

<b>Item No.</b> 10.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 29 April 2013	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Annual Report on Fostering	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Corporate Parenting committee to note the Annual Fostering Report.
2. Corporate Parenting committee to note and comment on proposals to improve recruitment of Southwark approved foster carers.

## KEY MESSAGES

3. The Southwark Foster Care Service was judged good with outstanding features in its last inspection in December 2011. The Adolescent and Aftercare service (A & AC), continues to perform well, delivering good outcomes for older children in care and care leavers.
4. Recent changes have been made to the fostering panel to refresh the approach to the approval and quality assurance of foster carers. It is good practice to ensure that there is a regular turnover of both the chair and panel members so that standards can be maintained that the panel does not collude with the service.
5. Work is underway to improve recruitment of foster carers to ensure that more children and young people can be placed within or close to the borough and maintain contact with their families and communities. Southwark has an ageing foster care population and it is important to ensure that carers who retire are replaced and that capacity is built to meet the current level of need and demand.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6. The annual Fostering report provides information about the activity and outcomes achieved in 2012-13 by the service and what is planned for the year 2013-14.
7. The work of the Southwark Fostering Service is governed by statutory regulations, which require that elected members are informed of the Service's activity on a regular basis. This enables Members to fulfill their responsibilities as Corporate Parents for looked after children in Southwark.
8. The annual report informs elected members about:
  - National developments in fostering issues
  - Activity, performance and developments in the Fostering Service in 2012-13

- Future plans for the Fostering Service in 2013-14.
9. The foster care service has a vital role to play in providing safe and secure placements for vulnerable children who for whatever reason cannot remain with their birth families or have been abandoned.

**Policy implications**

10. There are none.

**Resource implications**

11. There are no additional resource implications in this report.

**Community impact statement**

12. Southwark Fostering Service has a key role to play in ensuring that children and young people can remain with a family close to their birth parents and community. 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 to their communities.

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark Council Annual Report on Fostering 2012-13	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Alasdair Smith 020 7525 0654

**APPENDICES**

No.	Title
Appendix A	Southwark Council Annual Report on Fostering 2012-13

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson Director Children's Social Care	
<b>Report Author</b>	Alasdair Smith, Head of Services for Children in Care	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	16 April 2013	
<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>	16 April 2013	