

<b>Item No.</b> 6.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 1 May 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Adolescent and Aftercare Service	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To note the delivery of the Adolescent and Aftercare Service for looked after children and care leavers (13-21) contributes to economic well being.
2. To note the Children Looked After service will be relocated to a single purpose built central location in Peckham from May 2012.
3. Corporate Parenting Committee to promote key partnerships/protocols with other council services to target looked after children and care leavers to deliver tangible outcomes regarding apprenticeships, training and further education.
4. That the cabinet member for children's services write to all cabinet members to clarify how the needs for adolescent looked after children and care leavers are being met within their portfolio areas and encouraging interventions that are in place or being developed.

## **KEY MESSAGES**

5. The Adolescent and Aftercare service (A & AC), continues to perform well, delivering good outcomes for older children in care and care leavers.
6. The A & AC service has developed a broad range of service partnerships to enhance services and target support where most needed.
7. The new building will enhance service capacity to deliver successful independence transition at 18 for the most vulnerable care leavers and successfully helping them to engage in Education, Employment and Training as young adults.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Adolescent and Aftercare Service**

8. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service was established in 2007 as part of a single service (business unit) for Southwark's looked after children and care leavers.
9. The Adolescent and Aftercare service (A & AC) is one of three services which make up the overall service for children in care and care leavers, these being the:

- Adolescent and Aftercare service (13-21)
- Services for children in care 0-12 and primary
- Fostering Support Services

Each service area is led by a Service Manager consisting of a number of social work teams with support from administration, finance and specialist co-located staff.

10. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service provides the care planning function for looked after children from the age of 13-18 and aftercare support until the young person achieves the age of 21 (25 if attending university/higher education).
11. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service has five teams which provide the full range of services for looked after children and care leavers (13-21). These being:-
  - Two teams for children in care aged 13-18
  - Two aftercare teams for care leavers aged 18-21 (24 if in university or higher education).
  - One team for unaccompanied minors and unaccompanied minor care leavers.
12. The core responsibilities of the Adolescent and Aftercare service are:-
  - Deliver personalised care planning to include health, education, pathway and transition plans
  - Maintain meaningful contact and support for young people who have left care up to age of 21
  - Deliver support to young people who wish to attend university/higher education up to the age of 25
  - In partnership with primary health, Specialist Health Trusts and Drug Treatment Agencies deliver effective health interventions to include reducing teenage pregnancy and substance misuse
  - Deliver specialist partnerships with Police, Community Safety and Youth Offending Services to address issues relating to youth offending including children in care who are on the cusp of crime or associating with gangs
  - To work alongside colleagues in Southwark's CLA Education Team to narrow the gap relating to attainment especially at Key Stage 4 (GCSE)
  - Deliver a range of interventions post 16 to promote semi independence skills including group work, mentoring, life skills training and deliver placement stability
  - Deliver effective participation arrangements with young people and

Speakerbox to improve, evaluate and shape services

- Working in partnership with Southwark housing, supporting people (including Adult Services) and the private sector (commissioned services) deliver appropriate living accommodation and support for care leavers
- Contribute towards an effective strategy to support young people in employment, education or training from the age of 16 -21, involving partnerships with Connexions, Southwark works, Southwark College, Southwark's Apprenticeship Scheme and targeted youth support (TYS)
- Provide specialist advice, intervention and support, specific to unaccompanied minors and unaccompanied minors leaving care (and those with no recourse to public funds).

### **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

13. There are a number of core functions the A & AC service provides to enhance access to employment, education and training.

### **Case Management**

14. The core function of the Adolescent and Aftercare Service is to provide qualified experienced and motivated social workers and personal advisors to be allocated to each looked after child and care leaver. Currently the Adolescent and Aftercare team have no social worker or personal advisor vacancies. Social workers currently have a maximum case load level of 14 looked after children and personal advisors have between 22 & 25 care leavers
15. Social work and personal advisor activities are monitored with regards to the impact of their direct work with children and care leavers as well as delivering key planning activities around education, employment and preparation for independence (from 18).
16. The children looked after service recognises that the Adolescent and Aftercare Service provides support for some of the most vulnerable young people and young adults in the community. It is recognised that this group may be particularly subject to issues relating to youth crime, substance misuse and anti social behaviour and would therefore want Southwark's services to be effective in delivering economic well being and ensuring care leavers are able to make a positive contribution. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service therefore has a key role to lead a range of strategic partnerships to provide targeted interventions as appropriate.
17. Many of Southwark's looked after children do not begin to settle and make sense of their lives until they have left care. It is therefore crucial that the Adolescent and Aftercare Service maintain effective contact with care leavers up to the age of 21 to provide all the necessary support and encouragement. Over 95% of Southwark's care leavers at the age of 19 are still in touch with their personal advisor and living in suitable accommodation.

## **Additional Vulnerability**

18. Some looked after children may be additionally vulnerable to teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and engagement in youth crime. Others might have additional pressures upon their emotional well being (mental health) as a result of previous trauma or neglect. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service therefore have a screening process which can identify young people from the age of 13 (or later if arriving in care over the age of 13) which can highlight specific vulnerability and trigger referrals to key partners.
19. As a result of the vulnerability screening the following specialist referrals can be made: -
  - (a) Teenage pregnancy services. The CLA Service joint funds a women's worker with the teenage pregnancy strategy to target young women in care. The Family Nurse Partnership Service is also available to provide support to young mothers.
  - (b) Insight (commissioned substance misuse services for young people) through a specific protocol which offers targeted services to looked after children.

NB: Members of Insight and the women's worker attend Southwark's drop in and group work programmes to directly engage with Southwark's most vulnerable children and will receive referrals directly from social workers who have undertaken screening activities relating to substance misuse.

(c) Vulnerability to youth crime. The screening process enables young people to be identified as vulnerable to youth crime which triggers a strategy meeting involving Southwark's youth offending service to identify early intervention and diversionary activities as well as support to placement carers.

(d) Emotional Well Being. All looked after children coming into the care system are subject to mental health screening (Strength and difficulty questionnaires – SDQ) which can identify early issues relating to mental health. This screening process enables prompt referrals to be made to Southwark's co located mental health team (Carelink) to deliver specific interventions.

NB: It is well known that children in care who have issues relating to crime, emotional health, substance misuse and early motherhood are less likely to access the world of work and further education. The A & AC Service therefore screens at 13 to identify issues as early as possible.

## **Key initiatives**

20. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service has developed a number of key initiatives to enhance services provided and improve outcomes for children leaving care at 18 and achieving full independence at 21.

These are as follows: -

### **Apprenticeship Scheme**

21. In partnership with Southwark's organisational development team, the looked after service has developed a protocol to enable care leavers to fully access the council's apprenticeship scheme (20%).
22. The protocol has clear targets with regards to Southwark's care leavers accessing apprenticeship placements as a percentage of all apprenticeships on offer.
23. To support this process, each year the Adolescent and Aftercare Service deliver a short preparation course for those care leavers who wish to apply for a Southwark apprenticeship.
24. The CLA Service provides a leadership role (modeling) through the establishment of two apprenticeship posts within the service, (finance and group work)
25. To support care leaver apprenticeships successfully completing their training and placements, there are designated lead officers within the Aftercare Service and organisation development who track progress and will intervene early as soon as any problems arise.

### **Coaching Scheme**

26. In partnership with Southwark's organisational development team, a pilot project was successfully delivered in 2009 which allocated care leavers with Senior Southwark Managers who wished to coach care leavers. Specific training was provided for Southwark Managers to develop coaching/mentoring skills for vulnerable young adults and raise awareness of the needs of care leavers.

### **Drop In Service**

27. The Aftercare service introduced a "drop in" service at Bradenham Close in 2010. The drop in service is a key initiative delivered in partnership with Southwark's youth work service (TYS) to maintain contact with the most difficult to engage children in care and care leavers aged 16-21. The Bradenham resource centre is available three days per week for young people who are not engaged in employment, education and training or have been assessed as having raised vulnerability. The service has input and advice from partner workers including specialist nurses, employment advisors, Connexions and Insight. From 2012 it is proposed to expand the provision to include CAB and dental services. .
28. The drop in is provided to maintain contact with vulnerable care leavers to enable the service to continue supporting them and maintaining some momentum towards them regaining access to employment, education and training opportunities.
29. The service will be relocated to new premises from May 2012. The drop in

resource has been reshaped with input from young people to include kitchen, groupwork and IT resource.

### **Housing Protocol**

30. Southwark Specialist services has a long standing protocol with Southwark housing (over 20 years). The protocol enables care leavers to access level 2 priority for Southwark housing at 18. Under leaving care legislation, local authorities are required to provide suitable accommodation for all care leavers. For most care leavers in London this results in care leavers being allocated a house of multiple occupation or a temporary tenancy in the private market. Through Southwark's protocol with housing (including supporting people) Southwark is able to offer a tenancy (twelve month probationary tenancy in keeping with general Southwark policy) at 18 which provides suitable accommodation at affordable rental costs. For all young people who are deemed to be vulnerable at 18 and require additional support, Southwark housing allow the children looked after service to have direct referral access to "supporting people" placements which provide up to 2 years supportive housing till the young person is ready and able to cope with their own tenancy.

### **Southwark Works and Connexions**

31. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service have an active partnership with Southwark Connexions and Southwark Works to provide allocated staff who are able to target the most vulnerable care leavers who may struggle to access the employment, education and training markets.
32. In partnership with the CLA education Service, social workers also identify the young people who do not have firm plans and directly intervene to help young people from 16 clarify their pathways and access special projects to help them engage and prepare. The impact of these partnerships and protocols are measurable through attainment levels at 18 and those that are accessing employment, education and training at 17 and 19 (key performance indicators). The CLA Services ability to maintain its current employment, education and training levels in the current economic circumstances reflects the impact of these partnerships.
33. There is a 6 weekly tracking group chaired by the A & AC service manager with key personnel to track every individual aged 16-19 who is NEET.

### **Group Work and Fusion Partnership**

34. The CLA service has a group worker who is able to deliver a range of activities and learning opportunities for young people in care and care leavers. This acts as a focal point for partners who wish to deliver key health and developmental inputs for looked after children and care leavers. Examples of the impact of group work can be seen through the delivery of sexual health promotional activity and more social events such as black history month (Windrush) and the young people/staff choir (CLA celebration ceremony).
35. Southwark's leisure centre contractor, Fusion is committed to a further protocol

from April 2011 to deliver free gold memberships to looked after children and care leavers from 14 – 20.

36. From April 2012 a new initiative is being introduced to promote sport and hobbies for every child in a Southwark foster placement.

### **Communication and Participation**

37. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service are fully committed to consulting with young people relating to their individual care plans and evaluation and shaping of services. The service actively uses the Speakerbox magazine to promote services and delivers a range of information materials for young people. In addition all young people when they reach the age of 13 are invited to visit the Adolescent and Aftercare Service for an induction event where they meet staff and key partners.
38. Speakerbox plan to develop their own facebook page in 2012/13 to enhance communication and service feedback.
39. A similar induction event is managed by the Aftercare Team when young people reach the age of 18 to explain the service and introduce them to key partnership staff.
40. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service have almost completed the development of an interactive website to promote service awareness, signpost forthcoming events and book appointments with key staff.

### **Single Location for CLA Service**

41. That the whole CLA Service will be integrated into a single location May 2012. The current design proposals incorporate all of the current facilities available to the Adolescent and Aftercare Service which will be updated and modernised. This resource will enhance the work of the service as a whole particularly the drop in, employment, training, skills development and group work processes. It is expected that through the co location of the Carelink team (now increasing its remit from 16 years to 18 years of age) there will be more effective early intervention planning for young people who have emotional well being issues.

### **Service Overview**

42. The performance and impact of the Adolescent and Aftercare Service is subject to regular scrutiny by the Corporate Parenting Committee through the series of partnership reports and performance reports.

### **Policy implications**

43. There are none.

### **Resource implications**

44. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service delivers statutory provision for looked after children and care leavers and is delivered within current resources allocated to the

Children's Looked After Services. There are no additional resource implications in this report.

45. As part of the overall looked after service, the Adolescent and Aftercare service has a key part in delivering direct involvement of young people in their individual service plans and evaluating and shaping service delivery.

### Community impact statement

46. Southwark CLA Services 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, access to leisure and healthy lifestyles all help to build resilience for young people to successfully achieve economical wellbeing and making a positive contribution from 18.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Support for young people leaving care <a href="http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/840/children_in_care/628/support_for_young_people_leaving_care">http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/840/children_in_care/628/support_for_young_people_leaving_care</a>	<a href="http://www.southwark.gov.uk">www.southwark.gov.uk</a>	Alisdair Smith Telephone 020 7525 0654

### APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	



## AUDIT TRAIL

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Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
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