

<b>Item No.</b> 8.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 5 November 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection Outcomes	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's and Adult Services	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee are asked to note the Inspection Report and the key areas for improvement in relation to looked after Children listed in paragraph 7 of this report.
2. That the Director of Children's Social Care brings a detailed action plan to the next Corporate Parenting Committee on how the improvements will be implemented.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. An inspection was carried out by Ofsted Inspectors between 21 May and 1 June 2012. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the contribution made by relevant services in the local area towards ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded and to determine the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers.
4. The inspection report which was published on the Ofsted website on 10 July 2012, identified areas of strength and areas of practice that met requirements, with some areas for improvement.
5. An Action Plan has been developed to address the areas for development identified within the inspection report and is attached as Appendix 1.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. The outcomes of the inspection are as follows:

<b>Safeguarding services</b>	
Overall effectiveness	Good
Capacity for improvement	Outstanding
Children and young people are safe and feel safe	Good
Quality of provision	Good
The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe	Good
Ambition and prioritisation	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Performance management and quality assurance	Good
Partnership working	Good

Equality and diversity	Good
<b>Services for looked after children</b>	
Overall effectiveness	Good
Capacity for improvement	Good
Being healthy	Good
Staying safe	Good
Enjoying and achieving	Good
Making a positive contribution, including user engagement	Outstanding
Economic well-being	Adequate
Quality of provision	Good
Ambition and prioritisation	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Performance management and quality assurance	Good
Equality and diversity	Good

7. The key areas for improvement in relation to looked after children and care leaver services were identified as:

- Ensure that clearly recorded care plans are in place for looked after children and care leavers containing clear, specific outcomes sought as well as realistic contingency plans.
- Ensure that assessments are comprehensive and up to date and that they take account of the full circumstances of the child in need plans and interventions.
- Ensure that transition to independence is effectively planned, commencing at an appropriate stage for young people, leading to the development of and support for independence skills.
- Develop a systemic evaluation of services for children and young people and their families on the edge of care to assess their effectiveness and ensure a robust monitoring of these children leading to timely decision making should they need to become looked after.
- Ensure an effective dialogue with the family courts aimed at establishing a mutual clear understanding of thresholds, quality of plans and proposals, and timescales for completion within a timeframe suitable for each child.
- Ensure capacity of the independent visiting service is sufficient to meet need.
- Southwark NHS Primary Care Trust and the local authority to ensure that young people's health needs are fully addressed in preparation for leaving care, including the consistent provision of summary health plans.
- Ensure that themes identified within case audits are collated, leading to clear action plans and that consequent outcomes are systematically and consistently evaluated to achieve a full understanding of their service impact.

### Key themes

8. The following key themes are noted:

- Overall effectiveness of services for looked after children is good, with the Local Authority and its partners presenting as effective corporate parents. The needs of looked after children are established as clear priorities for members of the children's trust, and there is a well-embedded and improving commissioning culture in place which is contributing to improved outcomes.
- Ambition and prioritisation for looked after children and young people are outstanding. The corporate parenting arrangements are mature, exhibiting a

very strong commitment to the needs of looked after children, and are fully integrated into the children's partnership. This ensures effective prioritising of children in care and care leavers, who receive a very high profile within the partnership.

- The capacity of services to improve is good, with strong current performance across a wide range of outcomes.
- The contribution of Speakerbox was highlighted as excellent, with a well-embedded commitment by services to engage the views of looked after children.
- Good arrangements are in place to assess and maintain the health of looked after children and young people. There are very good and highly effective arrangements to meet the emotional health needs of most looked after children and young people through the looked after CAMHS provision (child and adolescent mental health services).
- Safeguarding arrangements for looked after children are good. Pre-birth work is of a high quality, with risk well recognised, leading to appropriate and timely action.
- The vast majority of children who responded to the inspection service user survey or who were met by inspectors stated that their placement was good or very good and that they felt safe or very safe.
- Outcomes for looked after children and young people to enjoy and achieve are good, and arrangements for looked after children and young people to make a positive contribution are outstanding. Consultation and engagement with children and young people looked after is extensive and of a very high quality, actively contributing to a number of improvements in how care is experienced.
- Looked after children and young people's economic well-being outcomes are adequate. Of the care leavers surveyed, less than half felt they had enough help to prepare for leaving care.
- Overall the quality of direct work with children is good and child centred, there is evidence of very sensitive and considered interventions with children.

### **Future work programme implications**

9. Potential areas for future scrutiny include:

- Consistency of practice in delivery of health review assessments.
- Development of health needs summary in preparation for leaving care.
- Supporting and preparing children in care and care leavers for adulthood.
- Development of systems to track educational attainment and progress.
- Development of evaluation and monitoring framework for children and young people and their families on the edge of care.

### **Policy implications**

10. The areas for development identified in the inspection are consistent with local strategic frameworks including the Children and Young People's Plan and Council Plan.

### **Community impact statement**

11. This report aims to communicate the strengths and areas for improvement assessed through inspection, thus, impact on the community is minimal. However, the corresponding action contains activities which will seek to make

Southwark safer and improve outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. The action plan will be monitored to ensure these activities do not have adverse community impacts going forward.

### Resource implications

12. It is anticipated that the actions to take forward the inspection areas of development will be achieved within existing resources.

### Legal and financial implications

13. There are no legal and financial implications arising from this report.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background papers	Held at	Contact
Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services – 10 July 2012	<a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/southwark">http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/southwark</a>	Jackie Cook 020 7525 0387

### APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services - Safeguarding Improvement Plan

### AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Social Care	
<b>Report Author</b>	Sadie Dann, Policy Officer	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	22 October 2012	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	22 October 2012	