

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 16 February 2011	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Placement Stability	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The corporate parenting committee recognises the significant progress made since the JAR (Joint Area Review) inspection in April 2008 to deliver improved permanent outcomes for looked after children.
2. The corporate parenting committee supports the proposed reconfiguration of the fostering service to deliver increased numbers of new carer approvals whilst retaining the capacity of the Service to continue providing high levels of carer support and stability.
3. The corporate parenting committee supports the proposed management integration of the adoption and permanence service into the 0-12 Service.
4. The corporate parenting committee requests an appraisal from the Virtual Head concerning the possible impact the reconfiguration of the children looked after education team might have upon placement support and stability.
5. The corporate parenting committee requests the lead commissioner of CAMHS (Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services) to review and report on the impact of any proposed service reductions upon Carelink and its capability to deliver targeted interventions for children in care and foster carer support.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6. This report is commissioned as part of the February corporate parenting agenda - "staying safe".
7. Placement stability was identified as the main practice development recommendation from the 2008 JAR Inspection.
8. A strategic planning group chaired by Rory Patterson, assistant director for Specialist services had been established in 2007 to review and enhance Southwark's adoption outcomes. Following the JAR Inspection and improved adoption performance, this strategic group undertook a review of placement stability. A comprehensive overview and action plan was signed off by the strategic group in October 2008.
9. The CLA service has implemented the action plan since 1st April 2009 which has delivered year on year improved stability outcomes.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

10. Given the length of time it takes to have an impact upon stability outcomes for children in care a scheduled review was undertaken after two years in November 2010. The review has now been completed and is submitted as Appendix 1.
11. It is currently anticipated that the 2010/11 financial year report in April 2011 will indicate a third successive year of improved stability performance.

Policy implications

12. There are no policy implications concerning this report. The proposed changes to the fostering services are subject to consultation processes in keeping with council and human resource processes which are scheduled for implementation in April 2011.
13. Under council policy it is expected that any proposed changes to the CLA Education Team and CAHMS link team will be subject to agreed consultation processes.

Resource implications

14. The reconfiguration of the fostering team and management changes for the adoption and permanence team are part of the overall CLA reconfiguration proposals for April 2011 which are currently being consulted upon to deliver necessary budgetary reductions.

Community impact statement

15. There is a strong correlation between placement disruption (especially in later childhood years) and vulnerability to anti social or self harming behaviour i.e. teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and youth offending. It is therefore crucial for the CLA Service to deliver successful economic well being and achievement outcomes for looked after children.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
JAR inspection report 2008	160 Tooley Street, SE1	Eleanor Parkin Tel: 020 7525 5032

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Review of Long Term Stability of Southwark Children in Care

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
Report Author	Chris Saunders Head of Services for Children in Care/Service Manager 0-12 Service	
Version	Final	
Dated	3 February 2011	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law and Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		3 February 2011