

Item No. 12.	Classification Open	Date: 8 November 2011	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Review and monitor of access to Higher Education in light of the change in fee regime	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Deputy Director Specialist Children's Services and Safeguarding	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Committee note the information and advise of further actions required

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Corporate Parenting Committee at their meeting on 21 April 2010 requested that access to higher education be monitored by the Committee in order (to raise relevant issues with regard to looked after children) to ensure that looked after children are not disproportionately affected by the recent changes in the university fees regime.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3. The new higher tuition fees for universities do not come into effect until 2012/13 so access to Higher Education for 2011/12 should not have been affected. Southwark Council introduced a new Southwark Scholarship Scheme which will pay the tuition fees for this year and subsequent years of 6 Southwark students starting university in October 2011. This scheme will continue next year when the higher tuition fees come into force.
4. From 2012/13 universities will be allowed to charge annual tuition fees of up to £9,000. Any university charging more than £6,000 has to produce an access plan agreed by the Office for Fair Access to use some of the income from increased fees to improve access for students. Two local universities – Goldsmith's College and London South Bank University (LSBU) both specifically mention help for care leavers in their access plans. Goldsmith's are providing 5 scholarships of £4,000 for care leavers while at LSBU care leavers entering the University will receive a £1000 travel allowance and a £750 bursary for all three years of study.
5. The rise in tuition fees should not affect care leavers disproportionately given the duty now laid on universities to have plans for ensuring access and the arrangements for paying tuition fees. Students do not pay the fees up front. The Government pays the tuition fees while the student is at university and the student only starts to repay this loan once their income has risen over £21,000. After that the student pays 9% of their income over £21,000 until the loan is paid off or for thirty years when the debt is written off. The amount to be paid back is therefore constant – it is always 9% of income over £21,000. Changes in interest rates only affect the debt total and not the repayments.

Policy implications

6. The proposals are in line with CYPP (Children and Young People Plan)

Community impact statement

7. This scheme supports some of the more vulnerable young people in the community and aims to narrow the gap between them and the general population. The Children Looked After Service will continue to monitor uptake of university places to see if the changes in 2012-13 have an adverse effect on care leavers.

Resource implications

8. The proposal will be met within existing resources.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Corporate parenting committee Agenda	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Bola Roberts 020 7525 7232

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Deputy Director Specialist Children's Services and Safeguarding	
Report Author	Chris Saunders, Head of Service 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	