

# Corporate Parenting Committee

Tuesday 16 April 2024

2.00 pm

Ground Floor (G02B and C rooms), 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

## Membership

Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)  
Councillor Charlie Smith (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Naima Ali  
Councillor Rachel Bentley  
Councillor Esme Dobson  
Councillor Natasha Ennin  
Councillor Sarah King

## Reserves

Councillor Portia Mwangangye  
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall  
Councillor Sunny Lambe  
Councillor Joseph Vambe

## Non-voting co-opted members

Dr Mark Kerr and Rosamond Marshall

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## INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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### 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. For details on building access, translation, provision of signers or any other requirements for this meeting, please contact the person below.

### Contact

Email: [paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk) or [beverley.olamijulo@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:beverley.olamijulo@southwark.gov.uk)

Web site: [www.southwark.gov.uk](http://www.southwark.gov.uk)

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Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

**Althea Loderick**

Chief Executive

Date: 8 April 2024



## Corporate Parenting Committee

Tuesday 16 April 2024

2.00 pm

Ground Floor (G02B and C rooms), 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

### Order of Business

| Item No. | Title   | Page No.  |
|----------|---|-----------|
|          | <b>MOBILE PHONES</b>  |           |
|          | Mobile phones should be turned off or put on silent during the course of the meeting.                                   |           |
|          | <b>PART A - OPEN BUSINESS</b>   |           |
| 1.       | <b>APOLOGIES</b>  |           |
|          | To receive any apologies for absence.   |           |
| 2.       | <b>CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS</b>   |           |
|          | A representative of each political group will confirm the voting members of the committee.                              |           |
| 3.       | <b>NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT</b>   |           |
|          | In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear days of the meeting.          |           |
| 4.       | <b>DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS</b>  |           |
|          | Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting. |           |
| 5.       | <b>MINUTES</b>  | To follow |
|          | To approve as a correct record the minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 28 February 2024.                 |           |

| <b>Item No.</b> | <b>Title</b>   | <b>Page No.</b> |
|-----------------|--|-----------------|
| 6.              | <b>SPEAKERBOX VERBAL UPDATE (2.10PM - 3.10PM)</b>                                | -               |
| 7.              | <b>BRIEF REPORT: LIFELONG LINKS IMPLEMENTATION (3.10PM TO 3.30PM)</b>            | 1 - 8           |
| 8.              | <b>SOUTHWARK HOMES FOR SOUTHWARK CHILDREN PROGRAMME UPDATE (3.30PM - 3.50PM)</b> | 9 - 22          |
| 9.              | <b>CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2024-25 (3.50PM - 4.00PM)</b>       | 23 - 27         |

**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.”

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

Date: 8 April 2024

|                                    |                                |   |  |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Item No.</b><br>7.              | <b>Classification:</b><br>Open | <b>Date:</b><br>16 April 2024                                       | <b>Meeting Name:</b><br>Corporate Parenting<br>Committee |
| <b>Report title:</b>               |                                | Brief report: Lifelong Links implementation                         |  |
| <b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b> |                                | All   |  |
| <b>From:</b>                       |                                | Director of Children Services for Children and Families Directorate |  |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the corporate parenting committee note the Lifelong Links programme and its implementation for children in the care of the council, or those formerly who are care leavers, as part of the Department for Education (DfE) family finding, befriending and mentoring programmes.
2. That the corporate parenting committee note the inclusion of people with lived experience of social work within the Lifelong Links implementation, including children and young people, care leavers, parents and carers.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Lifelong Links was established by the Family Rights Group (FRG) to enable children in care and care leavers to develop positive networks who can offer them support throughout their time in care and well into adulthood. The [Lifelong Links embedding practice briefing paper](#) highlights *“Lifelong Links supports the concept of relational stability, with the recognition that relationships can continue beyond placements, and that foster carers and birth family members can work collaboratively.”*
4. Previously piloted during 2017-2020, the [Lifelong Links evaluation report](#) found that on average, children and young people who accessed a Lifelong Links intervention, increased their social networks (family, friends and connections with previous professionals) from 7 to 26 people. The report concluded that there was a significant positive impact on children’s stability following a Lifelong Links intervention, with 74% remaining living in their foster care or children’s home placement a year later compared with 41% of children who did not receive the intervention. An improved sense of identity and increased number of family and friends' connections was also noted.
5. Southwark Council was part of this pilot, however, due to a number of difficulties with the delivery model this was only able to benefit a small number of children. Subsequently, the Lifelong Links offer evolved into

the Reconnect offer focusing on connecting children in care with specific people. Again, this was only able to benefit a small number of children, approximately 10 per year.

6. In July 2023 the DfE launched the [family finding, befriending and mentoring programmes](#), with the council successful in its bid to be part of this. The council was awarded funding to deliver Lifelong Links to 20 children and young people before March 2024, and 56 children and young people during 2024-2025. To achieve this, a Lifelong Links Team is being created, sitting within the Family Group Conferencing Service overseen by the FGC Lead. The team will comprise of a team manager, social worker, project officer and clinician, complimented by freelance Lifelong Links FGC Coordinators, who undertake direct interventions with children and young people in line with the Lifelong Links operational model.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

### What has been achieved so far?

7. Our first report to the DfE has been submitted, detailing our progress across the initial implementation period.
8. A Lifelong Links steering group has been created, meeting regularly to provide strategic oversight for implementation and chaired by the Assistant Director for Quality Assurance and Practice Development. Membership of the steering group consists of a cross section of practitioners from across Children's Services alongside representation from family advocates and the Children's Rights Officer. Young people with lived experience, foster carers, and parent's representatives are being sought to join this group. The steering group is complimented by a Practice Development Group, which meets on a monthly basis to action any required workstreams.
9. Recruitment to the Lifelong Links team has been agreed, with funding available via the DfE grant. Recruitment to these posts is in progress, with the clinician having been appointed, with a start date in April 2024. Whilst we await appointment to the remaining posts as an interim measure Julie Campbell, Audit and Learning Lead has been providing support to Lifelong Links.
10. Thirteen referrals for Lifelong Links intervention have been received thus far. The demographics of the children and young people are:
  - I. 46% identify as male and 54% as female
  - II. 46% are White British, 54% are from global majority ethnicities.
  - III. Ages range from 10 – 23yrs, with the majority (54%) aged 18yrs and over.

- IV. 6 are open to intervention from the Care Leaver service, 5 from Care, 1 from SFS and 1 is a former care leaver. Of these, 1 young person is in custody.
11. Twelve of these referrals have been accepted – a conversion rate of 92%, with most (10/12) having been allocated to a Lifelong Links Coordinator. Of these, four initial planning meetings have been held, meaning there are four children / young people actively receiving Lifelong Links intervention at the current time.
  12. A further five children and young people have been offered a consultation around Lifelong Links, to ascertain whether this intervention would be suitable.
  13. We have been able to utilise our existing pool of FGC Coordinators, many of whom have prior experience of being a Lifelong Links FGC Coordinator and have offered them refresher training via Family Rights Groups. One of our Coordinators is also care experienced, bringing their knowledge and skills directly to their interventions with our children and young people.

#### **What are our ongoing priorities?**

14. The next DfE reporting period is in April 2024, whereby we will need to detail our continued progress.
15. Job adverts for the team manager, social worker and project officer are being finalised, with recruitment hoped to take place in April 2024. Consequently, it is likely team members will be in post by summer 2024.
16. We aim to maximize opportunities for people with lived experience of social work to be involved in the implementation and delivery of Lifelong Links. To do so, we are in the process of recruiting a foster carer to the steering group and considering how we can include children and young people within this forum also. We would also like to expand opportunities to our care experienced community to become a Lifelong Links FGC Coordinators in the future.
17. We need to ensure referrals for Lifelong Links intervention maintain momentum. A further 23 children and young people have been identified via various cohorts (those who are in custody, living in residential accommodation or who may have previously been known to Reconnect) and have been highlighted to the Care and Care Leaver services.

## Policy implications

18. The Children Act (1989) states (Schedule 2, paragraph 15) “*The Local Authority has a duty to promote contact between a child and their parents, plus any important people in their lives*”. Lifelong Links helps us achieve this for children in care and care leavers, connecting them with their extended networks, not just those they are biologically related to, to promote these relationships, expand their support networks and provide a stronger sense of Identity.
19. The Government’s ‘stable homes, built on love’ strategy for children's social care (2023) also highlights the need for “*children in care and care leavers to identify and connect with the important people in their lives and create safe, stable, loving relationships*” with the [family finding, befriending and mentoring programmes](#) being integral to helping Local Authorities achieve this goal for children and young people within their communities.

## Financial implications

20. The financial implications are met by the DfE funding, from securing a successful bid to implement Lifelong Links within the borough.

## Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

### Community impact statement

21. The decision to note this report has been judged to have a small but important impact on local people and communities. The work relating to children in care and care leavers is intended to improve the outcomes for them.
22. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, lays out the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. The council’s approach to equality commits the council to ensuring that equality is an integral part of our day to day business.
23. The council’s children’s services involves working closely with all relevant stakeholders and partners across the sector and collectively we are committed to upholding the responsibilities towards advocating the Public Sector Equality Duty and complying with the Equalities Act 2010. 13. The PSED enables public bodies to consider the diverse needs of groups and have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Due regard is about considering the different needs of protected characteristics in relation to the three parts of the duty.

24. The Equalities Act 2010 define the following as protected characteristics; age; disability, gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement 15. The report takes account of the ethnicity, age and disabilities of care leavers, as well as their racial ethnic background and considers these areas in light of commitments set out by Southwark Stands Together.

### **Health impact statement**

25. The longitudinal child level analysis of Lifelong Links shows that emotional health and well-being appear to improved and that the improvement is sustained over time (as measured by the Strengths & Difficulties questionnaire) for children in care and care leavers who have access to these interventions.

### **Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement**

26. Research suggests that when children in care are compared with children who have not been in care, they tend to have poorer outcomes in a number of areas including their and mental and physical health. Corporate parenting work supporting our children in care and care leavers seeks to address these inequalities and this paper is about addressing inequality via Lifelong Links interventions.

### **Climate change implications**

27. There are no relevant climate change implications

### **Resource implications**

28. Any resource implications will be met by the DfE funding.

### **Legal implications**

29. There are no relevant legal implications.

### **Consultation**

30. There is no consultation required.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Assistant Chief Executive of Governance and Assurance**

31. A concurrent is not required.



## Strategic Director of Finance

32. A concurrent is not required.

## Other officers

33. There are none.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

| Background Papers  | Held At  | Contact                        |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Family finding, befriending and mentoring programmes   | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Tendai Murowe<br>020 7525 0486 |
| <b>Link:</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-finding-befriending-and-mentoring-funding-for-programmes/family-finding-befriending-and-mentoring-programmes-application-guide-for-local-authorities">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-finding-befriending-and-mentoring-funding-for-programmes/family-finding-befriending-and-mentoring-programmes-application-guide-for-local-authorities</a> |  |                                |
| Lifelong Links embedding practice briefing paper   | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Tendai Murowe<br>020 7525 0486 |
| <b>Link:</b> <a href="https://huddersfield.app.box.com/s/2yqpiz5t5hn9u6n6jc923fd4b40wua57">https://huddersfield.app.box.com/s/2yqpiz5t5hn9u6n6jc923fd4b40wua57</a>   |  |                                |
| Lifelong Links evaluation report   | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Tendai Murowe<br>020 7525 0486 |
| <b>Link:</b> <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60104f74d3bf7f05c3182253/Lifelong_Links_evaluation_report.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60104f74d3bf7f05c3182253/Lifelong_Links_evaluation_report.pdf</a>   |  |                                |
| Children Act (1989)  | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Tendai Murowe<br>020 7525 0486 |
| <b>Link:</b> <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents</a>   |  |                                |
| Equalities Act 2010: S149 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)   | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Tendai Murowe<br>020 7525 0486 |

| Background Papers   | Held At  | Contact                        |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| <p><b>Link:</b> <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149</a></p>   |  |                                |
| Strengths & Difficulties questionnaire  | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Tendai Murowe<br>020 7525 0486 |
| <p><b>Link:</b> <a href="https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/the-strengths-and-difficulties-questionnaire-sdq/">https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/the-strengths-and-difficulties-questionnaire-sdq/</a></p>   |  |                                |
| Council Assembly, 25 November 2020, Item 6.1 Refresh of the Council Plan 2018 - 2022 – Appendix A   | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Tendai Murowe<br>020 7525 0486 |
| <p><b>Link:</b> <a href="https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s92006/Appendix%20A%20Southwarks%20Borough%20Plan%202020.pdf">https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s92006/Appendix%20A%20Southwarks%20Borough%20Plan%202020.pdf</a></p>   |  |                                |
| Council Assembly, 14 July 2021, Item 6.1 constitutional changes: Climate Emergency and Equality, Council assembly role and functions – Appendix 3 PART 3B Cabinet Role  | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Tendai Murowe<br>020 7525 0486 |
| <p><b>Link:</b> <a href="https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s99855/Appendix%203%20-%20Part%203B%20Cabinet%20role.pdf">https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s99855/Appendix%203%20-%20Part%203B%20Cabinet%20role.pdf</a></p>   |  |                                |
| Southwark Council's Delivery Plan, Appendix 1, Item 8 – Cabinet 17 October 2023   | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Tendai Murowe<br>02075250486   |
| <p><b>Link:</b> <a href="https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s116779/Appendix%201%20Southwark%20Council%20Delivery%20Plan%20Annual%20Performance%20Report.pdf">https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s116779/Appendix%201%20Southwark%20Council%20Delivery%20Plan%20Annual%20Performance%20Report.pdf</a></p> |  |                                |

**APPENDICES**

| No.  | Title |
|------|-------|
| None |       |

**AUDIT TRAIL**

|   |  |                          |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Lead Officer</b>   | David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children Services                 |                          |
| <b>Report Author</b>  | Tendai Murowe, Assistant Director – Quality Assurance and Practice Development |                          |
| <b>Version</b>  | Final  |                          |
| <b>Dated</b>  | 8 April 2024   |                          |
| <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> |
| Assistant Chief Executive of Governance and Assurance                   | No   | No                       |
| Strategic Director of Finance   | No   | No                       |
| List other officers here  | N/A  | N/A                      |
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>   | No   | No                       |
| <b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>                    | 8 April 2024   |                          |

|  |                                |  |  |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Item No.</b><br>8.                  | <b>Classification:</b><br>Open | <b>Date:</b><br>16 April 2024  | <b>Meeting Name:</b><br>Corporate Parenting<br>Committee |
| <b>Report title:</b>                   |                                | Southwark Homes for Southwark Children<br>Programme Update             |  |
| <b>Ward(s) or groups<br/>affected:</b> |                                | All  |  |
| <b>From:</b>                           |                                | Director of Children Services for Children and<br>Families Directorate |  |

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Corporate Parenting Committee note the contents of the update on the Southwark Homes for Southwark Children programme of improvement work for the delivery of services to looked after children and care leavers.
2. That the Corporate Parenting Committee feedback their comments on the progress of the improvement work programme.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The Southwark Homes for Southwark Children (SHfSC) programme is a large programme of improvement activity embedding change in service delivery for children in care, care leavers, foster carers and children on the edge of care.
4. This programme of work aims to deliver the Corporate Parenting Committee priorities as set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2024.
5. This programme intends to deliver improvements to service delivery through the following projects:
  - Delivering additional placement capacity in-borough through opening two in-house ran children's homes
  - Achieving greater retention of foster carers, improving the experiences of children placed in foster care and attracting new carers through piloting the Mockingbird model of fostering service delivery
  - Introducing quality assurance mechanisms for placements of children in care through reform of the Access to Resources service. This will include implementing a Young Inspector team

- Attracting higher numbers of highly skilled prospective foster carers through a refresh of the fostering recruitment strategy which will introduce new marketing assets and a streamlined process
  - Embedding the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths assessment to strengthen the assessment of risks, needs and strengths of children in care and care leavers to better able the organisation to respond to these effectively.
6. The attached update report also sets out the priorities for the programme over the next year to include reforms to:
- The support offer available to Special Guardianship carers
  - Joint working protocol with Housing and Children’s Social Care
  - In-borough semi-independent placement capacity
  - Edge of care service delivery.

### **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

7. A project update report is attached as Appendix 1 to this cover report.

### **Policy framework implications**

8. The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2024 outlines several key priorities around the delivery of services for looked after children and care leavers. The SHfSC programme aims to deliver key parts of this strategy over 2024.

### **Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts**

#### **Community impact statement**

9. The delivery of the key priorities of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2024 is intended to improve the life-chances, opportunities and long-term outcomes of children in care and care leavers.
10. The decision to note this report has been judged to have a small but important impact on local people and communities. The work relating to children in care and care leavers is intended to improve the outcomes for them.
11. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, lays out the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. The council’s approach to equality commits the council to ensuring that equality is an integral part of our day to day business.

12. The council's children's services involves working closely with all relevant stakeholders and partners across the sector and collectively we are committed to upholding the responsibilities towards advocating the Public Sector Equality Duty and complying with the Equalities Act 2010. 13. The PSED enables public bodies to consider the diverse needs of groups and have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Due regard is about considering the different needs of protected characteristics in relation to the three parts of the duty.
13. The Equalities Act 2010 define the following as protected characteristics; age; disability, gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement 15. The report takes account of the ethnicity, age and disabilities of care leavers, as well as their racial ethnic background and considers these areas in light of commitments set out by Southwark Stands Together.

#### **Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement**

14. This report outlines the progress in the delivery of the Southwark Homes for Southwark Children improvement programme.
15. The council is committed to delivering fair and just services to the residents of the borough. The improvement of services for children in care, care leavers and foster carers will ensure that services delivered to these groups improve their short and long-term outcomes demonstrating a commitment to eliminating discrimination.

#### **Health impact statement**

16. Children in care experience adverse long-term health outcomes, the improvement activity set out in the SHfSC programme aims to increase the longer-term life chances of children in care and care leavers.

#### **Climate change implications**

17. There are no identified climate change implications with the SHfSC improvement programme.

#### **Resource implications**

18. The report provided is an update to the improvement programme for SHfSC with no additional resource implications identified.

#### **Legal implications**

19. The report provided is an update to the improvement programme for SHfSC

with no additional legal implications identified.

### Financial implications

20. The report provided is an update to the improvement programme for SHfSC with no additional financial implications identified.

### Consultation

21. The report provided is an update to the improvement programme for SHfSC with no additional consultation required. Consultation and engagement with children and young people and foster carers is ongoing as part of the wider programme.

### SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

#### Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance

22. A concurrent was not applicable for this report.

#### Strategic Director of Finance

23. A concurrent was not applicable for this report.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

| Background Papers   | Held At  | Contact                        |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2024  | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Helen Woolgar<br>020 7525 0654 |
| <b>Link:</b><br><a href="https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s99637/Appendix%201%20Dr%20aft%20Corporate%20Parenting%20Strategy%202021-2024.pdf">https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s99637/Appendix%201%20Dr%20aft%20Corporate%20Parenting%20Strategy%202021-2024.pdf</a> |  |                                |
| Equalities Act 2010: S149 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)  | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Helen Woolgar<br>020 7525 0654 |
| <b>Link:</b> <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149</a>  |  |                                |
| Council Assembly, 25 November 2020, Item 6.1 Refresh of the Council Plan 2018 - 2022 –  | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street,                 | Helen Woolgar<br>020 7525 0654 |

| Background Papers   | Held At  | Contact                        |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Appendix A  | London, SE1 2QH  |                                |
| <b>Link:</b><br><a href="https://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s92006/Appendix%20A%20Southwark%20Borough%20Plan%202020.pdf">https://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s92006/Appendix%20A%20Southwark%20Borough%20Plan%202020.pdf</a>   |  |                                |
| Council Assembly, 14 July 2021, Item 6.1 constitutional changes: Climate Emergency and Equality, Council assembly role and functions – Appendix 3 PART 3B Cabinet Role  | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Helen Woolgar<br>020 7525 0654 |
| <b>Link:</b><br><a href="https://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s99855/Appendix%203%20-%20Part%203B%20Cabinet%20role.pdf">https://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s99855/Appendix%203%20-%20Part%203B%20Cabinet%20role.pdf</a>   |  |                                |
| Southwark Council's Delivery Plan, Appendix 1, Item 8 – Cabinet 17 October 2023   | Children and Families Directorate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH | Helen Woolgar<br>020 7525 0654 |
| <b>Link:</b><br><a href="https://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s116779/Appendix%201%20Southwark%20Council%20Delivery%20Plan%20Annual%20Performance%20Report.pdf">https://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s116779/Appendix%201%20Southwark%20Council%20Delivery%20Plan%20Annual%20Performance%20Report.pdf</a> |  |                                |

## APPENDICES

| No.        | Title  |
|------------|--|
| Appendix 1 | Southwark Homes for Southwark Children – Programme Update to the Corporate Parenting Committee |



## AUDIT TRAIL

|   |  |                          |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Lead Officer</b>   | David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children Services   |                          |
| <b>Report Authors</b>   | Clare Pitchford, Senior Service Development Officer<br>Helen Woolgar Assistant Director Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting |                          |
| <b>Version</b>  | Final  |                          |
| <b>Dated</b>  | 8 April 2024   |                          |
| <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> |
| Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance                     | No   | No                       |
| Strategic Director of Finance   | No   | No                       |
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>   | No   | No                       |
| <b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>                    |  | 8 April 2024             |

# Southwark Homes for Southwark Children

Corporate Parenting Committee Update

16 April 2024

# Southwark Homes for Southwark Children Overview

Southwark Homes for Southwark Children is a broad improvement programme centred on delivering better outcomes and value for children in our care and our care leavers.

The programme is overseen by the Southwark Homes for Southwark Children Board, with membership across Children's Services and wider council and corporate enablers.

**The priorities for the program are linked to the delivery of our Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2024 and are broadly intended to deliver on two priorities;**

- **Developing our sufficiency** – delivering on our duty under the Children Act 1989 (Section 22) to provide sufficient placements in the locality, as far as reasonably practical, to meet the accommodation needs of our children looked after and of our care leavers.
- **Improving the quality and experience of our care experienced children and young people** – ensuring that more of our children are in stable, caring and high quality care placements and accommodation. That we understand their needs better and are better able to respond to them.

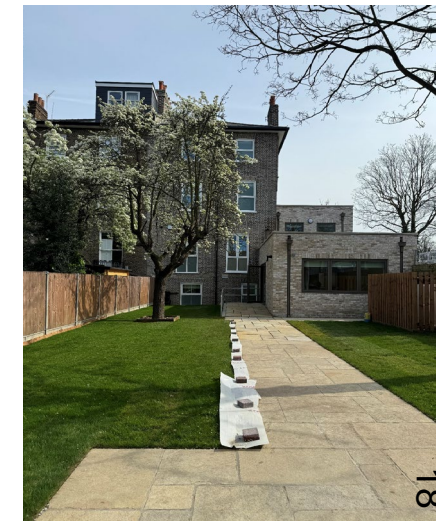


# Southwark Homes for Southwark Children

Key Updates Quarter 4 2023/24



# Children's residential homes – 1<sup>st</sup> home



**Successful bid for £2m capital grant** from the Department for Education to create a new children's home in the borough

Council match funded the DfE capital grant with a redundant council property of equal value

Design proposals developed including consulting Speakerbox for a complete internal rebuild and renovation of the property to create a **state of the art and carbon neutral home** for up to 5 of our children

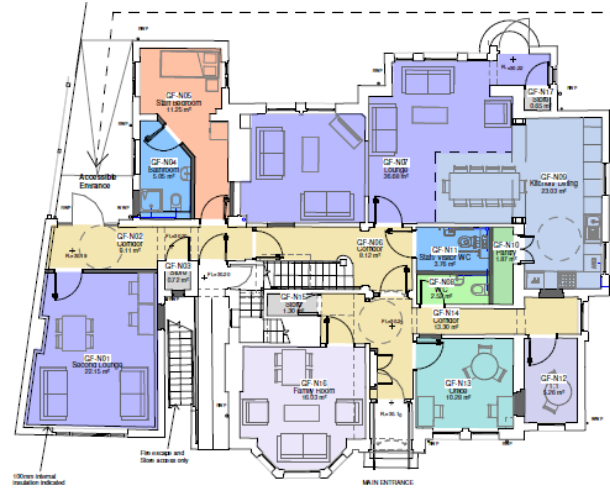
Fully accessible building with a new extension to provide expanded living, dining and education space for our children

Building work is nearing completion with the **handover of keys from the contractors** to the service scheduled to take place **by end of April 2024**

All furniture and fittings scheduled to be installed in May 2024

Whole new staff team and service being recruited to and the **first of our children are expected to living in the home after a planned transition** back to Southwark towards the **end of the school summer break, in August 2024.**

# Children's residential homes – 2<sup>nd</sup> home



**Second successful bid** for a £1.13m Capital Grant from the Department for Education to build a second residential children's home

Match funded from council capital funds.

The property was formerly an adults supported living property secured on a long-term lease from a Housing Association.

As with the first children's home, design proposals will be developed including consulting Speakerbox for a complete internal rebuild and renovation of the property to create a **state of the art and carbon neutral home** for up to 5 of our children

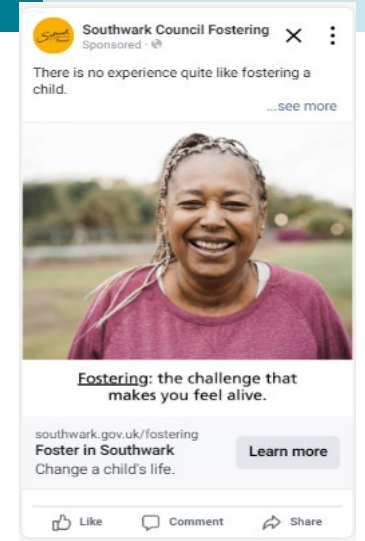
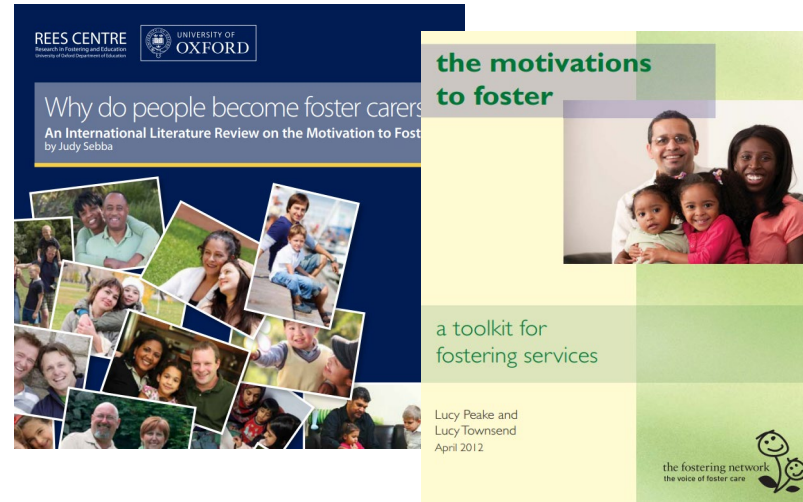
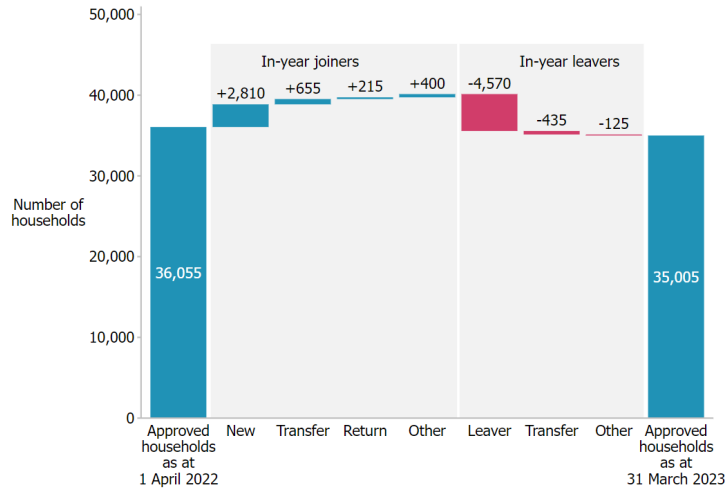
Fully accessible building with an annex to provide flexibility for children with more complex needs.

**Detailed design work signed off** in March 2024.

Tendering for contractors to go live **April 2024**

Project **on-track for completion** and for the first of our children to move in to our 2<sup>nd</sup> home **by Summer 2025**

# Foster carer recruitment



There is an increasing **national trend** of more people stopping fostering, than those becoming foster carers.

This trend is visible in Southwark. We have a declining number of foster carers. As at January 2024 over 53% of our foster carers are over 60 years old often retiring after 20 plus years fostering.

We need to **reach and motivate new local carers** for our children

We have re-thought **our approach** to carer recruitment based on **national and international research and evidence** into what messaging motivates people to become carers.

We have Created dedicated social media accounts for foster carer recruitment to **modernize our marketing channels for the digital age** and develop targeted community engagement

We are co-producing new **targeted promotional materials** with our children and carers that appeal to the right motivating factors and the right communities

A **dedicated role has been established from January 2024 in Corporate Communications** for carer recruitment

We are completing by end of **April 2024** an **end-to-end business analysis** of our recruitment and assessment process with the transformation, technology and digital service to improve performance and digital capability, providing a better customer experience.

# Foster carer retention & models of care

We are continually looking outward at best practice and research to explore **more opportunities to innovate and improve** the offer to our carers and our children. We want the best evidence-based support models in place to make our carers more likely to succeed, sustain their care for our children, and to keep them in caring, and where possible expand their capacity to care

In the coming months we will launch a local pilot of the Mockingbird Model. An evidence-based model that creates a formal network of carers with a highly-experienced carer at the centre offering peer support, guidance and respite to newer and less experienced carers

We will build direct links to **the networked model to our new children's homes**. This will mean that carers have 24hr access to high-quality professional, as well as peer, support and advice

Building on previous successes we are **exploring the opportunity to invest more capital funds** in the enhancing of carers properties, including kinship carers, where we know they could safely and confidently provide care to more children with more space to do so





# Modernisation & reform of our placements service

**Access to Resources Team (ART)** – our placements service ART was formed in 2015. The team works alongside our Children in Care and Care Leaver Services to source and broker homes for our children in the independent and private residential and foster care sectors

ART works to identify homes for new children coming into care, often in crisis situations, as well as working with providers and our social work teams to help identify and plan for new placements when children need to move or when they can be successfully supported to move to different homes as their needs change

The care placement market is volatile and highly competitive. Services need to be able to **build relationships with good providers** to ensure the best placements are available to our children, and we need our team to be proactive in helping good providers to develop.

We have worked on a proposal for the structure needed and will be looking to enhance and modernise the current ART structure by end June 2024.

**Placements Quality Assurance** – too often the relationship between services and providers is a commissioning and contract monitoring relationship. This misses the opportunity to work more collaboratively with the market to improve the quality of provision and placements and build stronger relationships with our preferred providers to ensure our children get the first choice for homes we can trust. We are developing the model of practice with the ART to increase capacity to deliver a stronger **quality-led approach** to our relationships with the market.

**Young Inspectors Programme** – at the heart of our new quality-led approach will be **new Young Inspectors**. Care experienced young people who will be trained and supported to inspect and make recommendations about placements and providers.



|  |                                |  |  |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Item No.</b><br>9.                  | <b>Classification:</b><br>Open | <b>Date:</b><br>16 April 2024                        | <b>Meeting Name:</b><br>Corporate Parenting<br>Committee |
| <b>Report title:</b>                   |                                | Corporate Parenting Committee – Work Plan<br>2024-25 |  |
| <b>Ward(s) or groups<br/>affected:</b> |                                | All  |  |
| <b>From:</b>                           |                                | Director of 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 2024-2025 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 an annual 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.

### **Corporate Parenting Committee work plan – draft outline**

#### **16 April 2024**

- Speakerbox verbal update
- Update on Southwark homes programme
- Lifelong links.

#### **17 July 2024**

- Speakerbox verbal update and report back on actions
- Annual health report for looked after children
- Foster annual report
- Care leaver and housing protocol
- Charter for employment.

#### **23 October 2024**

- Speakerbox verbal update / annual report
- Annual independent reviewing officer report
- Adoption annual report
- Annual virtual head teacher's report.

#### **26 February 2025**

- Speakerbox verbal update

#### **1 April 2025**

- Speakerbox verbal update

### **SpeakerBox**

8. 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, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts**

#### **Community impact statement**

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

#### **Equalities (including socio-economic) impact and health impact statement**

6. Relevant issues will be addressed in the reports submitted to the corporate parenting committee.

#### **Climate change implications**

7. The work plan process for the committee has no direct implications.

#### **Resource implications**

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

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

| <b>Background Papers</b>  | <b>Held At</b>   | <b>Contact</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| Minutes of meetings of Corporate Parenting Committee  | Constitutional Team<br>160 Tooley Street<br>London SE1 2QH | <a href="mailto:Paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk">Paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk</a> |
| <b>Web link:</b><br><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**

| <b>No.</b> | <b>Title</b> |
|------------|--------------|
| None       |              |

**AUDIT TRAIL**

|   |   |                          |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Lead Officer</b>   | Alasdair Smith, Director of Children and Families       |                          |
| <b>Report Author</b>  | Beverley Olamijulo/ Paula Thornton, Constitutional Team |                          |
| <b>Version</b>  | Final   |                          |
| <b>Dated</b>  | 8 April 2024  |                          |
| <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> |
| Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance                    | No  | No                       |
| Strategic Director of Finance   | No  | No                       |
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>   | No  | No                       |
| <b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>                    |   | 8 April 2024             |

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**CORPORATE PARENTING DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)****MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24**

**NOTE:** Original held by Constitutional Team; all amendments/queries to  
[Paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:Paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk); [Beverley.olamijulo@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:Beverley.olamijulo@southwark.gov.uk)

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| <b>Membership</b>   |              | Paula Thornton/Beverley Olamijulo | 12           |
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|   |              | <b>Total:</b>                     | 14           |
| <b>Electronic versions (No hard copy)</b>                       |              | <b>Dated:</b> 8 April 2024        |              |
| Councillor Naima Ali  |              |                                   |              |
| Councillor Rachel Bentley                                       |              |                                   |              |
| Councillor Esme Dobson  |              |                                   |              |
| Councillor Natash Ennin   |              |                                   |              |
| Councillor Sarah King   |              |                                   |              |
| Councillor Charlie Smith  |              |                                   |              |
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| Councillor Portia Mwangangye                                    |              |                                   |              |
| Councillor Sunny Lambe  |              |                                   |              |
| Councillor Natash Ennin   |              |                                   |              |
| Councillor Joseph Vambe   |              |                                   |              |
| Councillor Irina Von Wiese                                      |              |                                   |              |
| <b>Co-opted members</b>   |              |                                   |              |
| Mark Kerr (email)   |              |                                   |              |
| Rosamond Marshall (email)                                       |              |                                   |              |
| <b>Children’s Services - electronic versions (No hard copy)</b> |              |                                   |              |
| David Quirke-Thornton   |              |                                   |              |
| Alasdair Smith  |              |                                   |              |
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