

Item No. 10.	Classification: Open	Date: 3 November 2014	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		2014/15 Mid-year Performance Report – Looked After Children	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director, Children’s Social Care	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That members note the information provided in this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. This report is a mid-year update on the performance figures and data reported in the annual performance report.
3. Statistical neighbour and England benchmarking figures are from 12/13 DfE publications. 13/14 benchmarking figures will be available later this autumn.
4. Overall, the performance of the service is sound, although we are assessing the impact of the changes brought about by the transition.
5. A Children Looked After Strategic Group has been formed to focus on all elements of performance and the quality of practice in the service.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Our looked after children population

6. The number of children looked after at the mid year point (29 September 2014) is 525, which is a 4.5% drop on the 13/14 end of year position. The table on the next page shows the current number of looked after children and rate per 10,000 (using the 2013 ONS mid year population estimates) and the position for the previous five years together with the latest benchmarking figures. Although our number of looked after children has reduced, we are still above our statistical neighbours, London and the National averages. It is important to note that Southwark has the 18th highest proportion of children living in low income households (according to figures released by the government in February 2014) in the country and the 11th highest in London, so we would expect there to be high rates of children and young people entering care. However work is underway to develop specialist “edge of care” services to enable more children and young people to remain safely in their families and communities.

Description	Benchmarking			Southwark Historic					Current*	
	2012/13									2014/15
	National	London	SN	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	mid-year
Number of children looked after at end of reporting period	68110	10090	392	535	557	522	552	565	550	525
Rate of children looked after at end of reporting period per 10,000 pop aged under 18	60	55	72	92.7	95.5	89.1	93.5	95.7	90	85.9

* Using ONS 2013 mid year estimate population figures

7. The proportion of children looked after at the mid-year point in each placement type is largely unchanged from the end of the 2013/14 year. There has been a small decrease in the proportions of children living in children's homes (-3% points) and increases in those living independently (+2% points) & in other residential settings (+2% points).

Looked after children - Placement type								
Placement type	Southwark						Stat neighbours	
	2012/13	%	2013/14	%	2014/15 mid-year	%	2012/13 Average	%
Foster placements	425	75%	424	77%	409	78%	300	76%
Placed for adoption	20	4%	29	5%	20	4%	16	4%
Placement with parents	15	3%	6	1%	7	1%	10	3%
Other placement in the community (Independent living)	35	6%	28	5%	35	7%	18	4%
Secure units, children's homes and hostels	17	3%	50	9%	31	6%	42	11%
Other residential settings (Residential care home, mother and baby unit, NHS, Youth offender institute)	37	7%	10	2%	20	4%	9	3%
Residential schools	12	2%	0	0%	0	0%	5	2%
Missing - Absent for more than 24 hours from agreed placement	3	1%	3	1%	3	1%	0	0%
Other placement	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	565		550		525		400	

Please Note: In 12/13 the published figures show that 12 children were placed in residential schools on 31 March 2013. This is inaccurate, although these placements are schools, because they are dual-registered as Children's Homes (as defined in section 1(6) of the Care Standards Act 2000) they should be shown in our figures as Children's Homes. The figures from onwards 2013/14 correct this.

8. The proportion of looked after children on full care orders has increased slightly (+2% points) as has the proportion looked after under s20 of the Children Act (voluntary accommodation) (+3% points). The proportions looked after on interim care orders and placement orders have both decreased slightly (-2% points). The reduction in interim care orders is a result of a fall in the number of care proceedings following an all time high in 2013\14. Care proceeding activity is now more in line with statistical neighbours. The number of children in care under Section 20 remains high because of the number of older teenagers entering care because of homelessness. At any one time we have between 80-90 17 year olds in care.

Looked after children - Legal status						
Legal status	2012/13	%	2013/14	%	2014/15 mid-year	%
Detained in LA	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Full care order	224	40%	263	48%	263	50%
Interim care order	115	20%	63	11%	46	9%
On remand, or committed for trial or sentence, and accommodated by LA	11	2%	4	1%	2	0%
Placement order granted	80	14%	72	13%	58	11%
Single period of accommodation under section 20	134	24%	148	27%	156	30%
Grand Total	565		550		525	

9. As can be seen when compared to the Southwark 0-18 population (see table below), the younger age groups in our looked after children appear under-represented, whilst the opposite is true for children in the older age groups. However, some of the children entering care at a young age are ultimately adopted (and so leave care) and since this is an area of national policy this trend is likely to continue and the numbers of these children increase. Southwark's recent success at adopting more children from care (21 rising to 33 in 2013/14) has reduced the number in the young age groups. This is also a result in the reduction in care proceedings, which usually involve younger children. Overall, the cohort of children currently looked after has seen a shift to an 'older' cohort. However the 'Staying Put' national strategy has influence here; there is an expectation that children who are looked after at 18 should remain in care until they reach 21, particularly if they are in further and higher education. As a consequence, these considerations need to be borne in mind when evaluating this data.

Looked after children - age								
Age band	2012/13	%	2013/14	%	2014/15 mid-year	%	Southwark 0-17 pop	%
0	42	7%	28	5%	29	6%	4,789	8%
1 - 4	88	16%	78	14%	58	11%	16,965	28%
5 - 9	115	20%	101	18%	96	18%	17,007	28%
10 - 15	183	32%	186	34%	182	35%	16,627	27%
16 - 17	137	24%	157	29%	160	30%	5,707	9%
Total	565		550		525		61,095	

10. The table below shows that the ethnicity of looked after children in Southwark has remained fairly stable, with Black or Black British (44%) and White (33%) making up the biggest proportions.

Looked after children - Ethnicity						
Ethnicity	2012/13	%	2013/14	%	2014/15 mid-year	%
White	193	34%	190	35%	174	33%
Mixed	93	16%	91	17%	77	15%
Asian or Asian British	20	4%	18	3%	18	3%
Black or Black British	239	42%	235	43%	232	44%
Other ethnic groups	20	4%	16	3%	24	5%
Total	565		550		525	

11. When compared to projected figures for the ethnicity of the wider Southwark population, shown in the table below, it appears that children from a Black Caribbean background (6%) are over-represented in our looked after children cohort (14%), whereas children from an Asian background (11% in total) are under-represented in our looked after cohort (5%). The projected ethnicity figures come from the Greater London Authority and were published in February 2014. As with any projected figures these figures need to be used with caution because they are built upon a range of assumptions, any of which may be inaccurate. They are the best measure we can currently use.

Looked after children - Ethnicity				
Ethnicity	2014/15 mid-year to compare with Southwark	%	Southwark 0-17 pop*	%
White	174	33%	21,100	34%
Black Caribbean	71	14%	3,500	6%
Black African	114	22%	13,800	22%
Black other	89	17%	11,500	19%
Indian	0	0%	800	1%
Pakistani	3	1%	400	1%
Bangladeshi	4	1%	1,300	2%
Chinese	3	1%	1,150	2%
Other Asian	11	2%	3,300	5%
Other	56	11%	4,850	8%
	525		61,700	

* Using GLA 2013 Round Ethnic Group Projections - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Final

12. From the table below it is possible to see that there were more Males than Females in care at 31st March, this contrasts with the general population where there is an almost even split. The balance in our looked after children cohort has been fairly consistent over the last 18 months.

Looked after children - Gender								
Gender	2012/13	%	2013/14	%	2014/15 mid-year	%	Southwark 0-17 pop	%
Female	249	44%	242	44%	234	45%	29,979	49%
Male	316	56%	308	56%	291	55%	31,116	51%
Total	565		550		525		61,095	

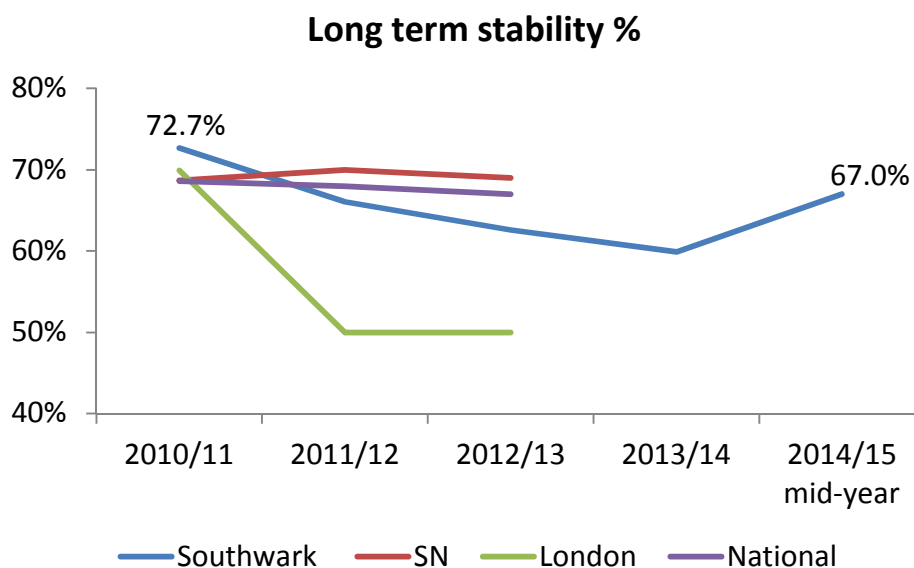
13. The table below looks in more detail at the children who were looked after on the 29th September and their gender by the age band they are in currently. This reveals that in the younger age groups there are more girls than boys. From the age of 5 this starts to change and in the older age groups there are more boys than girls.

Looked after children - 29/09/2014			
Current age band	Female	Male	Number of children
0-4	56.32%	43.68%	87
5-9	46.88%	53.13%	96
10-15	39.56%	60.44%	182
16-18	42.50%	57.50%	160
Total	44.57%	55.43%	525

Performance figures

Long-term placement stability

14. The graph below shows the proportion of children aged under 16 who have been both looked after for two and a half years or more, and been in the same placement for the last two years (if they are placed for adoption the calculation looks at the last two placements equalling two years or more). It shows that the performance over the last three and a half years had been declining but has improved in the last six months



15. Long term stability is a key determinant in securing positive outcomes for children in care. Southwark is recruiting more foster carers both in and closer to the borough to ensure that children and young people can remain near to their families and communities. All foster carers receive support to enable them to cope with more challenging children or look after larger sibling groups. Long-term stability of children in care will continue to be monitored closely so that further improvements can be secured and the upward trend in performance maintained.

Children placed out of borough

16. As can be seen from the table below, there has been a slight improvement in the numbers of children placed inside the Borough. Despite this high figure it is important to remember that 82% of the cohort are placed in foster care or placed for adoption and are in permanent long-term alternative family settings. Work is already underway to identify those young people who can either return to their parents or move closer to Southwark so that they can receive the support they need from local services.

Looked after children - borough of placement				
	2013/14		2014/15 mid-year	
Placed inside Southwark	141	25.6%	148	28.2%
Placed outside Southwark	406	73.8%	374	71.2%
Not included	3	0.5%	3	0.6%
	550		525	

Children placed more than 20 miles from home

17. The table below shows the distance that children are placed from their home address. The mid-year position shows a slight improvement on the end of year position. There is more detail on this in the placement stability report. Services are working to bring children back to the borough where possible as more local foster carers are recruited.

Looked after children - distance from home				
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15 mid-year
% of LAC at the end of the period placed more than 20 miles from their home	17%	17%	23%	22%

Community impact statement

18. Southwark Children Looked After services works to promote the best possible outcomes for children in care. 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 make a positive contribution. Effective performance monitoring supports these objectives and enables us to identify areas where improvements may need to be made.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Director, Children’s Social Care		
Report Author	Rashid Jussa, Strategic Intelligence and Performance Manager		
Version	Final		
Dated	21 October 2014		
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		21 October 2014	