

Corporate Parenting Committee

Wednesday 7 July 2021
2.00 pm
160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Supplemental Agenda No. 1

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Date: 29 June 2021

Self-Evaluation of Social Work Practice

Children in Care and Care Leavers
Children's Social Care
June 2021

The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

7.	Making good decisions for children		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
7.1	<p>Successive years of investment a dedicated edge of care service (KFT), Clinical Service, PAUSE and an in-house FGC Service has supported a continuous reduction in the numbers of children in care, now in line with statutory neighbours. Numbers of care entrants fell during the most recent lockdown to currently below pre-pandemic levels. Analysis is taking place to understand this trend in more depth.</p> <p>Assessments positively identify those children and young people who need to come into care. Children and young people enter care in a timely manner and when in their best interests. Decisions that children should be in care are based on clear, effective, comprehensive and risk-based assessments involving if appropriate, other professionals working with the family.</p> <p>Family Group Conferencing is continuing to support children to remain within their wider families and being used more widely now for example in Family Early Help Service. They are used routinely as part of care proceedings when appropriate and increasingly integrated in to pre-proceedings processes.</p> <p>Decisions as to whether threshold is met for care proceedings are consistent and robust. Effective legal planning meetings are attended by experienced officers and continue to involve a senior clinician to help advise on clinical assessment work and integration with social work assessment and interventions. The average length of care proceedings significantly impacted by the pandemic in line with nationally identified concerns.</p> <p>Work with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) on entering care is a strength with dedicated function and quick response. Specialist workers within the Leaving Care Service with dedicated specialism in supporting UASC have delivered training for Fostering Teams and the Out of Hours Social Work Service.</p>	<p>Rate of children in care is now at 68 per 10,000.</p> <p>Over the last 6 months the rate of children entering care has fallen significantly below comparator averages although 12 month figure is in line with them.</p> <p>PLO and Care Proceedings Quarterly Performance and Tracking Reports.</p> <p>Cafcass Care Proceedings data shows the average length of care proceedings for 2020/21 was 40 weeks, which is in line with the national average.</p> <p>Legal Planning Panel chaired by the Head of Service for Safeguarding and Family Support and the Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Care.</p> <p>FGC referrals have increased year on year. FGC Annual Report 2020-2021</p> <p>Performance data shows an increase in children leaving care subject to an SGO over the last 2 years this has been 10% of children leaving care an increase from 7% in 2018/19.</p> <p>The number of children in care placed with friends and family compared to the overall children in care population rose from 7% to 14% over the last 3 years.</p> <p>The number of friends and family carers varies given the temporary nature of many arrangements but has broadly doubled over the last 3 years.</p>	<p>Continue work and investment to safely and appropriately ensure only children who need to be in care enter care.</p> <p>Undertake in depth analysis of reducing levels of entry to care.</p> <p>Ongoing work to promote the FGC offer to all families. Review the impact of having FGCs using video technology and how this has widened participation to more family members including families internationally.</p> <p>Continue the project with SLRA (South London Refugee Association) to ensure early resolution of UASC status from point of becoming looked after.</p> <p>Continue our commitment to place all UASC in foster care or 24 hour staffed accommodation to reduce risk of trafficking</p> <p>Delivery of specialist UASC training to MASH and updating training for Out of Hours Social Work Service (July 2021).</p>

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7.	Making good decisions for children		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
7.2	<p>The process for management oversight, tracking and driving permanence has developed considerably but we are ambitious this needs to continually improve so we can demonstrate achieving permanence in the right timescale for every child. Midway IRO reviews are providing increased challenge on progress to permanence.</p> <p>The Achieving Permanence Team works across services support practice in securing good quality matches for all children in care, ensuring the right support offer is identified and implemented to secure and sustain matches.</p> <p>Initial placement planning meetings supported by Clinical Services contribute to an enhanced support offer. A dedicated Family Finder role has been permanently recruited to in June 2021 and will focus on finding families for children ready to leave residential care and with complex needs where a really focussed and creative approach is needed to find a family able to meet their needs.</p> <p>A new permanence planning workflow (introduced July 2020) ensures a better line of sight on children achieving permanence. This is monitored via permanence tracking meetings within services including in the 16+ Service where fortnightly panels include the Service Manager and IRO Service Manager.</p> <p>Foster to adopt is increasingly established in practitioner considerations for early permanence planning. In 2020/21 Adopt London South (ALS) made 14 early permanence placements across 9 south London boroughs and 5 of these 35.7% were for Southwark children, this is the highest number of all ALS boroughs.</p>	<p>During 2020/21 we have embedded across all services a strengthened approach to permanence planning meetings for all children in care with a dedicated workflow on the electronic recording system for all children looked after and children subject to pre proceedings. This has been achieved by practitioners and managers thinking permanence as early as possible before children become looked after and at legal panel, pre-birth and for children in pre-proceedings with robust fortnightly tracking.</p> <p>Permanence review activity coordinated by Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Care via the monthly Permanence Taskforce.</p> <p>Number of long-term fostering matches increased from 22 (19/20) to 41 in 2020/21.</p> <p>Fostering Panel Annual Report 2020/21</p> <p>Adoption Performance Report 2020/21 to Corporate Parenting Committee July 2021.</p> <p>Service Performance Reports</p>	<p>Continue to embed and track use of permanence planning workflow to ensure this is more visible and effectively monitored to ensure robust permanence planning for all children. All children in pre proceedings, care proceedings and looked after should have an initial permanence planning meeting and a review of this every 6 weeks with clear reporting to enhance strategic oversight.</p> <p>Continue to embed and upscale the Midway IRO Review support and challenge process for looked after children.</p> <p>Embed the role and work of the new social work qualified Family Finder to support matching for children including those with complex needs and those ready to move from a residential to a family placement.</p> <p>Continue to embed and track the permanence tracking meetings and look at the quality of these meetings.</p>

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7.	Making good decisions for children		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
7.3	<p>There are good examples of support offered to families for children to be successfully rehabilitated home from care. The support offered includes support from the Clinical Services, family support workers and social workers. In several examples of planned rehabilitation Family Group Conferences have been used to ensure a family plan of support to promote sustainable rehabilitation and also contingency plans if challenges and difficulties arise.</p> <p>There is good work with the Family Drug and Alcohol Court to plan and support rehabilitation with professional and family support integral to the plan. Practice to ensure sustainable rehabilitation home from care is an area for continuous improvement as well as ensuring plans of rehabilitation also have robust contingency plans.</p> <p>The Keeping Families Together Team provides an intensive therapeutic and evidence based approach to supporting children to remain at or return home. The learning and best practice from the team could benefit from being more widely embedded across the whole service as KFT.</p>	<p>Audit examples of good practice in supporting rehabilitation.</p> <p>Direct feedback from a parent (film) about support from Clinical Service and their experience in care proceedings and of child being rehabilitated to their care.</p> <p>Weekly Resource Panel overseeing pathway to voluntary care entry for adolescents and provision of bespoke support.</p>	<p>Targeted review of rehabilitation plans for young adolescents and developing the clinical support offer to families with a view to developing service offer.</p> <p>Workshops on strengthening reunification to be held led by Clinical Service and KFT (Summer 2021).</p>
7.4	<p>Practitioners are appropriately focused on the wishes and feelings of children and their parents in their assessments and applications to court. However the consistency of good quality practice can continue to be strengthened. Family networks are considered and broadly well assessed for opportunities to care for children who are not able to return home. There are good examples of high quality work undertaken by some practitioners to support children to remain within their families.</p>	<p>Case work audits show that for most children participation and engagement is regarded as good or better.</p>	<p>Promote best practice in assessments and applications to court and disseminate learning from audit and reviews to ensure more consistent practice. The ongoing learning programme on best practice in care proceedings is led by a dedicated Care Proceedings Case Manager with regular workshops and sharing good practice examples.</p>

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7.	Making good decisions for children		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
7.5	<p>Most care plans understand children’s needs and life experience well, they are generally analytical and reflective. Practice is broadly strong in supporting children and young people to participate in the development of their plans and in ensuring their wishes and feelings are heard, and that they are active participants in making decisions that affect them. There are examples of excellent care plans for children in care, and most are found to be good overall. However, associated action plans can be more focused, with greater clarity and firm timescales and there needs to be a more consistently dynamic approach to care planning to ensure consistently good care plans are in place for all children at all times.</p> <p>Significant events or changes in circumstances for looked after children need to be better reflected in updated care plans through a more routine approach to continuous assessment in the care plan, and a more proactive approach to re-scheduling looked after reviews to ensure any changes are captured in a timely way for all children.</p> <p>Timeliness of Looked After Reviews was an area for focussed improvement and figures are showing much improved performance although needs continuing focus. Updated plans and professional input needs to be provided in a more timely fashion to further improve the effectiveness and impact of reviews.</p> <p>IROs escalate concerns appropriately and conduct Midway Reviews which is having a positive impact on practice and planning helping to drive timeliness and progress of plans for children, particularly ensuring there is momentum in permanence planning for every child. IROs now write letters to children at the end of each review and these are really helpful for life story work.</p>	<p>Case work audits shows most care plans for children in care are good or better.</p> <p>Case work audits shows overall practice for most children in care are good or better.</p> <p>Overall across 2019/20 76% of LAC reviews were held within timescales in 20/21 this increased to 85% of LAC reviews were held in timescales.</p> <p>IRO Annual Report 2020/21</p> <p>Case work audits show visible IRO footprint on children’s records</p>	<p>Embed the improvement work of the Care Plan Review Project based on learning from the revised Pathway Plan approach.</p> <p>Further embed Midway IRO Reviews to promote a more robust oversight approach and increase the pace of delivery for children in care, and ensure all care plans are completed in a timely fashion.</p> <p>Embed escalation guidance and further develop escalation tracking and reporting for inclusion in monthly Service Quality Assurance Review Exercises (SQUAREs).</p> <p>Continuing work to strengthen reviews to ensure plans are effectively driving improvement in outcomes for children and young people, including permanency.</p>

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8.	Participation and direct work with children in care and care leavers		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
8.1	<p>Children and young people benefit from largely stable and positive relationships with their social workers and IRO whom they trust. Practitioners recognise and value the importance of forming strong and stable relationships with children in our care.</p> <p>Children are almost always visited by their social workers within timescales commensurate to their plan. However the quality and timeliness of recording is not always sufficiently representative of the quality of work and engagement and understanding of the child’s lived experience. Virtual working has been reducing significantly since April 2021 to a very small number of children well known to the service with clear reasons for any virtual visit. Children have continued to make progress despite the challenges of virtual working.</p> <p>Children and young people would benefit from more timely contact and engagement from the IROs outside of formal review meetings.</p> <p>Almost all care leavers are in touch with the service. There are positive examples of personal advisors exceeding high expectations and showing considerable tenacity in their efforts to maintain contact with some hard to reach young people. The Head of Service provides monthly oversight of care leavers not in touch with the service. Routine visits to care leavers had previously been identified as an area for focused improvement through monthly performance meetings and performance has shown a marked improvement.</p>	<p>80% of children in care are visited within 6 weekly timescales. Rising to 98% within 12-week timescales.</p> <p>For 2020/21 98% of care leavers age 19-21 were in touch with the service around their birthday and this measure is rigorously tracked with good knowledge of all those who we are not in touch with.</p> <p>Case work audits show strength in good contact between children and young people and social workers and personal advisors.</p> <p>Bright Spots Survey (Jan-April 2020) in depth study of subjective wellbeing of Southwark children in care reported:</p> <p>96% of young people (11-18yrs) trusted their social worker – significantly higher than young people (89%) in other local authorities. This is a Bright Spot of practice.</p>	<p>Provide learning and development opportunities to staff to ensure that case file records better capture the quality and depth of engagement and understanding of children’s lived experience to inform more robust review and planning.</p> <p>Continue progress to permanent recruitment of social workers through use of ASYE program to increase stable relationships for children and young people.</p> <p>Continue to implement best practice where young people are not in touch through Independence Hub completing Pathway Plans along with regular safeguarding checks with the police, prison location service and Home Office</p>



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8.	Participation and direct work with children in care and care leavers		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
8.2	<p>Children in care and care leavers have access to independent visitors and advocates and are routinely advised of this support through ongoing communications and in review processes. Uptake is higher in older age groups, particularly around key transition points, and needs to be better developed for younger children in care. There are examples of strong advocacy for care leavers having an impact on outcomes, and most issues are addressed promptly and without need for further escalation.</p> <p>The Leaving Care Service has developed a strong local offer for care leavers branded and designed by care leavers themselves. All young people are written to with details of the local offer.</p> <p>Information about rights and entitlements is integrated into the redesigned pathway planning process and is discussed on completion of plans with young people to ensure they are fully informed and are active participants in the development of their own plans and records. Feedback from young people tells us they would benefit from more direct work to ensure they are fully aware and understand the offer available to them.</p>	<p>Annual Complaints & Compliments Report 2020/21</p> <p>The Southwark Care Leavers Local Offer website is active and has been well publicised amongst young people.</p> <p>The Pathway Plan document launched in December 2019 was co-designed by young people, has rights and entitlements integrated. This also includes the contact details for the Head of 16+ Leaving Care Services and the Complaints Team.</p> <p>All young people in care and care leavers are sent a copy of the complaints leaflet and details of advocacy services and Independent Visitors in letters after reviews. This information is also periodically sent out to young people by the Head of Service for 16+ Leaving Care Services.</p>	<p>Embed learning from the reform of the pathway planning process into looked after children processes.</p> <p>Report on and evaluate feedback from young people's scaling of their Pathway Plans</p> <p>Formally review with young people and workers implementation of new Pathway Plan (Dec 2019) to evaluate and adjust if needed.</p>
8.3	<p>There is a strong track record of celebrating the achievements of children in care and care leavers. The Children in Care Celebration Event was planned for early 2021 and cancelled due to pandemic. Planning is underway to relaunch autumn 2021.</p> <p>The Council Plan 2018-2022 makes specific commitment to opportunity for education, employment and training for care leavers and in July 2019 launched its own local care leaver covenant supported by Kings College University, Care Leaver Covenant and about of local businesses.</p>	<p>The first 'Be Inspired' event held in August 2019 brought together inspirational individuals from a variety of backgrounds with 180 young people aged 14 and above to talk about aspiration and future career possibilities. Despite the pandemic this was repeated in July 2020 virtually including a variety of well attended online sessions and events for children in care and care leavers. The council have worked with Ashley John-Baptiste and the Care Leaver Covenant to grow Be Inspired 2021 (30 July 2021) to be for older children in care and all care leavers to support aspiration and inspiration.</p>	<p>Deliver children in care celebration event when public health restrictions allow (delayed due to third wave of the pandemic) Planning has commenced for a celebration event for autumn 2021, depending on any public health restrictions in place at the time.</p> <p>Further develop elected member Celebratory Card Scheme. This was put on hold due to restrictions during the pandemic.</p>

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8.	Participation and direct work with children in care and care leavers		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
8.4	<p>Southwark's Children in Care & Care Leavers Council Speakerbox is well established and attended. It is highly active delivering opportunities for children in care and care leavers to engage with each other and with services and has embraced the use of video calling technology to continue its work.</p> <p>Children in care and care leavers actively participate in the development of services. As part of recruitment processes, improvement action planning and in operational delivery. For example, young people collaboratively designed a new Pathway Plan format, are participating in building on that learning to develop renewed Care Plan documents and participated in a Young Inspectors program – that was put on hold during the pandemic.</p> <p>Speakerbox members attend the Council Corporate Parenting Committee and provide direct insight and challenge to officers and elected members on all aspects of delivery for children in care and care leavers</p> <p>The Fostering Panel membership includes a young person with experience of being in care.</p>	<p>Speakerbox program of activities.</p> <p>Speakerbox have previously produced a films that focused on the importance of sibling contact and developing good relationships with professionals. Speakerbox ran an awards day for professionals who had successfully 'bridged the gap' nominated by young people themselves. In August 2020 the younger group of Speakerbox collaborated with the Bubble Theatre and using ZOOM made a film about Black Lives Matter. The film was shown to a group of professionals on 14th August 2020 who were all hugely impressed with the powerful film the young people made in only one week of workshops.</p> <p>Young People's Panels are routinely in place for recruitment to middle and senior management posts and were involved in social worker recruitment in the Care Service in March 2021 and planned for new Head of Service recruitment in August 2021.</p> <p>In July 2020, using Zoom, Speakerbox engaged senior managers (DCS and DC&F) and elected members (Lead Member for Children and Schools and Lead Member for Communities and Public Health) in issues for young people raised through the black lives matters movement. This fed into further well attended virtual input into Corporate Parenting Committee July 2020.</p> <p>In August 2021 an interactive theatre programme is planned for Children in Care with the Bubble Theatre and a performance will be held at the end of the week to be attended by their carers, social workers and senior managers and elected members.</p>	<p>Continue to develop the Corporate Parenting Committee and use virtual technology to increase the opportunity for wider groups of children and young people to represent their views to strategic managers and elected members.</p> <p>Continue to develop specialist engagement programmes for young people led by individual experienced practitioners to consult on and hear the experience of our young people and support service development in key thematic areas.</p> <p>The 16+ Service worked to develop a partnership with the Head of the History Department at St Michael's Academy. The intention behind this was to deliver a series of streamable lessons in Black history, for care leavers but also for partners and colleagues. A number of meetings and trial lessons took place along with the development of some resources. This work was significantly impacted by the pandemic but will be resumed in Autumn 2021.</p> <p>Work with Speakerbox to share their film products more widely to influence key people on issues for young people in care and their perspective.</p>

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9.	Helping and protecting		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
9.1	<p>Most children in care feel positively supported by their carers, social workers and have trusted relationships that support them to feel safe and protected with the ability to access help and support if they fear bullying or any other forms of discrimination. Children in care also report that they have trusted and good friends available to support them. Whereas most children in care report that they feel safe from bullying and discrimination, more work needs to be done to ensure that the impact of feeling unsafe is not adversely affecting children in care, particularly for younger cohorts of children.</p>	<p>Bright Spots Survey (Jan-April 2020) in depth study of subjective wellbeing of Southwark children in care reported:</p> <p>93% of children in care aged 11-18yrs never or hardly ever feel afraid of bullying. This falls to 72% for children aged 8-11yrs. The England average for all children is 88%.</p>	<p>Implement a targeted engagement approach in collaboration with schools, the virtual school and social care teams to better understand and provide support to younger children on the impact of bullying and discrimination and the fear of bullying and discrimination.</p>
9.2	<p>Where children and young people are identified as being at risk of exploitation or due to patterns of missing behaviours; weekly Missing, Exploitation and CSE Tracking Panels closely monitor children in care and care leavers. The service has a positive overview of young people at risk and panels ensure risk and safety planning takes place promptly and is informed by wider professional expertise. More work needs to be done to ensure that safety planning and the actions from tracking meetings are consistently impactful in supporting young people to change or de-escalate risky behaviours.</p> <p>Whilst most children at risk are known and monitored the depth and breadth identification of young people who are at risk of similar vulnerabilities is not as consistent across all practice as it needs.</p> <p>The 16+ and Care Leavers Service has established a range of specialist Experienced Practitioner posts focused on key vulnerability areas for young people including substance misuse, housing and EET. Practitioners work intensively with both those young people identified as at risk and with colleagues to support their work to plan for their children and young people and their work evidently stands out.</p>	<p>Weekly Missing, Exploitation and CSE Tracking Panels</p> <p>Monthly MACE Meetings</p> <p>Extra-Familial Harm Panel</p> <p>Monthly performance data</p> <p>Case work audits</p> <p>Bright Spots Survey (Jan-April 2020) in depth study of subjective wellbeing of Southwark children in care reported:</p> <p>Overall, 93% of children and young people reported that they 'always' felt safe in their placements: a larger proportion than children in the general population. This is significantly higher than the general population (75%) and has improved from the previous Bright spots survey in 2018. This is regarded as a Bright Spot of practice.</p>	<p>Continue to improve the consistency and delivery of return home interviews for children who go missing from care utilising learning from use of technology .</p> <p>Continue to embed the revised protocols for planning and review of children at risk of extra-familial harm including multi - agency operational meeting to more closely scrutinise planning and safety to support individual casework and MACE overview.</p> <p>Develop more in-depth analysis of exploitation and problem profiles in partnership with police colleagues</p>

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10.	Health		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
10.1	<p>Almost all children in care have an up to date health assessment or completed developmental checks. Timeliness of Initial health assessments is a priority for the service and health partners.</p> <p>Access to timely dental checks has been and remains an area significantly impacted by the pandemic.</p> <p>Most children in care have an up-to-date SDQ score. These need to be more consistently evident in informing children's care plans.</p> <p>The relationship between the Care and Care Leavers Services and the Looked After Children Health Team is positive and proactively collaborates to deliver improving access to health and mental health services for children and young people.</p> <p>All teams working with children in care and care leavers have embedded clinical capacity responsible for ensuring children's mental health needs are met, via local specialist NHS provision and external providers as needed, or else through the Clinical Service. A recently established Virtual Mental Health Lead for Looked After Children, building on the recommendations of the SCIE Expert Working Group, oversees such provision.</p> <p>Where issues are identified teams work closely to progress solutions in a timely fashion. E.g. Looked After Children Health Team attends Complex Needs, 18 Plus and other panels.</p>	<p>97% of children have an up to date health assessment. Initial health assessment timeliness was 24% in 20/21.</p> <p>38% of children in care have an up to date dental check.</p> <p>88% of children have an up to date SDQ score.</p> <p>Looked After Children Health staff are active participants in routine planning meetings for children and young people and similarly attend key decision making and case progress panels including the Complex Needs Panel.</p> <p>Looked After Children Health Annual Report 2020/21</p> <p>Historic issues existed in access to health assessments for children placed at distance from the borough, teams were successful in working collaboratively to ensure that performance on health assessments for those placed over 20 miles from Southwark was in line with those placed within the borough.</p> <p>Quarterly Health and Social Care Forum chaired by the Designated Doctor for Children in Care and Assistant Director- Safeguarding and Care.</p>	<p>Work with health partners to ensure increased access to dental health checks for all children considering challenges due to Covid 19 and infection control measures.</p> <p>Continue to use information from health colleagues to support planning around 18+ placement changes and moves to independence</p> <p>Progress the implementation of improved systems for tracking and monitoring access to mental health provision for children in care.</p> <p>Implement new evidence-based approach to routinely monitoring the mental health needs of all our looked after children and care leavers, the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment (CANS), to better inform both individual and population level planning in relation to meeting their needs.</p> <p>Continue to work with the South London & Maudsley Trust (SLAM) to expedite the NHS commitment to 0-25 mental health services. This includes convening a multi-agency panel focussing on 16-25 year olds where there are issues with accessing appropriate mental health services</p> <p>Exploring the use of personal healthcare budgets for Care Leavers to ensure more timely access to appropriate provision.</p>
10.2	<p>The majority of care leavers are provided with a summary of their health history at the time of their final health assessment before leaving care. The Care Leaver Service and Named Nurse work proactively to ensure those young people not in receipt of their history at the time of their final health assessment are tracked, monitored and provided with their summaries at the earliest possible time.</p>	<p>Looked After Children Health Performance Tracking</p>	<p>Further integrate health history discussions into earlier planning and review processes for young people progressing towards leaving care to ensure they have the opportunity for a full and purposeful and ongoing discussions to help them better understand their individual history. Ensure that the health summaries inform Pathway Planning assessments and goals</p>

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11.	Learning and enjoyment		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
11.1	<p>Children in care generally perform in line with their looked after peers in terms of their education progress. More is needed to ensure educational outcomes are closing the gap with non-looked after peers locally and nationally.</p> <p>Children entering care at a very young age are impacted by early trauma and inconsistent early years education and this is evident in KS1 performance and educational progress.</p> <p>High numbers of children in care are identified as having special educational needs. The Virtual School takes a proactive early intervention approach to support progress.</p> <p>Children in care are making good progress at KS4 and are seeing year on year improvement in performance. Southwark young people perform slightly better than their local and national comparators.</p> <p>Older young people at KS5 receive continued high levels of support from specialist practitioners in the Care Leaver Service and a dedicated KS5 Team within the virtual school to support and maintain them in further education. This is showing positive impact.</p> <p>During the pandemic from May 2020 the virtual school developed a Covid 19 PEP and Education Advisors worked with social workers to ensure these were undertaken focussing on the most vulnerable and those at a transitional age such as Year 6. This is a priority improvement focus for the service and the Virtual School for children in care.</p> <p>Children are well supported by carers in their education.</p>	<p>Virtual Headteachers Annual Report</p> <p>Early intervention approach for children at KS2 with SEN supported a 5.9-point increase in expected progress in Reading for these pupils. In excess of national and local comparators.</p> <p>31% of looked after children have a statement of SEN or EHCP</p> <p>Average Attainment 8 scores improved from 17.1 to 24.2 between 2018 and 2019.</p> <p>8.6% of Southwark children in care achieved a Standard level E.Bacc in 2019, compared to 6% across London and 4% nationally.</p> <p>60% of young people at KS5 exceeded the expected progress levels in 2018/19.</p> <p>28% of looked after children have an up-to-date PEP</p>	<p>Continue to drive up performance in completion and timeliness of PEPs</p> <p>Progress Virtual School migration project of data onto Mosaic to integrate education and social care data more seamlessly, enhancing tracking and outcomes work and developing Mosaic portal for an E-PEP.</p> <p>Build on learning during pandemic around increased use of technology by foster carers to promote learning.</p> <p>Complete an in-depth analysis of foster carers development needs in respect to promoting and improving educational outcomes for children.</p> <p>Further consolidate and develop Education and Social Care Forum (began 2020) building upon learning from the well established Health and Social Care Forum.</p>

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11.	Learning and enjoyment		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
11.2	<p>Persistent absenteeism for Southwark children is higher than comparator averages and is a key area of improvement focus for the service. The Virtual School has allocated a dedicated project officer to track and support reductions in persistent absenteeism and this is beginning to show improvement.</p> <p>The Virtual School continues to monitor attendance of children in care daily and maintains a programme of welfare calls to schools and carers. A monthly attendance panel reviews every episode of absence and support collaborative strategies and interventions to improve attendance.</p> <p>The Virtual School is proactive in developing alternative education packages for children in care who are not able to attend a mainstream setting. This includes a provision of interim education for children who have experienced urgent placement changes.</p> <p>Timely access to appropriate education settings for children placed at distance from the borough is a significant area for improvement.</p>	<p>Virtual Head Teachers Annual Report</p> <p>Fixed Term Exclusion for children in care fell from 12% (19/20) to 8% in 20/21</p> <p>The percentage of children in care with less than 90% school attendance fell from 26% (19/20) to 19% in 20/21.</p>	<p>Continue joint working to improve early engagement between Care Service, Access to Resources Placements Team and Virtual School to support education provision for children moving to new placements.</p> <p>Develop work of joint Social Care and Educational working party to address challenges particularly for children placed out of borough building on success of Virtual School and SEND attendance at Complex Cases Panel.</p>

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11.	Learning and enjoyment		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
11.3	<p>The Local Offer partnership with Everyone Active provides free leisure access to local opportunities for children in care and care leavers in facilities across the borough. Including free swimming, gym and group workout sessions. This has recently been re-launched following the re-opening of services.</p> <p>16+ Care LeaverService has funds for children and young people out of borough to access gym membership, particularly where this supports their emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>Children in care report that they are supported by trusted adults that allow them to live age appropriate fulfilled private lives that they enjoy and provide them with the access they need to good social, educational and recreational opportunities. Most children have a hobby that provides fulfilment and enjoyment, but more children need to be supported to find individual hobbies and activities that they enjoy,</p>	<p>Over 200 children and young people were registered and received free leisure passes in the first 18 months of the offer. In the 9 months to Dec 2019 children and young people attended 863 individual free leisure sessions. Data on availability and usage will be tracked as the scheme has reopened from May 2021 following the reopening of gyms as lockdown restrictions ease.</p> <p>Bright Spots Survey (Jan-April 2020) in depth study of subjective wellbeing of Southwark children in care reported:</p> <p>92% of children in care had a high or moderate life satisfaction score. 45% of young people reported very high life satisfaction, compared to 34% nationally - a <i>Bright Spot</i> of practice.</p> <p>100% of children aged 8-11 yrs; and 98% of young people (11-18 yrs) trusted their carers. All children 4-7 years old trusted their carers – a <i>Bright Spot</i> of practice.</p> <p>Overall 89% of children and young people in care in Southwark had access to nature. This was similar to the proportion of 6-15 yrs olds in the general population who spent time outdoors and is a <i>Bright Spot</i> of practice.</p> <p>72% of children reported that they have fun in their private lives and have activities that they personally enjoy</p>	<p>Use the renewed Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-24 to explore an expanded engagement programme with local cultural, academic and sporting organisations in the borough to promote access to additional opportunities for children in care and care leavers.</p> <p>Develop improved reporting about leisure activities and hobbies undertaken by children in care to support greater promotion of this aspect of children’s lives understanding the importance for this for resilience building and opportunity.</p>

the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

12.	Stability and permanence		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
12.1	<p>Long-term placement stability has improved significantly during 2020/21 and better and more sustainably in line with comparator averages. Similarly short-term stability has significantly improved over the past 12 months. An enhanced financial and practice support offer was provided to carers during the pandemic and a Placement Stability Project led by the Head of Service for Permanence and Resources and Clinical Service ensures lessons are learnt from this period and key factors that impacted during lockdowns are integrated into the mainstream offer.</p> <p>The Sufficiency Strategy Steering Group continues to oversee improvements in placement availability for looked after children, underpinned a well-resourced Access to Resources Team. Embedded within Children's Social Care. However, the competitive local and regional placement market is a continuing challenge.</p> <p>Most children are in placements that are suitable to their needs and aligned to their wishes and views. Where children do need to move placements the majority are done so in a managed way through a careful transition process which is child-centred.</p>	<p>Long term placement stability is at 71% in the DfE 901 provisional data return for 20/21 compared to national and comparator averages of 69% and 71% respectively.</p> <p>Number of long-term fostering matches increased from 22 (19/20) to 41 in 2020/21.</p> <p>The number of children with 3 or more placements is at 10% (20/21 DfE 901) down from 16% in 2019/20. In line with national and comparator averages of 10%.</p> <p>Placement Stability meetings with clinical input are having a positive impact for young people but learning from the Placement Stability Project shows further embedding this practice, and positioning it earlier when issues arise, will continue to better support young people to remain in placements.</p>	<p>Recent move to join the Commissioning Alliance has been completed and will drive improved sufficiency of placements for Southwark children. Develop sufficient capacity within and in the proximity of the Borough is a priority</p> <p>Evaluate impact of clinical input to Stability Meetings with a view to develop further plans to strengthen this area of work.</p> <p>Progress the findings of the Placement Stability Project Engagement and Analysis Phase, to develop options and action plan for integration into mainstream offer.</p> <p>Continue to develop the offer of the innovative Life Long Links and ReConnect programmes to safely support children in care to establish meaningful links with people who are important to them and offer them insight into their history, culture and identity.</p> <p>Progressing opportunities to develop local residential provision.</p>
12.2	<p>The Looked After Children Health Team proactively support young people placed outside of the Borough with direct work Southwark mental health services are provided to young people to ensure continuity, where local services are not able to meet the needs of young people promptly. Health Commissioners actively broker local support for children.</p> <p>The virtual school provide a proactive response for interim education opportunities for children placed outside of the borough and in urgent circumstances. Ensuring timely access to appropriate mainstream education settings for children placed at distance from the borough is an area for improvement.</p>	<p>Looked After Children Health Annual Report - Health Assessment Performance for children placed out of the borough is aligned to those within the borough.</p> <p>Virtual Head Teacher Annual Report</p>	<p>Health and Education colleagues to develop a more integrated approach with the Access to Resources Team, to ensure planning for placements moves identifies issues and access to health and education planning earlier for children placed at distance from the authority.</p>

the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

12.	Stability and permanence		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
12.3	<p>The availability of sufficient good quality placements remains a significant challenge across London and the wider region. Southwark children are more likely to be placed in foster care than their national and comparator peers.</p> <p>Southwark has a comprehensive Placement Sufficiency Strategy which is considered by the Corporate Parenting Committee as a priority, last reviewed by them in April 2021. The strategy is driving innovative approaches to improving sufficiency such as the 16+ accommodation partnerships with Oasis Aquila Housing and the Salvation Army (commenced December 2019) to provide high quality and comprehensive supported accommodation to our young people.</p> <p>An enhanced offer was in place at the height of the pandemic this included a Placements Officer working out of hours anticipating more emergency admissions to care linked to Covid. The Clinical Service also began a helpline to foster carers who may need emotional support for themselves and children in the pandemic. While these supports were not fully utilised as the level of demand did not increase the Out of Hours Service commented positively on additional placement support as they experienced increased demand from Adult Social Care Services and this can be operationalised again in another lockdown.</p>	<p>77% of looked after children are in foster placements compared to 70% for statistical neighbours and 72% nationally.</p> <p>77% of children in residential care are in good or outstanding provision.</p>	<p>Recent move to join the Commissioning Alliance has been completed and will drive improved sufficiency of placements for Southwark children.</p> <p>Revised Sufficiency Strategy which will include a comprehensive updated plan for 2022 onwards.</p> <p>Implement all the actions and recommendations from the Fostering Network review of the Recruitment for Retention of Foster Carers.</p> <p>Complete evaluation of ongoing progress with 16+ Accommodation Strategy to refresh if needed, building on learning from recent joint work with Housing.</p>

the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

12.	Stability and permanence		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
12.4	<p>The Service is continuing to embed the Secure Base Model of therapeutic caregiving. Training is co-delivered by social workers in the Fostering Service, foster carers, the Clinical Service and young people from Speakerbox. The Secure Base Model continues to underpin the training programme that is offered to all of our foster carers. This is delivered alongside a strong core training offer for all carers which all are required complete on becoming carers and to renew on a 3-yearly basis.</p> <p>Fostering approvals for 2020/21 have kept pace with London comparators despite the pandemic although this has impacted all becoming available for children in care.</p> <p>The service sets very high expectations of foster carers continued improvement and a proportion of the decrease in internal numbers recently is related to carers not being adequately able to adopt the secure base model expectations and standards. The council is a Fostering Friendly Employer.</p> <p>The Access to Resources Team and Fostering Service work closely and are integrated under the same Head of Service to ensure there is a strong and collaborative approach to finding placements that meet the needs of children. Appropriate matches and placement stability have shown significant improvement but remains an ongoing area for continuous improvement particularly for older and more complex young people.</p> <p>The service has had some success in improving the availability of placements for children that match or closer represent their ethnic identity, this remains a strong focus on efforts to recruit and retain carers who are able to offer placements for children which match their ethnic identity. This has been assisted by the increased use of friends and family foster carers and development of support for them.</p>	<p>Fostering Service Annual Report 2020/21</p> <p>Fostering in England Annual Data Set 2019-20 Southwark Fostering Service remains the largest inner London borough fostering service in respect of the total number of children placed with in house foster carers. It is the third largest in terms of approved households London (behind Croydon and Bi-Borough) and equal highest in inner London in terms of new approvals.</p> <p>Number of long-term fostering matches increased from 22 (19/20) to 41 in 2020/21.</p> <p>Use of friends and family foster carers increased to 66 children as at end of March 2021, compared to 46 as at end March 2019.</p>	<p>The service will continue to work in partnership with foster carers and to roll out training to the Care Service and will continue to roll out secure base training across all of Children's Services</p> <p>Focusing on improving the availability of carers for older children and sibling groups.</p> <p>Implement all the actions and recommendations from the Fostering Network review of the Recruitment for Retention of Foster Carers.</p>

the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

12.	Stability and permanence		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
12.4	<p>Special Guardianship and Connected Persons team is now well established and is delivering improvements in assessing and supporting Special Guardians, as well as friends and family foster carers.</p> <p>Foster carer retention is a key focus for the service and the team works proactively to find solutions to increasing retention, for example offering increased support packages for those placements that are complex and may require extra provision, increasing the professional package of relevant training, and developing peer opportunities for contact with other carers, and celebrating the work of our foster carers and their relationship with our children .</p>	<p>Fostering Service Annual Report 2020/21</p> <p>On the 31st March 2018 Southwark were paying allowances to 185 Special Guardians. On 31st March 2021 this has increased by 17% to 216 Special Guardians.</p> <p>Monthly support group and coffee morning with regular attendance from staff in the Fostering Service as well as foster carers.</p> <p>Attending the fostering panel is a day of celebration for children and carers and we have introduced a matching certificate and send out photographs of children and their carers taken with the Fostering Panel members. In lockdown panel has been successfully held virtually and this worked well for many foster carers and enabled the panel to observe children and foster carers at home in their home setting.</p>	<p>Developing a cohort of specialist carers with access to 24/7 wraparound clinical support who will be able to use their increased level of experience and skills to offer reparative therapeutic parenting to children with complex emotional and behavioural needs.</p>

the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

12.	Stability and permanence		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
12.5	<p>Most children achieve permanence in a timely fashion. Professionals recognise the importance of an efficient approach to long term matching for children and work proactively together to achieve this. The Access to Resources Team and Care Teams work closely together to find the right placement for children and young people promptly. However, overall issues with sufficiency impact on the timescales for some young people and this remains an area for targeted improvement.</p>	<p>Permanence Task Force Performance Updates</p> <p>Matching Panel Performance Updates and information from service permanence tracking.</p> <p>Case Audits</p>	<p>Continue to develop the system to provide strategic oversight of permanence, and the timeliness of matching.</p>
12.6	<p>Improvements have been made in the past 12 months in the system to monitor and drive progress in permanent matching for children and young people in long term foster care. However this remains a continued focus for improvement to ensure the new arrangements are further embedded and all children receive a timely match.</p> <p>Most children and young people are supported to understand their life history and the reasons they are in care, and to participate in the decisions that affect them. Whilst there are very good examples of formal life story and direct work for some children, ensuring that all children in our care have the same level and quality of life story work is a priority area for improvement. A specialist life story worker role is being introduced to increase the pace of improvement.</p> <p>Most children feel supported in their placements, have a trusted adult who cares for them and are well supported to experience and develop life skills, have fun and engage in activities they enjoy.</p>	<p>47% of children for whom the permanence plan is long-term fostering are in a long-term fostering placement up from 38% at end Jul 2020.</p> <p>Bright Spots Survey (Jan-April 2020) in depth study of subjective wellbeing of Southwark children in care reported:</p> <p>95% of 8-11yrs feel included in the decisions that affect them, "all or most of the time" or "sometimes" felt included and 87% of 11-18yrs feel the same "all or most of the time" or "sometimes" felt included.</p> <p>91% of children in care aged 11-18yrs report having been appropriately engaged with about the reasons they are in care. This falls to 60% for 8-11yr old cohorts.</p>	<p>Review and implement more age appropriate evidence based approaches to support younger children to understand their care experience.</p> <p>Two Social Workers in the 0-15 Service have completed a training programme in therapeutic life story work which included supervision undertaking this work with children in care. Although delayed from April 2020 4 workers, 3 from 0-15 and 1 from Fostering undertook the same course in September 2020 and are now delivering therapeutic life story work with children as well as developing leadership across all services in this area. This needs to be embedded and best practice disseminated across all areas.</p> <p>Implement findings of the thematic audit of life story work.</p>

the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

12.	Stability and permanence		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
12.7	<p>There has been a significant drive in over the past 12 months to improve the timeliness, completeness and clarity of case work records for children in care and care leavers. A best practice example of the improved approach has been the inclusion of the "Manager's Letter" into the Pathway Planning process, a child focused summary and review statement embedded within every care leavers plan. There are good examples of similar child and family focused recording across the service, but these need to be better systematically embedded in routine practice for all children. IROs now write letters to children after each review in an age appropriate way.</p>	<p>Case work audits</p>	<p>Work with children, young people and families to develop new guidance for practitioners in child friendly recording, and understanding the impact of good quality writing and use of language on supporting young people to understand their life history better.</p>
12.8	<p>Southwark has prioritised the Early Permanence Approach to foster for adoption, and led this regionally for many years. The Borough led the development of activity across the RAA and has driven the focus across practitioners. Collaborative working between the RAA and Social Work Teams is positive and energetic in looking to secure innovative opportunities to secure early permanence for those young children likely to be adopted. The permanence task force drives the focus on the approach for those young children.</p> <p>The authority worked with the University of East Anglia on the innovative pilot to develop the Moving to Adoption model.</p>	<p>In 2020/2021 Southwark had the highest number of early permanence foster to adopt placements, highest rate number within the RAA. Currently 2 more children are in F2A placements.</p>	<p>Continue to embed the Early Permanence Approach across all children entering the care system to drive up adoption for older children.</p> <p>Work with ALS to address the racial disparity with more Black children waiting longer to find adoptive families and being more likely to have a reversal of their adoption care plan.</p>

the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

12.	Stability and permanence		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
12.9	<p>The Southwark Fostering Panel and ALS Adoption Panels are well established, with suitably experienced and qualified members and chairs. The Panels make significant efforts to ensure a representative membership that reflects the children and young people within the Borough, and their life experiences.</p> <p>The Fostering Panel provides ongoing scrutiny of the quality of practice in relation to fostering and reports routinely to the Agency Decision Maker and Head of Service for Permanence and Resources and other senior leaders on the themes for improvement and areas of strength.</p> <p>The Adoption Panel members complete a standardised Quality Assurance questionnaire at the end of each panel slot. The Panel Advisor uses these to provide direct feedback to social work attendees on all individual case work promptly, including areas of good practice and for development. At the end of each panel thematic issues are collated and feedback to the relevant Team and Service Managers by the Panel Advisor. The Adoption Panel provides a 6-monthly overview report including quality of practice issues and strengths to the Strategic Leadership of Adopt London South.</p>	<p>Fostering Panel Annual Report.</p> <p>Adoption Panel Chairs 6-monthly Update Report</p> <p>Two new members of the Fostering Panel who joined in 2019/20 are care leavers. The Fostering Panel has also recently recruited a Friends and Family Carer</p> <p>The Adoption Panel includes two adult adoptees and two adoptive parents</p> <p>The Fostering Panel Chair attends quarterly business meetings with the Agency Decision Maker and service heads to discuss feedback, themes, any areas of concern together with action required to address them.</p> <p>The Agency Decision Maker observes the Fostering Panel regularly.</p> <p>Increasingly positive feedback from adoption applicants</p>	<p>Develop the panel role in communicating and disseminating best practice into the wider service.</p> <p>The Fostering Panel seeks feedback from all carers and social workers that attend the panel. Key recommendations from the collated feedback to be implemented, including supporting attendees to have access to key questions in advance and ensuring the timeliness of panel slots is adhered to.</p> <p>Improving the timeliness of medical advice submitted to the Adoption Panel.</p> <p>Focus on reducing racial disparity in adoption recruitment.</p>
12.10	<p>Southwark hosts Adopt London South (ALS) (Regional Adoption Agency) and actively promotes the offer and entitlement to post-adoption support. There has been significant improvement in the timeliness of engagement and assessment. Continuing to reduce the waiting time for support is an area of focus.</p> <p>ALS supports letterbox contact for birth families and commissions counselling provision for families.</p>	<p>First contact for those requesting post - adoption support has decreased from 32 days to an average of 7 days in 19/20, and is now at 2 days in 20/21. A new helpline has been implemented offering immediate help and advice for adopters.</p> <p>Post-Adoption assessment timeliness improved from 14 weeks to 12 weeks in 2019-20. This further improved to 6 weeks during 20/21, but year end figures had increase slightly towards 19/20 performance.</p>	<p>Sustain the investment in post-adoption support services to maintain and further the significant improvement in the timeliness of support</p> <p>Progress activity with the Adopt London programme to commission a stronger birth parents counselling service on a pan-London basis.</p>

the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

13.	Care leavers and transitions		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
13.1	<p>Designing services to focus on children in care aged 0-15, and those aged 16+ and care leavers has secured a more focused, specialist and high quality delivery model for young people to help and support their transition to adulthood and independence. The timeliness of pathway plans has been previously recognised as an area for improvement and subsequent to this the service has seen year on year improvement. However, this remains an area of focus to ensure that all young people receive a timely and effective pathway plan. An evolving performance challenge approach across the service has supported Senior Managers in effecting this continuing positive improvement in pathway plan performance.</p> <p>The pathway planning process was revised and relaunched in December 2019 through a detailed and collaborative process with young people to make them more young person focused and more understanding of their wishes and feelings. There are examples of very strong pathway plans that capture the holistic needs of young people and successfully drive multi-agency planning that effectively addresses those needs. However, the quality and depth of analysis within pathway plans overall still needs work in places to ensure a consistently effective impact on outcomes for all young people.</p> <p>The All Age Disability (AAD) Service provides a seamless whole life course service to young people. Supported by a stable and permanent workforce which ensures consistency of relationships as young people transition to adulthood. All care leavers in AAD are joint allocated to a personal advisor.</p>	<p>86% of Pathway Plans are up to date. An improvement from 70% in 2019-20 and 66% in 18-19.</p> <p>Increased capacity of social workers within Leaving Care Service to meet increase in need.</p> <p>Experienced Practitioners in the Leaving Care Service holding particularly complex cases specific to their specialisms, and also provide additional expertise to colleagues.</p> <p>Pathway Plan and supporting guidance and workshops implemented during 2020 placing the child's voice at the centre and developing shared goals</p> <p>Case work audits</p>	<p>Service to maintain improvement trajectory for Pathway Plans as well as increasingly focussing on quality and co-design.</p> <p>Continue to grow and develop Pathway Plans being signed off by Team Manager in the form of a letter or note addressed directly to the child / Young person – this will be a focus for the next 12 months.</p> <p>Pathway Plans have introduced scaling that is recorded on Mosaic so young people can directly feed back, and the use of this tool will be developed to assist work with young people and service evaluation.</p> <p>Regular meetings with the AAD and 16+ Leadership teams to include establishment of a forum with AAD where children can be discussed and transition eligibility reviewed.</p> <p>Service Management review all Pathway Plans for children not in touch to ensure these are only completed in line with appropriate management decision making.</p>

the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

13.	Care leavers and transitions		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we will do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 mths?
13.2	<p>The Independence Hub within the Leaving Care Service provides targeted support to former UASC, returning care leavers aged 21+ and qualifying care leavers. Specialist workers ensure these young people receive a high quality bespoke response and support package commensurate with their needs up till age 25. Where returning care leavers need a more holistic continuing service they are allocated within the mainstream service</p> <p>Most children in care report that they are regularly supported throughout their time in care to develop the skills they need to go on to live independently</p> <p>The Leaving Care Service provides a young person focused sustained and trusted relationship based service to young people above and beyond statutory requirements to ensure that those young people formerly in care are able to access support where it is the right thing for them and their future. For example, some young people aged 25+ continue to receive support to access full time education.</p> <p>Throughout the pandemic online content to children and young people. Children in SIA continued to receive keyworker sessions and children in foster care were well supported by their carers. For children who attained 21 years of age we continued to support their staying put arrangements and careers demonstrated flexibility.</p>	<p>Bright Spots Survey in depth study of subjective wellbeing of Southwark children in care (Jan-April 2020) and care leavers (Nov 2020) reported:</p> <p>96% of young people were taught independence skills 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes'</p> <p>79% of care leavers trust their workers all or most of the time. Just one in twenty '<i>hardly ever</i> or <i>never</i>' trusted their leaving care worker.</p> <p>Case work audits</p>	<p>Continue to integrate findings from Bright Spots (children in care and care leavers) into service planning over next 12 months through co-working with SpeakerBox.</p> <p>Continued evolving of agile systems and approaches to manage practice in a pandemic context. This includes continuing development and blending of face to face and virtual best practices and increasing availability of safe office spaces for teams to use and work with care leavers in supporting all work.</p>
13.3	<p>The majority of young people are encouraged to and do remain in care until their 18th birthday.</p> <p>The service actively promotes and successfully supports young people to remain staying put with their former foster carers when they leave care and this has been successful in increasing this take up.</p>	<p>88% of children in care remained in care until their 18th birthday compared to 73% of statistical neighbour.</p> <p>25% of young people aged 17-18, and 11% of young people aged 19-21 are living with their former foster carers, both exceeding national and statistical comparators. There has been a 10% increase in staying put over 3 years to March 2021.</p>	<p>Embed and further evaluate the updated Staying Put policy to further improve performance and support even more young people to remain with their foster carers beyond 18.</p>

the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

13.	Care leavers and transitions		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
13.4	<p>Care leavers are significantly more likely than their national and statistical neighbour peers to be in education, employment or training. This improvement has been delivered through the innovative appointment of specialist Experienced Practitioners for NEET who joined the existing EET / NEET worker providing expertise and knowledge to colleagues and holding difficult and complex young people themselves.</p> <p>Regular newsletters with EET opportunities are sent to staff and care leavers</p> <p>The Virtual School provides holistic support to young people as they transition to Key Stage 5 to ensure that the majority have a placement available for them by the September following the end of KS4. The cohort is tracked through weekly meetings to ensure the right continued support is available to maintain young people in EET and proactively identify new opportunities for those who do become NEET. This support is maintained for young people at KS5 to ensure they receive specialist targeted educational support to continue and succeed in their studies.</p> <p>Supporting care leavers into EET opportunities is a key focus and children benefit from direct support and advice. This was negatively impacted by Covid 19. Some young people struggled with virtual learning and needed extra support around exam results time. Many young people were working in less secure employment settings (retail sector / service industries) and were furloughed or lost employment and had to rely on the benefit system plus additional help from the authority. There has been a reduction in employment opportunities and this is likely to continue and needs concerted action to mitigate.</p>	<p>71% of 19-21 year old care leavers are in EET compared to 55% nationally (20/21 DfE 901).</p> <p>Virtual School Annual Report</p> <p>60% of learners are exceeding expected levels at KS5.</p> <p>Students receive supplementary tuition as part of the Virtual School offer to support exam readiness.</p> <p>Students each have their own Virtual School education advisor that supports academic attainment, and access to supplementary tuition.</p> <p>The Virtual School IAG officers support the planning of destinations and opens doors of opportunity to promote EET.</p>	<p>Multi agency panels continue to review those who are NEET and discuss how to sustain EET</p> <p>Progressing activity through the local authority internship programme to increase the availability of opportunities for Care Leavers within the Borough and through social value contributions are corporate partners across the public and private sector.</p> <p>Developing the Care Leavers mentoring programme to increase capacity to support care leavers in education, employment and training, and ensuring employers and those working with care leavers have an embedded understanding of the support requirements of our young people.</p> <p>Restart Corporate Parenting Roadshows to divisions across the council including to HR and work with them to understand the potential for shortlisting and interviewing care leavers for all jobs they are qualified for building on Housing Services trailblazing.</p> <p>Continue regular newsletter to all care leavers with section on EET opportunities.</p> <p>Using designated Departmental Care Leaver leads, further progress engagement with key Council services such as planning, licensing, procurement and economic development to maximise social capital offer for our care leavers.</p>

the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

13.	Care leavers and transitions		
	What do we know about social work practice?	How do we know?	What are we going to do to maintain and improve practice over the next 12 months?
13.5	<p>The vast majority of young people are in suitable accommodation that meets their needs and supports transition to independence. The Experienced Practitioner for Housing is leading improvements in access to housing and support to maintain housing for care leavers. During the pandemic the availability of tenancies for young people to move into ceased due to Housing prioritising the needs of street homeless people as part of the council's C19 emergency response. This has led to more young people being in semi-independent accommodation longer.</p> <p>Housing and Leaving Care services work closely together to prevent tenancy breakdowns and evictions for care leavers.</p> <p>A high-level of support to care leavers to move to independence at the right time for them and to ensure a secure future for them.</p> <p>Leaders are aware of the vulnerability of children in unregulated placements and when this does need to happen the Director and Senior Managers maintain weekly oversight to ensure all necessary actions are progressed to ensure a timely transition to appropriate placements. Children in semi independent placements are regularly reviewed by multi agency placement panels.</p>	<p>95% of young people aged 19-21 are in suitable accommodation</p> <p>43% of children and young people aged 19-21 are in semi-independent supported accommodation.</p> <p>No young person has faced eviction from a Southwark Council tenancy in the previous 12 months.</p> <p>The care leaver visit report was revised to provide live information on suitability of accommodation – this data is regularly reviewed and in addition is provided to our specialist Housing Experienced practitioner twice weekly.</p> <p>Every young person in custody (up to 25 years of age) has a named personal advisor—we also pay a weekly allowance to all young people in custody.</p>	<p>Develop further the integrated approach with Housing Services to ensure a more timely transition to independence for care leavers and increased access to suitable independent living housing stock.</p> <p>Work in partnership with charitable organisations and peer London boroughs to explore tenancy deposit support schemes for care leavers.</p> <p>Continue to deliver skills sessions for care leavers about tenancy sustainment, moving from online to blended online and face to face.</p> <p>Targeted joined up working with Housing and Social Care to make more tenancies available for young people to move into. To be overseen by Housing and Social Care Partnership Board.</p> <p>Progress the outcomes of the review of accommodation for care leavers, with a view to the increased development of council owned capital assets within the borough able to be developed as local provision.</p>
13.6	<p>Almost all young people are in receipt of their key documents at the time they leave care, or are being actively supported by their linked worker to resolve any issues.</p>	<p>Dip sample (June 2021)</p> <p>Manager's feedback</p>	<p>Strengthening the transition between Care and Leaving Care Services to ensure key tasks are undertaken and planned for young people well in advance of their transition from care</p>

CORPORATE PARENTING DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021-22****NOTE:** Original held by Constitutional Team; all amendments/queries to
Beverley Olamijulo Tel: 020 7525 7234/4395

Name	No of copies	Name	No of copies
Membership		Beverley Olamijulo	6
Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)	1		
Councillor Eliza Mann	1	Total:	9
Electronic versions (No hard copy)		Dated: 28 June 2021	
Councillor Evelyn Akoto			
Councillor Stephanie Cryan			
Councillor Maggie Browning			
Councillor Sunny Lambe			
Councillor Charlie Smith			
Councillor Anood Al-Samerai			
Co-opted members	1		
Florence Emakpose (external)			
Francis Turkson (email)			
Mark Kerr (email)			
Rosamond Marshall (email)			
Nicky Stoupe (email)			
Tracey Harrison (email)			
Children's Services - electronic versions (No hard copy)			
David Quirke-Thornton			
Alasdair Smith			
Poonam Patel			
Legal – electronic version (no hard copy)			
Sarah Feasey			