

Item No. 10.	Classification: Open	Date: 26 February 2013	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Progress on the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Post-inspection Report	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director, Children's Social Care	

RECOMMENDATION

1. Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee are asked to note the improvement actions and their progress.
2. That officers continue to monitor service developments and improvements and to report back to committee as appropriate.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. On 10 July 2012 Southwark's safeguarding and looked after children inspection report was published. The report identified strengths and also areas for development to be completed in three phases; immediately, within three months and within six months.
4. An action plan was developed to address the areas for development and is attached as Appendix 1.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The areas for development for Looked After Children services are as follows:

Immediately:

- Ensure that clearly recorded care plans are in place containing clear, specific outcomes sought as well as realistic contingency plans.

Within three months:

- 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 an 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 leading to timely decision making should they need to become

looked after

- Ensure an effective dialogue with the family courts aimed at establishing an 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.

Within six months:

- Southwark NHS Primary Care Trust and the Council to ensure young people's health needs are fully addressed in preparation for leaving care.
- Ensure that themes identified within case audits are collated, leading to clear action plans and outcomes are systematically and consistently evaluated to achieve a full understanding of their service impact.

Progress update

6. Immediate areas for Improvement: This action is complete. All active care plans have been reviewed by the Independent Reviewing Officer and identified issues have been resolved.

Areas for improvement within three months

7. Out of the five areas for improvement requiring completion within three months all five have been completed.
8. The transition to independence for Looked After Children has been improved through a robust review of individual plans and a baseline quality audit which has resulted in more comprehensive and up-to date transition plans. Engagement events with Looked After Children and Care Leavers have also been carried out as a part of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) refresh. Issues raised regarding transitions have been feedback to senior managers and will be used to reform services.
9. Provision for children, young people and their families on the edge of care has been improved through an evaluation exercise which effectively challenged current practice and identified new local practice options. This activity will be linked with the troubled families agenda and is predicted to further reduce the numbers of children entering care.
10. Partnership arrangements between the Council and the family courts have been improved through the implementation of cross borough care proceedings pilot. The pilot will improve the quality of evidence to court by developing shared systems for ensuring social work statements are of good quality and Council submissions are delivered on time. Finally, sufficient capacity in the independent visiting service will be ensured through an annual Independent Reviewing Officer report which will be presented and scrutinised by senior social care and commissioning managers.

Areas for improvement within six months

11. Both actions requiring improvement within six months have been addressed and

activity will continue throughout 2013.

12. Looked After Children's health needs have been addressed through the reconfiguration of commissioning arrangements; including needs assessment and market analysis. Moreover, health needs have been identified through consultation with looked after young people as part of the CYPP renewal process. Outcomes are being analysed and will be used to increase the quality of health plans.
13. The process of case auditing is being transformed through implementation of an integrated performance management and quality framework for both Children's Services and the Southwark Safeguarding Children's Board (SSCB). The framework will shift the purpose of performance management from one that describes activity and how well we do it; to one that demonstrates whether we have made a difference and captures the service users' journey.

Policy implications

14. The actions identified in the inspection are consistent with local strategic frameworks including the Children and Young People's Plan and Council Plan.

Community impact statement

15. The improvement actions identified comprise 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

16. The actions being taken forward will be achieved within existing resources.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held at	Contact
Ofsted Inspection Reports	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report	Sadie Dann 020 7525 3863

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Safeguarding and Looked After Children Action Plan

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Director, Children's Social Care	
Report Author	Sadie Dann, Policy Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	18 February 2013	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	18 February 2013	