

## Corporate Parenting Committee

Monday 8 July 2019

2.00 pm

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

### Membership

Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)  
Councillor Evelyn Akoto  
Councillor Sunny Lambe  
Councillor Maggie Browning  
Councillor Eliza Mann  
Councillor Charlie Smith  
Councillor Bill Williams  
Florence Emakpose (Co-opted)

### Reserves

Councillor Anood Al-Samerai

---

## INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

---

### Access to information

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

### Babysitting/Carers allowances

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

### Access

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

### Contact

Paula Thornton on 020 7525 4395 or email: [paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk) or [paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk)

---

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

**Eleanor Kelly**  
Chief Executive  
Date: 28 June 2019



# Corporate Parenting Committee

Monday 8 July 2019  
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.

#### **3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

To elect a vice-chair for the 2019-20 municipal year for the corporate parenting committee.

#### **4. 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.

#### **5. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

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

Item No.	Title	Page No.
6.	<b>CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2019-2020</b>	1 - 6
	<i>FIRST PART OF THE MEETING - CHILDREN IN CARE</i>	
7.	<b>THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS - A DEEP DIVE</b>	7 - 10
8.	<b>CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE</b>	11 - 36
9.	<b>ANNUAL REPORT - INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE 2018-19</b>	37 - 51

*SECOND PART OF THE MEETING - CARE LEAVERS*

10. **WORKSHOP: PERFORMANCE AND OUTCOMES**
11. **MINUTES (TO FOLLOW)**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 25 March 2019.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**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**

**Item No.**

**Title**

**Page No.**

**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.”

<b>Item No.</b> 6.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 8 July 2019	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Corporate Parenting Committee – Work Plan 2019-20	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Director, Children and Families	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the corporate parenting committee agree the approach and work plan as set out in the report.
2. That the committee review and identify any further items for consideration in the work plan.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Role and function of the corporate parenting committee

3. The constitution for the municipal year 2019-2020 records the corporate parenting committee's role and functions as follows:
  - a. To secure real and sustained improvements in the life chances of looked after children, and to work within an annual programme to that end.
  - b. To develop, monitor and review a corporate parenting strategy and work plan.
  - c. 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.
  - d. To develop and co-ordinate a life chances strategy and work plan to improve the life chances of Southwark looked after children.
  - e. 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.
  - f. 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.
  - g. To ensure performance monitoring systems are in place, and regularly review performance data to ensure sustained performance improvements in outcomes for looked after children.

- h. 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.
- i. To report to the council's cabinet on a twice yearly basis.
- j. To make recommendations to the relevant cabinet decision maker where responsibility for that particular function rests with the cabinet.
- k. To report to the scrutiny sub-committee with responsibility for children's services after each meeting.
- l. To appoint non-voting co-opted members.

### **National and local context for care leavers**

- 4. There is national momentum towards improving outcomes for care leavers. The government introduced 'Keep on Caring' strategy in 2016, increased council statutory duties to care leavers in the Children and Social Work Act in 2017, appointed a national Adviser for Care Leavers who produced a report in 2018, alongside the national launch of the Care Covenant. The council has responded to the various recommendations, for example by prioritising education, employment and training outcomes for care leavers in the Council Plan and developing the care leaver local offer as well as increasing service capacity for the extended personal adviser duties to 25.
- 5. Although much has been done to improve services and outcomes for care leavers, the council has an ambition to go above and beyond, by creating the best Leaving Care Service possible, by co-designing this with young people, learning from other organisations and trialling new ideas to test what works best.
- 6. In 2017 the council and Catch22 received funding from the DfE Social Care Innovation Programme to work in partnership to design and test new ways of working to support care leavers. The Care Leavers Partnership (CLP) works to improve outcomes for young people in Southwark by working across boundaries, reshaping the service delivery model, unlocking capacity in the community, and co-designing solutions. There are a number of strands that the CLP is working on to achieve our goals.

### **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 7. The corporate parenting committee review and update the work plan each meeting. Following the beginning of the municipal year 2019-20, and reflecting on the momentum towards improving outcomes for care leavers, the opportunity has been taken to review how the committee works and present proposals to refresh this in relation to: non-voting co-opted members; committee approach; and work plan and suggested agenda items.

### **Non-voting co-opted members**

- 8. It is recommended that the committee is supported and enhanced by adding a number of non-voting co-opted members. By bringing perspectives, knowledge and experience from young people, practitioners, subject matter experts, council and local community representatives together with elected members, there will be more opportunity to add value to the committee in its work to improve outcomes for children in care and care leavers. This will promote wider ownership of the

important work of the service and enhance plans developed to improve its work.

9. A **representative of Speakerbox**, Southwark's Children in Care Council, should be formally designated a non-voting co-opted member. This person would help the committee perform its role and function by bringing expertise by experience about how the system of support works around children in care and care leavers (3f above). The committee would recognise the person would preferably be consistent through the year, but may change. The council would support this person in that role, as well as Speakerbox, through its Childrens Rights and Participation function, to enable as far as possible the Speakerbox member to be representative of the voice of children in care and care leavers.
10. A **representative from Southwark's frontline workforce**, who works face to face with children in care and care leavers, should be formally designated a non-voting co-opted member. This person would help the committee perform its role and function by giving a sense of the reality of work on the frontline to enable it to better seek to ensure that the life chances of looked after children are maximised (3c above). This committee member would be supported by the Children and Families Principal Social Worker to enable them to be a representative voice for those that work everyday with children in care and care leavers.
11. A **subject matter expert** who has undertaken extensive research and/or improvement work in the area of children in care and care leavers, should be formally designated a non-voting co-opted member. This person would help the committee perform its role and function by adding knowledge and experience that is outside the day to day ambit of those working within the Southwark system to help the council better secure real and sustained improvements in the life chances of looked after children (3a above). The committee member would be supported by the Quality Assurance Unit to ensure they provide a valuable and relevant contribution to every committee.
12. A **critical friend** from an area of the council outside children and adults service, should be formally designated a non-voting co-opted member. This person would help the committee perform its role and function by adding knowledge and experience of the council outside social care and education areas to aid the development of a cross council approach to corporate parenting (3e above). The committee member would be supported by the quality assurance unit to ensure they provide a valuable and relevant contribution to every committee.
13. A **critical friend** from the local community, should be formally designated a non-voting co-opted member. This person would help the committee perform its role and function by adding knowledge and experience of the community and its assets and to aid the development of a wider community ownership of outcomes for children in care and care leavers. (3e above). The committee member would be supported by the Quality Assurance Unit to ensure they provide a valuable and relevant contribution to every committee.

### **Corporate Parenting Committee approach**

14. The traditional way of managing the committee has been for officers to prepare reports and then members to scrutinise this at committee meetings. It is proposed that the agenda is split into two halves: children in care and care leavers. The children in care section would continue in a more traditional way as described.
15. The care leaver section could be managed differently with a thematic approach where officers responsible for those areas would attend. A presentation would be

made about the area, and then a workshop approach would be taken whereby committee members would be invited to question and discuss, with an aim of developing recommendations for improvement. The workshops will produce targeted actions that thematic groups can take away to put into practice to make lasting change for care leavers.

16. The suggested main themes would be housing; education, employment and training; health and wellbeing. Others could be developed depending on the areas that might be considered important at the beginning of the year “kick off” meeting (see 17 below), and capacity of the committee. It would be expected that those attending for the themed areas would be at Director level within the council, and at a most senior level from other organisations.
17. The municipal year would start with a ‘kick-off’ meeting. This will present performance data about the outcomes for care leavers and plans for improvement. This will help the committee look at what is happening in Southwark, in comparison to neighbours and nationally. Quality and performance analysts could be available at the meeting to respond to detailed questions to deepen understanding. The whole approach would help the committee develop its plan for the year with areas of focus for the year ahead as well as being a place to question the whole approach to improvement.
18. The committee may develop, as part of its agenda, engagement with some areas between committee meetings. For example historically the committee has sometimes taken the opportunity to meet with SpeakerBox during some school holidays at focused events. These engagement opportunities could still be planned as an important aspect of the work of the committee that builds their knowledge and understanding, and thus the committee’s capacity to deliver its role and function

## Corporate Parenting Committee work plan and suggested agenda

### 19. 8 July 2019

#### *Children in care*

- IRO Annual Report 2018-19
- Children's Social Care Self Evaluation 2018–19.

#### *Care Leavers*

Workshop theme **Performance and Outcomes**

### 20. 4 November 2019

#### *Children in care*

- Foster and Adoption Service Annual Reports 2018–19
- Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-25 (incorporating Life Chances Strategy for children in care).

#### *Care Leavers*

Workshop theme **Housing**

### 21. 25 February 2020

#### *Children in care*

- Children in Care Annual Health Report 2019 - 20
- Item to be agreed.

#### *Care Leavers*

Workshop theme **Health and Wellbeing**

### 22. 22 April 2020

#### *Children in care*

- Virtual Headteacher Annual Report 2018–19
- Item to be agreed

#### *Care Leavers*

Workshop theme **Education, Employment and Training**

### SpeakerBox

23. SpeakerBox, established in 2005, ensures that the views of looked after children and care leavers are used to influence decision making that affects their care and support particularly service planning and design. Representing children and young people between 8 and 24 years the group also provides a peer to peer networking support system for looked after children. The programme is operated independently and run by the young people themselves, although it is supported by the council's Children Services and councillors.

### Community impact statement

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

### Resource implications

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

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Minutes of meetings of Corporate Parenting Committee	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Paula Thornton 020 7525 4395
<b>Web link:</b> <a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=129&amp;Year=0">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=129&amp;Year=0</a>		

### APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

### AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Alasdair Smith, Director, Children and Families	
<b>Report Author</b>	Alasdair Smith, Director, Children and Families	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	13 June 2019	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	14 May 2019	

<b>Item No</b> 7.	<b>Classification</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 8 July 2019	<b>Meeting name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		The Relationship between Health and School Exclusions – A Deep Dive	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		Children in Care of LB Southwark	
<b>From:</b>		Dr. Stacy John-Legere, Designated Dr for Looked After Children, Southwark	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note that the Southwark Looked After Children (LAC) health team to work with Carelink Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the Virtual School to identify the type of health information that would help education manage the children in school.
2. To note that the Southwark LAC health team to ensure clinicians carrying out statutory health assessments consider whether any identified physical, mental or emotional health needs are likely to impact on access to education; and to ensure reflected in recommendations made.
3. To note that the Southwark LAC health team to continue to ensure health assessments are shared with the Southwark Virtual School educational advisers and Carelink CAMHS. Recommendations pertinent to education will be copied to the school Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo).

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. National educational data contained in the Timson review <sup>1</sup>(2019) reveal that boys, children who are looked-after, living in poverty, have special educational needs, or from certain ethnic minorities, are disproportionately excluded from school. Exclusion from school is associated with child, family and school-related factors identifiable at, or prior to, primary school age
5. Official data and the literature<sup>2</sup> emphasise the high and disproportionate exclusion of children who have special educational needs and disability (SEND). Official statistics show that children with SEN represent 14% of the state-funded school population but account for almost half of permanent exclusions. The same data show that pupils with SEN support are almost six times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion than pupils with no SEN and pupils with any type of SEN are around five times more likely to receive a fixed period exclusion.

---

1

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/807862/Timpson\\_review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf)

2

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/800028/Timpson\\_review\\_of\\_school\\_exclusion\\_literature\\_review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800028/Timpson_review_of_school_exclusion_literature_review.pdf)

6. The prevalence of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) problems among excluded pupils is high. Pupils who have emotional and/or mental health problems are at higher risk of exclusion: This increases inversely with age: the younger the child was when psychological distress first developed, the higher the likelihood of exclusion. At the same time, the exclusion in itself has been found to trigger or exacerbate emotional and mental health problems among those excluded. A literature review by Cole (2015) concluded that it seems feasible that in England, there could be up to half a million children with mental health difficulties at risk of exclusion.
7. The research supports that child health professionals have an important role in the holistic, multidisciplinary assessment of children who are at risk of exclusion from school. Mental health and neurodevelopmental difficulties should be recognised and supported, to improve the health and educational outcomes among this vulnerable group.

### **Aim**

8. To assess the identification of any physical health needs, learning needs or emotional and behavioural needs contributing to the risk of exclusion during health assessments. To note the actions taken if risk of exclusion was identified.

### **Methodology**

9. Southwark LAC Health team analysed the electronic health records of 6 children who were identified by Southwark Virtual School to have had more than 3 fixed term exclusions in the last academic year. These children are matched to the accompanying analysis from the Virtual School.

### **Results**

10. We looked at a sample of 6 children who had had more than 3 fixed term exclusions in the current academic year (2018 – 2019).

5 out of the 6 were boys. The age range was 12 to 16 years. All were registered with a GP

4 of the sample had some type of physical health need which was not thought to directly contribute to the risk of exclusion

4 of the sample had learning needs which may have contributed to exclusion

3 had explicit recommendations related to access to education/behavioural impact on learning in the health assessment Health care Plan

3 were recorded as having education, health and care plans (EHCPs)

2 of the sample attended special needs schools

5 of the sample had either current or past emotional and behavioural needs

2 received assessment by Carelink CAMHS and 3 received assessment, therapy (including medication as required) by other CAMHS services

In 2 cases the assessing clinician recognised the risk of exclusion due to behavioural and learning needs and took action by liaising with the school and CAMHS.

### **Limitations**

11. For most of the cases reviewed, the timing of school exclusions was not available to the assessing clinician.

12. The reasons for exclusion were not explicitly stated in correspondence available on clinical records.
13. Not all completed EHCPs are available on children's electronic health records. This was recognised and improvements made so that all new EHCPs are copied to the health team; and when reviews are made.

### Conclusion

14. In the 6 cases the clinicians identified physical, emotional and behavioural health needs and learning needs - either in the health assessment or the paediatric review directly before accommodation.
15. In 2 out of 6, specific communication occurred with the school related to the impact of the young person's emotional and mental health presentation on their learning.
16. There are a number of factors why direct links to exclusion were not made at the time of the health assessment; and these will be explored further. The Southwark LAC health team now request school information before health assessments.

### Resource implications

17. Nil additional resource implications. This will be implemented in training and supervision

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Timson Review May 2019		
<b>Link (please copy and paste into your browser):</b> <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf</a>		

### APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

**AUDIT TRAIL**

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Dr. Stacy John-Legere, Designated Dr for Looked After Children, Southwark	
<b>Report Author</b>	Dr Anupama Dolly Agrawal, Dr. Nkiru Asiegbunam	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	26 June 2019	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		26 June 2019

**References:**

1. School exclusion: a literature review on the continued disproportionate exclusion of certain children , May 2019 , Berni Graham, Clarissa White, Amy Edwards, Sylvia Potter and Cathy Street
2. The relationship between exclusion from school and mental health: a secondary analysis of the British Child and Adolescent Mental Health Surveys 2004 and 2007, AUTHORS, Ford, TJ; Parker, C; Salim, J; et al. JOURNAL, Psychological Medicine DEPOSITED IN ORE, 06 July 2017

<b>Item No.</b> 8.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 8 July 2019	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Children's Social Care	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Director of Children and Families	

### RECOMMENDATION

1. That the corporate parenting committee notes the self evaluation of social work practice in children's social care

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The self evaluation of social work practice in children's social care is prepared annually by the Children and Families Division following the close of the performance year. It follows the framework set out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate Ofsted in their Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) guidance
3. For more than eleven years Southwark has maintained a record of good rated services to children and their families, and this was reaffirmed in June 2018 and January 2019 with a positive SEND Inspection and the Focused Visit to our Care Service under the new ILACS framework. Facilitating and achieving the best outcomes possible for the children, young people and families that we work with, remains central to our goals for a fairer future for all vulnerable children and families in Southwark. .

### KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. The self evaluation follows a standard format, asking us to consider
  - what we know about the impact and quality of social work practice
  - how we know it
  - what are our plans for improvement
5. The Ofsted Focussed Visit in January involved inspectors looking at a range of evidence; our threshold information, performance management, quality assurance activity and children's case records. Meaningful case focussed dialogue with social workers and managers that also evaluated the effectiveness of supervision and the range of supports available to social workers, was fundamental to the process and enabled staff to engage fully with the visit. As a result feedback was broadly positive with recognition by Inspectors of the significant improvements made to the Care Service since the Inspection in March 2017.

6. This corresponded with the positive messages from the SEND Inspection undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in June 2018, which examined the effectiveness of delivery to children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs. Here, timely assessments, good accessibility to services and good partnership working were referenced which allied to the general findings in both the Focused Visit and the SIF.
7. The self evaluation set out in Appendix 1 is our second self-evaluation under the ILACS inspection framework and reviews the quality and impact of social work practice across our safeguarding and care responsibilities. It originates in the local self-evaluations completed by individual services, and along with related plans will serve as a key tool to inform service development and improvement across the Children's & Families Division throughout 2019/20.

### 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.
9. The work of the children's social care is intended to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and as far as possible ensure that this is within their own families.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

### APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Self Evaluation of Social Work Practice June 2019

### AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Alasdair Smith, Director of Children and Families	
<b>Report Author</b>	Tom Stevenson, Assistant Director Quality and Performance, Children's and Adults' Services	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	28 June 2019	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
	<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>
	Director of Law and Democracy	No
	Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No
	<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No
	<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	28 June 2019

# Self-Evaluation of Social Work Practice

## Children's Social Care

June 2019

# vision

*“Every child deserves the best start in life. We want all children and young people in the borough to grow up in a safe, healthy and happy environment where they have the opportunity to reach their potential.”*

Southwark Council Plan 2018 to 2022

# introduction

Children and families are at the heart of LB Southwark's work. Achieving the best outcomes possible for the children, young people and families that we work with, remains central to our ethos as a council, believing in a fairer future for all, especially those most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families.

In January 2019, a Focused Visit for Children in Care under the new ILACS framework looked at a range of evidence; performance management; quality assurance activity and children's case records. Meaningful case focussed dialogue with social workers and managers also evaluated the effectiveness of supervision and the range of supports available to social workers, and enabled staff to engage fully with the visit. The outcome was broadly positive with recognition by inspectors of the significant improvements made for children in care since our inspection in March 2017 under the single inspection framework.

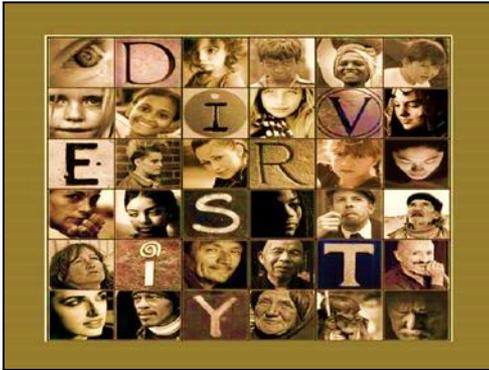
In June 2018, a positive SEND Inspection undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission examined the effectiveness of support to children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs. This inspection found a generally positive picture of service delivery and a commitment by partners in Southwark to improve outcomes for children and young people.

This self-evaluation summarises the quality and impact of social work practice across our safeguarding and care responsibilities. It originates in the local self-evaluations completed by individual services alongside quality assurance colleagues, and coupled with related plans serves as a key tool to inform service development across the Children's & Families Division throughout 2019/20.

The self evaluation addresses three key questions:

- What do we know about the quality and impact of social work practice
- How do we know it?
- What our plans are for the next 12 months to maintain or improve practice?

# local context



Southwark is **densely populated** with the ninth-highest population density in England and Wales at 10,887 residents per square kilometre, nearly twice as much as the London average of 5,613. The median age in Southwark is 32.9 years but approximately 64,000 children and young people or 20.5% of the population are under the age of 18. 60.6% of residents were born in the UK, with 29.1% of residents born outside the EU.

Southwark is an **ethnically and culturally diverse borough**. 54% of our population is of white ethnicity, 25% are black and 11% of Asian heritage with 10% made up of other ethnic communities. Children and young people from minority communities however account for 64.8% of all children living in Southwark, compared with a national average of 20.7%. Children and young people from Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds form the largest minority ethnic communities. Between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, the number of people who identified as Christian fell to 52.5% from 61.6%. Muslims are the next highest faith community at 8.5%. A further 8.5% did not state a religion and a sizeable 26.7% identified as having no religion.



Over **120 languages are spoken** in our schools and the proportion of children & young people who speak English as an additional language In primary schools is 43.8% compared to national average of 21.1%. In Secondary schools it is 34.6% compared to the national average at 16.6%. English is a secondary language in 11% of households.

The Indices of Deprivation 2015 measures Southwark as the **40<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority area** relative to all 326 local authorities with around 15,000 (25%) aged under 16 living in low income families. The proportion of children in low income households is 30.3% and 43.7% of households live in rented social housing. There are 11,945 lone parent households with dependent children

The 2018 census data showed **42.2% of our pupils are eligible for the deprivation pupil premium** compared to an England figure of 25.7% and the proportion of children entitled to free school meals in primary schools and nurseries is 19.6%. This compares to the national average of 13.7% whilst in secondary schools the proportion entitled to free school meals is higher still at 25.1% compared to the national average of 12.4



# progress and continuing support

## Strengths and developments

The Cabinet and **Council Plan 2018-22** has: maintained investment in frontline services for children's safeguarding and care; commitment to care leavers (no Council Tax – July 2018); children's mental health (£2m investment); and early intervention (commitment to maintaining Children's Centres)

Involved and passionate **Lead Member**, knowledgeable and experienced, championing the cause of children across the spectrum but particularly those in care and care leavers through Corporate Parenting

Focus across early help, youth justice and community safety on prevention and strong engagement with our communities, parents, carers and young people across the council and multi-agency partners. Visible through **Keeping Families Strong** strategy and **Extended Learning Review** undertaken by the Home Office Violence and Vulnerability Unit

Constructive **SEND inspection** (June 2018) with positive messages around early identification of need, partnership working and children in care.

Encouraging **Focused Visit on Children in Care** (January 2019) with excellent engagement by staff and a narrative that highlighted strong relationships with young people, good partnership working and *"drive and determination in sustaining and improving outcomes for children in care"*

**All Age Disability Service** live from April 2019 with development of services and approaches incorporating better understanding of the life long journey for those with disability

Stable and consistent **senior management team** continuing to promote and develop culture of high support and high challenge, enabling learning and development while keeping children and families at the centre

**Young people** continuing to play a significant role in our service development and recruitment with strong voices through SpeakerBox and Peer Navigators

## Areas for continued development

The **vulnerability of young people** to all forms of exploitation needs development, building on our strong partnership approach with multi-agency and council partners, to implement recommendations from **Extended Learning Review** undertaken by the Home Office Violence and Vulnerability Unit

Embedding the "Family" model across **Family Early Help** Service rolling out systematically increased YOS diversionary activity addressing serious youth violence, particularly knife crime

Reappraisal of our **practice model and forward plans** building on highly successful Practitioner Gathering *Looking Back, Looking Forward*, reviewing 5 years since the introduction **Social Work Matters** practice model

Implementation of **development plans** including transformation of Care Leaving Services; delivery of Sufficiency Strategy; formation of Partnership Southwark with the Council and NHS for greater impact on supporting earlier help for families (Keeping Families Strong) alongside further development of Access to Resources approach

A refreshed programme of continuous improvement and professional development through a Practice Development Unit lead by a newly appointed **Principal Social Worker** leading an ambitious ASYE and student programme

Further developing value gained from **dedicated practice support roles** with: enhanced intelligence and tracking from the CSE & Missing Co-ordinator; valued and impactful direct supports to families through the Family Support Workers; and desk-side system supports to social workers through Data Practice Co-ordinators

Leading on development of **Adopt London South**, Regional Adoption Agency with 9 local authorities, hosted by Southwark, going live 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019

**what we know about the quality of  
front line social work practice**

**how we know it**

**our plans for the next 12 months to  
maintain or improve practice**

# quality and performance framework

Our Quality and Performance Framework sets out our areas of focus and schedules for audit and observation over an annual cycle. The themes are developed from:

- service and strategic self-assessments
- learning from internal and external reviews and inspection
- responses to local and national priorities

The Framework is delivered through a programme of:

- low volume case file audits including conversations with practitioners
- high volume focused thematic audits on practice areas and processes
- observation of staff in relation to practice areas and processes

Performance is reported against through weekly and monthly dashboards, with service-level capacity to report more frequently. The data visualisation contained within the self evaluation is taken from our business as usual performance dashboard.

Dedicated support within the Management Information Unit provides capacity to undertake in-depth analysis of emerging and indicative themes from practice.

The quality and impact of social work practice is gathered and assessed in five broad strands:

- **Analysis** of in year data and audit activity
- **Intelligence** generated from Quality Assurance Leads, managers and Quality and Performance Service, Practice Educators and Principal Social Worker
- **Casework scrutiny** through capitalising on opportunities such as taskforces, panels, escalations and reviews
- **Views** gathered from young people (Speakerbox); parents and carers (surveys and groups); complaints, compliments and representations
- **Reviews** undertaken internally, commissioned externally or provided through inspection

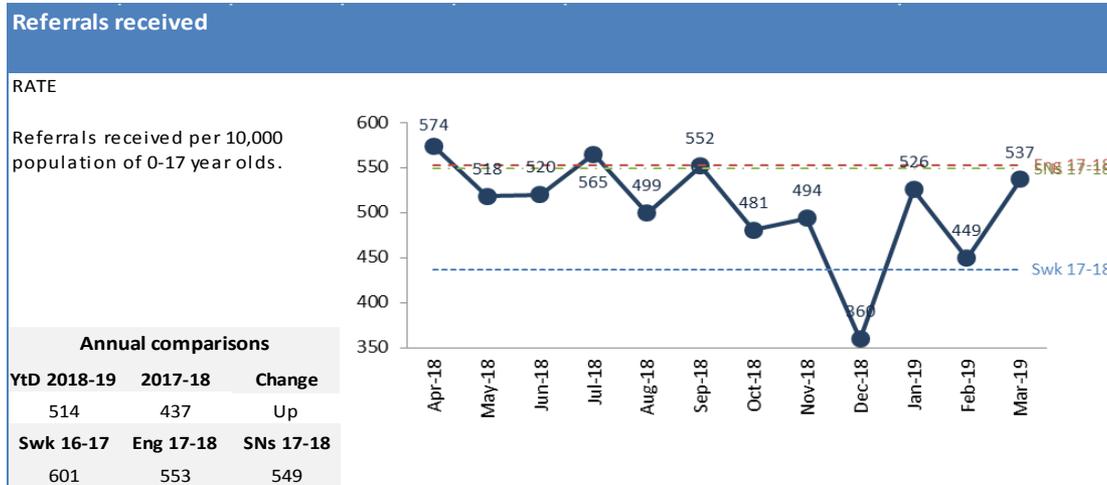
Standard and localised tools have been developed to support dialogue and feedback with social workers. One of our aspirations in 2019/20 is to modify the dialogue with practitioners to support an energising audit conversation about their purpose and impact when working with families.

Our emphasis remains on identifying areas of strength, areas for development and remedial action, and using the five different strands above as avenues for supportive critical reflection and development for our staff.

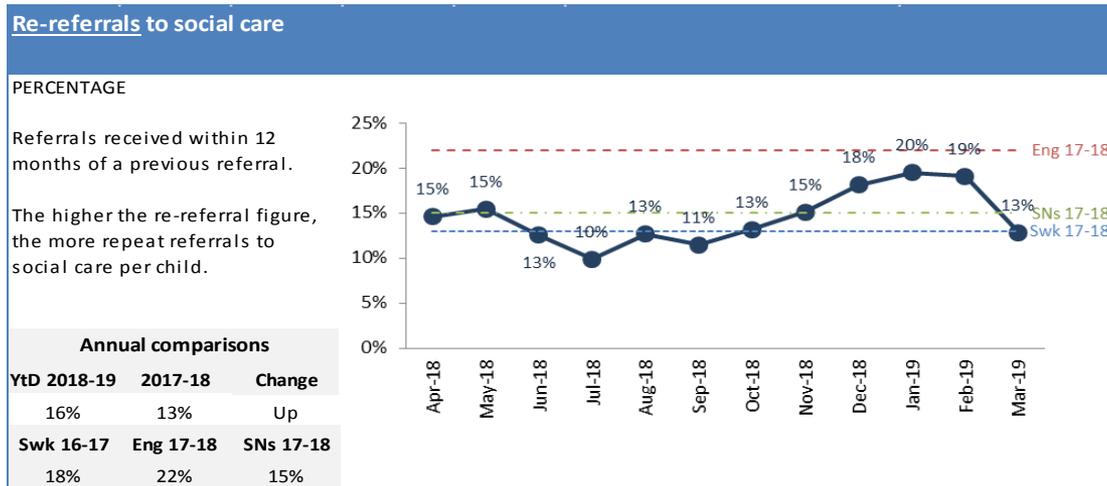
# front door

## key performance indicators

(provisional 2018/19)



Referrals in 2018/19 have shown an increase of 18% from 437 to 514 per 10,000. This has brought us more in line with England and statistical neighbour averages and reflects continuing work around threshold management and application. Workflow processes have been improved allowing cases below social care threshold to be stepped down to Family Early Help.

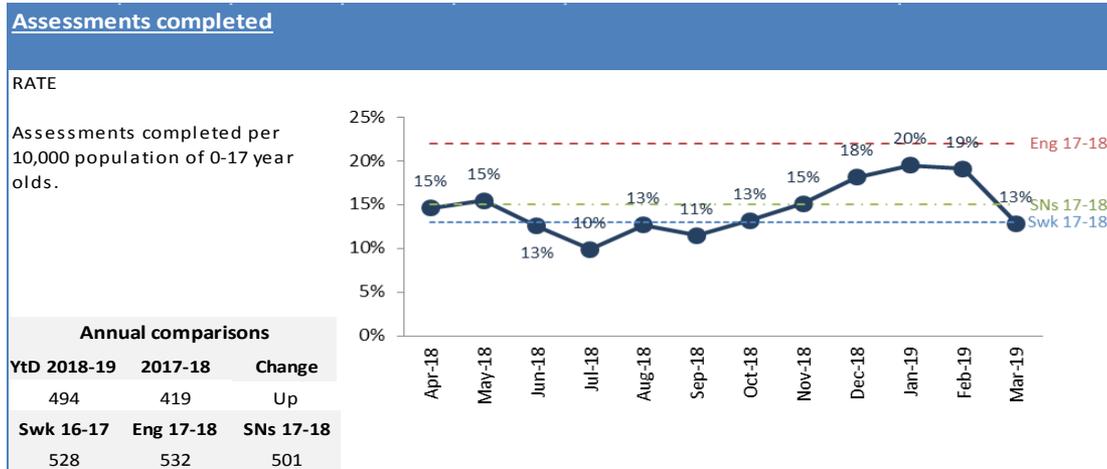


Re-referrals within 12 months in 2018/19 have seen a small increase of 3%. Recent activity suggests this is again reducing but is an area we are exploring further to understand this in more depth given the rise over the course of the year and peak at 20%.

# front door

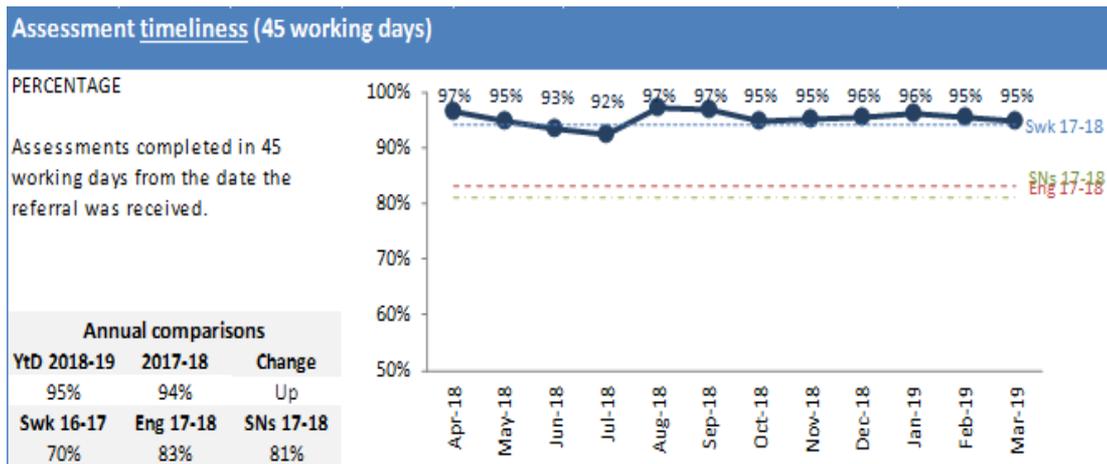
## key performance indicators

(provisional 2018/19)



Assessments completed in 2018/19 have shown an increase of 18% from 419 to 494 per 10,000. This brings us more in line with statistical neighbours and a little below England.

There is no single reason for the increase in demand, however it is in-line with the increase in referrals. Based on factors recorded within the assessment the most significant change is domestic abuse which has risen from 40% to 60% of all assessments.



Assessment timeliness has continued to be good at 95% within 45 days making this strong performance despite the increase in volume.

This is an area that we will consider further over 2019/20. For example asking ourselves whether more assessments should finish earlier than 45 days and also test further how this relates to quality.

# front door

## What we know about the quality and impact of social work practice *(how do we know?)*

The **MASH** continues to support decision making in a timely way for children through information sharing with a wide range of partners. More work is needed to maximise information from all agencies *(review)*

**Thresholds** are used appropriately to support decision making by social care managers. We need to promote learning of officers to develop greater consistency of decision making *(review)*

**Strategy meetings** lead to timely, effective and proportionate decisions and investigation and safeguarding plans. Multi agency information and children's views and experiences are used to inform judgments but enabling more schools to contribute would be beneficial *(analysis and intelligence)*

**Children are seen** in a timely way and **assessments** begin promptly and are almost always completed within 45 days *(performance data and analysis)*

High quality **interventions** are offered quickly in the assessment process. **Direct work** is a strength and this work helps when it is most needed, addresses risks and mitigates the likelihood of them escalating *(casework scrutiny and intelligence)*

**Safety planning** is embedded in practice and undertaken early with families enabling them to set realistic goals and reduce concerns and risk *(casework scrutiny and intelligence)*

Social workers are persistent in **engaging families** using positive, creative techniques that develop trusting relationships with parents. The Keeping Family Together (KFT) team continues to work intensively and effectively to reduce the need for children to enter care *(casework scrutiny & intelligence)*

Families access help at the right time through improved **step up /step-down** processes between Tier 3 Children's Social Care Services and Family Early Help

## Our plans for the next 12 months to maintain or improve practice

Enhance the '**Team Around the School**' to include key partners in YOS, Children's Social Care, St Giles & CAMHS to manage risk and reduce exclusions enabling families to get the right help earlier

Further develop **management oversight** and consistency of decision making in the MASH through more effective use of quality assurance systems, partner relationships and learning opportunities

Roll out **training and workshops to partner agencies** on refreshed 2019 Threshold of Need Document to improve multi-agency understanding of thresholds and parental consent

Continue **supportive management** and **manageable caseloads** for social workers so children and families continue to receive the right protective response from Assessment & Intervention Service

Review **approaches to helping families** to ensure all section 47 investigations are necessary and whether fast tracking young people and families to services may produce better outcomes sooner

Further develop practice in **strategy meetings** to improve opportunities for schools and other non co-located agencies to contribute through better use of technology supported by a virtual meeting facility

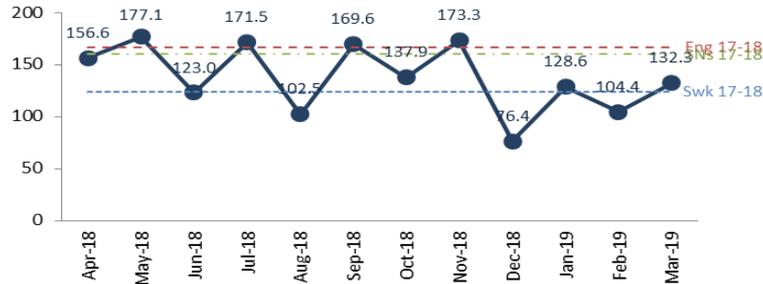
Further develop focus on **children being seen**, their views and experiences through changes to Mosaic recording practice and management oversight of this

# child protection key performance indicators (provisional 2018/19)

## Section 47 enquiries initiated

### RATE

S47 enquiries initiated per 10,000 population of 0-17 year olds.



### Annual comparisons

YtD 2018-19	2017-18	Change
139	124	Up

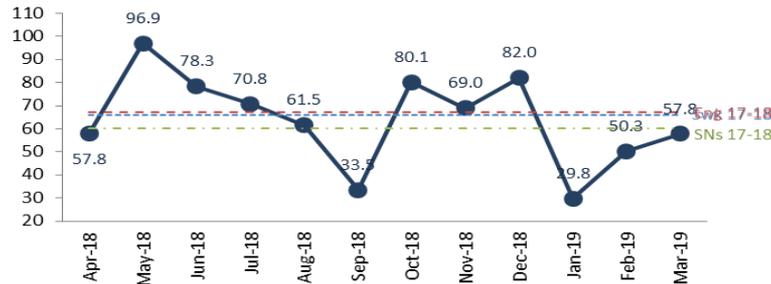
Swk 16-17	Eng 17-18	SNs 17-18
168	167	160

Section 47 investigations over 2018/19 have risen 12% to 139 per 10,000 bringing us nearer to statistical neighbours and England average. This reflects the rise we have seen in referrals and assessments over the last 12 months. It is helpful to see these changes have brought us nearer to comparators not further away.

## Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) occurred

### RATE

ICPC occurred per 10,000 population of 0-17 year olds.



### Annual comparisons

YtD 2018-19	2017-18	Change
65	66	Down

Swk 16-17	Eng 17-18	SNs 17-18
70	67	60

ICPCs per 10,000 as an average over 2018/19 have remained consistent. Setting this against the 12% increase in section 47 investigations we are planning further work to ensure only those families that need to be are subject to child protection investigation processes.

# child protection key performance indicators (provisional 2018/19)



The number of children subject to CP plans per 10,000 during 2018/19 decreased 3% over the course of the year. This is significantly higher than statistical neighbours. There is ongoing scrutiny to review children who have been subject to a CP plan for more than 18 months which helps to explain the decrease of that cohort over the year. There remain challenges for example, Court's making children subject to Supervision Orders rather than Care Orders, which can lead to prolonged periods on CP plans.



Children who have had more than one period subject to a CP Plan is at 16% which is a slight reduction on last year's figure and in line with statistical neighbours. The two main categories of abuse are neglect and emotional abuse, however emotional abuse as a category increases at the point of review conference from 43% to 50%. This relates to work that takes place once a child is subject to a CP plan of physical harm or neglect where characteristics associated with emotional abuse sometimes emerge.

# children in need and subject to a child protection plan

## What we know about the quality and impact of social work practice

*(how do we know?)*

**Social workers** are confident, reflective and well supported. They know their children well and undertake good quality work that is making a difference *(casework scrutiny and intelligence)*

**Direct work** with children and young people is a strength with a wide range of tools used. Social workers don't always fully record this, and in some areas could improve the focus of their direct work

Group **supervision** continues to support a persistent and reflective approach to families, particularly those hard to engage. Continuing attention is important to ensure the child is always at the centre and recording is consistent *(casework scrutiny, intelligence and analysis)*

**Child in need plans** are of good quality, with clear actions although some practice in this area could benefit from greater purposefulness *(review)*

Skilled non-social work professionals enhance **interventions**. Family support workers provide targeted practical help. Specialist IDVA roles embedded in teams have also shown positive impact. Clinical practitioners continue to support high quality casework *(casework scrutiny, views and reviews)*

**Child protection plans** are of good quality, making clear the multi-agency support and what parents or young people need to do. Children are mostly held at the right threshold but some need escalation to PLO earlier *(review, intelligence, and analysis)*

At **pre-proceedings** stage, effective and timely planning, support and decision-making happens. **Care proceedings** are well managed with appropriate consideration of family options through strengthened FGC and SGO Services *(casework scrutiny and analysis)*

## Our plans for the next 12 months to maintain or improve practice

Enhance **management oversight** and consistency of practice through more effective use of the performance indicators and quality assurance systems

Improve the recording and focus of **direct work** more clearly linking to purpose of statutory involvement

Develop more emphasis on **outcome-focused work** and child's experience through practice development work supported by the Principal Social Worker

Develop the **family support offer** to include more specialist intensive work with families where neglect issues are heightened due to domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse issues

Undertake and implement findings of review of tracking systems and intervention approaches for **neglect** to particularly catch those children who travel between categories of help particularly: children in need; child protection; and Supervision Orders

Further develop family minded **practice approaches** particularly the use and positioning of FGCs to provide more and earlier opportunities for family lead help and plans, as well as strengthening SGOs

Undertake and implement findings of a review into reducing numbers of **adoptions** and increasing numbers of **SGOs** to ensure all children are benefitting from these opportunities if appropriate

Undertake and implement findings of a review of safeguarding practices in **All Age Disability** Service following establishment of the service in April 2019 to support service consolidation and development

# vulnerable adolescents

## What we know about the quality and impact of social work practice *(how do we know?)*

Current **partnership working** from Family Early Help, Police, YOS, ART, Housing, Schools & CAMHS is strong and delivering a skilled response to young people at heightened risk within a contextual safeguarding frame *(casework scrutiny, analysis and intelligence)*

Dedicated **resource targeted to missing from care** including enhanced tracking, improved RHI offer and strong intelligence links, has greatly increased understanding of missing patterns and behaviour but timeliness of some RHIs needs improving *(casework scrutiny and intelligence)*

Strong **understanding of missing** cohort has led to detailed mapping alongside creative engagement to intervene, disrupt and manage risk, making a good impact on practice and young people's safety *(intelligence)*

**Strategy meetings** work well although quality needs development in some areas. **Direct work** is used well, supported by clinical practitioners, to make engagement more meaningful, promote insight and increase safety *(casework scrutiny and review)*

Dedicated support at edge of care from **Keeping Families Together** team continues to show impact and reduces the need for children to be in care including supporting well-timed reunification and increasing safety *(casework scrutiny and review)*

The system and resources around **children missing education** work well to support and challenge young people, families and professionals *(review)*

There is good, persistent work to reach **young care leavers**, recognising their continuing vulnerability into adulthood *(case scrutiny and review)*

## Our plans for the next 12 months to maintain or improve practice

In partnership with multi-agency and council colleagues implement recommendations from **Extended Learning Review** undertaken by the Home Office Violence and Vulnerability Unit

Develop **MASE** to increase its oversight of child criminal exploitation. Further develop the role and capacity of the **CSE / Missing Lead** to support this multi-agency work

Undertake programme of development to improve quality of **strategy meetings** and more dynamic use of safety plans

Build on strengths of **resource targeted at missing from care** to ensure RHI offer has full reach. Develop peer approaches to the RHI offer considering SpeakerBox and YOS Peer Navigators

Review approaches to **working with adolescents** to identify ways in which our response and approach can be strengthened

Strengthen connectivity between **YOS and Care Services** to ensure young people of mutual concern receive more targeted, joined-up interventions.

Work with the **Virtual School and Family Early Help and Youth Justice Services** to support restorative responses in school settings to reduce exclusion of young people with heightened vulnerability

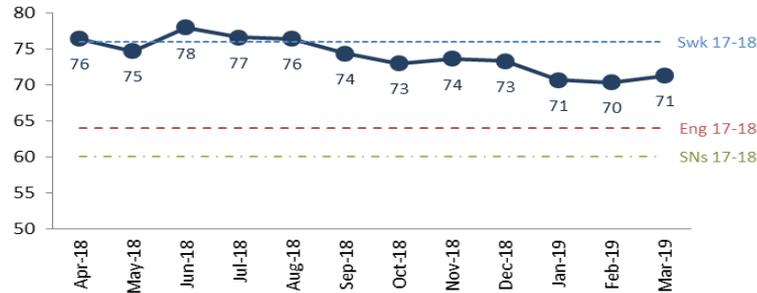
Continue to develop **placement sufficiency** for increased adolescent placement options particularly around high needs

# children in care key performance indicators (provisional 2018/19)

## Children looked after

### RATE (SNAPSHOT)

Children who are looked after at the end of each month.



### Annual comparisons

YtD 2018-19	2017-18	Change
71	76	Down

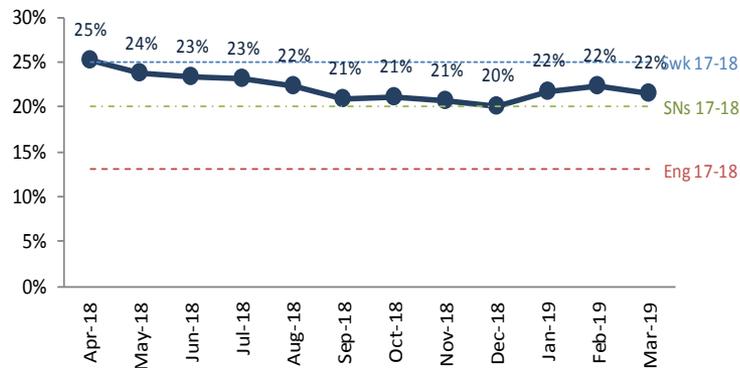
  

Swk 16-17	Eng 17-18	SNs 17-18
79	64	60

The number of children in care over 2018/19 has reduced by 5% per 10,000. The number of UASCs has remained constant between 45 and 50 however as a proportion of the care population they have risen to 12%. This change is explained by our continuing work to reduce the need for children to be in care through targeted support approach (KFT and Clinical Service) and greater use of FGCs.

## Children looked after placed out of borough and more than 20 miles from home

### SNAPSHOT PERCENTAGE



### Annual comparisons

YtD 2018-19	2017-18	Change
22%	25%	Down

Swk 16-17	Eng 17-18	SNs 17-18
27%	13%	20%

The proportion of our children in care placed far from the borough has reduced by 3% over 2019/20. This is much nearer statutory neighbours which are London boroughs with similar characteristics to ourselves. This reduction has been supported by our reducing need to use residential care and Access to Resources Team focusing more on identifying placements closer to the borough where young people are better able to benefit from local services and we provide more support around placement stability.

# children in care

## What we know about the quality and impact of social work practice *(how do we know?)*

**Social workers** know their young people and talk about them with genuine warmth and care. This enables children to contribute to planning for their future through the strengths of the relationships they built. Social workers undertake purposeful work with children including sensitive life story work (*casework scrutiny, analysis, views review*)

Social workers are creative and go to added lengths to maintain **contact** with parents and family members. This is articulated well in plans and reviewed regularly (*review*)

The **Access to Resources** Team has continued to develop a vigorous approach to identifying the right placements for children, nearer to the borough with better support (*casework scrutiny, analysis and review*)

There is effective and dedicated resource for **children missing from care** that support the service in managing risk well with excellent multi-agency partnership engagement (*see vulnerable adolescent section above*)

**Permanence planning** is consistently stronger while still having further to go to consolidate and build on improvements (*see permanence section below*)

Children benefit from **stability of social work relationship** with a very stable staff group within the children in care service (*casework scrutiny*)

Children benefit from regular **looked after children's reviews** from consistent Independent Reviewing Officers who have long term involvement. Some improvement is needed in timeliness (*analysis and review*)

Effective **transition planning** to leaving care is timely with consistent allocation from 16 in most cases and better transition planning between All Age Disability Service as well as Adult Services (*case scrutiny*)

## Our plans for the next 12 months to maintain or improve practice

Continue to develop **management oversight** to ensure all improvements are consolidated and built on maximising use of management information and quality assurance systems

**Access to Resources** Team to continue to work with teams around improving placement request referrals to reflect strengths-based approaches that support better placement matching

**Access to Resources** Team to continue to work to deliver improved placement sufficiency with Commissioning Division and commissioned providers

Continue to work with the Virtual School to provide support and interventions for the **education** of children in care helped through roll-out of E-PEPs

Develop work with the YOS and other partners to support children in care who are at increased vulnerability from **criminal and sexual exploitation** activity

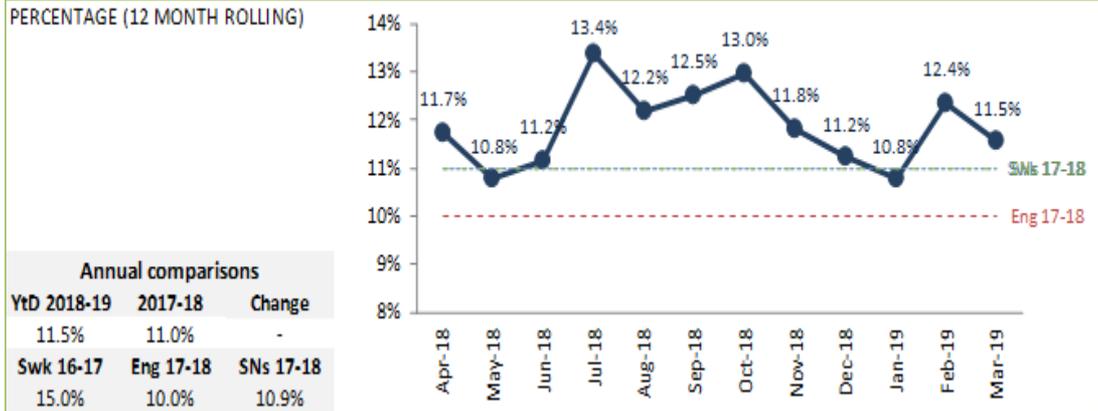
Work with the Clinical Service and CAMHS to provide an holistic response to the growing **emotional and mental health needs** of children in care

Explore Foster Carers being recruited for **late care entrants** to provide option of supported living in family settings outside of "staying put" arrangements

To work with Speakerbox to broaden **participation** opportunities to younger children in care and continue to include young people in recruitment processes.

# children in care key performance indicators (provisional 2018/19)

## Short term placement stability (3+ placements in the year)

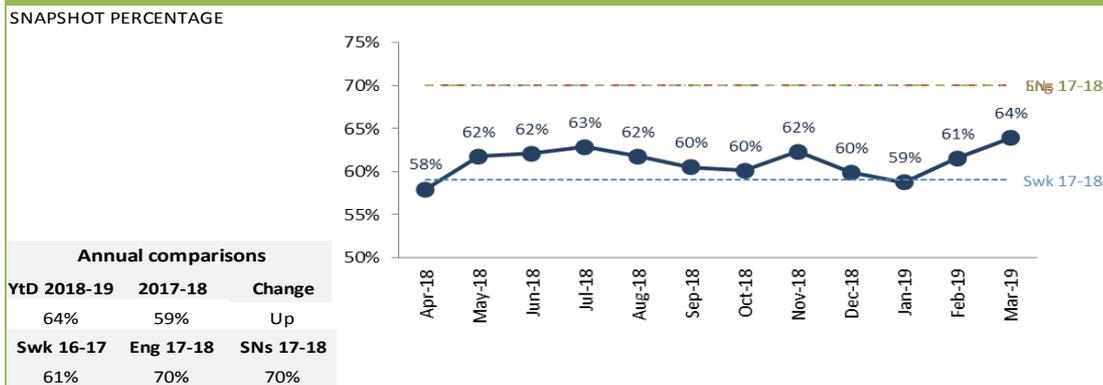


Short term stability over 2018/19 remains stable which is slightly above statistical neighbours and England averages. This is a consolidation of stable performance which has historically been higher.

Long term stability has risen 5% over 2018/19 and is continuing to rise. This is below statutory neighbours and England.

Since January 2019 a Stability Taskforce has met to oversee the strategic intention to sustainably improve both stability measures but particularly long term stability.

## Long term placement stability (same placement for 2+ years)



A key part of this is the continuing development of a strong child-centred Access to Resources Team sourcing well matched placements with resilience or a wider spread of skills is enabling young people to be maintained or in some cases returned to fostering environments. Challenge processes that require stability meetings to be held before placements change also allow for reflection or added support that has enabled more placements to be sustained.

# permanence

## What we know about the quality and impact of social work practice

*(how do we know?)*

When plan is **reunification** of children who have been in care a while, risks are well understood and appropriate action is taken to reduce these risks. These plans proceed at a pace consistent with the child's needs *(review)*

Increased formal **matching** for children in **long term foster care** placements with 20 matched in 2018/19 and continuing focus on strengthening this area of practice *(analysis, intelligence, casework scrutiny)*

**Access to Resources** Team (ART) continue to lead rigorous approach to placement quality. Placements demonstrate better matching between children's identified needs and the capacity of carers to meet those needs, supported by better placement referral information

Sustained improvement to **short term stability**, with more children living closer to home and able to benefit from local services *(analysis)*

Improvements in **long term stability** showing impact of continuing focus on this area particularly greater emphasis on pro-active stability meetings, rather than a reactive disruption approach *(analysis)*

Reduced use of **residential care** but where necessary it is of higher quality with clear outcomes and expectations set *(analysis)*

Evidenced impact from greater use of **Family Group Conferences** in particular Life Longs Links on the lives of children, their story, identity, social capital and increased networks *(analysis, intelligence and casework scrutiny)*

## Our plans for the next 12 months to maintain or improve practice

Develop renewed practice model for **reunification** work, based on NSPCC approach, to support work with children returning to families care building on learning through successful reunification work, Family Group Conferencing and better understanding of young people and family voices

Roll out **matching best practice approach** supported by matching template across all Care and Permanence Services

Consolidate and develop management oversight via **Permanence Tracking Strategy** for long term foster care to provide support and challenge to delay

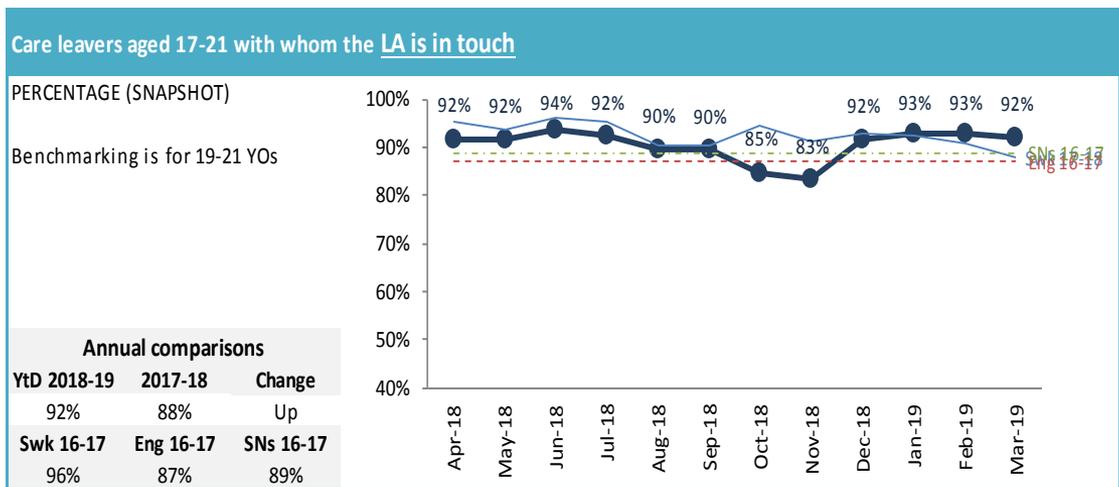
Continue focus on **placement stability** through Director lead Stability Taskforce to continue to build on improvement in this area

Review work with London local authorities to design a shared framework for **high quality fostering (IFA) and residential care provision**

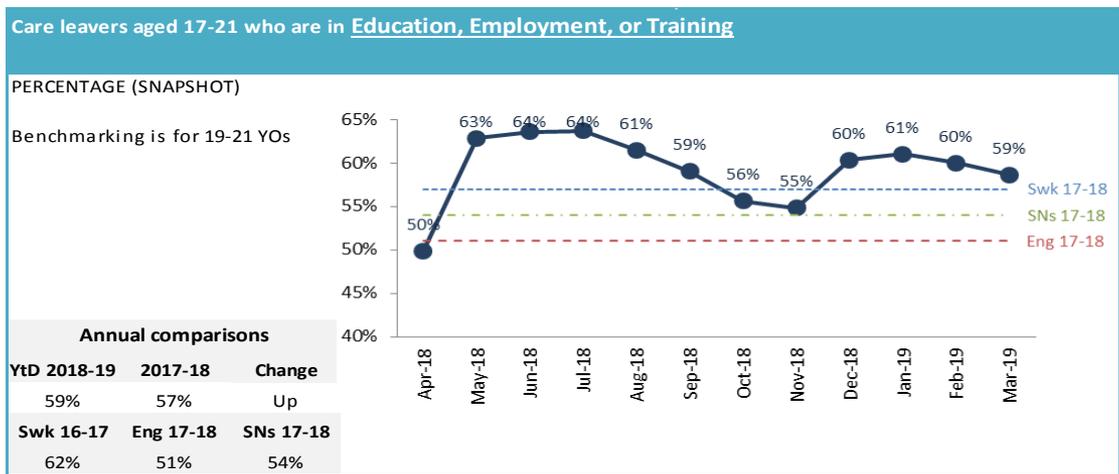
Undertake and implement findings of a review into reducing numbers of **adoptions** and increasing numbers of **SGOs** to ensure all children are benefitting from these opportunities if appropriate

Undertake and implement findings from review into **friends and family practice** to ensure all children are benefitting from these opportunities if appropriate and work with extended family and networks.

# care leavers key performance indicators (provisional 2018/19)



Care leavers with whom we are in touch has risen over 2019/19 by 4% placing us significantly higher than statutory neighbours and England. This reflects our dedicated approach and investment in this area. We have a good understanding of those young people who we are not in touch with and continue to work to engage them through assertive outreach and local offer development.



Care Leavers who are engaged in employment, education or training activities when they get to 21 years old has increased 2% over the last 12 months to 59%. This is significantly above England and a little above statutory neighbours. It is an area of high focus and has been impacted by the rise in care leavers with whom we are in touch who have often experienced more difficulties in this area. This is a Council Priority to improve for 2019/20.

# care leavers

## What we know about the quality and impact of social work practice

*(how do we know?)*

**Social workers and personal advisers** know their young people well and are highly committed to supporting them. There is an improved and growing understanding of good practice and strong partnership working (*analysis and casework scrutiny*)

The quality of **pathway planning** is improving and managers are providing greater challenge to practitioners and quality assurance of such plans. The quality remains variable particularly with reviews post 18 (*casework scrutiny and review*)

Some **visit records** for care leavers are very good, clearly structured addressing key areas and actions taken to progress identified issues, but this is not consistent in all cases (*analysis, casework scrutiny and review*)

There is effective and dedicated resource for **care leavers** that supports the service in managing risk well with excellent multi-agency partnership engagement (*see vulnerable adolescent section above*)

Work with **unaccompanied asylum seeking young people** is good, benefitting from a specialist manager and social worker upskilling staff around age assessments, HRAs alongside work with the Young Migrants Project to regularise status sooner (*intelligence and casework scrutiny*)

Care Leavers are increasingly involved in **co-designing** and **co-delivering** services for example group work activities; local offer content and communication; and recruitment panels for Care Leaver Service workers as well as senior management appointments (*intelligence, views*)

The **Local Offer** has been completed and shared with all care leavers and has been welcomed by them (*views*)

## Our plans for the next 12 months to maintain or improve practice

Enhance **management oversight** and consistency of practice through more effective use of management information and quality assurance systems

Improve the quality of **pathway plans** particularly in relation to reviews post 18 through workshops and increased practitioner and management accountability

Co-design a new **pathway plan** and approach to pathway planning with young people and workers, building on learning from pilot approach, for a more meaningful plan for young people

Continue to develop the **Corporate Parent offer** across the council to offer mentoring, apprenticeship and internship opportunities for care leavers building social capital

Further develop our approach to **“returnees”** up to 25, embedding the expectations of the Children and Social Work Act 2017

Implement new commissioned **accommodation and support services** for care leavers from 1<sup>st</sup> July, raising the quality of suitable accommodation and experience of young people in

Implement and evaluate **Experienced Practitioner roles** to deliver and facilitate intensive interventions in specific areas where specialist professional knowledge and expertise has been identified as essential to improving outcomes for care leavers: Youth / Group Work, Substance Misuse, Mental Health, Young Women, Housing / Homelessness.

To further develop and promote the **Local Offer**, co-designing this with young people to ensure accessibility and availability through different forms of media including the development of our pilot website.

# Voices

## Children and young people

**Speakerbox**, our Children in Care Council continues to shape practice and influence decision making with a seat at both the Corporate Parenting Committee and Southwark Safeguarding Children Board.

During 2018/19 Speakerbox made a short film - **Bridging the Gap** developed through a series of workshops that explored children and young people's relationships with their social workers. This has been used widely to help everyone reflect on the importance of relationships from the young persons perspective.

**Peer Navigators** are an amazing group of young people who have successfully completed their statutory contact with the YOS and have been trained in communication skills and trauma awareness. As well as being effective peer mentors they have engaged with different services and training events as well as the Councils Serious Youth Violence Panel to give a strong perspective on being a young person in Southwark.

Speakerbox and Peer Navigators were a central feature of the **Practitioner Gathering (March 2019)** placing the experience of young people at the centre of our work

Young people are a key part of **recruitment activity** and many permanent roles have young people involved in the interview process including, for example, recent interviews for personal advisors and experienced practitioners in the Care Leavers Service all involved a young people's panel.

**Bright Spots**, the Coram and University of Bristol independent survey of subjective wellbeing was conducted in 2018. 38% of the child in care population responded. Key recommendations for improvement were integrated into the Care Service Business Plan 2019-20

## Parents and carers

An increasing aspect of our work ensures the voice of parents and carers is used alongside that of children and young people to measure impact as well as influence what we do and how we do it. Among the **key groups** working in this space are Southwark Pause, Mum's Supportive Group, Southwark Fathers Group, Grandparents' Plus who all alongside their core purpose articulate the voice of parents and carers.

Examples of the **work they have been involved in** include: consultation around the redesign of early help services during 2018/19; interviewing senior management appointments jointly with young people; influencing practice through speaking at the Practitioner Gathering (March 2019)

**Feedback surveys** are conducted periodically as part of the case closure in our Assessment and Intervention Service and routinely during the CP Conference QA process. These highlight improved responsiveness around giving information and how to make complaints. The significant majority of feedback forms received are positive about the service delivered.

A growing feature in measuring our impact are **parent testimonies** as part of the Parenting Programme graduation, which often gives powerful feedback on the impact of the programme on parents and their relationships with their children.

This year, with help from the Family Rights Group, we co-designed a **Parent Council** to ensure listening to families is strengthened in our service design and improvement work and over 2019/20 we hope to develop the impact of this including peer advocacy.

## Annual Complaints Report 2018/19

We **take complaints seriously** and we find generally service users and stakeholders are not complaining about the services which are available to them, or their entitlements. Complaints are low in relation to the quality of our services or service providers but are none the less taken very seriously.

Overall there was a **reduction in the number of complaints** during 2019/20 particularly in relation to those that progressed to Stage 2 indicating a better approach to early resolution. There was a threefold rise in the number of compliments received which supports a more relational way to approach concerns being developed across all services.

Analysis of the complaints investigated shows **communication** as the underlying factor in most complaints. For example where relationship breakdown is indicated as a cause, the complaint has almost always been made following a chain of communication which has not been prompt and sufficiently explanatory in the view of the complainant. This is important learning that has been considered by all services and given the vulnerability of the client group and focus on relationship based work something that will understandably need continuing work.

Scrutiny and learning is undertaken in each complaint to draw out what we may have been able to influence or change. We continue to promote the value in a considered phone call or face-to-face meeting, to ensure our relationships remain effective, do not give rise to a loss of trust, and a formal complaint. Our culture is open and accountable – we apologise if we get things wrong, we put them right and learn from feedback.

## Social Workers

Social workers views have been gained through our staff survey, active Practitioners Forum and through the work of the Principal Social Worker, newly appointed in January 2019.

Our **Practitioners Forum** continues to be a strong voice for practice with a focus on continued co-ownership of the practice framework, to evolve it so it is more driven by practice evidence, to best support the changing needs of our young people and families. This is alongside a strong desire to develop more outcome focused practice approaches and use the forum as place to influence policy, strategy and procedures. This was reinforced by co-producing and delivering an energising Practitioner Gathering (March 2019) **Looking Back, Looking Forward** which involved practitioners at all levels reviewing the impact of the *Social Work Matters* and engaging with future planning on how we will work with children, young people and families over the next five years.

The forum (and wider staff groups) have identified **future areas of focus** to include greater cohesion and consistency in induction, input to training and procedural updates in working with contextual harm, enhancing the reflective quality of group supervision, and seeking to further ongoing professional development opportunities in particular expanding and strengthening a 'coaching culture' throughout the department.

Social workers overall feel **well supported** with particular keenness to continue to further their understanding and use of systemic practice. They report positively of the support of the Clinical Service and the impact this has on their practice and their outcomes for families. They are excited about opportunities co-location and modern technology may bring being keenly involved in plans for a new building for Children's Services in 2021.

# for more information

**David Quirke-Thornton**

0207 525 3289

Strategic Director, Children's & Adults Service

[david.quirke-thornton@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:david.quirke-thornton@southwark.gov.uk)

(Director of Children's Services)

**Alasdair Smith**

0207 525 0654

Director, Children & Families

[alasdair.smith@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:alasdair.smith@southwark.gov.uk)

**Tom Stevenson**

0207 525 3816

Assistant Director, Quality & Performance Improvement

[tom.stevenson@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:tom.stevenson@southwark.gov.uk)



<b>Item No.</b> 9.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 8 July 2019	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Annual Report 2018-19	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Director of Children and Families	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the corporate parenting committee notes the Independent Review Officers (IRO) Annual Report.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The IRO Annual Report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the Independent Reviewing Service for children and young people in care within the local authority, as required by statutory guidance arising from the Adoption and Children Act 2002.
3. This report contains a summary of work completed by Southwark's IRO service for the period 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019. It identifies the work of the service in fulfilling its remit and highlights areas for development in relation to the IRO function.
4. The report is to be presented to the strategic director of children & adults services, the lead cabinet member for children, schools & adult care and to the corporate parenting committee.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. Independent reviewing officers are dedicated to improving outcomes for children and young people in care through the review and challenge aspect of their role. They have a unique insight into every young person in care and are committed to driving improved outcomes for them through working in partnership with young people, their carers and the social work and professional network involved.
6. The IRO service is committed to ensuring good outcomes are achieved for children and young people in care, and providing challenge where necessary. In the Ofsted Inspection of 2017 their challenge was felt to be muted and this is an area for continuous development. In the Ofsted Focused Visit of January 2019 this had much improved. In considering the IRO report the corporate parenting committee is able to exercise its own scrutiny and challenge function and hold services to account.
7. The report set out in Appendix 1, highlights the work of the service and the areas for development going forward. It also provides detail on the advocacy and independent visiting offer to children in care.

**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.
9. The work of the IROs is intended to improve the outcome for children and young people in care.

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

**APPENDICES**

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Annual report 2018-19

**AUDIT TRAIL**

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Alasdair Smith, Director of Children and Families	
<b>Report Author</b>	Tom Stevenson, Assistant Director Quality and Performance, Children's and Adults' Services	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	28 June 2019	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	28 June 2019	

# Annual Report

## Independent Reviewing Service Children in Care

DRAFT

April 2018 to March 2019

Tom Stevenson

Assistant Director, Quality Assurance & Performance

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. The statutory role of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. The IRO Service in Southwark</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Ofsted Focused Visit January 2019</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5. Child in care reviews</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. Analysis of issues raised in dispute (escalations) and outcomes</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7. Good practice</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8. Participation in reviews</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>9. Advocacy and Independent Visiting</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>10. Areas for development 2019/20</b>	<b>12</b>

## 1. Introduction

A strong Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) service is a key component of good corporate parenting. The IRO service works jointly with the local authority's children's service, senior managers and multi-agency partners to support improved outcomes for Southwark's children in care. This is done through robust oversight and challenge of how services meet their needs, the quality of care and progress against care plans, both as individuals and as a vulnerable group within our local community.

The IRO Service operates within the statutory guidance provided by the IRO Handbook. This is issued under two provisions: The Children and Young Persons Act 2008, which created a new power for the Secretary of State to issue statutory guidance to IROs; sections 1 and 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, which requires local authorities, in the exercise of their social services functions, to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State; unless there are exceptional reasons local authorities must follow the requirements set out in this guidance. The IRO Handbook should be read in conjunction with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (2010).

This report provides an overview of the IRO Service for the period *1 April 2018- 31 March 2019*. The statutory guidance makes clear an Annual Report should be produced for the scrutiny of the members of the Corporate Parenting Committee. This report should identify good practice but should also highlight issues for further development, including where urgent action is needed. It should make reference to:

- procedures for resolving concerns, including the local dispute resolution process and it should include an analysis of the issues raised in dispute and the outcomes;
- the development of the IRO service including information on caseloads, continuity of employment and the make up of the team and how it reflects the identity of the children it is serving;
- extent of participation of children and their parents;
- the number of reviews that are held on time, the number that are held out of time and the reasons for the ones that are out of time;
- outcomes of quality assurance audits in relation to the organisation, conduct and recording of reviews; and
- whether any resource issues are putting at risk the delivery of a quality service to all looked after children.

## 2. The statutory role of an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

Introduced by the *Adoption and Children Act 2002*, the statutory role of the IRO monitors how the local authority fulfils its duty to children in care through regular statutory reviews of their care plans. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of care planning and for challenging drift and delay. The IRO has a unique power to refer a case to the Children's and Families Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS) if local escalation and resolution processes cannot resolve any dispute over how a child in care's needs are being met. All children in care including those on adoption plans or receiving short breaks are included within these regulations.

The IRO's primary role is to quality assure the care planning and review process for each child in care and to ensure that their current wishes and feelings are given due consideration. The role should be valued by senior managers and operate within a supportive service culture and environment to be successful. An effective IRO service supports the local authority to achieve improved outcomes for children.

The child's review considers the quality of the care plan which is based on the social work assessment of the child's individual needs. The care plan should set out how the full range of the child's identified needs will be met. The IRO must be satisfied that the plan identifies who is responsible for achieving the plan's objectives, that the resources identified can be utilised and that clear timescales for each stage of progression are set.

Each child in care has a named IRO who provides independent oversight including:

- Determining and representing the child's wishes and feelings
- Ensuring their rights and interests are protected
- Assessing whether the care plan meets the child's assessed needs and progression is timely
- Negotiating with the social work team on any identified issues arising from the care plan or implementation of the care plan. They can escalate unresolved concerns through the local authority's management structure, and/or if necessary to CAFCASS.

The main forum through which the IRO carries out their monitoring role is the statutory child in care review. These take place regularly at the following times:

- first review within the first 28 days of the child going into care
- second review within 90 days
- subsequent reviews at 180 day intervals
- when a child or IRO asks for one
- when significant events occur or when the care plan is changed.

The review takes place at the child's placement wherever possible. Parents, residential workers, foster carers and their support workers, social worker and the IRO will attend the review meeting. Almost all reviews and conferences in Southwark are held to time and with good rates of child and family participation.

### 3. The IRO Service in Southwark

The IRO Service is delivered by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU). This places it outside the operational social work management structure thus supporting and facilitating the independent function of the IRO. In the period of this report up to November 2018 the Head of Social Work Improvement & Quality Assurance had line management responsibility for the service assisted by the Quality Assurance Manager and the LADO. Following the retirement of the post holder, for the remainder of the reporting year this was undertaken by the Quality Assurance Manager. For 2019/20 the IRO Service has in place a newly established Quality Assurance Service Manager (Care) dedicated to managing the IRO Service. Administrative support is provided by a fulltime executive officer managed by the QAU Administration Manager.

IROs and Child Protection (CP) Chairs continue to share a joint job description allowing for flexibility across the service and ensuring continuity of oversight and review from the same person when children and young people move from CP Plans into being looked after.

The IRO Service operates a “mixed economy” approach to staffing. There are three directly employed permanent staff who act predominately as IROs plus five CP conference chairs that carry out child in care reviews. This is augmented by the use of freelance sessional IRO’s, many of whom have been involved with young people for a long time. Caseloads vary as a result but we have continued to have the ability to maintain caseloads at the optimum levels for permanent staff.

A key strength of the service remains the stable, highly experienced IRO and CP Chair cohort. There is diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity and cultural background amongst the IRO group but it is not fully reflective of Southwark’s children in care population. The IRO’s however consider and promote the specific ethnicity and diversity needs of children and young people through their review of how these are addressed in care plans.

IRO’s are all registered social workers and the service maintains good working relationships with the operational social work teams, Access to Resources and the Children’s Rights & Participation Officer who co-ordinates Speakerbox – the Southwark Children in Care Council. Most importantly, IRO’s through the longevity of many relationships have strong connections with children and young people in care.

#### 4. The Ofsted Focussed Visit – January 2019

Ofsted found that the IROs was “*having an increasing impact on improving the quality of practice and of reviews*”. Child in care reviews were timely in most cases and there were individual responses to children’s needs when their circumstances changed. Children’s participation in their reviews and the care given to obtaining their wishes and feelings was seen as a strong feature. Care plans under review were seen to contain clear descriptions of children’s needs, and when the plan envisaged a return home there was evidence of risk assessment and appropriate follow up action that supported children and their families. Some plans however were not specific and detailed enough to give a clear structure and pathway for any actions needed.

One of the main learning points for the IRO Service was that although inspectors could see impact, the IRO footprint was still not sufficiently evident across young people’s case records; with a clear correlation between improvements seen and the IRO’s involvement.

The Focused Visits and our own intelligence gathering suggests that there is a real opportunity for IRO’s to provide a consultative and mentoring role to social workers around the quality and outcome focus for care plans, as well as being instrumental in ensuring that early permanency planning is routine.

#### 5. Child in care reviews

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2019/20
Number of reviews	1548	1377	1235	1319	1268	<b>1588</b>
Reviews held in timescale	96.5%	92%	87.8% (416)	90%	91%	<b>91%</b>
Child in care numbers at 31 March at year end	550	503	474	498	491	<b>458</b>

During 2018/19 the IRO service undertook 1588 reviews of looked after children. 91% of these were held within statutory timescales. The 9% of reviews not held on time relates to a number of reasons. In the main there is still a need to record reviews outside of Mosaic which can lead to reporting errors in a small number of cases. There are some delayed reviews related to late notification of care entry which then reduces the service’s ability to set up an initial review in time; or IRO’s missing statutory deadlines because the review has been set up without spare capacity to respond to any cancellation within the deadline. The Access to Resources Team is responding to the former area and the service is booking all reviews at a 5-month interval to allow for re-arrangement when necessary. As part of our current refocusing of the IRO Service we will arrange meetings between the IRO Service, A&I, SFS and the Care Service to resolve issues and improve the timeliness of our reviews, with a target of 95% completion within time for 2019/20.

## 6. Analysis of issues raised in dispute (escalations) and outcomes

IROs raise concerns about children in care through an escalation process. The IRO Service reviewed this process during the early part of 2018/19 and a new system was designed to record escalations and outcomes on the child's case record. This new escalation process was built into Mosaic as a "workstep" and that has enabled better reporting of concerns about the care plan or other aspects of a young person's care to operational managers. This has been in place since last November and has seen an increase in recorded activity that also allows reports to be generated giving more evidence of the IRO footprint on casework.

The majority of concerns that IRO's have around aspects of a young person's care are still dealt with at an informal level with social workers and team managers. These are still responded to on the whole promptly and the escalation process is used when some of these informal approaches have not resulted in the necessary action. Once raised the majority of escalations are resolved at Stage 1 and 2 with few having to be progressed to Assistant Director or Director level.

In 2017/18 there were 219 escalations. In 2019/20 there were 185. This is a reduction of 15% which represents a significant step in a stronger system for looked after children. The nature of the escalations is set out in the table below.

Reason for escalation	Number	%
Inadequate care plan	79	42.7
Care plan delay	31	16.8
Other	17	9.2
Social work provision	8	4.3
Education	14	7.6
Follow-up actions	5	2.7
Safeguarding	2	1.1
Placement	8	4.3
Health (new category)	5	2.7
18+ planning (new category)	8	4.3
Action and effectiveness of management (category no longer used)	8	4.3
Total	185	100.0

Although inadequate care plans continues to be the main reason for escalation, this has dropped by more than 25% in the last year. “Inadequate” in this context means that the plan is not complete in time for the review, but to bring more clarity to this indicator the service will work with Mosaic to provide expanded drop-down options. Drift in the care planning has however risen by 6% in the same period which represents an increase of 9 cases. A key part of the reason for this is that the service has increased its scrutiny and standards around permanence particularly for long term foster care and this has led to less tolerance for delay and more intervention by IROs to progress plans to permanence. Very often this relates to children who have been settled in what have become long term placements which need to be ratified as such. There have been other increased concerns seen below, which although modest, do demonstrate some of the issues around stability of workforce and continuity of delivery to children and young people in placement. This is when the long term nature of some IRO relationships with children and young people becomes important in providing a continuing thread in young people’s understanding of their stories.

## 7. Good practice

Some examples of the good practice noted by IRO's are outlined below. The Service currently do not use the escalation process to highlight positive examples of social work, instead using a monitoring form or simply writing to team managers or the social worker directly to commend the good work they have observed. Going forward this aspect of oversight will be a set agenda item in Service Meetings and as part of supervision.

One example involved difficulties in gaining an SEN school placement in Kent which has extremely high demand and the IRO highlighted the very good work the social worker had put into finding and supporting an excellent placement whilst a school place was awaited.

*"You've done a great piece of work with him Jane, and have set him on a really positive path. Without your input I think there was a risk of continuing instability and some potentially poor outcomes for him".*

Another example related to drift connected to progressing the care plan because of changes of social worker. The new social worker made excellent progress in a short time, achieving positive outcomes, the most notable of which was progressing his immigration claim swiftly so that it was settled before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and his transition to independence was not overshadowed by that uncertainty.

*"Dear Andrew, Just to let you know, following KM's final LAC review yesterday at [the placement], that Natasha and Tina have made excellent progress in moving things forward for him. This is a huge relief. All the paperwork for his citizenship application is with the solicitor, and she will submit it to the Home Office this week. She will also advise the LA on whether or not a separate application under the EU Settlement Scheme will need to be made before his 18th birthday.....Natasha has done some excellent work with KM in a very short space of time, and has already made a difference".*

Another example highlighted good work within the Family Drug & Alcohol Court (FDAC) where the social worker provided good quality Court Reports that were rooted in evidenced based practice that supported the proposed Care Plan and had been discussed with and supported by the IRO.

Similar positive feedback was provided to the social worker on another case where the social worker had communicated fully and effectively with the child, enabling them to understand the Court process and the reasons why outcomes were delayed because of adjournments. In that case the IRO also praised the social worker's "water tight knowledge" of the family and how this directed the case.

In another case the IRO praised the social worker for the “fantastic support “she provided to the unaccompanied asylum seeking young person, when seeking to gain asylum in the UK. The young person experienced very high levels of anxiety about his application to the Home Office to the extent that there was the possibility of self harm. The social worker supported him emotionally in preparing for his legal appeal and also advocated for him, making sure his legal representation were active on his behalf.

## 8. Participation in reviews

In 2018/19 almost 97% of children in care participated in their review process in some way. This is the same as the previous 2 years. Where young people do not attend or give a view the reasons for these are noted. The majority are older teenagers on the cusp of independence who perhaps do not see the value in the Review Meeting, and a secondary group are those young people who were missing from placement on the day of the Review (11 individuals). In only one situation was a young person not at a review because it was felt that their profound disability affected their ability to communicate a view in some form. There are a very small number of what are classed as “executive” or paper reviews which are administrative exercises which young people do not attend. Participation may have been through physical attendance and speaking for themselves which 71% of children and young people did; through completing a consultation form, via advocacy or through pre-review discussion with the IRO. It is important that passive attendance is not seen as participation and IROs encourage young people to chair or co-chair their reviews. This active participation, with children and young people holding staff accountable for the progression of their care plans, is something that the IRO Service wishes to further promote going forward. The IRO will ensure an advocate is provided to support the child or young person if necessary or requested. Children and young people who have English as a second language have an interpreter available. Children with disabilities or with communication difficulties are supported to express their views with help of their carers or a specialist worker or advocate through non-instructed advocacy.

Form of participation	Nos	%
child attends and speaks for themselves	865	71%
child does not attend but conveys their feelings to the conference	136	11%
child does not attend but asks advocate to speak for them	37	3%
child under 4 at time of review	127	10%
child attends and conveys their views non-verbally	17	1%
child attends and an advocate speaks for them	4	0.3%
child does not attend nor conveys their view to conference	32	3%
child attends but doesn't speak for themselves/convey their views etc.	6	0.5%

## Advocacy and Independent Visiting

As part of a child's first review after coming into care, and at subsequent reviews, the IRO checks that children and young people know how to make a complaint and know that there is an advocacy offer available to them.

During 2018 tendering for our Advocacy and Independent Visiting Service took place and the success of a bid for the delivery of both services from Coram Voice who took over the contracts in January 2019. We are grateful to both *Barnardo's* and *Action for Children* for their previous support to our young people in care and look forward to developing our relationship and the offer available with Coram Voice.

In the three quarters of 2018/19 Barnardo's provided advocacy to 27 children and young people in care - 17 in face to face sessions and 10 via telephone contact. 34 issues were actioned by advocates upon instruction of children and young people with the main presenting issues related to placements at 29% followed by Housing at 18%. The majority of contacts were from those aged 16 and over at 74% of demand.

More enquiries were received from boys/young men at 15 with 12 girls/young women seeking advocacy input. This compares to 17 (f) 14 (m) in 2017/18. The primary demand continues to come from children in care who classify as White British (30%) followed by Black African children (26%) and Black British young people (19%). There are no significant disparities between advocacy demand and representation in the care population. The majority of service users continue to be non-disabled at 19 out of 27. 8 young people had disabilities including 2 with mental health vulnerabilities.

In the first quarter of the Coram Voice contract they reported that 28 young people accessed advocacy support. Some of these were existing young people who continued to receive support during and after the transition from Barnardos. 86% of approaches were from young people 16 and over with 21% of that total being 21 years and over. There was no significant deviation from the previous figures in relation to the gender and ethnicity breakdowns of young people approaching Coram Voice for support.

The total number of children and young people accessing the Independent Visitor Service at the end of March 2019 is 20. There are a further 12 young people awaiting an IV match. The recruitment and matching of new Independent Visitors to respond to some of these young people, is a priority for Coram Voice as part of the implementation of the new contract.

## **9. Areas for Development for the IRO Service in 2018/19**

The IRO service has identified 8 areas for development for 2019/20 as follows:

To develop clarity around the escalation process providing clear timescales for expected response or resolution at Stage 1, 2 & 3.

To improve the way IROs influence by acknowledging and reporting on good practice

Timeliness of reviews to be more closely monitored and to reach the agreed target of 95% or better.

To initiate regular meetings between the IRO Service and the social work services in A&I, SFS and Care to understand and resolve any areas of difficulty and improve timeliness of Reviews, quality of Care Plans and any workflow issues.

To increase dialogue between Speakerbox and the IRO Service to support the development of Young Inspectors as an integral part of assurance work to young people in care.

To incorporate the findings from the Bright Spots survey into areas for scrutiny and development as part of the review process.

To work with the Principal Social Worker to develop joint workshops and other training events that build relationships between the IRO Service and the social work teams and enable IRO expertise to be shared, particularly as part of ASYE programmes.

To develop the audit and learning contribution of IROs to improve the quality and impact of social work practice.

This page is intentionally blank.

**CORPORATE PARENTING DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)****MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019-20****NOTE:** Original held by Constitutional Team; all amendments/queries to  
Paula Thornton Tel: 020 7525 4395

Name	No of copies	Name	No of copies
<b>Membership</b>		<b>Constitutional Team</b>	
Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)	1	Paula Thornton	10
Councillor Eliza Mann	1		
<b>Electronic versions (No hard copy)</b>		<b>Total:</b>	16
Councillor Evelyn Akoto		<b>Dated:</b> 28 June 2019	
Councillor Bill Williams			
Councillor Maggie Browning			
Councillor Sunny Lambe			
Councillor Charlie Smith			
Councillor Anood Al-Samerai			
<b>Co-opted members</b>			
Florence Emakpose (external)	1		
<b>Children's Services</b>			
David Quirke-Thornton			
Alasdair Smith	1		
	1		
<b>Legal</b>			
Sarah Feasey	1		