

# Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Wednesday 19 October 2011

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G01C - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1  
2QH

## Supplemental Agenda

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Date: 14 October 2011

## Evidence for Southwark Council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

### Support for parents and carers of disabled children and children with special educational needs

Contact a Family, October 2011

Contact a Family is the only UK-wide charity providing advice, information and support to the parents of all disabled children (aged 0 – 19). We have been working in Southwark for 15 years and have strong connections with local families, statutory services, other local organizations and agencies supporting families with a disabled child, and the wider community.

Over these 15 years, we have provided a service to thousands of individual families. This wealth of local experience, together with the information we gather from the hundreds of thousands of families who engage with Contact a Family across the UK, gives us a unique insight into the life experience of families caring for a child with a disability.

*Details of how to find out more about what we offer and what families tell us about the ways caring for a child with a disability impacts on their lives are at the end of this paper.*

On behalf of all families caring for a child with a disability we would like to submit this evidence to the committee.

#### 1. Knowing who we mean

Contact a Family was commissioned by the Southwark Aiming High for Disabled Children Project Board to attempt to identify all families caring for a child with a disability or additional need. Historically, there has been estimation that there are 5000 children with a disability or additional need in the borough. The work that we did suggests that a more realistic figure would be 2500 – that is: children who are known to a service, and/or have a statement of educational need.

Contact a Family found that, although it is possible to know how many children have a statement, and how many are on the Disability Register, these two listings are not compatible. There is also no way of gathering information about children who have specific health needs, nor of merging this data with education or social care needs records.

At the time of our analysis, approximately 1500 children were in receipt of a statement of educational need, about 450 were noted on the Disability Register and an even smaller number (around 180) received a service from the Children with Disabilities and Complex Needs team.

In order to plan services effectively, there is a need to identify who they are for and to join up the intelligence that already exists.

## 2. What is support?

The support that Contact a Family offers is tailored to the needs identified by each family. It will vary from family to family and from time to time. We aim to build a relationship with families and to develop their skills, knowledge and resilience over time. We are a dip-in-and-out service with families using our support at different levels. We are also an holistic service, so that we offer a full service to everyone if they want it. And we are an inclusive service – for any family living in Southwark with a child with any disability or additional need up to the age of 19 (Note: this may be extended to 25 as a result of recommendations from the Green Paper: *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability*).

The support we offer is intended to enable families to live the lives they choose to live.

We know that, as a result of caring for a child with a disability, many families experience:

- financial issues
- relationship issues
- isolation
- lack of confidence and self esteem
- health issues

We know that positive outcomes for the child are more likely in a well-functioning family. We also know that families who are supported to seek their own solutions and to become resilient are less likely to need support in the future. We can assume that children in these families are also more likely to be resilient and reach their full potential as adults, thus requiring less support in the future.

Preventative services which enable families to have a quality of life must be preserved in order to avoid more expensive support becoming necessary.

## 3. Who do families engage with?

Many families prefer to engage with non statutory services. We know that if a family has a bad experience with one service they will not engage easily with any other. By being independent, Contact a Family can often build a relationship with a family to gain their trust so that other agencies can be introduced.

We also know that families benefit from and value peer support. Much of what we do has an added element of linking families for mutual support. This works well as, although we continually meet families new to us, we also continue to have contact with families we have known over time because of our dip-in-and-out service and because we will support a family until the child is at least 19.

It is best practice to use non statutory services to support 'need to reach' families. Families should have the opportunity to offer each other support.

## 4. What do families tell us they want?

Families want to be included, and for their child to be included.

Our Inclusion Programme offers a range of family inclusive activities to introduce families to new experiences. Many of these are within the borough and most are universal. Our aim is to support families to enjoy activities which can be repeated independently.

Examples are using local parks and libraries, taster sessions and courses at local swimming pools, and exploring local museums. We also offer some opportunities which are more expensive and/or further away which families would find very difficult to access. Examples are trips to theme parks, the Pantomime, and the seaside.

Families may choose not to use services if they do not feel welcome. Contact a Family offers information and training to other settings and agencies to support staff to be inclusive in their practice.

Finance is often restricted for our families and this can be a barrier to accessing or providing what other families take for granted, such as replacing worn out appliances, new school uniforms, holidays and treats. Contact a Family supports families to maximize their income through accessing benefits, small grants and special offers.

Families would like to have regular breaks from their normal routine. They want good quality and meaningful experiences for their child and they want a chance to recharge their own batteries. And they want choice.

Families tell us it is hard to get good quality information. We offer one to one information and advice and we offer a quarterly newsletter plus a monthly email update. We also use texts to send reminders or small items of news or offers.

Contact a Family also has a website, Helpline, publications and a presence on Twitter, Facebook etc which all families can access.

Families want what they are entitled to. They want good quality services, to be considered as partners, and to be respected as an expert on their child and his/her needs.

### What the future should look like

Contact a Family, on behalf of all families with a child with a disability in Southwark, asks that the committee consider these recommendations:

- develop systems to promote the identification of families so they can be supported and which bring systems together (related to Aiming High for Disabled Children, the Green Paper *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability*, the Child Poverty Strategy and more)
- recognize the value of interventions which enable families to use their own resources, develop resilience and have a quality of life
- understand the benefit and power of peer support
- treat parents and carers with respect and truly seek and value their contributions (and those of their children) to planning and evaluating services
- support community and voluntary sector agencies and groups in offering a wide range of opportunities to families. Collaborate with and value the sector. When commissioning, offer contracts which are long enough to allow security and development.

Contact a Family wants to be able to continue to offer a quality service to all families with a disabled child in the borough. We want to see a holistic response to the needs of families across all parts of Children's Services, which will mean working together effectively and efficiently, and actively seeking the views of parents and carers and children and young people in a meaningful way.

I would like the opportunity to present this paper in person on 19 October and to answer any questions the committee might have. Thank you.

## More information

For general information about Contact a Family and the families who use our services, see our website: [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

Findings from some recent Contact a Family reports:

### Counting the Costs 2010

Key findings from a survey of over 1,100 parents include:

- Almost a quarter are going without heating (23%). Up from 16% in 2008.
- One in seven (14%) are going without food. Down from 16% in 2008.
- More than half have borrowed money from family or friends (51%) to keep financially afloat or pay for essentials, such as food and heating. (42% in 2008)
- More than 40% have applied for a charity grant. Up from 25% in 2008.
- Almost three quarters (73%) are going without days out and leisure time with the family. Up from 55% in 2008.

### Our family, our future

Features the stories of 30 families from across the UK whose children are affected by a range of disabilities and conditions and gives parent carers a voice to talk about their achievements, acknowledge the challenges, reflect on their aspirations and fears for the future and above all to celebrate their family life

### What makes my family stronger

Key findings of the report are:

- Almost 70% of families with disabled children said that understanding and acceptance of disability from their community or society is poor or unsatisfactory.
- Over 60% of families said they don't feel listened to by professionals.
- Vital support services such as short breaks, a key worker and childcare are unavailable to almost half of families.
- Over 60% of families said they don't feel valued by society in their role as carers.
- Half of families with disabled children said the opportunity to enjoy play and leisure together is poor or unsatisfactory.

### Information about Contact a Family Southwark

Our current newsletter and Annual Review are attached. These can also be accessed on our website: [www.cafamily.org.uk/inyourarea/london/southwark/index.html](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/inyourarea/london/southwark/index.html)

A full analysis of the local survey conducted in autumn 2010 can be found in our Winter 2010 newsletter (see the website). You may also find the parents' peer support contributions gathered at our Annual Conference in May 2011 interesting. These are reported in the Summer 2011 edition of the newsletter, also available on the website.

In the Annual Review, you will find an analysis of the families who are actively engaged with us, and reports on our activities over the last year. Our newsletter gives a flavour of the information we share with families and the professionals and agencies who also support them.

To contact me for any further information, please email: [Naomi.gilbert@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:Naomi.gilbert@cafamily.org.uk)

## **Evidence to scrutiny review of support for parents/carers of disabled children and children with special educational needs**

Catriona Moore & Eduardo Reyes  
Parents of Amy Reyes, 4 years old

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We welcome Overview & Scrutiny's interest in the subject of support for parents/carers of disabled children and children with special educational needs, and hope that our comments based on our own experience will be useful to the committee.

### **Introduction**

1. When you have a child with a severe disability, you enter into a long-term relationship with public bodies. Things that families with 'typical' children usually experience privately, become for families like ours the subject of professional interest and intervention. And we find ourselves having to seek out formal support to help our child live as normal a life as possible. Because these relationships are ongoing, and because they often begin when parents are in a state of grief, shock and sheer blind panic, it is very important that early contact is handled with sensitivity and that the council does not immediately convey a message of 'no help here'.
2. We are still in the early stages of adjusting to life as a family with a disabled child. Our experience of dealing with Southwark council has not been a positive one thus far. We have found that every request (for a social care assessment, for a statement of special educational needs, for a blue badge for parking, and other things) is initially rejected, with scepticism openly expressed about whether our daughter really does have the 'special needs' we claim she has. We have found it very difficult to obtain information about what type of support might be available and how to access it. And we have found that we need to remain constantly vigilant to ensure that services are not removed.

### **3. Summary of key points**

- The council should not carry out 'consultations' on proposals to remove services that it is legally required to provide. It is time-consuming, stressful and unnecessary for parents to have to make the case to the council that statutory obligations cannot be over-ridden, even at a time of severe cost pressures.
- The council is responsible for ensuring that children receive the services and support that their statement of special educational needs says they should have. It is an additional burden on parents to have to monitor constantly whether the council is in breach of its obligation to implement their child's statement.
- Assessments of children's needs for both care and education should be carried out early, when requested by another professional or by a parent, to enable the council to fulfil its commissioning responsibilities and plan ahead for future need.

- Disabled children and their families do not exist in isolation from the rest of the world. It is simply not realistic for the council to state that parents' responsibilities for other children or work commitments can have no bearing on decisions about the services and support these families should receive. Often a relatively small amount of support can enable families to support themselves and continue to function.

### **Tendency to disregard legal obligations to children with disabilities**

4. Councils have a number of legal obligations to children with disabilities.<sup>1</sup> Even in a time of financial constraint, the council still has a duty to comply with these obligations.

5. Over the last year, Southwark council has shown itself to have a somewhat cavalier attitude to its statutory duties. One example is the recent consultation on the new home-to-school 'travel assistance' policy. Among the proposed changes to the existing policy was a proposal to withdraw transport from children whose families have opted to use the child's mobility allowance (provided by the Department for Work and Pensions, not the council) to fund a Motability car. The aim was to reduce the number of children that the council was responsible for transporting and to place the responsibility on parents instead. This proposal went against the council's statutory obligation under Section 508b of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to provide free home-to-school transport for children of compulsory school age who have a mobility problem that means they cannot be reasonably expected to walk to school.

6. The proposal was dropped before the new policy was finalised. But it was a waste of time for council staff and parents to have to discuss a change that would have had a negative impact on parents, that the council did not even have the power to make. We wonder what was going through the minds of the council staff who drafted this, and whether there was an assumption that parents of disabled children would not be aware of what the legal position was or would not have the energy to challenge it.

7. Another example concerns the implementation of statements of special educational needs. A child's statement is a vital tool for parents and teachers, as it is a legal document stating who our child is, what she needs and how those needs will be met. Central to our daughter's statement is speech and language therapy. We were, then, dismayed earlier this year to discover that all speech and language provision had been removed from Cherry Garden School, an outstanding local school that specialises in educating children with complex disabilities and where our daughter is a pupil. The school was without speech and language input for more than a term, and it was only when two-thirds of the parents at the school wrote directly to the director of children's services that it was restored. It is up to parents

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<sup>1</sup> Further information is available from the Council for Disabled Children [www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk)

to monitor the implementation of their child's statement, and this is a significant extra burden.

8. Children like our daughter who need specialist therapy – as detailed in their statements – need it to be ongoing. They cannot wait until the council's budget is less tight. The input a child like Amy receives now, when she is young, will have an impact on her long-term development – which will in turn affect the 'demands' she makes on the council in years to come.

### **Reluctance to carry out assessments**

9. Both the disabilities/complex needs team (social care) and the Special Educational Needs section appear to have a presumption against carrying out an assessment of a child, regardless of who the assessment is requested by.

10. The burden is on parents to prove the need for an initial assessment of their child, even before there is any discussion about the need for specific services. Social workers and SEN staff make decisions about children without seeing them and without reviewing reports by other professionals. We experienced this with the disabilities team, which refused a request by our daughter's community paediatrician in 2009 to carry out a social care assessment. We also experienced it with SEN, which turned down the paediatrician's request for assessment at the same time.

11. It is clear that the council takes this approach in order to manage demand for limited resources. If a child is not assessed, he or she cannot access services. Neither can an un-assessed child be 'counted' in any review of unmet need in the borough. Keeping people 'out of the system' for as long as possible is clearly a way of containing need, especially as the number of children with disabilities continues to rise.

12. We understand that. If both of these teams had been honest with us, and explained that they try to manage demand by delaying assessments until children are older, we would have known where we stood (although we would have disagreed, as explained below). Instead, what is conveyed to parents is an attitude of 'institutionalised suspicion', where staff suggest that your child does not in fact need the thing you are requesting. It is interesting to compare this approach to rationing with the NHS approach: the NHS admits you have a need and puts you on a waiting list; the council denies that you have a need at all. It is clear which approach is most damaging to a family that is coming to terms with their child's diagnosis and likely prognosis.

13. Here is an illustration. Our daughter Amy was diagnosed with Rett syndrome in June 2009 when she was nearly two years old. Rett syndrome is a severely disabling neurological disorder, which means that Amy is unable to sit, stand, walk, talk, or use her hands. In August 2009, following her paediatrician's referral to the disabilities team, we received a letter from the duty social worker stating (without seeing our



daughter): *“This team works with children who have a severe and profound disability and at the moment we do not believe Amy’s disability meets this criteria. Therefore we will not be offering an assessment.”*

14. It is important that the committee understands the importance of early assessments. One of the purposes of assessment by the disabilities team is to ensure that children who need to be registered disabled are placed on the council’s disability register. The point of the disability register is to provide the council with a tool to enable it (and other local agencies) to plan ahead for future needs. Even if children do not receive social care services when they are very young, the council still needs to know about them – and register them – so that appropriate planning can occur for when they are older and need more care and support. That is what strategic commissioning is all about, and it is the council’s job to do more than simply respond to families when they reach crisis-point.

### **Limited recognition of the realities of family life**

15. Various council policies appear to be based on the assumption that parents of disabled children have (or should have) no commitments or responsibilities other than to their disabled child. Going back to the council’s home-to-school transport policy as an example: the policy states that no consideration will be given to parents’ responsibility for other, non-disabled children, or to their work commitments, when determining whether children should receive transport to school. Does it really need to be pointed out that making it possible for parents to keep working enables families to survive economically, and to be less of a drain on the state? Or that the fact our daughter Amy needs to be at a different school to her sister, in a different part of the borough, is something we have no control over?

16. Another example is access to respite care – a topical example, given that the council is currently finalising its policy on short breaks for carers of disabled children, in line with Government policy. We were told by the disabilities team that respite care is only available for single parents, on the grounds that two parents who are living together “can give each other breaks”. As in other areas, there is little recognition that a small amount of support for families now may help prevent a crisis in the future. The social care system is set up to respond to immediate crises, not to prevent these occurring. This is neither cost-effective for the council, nor satisfactory for families.

### **Conclusion**

17. Our experience of dealing with Southwark council as Amy’s parents confirms the old cliché that those who shout the loudest, get what they want. This may benefit parents like us, who have a reasonably good understanding of how to navigate the system and high levels of persistence to keep pushing for what our daughter needs. But it is not how things should work. Social workers, for example, should have the professional expertise, judgement and authority to work out for themselves who

needs help and what should be offered, and to look ahead in order to put the right services in place before families reach crisis-point.

18. There seems to be a fear that if you let families 'in', they will never stop demanding things. But the 'demands' of a family like ours are pretty modest. We want council staff who act in a 'gatekeeping' role to accept the judgement of doctors and other professionals and to work with other services to support our daughter. We want to be assured that the council knows about our child and understands her needs, so that when she needs more care and support in the future, the right services will be there. (Regardless of whether the council itself provides these services.) We want to be assured that services for children with disabilities are not seen as a 'soft target' for cuts, simply because they affect a small minority of the borough's children. We want the council to recognise that our aim is to care for our daughter ourselves for as long as possible, and if we have support now, we can do that before problems escalate in the future.

October 2011

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 19 October 2011	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Education and children's services scrutiny sub-committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Support for parents – review of short breaks services	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Rory Patterson, Deputy Director, Specialist Services, Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. To note the information in this report, in particular the intended next steps in reviewing and developing short breaks services in response to feedback from children, families and practitioners.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Local authorities are required to publish a short breaks services statement under the 2011 Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations. A cope of the regulations is included in Appendix 1.
3. To inform the development of Southwark's statement, the local authority commissioned an independent consultant to carry out a targeted consultation with children, young people, families and practitioners from the statutory and voluntary sectors.
4. The consultation took place in August and September. It involved seven organisations including local authority teams, as well as families through the Parent Carer Council and young people using services. The resulting reports, as set out in appendices 1-4, included:
  - a) Short breaks programme consultation: stakeholder views on current provision, highlighting their issues and concerns
  - b) Short breaks wish list: A 'wish list' of how stakeholders would like to see services improved
  - c) Shaping future service delivery – stakeholder proposals: Potential service actions to take forward stakeholders' views and wishes
  - d) Workforce development and training plan – consultation summary: Potential training opportunities to support future service arrangements
5. The consultation confirmed that children and their families value their short breaks very highly. Families see these breaks as essential as they provide much-needed respite as well as ensuring that children and young people have access to social and recreational activities away from home.
6. The outcomes of the consultation have assisted in setting the priorities for the statement and for developing the framework for future service arrangements. They have also helped to identify some service gaps and areas for development, which the local authority is committed to working with services, providers and families to address.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

### Southwark's short breaks services statement

7. Southwark's short breaks services statement will be published by the end of October. It is acknowledged that the deadline set in the regulations has passed. This is in part due to services' recognition that the statement has to be informed by, and respond to, the views of children, families and practitioners.
8. In listening to these views, the authority recognises that although families value highly the quality support they receive, there are opportunities to make access to them simpler and more transparent. Consequently, alongside publishing the statement, the local authority intends to set out how it will address the issues identified through the consultation phase.
9. This will take the form of a service review over the winter and spring, with the intention that the services families receive from next summer are easier to access and better targeted to support their needs. It will build on the outcomes of the consultation and will involve significant further consultation and collaboration with families, services and providers to define and test simpler, more transparent criteria and ways to allocate resources, and assessing the impact of any changes.

### Developing a new local offer

10. The consultation responses highlighted areas where improvements could be made, and which the local authority is committed to working with families, services and providers to address. Broadly, these are:
11. **Simpler, more transparent access:** Parents and carers said they want clearer definitions of what constitutes short break services and the criteria for accessing them, as well as easier access to information about what's available, especially at the universal level. They also said that referral routes were sometimes unclear and that assessment sometimes took too long. The local authority intends to use the coming review to clarify the eligibility criteria, simplify the referral process, improve the assessment process and strengthen review and communication processes.
12. **Activities tailored to need:** Disabled children and young people said they want to do the same 'fun things' that their non-disabled friends and siblings are able to do, and to take part in activities that increase their independence. Their parents and carers would like to access short breaks in more universal and inclusive settings, as well as in settings which can provide parallel activities for siblings and/or the whole family. They also want a wider range of activities tailored to ages and abilities as well as holiday clubs which run during all school holidays. These are options the review process will explore with families and providers.
13. **Greater use of direct payments:** Families requested greater flexibility around the use of direct payments, such as being able to purchase the level of one-to-one support their child may need to access universal services, alongside support and signposting to suppliers which can provide a variety of services. The authority intends to explore with families and providers the desirability and feasibility of extending the use of direct payments to access a wider range of

support, and to moving towards offering personal budgets which offer families more choice and control.

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	2011 Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/707/made">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/707/made</a>
Appendix 2	Short breaks programme consultation
Appendix 3	Short breaks wish list
Appendix 4	Shaping future service delivery – stakeholder proposals
Appendix 5	Workforce development and training plan – consultation summary

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Deputy Director, Specialist Services, Children's Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Fiona Russell, Principal Strategy Officer, Children's Services	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	12 October 2011	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to the Scrutiny Team</b>	13 October 2011	

# **Short-Breaks Programme Consultation**

**Southwark Council**

**Kim Leathem**

**September 30, 2011**

## **Project Brief**

All local authorities within England are required to provide short breaks for families with disabled children under the Children and Young Persons Act. Regulations from 1 April 2011 requires each local authority to produce a short breaks service statement to detail what services are available locally, the eligibility criteria for these services and how the services on offer will meet the needs of disabled children, young people and their families.

Thirteen consultations were conducted with service providers, children, young people and parents across the borough about a wide range of short breaks on offer. This information will be collated and used to inform the short breaks statement in terms of the current program on offer and looking to future service delivery.

A short series of questions was put forward during each consultation session, the results of which are included in this paper along with a brief summary of each group discussion.

General recommendations follow session summaries and reflect the overall feedback received.





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent carers accessing services have care package reviews and find out about services</li> <li>• CYP have to be on the disability register in order to access services; being on the register means support but not necessarily a care package. Parent carers need good access to information about community resources and universal services to compliment specialist provision.</li> </ul>
<b>Are you consulted enough about Short Breaks Provision?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough input into Short Breaks provision.</li> <li>• Would like to ensure that provision being offered meets the individual needs of CYP and that there is flexibility in level of support required.</li> </ul>
<b>Do you feel it's possible for parents and carers to access short breaks on short notice when required?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the services on offer have positive feedback from service users.</li> <li>• CYP with challenging behavior and/or are on the Autistic Spectrum often can't be placed and may end up in a residential unit due to lack of available provision.</li> <li>• If there was sufficient day provision at weekends, overnight respite demand may decrease.</li> <li>• More foster carers and respite carers are needed, however criteria is so strict that many people who apply aren't successful; assessment process for successful applicants is too long.</li> <li>• The Family Link Service is small; there isn't capacity to manage more carers.</li> <li>• There is a gap in emergency provision should parent carers have an illness/overnight hospital stay, etc. and are without a support network.</li> <li>• Many carers are unable to stay with CYP in their home overnight, which means they need to be placed outside the home; parents would prefer overnight breaks in their own home.</li> <li>• There is a distinct lack of available foster carers for in-house overnight respite, especially at short notice. Looking after CYP in their own home (domiciliary care) requires a shorter assessment process and isn't considered to be fostering.</li> <li>• It would be helpful if Orient Street had an emergency provision, including for those CYP not known to them currently, as this facility already exists and is a well known, trusted provision.</li> </ul>
<b>Training and Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a lack of disability awareness across the council including information around HIV.</li> <li>• More specialist training is needed to ensure that</li> </ul>

	<p>activities for CYP are more inclusive and that disabled children don't miss out due to communication difficulties or medical needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Social Care interagency referral form currently doesn't provide contact details for the Children with Disabilities Team.</li> <li>• More robust promotion of current e-learning packages and follow-up training around disability.</li> <li>• Referral and Assessment to increase signposting disabled CYP to appropriate services.</li> </ul>
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## **Contact a Family**

Contact a Family is a voluntary service that provides support to all CYP from 0-19 who have an additional need and their families, and remains a key source of information for Southwark residents. They are working with (approximately) 580 families and publish 'The Grapevine' newsletter as one way of regularly reaching service users. Services offered by the organization are access to information, family support work and events coordination.

The service offers various activities both locally and beyond for families to enjoy together, such as trips to the London Zoo or attend an Arsenal game. The cost for such activities is subsidized to help ensure attendance at events, however in some cases fees are refunded. Transport is often arranged so that families can travel together, helping to build community links and develop confidence to travel independently on public transportation around London. Contact a Family use text messages to remind families about events and meeting arrangements, which has proved successful, especially with Dads.

Supporting families to be confident to access universal services is an essential part of the work that Contact a Family does, to help families have broader access to their community and to build support networks with other families. Families need to build trust networks and links in the community, especially for some young people who will still require a high level of care and support in adulthood.

Contact a Family offers a menu of training courses, which can be delivered across the children's workforce and to parents and carers at a lower cost than commissioning training providers, a resource that can be maximized for both in-house and multi-agency training. Small workshops are offered to parents when requested, i.e. around the DLA, how to apply for different kinds of funding or relevant national issues.

## **Orient Street**

Orient Street is a 4-bedded respite unit where profoundly disabled children are referred by Social Services for overnight and weekend respite. In addition to the children's unit there is also an adult unit with a similar configuration. An additional bedroom was requested downstairs, however when this bed is occupied Orient Street is fully booked and an extra member of staff is needed which requires additional funding – in most cases Social Services is unable to fund this extra place. All clients who receive a service at Orient Street are on the disability register.

The Unit Manager often covers shifts/part of a shift in an emergency, and agency staff is then employed and funded by Social Services to provide cover and relieve the Manager. Orient Street have 45 children and young people known to them currently who have been assessed and are receiving regular respite either monthly or every 6 weeks, either as a one night or two night stay. Carers can submit an advanced booking request of up to seven nights if they wish to go on holiday.

As there aren't sufficient funds for 1 to 1 support, the unit often needs to block a bed and allocate two places to one child which doubles their unit cost in order to ensure sufficient staff coverage. Some children stay during the week as they are unable to cope well with an entire weekend day; transportation is provided for them between the unit and school for weekday stays.

There is a panel meeting with the Children with Disabilities team to discuss referrals from Social Services and review care plans for service users. Prior to staying at the unit, children are visited at school, and their family is visited at home or they attend a site visit. Children also have a tea visit and then try a one-night stay.

Orient Street has capacity during the school day in term time (approx. 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.) to contract out the space for structured activities. This would help develop a higher profile of the provision, maximize the space and potentially generate revenue, as well as offering a cost effective venue for professionals and partner agencies who need a safe space.

Of current concern for Orient Street staff is the process for purchasing goods and/or services; the current system is time and resource intensive and doesn't provide good value for money. It would be helpful for this process to be reviewed to support service delivery.

Staff turnover is low at Orient Street, and managers and staff have a rota, overtime and flexible working system that works well and meets the needs of service users and staff. Occasionally additional staff is needed and there are systems in place to support this need. However, the unit is required to procure agency staff through Comensura who acts as a broker as staff can no longer approach individual agencies. However, Comensura often supply staff who don't have appropriate security checks when they present for work and therefore are not permitted to stay, leaving a staff shortage for that

particular shift. It is also felt that Comensura use lower paying agencies who often provide unsuitable staff for this specialist environment.

### **Peckham Park Carers**

Carers at Peckham Park were consulted on its last day of operation before the site would become part of the Academy in the main school building. Various concerns were raised about future provision for the CYP who regularly attend and benefit from the Peckham Park Program:

#### **What concerns do you have about the future for this particular group of CYP?**

- Transition to the new site has not been planned - a staged transition would help these CYP adjust to a new environment better as keeping routines is very important for them.
- Staff consistency, wherever possible is also important, especially during times of transition. Long-term carers have invaluable experience with and information about CYP who attend this site – how will they be handing over this information to staff at the new site?
- Will the new site meet the needs of this group of CYP effectively?
- Are the staff at the new site experienced enough to manage these CYP as they have complex and profound needs and often exhibit challenging behavior?

#### **What other concerns do you have as carers?**

- Staff are not assured that the new provision has had comprehensive and appropriate health and safety checks completed; several staff members are considering not working at the new site because they feel it is unsafe for this group of CYP (i.e. securely locked doors)
- Rate of pay at the new site are significantly lower than staff are paid now in Southwark – has any provision been made for carers who have been working in the borough long-term?
- There appears to be less spending per child – concerns that this may reduce the quality of the activities offered.
- Some carers used to be re-imbursed by Social Services to pay for travel to accompany CYP on special trips – this is no longer being provided, which means that carers are using their own money to travel in London to support their client(s).
- Agency commission fees are extremely high – consider offering carers better rates of pay and utilize staff from local schools and other services in the borough that are already working in Southwark to keep costs down and provide better local knowledge.

## **Playscheme and After School Service, Cambridge House**

The Playscheme Service provides a specialized comprehensive program during the Easter and Summer Holidays, 8 days and 16 days of activities respectively. The activities are varied and include physical and creative activities as well as trips to local attractions. All of these are specifically tailored towards the individual needs of clients with learning disabilities. This year funding permitted approximately 88 children and young people to access these services, however the need for these services extends beyond the amount of places offered this year.

Some parental contribution per day is required in addition to Social Services funding in order for their child/ren to attend these programs. Depending upon the family income, Social Services can also pay a proportion of these contribution fees, though the process for this is complicated and time consuming.

During term time, there are various after school programs on offer including a program for approximately 6 clients at Cherry Gardens School from 3:15 – 6:30 from Monday to Friday (including drop-off of clients) and an after school arts based program on Wednesdays at Queens Road, Peckham for 6 clients, average age being 8-16 from 3:15 – 5:30. Transport to home addresses is provided for clients participating in the Cherry Garden provision but there is no transport included for the Wednesday Afterschool service. Referrals to both programs are either from Special Schools directly or via Social Services.

Strategic marketing of these programs is essential in order to provide a service to a wide range of CYP with additional needs, including canvassing both special schools and mainstream schools with special units on site.

A summary paper will be available shortly in regards to the services provided and the outcomes of this year's program, which will set out the summer scheme in more detail.

**The two most difficult areas for this program are similar to concerns raised by other services, so a detailed list of these challenges has been included below:**

<b>Staff</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers were recruited through various local colleges including art students to provide art therapy, however only a handful of volunteers worked on the program; procuring volunteers requires more advanced planning than time permitted this year.</li> <li>• The program in some ways is easier to manage without volunteers, as they often have less training, less experience working in a professional environment and require extra supervision, which can be labor intensive.</li> <li>• For the summer program a more professional and experienced staff group was employed as a result of a comprehensive recruitment campaign.</li> </ul>

- A new pool of staff was selected via a formal interview process with CRB checks undertaken from the point of hire.
- Experienced staff were also mixed with new members of staff to maintain a more professional and less familiar atmosphere.
- One off funding of was provided by United St. Saviours to deliver a Circus Skills based program for CYP with less severe needs. This ran simultaneously to the council funded program, providing for the division of clients by ability, which was positive because it ensured that all CYP were able to access a program that met their individual needs. The Circus Skills program was also designed as a sibling project; some siblings attended however not as many as desired.

### **Transportation**

- This summer program used Lambeth and Southwark Community Transport (LASCOT) Transport instead of Ruskin as their rates were more competitive and they provided a more professional service.
- Parental contribution was required of £10 per day without transport, and £15 per day with transport
- Approximately 90%+ of parent carers wanted transportation to and from home.
- Coordinating driving routes for buses and measuring travel time is difficult, so the amount of transportation available has been slightly reduced.
- LASCOT buses are not large enough to accommodate a full group of wheelchair users. Therefore, for the second week of the program extra Ruskin buses were bought in, to better accommodate wheelchair users.
- For week 1 of the program the buses were divided by geographical area, which meant a mix of ages on the bus and all 5 buses had to arrive at the center prior to commencing any planned group activities for the day. This often meant a long wait time with individual activities at the center depending on traffic before the group could go for example on an off-site trip.
- For weeks 2-4 bus routes changed to make sure that they were divided by age groups (Under 8's, 9-11, 12-14, 15-18) with designated staff on each bus that families knew and were familiar with. This reduced travel time and improved consistency of personnel.
- There was also a Special Care bus for service users with profound difficulties of all ages.
- Wherever possible it would be helpful to have consistent drivers, however this proved to be difficult to manage. Training staff who work on the Playscheme in future to drive minibuses would reduce the costs, increase staff skills and employability and ensure a more consistent and tailored service was provided.

## **Resources for Autism**

Resources for Autism provide a variety of short break programs in different areas, with staff being assigned to one particular borough to ensure continuity with children and young people.

The Monday night after school club takes place at Spa School from 6-8 p.m. and has capacity for up to 12 young people ages 14+ who are on the Autistic Spectrum. Staff wear matching orange t-shirts and/or sweatshirts, which immediately gives the impression of being part of a club or a team. Each week has a different activity focus such as baking, bowling or a treasure hunt, however free play is also incorporated into each session so that young people have a choice of what they would like to do. The final week there is an awards ceremony and each young person is recognized for something they have achieved during the term.

This club provides 1 to 1 support for those who attend and there was a good staff to young person ratio. The club has access to the school facilities including an art studio and a large outdoor play area so the building is well resourced for the program. Transportation is not provided, so young people need to be dropped off and picked up for the club unless they are able to travel independently. Referrals come from parents themselves or from school Senco's.

As it is the start of a new term, a few members of staff are new to the team and returning staff are just getting to know their clients and settling in to a new environment so feedback has been provided based on staff experience of working in Southwark:

- Swimming is regularly requested – would like to include in the program as much as possible.
- There are not enough places on the summer program for everyone who wants to attend so clients are offered one or two weeks instead of the full 3-week provision.
- There should be more resources for children under 8 on the Autistic Spectrum.
- Previously programs were divided by ability so that CYP could access more appropriate activities – staff generally felt that this works better than whole group activities and is preferred.
- This club can accommodate 12 young people – need to ensure that all places are being utilized to maximize the provision.

## **Salmon Youth Center**

Salmon Youth Center offers a variety of short breaks and programs for CYP across Southwark. In addition to offering inclusive holiday provision for 12+ young people such as day trips (i.e. Cinema, ice skating, London Eye, Snow Center) and residential trips during the summer, Easter and half-term breaks, there is a weekly youth club called the "Mixable" for 14+ young people with an additional need. Transport is available for this program, however it's limited and young people who can travel independently are encouraged to do so.

Feedback received about programs on offer is generally good; referrals are generally word of mouth, however the Children with Disabilities Team and Connexions often make some referrals, with one or two referrals coming from special schools. Generally, Social Workers and Teachers pass along valuable information about the young people being referred to the Salmon Center, helping them to provide the appropriate support.

Salmon also offers an inclusive young volunteers program, which currently has 12 volunteers, at least 5 of whom have a special or additional need.

The biggest challenge for Salmon at this time is that due to staff shortages, programs on offer are more limited than the center would like to provide. This also creates a shortage in available transport because there isn't sufficient staff to release to drive the mini-bus. For those CYP who can travel independently with supervision, some consideration will be needed in terms of the 'walking bus' idea, or having volunteers accompany groups of young people to the center from school or a designated meeting point.

Advertising for programs would benefit from some support to help promote the center, and having a Disability Manager as a dedicated resource would improve accessibility to the center. Currently programs are first come first served, however it would be beneficial to offer a full program across the borough.

Salmon Youth Center may be one of the largest youth clubs in Europe so attendance at activities should be maximized!



## Parents and Carers – Service Users:

### Parent Carer Council (PCC)

The Parent Carer Council has a large number of involved families so information was collected through a series of consultation events at Cambridge House with both Executive Members and Council Members.

#### **Access to Information and Services**

- Parents would like a definition of ‘Short Breaks’ and ‘Short Breaks Services’, who it applies to and criteria for receiving services.
- It should be easier to find out what services are available and if there is a cost implication; service directories are often out of date.
- Parents feel that only CYP with learning needs are able to access services, physically disabled CYP often don’t meet the criteria for services. ‘Moderate’ needs don’t qualify for a Social Worker, which then prevents access to some services.
- Families viewed as ‘able to cope’ are not given services unless they declare themselves at crisis point; it is perceived that families with adopted children receive more services than those who have disabled children.
- Parents who empower themselves to access information about their child/ren’s condition(s) are often discharged from services.
- Parents signed up to the forum receive emails, newsletters and email from Contact a Family, PCC website and can access information at Sunshine House. Most information is received by word of mouth, as this is the most reliable way to learn about services. Libraries and schools/nurseries are also preferred sources of information.
- Eligibility criteria are unclear – packages vary greatly between CYP and parents often don’t understand how/why. It appears that packages are offered to offset a family breakdown, so those in crisis or those who articulate most receive more services.
- The ‘panel’ process isn’t satisfactory and there is the concern that personal judgments of some professionals may affect the care package (process currently under review).
- Carer assessments take too long and families are often waiting for a service.
- SEN Statementing process is very long and parents don’t feel supported during the process.
- For those families receiving the Disability Living Allowance, is there a monitoring

system in terms of how it's being used?

- Disabled CYP attending mainstream schools are often unable to access after school clubs and programs there without 1 to 1 support, as staff feel unable to provide the appropriate level of care.
- Universal services across Southwark are not accessible for disabled CYP in most cases, and families do not feel welcome by staff.
- Young people 19+ are often left without services and parents feel they don't know where to go to get help, including information about social activities and work experience. Vulnerable young people also need support to access transport and to be independent, which also isn't forthcoming.
- Parents who receive money for the 'Fix Yourself a Break' Scheme appreciate the gesture, however are left with finding their own holiday and some find this difficult as they are not signposted or provided with details of agencies who can help them find a suitable break.

### **Consultation**

- Parents appreciate the opportunity to be consulted, however feel that they don't find out the results of the consultation and are not given sufficient explanations about why some changes can't be accommodated.
- Some consultation periods are too short so parents don't have time to meet the deadline
- Various methods need to be used to collect information (i.e. face to face meetings, questionnaires, electronic surveys, mail drop, phone survey) to encourage parent participation.

### **Direct Payments(DP)**

- Some parents are using Direct Payments however it adds stress, as it requires extra administration time and IT access (i.e. computer/scanner/fax/photocopier - potential cost implication if no computer at home). Parents must manage carer payments, National Insurance, payroll/PAYE/Taxes and timesheets, as well as may need support to apply for an enhanced CRB for the carer. There have also been difficulties with some payments not being received, which creates extra work and stress.
- Parents feel DP should be easier to manage with more control over what they can purchase.
- The view is that with DP parents receive less support (i.e. 4 hours of care instead of 6).
- Parents feel that the transition to new provision is often delayed because of DP and the process (i.e. from Peckham Park to Camden Society).
- Experiences with Agency Carers have not been favorable on the whole; parents often have to find their own carers, which takes time and resources.
- If a parent manages to find a carer privately who isn't registered with an agency, a CRB may not have been undertaken (which has time and financial implications), and the carer may not have had recent training opportunities for their practice to stay current.
- Privately arranged carers provide more flexibility in terms of their hours and when they work each week, depending on the needs of the CYP and their family.

- Greater flexibility with/understanding of DP may encourage more parents to engage with this system. More information about Personalized Budgets would also be useful as this is likely to be introduced in the future.
- Some parents would prefer their child (ren) attend a provision that's paid for as it's more secure and structured, and easier to manage if it's paid for by Social Services rather than DP.

### **Professional Networks and Support**

- General impression that there is not enough 1 to 1 support available so CYP are often missing out because they cannot attend some provisions without support.
- Mentors and Befrienders are viewed more positively than agency staff; experience is that agency staff can be inconsistent, are often poorly trained and difficult to find a suitable carer.
- There is a lack of male carers for boys
- Support networks for parents are very helpful but should include some events where parents can have a break and not focus on disability.
- Schools are viewed as not inclusive enough, and 'inclusion units' at mainstream units are often isolated/separate making CYP feel even more excluded. Need to ensure that CYP with additional needs at mainstream schools can still access after school activities.
- Some schools are not open enough with parents who sometimes find out things from their child (ren) after the fact.
- Families often feel socially isolated which can lead to mental health concerns for both children and parent carers.
- Need a more robust system around Team around the Child/Family meetings taking place; current view is that they usually take place as a crisis meeting, lead by Social Services.
- Most families do not have an allocated Keyworker or Lead Professional to help lead the professional network. Families are telling their story more than once and do not feel that professionals are working together to share information and safeguard CYP. Some parents are calling their own Team around the Child meeting!

### **Service Delivery**

- There are many well-received services being delivered, such as Sports Camps and the hydrotherapy pool, which families are grateful for and appreciate.
- More 1 to 1 support available and/or more opportunities for parents to use direct payments to provide support so CYP can attend more activities.
- Waiting lists for services can be too long; in some cases if a provision is full, the CYP isn't offered an alternative provision.
- Families would like more provision that includes siblings as well as more inclusive programs.
- Parents need to feel secure during a time of significant change that they will still have services and provision available and that the buildings where their child (ren) attend activities are safe and secure environments, particularly for those CYP who often run away.
- Summer programs aren't long enough currently, so CYP are then required to

have various periods of transition during the summer: school to home/home to their summer program/end of program back to home/home back to school. The establishing of new routines takes time, and the current arrangements mean that the whole summer is spent moving from one phase to another, which can be difficult to manage, and upsetting for CYP who require routines.

## **Children and Young People – Service Users:**

### **Monday Club @ Spa School**

The Monday Club @ Spa School is run by Resources for Autism once a week from 6-8:00 p.m. There is capacity for up to 12 young people to attend this program who are 14+ and on the Autistic Spectrum. The young people attending this program enjoy their time at the club and engage well with staff. As it was the start of term they had some circle time to share something about their summer break, had some free play outside and then worked on an art project in the studio, which is well resourced.

On this occasion there were 5 young people who attended and they provided me with the following information:

- They would like more swimming
- If club could run another night of the week they would like to attend.
- Club is fun and they like being away from home after school

### **Peckham Park**

Peckham Park is a specialist provision for CYP with profoundly complex needs, many of whom are also on the Autistic Spectrum. There is a 1:1 staff ratio given the level of needs of this client group.

Four young people with the help of their carers participated in an informal consultation session at Peckham Park in it's last day of operation before the building will be turned over to the Academy in the main school site.

At the time of the consultation, these young people would be returning to school without an after school/evening short break provision. One young person who had already turned 19 was still attending Peckham Park provision, as a transition to adult services had not yet been arranged.

Feedback from young people was as follows:

<b>Which activities do you enjoy most?</b>	Cinema Day trips to the city to see architecture/buildings around London
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	Riding the bus/train Rock climbing Space to run Sports Swimming Visits to the park
<b>Which activities would you like to have more of?</b>	Activities to help increase independence Increased space More trips – would like to visit LEGOLAND Residential trip for 2-3 days Seaside trip

## **Conclusion**

In summary, this exercise has been successful in offering service providers, children, young people and parent carers an opportunity to feedback about their experiences with the Short Breaks Program in Southwark. Discussion sessions were welcomed and feedback was constructive in terms of what areas should be looked at in the coming year(s). **Overall feedback about services and resources was very positive and appreciated, with the view that the core offer is very good and delivers a high standard of short break for families.**

**It is evident that children, young people and their families value their short breaks very highly, and would like more – as much as possible!** These breaks are essential for families as they provide much needed respite as well as ensure that children and young people have access to social and recreational activities away from home. A clear message that was consistent across the consultation meetings was that with less short breaks, there would be a greater need for overnight respite care. Therefore, suggestions and feedback generated during consultation sessions should help inform future service delivery to ensure that Southwark maintains its short break offer and delivers services according to local need.

In addition, Southwark is fortunate to have such a wide range of service provision with very committed and dedicated staff that are passionate about the communities they serve and the work they do.

## **Shaping Future Service Delivery**

Throughout this consultation exercise, feedback was provided in terms of looking ahead to the future and improving services for disabled children and young people and their families. While families understand that not all changes will be possible, it was

suggested that some areas of work would benefit from being reviewed even if only small adjustments could be made. Service delivery should also ensure that it is fully inclusive of all CYP in Southwark with an additional need, as many of these vulnerable clients will not be known to Social Services.

Feedback from the consultation exercises can be divided into 5 main areas:

- 1. Access to Services**
- 2. Commissioning**
- 3. Consultation**
- 4. Resources**
- 5. Safeguarding Responsibilities and Integrated Service Delivery**

**More detailed suggested work plans have been set out in Appendix A, B and C to help inform future discussions.**

A special thank you to those who participated in this consultation exercise and who have contributed to the content of this paper:

Children with Disabilities and Complex Needs Team  
 Contact a Family  
 Family Link Service  
 Linda Cleverly, Child and Young Person's Advocate (Disability)  
 Orient Street Staff  
 Parent Carer Council Executive Committee and Forum Members  
 Peckham Park Young People and Staff  
 Playscheme and After School Service, Cambridge House  
 Resources for Autism  
 Roger Weissman, CAMHS Social Work Team Manager  
 Salmon Youth Center  
 Young People @ Monday Night Club, Spa School

## Appendix 3

### Short Breaks 'Wish List'

The following is a 'Wish List' for improved service delivery that has been suggested by service providers, children, young people and parent-carers who participated in the above consultation sessions.

Service Users and Providers	Wish
Children with Disabilities Team and Family Link Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher profile of disability, specialist services and training opportunities across Southwark.</li> <li>• Informed discussion with Transportation Department re: transporting CYP to out of borough provision (i.e. Charlie Chaplin which is just over the border with Lambeth).</li> <li>• Investigate more after school provision including Child Minders to support working parents; consider sites where parallel activities can take place for siblings to reduce travel times and cost for after school pick up.</li> <li>• Designated Brokerage Worker attached to the service who understands the needs of CYP and their families.</li> <li>• In-house staff pool of carers instead of using agency staff.</li> <li>• Include contact details for 'the Team' on the Inter-Agency Social Services referral form.</li> </ul>
Contact a Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security of tenure – a longer contract would support on-going program planning and development and staff continuity for families.</li> <li>• More robust advertising of short breaks services including maintaining a regularly published comprehensive (and translated) catalogue of activities (paper copy still required for families who do not access web-based information).</li> <li>• Short Breaks Coordinator Post – someone who can help</li> </ul>

	<p>monitor provision, access criteria, contracts and the referral process; also to provide a brokerage service to ensure that all CYP with additional needs receive/access services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer more activities that are inclusive and modified for different ability levels.</li> <li>• More provision for disabled children between 5-8.</li> <li>• Ensure that CYP who attend out of borough schools can still access community resources local to their home.</li> <li>• Offer multi-activities on site wherever possible so that all children in a family can enjoy an activity and parent carers can have a break; wherever possible, coordinated finishing times to facilitate collecting children; additional Crèche facilities to help support parent carers to attend activities, workshops, training, etc. (I.e. Squids offers whole family activities for anyone 11+ so that all needs are catered for).</li> <li>• Improved transition from children's to adult's services.</li> <li>• More family holidays</li> <li>• Offer a different level of family link care to supervise CYP in their home with a view to being able to offer an overnight/weekend break for parents.</li> </ul>
Orient Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install a new and updated kitchen, which is DDA compliant/friendly to ensure it's accessible and safe for service users. Can consider additional uses for the kitchen if site is to be contracted out (i.e. for independent living schemes, healthy eating cooking courses for CYP and/or parent carers)</li> <li>• Offer a full day holiday Playscheme during the holidays from Monday – Friday, 9:00 – 6:00 p.m.</li> <li>• Offer respite care during the holidays from Friday – Monday to accommodate a Playscheme program</li> <li>• Consider contracting the building for structured activities when not in use to other professionals and/or service</li> </ul>



	<p>users (i.e. Early Years provision, Occupational Therapists, Supervised Contact)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New bath upstairs</li> <li>• One electrical hospital-type bed for the unit</li> <li>• Offer a Saturday club for a small group of young people who can attend once a month to replace an overnight stay.</li> <li>• More mobile sensory equipment and hardwearing equipment such as musical toys that are specifically designed for disabled CYP.</li> <li>• Installation of an overhead track in the soft playroom to help with wheelchairs/hoists.</li> <li>• An improved and more time/resource efficient system for purchasing goods (i.e. using a credit card or direct debit controlled by Site Manager)</li> <li>• Consider having a 'handy man' on site in lieu of contractors, as more time and cost efficient.</li> </ul>
Parent Carer Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More access to holiday breaks for CYP with disabilities and their families</li> <li>• More inclusive sports clubs/programs for CYP with disabilities – especially swimming.</li> <li>• Sports clubs to clarify what needs can/can't be met by staff; offer a short break for parents (i.e. activity or coffee break) so parents can remain on site for support if needed. Parallel activities for siblings helpful to reduce travel costs, time and stress.</li> <li>• Stronger link between PCC and Southwark Carers to ensure that parent carers of children can also access various schemes and available support.</li> <li>• More 1 to 1 support to be made available.</li> <li>• Council to meet with Fusion/'Disability Champion' and review access to services and the need for specialized services to meet local need.</li> </ul>

- More scheduled sessions for disabled children; currently places are very limited at some provisions (i.e. Peckham Soft Play Area, Swimming).
- Upgraded search function/database on Southwark website to find appropriate services.
- Poster campaign across Southwark about disability awareness and available services.
- More flexibility with Direct Payments.
- Parental participation in the strategic planning of service design and delivery.
- Workshops offered to explain topical issues, i.e. Direct Payments, Taxi Card, Short Breaks and local services for disabled CYP and their families, applying for funding.
- For CYP who attend out of borough schools, they need to be able to access local and community resources to develop a social network near to their home.
- Carefully planned and implemented transitions into Adult Services and between provisions including keyworker/support worker transitions; this process ideally begins before the end of one provision and before/during the start of the new provision.
- Investigate ID Bracelets/tracking devices for CYP who often go missing or run away to ensure that they can be returned home safely.
- Adventure Playground to offer regularly scheduled sessions for disabled CYP, including some sessions where siblings can also attend.
- For Southwark Council to investigate and promote what opportunities there will be at Burgess Park for all CYP.
- Playscheme programs are needed during the October/February/May half-term holidays.
- Provide a sufficient level of short breaks funding in order to ensure continuous and much needed service delivery!
- ADD/ADHD CYP to be supported to be included in after

	<p>school clubs and activities.</p>
Peckham Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition plans for 18+ young people to be implemented and planned in a staged approach over time including carer transitions.</li> <li>• Ensure staff consistency wherever possible</li> <li>• Ensure that the new site is appropriately health and safety checks in order to safeguard this group of vulnerable CYP.</li> <li>• Review contractual arrangements for those carers who transfer to the new site. Consistency is important for these CYP and staff would like to move with their clients, if possible while maintaining similar terms and conditions.</li> </ul>
Playscheme and After School Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More competitive wages to ensure high quality staff.</li> <li>• Re-assess the 1 to 1 provision – is it necessary for all CYP designated this support?</li> <li>• All staff should be paid for training/induction days</li> <li>• More robust training and induction program needed; tailor made program for experienced staff who have attended various training sessions previously.</li> <li>• Part-time or full-time substantive post to ensure consistent program coordination and benefit from learning over time. Administrative support required for this role.</li> <li>• Placements should be funded based on need instead of places allocated according to available budget; alternatively may need to consider reducing service entitlement in order to accommodate all CYP who would like to receive a service (i.e. offer 8 days to a client instead of 16).</li> </ul>
Resources for Autism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all places at Monday Club are utilized to maximize provision; offer more weekly sessions if possible.</li> <li>• Include swimming wherever possible!</li> <li>• Consider splitting groups by ability to ensure that CYP access activities that are appropriate for their ability.</li> </ul>

Roger Weissman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return of overnight short breaks and short break 'camps' to provide CYP an opportunity to visit outside of London to access a range of outdoor activities and opportunities to learn independent skills. (I.e. trip to Cornwall, boat trip, city breaks within the UK, trip to an amusement park)</li> </ul>
Salmon Youth Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Manager to oversee all programs at the center for CYP with additional need, market programs and provide outreach for target groups.</li> <li>• Offer 19+ workshops around life skills, AQA certificates and supporting transition from college into adulthood.</li> <li>• Additional staff to offer expanded programs</li> <li>• Improved transport program to help CYP access the center (i.e. volunteers to bring a group from school either walking or on public transport; supporting CYP from a particular area/estate to travel together). This also frees up the mini-bus for those who are unable to travel independently.</li> <li>• Consider the use of taxi cards or Dial-A-Ride to provide group transport to/from the center to increase access.</li> <li>• Only staff/carers/volunteers who are CRB checked by Salmon can accompany young people on residential trips, which limits access – can this be managed differently?</li> <li>• Enhanced staff training to better support young people with more complex needs.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4 Shaping Future Service Delivery – stakeholder proposals

The following work plan has been collated based on consultation feedback and are suggestions and recommendations made by service users and providers including families.

WORK AREAS	DISCUSSION POINTS
<b>Access to Services</b>	
Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearer explanations of eligibility criteria and referral pathways into services (pre and post assessment).</li> <li>• Review of joint working agreement/protocol between Children with Disabilities Team and Referral and Assessment Team to ensure families are signposted and referred to appropriate services.</li> </ul>
Emergency support services for parents/carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the event that a parent carer has an emergency (i.e. hospital appointment, surgery, child in the hospital) where can they go to get help?</li> <li>• Many parents felt that in the first instance they would rely on their network of family and friends. As many CYP are not known to Social Care parents wouldn't feel comfortable contacting them in an emergency. In the event that a parent/carer was without support, where would they receive help in an emergency situation?</li> </ul>
More inclusive/integrated activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal settings in particular need to be more inclusive with up skilled frontline staff to better support disabled children and young people.</li> <li>• Ensure Hearing and Visually impaired CYP are included in service provision and access to activities, as these groups are often isolated.</li> <li>• More sports clubs requested (provision of disability sports</li> </ul>

	<p>program is no longer available); there is a particular interest in swimming including disability swim sessions. Parents have also requested activities for girls supervised by female staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different kinds of activities to meet different needs (i.e. swimming classes delivered at different levels of ability)</li> <li>• Consider short breaks to provide different activities for different ability levels; CYP should have a choice of activities during short breaks programs wherever possible – mix of ages and CYP will support socialization skills and break down disability barriers.</li> <li>• More activities needed that offer support to all CYP within Southwark with an additional need – as the majority are not known to Social Services, they should still be able to access services.</li> <li>• Review of referral routes to ensure that CYP not known to Social Services can be referred by other professionals or self-referred by parents.</li> <li>• For families who don't receive services and/or funding from Social Services, how can they be supported to access activities for their children? It is viewed that better access to services in the long run will help prevent CYP and families from escalating up the crisis ladder and are therefore more cost effective.</li> </ul>
Publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southwark Council website including online regularly updated directory of services, but enhanced promotion of available services is needed included access criteria and cost to parents carers.</li> <li>• Family Information Service needs more regularly updated information from service providers. Consider a way to demarcate services in the online directory that families with disabled children have used and reviewed.</li> <li>• Leaflets, Brochures for distribution – accessible at Sunshine House, Libraries, etc.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Conference for agencies to have information booths to provide information about services.</li> <li>• Offer parent carers including foster carers a series of workshops to explain more about: Short Break provision and what is available, Direct Payments/Personalized Budgets, Taxi Card and other issues of interest (i.e. funding for holidays).</li> </ul>
Transportation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessing short breaks is often difficult due to travel and transport arrangements. Some CYP will miss out on services, as it is too difficult for parent carers to bring them to/from activities. Ensure equal distribution of activities in the north and the south of the borough wherever possible.</li> <li>• How can CYP travel between school and local clubs/community activities?</li> <li>• Mobility allowance and Disability Living allowance can be used for transport to/from activities – may need to refresh this information with parents.</li> <li>• Some services have their own transport as Southwark has contributed to the purchasing of vehicles; review of contractual agreements to ensure that drop off and pick up for CYP is included.</li> <li>• Use of transport for out of borough provision needs to be included in the strategy, as currently there appears to be some difficulty with this (i.e. crossing into Lambeth). Commissioning of services and placements should align with/be supported by transportation provision.</li> <li>• School transport is only used during term time, and before and after school – consider using these buses during the day, on weekends and during the school holidays to maximize transport provision.</li> <li>• Transport for vulnerable young people post 16 who cannot travel independently would be useful, especially for working parent carers and/or those with other children to transport to school.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the assessment process for school transport to include parent carer work/shift commitments, other children in the household and logistics of travel for drop off/pick up.</li> <li>• School transport currently is operating without designated/routine pick up times which can distress the children; parents are often having to take children to school so they arrive on time which adds extra pressure and stress (A new system is in place, still working through the logistics but is causing stress to some families).</li> <li>• There are less buses being used for school transport so timing is less flexible – this creates difficulty for parents with other children (i.e. bus scheduled for pick up at 8:30, parent needs to leave by 8:20 to bring other children to school).</li> <li>• Transportation is especially important, as parent carers feel very protective of their children being out on the streets of Southwark; they need to feel that their children are in safe environments and arriving/departing a provision safely will help to foster this trust.</li> <li>• Consider use of taxi card for group transport to share costs?</li> <li>• Consider Dial-A-Ride minibus for group transport to improve access to services.</li> </ul>
<b>Commissioning</b>	
<p>Cost Savings and good value for money</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate short breaks programs into universal services/core offer where possible.</li> <li>• Robust evaluation of services being provided and whether they are meeting the needs of service users. Service users may need tailor made/specialized care packages and some services could be more flexible with their care offer.</li> <li>• Utilizing in-house staff, partner agencies and parent carers to provide staff training and workshops around disability and safeguarding.</li> <li>• Sessional staff are only paid for hours worked; if a CYP does not attend an activity is Social Services still required to pay? Are parent carers still required to contribute?</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of sites for short breaks in terms of value for money and facilities – are they meeting the needs of CYP and families? (I.e. Bacon’s College offer competitive rates, however they don’t have sufficient equipment for the Special Care Group during Playscheme; it is also not centrally located which adds transportation challenges). Can parallel activities be offered for other children at the same site?</li> </ul>
Early Years Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission additional Early Years placements, especially for children under 3. Currently there is a limited portage service however this group of children needs more activities with opportunities for social interaction.</li> <li>Some work to be undertaken with private nurseries, which often refuse to accept children with additional needs or who shortly after starting claim that they cannot manage their needs. At least one private nursery has claimed that only toilet-trained children are able to attend their setting.</li> </ul>
Increased service provision for CYP on the Autistic Spectrum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYP on the Autistic Spectrum often slip through the net as they may not qualify for mainstream and/or specialist services; CYP with dual diagnosis of ADHD and Autistic Spectrum Disorder are particularly vulnerable as they require 1 to 1 support to access services which required funding; CYP on the Autistic Spectrum with challenging behaviour are often hard to place especially for overnight stays and respite care. Investigate more suitable provision for these CYP including enhanced training for carers.</li> <li>More provision needed for children under 8 diagnosed with Autism.</li> <li>Further investigation around services provided by Resources for Autism and IBA.</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Regular on going consultation with CYP, parents/carers/providers (i.e. 2-3 times per year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that results of consultations are shared; wherever possible explain why some requests cannot be honoured.</li> <li>Offer various methods to collect feedback (i.e. face to face</li> </ul>

	<p>consultation, questionnaire, electronic survey, telephone survey)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents to participate in the strategic planning of services wherever possible.</li> <li>• Robust methods to engage CYP and include their views and provide opportunities to introduce them to new and different activities (i.e. canoeing, sailing)</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	
Care package allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of current 'panel' process; consider a wider multi-agency approach to include input from various service areas across the sectors including an Independent Person to offer a wider range of services to families. Consider keyworker/lead professional to attend the panel meeting to advocate on behalf of the family and further explain specific requests for services.</li> <li>• Transparency in how care packages are allocated and the eligibility criteria for services.</li> <li>• Inform parents of other services they may wish to access in addition to what is provided by Social Services and/or by using Direct Payments.</li> </ul>
Extended use of available facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of site provision to ensure maximum use and provide value for money.</li> </ul> <p>For example:  Orient Street has capacity on the children's side during school hours to provide a safe space for additional activities – i.e. under 5's stay and play or a drop-in service to give parent-carers a break (staff requirements would need to be reviewed); Work experience placements from Spa School could use the building during the school day; Occupational Therapy assessments. Consider using Orient Street as an activity hub and/or resource center including as a provider of Independence Training. This would maximize the building, improve the profile of the provision and encourage professional relationships between agencies. A pricing structure</p>

	<p>would need to be agreed.</p> <p>Tuke School (and others) have comprehensive facilities available during half-term and holidays that could be utilized; hoists, multi-sensory rooms and hydrotherapy activities would be well received by program participants; school staff may even be interested in working in the scheme (contractual agreements permitting), providing consistency, understanding of local communities and need, with health and safety checks and training already in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider multi-use sites for after school and club activities where siblings can attend and/or activities for parents; parallel activities reduces travel time and cost, allows a break for the whole family and then parents/siblings can provide support for CYP with additional needs if required.</li> </ul>
Staff Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider pool of carers needed to provide short periods of respite care, especially within the family home. Consider increased utilization of pool of sessional contact supervisors to provide cover when required; these are staff who would be employed by Southwark Council and would have undergone all required safety checks and training.</li> <li>• More foster carers needed – strict criteria and lengthy assessment processes means many carers don't qualify or move on before they are accepted. Improved process for vetting carers who can supervise CYP in their own home, working up towards an overnight/weekend break for the parent(s).</li> <li>• Agency staff are expensive and can be inconsistent; service providers and parents feel that agency staff often don't offer good value for money; it is also felt that in order to attract good quality carers, staff pay rates need to be re-evaluated.</li> <li>• Better paid/skilled/trained staff may mean less 1 to 1 support needed and can offer 1 to 2 support, which is more cost effective. This also helps to balance staff and client</li> </ul>

	<p>numbers in the event of an absence during scheduled activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of more male carers, especially for boys.</li> <li>• More mentors, ‘befrienders’ and volunteers to work with CYP. This kind of service is well received by families and provides good value for money.</li> <li>• Consider designated Short Breaks Coordinator to ensure Southwark offers a comprehensive short breaks service integrating all CYP with special needs; would facilitate managing, arranging and monitoring service provision.</li> <li>• Consider Brokerage Worker role to support CYP and families to be provided appropriate services.</li> <li>• Further discussions around maximizing staff working with CYP in Southwark in lieu of using agency staff; i.e. the creation of a staff pool for staff who would like to work extra hours and work with CYP in different settings (possibly with different contractual arrangements to avoid overtime pay). This also supports staff continuity and stability for families.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding Responsibilities and Integrated Service Delivery</b>	
<p>In-school support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop stronger links between mainstream and special schools for better support of CYP with additional needs.</li> <li>• Work undertaken with schools about disability awareness, building empathy and understanding how to meet the needs of individual CYP and developing in-school support programs for CYP without specialist or 1 to 1 support.</li> <li>• Review of incidents of bullying and exclusion of CYP with additional needs from mainstream schools; with the expansion of Academies there are a limited number of mainstream school places for this group of vulnerable CYP so in-school support is essential to prevent exclusion.</li> <li>• Work to be undertaken with schools to support cultural shift around supporting CYP with additional needs including refreshed strategies for in-school support.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider program to support CYP to travel independently to school – i.e. walking school bus, escort to school from home or pick up point (volunteers, 6<sup>th</sup> form or college students, older siblings) and organized ‘carpools’ between parents (i.e. taking a group of children to school on foot, by bus or car). This also supports working parents and those with several children to transport to and from school.</li> <li>• School governors to include parent(s) of CYP with additional needs to advocate and provide link to services and information.</li> </ul>
Integrated Working and Information Sharing Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased use of CAF for information sharing and a more holistic assessment and referral process.</li> <li>• Further development of Key worker and Lead Professional roles</li> <li>• More structured approach to Team around the Child/Young Person/Family to ensure professional networks are working together to safeguard vulnerable CYP and their families.</li> </ul>
Multi-agency working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More robust systems to encourage multi-agency working, care planning and information sharing including shared IT system (i.e. eCAF/SharePoint). Integration between services and professional networks will have a significant and positive impact on service delivery and family experience.</li> <li>• For services where referrals are received by parent carers and/or social workers, information from other professionals is not shared or provided which may be critical for the CYP and the agency providing a service.</li> <li>• Best practice to be shared across the children’s workforce.</li> </ul>
Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well planned and managed transitions from Early Years provision to Reception, Primary to Secondary and from Children’s to Adult Services for CYP who are 18+ including a Team Around the Child/Young Person meeting for professionals to share information and knowledge about each client.</li> </ul>

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staged and managed transitions to new sites are also important, especially for CYP on the Autistic Spectrum for whom routines and consistency are essential to their safety and well-being.</li></ul> |
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## **Appendix 5**

### **Workforce Development and Training Plan – Consultation Summary**

The following is a range of areas for further training and workforce development across frontline staff in order for them to work more effectively with disabled CYP and their families. It has been suggested that the Placements Team be included in this training to ensure that they are able to effectively support placing CYP and have a better understanding of their needs. Foster carers (including during the pre-approval period), newly diagnosed parent carers, childminders and volunteers should also be provided appropriate training to feel included and supported.

All partner agencies across the Southwark children's workforce should be offered places on training to ensure a multi-agency learning experience, develop a greater understanding of CYP with additional needs and encourage strengthened relationships between professional agencies including education provision, private, voluntary and independent and mixed economy partners.

Some parent carers have completed a Train the Trainer course and can provide training courses and workshops, or help build capacity within the training program including training for carers and volunteers. Training provided by in-house staff or partner agencies (i.e. Contact a Family) wherever possible ensures better understanding of local need and provides good value for money over commissioning external trainers. Some parents have also received training to provide peer support to other parents, which promotes local networking and value for money.

Attending specialist disability training to be included as part of Corporate Induction Program for new staff and the Performance Management process for staff in Children's Services where appropriate.

Training Course	Providers/ Volunteers	Parent Carers/ Foster Carers	Trainer/In-house delivery	Notes from Consultation
Accident and Incident Reporting Training	X			
ADD and ADHD	X	X		<b>Include strategies for schools and after school/holiday play staff for managing CYP with these conditions (i.e. Peer Support program, visual timetables, communication book for parent carers).</b>
Advanced Autism	X	X	Local branch of National Autistic Society (NAS)	<b>Particularly relevant for staff at Orient Street and Senco's.</b>
Mini-bus Driver Training	X			<b>If in-house staff could drive buses this may achieve a cost savings as well as support staff consistency.</b>
Challenging Behavior	X	X		<b>Specific work to be done with universal settings and schools (including After School Club staff) to become more inclusive and understanding of disability.</b>
Child Protection and Safeguarding Training	X	X		<b>Different levels according to need; to include how to progress a CP concern.</b>
Child Development	X	X		
Communicating with CYP with disabilities	X	X		<b>Specific work to be done with universal settings and schools to become more inclusive and understanding of disability.</b>



Disability Awareness	X	X		<p>General awareness training and publicity campaigns across Southwark requested.</p> <p>Ensure 'My Learning Source' includes e-learning modules around disability.</p> <p>Specific work to be done with universal settings, schools and Placements Team to become more inclusive and understanding of disability. Support staff including bus drivers and bus escorts to be included in this training.</p> <p>Refresher courses for experienced staff.</p>
Hoist Training	X	X		<p>Some activity centers are poorly resourced and should have more equipment on site to keep costs down.</p>
Integrated Working and CAF	X			<p>More robust system needed for early intervention and holistic assessment, information sharing and the role of Keyworkers/Lead Professionals.</p>
Makaton	X	X		<p>Beneficial for frontline staff and mainstream schools to ensure more inclusive provision.</p>
Management Training	X			<p>Activity group leaders and team leaders to be included.</p>

Manual Handling	X	X		<p>Potential risk in having information cascaded by peers and/or through one off demonstrations.</p> <p>General view is that frontline staff are not trained enough to work with CYP with physical disabilities.</p>
PECS Training	X	X		PECS cards/resources are inexpensive to produce and should be available at all activity centers.
Personal Care	X	X		Potential risk in having information cascaded by peers and/or through one off demonstrations
Play	X	X		Include working with profoundly Autistic and disabled CYP.
Sexual Awareness/Sexuality	X	X		
Supporting CYP with complex needs including medical needs	X			
Team Building Training	X			Would support staff and volunteers to work better together, especially in short break or holiday provision.
Transitions	X	X		
Travel Training	X	X		
Using Visual Timetables	X	X		
Working with CYP on the Autistic Spectrum	X			Including in-school support strategies.
Working with LDD young people	X	X		Including in-school support strategies.

FINAL

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 19 October 2011	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Education and children's services scrutiny sub-committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Support for parents – CSV services	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Rory Patterson, Deputy Director, Specialist Services, Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. To note the information in this report and appendix, which provide information requested by the education and children's services scrutiny sub-committee.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. CSV, a volunteering and learning organisation, provides a range of support to Southwark young people and families. This is detailed in the report compiled by the organisation, attached as appendix 1.
3. The parent mentoring support is provided in Southwark as part of our early help offer for families with complex needs. This is led by the Family Focus team, which provides intensive holistic support around the most vulnerable families in Southwark.
4. CSV began working in the borough following its bid to the Department for Education for funding. This specified Southwark as one of the eight authorities the organisation wished to work with, based on its good existing relationship with the borough.

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	CSV menu of opportunities

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Deputy Director, Specialist Services, Children's	
<b>Report Author</b>	Fiona Russell, Principal Strategy Officer, Children's Services	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	12 October 2011	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to the Scrutiny Team</b>		13 October 2011

## **CSV menu of opportunities to support children, young people and their families in Southwark**

**Introduction:** CSV is the UK's leading volunteering and learning organisation providing a range of opportunities for almost fifty years. Working closely with partners, including local authority partners, we help deliver services and provide support for people who need it most. We support children in care, young people leaving care, and families with parenting issues. This report briefly outlines our services to these groups and demonstrates how CSV volunteers can offer independent and crucial support, particularly to vulnerable people.

### **1. Parent Mentoring and Volunteers in Child Protection – for families**

**Background:** Established in 2003 CSV has delivered supported families through our Volunteers in Child Protection (ViCP) scheme, matching volunteers with families with children on child protection plans. CSV volunteers provide friendship, advice and support, working closely with Social Services to complement to the services they offer. It's about taking the time to listen to families, acting as a strong role model and giving practical help and support.

ViCP started life as a two-year pilot in Sunderland and the London Borough of Bromley. Our volunteers supported 29 families. Every single child we helped was taken off the Child Protection Register and their files closed. Usually, two thirds of children are back on the register within a year, but ViCP is different. Volunteers keep in touch and keep supporting the family to make sure they stay on track. Currently we have ViCP projects in Bromley, Lewisham, Southend-on-Sea and Coventry. Each project supports approximately 30 families per year.

Parent Mentoring is a new CSV project beginning in April 2011. This project aims to improve the lives of children and young people by offering flexible personalised volunteer support to their parents in eight locations across England. We know that some parents struggle to create homes in which children can thrive and that just having someone to offer a listening ear, encouragement and ideas, can have an enormous impact, particularly when the person volunteers their time and poses no perceived threat to the family. This project will support 200 families in the first year in York, Derby, Coventry, Bristol, Islington, Southwark, Lewisham and Southend.

**Service model:** CSV recruits, selects, interviews and trains people from the local community to become mentor role models who are then matched to families and supervised by CSV staff.

The service model aims to deliver the following outcomes for families.

- Improved parenting confidence
- Improved outcomes for children and their families
- Reduced isolation
- Increased confidence and self-esteem

**Monitoring & evaluation:** The service will be monitored and evaluated using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, facilitated through monthly feedback from volunteers demonstrating progress toward the primary objectives of the service and the individual young person's specific support needs. Regular reviews with each family are undertaken in addition to an end of year evaluation. Progress reports will be disseminated at three month intervals to each referring social worker in addition to quarterly quantitative reports to head of service to demonstrate that referral targets and outcomes are being met.

## 2. Allies – mentoring support for children and young people in care (Independent Visitors)

**Background:** CSV currently delivers mentoring and befriending support to children and young people in care through our Independent Visitor projects operating in Hounslow, Southwark, Bristol and Derby. We support an average of 200 young people accessing the service each year, with projects managing target through-put of between 10 and 44 matches at any one time in line with their contractual obligations. Each project maintains a volunteer pool of 25% above contract targets to ensure we always have a sufficient number of volunteers available for matching, resulting in an average of 250 volunteers supported by CSV's Independent Visitor projects each year.

**Service model:** CSV recruits, selects, interviews and trains people from the local community to become independent visitors. We aim to recruit volunteers of different ages, gender, cultural backgrounds, religions, sexual orientation, and interests to ensure that young people get the right volunteer for their individual needs.

We offer a bespoke 21 hour training course which all volunteers must complete successfully; subjects covered include child protection, safeguarding, confidentiality and boundaries. Volunteers receive face to face supervision each quarter and phone support each month to make sure they are properly supported throughout their match. We meet each young person and their carer to identify their preference in a volunteer, their interests and aspirations and what they consider are the most important Every Child Matters outcome they wish to achieve.

**Monitoring & evaluation:** All CSV Independent Visitor services place emphasis on ensuring clear and measurable performances targets, which are evidenced through the implementation of achievable milestones and realistic ECM outcomes that match each child or young person's defined personal goals. We monitor and evaluate all aspects of the young person's experience while they are engaged in the project using both qualitative and quantitative methods. We gather baseline information from the referring social worker and from the young person and their carer during the initial assessment meeting. We devised a plan of engagement detailing the primary ECM each young person wishes to achieve. This information forms the basis of the volunteer's priority tasks in supporting their young person during each match visit. Volunteers are required to report progress towards achieving the desired ECM each month using CSV's standardised reporting template. Regular progress reports are sent to the referring social worker on average every three months.

To ensure that we are meeting the needs of every young person referred to the project we seek their feedback on how the match is going at three and six month intervals. We also carry out annual evaluation measured against the ECM framework and apply a 360 degree analysis of progression by securing feedback from social workers, carers, volunteers and more importantly, the young people themselves.

## 3. Transitions to independence – for young people leaving care

**Background:** Established in 2010 CSV has delivered the Transitions to Independence project in Bristol, Hounslow, Southwark and Derby. The service was created as a direct response to the identified needs facing young people reaching the age of 18 leaving care and consequently having to end their relationships with the independent visitor previously supported by CSV. Fourteen years experience in the field of supporting young people in care has shown CSV that it is through the transitional period to independence when young people most need the support of a befriender; somebody from outside the care system who can offer support in ways that professionals cannot and who will be seen by the young person as an advocate and role model.

This work complements the work of PA's; volunteers can support their caseload of 6 – 12 young people, and provide independent and flexible support on evenings and weekends, too.

In 2010 CSV supported 40 young people in transition and has a target of 90 young people aged 18-21 leaving care, including those age 16 and in independent living accommodation.

**Service model:** CSV recruits, selects, interviews and trains people from the local community to become mentor role models who are then matched to young people leaving care and supervised by CSV staff. The service is open to young people that have previously had an independent visitor through CSV's Allies projects and those who are considered particularly vulnerable referred directly through the local authorities leaving and after care teams.

The service model aims to deliver the following outcomes for young people.

- Improved life skills
- Increased likelihood of secure tenancy
- Reduced isolation
- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Improved employment / volunteering opportunities /training

For access to the service, young people will be able to engage in the project in three ways: intensive support; on-going support; and group activities, or through a combination of all three phases, subject to their changing needs.

**Monitoring & evaluation:** The service will be monitored and evaluated using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, facilitated through monthly feedback from volunteers demonstrating progress toward the primary objectives of the service and the individual young person's specific support needs. Quarterly reviews with each young person will be undertaken in addition to an end of year evaluation. Progress reports will be disseminated at three month intervals to each referring social worker, in addition to quarterly quantitative reports to head of service to demonstrate that referral targets and outcomes are being met.

**Summary:** We are happy to provide further details on each model and would welcome discussions on how to take this forward. Please contact the following CSV Operations Directors for further details;

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## **Update for interim scrutiny report on childhood obesity and sports provision for secondary and primary children**

### **Southwark Healthy Weight Strategy**

The strategy is currently being refreshed by the public health team. It has four strands:

- Early intervention and prevention – peri-natal and early years
- Shifting the curve of overweight and obesity
- Targeting those at risk
- Effective treatment of overweight and obesity

See below an update on some of the programmes of work under each strand which may be of relevance to the scrutiny report.

#### *Early intervention and prevention*

### **Eat Better, Start Better project**

Southwark is one of 5 pilot areas for the DfE funded project. 10 settings in Southwark including some children's centres and PVI nurseries will implement new national food and drink guidelines for early years settings. Pilot settings will receive training and support to implement the guidelines and set up practical cooking sessions with families.

Another four early years centres in Southwark are receiving the Grub4life intervention which involves nutrition training and a whole centre approach to nutrition.

#### *Shifting the curve of overweight and obesity*

### **The Healthier Catering Commitment**

The Public health nutrition team in Southwark is working with Environmental health officers to run a healthier catering commitments/healthy takeaways project in Southwark. The project will work with 15 food businesses. The Healthier Catering Commitment was launched in April 2011 by the Mayor's office Greater London Assembly which all London Boroughs are being encouraged to roll out. In the scheme environmental health officers can prompt food businesses during a routine inspection to sign up to 8 criteria such as reducing salt content, offering smaller portions etc to make food healthier. An information letter, application form and an assessment form is given out at the time of the visit.

A nutritionist from the public health team will then follow up with food businesses and offer one to one coaching. Food business owners will be offered information on Health checks, stopping smoking, nutrition advice and information on the Change 4 Life campaign. They will also be offered Change 4 Life material and information on local activities to display in the shop



window. Work in local schools around the fast food saturation points is also taking place in the form of healthy eating workshops, fast food seminars and consultation to raise awareness of the project. So far 8 food businesses have been coached on nutrition and how to make the place healthier, 6 are eligible for healthy catering commitment awards, environmental health are now trying to set dates with the next 7 businesses to reach a target of 15 food businesses by April 2012.

A top tips for takeaways card was developed by public health team nutritionists to help promote the project the card highlights simple tips on making menus healthier in line with the Healthier Catering Commitment.

### **Public health team nutritionist runs parents healthy eating workshops**

Parent's healthy eating workshops have been run in 10 Southwark Primary Schools and 1 Community setting, so far 60+ parents have attended the workshops.

- To educate parents on the balance of good health model and key healthy eating messages
- To give parents an idea on healthier snacking, food labelling and information on portion sizes
- To look at the barriers and solutions to healthy eating
- To signpost parents to local services and further information

### **Healthy Schools**

The Healthy Schools Partnership no longer operates. The PCT employs a schools health inequalities co-ordinator to advise schools on healthy eating and physical activity.

The PCT is collaborating with the local authority to support programme delivery of the Free Healthy School Meals Programme using a whole school approach.

School children identified through the National Child Measurement Programme will receive targeted support from school nurses. Schools are encouraged to provide school based Change4Life activities and refer families to practical workshops in the community or commission appropriate agencies to deliver them.

### **The Food Strategy**

The Food Strategy is no longer being developed by council officers.

### **Southwark Superstars**

The programme had three main factors to help tackle obesity in children, increasing physical activity (and reducing inactivity); dietary education and changing the way children think about food and exercise. Different schools were targeted across the borough over the 2 years based on obesity ranking

from NCMP data. The programme was run by the Southwark Community Games team with guidance and support from Healthy Schools and PCT nutritionists. They ran the entire exercise programme as well as oversaw the healthy eating messages component with support from a nutritionist, head teachers and school nurses.

The programme showed some promise in that a small yet statistically significant reduction in waist measurement was found across the classes taking part.

From April 2011 Southwark Community Games were re-structured and there are no longer enough coaches to run the programme, so the programme is no longer being offered to schools for free. Community sports are still taking place across the borough though on a smaller scale.

### **Family Wellbeing Programme**

The programme was developed locally by Bacon's School Sports Partnership (supported by Southwark public health). Phase 1 was delivered in the Walworth Clan. Phase 1 consisted of training of school staff to deliver a curriculum based intervention. Parent healthy eating workshops were held in some of the family well-being schools to support with healthy eating messages.

Unfortunately, due to restructuring and uncertainty over the future of the sports partnership and capacity to oversee the programme and provide coaches for extra physical activity for the second phase and a wellbeing hub for the third phase of the programme, the programme has now ended for the time being.

The PCT nutritionist is following up with some of the family wellbeing schools to provide healthy eating support and signpost to local services and use of the Change 4 Life campaign.

### *Effective treatment*

### **Healthy Weight Training**

The PCT Health Improvement Team offer Healthy Weight training which is available for frontline health professionals, school staff and those working with parents and children in education settings (schools and early years centres and children centres)

Level 1 and 2 Healthy Weight Training – Children  
Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for West African communities  
Buggy Walk leader training

### **MEND programmes**

Two MEND programmes will be delivered locally in 2012.

**The Map of Medicine online obesity care pathways for adults and children**

Unfortunately the London license for the Map of Medicine has been discontinued by NHS London which means that the obesity care pathways for Southwark are no longer available on-line. The local pathways are available as word documents but need to be revised into an alternative accessible format.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 19 October 2011	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Education and children's services scrutiny sub-committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Free Healthy School Meals Programme – Evaluation of Development Phases	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Kerry Crichlow, Assistant Director Strategy and Support, Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. To note the information in this report.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. This report provides an evaluation of the preliminary phase of the Free Healthy School Meal programme,

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3. The report sets out the findings from the initial phase of the Free Healthy School Meal programme.

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Evaluation of the development phase of Southwark's free, healthy school meal programme January-July 2011

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Kerry Crichlow, Assistant Director Strategy and Support, Children's Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Colin Gale, FHSM project manager	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	14 October 2011	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	YES	YES
<b>Date final report sent to the Scrutiny Team</b>	14 October 2011	

## **Evaluation of the development phase of Southwark's free, healthy school meal programme January – July 2011**

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Background and context**

Implementing a programme of free, healthy school meals<sup>1</sup> (FHSM) for all primary aged pupils attending Southwark schools is a key council commitment, as set out in the June 2010 cabinet paper 'A Fairer Future for all in Southwark'. The rationale for the programme was underpinned by the council's commitment to building a fairer future for all Southwark families and encouraging children to be a healthy weight, as set out in the Children and Young People's Plan.

The FHSM programme is a Council priority aimed at tackling the borough's extremely high levels of child obesity and relieving child poverty by putting money in parents' pockets.

The National Child Measurement Programme has identified Southwark as having among the highest levels of childhood obesity in the country. In the 2009/10 academic year, 14.7% of Reception year pupils were obese (the highest rate nationally) and a further 14.9% overweight. In Year 6, 26% of pupils were obese (the second highest rate nationally) and a further 14.4% overweight. Childhood obesity is strongly linked to poor diet and eating a healthy school meal as part of a whole-school approach to healthy eating and healthy weight can be expected to make a contribution to reducing these very high levels of obesity.

We are determined that no child is left behind and are committed to continuing to both narrow the gap and promote the highest possible outcomes for all children. Southwark has high levels of deprivation with an estimated 34% of children living in poverty, rising to over 50% in some wards. Many families on low and middle incomes are not eligible for Government funded free school meals and school meals represent a significant living cost. This is particularly an issue for families with more than one child.

Attainment levels for children in Southwark's primary schools continue to improve, although there is more progress required to narrow the gap for under performing children. There is evidence<sup>2</sup> that eating a healthy meal at lunchtimes, combined with a whole-school emphasis on healthy eating, can positively impact on concentration levels, and in turn attainment levels.

#### **Summary**

The practical approach to providing a FHSM in schools was tested in 10 primary schools over January – July 2011, during a "development phase". We are using what we have learnt to roll out the programme to all primary schools. This executive summary highlights some of these key points.

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<sup>1</sup> **Glossary:**

"Free healthy School Meals" – Southwark Council's universal scheme for primary age pupils

"Government free school meals" – Government scheme to provide free meals to pupils meeting certain criteria

"School meals" – meals cooked on school premises and provided either free or for a charge. If a child doesn't have a school meal they would bring a packed lunch

<sup>2</sup> Colquhoun D, Wright N, Pike J, Gatenby L (January 2008) 'Evaluation of Eat Well Do Well Kingston upon Hull's School Meal Initiative.' Centre for Educational Studies, Institute for Learning, University of Hull

**Parents really valued the FHSM programme.** Here's what some parents told us:

- My child wasn't a good eater at home and school lunches have changed this because he is trying more foods at home.
- My child is not choosy now, like she was with their packed lunches when they wanted certain foods/packaged stuff.
- My children's concentration and attention had improved when at home
- When my wife and I were both working it was not such a problem to find the money for school meals but I lost my job six months ago and was not entitled to benefit so this has been a godsend for us.
- I have been able to put the money back to my child by buying books.
- My child has been asking for fruit and vegetables at home.

**Staff in schools were positive about the potential benefits of the programme.**

Comments and views received included:

- an increase in the uptake of school meals across the school
- the offer to all children removed the stigma of free school meals based on income.
- by starting children early with free healthy school meals they are more likely to continue to eat them throughout their school years.

Three schools reported that they were actively encouraging parents/carers to get involved in curriculum activities related to healthy eating.

**Support for schools.** A number of schools told us they would like more guidance in areas such as linking food to the curriculum, workshops for parents, how food affects our health, and classroom-based food workshops. Information has been provided for schools to enable them to make their own arrangements. We have published an on-line toolkit of resources and guidance which can be found at [www.southwark.gov.uk/fhsmtoolkit](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/fhsmtoolkit). This provides specific support for headteachers and governors, bringing together all of the information needed for them to carry out their responsibilities for the provision of high quality school meals and supporting a whole-school approach to healthy eating and living. The website will be kept up to date with relevant information as it becomes available along with examples and case studies from schools to share and disseminate emerging good practice.

We carried out a capital audit in all schools to find out if they had enough equipment and facilities to provide a FHSM to all children whose parents wanted one. We have used the results of the audit to support schools to ensure they have sufficient resources – plates, cutlery, ovens, fridges, tables and other equipment – to cope with the projected increase in demand for school dinners. We have committed £206K to provide additional equipment to directly support the roll out of the FHSM programme. Two further phases will be met within the total of £500K agreed by Council in July 2011. Where, during the course of the audit we identified the need for capital improvement to the fabric of buildings which is not related to or caused by the introduction of the FHSM programme, this will be considered under the LA's existing school kitchen refurbishment programme.

There are number of variables that could impact on the future costs of the programme such as the level of take up of Free Healthy School Meals, as well as Southwark's pupil number growth and any changes in the eligibility criteria for

government free school meals. These variables will be built into the funding model, for example, following the annual school roll projection update.

The take up of all school meals (paid or free) in the development phase schools varied from as low as 26% up to 90% before the introduction of Free Health School meals (note that these figures are based on whole-school numbers). Initial information for the roll out from September 2011 has suggested a take up in Reception and Year One of 84.5%.

It has been reported by schools that some children who previously did not have a school meal are now receiving one due to the FHSM programme, and it has been established in the process that they were actually entitled to a Government funded free school meal but had not applied previously. Our data confirms that in the development phase schools, the Government funded free school meal levels increased by 0.8% between 2010 and 2011, an increase of 149 children year on year. Families who are entitled to but aren't claiming Government funded free school meals are a particular target group in addressing child poverty. Also, we anticipate that as the scheme rolls out more such pupils will be identified, which will, among other things, mean that schools will receive more Government Pupil Premium funding than previously – as that funding is based on the number of children claiming the Government's free school meals.

The full roll out commenced in September 2011 to all Reception and Year One classes. Parents received application forms and the programme started on the first day of term in September 2011.

The application form has been simplified based on feedback from the development stage and requires parents to only complete once, when their child starts the school, not every year.

## **Full Report**

### **Programme planning**

As this is a large and complex project with significant logistical and financial implications it was agreed by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services that there would be two phases to the programme:

1. A development phase to run from January to July 2011 to develop an effective, cost-efficient model for roll out across the borough and to gather learning for the full roll-out.
2. Roll out to all Southwark schools from September 2011 with specific year groups included in the programme year on year with full roll-out to all year groups by September 2013.

### **What we have learnt from the development phase?**

The development phase gave us opportunities to identify and address potential challenges, including administrative arrangements at school level and identification of capital investment required to provide the additional meals as take up increases. In this way we aimed to ensure effective roll-out to meet the commitment that by September 2013 a FHSM could be taken up by all primary pupils whose parents who wanted one. The purpose of the development phase evaluation was to:

- Gather qualitative data from stakeholders on views and attitudes to the programme – including views of parents and staff;
- Develop a registration system which allows the identification of those families eligible for Government funded free school meals which will ensure schools receive maximum income from central Government;
- Analyse the change in take-up of school meals following the introduction of the policy;
- Identify the capital investment required to enable all schools to deliver an anticipated increase in take-up;
- Identify additional support for facilitating a whole-school approach that will give extra help to tackle high local childhood obesity levels;
- Accurately assess the cost of implementing the new policy;
- Develop the required organisational and governance structures to support effective and efficient implementation, in partnership with key stakeholders;

A total of 10 schools were selected to participate using the following criteria: level of deprivation (as measured by free school meal eligibility rates), levels of obesity according to the national child measurement programme, a range of uptake of school meals, representation from all community council areas where schools expressed an interest in being part of the development phase, and had the capacity to deliver.



### **Qualitative data collected through focus group interviews with parents**

In June 2011 the ten development phase schools involved were invited to arrange focus group meetings for parents and carers of children in Reception and year 1 to allow staff from children's services an opportunity to canvass their experiences and opinions on the development phase of the programme. The aim of this exercise was to capture the views of parents/carers whose children were benefiting from a free healthy school meal for the first time. We also wanted them to comment on the impact of the programme at home, school and in their community in relation to key issues for a borough with high levels of deprivation and obesity, and an ongoing commitment to improvement in school performance for all children.

#### **Headline commentary**

- Children sharing the school meal experience for the first time were identified by their parents/carers as being less picky about food and requesting meals from the school lunch menu at home.

“My son was a poor eater at home but since he has been enjoying the social aspects of eating a meal with his friends and trying new foods his eating has improved.”

“My son now complains about meals at home saying school meals are better.”

“I have twin boys in Year One and since they started having school meals in January they have been requesting that I cook similar meals and I am having to familiarise myself with cooking vegetables I have never used before.”

- The promotion of the programme within the development phase schools has raised awareness of “healthy school meals” which has resulted in children talking about food more and the schools were receiving more demands from parents/carers for school meal menus and taster sessions.

“I would like to know what ingredients are in the meals.”

- Whilst six months, was not viewed as long enough for parents/carers to notice any significant difference in behaviour and concentration levels, but there was a view that having a healthy nutritional meal at midday should improve energy levels and concentration. But some parents did feel that their children's concentration and attention had already improved when at home.
- In terms of cost benefits to families, many families said that the money saved was benefiting the whole family as the saving was used to top up their family food budget or used for other family activities. Some families commented that not having to pay for school meals had reduced their stress levels.

“When my wife and I were both working it was not such a problem to find the money for school meals but I lost my job six months ago and was not entitled to benefit so this has been a god send for us”

“I was paying £16 per week for school dinners for my children so this is a big saving for me.”

- The majority of parents/carers agreed that their child having a school meal as opposed to a packed lunch was extremely convenient as they were less rushed in the mornings. It was also noted that it could be stressful trying to be inventive when providing packed lunches as most schools have a packed lunch policy which requires the lunch to be healthy and nutritional and parents/carers were now relieved of this responsibility. This prompted requests for more information from schools on nutritional standards so they could advise those parents requesting information on providing healthy meals at home.
- Parents'/carers' experience of the registration process of the development phase was on the whole very positive. This can be attributed in part to the work done by school administration staff to promote the programme and support the registration process.
- The benefits to the school community were seen in terms of children being equal as meals were free to all and not just to those on low income. Socialisation skills were being improved by the shared lunch experience and therefore potentially have an overall effect on improving behaviour in general.

**Development of a registration system which allows the identification of those families eligible for free school meals and identifying the impact of extending the system for registration for free school meals**

To be statutorily entitled to claim a Government free school meal a family must complete an application form, and be in receipt of income support, income based jobseeker's allowance, employment and support allowance, support from NASS (National Asylum Support Service), guaranteed element of state pension credit, child tax credit and joint family income of no more than £16,190. The numbers of children statutorily entitled to a Government free school meal is information which is used to inform certain sources of funding at both school and local authority level and so it was important that whatever system was used Children's Services was able to continue collecting this data. This is particularly important for schools' allocation of the Pupil Premium, which is driven by Government free school meal entitlement.

After analysing practice elsewhere and taking advice from legal services, it was agreed all families wanting their child to have a free healthy school meal would have to submit an application. This would ensure that Children's Services and schools would have the required information to receive the correct levels of government funding, and to develop an administratively simple system.

The development phase application form was developed and sent to school staff with information to support parents and carers to complete and then returned to children's services for processing.

As a borough-wide online application process becomes the standard process, the application process will become easier and will only require new starters to a school to complete the process. The status of the family is then able to be checked electronically.

**Key learning points**

- Following feedback from parents, the application form has been simplified. The feedback so far has been positive.

- To ensure a high return, parents and carers needed reminders and support from the school to complete the forms. Additional information was sent to the schools with the applications forms; also a dedicated phone line was set up to provide answers to parents requiring support.
- Initially schools were asked to keep a copy of the completed application form. However, to reduce bureaucracy we have made the decision to collect the forms directly from the schools to process and are moving to an electronic system for the future.
- We are developing simple systems which compare, verify and reconcile information gathered into the finance, data and admissions teams.

**Analyse the change in take-up of school meals following the introduction of the policy**

There was a significant variation in the uptake of school meals in the development phase schools generally, but also by pupils who were entitled to Government-funded free school meals. At St Jude's and Haymerle, 32.6% and 43.4% respectively were entitled to a government-funded free school meal and 100% took up Free Healthy School Meals. However at other schools the take up varied. Initial information for the roll out from September 2011 has suggested a take up in Reception and Year One of 84.5%.

**Key learning points**

- While almost 100% of families with children attending Reception and Year 1 applied for free healthy school meals, uptake (actual meals eaten) did not exceed 87% at any point in time. This can be accounted for through absences and some children still voluntarily opting to bring a packed lunch into school; this uptake level will continue to be monitored and reviewed as the main programme is rolled out.
- There was an increase in uptake in schools where the existing government-funded free school meals uptake was lower. It is suggested that this is in the main because the meals are free. However, advice was given to schools about how to encourage greater uptake, drawing on local good practice and national guidance.
- We will share the learning from the development phase schools with other schools as part of the roll-out, to support an increase in take up.

**Identify the capital investment required to enable all schools to deliver the anticipated increase in take-up**

In order to roll out the programme, schools need to have the capacity to manage and meet an increased volume of school meals and be compliant with food safety regulations. In addition to this, the school must have trained staff in place to ensure that requirements around nutritional standards are adhered to.

It was agreed the best way of gathering this information was through an independent audit developed by a specialist kitchen operations manager. Initially an electronic audit for schools to complete online was used to identify potential capital costs. The information from this was used to develop a more thorough auditing process.

Thirty schools were identified as requiring the more thorough audit, due to number of pupils on roll, a current uptake of school meals (paid or free) of less than 75%, those which have not had recent development work in the kitchens and those which have raised concerns/requested advice and guidance. These schools were visited and a joint exercise was conducted focusing on equipment, staff, resources, building alterations and enhanced practice. Technical catering operations advice was also provided to the schools as part of this process. The remaining schools were offered telephone support to complete the audit. As a result of the audit £206K has been committed to provide the additional equipment needed to directly support the roll out of the first phase of programme and we anticipate that the full roll-out costs will be met within the one-off £500K capital budget allocated to the programme.

We identified:

- Overall potential cost implications based on January and May/June audits
- Responsibilities of local authority, school and external caterers in regards to any additional resource needs to deliver the increase of meals.
- An assessment of the physical capacity of schools to deliver the increase of school meals, with estimated costings for additional equipment to enable schools to meet the increased capacity
- Recommendations for phasing of expenditure needed to ensure kitchens can meet the likely increase in demand for meals within the agreed £500K budget

### **Key learning points**

- Many of the schools are well placed to deliver the additional healthy school meals without the need for any large investment. In most cases there is an increased need for cutlery and crockery, tables, cookers and food storage including fridges and freezers. All the improvements will be met from within the agreed £500K budget.

### **Identify the additional support to facilitate a whole-school approach that will help tackle rising childhood obesity**

Helping tackle child obesity is one of the key drivers for this policy. The prevention and management of childhood obesity is very complex, influenced by a wide range of factors. Free Healthy School Meals is one – important - policy amongst many. Locally we are implementing best practice through the Healthy Weight Strategy, with schools playing a key role as a universal setting that most children attend.

There is extensive investment in prevention of childhood obesity before children start school. Breast feeding is known to be a protective factor and local initiatives to increase breast feeding rates including breastfeeding cafes have been successful with a year on year increase recorded. Healthy weaning is promoted in the community and there is also a network of community based organisations working towards 'Baby Friendly' accreditation. Guidance on promoting healthy lifestyles amongst under 5s and their families has been disseminated to all early years settings including child minders through a DVD "Food for Thought". This addresses how to engage children in growing, cooking and eating fresh fruit and vegetables, healthy eating more generally promoting physical activity both indoor and outdoor. To help families understand and implement the messages in the DVD, most children's

centres are now offering opportunities for families to attend training on collectively preparing for mealtimes

The Foundation Stage curriculum is very active and we promote the implementation of active play and learning about health within the curriculum across all early years settings. Children's services have invested heavily in outdoor play facilities across schools and settings to increase opportunities for young children to be active, even during inclement weather.

A range of online materials have been developed by the communications team to support implementation of the whole-school approach. This includes information relating to national programmes eg the School Food Trust and Food for Life Partnership, as well as local arrangements whereby the schools buy in additional support.

Recently, Children's Services commissioned a course for cooks in our own children's centres on preparing and delivering healthy meals for children in our settings. This also deals with how to cope with special diets. A training session for Governors on implementing a whole-school approach is being delivered by the Food for Life Partnership in the autumn term. In addition the council provides a range of other services that can help tackle obesity and keep children healthy – for example sport and leisure provision such as the Community Games. Schools emphasised the importance of effective communication around the range of provision – including Free Healthy School Meals - that helps keep children fit and healthy.

### **Key learning points**

- Governors welcomed extra guidance to help meet their statutory responsibilities around school food standards and health and safety regulations.
- Following the audit a range of on-line materials has been developed by the Communications team to support implementation of the whole-school approach. This includes information relating to national programmes eg the school food trust, as well as local arrangements whereby the schools buy in additional support; this provides more information for headteachers and governors as well as parents.
- Advice about other support agencies eg Food for Life Partnership, School Foods Trust, is being provided to schools.

### **Accurately assess the cost of implementing the new policy**

There are three elements to the programme:

- a. the cost of provision of the meals
- b. capital costs (discussed above)
- c. programme running and evaluation costs

Agreed annual revenue budget:

Roll out timetable	Annual budget requirement £m
2011 -12 Reception & Year 1	1.145
2012 – 13 Reception, Years 1, 2, 3 & 4	2.559
2013 – 14 Reception &	4.145

Years 1 - 6	
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Capital costs (one-off budget) £0.5m

### **The cost of provision of the meals**

We made the administration of the funding to schools as simple as possible. Schools require timely and regular payment, and to reduce administrative burdens for both schools and the Local Authority it was agreed that the funding should be paid through already established systems. As a consequence, schools will be paid based on the number of applications for free healthy school meals received in September less the number of applications verified as being entitled to government-funded free school meals. The actual take up (i.e. of meals eaten) figures will be reviewed during the course of the school year – taking into account sickness absence, or people choosing to bring in sandwiches instead) and payments adjusted accordingly. That is, we will only pay for meals actually eaten. Payments will be made at three points during the school year.

### **Programme running and evaluation**

The programme required dedicated capacity and this was particularly evident at the beginning of the programme, when there was intensive project officer activity to:

- Establish the cross-organisational programme support team
- Establish the information and finance systems for roll-out to all schools
- Develop draft communication materials and their subsequent amendment in the light of feedback from the audit
- Lead communication of key information to all stakeholders, particularly school leaders, chairs of governors, key officers and parent/carers
- Relationship management/trouble shooting with individual schools
- Evaluate the development phase, focusing on a qualitative evaluation
- Scope the evaluation of the substantive programme.

The evaluation methodology of the full programme is currently in development – including reporting mechanisms. The project team, in consultation with Public Health and other key stakeholders, will agree key indicators which can be easily monitored and allow for evaluation that provides useful information on the impact of the programme.

### **Key learning points**

- The cost the provision of the meals may vary over time as there are a range of factors which are subject to fluctuation or change, including increasing school rolls. However, effective monitoring of take up and ensuring those children entitled to the Government free school meal are recorded and claimed for will mitigate some of the risk. There is the potential for inflation to increase costs to schools, or any increase passed on by external contractors. It is possible however, that costs charged to schools will be better contained when the whole school is benefiting from the programme. It is possible that the cost per meal might reduce as the volume increases.

- There is the risk that the criteria for Government free school meals might change, reducing the numbers of eligible children. We will monitor the development of the Government's Universal Credit.
- There is a need for a Project Manager to monitor and manage the roll out as well as support the schools with information and the quality standards.. This post has now been established.

**Develop the required organisational and governance structures to support effective and efficient implementation, in partnership with key stakeholders**

Overall accountability for the programme rests with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services. Overall responsibility for delivering the roll-out of the programme lies with a senior named officer in Children's Services Department. A project team was established to support the programme development including colleagues from across the council and the NHS led by a Project Manager.

Discussions have taken place with headteachers and school business managers to support the establishment of organisational arrangements at school level. A dedicated phone line is in place for schools and parents to make contact and get answers to questions. This has helped to inform the administrative process of the roll-out.

A Cabinet Member Individual Decision-Making (IDM) report to approve the roll-out programme was agreed in July 2011. To ensure appropriate governance during the development of the programme, regular reports were made to the Strategic Director of Children's Services, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Children's Services management team..

Information will continue to be provided to school governors to support them with their strategic responsibilities at school level to enable them to ensure that nutritional and food hygiene standards and guidelines are met.

**Key learning points**

- It is important that the project support group includes appropriate levels of representation from teams involved in the programme.
- It is important to coordinate the work of this programme to ensure good levels of learning, involving school staff and governors.
- An effective and transparent governance systems is crucial.
- It is also important to keep governing bodies informed as to the progress of the programme and to influence them to promote not only healthy meals within their schools, but also to include healthy living as part of the curriculum.

## Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny sub-committee report

### Southwark Adult Learning Service

1. **Background information and context**
  - 1.1 The Adult Learning Service (ALS) is based in the Thomas Calton Centre in Peckham.
  - 1.2 In addition to direct delivery at the Thomas Calton Centre, the service works with a wide range of partners to enable access to learning at a number of other locations across the borough.
  - 1.3 The service is entirely funded by an annual grant from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). The grant comes with strict requirements in terms of quality standards, learner number targets and sound financial management.
  - 1.4 For the last two years, and after a number of years, the service met, and exceeded, its SFA learner number targets, building on work undertaken to increase uptake of learning through re-shaping the programme and working more closely with partners.
  - 1.5 ALS is just one of a number of adult and family learning providers in Southwark. Other major providers include Morley College and Southwark College. There is also significant provision from private and voluntary sector organisations – some of which receive funding from ALS to deliver learning on the Council’s behalf.
  - 1.6 Not all local authorities retain an adult learning service within the Council and there is no statutory obligation on local authorities to be providers of this service.
  - 1.7 Overall funding within the sector has declined over the last several years and successive governments have moved the focus of adult learning towards employment-related training and away from the more traditional leisure or arts based courses.
    - 1.7.1 As part of this, there is now significant pressure on providers to secure larger fee contributions from learners. ALS currently generates 4% of its income from learners. The SFA expects provider to work towards generating a larger percentage of income through learner fees. This is extremely challenging in Southwark as many of our learners are eligible for fee remission. In addition to this, our largest curriculum area – adult literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) – is provided free of charge to learners by Government policy, reducing our scope to generate additional income.



## 2. Current issues

### *OFSTED report and action plan*

2.1.1 Adult learning is subject to inspection by OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education). The last inspection took place in 2009 and the service was deemed to be overall “satisfactory”. Within this rating, several areas were identified as being “good”. These included the thoroughness and accuracy of the Self Assessment Report, good personal support for learners, strong internal and external partnerships to promote social inclusion; strong commitment to improve the quality of provision and good staff development. There were also some areas for improvement, including the quality of some teaching and learning and management information systems.

2.2 Following the inspection, service managers drew up a detailed action plan to address areas for improvement and to build on strengths. This plan was agreed with both OFSTED and the then Learning and Skills Council (LSC) – since re-shaped as the SFA. Much of the plan has been implemented; particularly work to further develop tutors, a completely new approach to management information and a re-shaped relationship with partner organisations including additional assurances about the quality of their work and information management.

### *Financial pressures*

2.3 The Government has been clear that there will be fewer resources available for adult learning and this is a continuing trend with the overall grant to the service having declined from £1,966,385 in 2008/9 to £1,795,739 this year, a decrease of 8.5%.

2.4 The decline in Government funding, the difficulty in generating additional income from fees and the service’s overall dependency on the SFA grant combine to make it extremely difficult to sustain levels of provision and also to respond to issues related to the service infrastructure.

2.5 The Thomas Calton Centre was extensively re-furbished in 2009/10 with an SFA capital grant of £750,000 secured by managers within the service and matched by £250,000 of Council capital monies. Whilst this has made a great difference, there are still many outstanding building issues including problems with the roof, many windows need to be replaced and lift access to the upper floors needs to be improved. Bids have been submitted to the Council’s capital programme over the last few years for these items, but have not yet been successful.

2.6 The service maintains an OFSTED registered nursery to support learners who may otherwise have difficulty in finding childcare and therefore may not be able to access learning. Whilst this is a valuable

service, it also presents financial pressures as we are currently subsidising the nursery with significantly more funding than the SFA allocates to this purpose, directing monies away from direct delivery of learning.

#### *Service charges*

- 2.7 In order to address some of these issues, and for the first time in many years, some new charges were introduced to the service last year. The new charges related to learners wishing to repeat or to take additional courses within the same academic year. Concessionary rates are still available where appropriate and all learners are still entitled to one subsidised course within a single academic year. There is no impact on learners eligible for adult literacy, numeracy or ESOL courses which remain free.
- 2.8 A number of complaints were received in response to the new charging regime, almost entirely from learners wishing to repeat courses within the arts or leisure based curriculum areas. These issues were considered by the Scrutiny sub-committee resulting in a request for this further report from officers.

#### *Policy and service direction*

- 2.9 It is fair to say that until the last few years, the service has been relatively “forgotten” and has continued to operate in the same way over a very long time. Significant steps have been taken in the last few years to modernise and improve the service and these were acknowledged in the OFSTED report. However, there is currently no agreed strategy for ALS and the Council has not articulated the direction it wishes the service to take.
- 2.10 The national context of decreasing funding and changing focus, together with the Council’s policy of focusing on core activity means it is timely to consider the future direction of the Adult Learning Service and to place it within an overall policy context.

### **3. What does the Council want from the Adult Learning Service?**

- 3.1 The Council has established a set of principles upon which service reviews, budget setting and other change within the Council is to be based – A Fairer Future. It is proposed that a review be carried out, guided by these principles and resulting in a new, clearly articulated direction for the service.
- 3.2 A Fairer Future includes a requirement to promote social and economic quality in the borough; to do all that we can to protect frontline services and support our most vulnerable residents; to ensure value for money; to seek alternative ways of providing services and to be clear about why any service should be cut, reduced or no longer

provided by the Council before proposing such a course of action. These will be key considerations in reviewing ALS.

- 3.3 In coming to a decision on what the Council wants from ALS, consideration should be given to other policy areas relating to employment, regeneration, health and well-being, setting a clear context for the future of the service.

#### **4. Areas for consideration**

- 4.1 In order to clearly articulate the future direction of the service, a number of key questions need to be considered. These include:
- Is this a service that the Council should provide?
  - Why does the Council provide such a service and what does the Council add?
  - What do other providers do?
  - Should consideration be given to handing the service over to other providers?
  - If the service is to be retained by the Council, what needs to change and what areas should it focus on whilst still complying with SFA guidelines?
- 4.2 Agreeing the Council's position on these questions will provide clear direction and policy for the service.

#### **5. Stakeholder review and next steps**

To take this work forward and to ensure views of key stakeholders are captured, it is suggested the following work be undertaken.

- Officers invite the views of the Scrutiny sub-committee
- A stakeholder and partner consultation event is held
- A desktop review of current provision and national issues and developments is undertaken
- A SWOT analysis is produced setting out the pros and cons of retaining the service within the Council
- A report is drawn up in response to this and presented to Cabinet in February 2012

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 19 October 2011	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Southwark Schools for the Future: New School Rotherhithe	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Sam Fowler, Project Director Southwark Schools for the Future	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee note the briefing provided below.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. In 2007 Southwark's Outline Business Case (OBC) established the case for a new 5 form entry (750 place) secondary school with a further 150 place sixth form to meet the needs of an expanding population in Bermondsey and Rotherhithe that would be delivered as part of Phase 3 of Southwark's Building Schools for the Future (BSF).
3. In April 2010 Partnerships for Schools provisionally allocated £19.6m to fund the delivery of a new school in Rotherhithe.
4. In July 2010 Southwark was informed that all our projects, including New School Rotherhithe, were unaffected by the cuts to the BSF programme that were announced.
5. In October 2010 Partnerships for Schools (PfS) informed the council that projects referred to as 'unaffected' in July would be subject to a value for money review to be carried out on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).
6. In November 2010 the DfE wrote to the council advising us of their decision to no longer support New School Rotherhithe. The Council continued to argue the case to the DfE and PfS that there was a need to deliver the New School Rotherhithe to meet current local demand and anticipated future boroughwide need.
7. In April 2011 Southwark was invited by PfS to submit revised and current Pupil Place Planning data. This submission was made on the 18 April 2011 and it reiterated the need for investment to create new places in Rotherhithe.
8. This Pupil Place Planning submission concluded that new Year 7 places will be required boroughwide from September 2016, with 5 FE (forms of entry) required by 2019/20 – 150 Year 7 places. It is considered by the Council that these places should be provided in SE16 to respond to and support the ongoing regeneration in the area.

**UPDATE**

9. On 10 October 2011 the DfE advised that a 700 place University Technical College (UTC) for 14-19 year olds based at Southwark College's Bermondsey site will proceed to the pre-opening stage of the UTC development process with a view to it being open in September 2012.
10. We understand that a UTC will have a sub-regional catchment area and will draw pupils in from beyond Southwark. It is unclear therefore the number of places that will be taken up by Southwark pupils and the affect on general outstanding demand.
11. The DfE further advised that a Compass School application for a 700 place mixed secondary school will also proceed to the next stage of the free schools process. Compass' proposed location within the borough for this school is unknown and the letter advised that the applicant will now 'begin the task of converting their vision into a reality'. Neither the DfE or applicant have, to date, shared the detail of their proposals with the council.
12. It is not known as to the implications of these decisions on the funding available through BSF and the Council will be actively seeking further clarity from the DfE and the applicant groups as to their proposals and the implications thereof. Neither proposal fully responds to the identified need.

**AUDIT TRAIL**

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Sam Fowler, Project Director Southwark Schools for the Future	
<b>Report Author</b>	Sam Fowler, Project Director Southwark Schools for the Future	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	11 October 2011	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team</b>	13 October 2011	

## Education and Children's scrutiny committee

### Workplan 2011/12

Updated October 2011

1. Review of Childhood obesity and sport provision - finalise including evaluation of Free school meal pilot <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review circulated obesity reports and make draft recommendations</li><li>• Review comments from residents and stakeholders on sports and young people Council Assembly theme</li><li>• Invite offices to present on free school meal pilot and start to consider the data needed to evaluate its impact.</li></ul>
2. Review of universal Free Healthy School Meals
3. Review of parenting support – part 2: support for parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Invite CSV (Community Service Volunteers) to present on their scheme matching volunteers with families and children on protection plans to give practical advice and support</li><li>• Invite groups and parent &amp; carers of disabled children to give evidence to the next meeting on the parenting support theme</li></ul>
3. Annual Safeguarding report – January 2012
4. Children and Young Peoples Plan with Southwark Youth Council and Speakerbox – quarterly
5. Rotherhithe School
6. Update on Adult Education
7. Cabinet member interview

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