

Item No. 6.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 July 2013	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Feedback from Speaker Box and Speaker Box Action Plan	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Looked After Children in Southwark	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the committee welcomes and notes the following documents:
 - The Speaker Box mission statement
 - Speaker Box work areas and achievements 2012-13
2. The 2013 -14 Children's Service participation action plan (including those actions detailed below) to be completed and presented to the Committee for approval.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Southwark has a good history of involving young people in decisions about their care. Speaker Box was set up in 2005 as a voice for young people looked after in Southwark and was well integrated into decision-making about Children looked after. In 2007, after a number of consultation events with young people, the Speaker Box Council was formally set up as Southwark's children in care council.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. Young people in Speaker Box have been meeting regularly with the senior managers and the corporate parenting group. The last meeting held was October 2012.
5. Speaker Box were actively involved in the OFSTED inspection of Children's Services in May - June 2012. The inspectors were very impressed by the presentation that was given to them by the young people and as a result Speaker Box was singled out by Ofsted as an example of national Best Practice in April 2013. This then led to a very positive article about Speaker Box in 'Children and Young People Now' magazine on 30 April 2013.
6. The documents included for reference outline the way in which LB Southwark Children's Services in collaboration with the Speaker Box council continue to ensure that children in care and care leavers have a voice in children's services.
 - Speaker Box's mission statement is outlined in the first document attached.

- The achievements of Speaker Box are outlined in the second document.
7. Our last children's rights and participation officer left at the end of 2012. A new children's rights worker has recently started with the council on 4 June 2013.
 8. This gives us an opportunity to refresh our work with young people. The new worker is aiming to increase the accessibility and relevance of the Speaker Box council to all young people in care and care leavers. This will lead to more meaningful participation from children with disabilities and those with English as a second language.
 9. Key new actions planned for 2013-14:
 - Re-design publicity materials including complaints, advocacy fliers and Speaker Box magazines to make them more accessible to all young people
 - A 6-week peer leadership and self-development film project to be run for young people in care and care leavers. The resulting film will be used in training for social workers managers and councillors around best practice in how to engage with young people.
 - Design and run a half day training programme for young people wishing to actively participate in Speaker Box
 - Set up a two-track pathway for young people to engage with the Speaker Box council – to improve inclusion for those young people who are not confident in a larger group setting.
 - To work collaboratively with the other youth groups in the borough on issues that affect all young people in Southwark e.g. education and crime

Community impact statement

10. This item will have an impact on the work that the council does with looked after children and their carers.
11. The decision to note this report has been judged to have no or a very small impact on local people and communities.

Equalities impact

12. These consultations are intended to improve the outcome for looked after children and care leavers.

Resource implications

13. None.

Consultation

14. There is ongoing consultation between the Children looked after service, the Quality assurance service and the Speaker Box council.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
The Speaker Box Mission Statement Speaker Box Achievements 2012-13	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Jackie Cook 020 7525 0387

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	The Speaker Box mission statement
Appendix 2	Speaker Box achievements 2012-13

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Director Children’s Social Care		
Report Author	Jackie Cook, Head of Social Work Improvement and Quality Assurance		
Version	Final		
Dated	8 July 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			8 July 2013