

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 26/11/09	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Children Looked After – 2008/09 Academic Year GCSE Results	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Assistant Director of Children's Specialist Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note 2009 GCSE results for Southwark looked-after children.
2. To note the celebration and award ceremony (Class of 2009) held Thursday 29th of October.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3 Each year (1st of November) all local authorities are required to report to the DCSF concerning performance of looked-after children at all key stages and GCSE achievement. This performance measurement (OC2) is a position statement relating to all children who have been in care for a year or more as at 30th September and also includes information concerning inclusion, attendance, special educational needs and health.
- 4 This year the Looked After service had 253 number of children who would have been in care for twelve months as at 30th September 2009.
- 5 The service also had a further 78 school age children who had been in care for less than twelve months – an overall total of 331 school age children..
- 6 In July the service sent letters to the schools of the whole cohort of 331 school age children to obtain key data relating to sats results, exclusions, special educational needs and attendance.
- 7 A further set of letters were distributed in September 09 to the schools of those looked after children in Year 11 to obtain their GCSE results. These returns are then used to validate the verbal feedback obtained by social workers.

NB: Over 60% of Southwark's looked after children of school age do not attend a Southwark school.

- 8 Two dedicated administration officers within the looked after service have a lead responsibility for writing to each school and inputting the data upon return. From mid September these officers then had to liaise further with those schools who had either failed to make a return or where the original requests had been lost in the post (postal strikes) or within internal school systems.

- 9 From 2008 GNVQ's are no longer part of the national curriculum and have been replaced with a range of other courses at level 1 & 2, which can contribute towards the young person obtaining the equivalent of a GCSE. As yet the national government reporting system (OC2 return database) does not permit these qualifications to be uploaded. It is important that these are included as Southwark's cohort of looked after children have specific challenges relating to language, rates of unaccompanied minors and deprivation.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Performance

- 10 The chart below outlines Southwark's GCSE performance for the 2009 and provides comparison with the previous three years.

GCSE & EQUIVALENTS 2009

OC2 DATA DEFINITIONS	2005/06	%	2006/07	%	2007/08	%	2008/09	%
Number in cohort	57		59		61		46	
Number who sat at least 1 GCSE* examination	39	68.42%	41	69.49%	43	70.49%	28	60.86%
Number who obtained at least 1 GCSE* A*-G	38	66.67%	37	62.71%	42	68.85%	28	60.86%
Number who obtained at least 5 GCSE* A*-G	22	38.60%	19	32.20%	31	50.81%	16	34.78%
Number who obtained at least 5 GCSE* A*-C	9	15.79%	8	13.56%	12	19.67%	9	19.56%
Number who did not sit any GCSE's*	18	31.57%	18	30.50%	18	29.50%	18	39.13%

* Or Equivalent qualification

- 11 The 2009 cohort was significantly smaller and aside from the 5 A* – C category has seen a dip in performance. The % gaining 5 A* to C has remained roughly the same as last year whilst the % gaining 5 A* to G has dipped slightly but is fairly consistent with other years.
- 12 The % however who have achieved at least 1 GCSE or equivalent has dropped by 8%.
- 13 The 08/09 cohort was much smaller and therefore makes it much more difficult to draw detailed conclusions.
- 14 It should also be noted that the actual number of young people who did not sit GCSE's has remained the same over the past four years.

Children who did not sit GCSEs or equivalent

- 15 The diagram below indicates the presenting issues of young people who did not sit exams at Level 1 or above. The service has a designated education advisor who has worked with CLA Management to identify and track all young people who are not pursuing GCSE coursework and required targeted interventions to get them back on track or to pursue alternative qualifications.
- 16 This year, there were 18 who did not achieve any qualification at Level 1 or above.

<u>Year 11 Pupils not achieving Level One or above</u>		
Of the 46 LAC eligible to sit GCSE &/or equivalent 18 did not sit for the following reasons:-		
Reasons: -		
Number who sat exams which were not GCSE &/or equivalent	= 4	(8.7%)
Poor attendance/school/placement disruption	= 5	
Complete/Profound school refuser	= 3	
Profound SEN/Disability	= 2	
Missing from care	= 1	
Failed to attend exams	= 1	
UM Age disputed	= 1	
Living in Ireland will complete next year	= 1	
Total	= 18	

- 17 Of the 18 young people listed above, there was only 1 young person who was expected to sit GCSEs who failed to attend despite specific arrangements. This was an improvement upon last year when there were 5 who failed to attend. Last year the Corporate Parenting Committee requested that information relating to young people not sitting their exams should be provided each year. The reason for this child not sitting GCSE's was that he was living and studying out of Borough but his placement broke down. At his request he was brought back into Borough and arrangements were made for him to sit his GCSE's at his previous school placement but he flatly refused to attend.
- 18 Listed below are two case study examples that the CLA Advisory Teacher has identified to describe to the Corporate Parenting Committee the sort of issues some of the young people are experiencing which may result in significant disruption or absence of meaningful education provision. It also provides an insight into the amount of support activity being provided on a case by case basis.

Case Study One

Nadia

Nadia has a statement for emotional behavioural difficulties, which predates her coming into care. She also has literacy difficulties and mental health needs.

Nadia came into care aged 10.

Nadai has had a lot of trouble settling into care placements, she has spent her teenage years so far, worrying about her mother with whom she has frequent contact, her older sister who has spent a considerable part of the last few years in prison and her nephew who has now been adopted.

Nadia had very low self esteem, she has had five different schools since coming into care. Each time the move has been because her care placement broke down.

With each change of school, her self esteem dwindled as did her academic attainment.

She began to truant and to present with a series of low level health problems in order to avoid school.

Her last school placement began in September 2007. At that time she was achieving at roughly three years behind the average for her age.

The carers, the school, the social worker and the CLA education team met and put in place a package which included: in school support, extra curricular activities, home tuition and CAMHS support. This has been closely monitored and reviewed over the last two years.

Nadia achieved six and a half GCSEs at A-G and is currently enjoying a college course in hairdressing.

Case Study Two

Toby

Toby came into care in April 2007 as a result of his involvement in the youth justice system. Toby had been living with his sister, as he no longer wished to stay with his mother who had been suffering from domestic violence. Her sister felt unable to cope with his anti social behaviour and so he was accommodated in a residential unit with a view to returning him to his mother's care. His mother had removed herself from the domestic violence situation and was anxious for her son to return. Toby refused to go. He was an able student, who according to his school could have achieved 10 GCSEs at A-C. He had however started to truant.

Once in care he was offered extra help to catch up on missed work, in school support, an escort to school, financial rewards for school attendance, a reduced timetable and a part time college place .All of these he refused, he also refused CAMHS support .

He took no GCSES and is currently NEET. His current semi-independent housing providers are trying to engage him in voluntary work and the CLA post 16 education advisor is working to support him into college.

In terms of what he was achieving at KS3, he should currently be studying 4 A levels.

Key Stage 2 Results

The 08/09 key stage results are outlined in Diagram 3 below,

Key Stage 2	26	NA	20	NA	Number in year 6 at school who were eligible for the end of Key Stage 2 tests Of these: - the number who sat all of these tests Number who attained at least level 4 in the following tests: - english - mathematics - science
	15	57.69%	19	95.00%	
	7	26.92%	8	40.00%	
	6	23.08%	9	45.00%	
	12	46.15%	15	75.00%	

- 19 The numbers of looked after children at Key Stage 2 are relatively small as a cohort and have fallen by a further 20% this year.
- 20 Last year's apparent very poor performance should be seen within the context of the number of children who actually sat the assessment or results available at the time, because only 15 of the 26 children in the cohort were available results this produced a particularly poor return for 2008.
- 21 The collection of key stage data has improved further this year and also a higher proportion of children have actually sat their school assessments at Key Stage 2.
- 22 Then performance comparison with Southwark children are laid out in full in Appendix 1.
- 23 This performance represents an improvement on last year and has further narrowed the gap between the Southwark average and Southwark looked after children. This performance is also broadly in line with the London average and key comparators.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

24. There are no policy implications.

COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT

25. Looked after children in Year 11 will use these results to form decisions relating to future education employment and training choices. At 18 most care leavers return to Southwark (if placed outside the borough) to live. The achievement of GCSEs is a key foundational stage to enabling care leavers to be successful in making a positive contribution as adults and their overall economic wellbeing.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

26. None.

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Key Stage Two Comparator Report

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services and Safeguarding	
Report Author	Head of Services for Children in Care	
Version	Final	
Dated	17/11/09	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law and Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Executive Member	Yes	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team	17 November 2009	