people at the appropriate time were seen to be a vital part of achieving this.
18. The regulations state:

"Care leavers should expect the same level of care and support that others would expect from a reasonable parent. The local authority responsible for their care should make sure that they are provided with the opportunities they need, which will include offering them more than one chance as they grapple with taking on the responsibilities of adulthood"
19. Southwark AAC service continues to have high aspirations for its children and young people and will continue to provide interventions that evidence these aspirations. CLA within Southwark will be provided with a variety of support and opportunities which enable them to make positive contributions their community.

Post Inspection Care Planning Case Management – Social Work and Personal Advisor

20. The core function of the AAC service is to provide qualified experienced and motivated social workers and personal advisors to each looked after child and care

leaver.

21. Currently the AAC team has no social worker vacancies and one vacancy for a personal advisor. Social workers currently have a maximum case load level of up to 15 looked after children and personal advisors have between 25-30 care leavers.
22. Social work and personal advisor activities are monitored with regards to the impact of their direct work with children and care leavers as well as delivering key planning activities around education, employment and preparation for independence (from 18).
23. The safeguarding and children looked after inspection 2012 found services to CLA to be good. The exception to this was the service's ability to successfully prepare and support young people with the transition to independence. This was judged adequate.
24. Areas for development echoed those that had been identified in the Speakerbox "Tell it as it was" Survey 2012. Speakerbox also identified the need for more consistent and effective relationships between young people, social workers and personal advisors.
25. The inspection noted that workers knew children/young people well, many of whom experience good stable relationships. Some examples of very good work with teenagers were seen demonstrating a strong commitment and perseverance from professionals.
26. In response to both these reports, the service has devised a detailed action plan to strength staff skills in building effective relationships with young people and ensuring transitions are smooth.
27. All social workers and personal advisors have completed or are scheduled to complete the Speakerbox training, aimed at developing knowledge and understandings of issues facing the young people in care/leaving care.
28. A series of training and development days were commissioned and achieved approximately 100% attendance. The development days aimed to teach practitioners motivational interviewing techniques as a method of engaging young people. In conjunction with learning and development, future action learning sets are to be considered to ensure the service is making effective use of these skills.
29. The service is able to recognise the importance of the role carried out by personal advisors (PAs) in ensuring successful transitions occur for young people. The service has committed to developing these groups of staff. PAs are responsible for implementing post-18 aftercare support to young people, and ensuring that young people have inspirational pathway plans. Colleagues within the learning and development service are in the process of identifying suitable training providers that can deliver to this group of staff.
30. All staff within the service are due to embark on training in the "signs of safety" approach to working with families. This approach will ensure that families/children

and young people receive a consistent approach and method of intervention from first contact with specialist children's services through to the time when they leave care. Future work within this area will enhance our work with young people who are deemed to be high risk, in particular young people who offend.

Care Planning Regulations – Pursuing Further Education

31. From April 2011, Care Planning Regulations introduced additional duties upon local authorities to support care leavers. An additional provision of £400,000 was made available in the budget to cover the anticipated cost of support for care leavers. This was to cover the additional requirements of the regulations.
32. Section 23CA of the 1989 Act requires that young people previously eligible for leaving care services who resume programmes of education or training after the age of 21 are entitled to continuing support from a PA. In effect this means care leavers up to the age of 25 can return to Southwark and request an assessment of their needs for support should they wish to resume their education.
33. To date Southwark has received 12 requests from young people for this support. Following an assessment of their need and a review of their last pathway plan, carried out by the aftercare teams. The service has re-opened ten of these cases, providing financial support in the form of university packages, as well as allocating a PA.
34. The service routinely offers further education and higher education packages of support to young people, including financial support, assistance with accommodation costs and course materials. In 2011/2012 the service offered 45 packages to young people for further and higher education support.

Education/Employment/Training Partnerships

Education

35. For those younger children (13-16) still receiving statutory education, the service is supported by a CLA education team.
36. The AAC service has access to a secondary education officer, as well as a SEN officer and data officer. The team assist social workers with the provisions of pupil premiums, Personal Education Plans and home tuition.
37. The team are also part of the operational monitoring group for young people at risk of disengagement in Years 10 and 11. There is a six-weekly tracking group chaired by the AAC service manager with key personnel to track individuals at risk of become not in employment, education and training (NEET) at the end of statutory education.

Not in Employment, Education and Training

38. The AAC service have an active partnership with Southwark Employment, training support workers and Southwark Works to provide allocated staff who are able to target the most vulnerable care leavers who struggle to access the employment,

education and training markets.

39. In recognition of the barriers faced by some young people leaving care, the AAC service pioneered a new approach to re-engaging some of the more disaffected young people. The Drop in service was launched in 2010. The initiative is delivered in partnership with Southwark's youth work service (TYS).
40. The drop-in service enables the service to continue supporting young people and maintaining some momentum towards young people regaining access to employment, education and training opportunities. The drop in service uses techniques employed by the youth service in engaging young people with an ultimate aim of reintroducing them to college or employment within a six-month period.
41. From May 2012, the drop-in resource has been reshaped with input from young people to include improved kitchen, group work and IT resources. The new premises have to date received positive feedback from young people. The service has input and advice from partner workers and provides access to the following services: Insight – drugs and alcohol worker, IT suite for job search, bidding for permanent accommodation, leisure pursuits, social networking sites, writing CVs, and a CLA nurse, as well as the young women's worker.

Apprenticeship Scheme

42. In partnership with Southwark's organisational development team, they looked after service has developed a protocol to enable care leavers to fully access the council's apprenticeship scheme.
43. To support this process, each year the AAC service deliver a short preparation course for those care leavers who wish to apply for a Southwark apprenticeship.
44. The CLA service provides a leadership role (modelling) through the establishment of two apprenticeship posts within the service, in finance and group work.
45. The AAC service has gone on to negotiate successfully apprenticeship opportunities for young people within the business sector of London. We have prepared and assisted a number of young people to complete apprenticeship positions within multi national KPMG. The KPMG apprenticeship programme attracts candidates from a variety of backgrounds, the majority with degree level qualifications.
46. To date we have successfully supported a young person in this program for every year it has been in operation. This is an excellent achievement for our young people and we are hopeful that another candidate will be successful in April 2013.
47. The AAC service continues to seek out new ways in which we can assist young people gain employment/educational opportunities. We are currently organising an event aimed at bringing colleagues/employers together with our young people. This is the Step Forward event in partnership with Southwark works.
48. The event is taking place at Southwark's Learning resource centre in Cator Street.

It is an opportunity for care leavers to hear from local businesses and colleges in an effort to engage them into employment/education.

Targeted interventions

49. The AAC service has developed a number of key initiatives to enhance services provided and improve outcomes for children leaving care at 18 and achieving full independence at 21.
50. Following reshaping of the AAC service in 2012, the service now includes the project team, led by a practice manager; it includes specialist workers within the services, who undertake targeted interventions with young people. Situated within this team is the AAC service group worker.

Group work

51. The AAC service group worker is able to deliver a range of activities and learning opportunities for young people in care and care leavers. This acts as a focal point for partners who wish to deliver key health and developmental inputs for looked after children and care leavers. Examples of the impact of group work can be seen through the delivery of sexual health promotional activity and more social events such as black history month and the CLA celebration ceremony which includes a staff/young people choir.
52. In 2012 following on from feedback from young people who had regularly used group work, the programme was revised to include focused sessions as well as opportunities for young people to develop social and independence skills.
53. The programme is overseen by a steering group, who are responsible for the design and evaluation of the programme, the steering group consists of staff from the AAC service, alongside young people and Speakerbox
54. The group work programme feature sessions which include Change or Die sessions, which addresses issues of gang culture, health sessions delivered by our CLA nurse and women's worker, Speakerbox sessions and safer choices around sexual exploitation and female involvement in gangs.
55. Unfortunately despite being in our new premises for some time, the resource area has only recently been fully operational for young people. The group work programme has offered a reduced programme of work, making use of local and community resources such as children centres.

Life skills training

56. An area highlighted within the Ofsted inspection was the need to further develop transition for young people. Ofsted noted:

“That half of the young people they surveyed felt they had been adequately prepared for leaving care, half felt this could have been improved”.
57. Through the AAC inspection plan the service is embarking upon a programme of

transformation, which includes all young people's placement plans post-18 being reviewed at a panel. All young people being allocated a personal advisor at 17 and a half to assist them with the transition from care to aftercare.

58. The service has been revised and will re-launch a life skills programme in 2013. The intention is to make this mandatory to all young people under 16, in an attempt to further develop their skills in living independently.
59. The life skills programme will run four to six times per year and will focus upon cooking, basic DIY, managing money, managing your home, domestic and financial planning – understanding the benefits system, child tax credit, child care allowances tax, etc.
60. Participants will evaluate the usefulness of each session by completing an evaluation form and each participant will be required to complete a quiz at the end of the session, to determine whether a basic understanding of the subject matter has been achieved.
61. Under the new semi-independent service specification successful providers must ensure young people not only attend the AAC programme, but also evidenced how they are developing young people skills in this area.
62. The service has also worked with fostering service and learning and development to run a series of independence skills training for foster carers. The training to date has been well received with evaluation forms citing it as excellent training, and requests that it be extended.

Fusion Partnership

63. Since April 2011 Southwark's leisure centre contractor, Fusion is committed to delivering free gold memberships to looked after children and care leavers from ages 14 – 20. Facilitated by the project team, young people can attend sessions as part of the group work programme or as individuals with foster carers. To date we have authorised 266 applications for fusion membership.

Tate Gallery

64. As part of expanding young people's cultural experience and the opportunity for them to make a positive contribution. We have worked with the Tate gallery to run a number of workshops aimed at increasing and developing CLA and care leavers' access to modern art. With the assistance of well known artists from the Tate, young people have visited and experienced exhibitions at the Gallery, participated in workshops within the gallery and showcased their work including making a video.

Accommodation

Southwark Housing Partnership

65. Southwark Specialist services have a long standing protocol with Southwark housing. The protocol enables care leavers to access level two priority housing at 18.
66. Ofsted noted that within Southwark:

“the existence of strong partnerships with housing are well established ensuring priority for care leavers through Supporting People arrangements and providing secure tenancies for care leavers. A large majority of responses to the inspection survey show that care leavers live in good or very good accommodation”.
67. Under leaving care legislation, local authorities are required to provide suitable accommodation for all care leavers. For most care leavers in London this results in care leavers being allocated a house of multiple occupants or a temporary tenancy in the private market.
68. Through Southwark’s protocol with housing (including supporting people) Southwark is able to offer a tenancy (twelve month probationary tenancy in keeping with general Southwark policy) at 18 which provides suitable accommodation at affordable rental costs.
69. For all young people who are deemed to be vulnerable at 18 and require additional support, the service has direct referral access to “supporting people” placements which provide up to two years supportive housing till the young person is ready and able to cope with their own tenancy.
70. Southwark’s CLA and young people are an extremely diverse group and Southwark therefore needs to have a comprehensive range of placement types and carers who are capable of meeting these diverse needs. Southwark takes the view that the most important thing in helping children in care achieve the best possible outcomes is through the provision of stable family placements.

Semi Independent Accommodation

71. Section 23B of the 1989 Act requires the local authority to provide relevant children with, or maintain them in, suitable accommodation. Bed and breakfast accommodation is not considered to be suitable.
72. Southwark has embarked on a detailed commissioning programme to source providers who can offer high quality provision of accommodation and support to young people in care and those leaving care.
73. As part of a consultative process involving staff and young people. Southwark has devised a service specification framework for the deliverance of semi-independent provision. The framework serves to ensure Southwark implements its corporate parenting functions and legal duties (Care Planning Regulations sufficiency duties) in offering a range of provision to meet the needs of its young people.
74. The tendering process will ensure that Southwark works with a number of highly experienced providers within the private and voluntary sector to secure appropriate

and high quality accommodation and support.

75. The specification offers various levels of support, depending on the young person's needs, from high 24 hour support to low level interventions. Successful providers will be expected to ensure young people participate in and fully utilise the resources available at the AAC service, including accessing group work and specialist services.
76. In preparation for the changes imposed upon by the LASPO, we have included within the commissioning contract the provision of services to young people who may be remanded to local authority accommodation. A detailed service specification has been drawn up in consultation with AAC service and YOS. LASPO is an opportunity to local authorities to develop provision including accommodation that can serve as an alternative to a remand to care for young people.

Staying Put

77. The Care Planning Regulations placed responsibilities upon local authorities to ensure young people have opportunity to remain in stable long term placements. From the age of 18, young people are no longer legally "looked after" and fostering arrangements do not apply.
78. Southwark Staying Put Policy ensures for those young people with a stable foster placement that they can continue to live in their former foster home as a transition to independence. This is more in line with what is experienced nationally by young people outside of the care arena.
79. During 2011/2012 Southwark supported over 24 young care leavers to stay put with former foster carers in order to complete their education or continue to develop their independence skills.

Additional Vulnerability

80. The CLA service recognises that the AAC service provides support for some of the most vulnerable young people and young adults in the community. It is recognised that this group may be particularly subject to issues relating to youth crime, substance misuse and anti social behaviour.
81. The effective management of risk is a key task within social work, sometimes often overlooked in provisions to CLA. The recent national media coverage of events such as those in Rochdale has served to raise the vast issue of safeguarding this already vulnerable group of young people.
82. The government has published revised guidance to address issues such as children missing from care or home, child sexual exploitation and child trafficking. Within Southwark we have clear policies in place to address these areas.

Children missing from care

83. The Southwark Safeguarding Board has revised its procedures for children missing from care.

84. Within the AAC service all teams have been issued with these revised procedures. Staffs have also participated within workshops to ensure procedures are clearly understood and implemented.
85. Workshops have been co-facilitated with the head of safeguarding and the lead police officer for missing children at a number of events, including the recent Children Looked After Conference (attended by a wide range of professionals, statutory and non statutory) as well as at the Safeguarding Children Conference. Future workshops will be targeted at foster carers on children missing from care.
86. For the older group of young people (18+) the aftercare service is aware of the procedures relating to safeguarding vulnerable adults. The teams use these procedures to support high risk cases, i.e. Missing from home, young people with mental health issues, substance misuse etc.

Child sexual exploitation and trafficking

87. The service continues to make referrals to the multi agency sexual exploitation panel (MASE) as well as the local authority Local Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection. All staff have within their performance appraisal a target to complete updated child protection training. Managers have a target to complete training in managing risk in child protection.
88. Senior management oversight has strengthened, with risk management briefings being completed monthly by all teams within the service to enable us to identify risk and ensure a consistent service approach.
89. Where necessary the service manager will chair risk management meetings to ensure risk is managed and staff are supported. The service has reporting procedures in place in which notification to the director is clear, as well as procedures for notification of potential risk or media interest to the council.

Safer Choices Partnership

90. The AAC service is part of a group of London boroughs running the Safer Choices programme. In partnership with the children's society this programme is aimed at young women who experience a number of risk factors in relation to gang culture. These risks include sexual violence, sexual exploitation, gang association and involvement in violent crime.
91. The programme offers group work and intensive one-to-one support that focuses on developing resilience and positive support networks to enable young women to develop healthy and safe relationships.
92. This project is funded by the Big Lottery and includes the ability to commission further training awareness for practitioners to raise awareness and increase professional skills.
93. Some CLA may be additionally vulnerable to teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and engagement in youth crime. Others might have additional pressures upon their emotional well being and mental health as a result of previous trauma or neglect. The

AAC service therefore have a screening process which can identify young people from the age of 13 (or later if arriving in care over the age of 13) which can highlight specific vulnerability and trigger referrals to key partners.

94. As a result of the vulnerability screening the following specialist referrals can be made:
- a) Teenage pregnancy – Young Women’s Worker (the CLA Service joint funds a women’s worker with the teenage pregnancy strategy to target young women in care. The Family Nurse Partnership Service is also available to provide support to young mothers.)
 - b) Substance misuse – Insight (commissioned substance misuse services for young people) through a specific protocol which offers targeted services to looked after children.
 - c) Vulnerability to youth crime – the screening process triggers a strategy meeting involving Southwark’s youth offending service to identify early intervention and diversionary activities as well as support to placement carers.

Youth Offending – Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders 2012 Act (LASPO)

95. Joint work with Southwark Youth Offending Service continues to make progress. The 2012 Ofsted inspection noted that Success has also been achieved recently in reducing the numbers of looked after children entering the criminal justice system, following extensive work with the youth offending service.
96. With the introduction of the new LASPO changes, the partnership working is an area that will to continue to be developed and embedded within the service.
97. LASPO brings with it wide range of reforms, including major changes to how children and young people are treated whilst awaiting trial or sentencing. The Act creates a new youth remand and sentencing structure.
98. The duties under the legislation were first introduced September 2012, with additional responsibilities being introduced in April 2013. One of the main changes is that children and young people subject to a youth detention order automatically become CLA.
99. Together with the Youth Offending Service (YOS) Southwark has agreed that these cases will be jointly owned by the AAC/YOS service. A new procedure is being implemented within the service to ensure smooth transitions from YOS to AAC.
100. Joint risk management meetings occur on cases where both services are involved and concerns are raised about a young person’s risk. Likewise the service manager is a member of the YOS Risk Management Panel.

Communication and Participation

101. The AAC service has now gone live with its website. The site shows details of the

provisions and services we provide, as well as how we link with other services. The website information can be printed in PDF format and has a voice over feature. At this present time the website is in English only, but this will be reviewed.

102. The website has a blog feature, which young people can use to leave comments about the service. It can also be used to upload information about upcoming events, news flash information, group work activities, job/training opportunities and a whole range of other information.
103. The AAC service are fully committed to consulting with young people relating to their individual care plans and evaluation and shaping of services. The service actively uses the Speakerbox magazine to promote services and delivers a range of information materials for young people.
104. All young people when they reach the age of 13 are invited to visit the AAC service for an induction event where they meet staff and key partners. A similar induction event is managed by the Aftercare Team when young people reach the age of 18 to explain the service and introduce them to key partnership staff.

Service Overview

105. The performance and impact of the AAC service is subject to regular scrutiny by the corporate parenting committee through the series of partnership reports and performance reports.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

106. A review of the Staying Put policy – Succeeding into adulthood, is being undertaken by the service, to ensure it remains fit for purpose given the changes to higher education support and children/young people who offend.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

107. The AAC service delivers statutory provision for looked after children and care leavers and is delivered within current resources allocated to the CLA services. There are additional resource implications for the service to meet the increased numbers of CLA as result of LASPO. A percentage of funding for the additional CLA numbers has been transferred from the ministry of justice to the local authority.

CONSULTATION

108. As part of the overall CLA service, the AAC service has a key part in delivering direct involvement of young people in their individual service plans and evaluating and shaping service delivery.

Community impact statement

109. Southwark CLA 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, access to leisure and healthy lifestyles all help to build

resilience for young people to successfully achieve economical wellbeing and making a positive contribution from the age of 18.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
AAC Inspection Improvement Plan	Adolescent and aftercare service Southwark Council 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Alex Kaitell Service Manager: 020 7525 1009

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Social Care	
Report Author	Alex Kaitell, Service Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	18 April 2013	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	18 April 2013	

Item No. 7.	Classification: Open	Date: 29 April 2013	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Corporate Parenting Committee notes the Independent Reviewing Officer Annual report.
2. That an action plan be drawn up for implementation of recommendations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. An annual report of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service for looked after children is required in guidance arising from The Adoption and Children Act 2002.
4. This report must be presented to the Director of Children's Services, the lead member for Children and the Corporate Parenting Panel. The report contains a summary of work completed by Southwark IRO Service for the period 2011-2012.
5. The IRO service continues to be well integrated within Children's services, has good levels of participation in reviews and strong links to the Speakerbox children in care council.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Legal Services

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

Strategic Director of Finance & Corporate Services

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

Community impact statement

8. The decision to note this report has been judged to have no or a very small impact on local people and communities.

Equalities impact

9. The work of the IRO is intended to improve the outcome for looked after children.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
IRO Handbook	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Jackie Cook 0207 525 50387

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A	Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Director, Children's Social Care	
Report Author	Jackie Cook, Head Of Social Work Improvement And Quality Assurance	
Version	Final	
Dated	16 April 2013	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
	Officer Title	Comments sought
	Director of Legal Services	No
	Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No
	Cabinet Member	Yes
	Date final report sent to Constitutional Officer	16 April 2013

APPENDIX A

**London Borough of Southwark
Independent Reviewing Officers
Annual Report
2011-2012**

Report by: Jackie Cook
Head of Social Work Improvement and Quality assurance
22/2/13

1. Introduction

An Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service for Looked After Children is required in accordance with guidance arising from The Adoption and Children Act 2002. The report has to be presented to the Director of Children's Services, the Lead member for Children and the Corporate Parenting Panel.

This report contains a summary of work completed by Southwark IRO Service for the period 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2012.

2. Legal Context

- 2.1 Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 introduced the statutory role of the IRO, with a duty to monitor the Local authority's functions by means of regular statutory reviews of the Care Plan of looked after children. The IRO was given the power to refer a case to the Children's and Families Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS) if any dispute could not be resolved within the Local Authority.
- 2.2 The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 expanded the role of the IRO from just reviewing the child's Care Plan to monitoring the child's case on an ongoing basis.
- 2.3 New regulations (Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations) were issued in 2010 and these are accompanied by 4 sets of statutory guidance including the 'IRO Handbook', which came into force in April 2011. All children in care including those on Adoption Plans or receiving short breaks are now covered by these regulations.
- 2.4 A number of new procedures have been drafted as a result of the new guidance. These include primarily the new arrangements for 'Staying put' and the 'Family and friends placement guidance'.
- 2.5 Every looked after child has a named IRO who has independent oversight of the child's case including:
 - Determining and representing the child's wishes and feelings
 - Ensuring their rights and interests are protected
 - Assessing whether the Local Authorities Care Plan for the child meets the assessed needs of the child within the timescale of the child
 - Negotiating with the social work team and managers on any identified issues arising from the Care Plan or implementation of the Care Plan and where necessary escalating unresolved concerns to an appropriate level in the Local Authority's management structure, and /or if necessary to CAFCASS.
- 2.6 The main forum through which the IRO carries out their monitoring role is the Statutory Looked After Review. These take place regularly at the following times
 - First Review within the first 28 days of the child becoming looked after
 - Second Review within 90 days
 - Subsequent Reviews at 180 day intervals

- When a child or IRO asks for one
 - When significant events occur
- 2.7 The review should, wherever possible, take place at the child's placement. Parents, residential workers, foster carers and their support workers, social worker and the IRO are the expected attendees. Reports from other professionals such as Health, Education and CAMHS are also received. In some cases, it may be necessary to hold a series of meetings to facilitate all professionals and views to be heard – for example where a child does not want their parents or another professional to attend a review.
- 2.8 The role of the IRO was reviewed by the Family Justice Review which reported in November 2011. Their conclusions in connection with IROs were as follows:
- The role of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is important to local authorities and they would very likely recreate it were it removed from them. The priority should be to improve the quality of the function and ensure its effectiveness and visibility.
 - We recommend that local authorities should review the operation of their IRO service to ensure that it is effective. In particular they should ensure that they are adhering to guidance regarding case loads.
 - We recommend that the Directors of Children's Services / Directors for Social Services and Lead Member for Children receive regular reports from the IRO on the work undertaken and its outcomes. Local Safeguarding Children Boards should also consider such reports.
 - Courts would benefit from this information too alongside outcomes of care cases. The pilot recommended earlier (for courts to receive information about the outcomes for children and families on which they have adjudicated) should include information from the IRO.
 - The courts and IROs need to develop more effective links. Guardians and IROs should strengthen their working relationship.

3. The Southwark Context

- 3.1 The census data in 2011 gave Southwark a population of 288,300.
- 3.2 Southwark is an extremely diverse borough with over 181 languages spoken in its schools (January 2008). The largest ethnic minority group is black African (mainly Nigerian and West African) which accounts for around 15.6% of the whole population. In 2010 it was estimated that 64.8% of the population was white.
- 3.3 Southwark has relatively high numbers of looked after children compared to other London boroughs. On 5/2/13 there were 568 Children Looked After in Southwark compared to 540 at end of March 2011.
- 3.4 The make up of Southwark Looked After children population was as follows on 5/2/13

CLA by Age & Gender	Female	Male	Total
0-4	67	62	129
5-9	51	60	111
10-14	52	79	131
15-18	80	117	197
Total	245	323	568

Ethnicity breakdown was as follows:

CLA by Gender & Ethnicity	Female	Male	Total	%
Total Asian	8	11	19	3%
Total Black	102	131	233	41%
Total white	80	108	188	33%
Total Other	3	13	16	3%
Total dual heritage	42	52	94	17%
Not stated/not yet obtained	10	8	18	3%
Total	245	323	568	100

Southwark has an over-representation of black and dual heritage children in care. On 5/2/13 only 33% of the care population were described as white. This reflects a similar position to most other London boroughs. The largest single ethnic group is 'White British' at 160 children (28%) and the second highest group is 'Black African' at 112 children (20%).

3.5 Key Challenges for Southwark Looked after Children Services

The key challenges for Southwark Looked after Children Services reflect many of the challenges faced by other Local Authorities and inner city areas.

- The current financial situation means that there is reduced funding for local authorities. This has an impact of staffing and resources available for placements.
- Meeting the needs of a diverse population of looked after children in terms of race, culture, religion, language and special needs is an ongoing challenge for services.
- The need to identify sufficient placements appropriate to the diverse needs of children and young people in a competitive market place and within the context of a decreasing budget.
- Research stresses the benefit of continuing to offer foster care and support post 18 for many looked after children to improve their outcomes in adult life. This is the case for example where young people continue in education post 18. In addition some looked after children are vulnerable young people who do not quite meet criteria for adult mental health or disability services and struggle with independence.

The new 'staying put' procedures outline how Southwark will meet these requirements.

4. Southwark IRO Service

- 4.1 The Southwark IRO Service is situated within the Social Work Improvement and Quality Assurance business unit. The Business Unit Manager reports directly to the Director making IROs independent of the operational children's services management structure where allocation of resources lies. The team is based at Tooley Street.
- 4.2 In addition to the core function of monitoring children's care plans, the IRO Service is also involved in:
- Meetings on individual cases
 - Wider consultations
 - Planning forums where policy and procedures are developed e.g. Health, Education, Participation and Professional Standards groups,
 - Audit work in conjunction with other departments,
 - Training and liaison with teams
 - Assisting with Complaints
 - Working with the commissioning team to monitor the quality of placements.
- 4.3 During the year IROs have:
- Assisted with development of several policies and procedures. In particular there has been IRO input to the Southwark implementation of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO)
 - Provided induction training for new social workers around planning for looked after children.
 - Provided inter-agency training around working with parents who have mental health problems
 - IROs have attended LAC service Health, Education, Participation and Adoption/Permanency groups.
- 4.4 IROs highlight good practice by workers as well as feeding back evidence of poor practice, poor standards of placements or safeguarding issues.
- 4.6 The IRO service establishment consists of 8 full time equivalent IROs. The permanent staff are line managed by the QA service manager. The sessional IROs have long-arm supervision via telephone contact with the QA managers and regular group meetings. Administrative support is provided by a full time executive officer managed by the QAU Admin Manager.
- 4.7 Staffing in 2011-12 consisted of:
- 4 directly employed permanent staff making up 3 f.t.e. posts
 - 14 freelance self employed sessional workers funded by 5 full time equivalent posts. These have varying caseloads of between 14-76 children looked after.

- Of the 18 workers 2 are male, 16 female; 2 are black and 16 are white.

5. PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 The IRO team provides an efficient service, within budget. During 2011 - 2012 the team chaired and completed reports for 1590 reviews of children looked after as well as making representations, participating in staff induction and training, undertaking audits and undertaking a range of other tasks.
- 5.2 Given the budget for the service this represents a unit cost of approximately £308 per review including professional and administrative costs.
- 5.3 The review reports, once signed off by the Team Manager, are the child's Care Plan.
- 5.4 The IRO service makes an important contribution to good performance against key performance indicators in the National Indicator Set: C63 (Participation at Reviews) and N166 (timeliness of Reviews). They also contribute to other Performance Indicators through quality assurance and collection of data or raising issues on cases at appropriate levels to minimise poor outcome e.g. drift in care planning, placement stability, educational achievements, health appointments etc.

5.5 Performance data 2008-2012

Year	2009-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-12
Number of LAC Reviews	1599	1571	1521	1590
NI66 Reviews in timescales	94.1%	92.8%	95.7%	94%
C63 Participation at Reviews	95.7%	94%	90.2%	95.2%
No of LAC at March 31st	533	557	522	550

- 5.6 The performance in relation to reviews not held within timescales in 2011-12 has dipped slightly from the previous year with 6% of reviews held late. This is a concern but is still within the acceptable range nationally. Of the 6%, the reviews were, in the majority of cases, held within a few days of the deadline date.
- 5.7 In contrast the performance in relation to children over 4 years old participating in their reviews has improved by 5 percentage points.

5.8 PARTICIPATION

The Performance Indicator for child participation is based on number of children who have not contributed to any one of their reviews in a year. A child may participate in 2 out of their 3 reviews in a year but this would not fulfil the criteria for participation.

Summary of participation at Reviews 2011-12	Total
PN0 Child under 4 at date of review	290
PN1 Attendance	1081
PN2 Attendance - views via advocate / IRO	36
PN3 Attendance - views via symbols	3
PN4 Attendance - without contribution	4
PN5 No attendance - views via advocate / IRO	73
PN6 No attendance - views expressed	75
PN7 No attendance - views not exp (Not available)	14
PN7 No attendance - views not exp (Not facilitated)	6
PN7 No attendance - views not exp (YP's choice)	8
Sum:	1590

In total, 4.8% of looked after children over 4 years did not contribute to one of their reviews held during 2011-12. This represents 28 review meetings. In 8 of these meetings it was the young person's choice not to participate in the review. Of the other 20 the young person may have forgotten the review or may have not been able to attend for another reason. Where the attendance of the young person was 'not facilitated' – this might be because the young person was not invited to the meeting or it was felt that the young person should not attend the review for some reason.

In all reviews where a young person does not contribute to the review the IRO will try to agree a plan with the social worker or carer to ensure the young person's views are available for the next review if they are not attending.

- 5.8 Looked after reviews usually last around 90 minutes. IROs will always aim to spend time individually with children and young people prior to the meeting to determine their wishes and feelings, identify if they have any concerns and find out how they would like to participate in the meeting. If necessary or requested the IRO will ensure an advocate is provided to support the child or young person.
- 5.9 IROs will usually arrange to meet children and young people at different times, or speak to them on the phone to try and gain their views when they have not attended a review meeting. Children or young people who have English as a second language will have an interpreter available. Children with disabilities or with communication difficulties will be supported to express their views with help of their carers or a specialist worker or an advocate.
- 5.10 **Distribution of review records**
Distribution of reviews is not currently a Performance Indicator. However statutory guidance now indicates that decisions should be circulated within 5 working days/7 days and the full report within 15 working days /21 days.

6. REPRESENTATIONS AND ESCALATIONS

- 6.1 IROs seek to ensure good outcomes for children. They do this through their quality assurance role in LAC reviews e.g. by checking diets are healthy and culturally appropriate, medicals take place, foster carers attend parents evenings or read bedtime stories, check contacts with siblings take place.
- 6.2 IROs pick up often on matters which make a difference to a child if they get overlooked for example ensuring sleepovers or school trips take place; passports are obtained so holidays are not missed; ensuring cultural and faith needs are met such as a prayer mat for young people of the Muslim faith. They will normally do this through suggestions at reviews and encouraging carers and workers rather than via formal escalation processes and so this cannot always be visibly evident or easily quantified.
- 6.3 Here are some examples of informal ways in which IROs reported helping the children they reviewed during 2010-11:
- I was thanked by the foster carers for support in a number of areas including obtaining peer mentor support for a child
 - The Practice manager thanked me for completion of life story script for two siblings
 - I requested a legal planning meeting to terminate contact with a family member following information shared in a review
 - I have received good feedback from a kinship carer for a child. The carer has emailed to say thank you for all my support in moving this case forward
- 6.4 Where there are concerns relating to implementation of the Care Plan, resources or poor practice, IROs will initially liaise with the team and seek to resolve things informally – often by bringing reviews forward or participating in professionals meetings. A record of this should be on the child's record. In the past this was often done via email or discussion with team and so was not previously very visible on the file. However an ICS record format for IROs has now been introduced which has assisted in tracking IRO interventions.
- 6.5 When a concern cannot be resolved informally each Local Authority must now have a formal 'dispute resolution' process through which an IRO can escalate their concern to the appropriate management level.
- 6.7 During 2011-12 IROs made 18 escalations aside from the many other occasions where they liaised informally with social workers. These were in relation to 16 children/sibling groups (2 cases escalated twice). Of these 2 were passed to social workers, 9 were passed to team managers, and 6 to service managers. One case was escalated to the director. Five of the 18 (28%) escalations were due to concern about drift or excessive delay in permanency planning for younger children (0-11). The rest of the escalations (13) were all concerned with young people aged 14 or above.

Concern about quality of placement	1
Concern about support for young people moving to independence	4
Delay in identifying placement	2
Concern about risk to yp (one gang involvement, one running away)	2
Placement in difficulty	2
Education issues	2 (for the same yp)

In all of the above cases, following the escalation the managers concerned worked closely with the IROs to take action to remedy the concerns noted.

7. INVOLVEMENT AND FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS

An article about IROs featured in the Speaker box magazine this year. In addition young people from Speakerbox children in care council prepared a one day training session to IROs in Summer 2012 – the ‘Understanding us’ training. Almost all IROs attended this session and thought it was useful. Speakerbox representatives continue to attend and contribute to the bi-monthly IRO meetings.

8. INSPECTION

Children’s Services was inspected in 21/5/12
 Services for looked after children were judged to be good with good capacity for improvement. Specific findings were that:
 ‘The overall effectiveness of services for looked after children is good. The local authority and its partners present as effective corporate parents.’
 ‘Speaker Box and its range of activities presents the authentic voice of the child in care, is very influential, impacting across a wide range of issues.’
 ‘Reviewing officers prioritise contact with children they are responsible for, seeking to establish a meaningful relationship according to the age and capacity of the child.’

9. Education of CLA

9.1 The educational attainment of Looked after children is priority for the IRO service. Many of the informal and formal representations from IROs concern the provision of appropriate education to looked after children.

9.2 As part of the Looked after review the IRO will always review the personal education plan for the child or young person.

10. Safety of CLA

There is much improved recording this year of children that go missing from care.

During 2011-12 there were 88 reports of children going missing for over 24 hours relating to 27 children. The children were aged between 15 -18.

IROs are always informed where young people looked after go missing and are invited where possible to missing from care strategy meetings and planning meetings.

11. KEY SUCCESSES IN 2010 AND FUTURE PRIORITIES

11.1 Key successes in 2010-11 have been

- Maintaining an experienced, committed and trained team of IROs providing consistency for children and young people.
- Improving the level of consultation with looked after children
- The standard of Review reports remains high. Review reports provide a pen picture of the child, synopsis of family history and a good 6 monthly summary of the case, including assessed needs and action plan.
- The IRO service receives positive feedback from partner agencies such as Health, Education and CAMHS. Partners state that they value having an independent professional to liaise with, giving their views weight and integrating them into Care Plans.
- A protocol has been drafted and inserted into the procedures to improve IROs access to court documents in proceedings through a more formal liaison with Legal Section.
- Working with operational services to reduce delay in permanency planning and achieve better outcomes for Southwark Children Looked After. IROs will highlight concerns identified at reviews and seek resolution mostly through informal negotiation but also using the formal escalation process when necessary.
- IROs bring issues to the attention of management – for example drift or serious concerns where workers are ill or where there is poor practice.

11.2 Key Priorities for the IRO Service for 2012-13 are

- From August 2012 there is a monthly IRO report going to the Director Specialist Children's Services. This report will raise the profile of the IRO service and ensure that feedback and escalations are immediately brought to the attention of the senior management team.
- Improving the proportion of LAC reviews held to time.
- Ensuring that all children and young people continue to participate in a meaningful way in their LAC reviews or are spoken to separately by the IRO.
- Improving the timeliness of completion and distribution of reports as timescales for distribution of review decisions are decreased in the new guidance.
- To ensure that IROs always take account of risk factors in chairing reviews – both in terms of younger children who may be at risk from placement move or rehabilitation or from older young people at risk from crime or gang-related activity or from going missing.
- IROs are to attend specialist Voice training on Secure accommodation reviews in March 2013.
- Improving the rate of progress of Permanency plans for Adoption or Special Guardianships and Long Term Fostering to ensure our children are in their permanent family at as early an age as possible through closer working with operational teams and Adoption and Fostering .

- Working with the Speaker Box council to obtain more information from children and young people as to how the review process and IRO role can be more useful for them
- Implementation of the new LASPO Act 2012 – this has already started to significantly increase the number of young people who are deemed looked after and will put increased pressure on the IRO group.

12. SUMMARY

The IRO Service has continued to provide an efficient and effective provision for reviewing and monitoring the Care Plans for Looked After Children during 2011-12.

The service contributes to improved outcomes for Looked After Children through increasing participation of children and young people in the decision making about their care as well as making independent representations to Operational Teams and Management on planning and practice issues.

Communication and relationships with teams are positive with the independent scrutiny valued by social workers and management.

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 29 April 2013	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Looked After children and young people and offending –impact of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASP)	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

Corporate Parenting Committee to note:

1. The implications of Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) on resources within the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and the Adolescent & Aftercare Service.
2. The proposed changes to the Care Planning Guidance to Looked after Children on remand.

Key Messages

3. LASPO has increased the number of young people considered looked after and needing services. The legislation now designates young people remanded in custody as being in care and therefore entitled to the same services as other looked after children including aftercare services if they meet the criteria. From April 2013 there will be significant additional costs falling on the council. Predictions based on historic data suggest remand bed days are reducing and additional costs would be in the region of £820,000.
4. The number of remands is influenced by the seriousness of offending by young people, policing activity, YOS work with young people (to prevent offending and offer bail packages), and is ultimately a decision made by the court.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

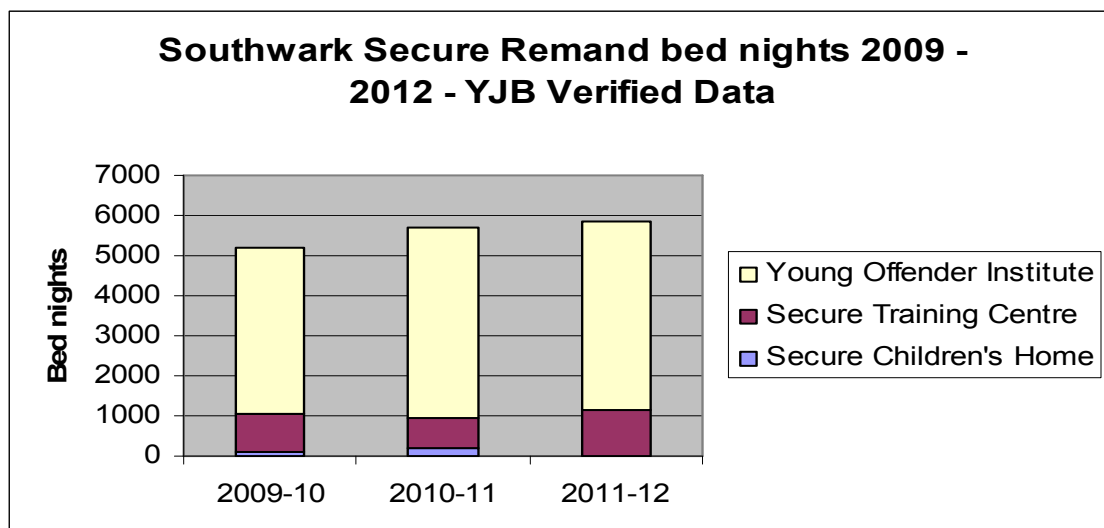
5. The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASP) introduced a new remand framework for young people from December 2012. When a young person is refused bail by the court the options now available are to Remand into Local Authority Accommodation (RLAA) or impose Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA).
6. A YDA is a secure remand either into a Young Offender Institute (YOI), Secure Training Centre (STC) or Secure Children's Home (SCH). Core to these legislative changes are the inclusion of 17 year olds in the remand options and that all young people receiving a YDA become looked after children.

7. From April 1 2013 the designated Local Authority for the young person will be responsible for all remand accommodation costs.
8. This intention behind this change in legislation is to only use remand places where it is necessary to protect the public from those whose offending and alleged offending is serious enough to warrant custody. In addition the legislation has been changed so that all young people under 18 are treated in the same way for remand purposes, rather than treating 17 year olds as adults. This will ensure compliance with the UN convention on the rights of the child. All young people who are securely remanded will become 'looked after' by the local authority. In addition, local authorities will become financially responsible for all youth remands to secure accommodation, although responsibility for commissioning and placements will be retained by central government. It is hoped that this will incentivise local authorities to invest in alternative strategies for this group of young people.
9. This legislative change is in the context of national data indicating that in 2010/11, 26% of all young people in custody were on remand, however 61% of those on secure remand were acquitted or did not go on to receive a custodial sentence from trial. The implication was that many of these young people did not need to be in a secure placement. Secure remands are also expensive, with costs ranging from £626 per night for Secure Training Centre to £171 per night for a Young Offender Institute.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Impact for Southwark based on 2009 – 2012 YJB verified data

10. Southwark has the third highest number of remand bed nights in England & Wales for 2009 – 2012. The potential impact of this is on the increased number of children becoming looked after children as a result of the change in remand legislation from December 2012 and also from April 2013 the financial costs of this accommodation.

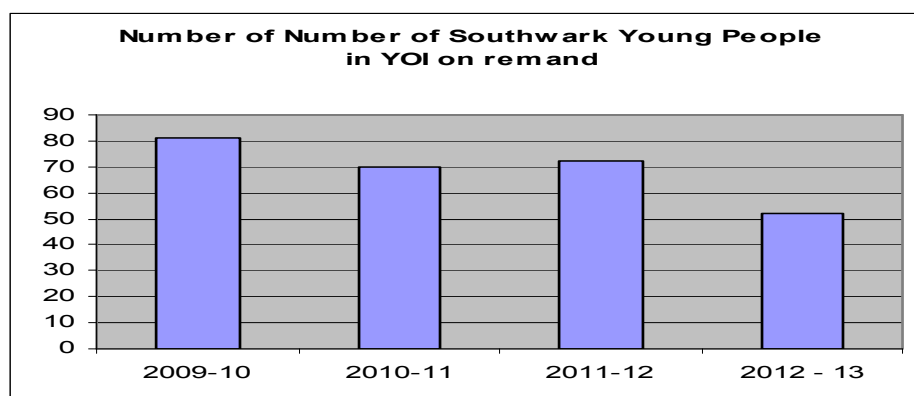


11. Financial implications of paying for remand bed nights from April 2013:

- The Ministry of Justice national allocation of additional funding has assumed a 26% reduction in remand bed nights following recent changes and the introduction of LASPO.
- Current YOS data (note: not YJB verified) on remands for 2012 – 2013 suggests that bed nights have significantly reduced this year. Current projections indicate a 33% reduction in remand bed nights. These secure bed nights would cost an additional £825,821 less than predicted earlier, however the bed nights for Remands into Local Authority Accommodation has increased by 42% implying that magistrates are now more likely to use a non secure remand which will put additional strain on budgets.

Additional resource implications of paying for remand bed nights from April 2013

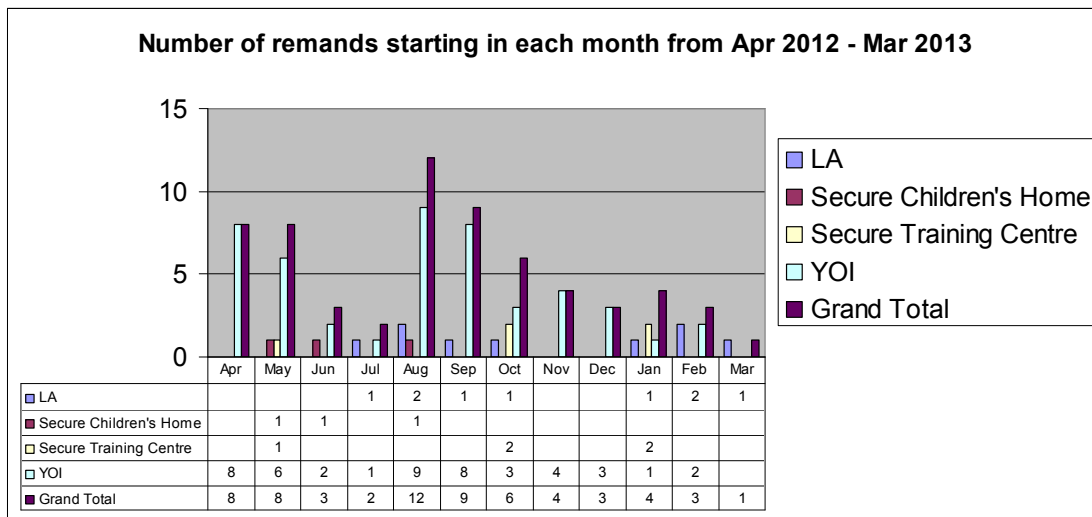
12. As all young people remanded from 3 December 2012 are now looked after children there are implications for social work resources in worker time additional requirements for Independent Reviewing Officers, and the potential additional demand for leaving care and aftercare services.
13. Care Planning Guidance is currently being reviewed by the DfE to take into account the special situation of remanded young people in the secure estate but until revised guidance is published existing requirements continue as for all newly looked after young people.
14. The YOS is currently case working all new remands and liaising with the Adolescent and Aftercare Service to handover cases once the length of remand is predicted to continue past the first month.
15. The length of a remand can depend on the seriousness of the offence, the number and type of co-defendants (whether they are young people or adults) and if a not guilty plea is entered the time taken for trial. An increase in remand bed nights does not necessarily mean that more young people have been remanded and data suggests the actual number of young people on remand has been falling.
16. In particular the number of young people remanded into YOI and who now become looked after children as a result of LASPO has reduced over the last few years and YOS data suggest this is predicted to reduce by 28% compared to 2011/12.



17. Some young people are already looked after before they are remanded. National data quoted by the Ministry of Justice estimates that 25% of the YOI population were already looked after young people. YOS data from April 2012 indicates that only 1 young person out of 16 on remand in YOI was LAC (6%).
18. Using YOS data from the last two years it is estimated that the LAC population will increase by 55 – 79 per year because of the additional YOI remanded young people. This figure does not include any potential increase in Remands into Local Authority Accommodation.
19. The length of time young people spend on remand impacts on the future responsibilities of the local authority. YOS 2009 – 2012 data shows that the number of days on remand ranges from 1 – 579, with the average remand period being 15.5 weeks and 75 young people in that period passing the 13 week qualifying period for aftercare services.
20. Southwark has been allocated an additional £107,183 for 2013 – 14 to cover the extra social work costs associated with the new LAC responsibilities for YOI remanded young people.

Latest YOS data on remands 2012 – 2013 (not verified by YJB)

21. As mentioned above, local YOS data shows that remand bed nights this year have reduced by 33%. The graph below shows the fluctuations in number of remands starting per month. The introduction of LASPO in Dec 2012 does not seem to have significantly impacted on what has been a general downward trend since the summer.



22. Since December 2012 young people have been remanded, 10 remain on remand. Three are in Secure Training Centre, four in YOI and three are Remanded into Local Authority Care and placed in the community. Two of the 18 young people were already looked after young people. 16 therefore became LAC however only 10 of these achieved this status as a result of LASPO changes (others would have been LAC owing to age and type of remand placement).

23. Of the 7 remands that have ended, the length ranged from 6 to 68 days. Two of those remaining on remand are likely to exceed the 13 week qualifying period.
24. In response to the additional demand for services arising from this legislative change, further work is being undertaken to strengthen bail support packages and suitable alternative care arrangements for young people at risk of being remanded to custody or local authority accommodation.

Community Impact Statement

25. Young offenders in care are a vulnerable group in our community. The new legislation ensures that the needs of these young people are appropriately prioritised by the local authority and that they are supported through care and custody into more positive and productive lifestyles.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Social Care	
Report Author	Jenny Brennan, YOS Service Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	17 April 2013	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Officer	17 April 2013	

Item No. 9.	Classification: Open	Date: 29 April 2013	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Adoption Service Annual Report	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	

RECOMMENDATION

1. To receive the Adoption Service Annual Report and note the recommendations of the Adoption Improvement Plan which seek to deliver a step change in the number of approved adopters and children adopted from care.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. There is a heightened level of interest and scrutiny both nationally and locally in local authority performance on adoption. In the last Ofsted Inspection of Southwark's adoption service in January 2012 the service was rated as good with some outstanding features.
3. The first adoption scorecards were published November 2012 and covered data for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2012. The scorecard covers a range of performance indicators averaged over a three year period. The scorecard highlighted a number of performance concerns for Southwark, particularly in relation to the length of time children had to wait between entering care and being adopted, and the number of children who were waiting to be adopted based on the number of placement orders granted by the courts in relation to Southwark children. The second release in November 2013 will not yet evidence the strong improvements made during the year in Southwark's approach to adoption, as the data is based on a three year period.
4. The report fulfils the regulatory requirement to provide an annual adoption service report which describes current activity and future challenges.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. Current performance information indicates that some children in Southwark are waiting too long to be adopted. However, performance improves when delays associated with foster carer adoption are taken into consideration. The number of children waiting for adoption has reduced and this brings Southwark in line with some other London authorities.
6. An adoption improvement plan is now in place to ensure that changes are made in both culture and adoption activity. Widespread system changes are also in hand to address some of the systemic delays in adoption for children. This includes the Care Proceedings Project which aims to reduce the length of proceedings to 26 weeks in line with the Family Justice Review recommendations. The post-adoption support role is increased from a 0.5 FTE to a full time role.

7. Additional capacity has been provided to speed up recruitment and minimise bureaucratic delays. A new recruitment strategy has also been developed to reach out to more local people, particularly those from black and minority ethnic communities. It is anticipated that this will ensure more black children are adopted from care.
8. The post adoption service is being strengthened as this encourages people to adopt, knowing that they will have ongoing access to support once the child is permanently placed.
9. The role of Adoption Improvement Manager has been created to oversee the improvement plan and ensure timely implementation of actions to improve the performance of the service.
10. It is planned that this role would lead the implementation of fostering for adoption and concurrency schemes in Southwark required by the government and difficult to deliver without additional expertise and capacity. This change will enable children to move quicker to adoption.
11. The Post-Adoption Support Manager role is adapted to manage mainstream adoption work and that additionally identified in this delegated item (social work with children waiting for adoption and early assessment of family members).

Policy implications

12. There are no new policy implications relevant to this report.

Finance implications

13. Funding for these posts and improvements will be met from the Adoption Improvement Grant.

Resource implications

14. There are none.

Community Impact Statement

15. The Adoption Service provides permanent adoption families for Southwark children and specifically recruits adopters to meet the diverse needs of Southwark children. Our recruitment strategy is that of maintaining a continuous presence in Southwark and neighbouring boroughs through the local press and targeting publications for black and ethnic minorities, cinema adverts, billboards and summer fairs as appropriate.
16. The Adoption Service is one of inclusion and research based and recognises that the quality of the relationship of perspective adopters is the key determinant for adoption success.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**APPENDICES**

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Adoption Service Annual Report

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Director Children's Social Care	
Report Author	Alasdair Smith, Interim Head of Services for Children in Care Special Needs	
Version	Final	
Dated	18 April 2013	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Service	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes/No	Yes/No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	18 April 2013	

*ADOPTION SERVICE
ANNUAL REPORT*

CLA Business Unit

2012/13

Adoption performance has received considerable scrutiny in the last 6 months. On the whole performance is consistent but there are clear areas for improvement particularly in respect of: numbers of children adopted: timescales to achieve adoption notably for BME children.

There has been a reinvestment in capacity in the Adoption Service alongside development of an Improvement Plan that is in its early stages of implementation.

2. Background Information

The adoption of children from care receives a high profile nationally promoted by the Department of Education. Southwark's performance came under scrutiny from the DfE in December 2012 and Southwark voluntarily undertook an independent peer review in February 2013 to assist informing its improvement work.

This report fulfils obligations in Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) and Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) Adoption and Children Act 2002 to report 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 20 March 2013. Plans for children are dynamic and develop every day and the picture will have changed at the point this is read.

Within this report there is particular emphasis on adoption due to the considerable scrutiny this area has received nationally reflected in our more detailed analysis and understanding of performance in this area.

3. Adoption - children

The government measures and compares local authorities by way of an annual adoption scorecard. It uses 3 year average figures as a more accurate guide to performance. This report looks at performance for the scorecard 2010-2013. Southwark's performance for this period can be measured but not compared with other LAs as comparative data is not released until November 2013.

3.1 The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (A1) shows an improvement for the 3-year average of 40 days with a total average of 735 days. There is considerable improvement in the year (an average of 598 which is 168 days less compared to 2011/12).

All remaining the same nationally, this would improve our London ranking by 3 positions to 15th and our national ranking by 10 positions to 28th.

There is concern about how the term *placed for adoption* and *a child moving in with its adoptive family* can be used inter-changeably. The DfE detailed guidance note setting out how the figure is calculated measures from entry to care to date child placed for adoption. For a significant number of children, those placed with and adopted by foster carers or family members, the date of moving in is in almost all cases much earlier than the date when the child was placed. The DfE recognised this in the 2009-2011 scorecard released by

introducing a further measure A10. Southwark's performance in this area is very good. A1 cannot be looked at in isolation to A10. (see further below).

- 3.2 *The average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (A2)*** has shown improvement by 70 days in 2012/13. However, the 3-year average shows a slight increase by 41 days reaching an average of 214 days. The main reason for this is that the 2009/10 figure, which was very low (84) will no longer impact on the 3-year average. The overall numbers of foster carers who have adopted (AX below) has also dropped and as the time to match them is treated as 0, less foster carers adopting effects this area by increasing the average number of days.

So while the year performance 2012/13 shows improvement, the 3 year average shows a decline in performance taking it above the threshold set by the DfE (190 days).

Of the 20 adopted children this year boys are more likely to take longer to be matched. Nearly half (5 children) of the white & black Caribbean children adopted, took longer than the national average to be matched.

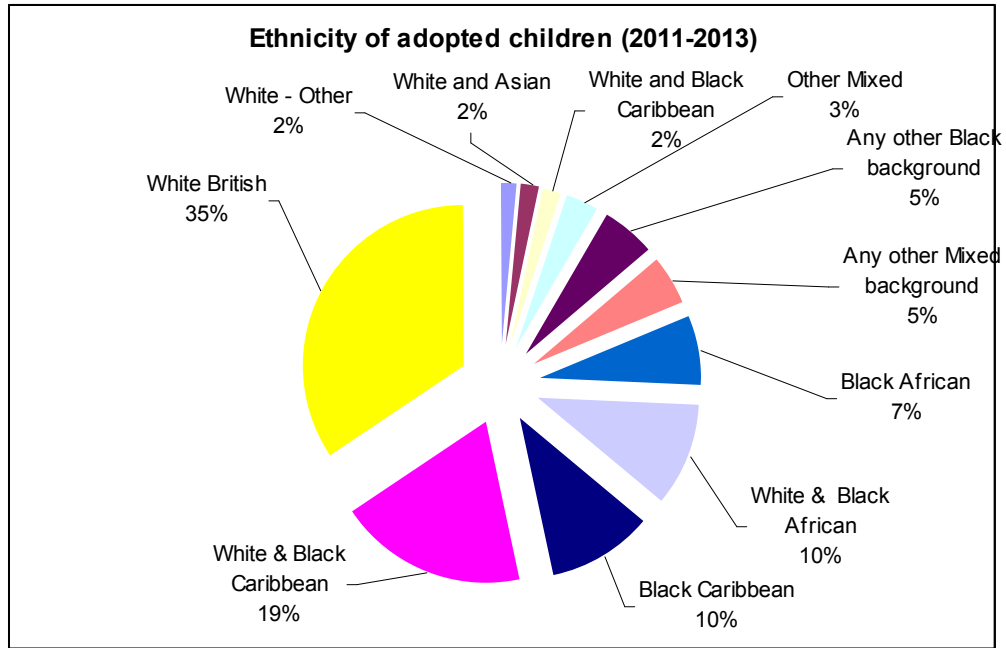
- 3.3 *The percentage of children who wait less than 21 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (A3)*** has shown improvement of 4.3 percentage points for the 3 year average. The yearly position in 2012/13 shows more improvement at 59.5% compared to 48.0% in 2011/12. However, the improvement in proportion is more reflective of the smaller cohort and less children actually waited less than 21 months (9 less children for the 3 year average but only 2 less children in the year – 47 in 2012/13 compared to 49 in 2011/12).

A cohort analysis shows no difference in gender, however, black children are more likely to wait longer than 21 months compared to white children.

- 3.4 *Adoptions from care (number adopted and percentage leaving care who are adopted) (A4)***

The total number of adoptions from care in 2012/13 is 20. This shows stability in the volume and proportion of children been adopted in Southwark. However, this remains below the national average of 12%.

In the 3-year period, slightly over half (52%; 30 children) adopted were boys and 48% (28 children) were girls, which is representative of all children ceasing to be looked after in the period. Over one third (20 children) adopted were white British followed by 19% (11 children) of white & black Caribbean children adopted. Six black Caribbean children and 6 white & black African children were also adopted.

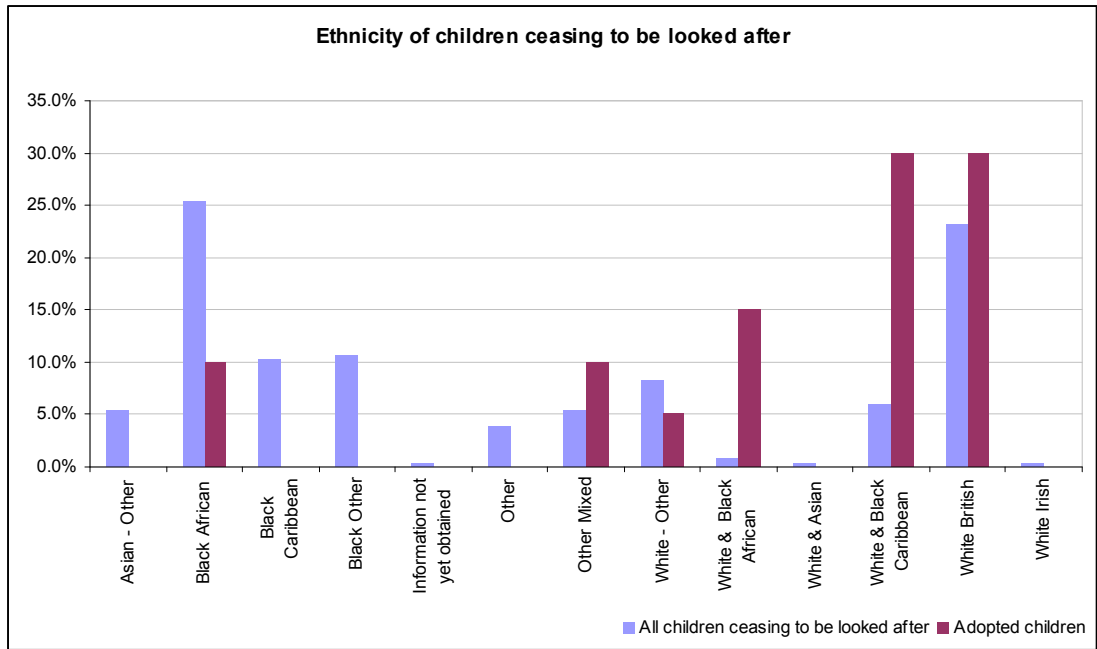


3.5 Number and percentage of children for whom the permanence decision has changed away from adoption (A5) currently this is showing 7%, with 6 children where the plan has been reversed in 2012/13. This figure needs further scrutiny due to considerable data cleansing in the last 6 months.

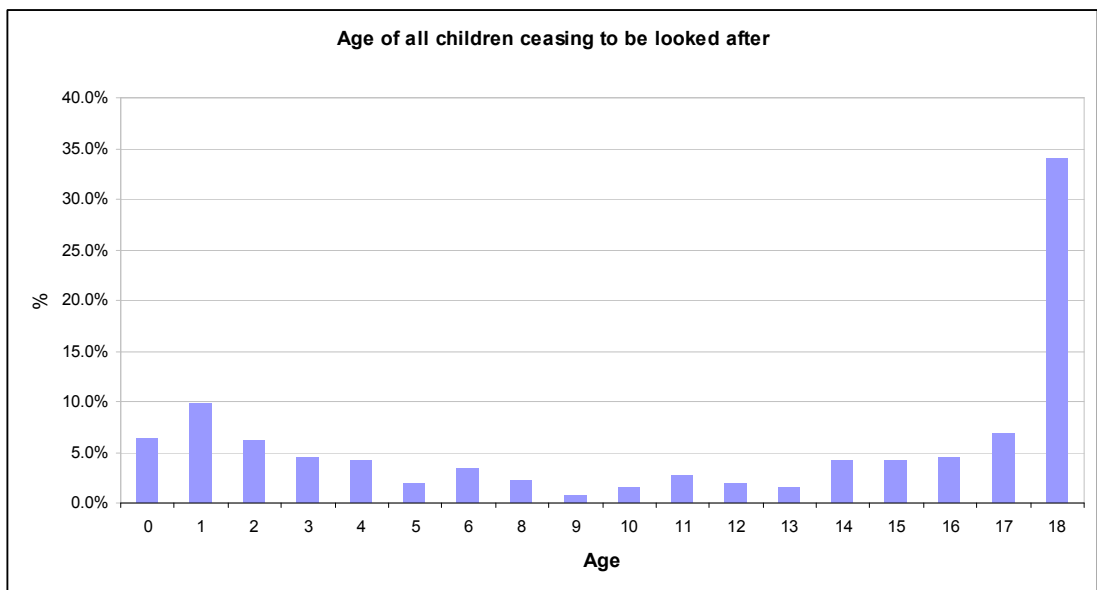
3.6 Number and percentage of black and minority ethnic children leaving care who are adopted and number and percentage of children aged 5 or over leaving care who are adopted A6 & A7 show lower numbers adopted in these 2 groups.

Both measures remain stable with the 3 year average at 6.6% for BME and 1.5% for those aged 5 or over.

In 2012/13, of the 20 adopted children 13 were of a BME background and 180 BME children ceased to be looked after in the year. However, when we compare the ethnicity of adopted children to those ceasing to be looked after it is clearly evident that there is over-representation of white British children and under-representation of black African children.



Similar to last year, 2 children adopted were aged 5 or over raising the 3-year average to a total of 9 children (1.7%). Over one third of children ceasing care are aged 18.

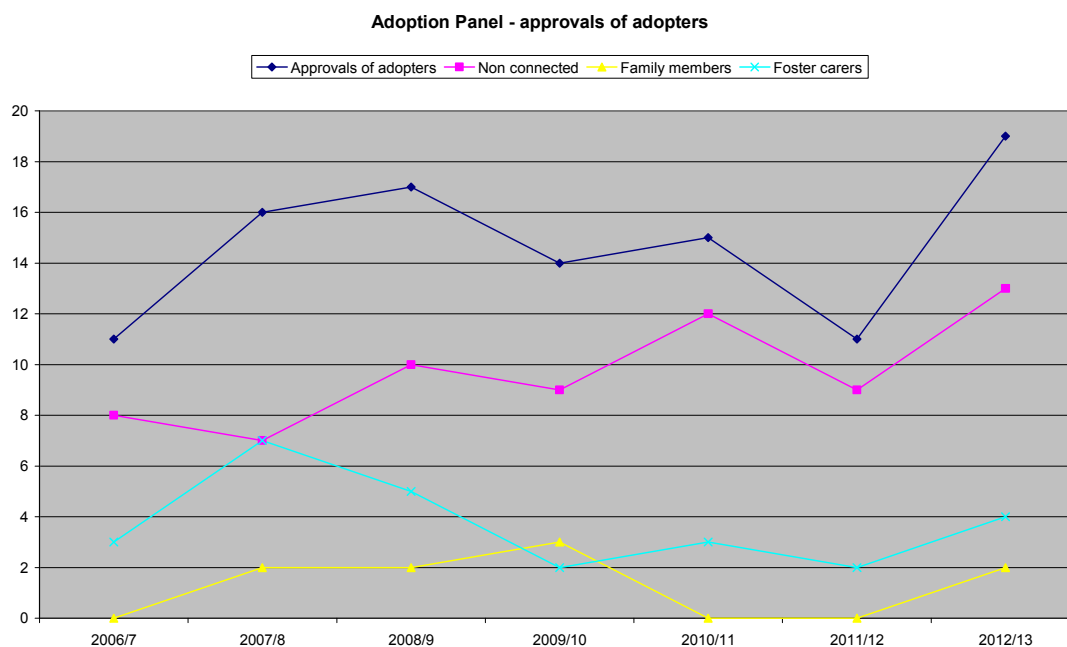


3.7 Number of children awaiting adoption (A9) Currently there are 42 children awaiting adoption. This puts Southwark in the second banding (28 to 47) of high performance for the adoption gateway map and with Haringey, Lambeth, Newham and Hillingdon compared to being the highest borough in London. The visibility of children waiting for adoption has been improved greatly by development of tracking reports showing more clearly who these children are and how long they have been waiting to allow more effective tracking and targetting of activity to prevent further delay.

3.8 The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family [A1] adjusted for foster care adoptions (A10) Southwark's performance in this area was very strong in the 3 year period 2009-2012 putting it in the quarter nationally. With the reduction in numbers of foster carers adopting this year this is set to increase a little although it is estimated that during 2013/14 at least 7 foster carers will adopt children which is a significant increase.

4. Adoption – adopters

19 new prospective adopters were approved in 2012/13. This is a 70% increase in availability of adopters. Of those approved 6 are foster carers, 2 of whom are friends & family carers. This is the highest figure of approvals in 8 years although.



Considerable work is needed to enable better tracking of adoption assessments to meet ambitious plans of the Adoption Scorecard for 2014 for all assessments of prospective adopters to be completed within 6 months.

4.1 Who adopted Southwark children?

Adopters of adopted children - which agency	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Southwark	11	12	12
Consortium LA	0	0	0
Consortium VAA	3	0	0
Other LA	5	5	3
Other VAA	1	4	2

9 of the above adoptive placements (8 families) were purchased externally. 5 from other local authorities at £13,138 each and 4 (2 single and 1 group of sibs) 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. In 2013/14 local authorities will be expected to pay the same fee for placements with other LAs.

Adopters of adopted children - how recruited	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Adopted Sibling	2	1	0
Adoption Register	3	2	1
Advert/Magazine	2	1	2
Family Member	0	2	4
Regional Event	0	2	2
Southwark Foster Carer	1	4	4
Southwark Recruited Direct	7	8	4

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.

Southwark Foster Carers continue to make up a significant proportion of adopters. They comprise 33% of those assessed by Southwark who adopt Southwark children in both 2010/11 and 2011/12. For the 2 years this is 21% of all Southwark children adopted.

In 2011/12 Southwark traded 1 households of approved adopters to another local authority generating income of £13, 138. 1 household was traded the previous year and 2 households were traded in each of the previous 2 years generating around £50K.

4.2 Enquiries, responsiveness and recruitment. There have been 208 adoption enquiries in the last year to date. This is about the same level as 2011/12 (207). Enquiries are defined as a person contacting Southwark to discuss their interest in becoming an adopter.

In November 2012 (National Adoption Week) this event was repeated but with wider advertising. This was co-ordinated by the Consortium administrator with considerable help from the Lambeth Communications manager. A full page of editorial in the Evening Standard together with an advert in the Metro as well as the SMS and advertising on individual agencies home pages ensured that over 120 people attended. Again, Lambeth was the venue chosen. The event was felt by all to be very positive and at least 3 families were followed up. Although this wasn't a Southwark event it did mean that it showed joint working and Southwark's profile was considerably raised.

The Adoption Statement of Purpose 2012/13 sets out the process and frequency of information meetings where enquires hear more about adoption and meet adopters and adoptees. In the last 12 months 6 Information Meetings have been held mostly in Peckham Library on Saturday mornings. Further

informal coffee mornings were held in the summer of 2011 and an extra evening event in East Dulwich.

The 2012/13 Recruitment Strategy has been delivered and evaluated and a new strategy has been devised for 2013/14. The current strategy must be regarded as partially successful given the 70% increase in approval of adopters. However with the high number of children waiting for adoption it does not meet the needs of all Southwark children in need of adoption and a more ambitious and creative strategy is being finalised for 2013/14.

4.3 Adoption disruptions. There was one disruption of a child placed for adoption in 2012/13. There were none the previous year.

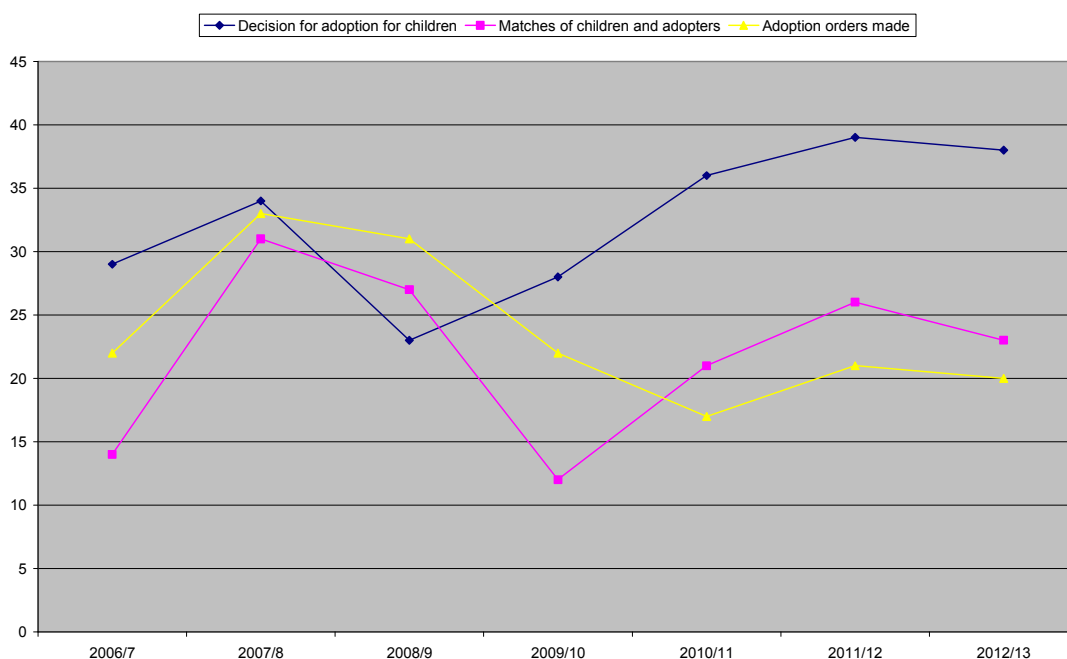
4 adoption placements have disrupted in the years 2006 to 2013. 3 were placements with voluntary adoption agencies and one with another local authority. This is a disruption rate of 2% and likely to be lower

5. Adoption Panel activity and related outcomes

Adoption Panels recommend prospective adopters for approval as adopters; and matches for approved adopters with children as well as whether adoption is suitable for relinquished children. The final decision, based on the panel's recommendations is made by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) (Head of Service for the CLA Service). Until September 2012 such panels used to recommend: children for whom adoption is in the child's best interests. That decision is made by the ADM without the benefit of scrutiny from the panel.

Southwark's Adoption Panels meets on the third Thursday of the month. 3 additional panels were held in the course of the year due to volume of work and the need to minimise delay for children.

All Adoption Panels are independently chaired and the report of Southwark's Independent Chair is set out in full in Appendix 1.



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.

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 7 month 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 to lower levels of adoption in 2010/11. The rise in care proceedings from 2009 has seen a rise in adoptions despite experience of the family justice system that such a care plan is harder than ever to achieve. Trends in adoption performance are most significantly influenced by levels of care proceedings which are at a very high level currently.

The independent peer review noted the Panel Chair's comments thus: *The Panel Chair spoke positively of the panel in Southwark, which he found to be competent, offering scrutiny and consistency of approach across cases. He highlighted a number of good practice examples, which included: an annual conference on adoption, draft later life letters at the matching stage, successful annual adopter events and CAMHS input. He did however also highlight a number of challenges facing Southwark as it moves forward: ensuring adequate staffing levels; an ethos in the Adoption Team that will need to support the new shorter timescales required for adopter assessment and the child placement process; decisively expanding adopter recruitment, improving family finding timescales and changing the approach to those children traditionally seen as harder to place.*

6. Adoption, Special Guardianship and Residence Orders

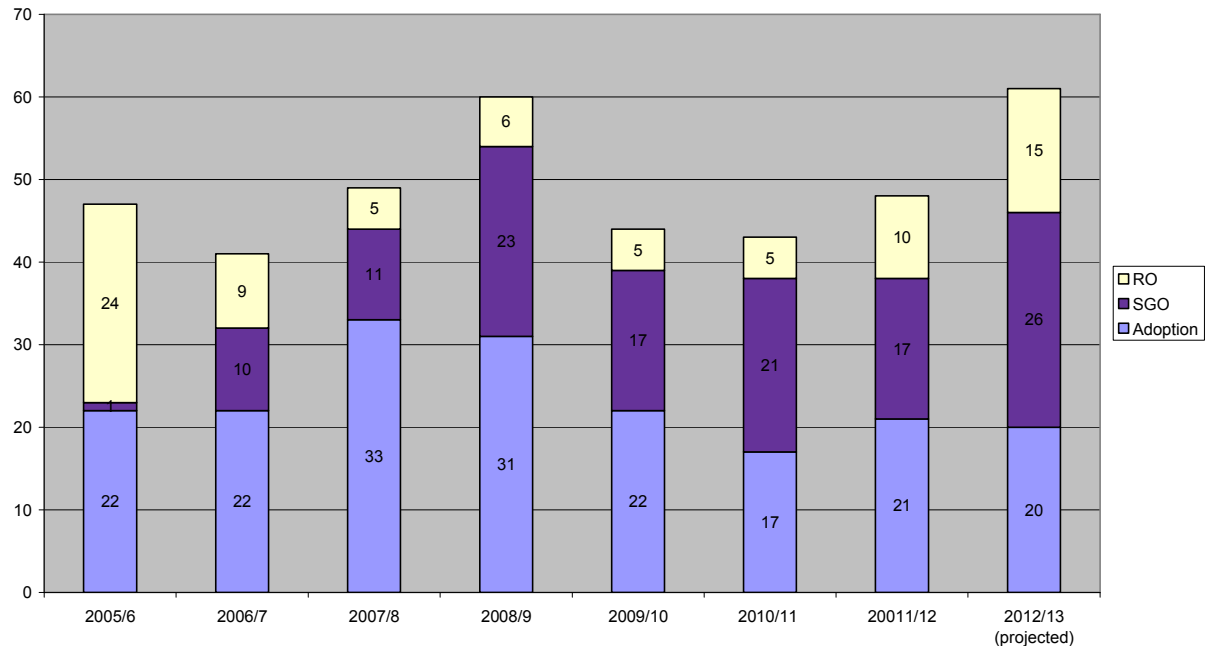
Overall in 2012/13 Southwark's performance for permanent outcomes beyond parental care was the best in 8 years of running these figures. The closest year in terms of volume 2008/9 was significantly effected by foster carers adopting.

Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) were introduced by the Adoption and Children Act 2002. It was intended to provide another option for legal permanence for children who cannot grow up with their birth families. A SGO gives the special guardian legal parental responsibility for the child which is expected to last until the child is 18. But, unlike Adoption Orders, these orders do not remove parental responsibility from the child's birth parents, although their ability to exercise it is extremely limited.

In practice, this means that the child is no longer the responsibility of the local authority, and the special guardian will have more clear responsibility for all day-to day decisions about caring for the child or young person, and for taking important decisions about their upbringing, for example their education. And, importantly, although birth parents retain their legal parental responsibility, the special guardian only has to consult with them about these decisions in exceptional circumstances

In considering permanence for children adoption must be considered alongside SGO and ROs. Historically the government measured adoption and SGO together as an indicator of permanent outcomes for LAC. Currently there is no requirement for a certain percentage of children to reach permanence through adoption or SGO although there is now a scorecard rating for percentage of LAC adopted.

Key permanence outcomes leaving care 2005 to 2013



A Residence Order (RO) is an order issued by the Family Proceedings Court, and details which parent or carer the children should reside with. This order normally provides details of when and where the children can be visited by the parent who has failed to gain residency. Once the order has been granted, Parental Responsibility for the children goes to the person with whom the children will be living.

ROs have increased significantly in the last 2 years. These are mostly BME children who are placed with relatives, abroad. A handful are used as an interim stage in consideration of an application of an SGOs during care proceedings. 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. In these 2 years 22 foster carers adopted children (2 were family members who looked after the children as foster carers). In 2011/12 this numbered 4 and 2012/13 this is just 2 the lowest in 8 years. Thus adoptions by strangers rose if overall adoptions reduced a little. Adoption and foster care adoption is estimated to rise significantly in 2013/14.

A comparison study between SGOs and adoption conducted for children with that permanence outcome from 2006 to 2012 showed how critically SGOs were a more likely permanence route for BME children than adoption in Southwark. For children of mixed ethnicity there was little difference between adoption and SGO as an outcome. With respect to age it appears from the study both orders are predominately used for young children, with 69% of those adopted and 65% of SGOs being under 5 years old when the order was granted. Consideration of SGO performance for 2012/13 supports this general finding. (*Permanence Analysis – Adoption and Special Guardianship Period : April 2006 to March 2012 (6 years) Author: Jenny Skirrow*)

7. Performance Improvement Activity

An Adoption Improvement Plan was devised in October 2012 and has evolved ever since. The Peer review undertaken in February 2013 summed up the approach thus:

In recent months an adoption task force has been established, comprising managers across the service and underpinned by an improvement plan and the recent appointment of an Adoption Improvement Manager.....the diagnostic team recognises that the plan is an evolving document and that work to embed improvement is in the early stages.

It also commented

There was a consistent view from all those we spoke to that social workers and managers take a child-centred approach, focused on achieving the best outcomes for all children and recognition of children's need for permanence

In discussions with social workers and managers, there was recognition that more attention needed to be given to adoption and that there were now increased resources and a higher profile being given to adoption.

The Improvement Plan is appended to this document as *Appendix 2*. Its key areas are

Reforming Custom and Practice with an aim to work better as a system to ensure more children are adopted from care and move in with their adoptive families as soon as possible.

Permanency planning with an aim to improving planning so fewer children awaiting adoption and more children adopted from care, and are able to move in with their adoptive family in a timelier manner

Family finding with an aim that all children in care have a decent chance of finding an adoptive family, including those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and those who are older, and can move in with adoptive families as soon as possible

Case tracking and management overview system with an aim that all children are closely followed on their journey to maximise their opportunities of permanent placement as soon as possible.

Innovation and challenge with an aim to explore new and different ways to creatively improve performance on adoption.

*Alasdair Smith
Interim Head of Service, Children in Care
20th March 2013*

Item No. 10.	Classification: Open	Date: 29 April 2013	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Annual Report on Fostering	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Corporate Parenting committee to note the Annual Fostering Report.
2. Corporate Parenting committee to note and comment on proposals to improve recruitment of Southwark approved foster carers.

KEY MESSAGES

3. The Southwark Foster Care Service was judged good with outstanding features in its last inspection in December 2011. The Adolescent and Aftercare service (A & AC), continues to perform well, delivering good outcomes for older children in care and care leavers.
4. Recent changes have been made to the fostering panel to refresh the approach to the approval and quality assurance of foster carers. It is good practice to ensure that there is a regular turnover of both the chair and panel members so that standards can be maintained that the panel does not collude with the service.
5. Work is underway to improve recruitment of foster carers to ensure that more children and young people can be placed within or close to the borough and maintain contact with their families and communities. Southwark has an ageing foster care population and it is important to ensure that carers who retire are replaced and that capacity is built to meet the current level of need and demand.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6. The annual Fostering report provides information about the activity and outcomes achieved in 2012-13 by the service and what is planned for the year 2013-14.
7. The work of the Southwark Fostering Service is governed by statutory regulations, which require that elected members are informed of the Service's activity on a regular basis. This enables Members to fulfill their responsibilities as Corporate Parents for looked after children in Southwark.
8. The annual report informs elected members about:
 - National developments in fostering issues
 - Activity, performance and developments in the Fostering Service in 2012-13

- Future plans for the Fostering Service in 2013-14.
9. The foster care service has a vital role to play in providing safe and secure placements for vulnerable children who for whatever reason cannot remain with their birth families or have been abandoned.

Policy implications

10. There are none.

Resource implications

11. There are no additional resource implications in this report.

Community impact statement

12. Southwark Fostering Service has a key role to play in ensuring that children and young people can remain with a family close to their birth parents and community. It is recognised that placement stability, engagement in education, access to leisure and healthy lifestyles all help to build resilience for young people to successfully achieve economical wellbeing and making a positive contribution to their communities.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark Council Annual Report on Fostering 2012-13	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Alasdair Smith 020 7525 0654

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A	Southwark Council Annual Report on Fostering 2012-13

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson Director Children's Social Care	
Report Author	Alasdair Smith, Head of Services for Children in Care	
Version	Final	
Dated	16 April 2013	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	16 April 2013	

**SOUTHWARK COUNCIL
ANNUAL FOSTERING REPORT
2012-13**



Southwark Council Annual Fostering Report 2012-13

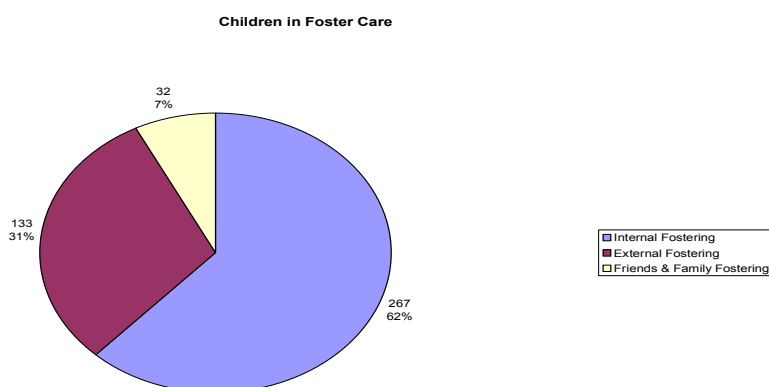
Introduction

The work of the Fostering Service is governed by statutory regulations, which require that Elected Members be informed of the Service's activity on a regular basis. This also requires the presentation of an annual report to help Elected Members fulfil their responsibilities as Corporate Parents for Looked After Children in Southwark.

The fostering team's core business as part of Children's Services is to:

- provide quality foster care placements for Southwark's Looked After Children.
- recruit, assess, train and support a suitable and diverse range of foster carers to provide quality care for Looked After Children.

There are currently 565 Looked After Children in Southwark.



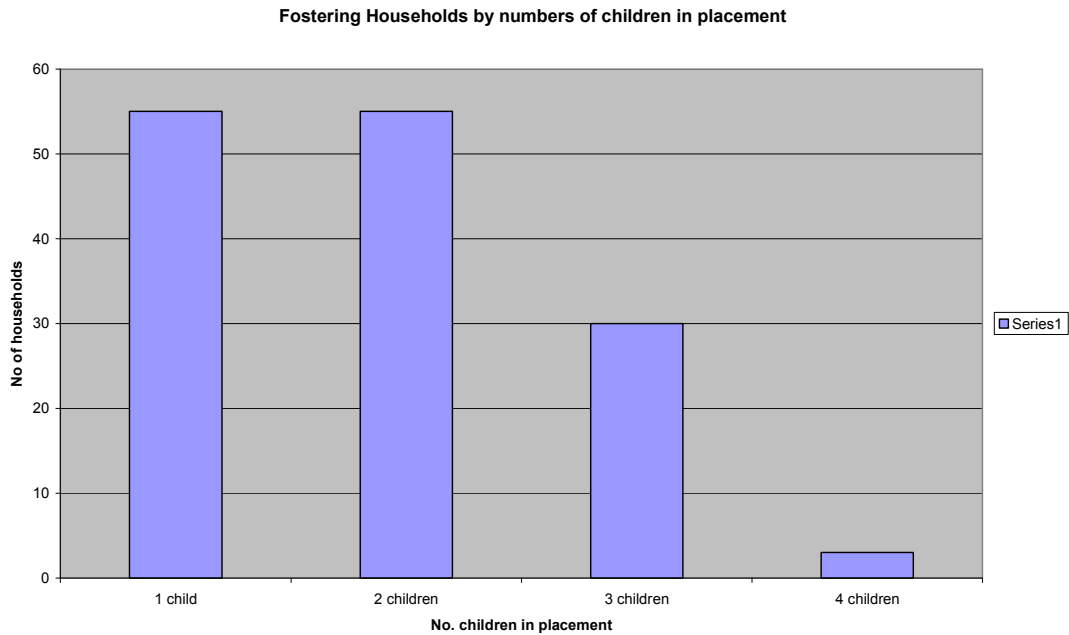
In house placements

The fostering team has a total number of 143 internal fostering households who are able to provide placements for 267(62%) Looked After children. There are 133 (31%) Looked After Children placed with external fostering agencies and 32 (7%) placed with Family & Friends carers (7%).

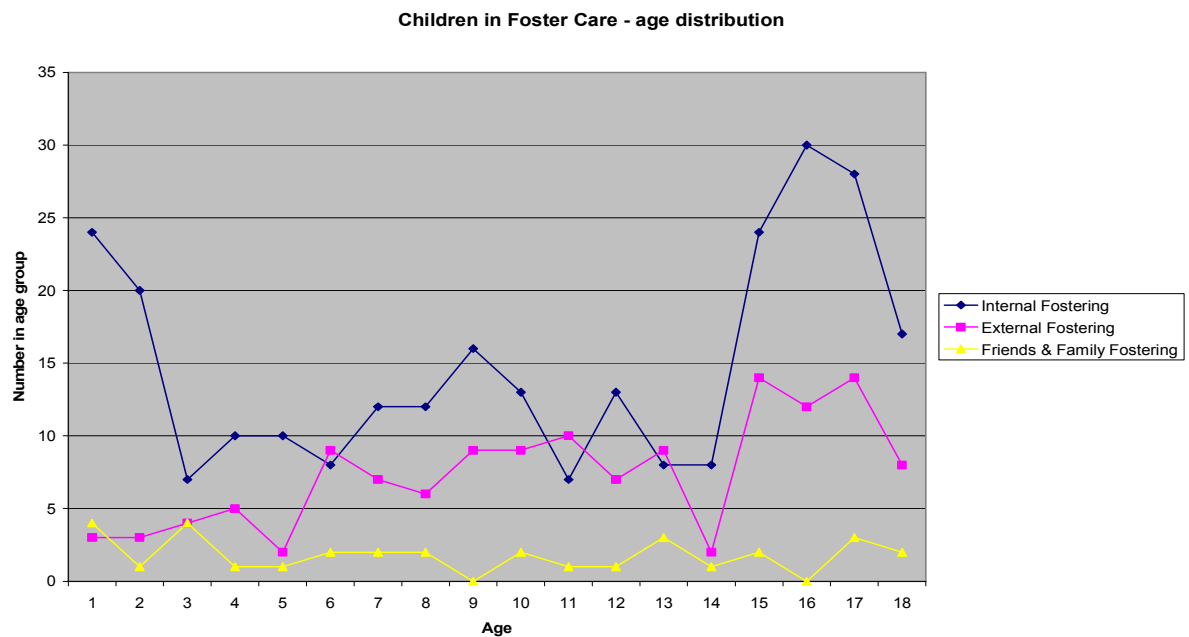
uring 2012/13 the fostering team lost 5 fostering households due to retirements, resignations and terminations of approvals.

Short Breaks Care

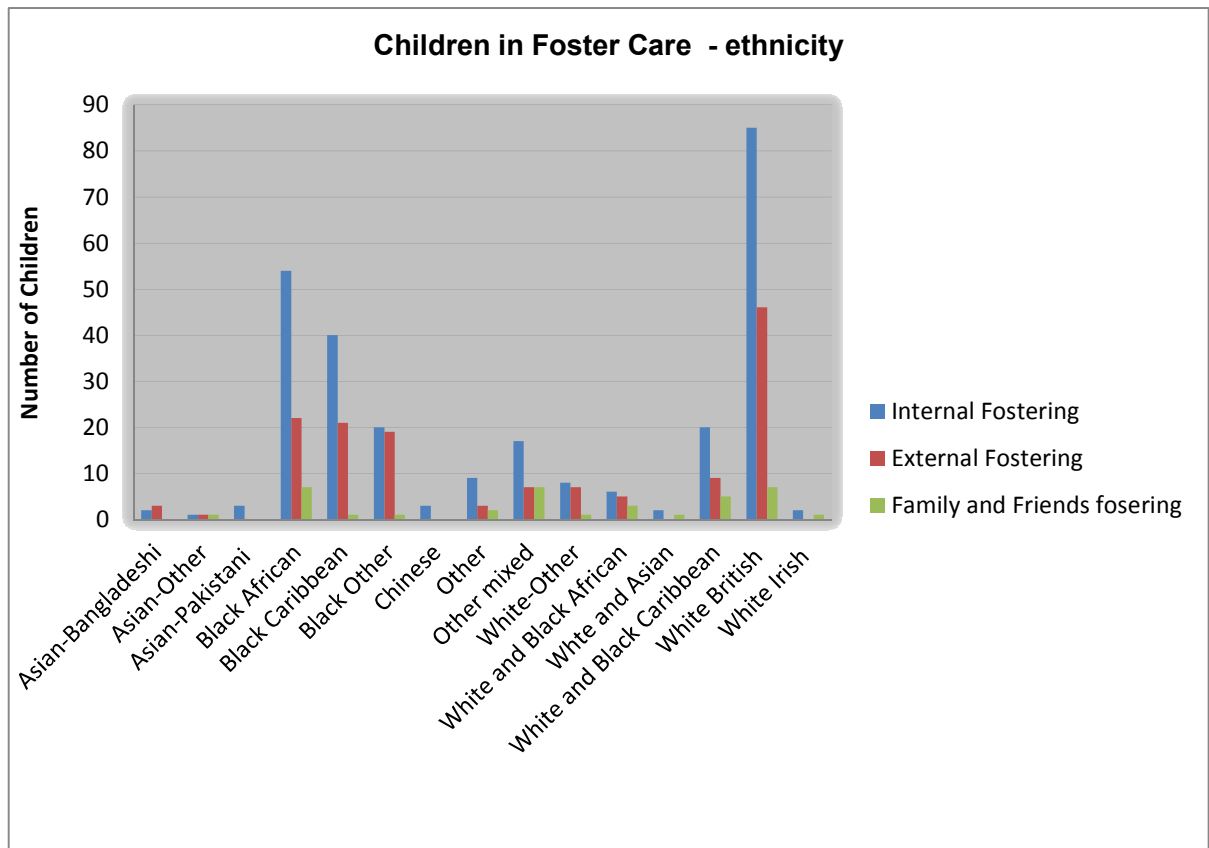
Southwark has 22 Family Link approved carers providing short breaks care for 24 children with disabilities.



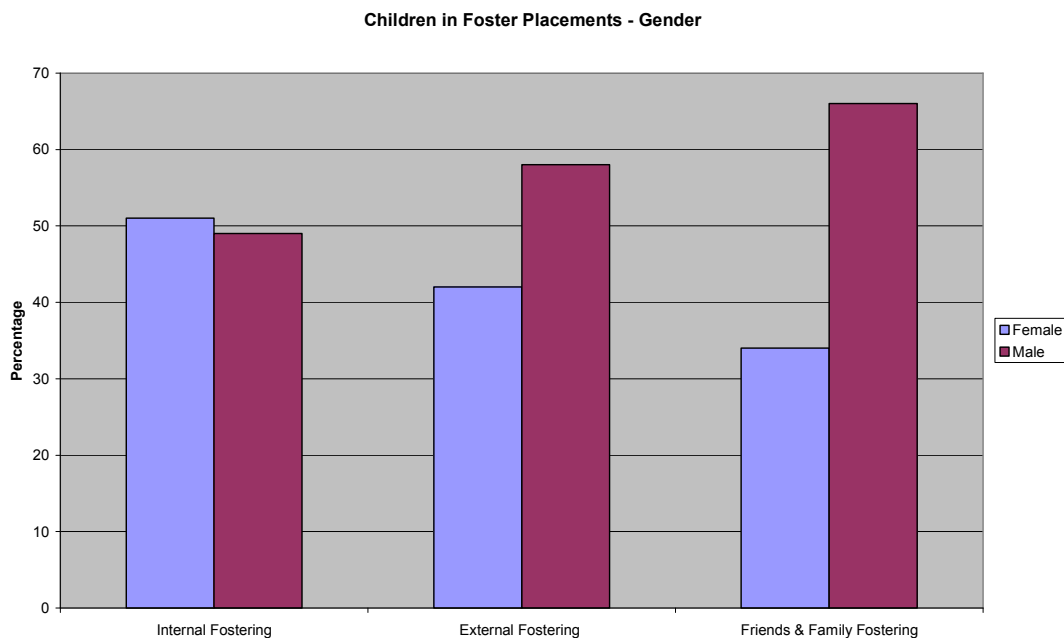
55 Looked After children (21%) are cared for by internal foster carers approved for one child; while 110 Looked After Children (41%) are cared for in households are approved to care for two children, which is the highest of the 4 groups. 90 children (34%) are placed with carers approved to care for 3 children and 12 children (4%) are placed in fostering households approved to care for 4 children, usually sibling groups.



Internal foster carers provide care for 62% of all children placed in foster care with a significantly higher proportion throughout the age range. 77% of children aged 1 and under and 70% of all 16 year olds are placed internally. External foster carers provide care for a slightly higher proportion of 6, 11 and 13 year olds compared with the other two groups. Figures for Family and Friends carers remain consistently low throughout.



There is a significantly higher proportion of white British (85) black African (53) and black Caribbean (40) children placed with internal foster carers than either external or Family and Friends carers. Family and Friend foster carers are represented across the majority of all ethnicities.



A significantly higher percentage of male children are placed with Family and Friends carers (66%) and external carers (58%) than with internal carers (49%). However more female children are placed with internal carers (51%) when compared with external carers (42%) or Family and Friends carers (34%).

Training

A comprehensive training programme for foster carers offering 26 different courses was developed in 2012/13. In addition foster carers are able attend courses advertised on the My Learning site, enabling them to train with social workers where appropriate. Responsibility for coordinating training for carers has been transferred to the Learning and Development Unit with support from the Fostering Managers utilizing their knowledge and experience to help co-ordinate the training programme.

While final figures are not yet available feedback from training suggests that foster cares are attending training courses ranging from 'basic induction' to 'helping to move children on'. It is evident that foster carers are keen to develop the necessary skills to provide a high standard of care for children. For those carers who are unable to attend training, Supervising Social Workers offer individual learning sessions.

Care Link Therapeutic Service

CareLink provide additional therapeutic support to foster carers to help them understand and confidently manage the behaviours of children in their care. Referrals are made by the Fostering Supervising Social Workers and the CareLink therapist work in partnership with them in providing support. One of the fostering Supervising Social Worker's is now based at CareLink to support this work, which foster carers are finding extremely helpful.

Foster Carer Recruitment

We have struggled to meet our target of 20 new foster carer approvals during 2012-13, with only 9 carers being approved. There are however 10 assessments still being progressed. Out of these 5 are waiting for further medical follow up. It is not unusual that up to 50% of our assessments require further medical information ranging from relatively minor information to that of a complex nature.

During 2012-13 the recruitment manager received a total number of 151 initial enquiries from members of the public interested in becoming foster carers, only 63 went on to complete application forms. Out of these:

40 initial visits were undertaken by the Recruitment Manager and of these visits:

11 applicants were assessed as being unsuitable

29 applicants were given forms to complete to progress to the next stage. Out these:

8 did not return the application forms, despite several calls to discuss

21 returned their forms and were allocated for assessment

Pre-Approval Training (Skills to Foster)

Two Skills to Foster courses took place in May and November 2012. Of the 21 applicants who took part four withdrew and one couple were found to be unsuitable.

Applicants submitted to the panel

10 assessments have been submitted to the fostering panel. Of these 1 assessment was deferred prior to the panel (the applicants subsequently withdrew their application) 1 assessment was deferred at panel, but has since been approved.

Of the remainder 6 applicants were ceased during assessment due to adverse CRB issues, adverse local authority information, and issues around management of own children arising and a couple separating during their assessment process.

5 applicants withdrew due to changing their mind after meeting a new partner, family bereavement, personal reasons and unhappy with the delay at going to panel.

There have now been 9 approvals since April 2012 offering 13 placements for children. There has also been 3 Family and Friends and 4 Family Link households.

Some factors for consideration

One of the main reasons expressed during the initial enquiry stage for not progressing applications is that Southwark allowances are lower than its neighbouring authorities. Southwark is currently working on a more competitive allowance scheme, which will shortly be sent out for consultation. If this is indeed a key factor we should expect to see an overall increase in applications during 2013-14.

The target for 2013-14 will be to recruit 25 internal foster carers over the next year. A range of options are now being considered to progress this plan:

- Financial reward to the workforce, or current carers whose friends or family recommendations lead to new approvals.
- A new communications strategy to include more wide ranging publicity such as:
 - a) foster carer and a supervising social Worker vignettes that can be added to the Website,
 - b) recorded phone messages while customers are waiting to be put through to services advertising on the back of buses travelling both within and outside of the borough
 - c) use of schools parents evenings, leisure centres, churches and community markets and events

Another option currently being considered is to commission an external agency to recruit new foster carers setting a target of 40 new carers within the next year. There is evidence from campaigns run in other authorities that this approach can be successful.

Southwark Foster Care Association (SFCA)

SFCA comprises Southwark Foster Carers who meet regularly to consider issues affecting foster carers such as fostering rates, support and training for carers and how the service can be improved. The Association is very active and provides an important avenue for the department to communicate directly with foster carers over changes in policy and strategy. It also provides an opportunity for foster carers to raise any issues of concern they may have. Recent topics have included the impact of Welfare Reform, changes to fostering rates, and how the department investigates allegations against carers. The department recognises the importance of the SFCA and is exploring ways to build on existing methods of communication.

Fostering Panel

In line with The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the associated National Minimum Standards for Foster Care, Southwark's fostering panel is organised to ensure that appropriate recommendations are made about the approval and reviews of foster carers.

The changes to guidance presented the service with an opportunity to review the panel tenure as members no longer have a maximum or minimum tenure. A recent decision was made to refresh the panel and this process has begun with the appointment of a new panel chair. The new chair is expected to take up her new position in May following an induction and panel training day. We will also be seeking to recruit more panel members from a range of backgrounds and key professions.

Inspection

The Fostering Service was required by regulation to be inspected by Ofsted once every three years. Southwark was last inspected in December 2011, when we received an overall rating of 'Good'.

Ofsted judged that the service was good at helping children to stay healthy, ensured they achieved well and enjoyed what they did, and made a positive contribution. The service was also good at protecting children from harm and neglect. Foster carers were well supported and the service had some outstanding features.

Finance

Gross Spend

Fostering Allowances	£4,899,552.96
Other	£232,652.32
Staff Costs	£1,080,443.71
Total	£6,212,648.99

Average weekly cost per child

Internal foster placement	£438.05
External foster placement	£850- £900

Future plans for the Fostering Service in 2013-14

The challenge to recruit internal foster carers remains high on the service agenda. This is the single most important area of need within the service as the number of Looked After Children population increases. The Supervising Social Workers have worked hard throughout the year to support and retain our current cohort of internal carers, however over the next two years some of our older carers are likely to retire and are not taking on any new placements leading up to this. In order to ensure our Looked After Children can remain living within their local community we need to provide sufficient placements to meet their needs. The Fostering Service will continue to work on recruitment and will learn from other Local Authorities' examples of recruitment and best practice. Consideration is also being given to how the SFCA can help improve recruitment as word of mouth is often a successful way of bringing new carers into the service.

Item No. 11.	Classification: Open	Date: 29 April 2013	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Corporate Parenting Committee – Work plan 2012/13	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director, Children's Social Care	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the corporate parenting committee review the work plan for 2012/13 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 2012/2013 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 have followed this framework since. Additionally, the committee agreed at its meeting on 21 April 2010 to receive a mid year performance review report. The committee also agreed to receive report/s of any significant performance variations evident from the monthly review of services for looked after children and care leavers.

Policy implications

4. The policy agenda has been measured against the 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 on these themes. In addition, the outcomes of the Ofsted inspection of safeguarding and looked after children’s services published on 10 July 2012 and other Government guidance will be taken into consideration in determining and reviewing the committee’s work programme.

Future agenda items

5. The following work plan sets out themes for future meetings.

29 April 2013

Stay Safe Theme

- Annual report on adoption services *
- Annual report on fostering services *
- Children in care and youth offending
- Independent reviewing officer (IRO) annual report
- Adolescent and After Care Service.

* Requested at 26 February 2013 committee that officers include a specific reference to Special Guardianship issues.

17 July 2013

Making a Positive Contribution

- Feedback from joint meetings between Speaker Box and members of the Corporate Parenting Committee and Speaker Box action plan
- Speaker Box mission statement
- Adoption and permanence for children in care (deferred from April 2013).

Reports to be allocated

- Pupil Performance. Interim position statement with regard to data collection (requested 26 February 2013)
- Impact of Welfare reform on looked after children, providing detail of case studies (requested 26 February 2013)
- Initiatives being undertaken to effect continuous improvement within the safeguarding and looked after children service (requested 26 February 2013).

Ongoing/monitoring

- Performance monitoring – committee to receive report/s of any significant variations evident from the monthly performance review of looked after children and care leavers services.

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 http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ie/ListMeetings.aspx?CId=129&Year=2012	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Sean Usher 020 7525 5338

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Director, Children's Social Care	
Report Author	Sean Usher, Constitutional Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	9 April 2013	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	9 April 2013	

CORPORATE PARENTING DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2012-13****NOTE:** Original held by Constitutional Team; all amendments/queries to
Sean Usher Tel: 020 7525 5338

Name	No of copies	Name	No of copies
Membership		Constitutional Team	
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle	1	Sean Usher	6
Councillor Eliza Mann	1		
Councillor Catherine Bowman	1		
Councillor Barrie Hargrove	1		
Councillor Claire Hickson	1		
Councillor Wilma Nelson	1	Total:	22
Councillor Althea Smith	1		
Reserves		Dated: 5 April 2013 (SDU)	
Councillor Poddy Clark	1		
Councillor Lisa Rajan	1		
Councillor Patrick Diamond	1		
Councillor Helen Hayes	1		
Co-opted members			
Barbara Hills	1		
Carolyn Martin	1		
Children's Services			
Romi Bowen	1		
Rory Patterson	1		
Alasdair Smith	1		
Email copy			
Sarah Feasey			
Patricia Rowe			
Liz Britton			
Deborah Walsh			
Eleanor Parkin			