

Item No. 6.	Classification: Open	Date: 8 November 2011	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. That Corporate Parenting Committee notes the revised and improved partnership with Fusion for a further 3 year period from April 2011.
2. That Corporate Parenting Committee notes the revised use and allocation of a pupil premium for each child in care
3. That Corporate Parenting Committee notes the ongoing framework for supporting additional sport and leisure activities for all school age looked after children as part of the "Being Healthy" agenda.

SUMMARY

4. This report highlights the Children in Care Services strong performance and commitment to promote and deliver leisure opportunities for children in care.

Key points include: -

- Revised and updated three year partnership agreement with Fusion (Southwark Leisure Services – see Appendix 1)
- Innovative approach to link annual pupil premium payment to targeted school activities (paragraphs 9 & 10)
- The Children in Care Service continues to fund extra curricular activities for children in care based upon interest (paragraphs 23 & 24).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. 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 improve self esteem, rebuild their confidence and develop aspiration through taking part in performing arts, sports, music, constructive recreation and hobbies.
6. Active lifestyles support the Being Healthy agenda by encouraging physical fitness combating obesity and promoting stronger emotional health.
7. The Children in Care 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.
8. Social workers are required to formally report twice a year at the young persons statutory review what efforts have been undertaken to promote leisure, sporting

and hobby activities. This area has to be specifically discussed by the Independent Reviewing Officer at each review who is expected to ask 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.

9. In addition the child's access to sports, music and after school activities form a key part of the Personal Education Plan documentation (PEP). PEP meetings are held at the school and ask staff to identify extra curricular activities which might support attainment and the child's engagement with school life. Many schools have significant direct funding to deliver after school provision programmes. The impact of the pupil premium payment will be managed by the Virtual school. Its delivery will be supported through the CLA's service delivery target requiring 100% of initial PEP's being undertaken during the winter term.
10. From September 2011, each child in care has an annual pupil premium allowance of £430. This will be managed at the first PEP meeting held at the school during the Winter Term (Sept – Dec 2011). The school will be asked to identify how the £430 will be used to promote learning, engagement and personal development. This will have to be reviewed following the implementation of the new pupil premium scheme in September 2012.

The virtual school and Children in Care finance will trigger the payment to schools once the PEP (random audits will quality assure for clear action points which links the pupil premium to specific activities to raise attainment) has been completed and uploaded onto Carefirst.

11. Whilst all placement fees include the promotion and delivery of sport and extra curricular leisure activities, Southwark's fostering service also has a designated budget to assist foster carers to fund specialist music and sport tuition.
12. Core fostering standards and placement contracts for all looked after children have a requirement that carers should provide a regular and diverse range of extra curricular activities.
13. Carefirst, the social care database, has been developed to enable recording of extra curricular activities for school aged children in care. This is inputted by Independent Reviewing Officers after each review.
14. Communication for all Southwark foster carers (delivered by Southwark Fostering Team) provides information for Southwark foster carers relating to holiday provision delivered by Southwark Council.
15. 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 may be isolated and/or 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.
16. Speakerbox magazines (under 12 and adolescent and aftercare versions) provide information relating to key events and promote healthy lifestyles.

17. Since June 2008 all looked after children and care leavers (13-19) have been able to access a free Fusion leisure centre pass under a three year partnership. The “lifestyle membership” enables unlimited access to Fusion’s gyms, swimming facilities and aerobics/body pump classes.
18. The annual CLA GCSE and Celebration Award has special awards for sporting achievement and performing arts, reflecting Southwark’s commitment to support and recognise progress in extra curricular activity.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

19. The three year Fusion partnership has been renegotiated from 1 April 2011 offering up to 150 “lifestyle memberships” for looked after children at any one time.
20. This further three year arrangement will be subject to review (April 2014). Speakerbox will be involved in all evaluation processes. Following feedback from Speakerbox, the new “offer” is for 14-20 year olds rather than 13-19. See Appendix 1 for newly agreed partnership.
21. Managers from Children in Care service and Fusion will meet six monthly to track progress and usage of the partnership agreement.
22. As at 1 September 2011, Fusion have issued 134 cards but only one in five are using their cards once a month (26 regular users). Speakerbox will therefore be profiling the new offer in magazines and reinforcing key messages around the importance of uptake and regular use.
23. Southwark currently has (1 October 2011) 183 looked after children out of 295 school aged children who have a current recorded regular (up to 2 hours a week) hobby, leisure activity or sport. This is currently in excess of our target of 50% all school aged children accessing regular leisure activities (2 hours per week).
24. During 2010/11 Southwark’s fostering services paid an additional £21,500K on supporting additional music and sport activities.
25. The Children in Care Service are currently reviewing with the targeted Youth Support service the impact and continued provision of youth work support to the drop in service.

Policy implications

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

Community impact statement

27. Southwark Children in Care Service works to promote the five outcomes for children in care as outlined in Every Child Matters. It is recognised that placement stability, engagement in education and extra curricular access to activities (linked with healthy lifestyles) all contribute to building resilience in young people.

Resource implications

28. This years review of all Children in Care spend protected the resources available to Fostering Services to promote extra curriculum activity.

29. Whilst Children in Care may be a prioritised service because of the vulnerability of this group of children, many universal community services they use are not statutory and may be affected by current fiscal pressures.

Consultation

30. 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.
31. In 2008 Speakerbox played a major part in promoting the need for a referral 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 have been involved in reviewing the partnership and its targeted age group from April 2011.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
1	Revised agreement with Fusion

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	24 October 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	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	26 October 2011	