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| Item No. 7. | Classification: Open | Date: 10 November 2010 | Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee |
| Report title: | | Children in Care accessing Leisure including Fusion Partnership | |
| Ward(s) or groups affected: | | All | |
| From: | | Strategic Director of Children's Services | |

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the framework for supporting leisure for looked after children as part of the Be Healthy agenda, and the initiatives to promote hobbies and leisure activities to develop a healthy lifestyle and build confidence as part of Enjoy and Achieve agenda.
2. Corporate Parenting Committee to formally request the council's procurement team and Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Sport and the Olympics review and extend Fusion's partnership for a further three year period from April 2011

The review to include:

- a. raising the age by one year to aged 20
- b. improving data recording and tracking arrangements
- c. maintaining level of 150 top memberships
- d. streamlining registration processes for looked after children.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Sports hobbies and leisure are recognised as key components of a child's care plan. Evidence indicates that looked after children are often able to build self esteem and rebuild their confidence and aspiration through development of performing arts, sports, music, constructive recreation and hobbies.
4. Active lifestyles support the Being Healthy agenda by encouraging physical fitness combating obesity and promoting stronger emotional health.
5. The CLA Service has developed a number of initiatives under the Being Healthy and Enjoy and Achieve agendas to enable care planning to address every area of a Child's health and well being.
6. Social workers are required to formally report twice a year to the young persons statutory review what efforts have been undertaken to promote leisure, sporting and hobby activities. This area is specifically discussed by the Independent Reviewing Officer at each review which offers further challenge to the foster carer or placement provider to articulate what steps they have taken to deliver positive extra curriculum and lifestyle activities. Each young person is invited at their statutory review to feedback how they are accessing and enjoying opportunities being made available and whether there are any other interests they would wish to pursue.
7. The Personal Education Plan (PEP) documentation also asks the school to identify extra curricular activities which might support attainment and the child's engagement with school life.
8. Schools have significant direct funding to deliver after school provision.
9. Where appropriate the Children Looked After Education team have access to funding streams (personal education allowance) to offer up to £500 to a school who wish to deliver targeted or extra curriculum activities for a looked after

- child who is falling behind. This will have to be reviewed following the implementation of the pupil premium.
10. Southwark's fostering services also have a designated budget to assist foster carers to fund specialist music and sport tuition to develop potential.
 11. Core fostering standards and placement contracts for all looked after children also have a requirement that carers should provide a regular and diverse range of extra curricular activities.
 12. Carefirst, the social care database, has been developed to enable reporting extra curricular activities young people are undertaking (aged 5 to 16).
 13. Publications for all Southwark foster carers (delivered by Southwark Fostering Team) provide information for Southwark foster carers relating to holiday provision delivered by Southwark Council.
 14. Since January 2010 Southwark's Adolescent and Aftercare Service has been delivering a drop in service for looked after children (16+ and care leavers) who are isolated and not in employment, education and training. The drop in is being delivered in partnership with Southwark's targeted youth support programme to link/signpost leisure and recreational opportunities to facilitate young people remaining engaged with services and promoting confidence to resume education or employment activity.
 15. The Speakerbox magazines (under 12 version, adolescent and aftercare version) all will provide information relating to key events and promote healthy lifestyles.
 16. Since June 2008 looked after children and care leavers (13-19) have been able to access a free Fusion leisure centre pass. This is a gold standard card which enables unlimited access to Fusion's gyms, swimming facilities, aerobics/body pump classes.
 17. The annual CLA GCSE and Celebration Award has a special award for sporting achievement and performing arts, indicating Southwark's commitment to recognising progress and application.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

18. The Fusion partnership enables up to 150 "lifestyle memberships" to be accessed at any one time. Appendix 1 is the leaflet young people use to make their application.
19. This arrangement will be subject by review after three years (April 2011). It is proposed that young people will be involved in the evaluation and that development of the scheme going forward including leaflet redesign.
20. As at the 1st October there are 135 Fusion cards issued to 13-19 year olds.
21. Southwark currently has (1st October 2010) 142 looked after children out of 235 who have a current recorded regular (up to 2 hours a week) hobby, leisure activity or sport (59.9%). This is currently in excess of our target of 50% all school aged children accessing regular leisure activities (2 hours per week).
22. It is proposed that the revised arrangement with Fusion will include an annual report from Fusion identifying the numbers of sessions attended by each young person. This will provide information as to which activities are proving most attractive to looked after children and care leavers whilst also ensuring cards are

not issued to young people who are not using them (maximising use of resources). Feedback from some young people and Speakerbox have indicated that if possible could the upper age limit for care leavers could be raised – given the positive impact this has on some care leavers who are isolated and have limited funds.

23. This proposal will be put to Fusion in November 2010. (Annual review date)

Policy implications

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

Community impact statement

25. Southwark CLA Service works to promote the five outcomes for children in care as outlined in Every Child Matters. It is recognised that placement stability, engaged in education, access to additional activities linked with healthy lifestyles all contribute to building resilience in young people.

Resource implications

26. It is recognised that the Comprehensive Spending Review will have a significant impact upon resources available to Fostering Services to promote extra curricular activity. Southwark's and other local authority youth services will also come under pressure in the next few years..
27. Whilst children looked after may be a prioritised service given the vulnerability of the group, many of the services they access in the community are not statutory and may be affected.
28. Wherever possible the CLA Service will work closely with other council departments and mainstream services, carers and schools to promote active engagement and positive lifestyles.

Consultation

29. Young people are individually engaged in their care plans which encourage them to participate in extra curriculum activities, develop hobbies and sporting interests. Whilst not compulsory, carers, social workers and schools are asked to encourage wherever possible.
30. In 2008 Speakerbox played a major part in promoting the partnership with Fusion, arguing that looked after children and care leavers should have free access to leisure. This initiative has proved successful (popular) and Speakerbox/young people will be involved in reviewing the impact and how this agreement can be further improved from April 2011.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

| Background Papers | Held At | Contact |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Minutes of meetings of Corporate Parenting Committee | Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street SE1 5LX | Bola Roberts 020 7525 7232 |

AUDIT TRAIL

| | | |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Lead Officer | Rory Patterson, Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding | |
| Report Author | Chris Saunders Head of Services for Children in Care | |
| Version | Final | |
| Dated | 28 October 2010 | |
| Key Decision? | No | |
| CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER | | |
| Officer Title | Comments Sought | Comments included |
| Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance | No | No |
| Finance Director | No | No |
| Cabinet Member | Yes | Yes |
| Date final report sent to Constitutional Officer | 28 October 2010 | |