

Corporate Parenting Committee

Tuesday 26 February 2019

2.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room GO2A, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Membership

Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)
Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor Jon Hartley
Councillor Eliza Mann (Vice-chair)
Councillor Sunny Lambe
Councillor Catherine Rose
Councillor Charlie Smith
Florence Emakpose (Co-opted)

Reserves

None

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Access to information

You have the right to request to inspect copies of minutes and reports on this agenda as well as the background documents used in the preparation of these reports.

Babysitting/Carers allowances

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Contact

Paula Thornton 020 7525 4395 or email: paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Eleanor Kelly

Chief Executive

Date: 18 February 2019



Corporate Parenting Committee

Tuesday 26 February 2019

2.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room GO2A, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

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MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones should be turned off or put on silent during the course of the meeting.

PART A - OPEN BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

A representative of each political group will confirm the voting members of the committee.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear days of the meeting.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.

5. MINUTES

1 - 4

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 5 November 2018.

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6.	OFSTED PROGRESS REPORT - OFSTED FOCUSED VISIT JANUARY 2019	5 - 12
7.	PROGRESS REPORT ON INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) ESCALATIONS	13 - 16
8.	BRIEF REPORT ON THE 'WE WILL' STATEMENTS IN CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2018- 2022 AND DRAFT SUFFICIENCY DASHBOARD	17 - 25
9.	CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2018-19	26 - 28

ANY OTHER OPEN BUSINESS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following motion should be moved, seconded and approved if the sub-committee wishes to exclude the press and public to deal with reports revealing exempt information:

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-7, Access to Information Procedure rules of the Constitution.”

PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS

ANY OTHER CLOSED BUSINESS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT.

Date: 18 February 2019



Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on Monday 5 November 2018 at 2.00pm at the Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT:	Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair) Councillor Evelyn Akoto Councillor Sunny Lambe Councillor Catherine Rose Councillor Charlie Smith Florence Emakpose (Co-opted Member, non-voting)
OFFICER SUPPORT:	Alasdair Smith, Director of Children and Families Tom Stevenson, Assistant Director, Quality and Performance, Children's and Adults' Services Dr Stacy John-Legere, Designated Dr for Looked After Children Elizabeth Murphy, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist Helen Woolgar, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Care Beverley Olamijulo, Constitutional Team

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Eliza Mann.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

The members listed as present were confirmed as the voting members for the meeting.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

No urgent items were identified.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Sunny Lambe declared an interest with regard to a family member (his partner)

being employed by the NHS. This was not a disclosable pecuniary interest.

No other disclosures or dispensations were made.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

6. ANNUAL REPORT HEALTH OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN 2017-2018

RESOLVED:

1. That the annual report health of looked after children 2017 – 2018 and information set out in Appendix 1 of the report be noted.
 - The figures on the referrals of young people that are placed in care were noted. At least 50% of young people lived in the borough and 51% lived in neighbouring boroughs (Lambeth, North Kent or Croydon).
 - Care link: Workable for families' which was set up by the referral team, working alongside social workers that accept children under their care.
2. That officers provide the necessary statistics to the committee on child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to see if the threshold for Southwark looked after children is being met.

7. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS (IRO) ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

RESOLVED:

1. That the Independent Review Officers (IRO) Annual Report be noted.
2. That a further progress report be provided at the next meeting on the systems surrounding the IRO reports which previously which had been ineffective to social care work.
3. That further information on statistics relating to children in the borough, who have been exposed to sexual exploitation, be provided to the committee at the next meeting.
4. That a representative from Speakerbox be invited to attend the next meeting, which includes a representative from the recruitment panel.
5. That the committee continue to work and engage fully with young people.

8. FOSTERING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

RESOLVED:

That the annual report of Southwark Fostering Service 2017-18 be noted.

9. ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

RESOLVED:

That the annual report of Southwark Adoption Service 2017-18 be noted.

10. UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

RESOLVED:

That the briefing report on unaccompanied asylum seeking children in care and care leavers set out in Appendix 1 of the report be noted.

11. CATCH 22 PROJECT - VERBAL UPDATE AT COMMITTEE

Dr. Stacy John-Legere updated the committee with regard to the Catch 22 Project.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that further public health provision will be extended to Family Management Partnership (FMP) for care leavers, which entitles them to free swim and gym at any of the council run leisure centres in the borough. In addition, the committee expressed their wish that this service be extended to foster carers, especially those that are Southwark residents.

12. CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2018-19

RESOLVED:

1. That the work plan for 2018-19 as set out in paragraph 5 of the report be noted.
2. The draft agenda for the next meeting be noted as follows:

26 February

- Sufficiency strategy update
- Ofsted progress report
- IRO – report back as set out in item 7.

The meeting ended at 4.10 pm.

CHAIR:

DATED:

Item No. 6.	Classification: Open	Date: 26 February 2019	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Ofsted Progress Report Ofsted Focused Visit January 2019	
Ward(s) or groups affected:			
From:		Director of Children and Families	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the corporate parenting committee note the contents of the Ofsted letter following the focused visit on 15 and 16 January 2019 (Appendix 1).
2. That the corporate parenting committee note the evidence of consistent progress and improvement with services for children in care since the last inspection in March 2017 under the single inspection framework.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Ofsted implemented a new inspection framework for children's services in January 2018. This is known as ILACS, Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services. As an authority with an existing "good" judgement, Southwark can expect to have a short inspection and two focused visits over a three year period. There is also a possibility that a focused visit could be replaced by a joint targeted area inspection. This focused visit is the first that Southwark has experienced under the ILACS framework.
4. Focused visits do not generate a graded judgement but a narrative letter that details findings, outlines strengths, areas for development and impact on outcomes for children and young people that the improvements make.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. Ofsted found that "children in care in Southwark receive effective support that helps many of them to achieve good outcomes". Social worker's know "their children very well and talk about them with genuine warmth and care". In an intense two days of inspection activity it is good that Inspectors were left with this clear impression of our commitment to our young people.

6. They acknowledged the positive impact of our access to resources team (ART) which has made a real and visible difference to the experience, outcomes and stability of children in our care. The quality of visits to children and the efforts made to maintain and promote family contact and life story work were highlighted as evidence of excellent practice with both contact and life story work being commended within the inspection. Health including child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and support for our children living out of borough and at distance all featured positively.
7. An area of particular scrutiny in any inspection is the work on missing and child sexual exploitation (CSE) and again inspectors were happy that all the protective and diversionary activity that would be expected is clearly present and effective. The focused visit touched on children with disability in our evolving all-age disability service and found a similar level of service and engagement with young people there. Short breaks and good transitions arrangements to adult care were managed well. Colleagues in other parts of the service and in health, education and youth offending services (YOS) helped to provide the fullest picture of the support provided to young people and this enabled inspectors to really take on board the extent of the “wrap-around” that supports children and their placements.
8. There were areas for improvement in the quality and timeliness of permanence planning and a general need to improve recording that would underpin the strengths that social workers, independent reviewing officer’s (IRO’s) and managers noted in their conversations with inspectors, but which were not always evident in the level of detail on file. The lead inspector gave constructive and helpful feedback on some of our processes and systems, notably around the use of consistent templates for recording visits and how we can use audit activity to better benchmark progress. We are always open to considering what Ofsted inspectors suggest as they see a real diversity of practice across many different councils, and some of these suggestions may positively strengthen our offer to children and families, and support our work.
9. Ofsted found “evident progress in addressing the areas for improvement” from 2017 underpinned by a “culture of continuous learning”. The council continued “to show drive and determination in sustaining and improving outcomes for children in care”. Overall, the letter outlines a strong and effective service that responds to our children well with no areas for immediate action.
10. As a good rated authority Southwark can expect a one week short inspection and a further focused visit or joint targeted area inspections (JTAI) in the 2019-21 inspection cycle. A short inspection will generate a graded judgement on the existing four point scale. Forthcoming Ofsted activity will centre on the annual conversation scheduled for May supported by the self-evaluation of social work practice.

Policy implications

11. None

Community impact statement

12. The decision to note this report has been judged to have no or a very small impact on local people and communities. Children in mostly come from communities in Southwark and as such the progress of services for children in care has a small positive impact on those communities.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Children's Services Focused Visit	Ofsted Published Report	N/a
https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80514		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Letter from Ofsted February 2019

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Alasdair Smith, Director, Children & Families		
Report Author	Tom Stevenson, Assistant Director, Quality and Performance		
Version	Final		
Dated	14 February 2019		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy		No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance		No	No
Cabinet Member		No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			14 February 2019

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7 February 2019

David Quirke-Thornton
Strategic Director for Children and Adults
London Borough of Southwark
160 Tooley Street
London
SE1P 5LX

Dear David

Focused visit to Southwark local authority children's services

This letter summarises the findings of a focused visit to Southwark local authority children's services on 15 and 16 January 2019. The inspectors were Andy Whippey, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Maire Atherton, Her Majesty's Inspector.

Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for children in care, including disabled children. They looked at a range of evidence, including case discussions with social workers and managers. They also looked at local authority performance management and quality assurance information, and children's case records. In addition, they evaluated the effectiveness of supervision and support for social work staff.

Overview

Children in care in Southwark receive effective support that helps many of them to achieve good outcomes. Since the last inspection in 2017, senior managers have made evident progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at that time, underpinned by a culture of continuous learning. They have a good understanding of the areas where improvements are still required, and they continue to show drive and determination in sustaining and improving outcomes for children in care.

The quality of permanence planning, particularly for children in foster care, is improving, although the improvements are not yet sufficiently embedded in social work practice. This has resulted in delays in achieving permanence for a small minority of children. High-quality, child-centred practice ensures that children are able to contribute to and engage in planning for their future. Skilled workers are persistent in building and maintaining good relationships with children in care. Senior managers have developed a comprehensive suite of performance data to support their work in improving outcomes for children in care. Leaders and managers use this data well to inform service planning and delivery.

What needs to improve in this area of social work practice

- The quality and timeliness of permanence planning.
- The quality and consistency of recording, including of visits to children, supervision, and activity by independent reviewing officers (IROs).
- The clarity of action planning in care plans.

Findings

- The access to resources team, which has been created since the last inspection, is having a positive impact on ensuring a more vigorous approach to identifying placements for children. More recent placements demonstrate better matching between children's identified needs and the capacity of carers to meet those needs. The quality of referral information for children who need placements has also improved, better reflecting children's unique needs and personalities, and enabling more appropriate matches to be made.
- Progress has been made since the last inspection in ensuring that permanence is routinely considered when planning for children, but there is still further work to do. The recent introduction of permanence trackers and panels is a positive development. However, panel records do not always sufficiently identify clear and specific actions to achieve timely permanence. Some children have been successfully placed with carers for a long period of time, but formal matching decisions have yet to be made. The frequency and structure of permanence planning meetings are not sufficiently explicit.

- Senior managers have been effective in increasing the numbers of children who are placed within Southwark or within 20 miles of their home. When children are placed at some distance from their families, a clear rationale is included in case records. For the majority of these children, their needs are met well in their placements, with appropriate arrangements for their health and education. Inspectors saw several cases where risks to children had been reduced successfully by placing children away from the local area while ensuring that children were able to maintain contact with their families and communities.
- Senior managers have a strong commitment to maintaining and sustaining contact for children. Arrangements for children to have contact with their families and other people who are important to them are very well considered and promoted. Contact arrangements for children are clearly identified and articulated in plans, and they are reviewed regularly.
- Social workers undertake purposeful work with children, and most children in foster care are benefiting from sensitive work to help them to understand their life histories. Life-story books that were seen by inspectors were of good quality.
- Children's wishes and feelings are captured well in assessments, plans and meetings. Social workers know their children very well and talk about them with genuine warmth and care. They visit them regularly, almost always within the local authority's expected timescales, and they see them alone, when appropriate. Visits to children and their views and feelings are mostly well recorded. However, there is some variability in terms of the depth, quality and content of records. In some cases, there is no analysis of the visit that would help to inform any future planning for children, or a record of actions resulting from such visits.
- IROs are having an increasing impact on improving the quality of practice and of reviews, although not all of their interventions on behalf of children are recorded well.
- The physical and emotional needs of children in care are clearly identified and understood, and practice has improved since the last inspection. Health professionals are proactive and determined in ensuring that the health needs of children in care are met. Close working relationships and effective communication between health professionals and social workers are helping to ensure that children's needs are addressed holistically, whether children live within the borough or at a distance.
- The needs of disabled children are well considered in most cases. Short breaks and transitions to adult services are managed well by a team that supports young people up to the age of 25. Good consideration is given to finding the right placement for each child. Most placement plans seen by inspectors were

thorough and detailed. Contact with family members is sensitively managed, and children's wishes and feelings are taken into account.

- Reviews of plans for children in care are mostly held within statutory timescales and are brought forward if there is a change in children's circumstances. Children are encouraged to take part in their reviews, and most do so, with their wishes and feelings being well recorded. Care plans contain clear descriptions of children's needs. However, the plans are not always sufficiently specific or detailed with regard to the actions required to ensure children's well-being. This means that professionals, children and their families are not always clear that actions are being taken or that progress is being made.
- When the plan is for children to return home, any risks to such arrangements are well understood and appropriate action is taken to reduce those risks. Plans proceed at a pace consistent with the child's needs. They are well considered and provide sufficient safeguards and support for children and their families.
- Risks relating to children in care who are at risk of sexual exploitation and going missing are mostly very well identified and managed, although risk minimisation plans are not consistently evident on case files. Links between missing episodes and the potential risks of sexual and other forms of exploitation are appropriately considered. Risk assessments are completed and most are reviewed when risks escalate or decrease. Strategy meetings are held when appropriate to coordinate multi-agency responses and actions, and they demonstrate good partnership engagement; risks are identified well.
- Senior managers have strengthened the response to children in care who have been missing. A weekly 'missing' meeting ensures senior management oversight, although the actions to protect children agreed at such meetings are not always sufficiently clear. The very recent introduction of a specific worker to undertake return home interviews with children in care is helping to improve the previously variable quality of return home interviews. Recent examples of such interviews seen by inspectors were of good quality and added real value in understanding why young people had been missing; this is helping to inform future safety planning.
- The recording of management oversight of casework is not sufficiently robust. Staff told inspectors that they feel valued and supported by visible, supportive and accessible managers, although records show variability in the quality of supervision. Supervision is frequent and records show that children's circumstances are discussed, although, in some records, there is little evidence of analysis and a lack of clarity as to the actions needed to help to improve outcomes for children in care.
- Case audits seen by inspectors did not show sufficient consideration of the lived experience of children in care or of the impact of the work undertaken. In some

audits, there was a lack of clarity as to the actions required, which was a missed opportunity to identify what needed to be done to improve practice.

- Staff have access to a wide range of induction and training courses. They report that they are supported and encouraged to engage in training and development, and these events provide good opportunities to reflect and focus on practice improvement with children in care. Caseloads are manageable, and this enables workers to undertake effective direct work with children and young people. Social workers in their assessed and supported year in employment told inspectors that they felt very well supported and well prepared for the future, and that their work, while protected, ensured that they had good exposure to the reality of practice.

Ofsted will take the findings from this focused visit into account when planning your next inspection or visit.

Yours sincerely

Andy Whippey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Item No. 7.	Classification: Open	Date: 26 February 2019	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Progress Report on Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Escalations	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		None	
From:		Director of Children and Families	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That committee members note the contents of this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. At the corporate parenting committee held on Monday 5 November 2018 members requested that a progress report on the *“systems surrounding the IRO reports which previously had been ineffective too social care work”* be made available for the corporate parenting committee of 26 February 2019. This related to the Ofsted finding in the 2017 single inspection framework (SIF) inspection that *“there is not sufficiently strong oversight or challenge by managers and IROs” and that “current performance regarding the timeliness of reviews is not strong and is not being addressed with sufficient urgency”*. The annual report of the independent reviewing service presented to the November committee meeting did not provide the level of detail that would have provided members with the requisite assurance. The committee wanted reassurance that these issues were being addressed.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3. In the reporting year 2017-2018 (April-March) there were 219 logged IRO escalations affecting 193 children. There was no accurate record of the different stages of escalation, but the figures suggest that 26 young people had an additional escalation stage beyond stage 1. This suggests that most escalations are resolved at the local level but accurate logging as part of the incorporation of the escalation process into our electronic recording system will provide this level of detail in future and the aligned assurance required.
4. Mosaic is the name of the council's electronic recording system where the records for children in care kept. They are maintained and updated mostly by social workers the child's social worker but also others contribute where appropriate, for example the social workers manager or IRO. Within Mosaic, many of the processes that social workers have to follow are governed by a “workflow”. Each workflow has steps that need to be completed before the next one can be commenced.
5. In 2017-18, 148 (68%) of 219 escalations related to incomplete or inadequate care plans. Investigation found that this was associated with Mosaic workflow steps not being fully completed, affecting the ability to enter later stages of the

workflow activity. In this situation IRO's are not able to enter a record of the review if previous stages have not been closed off. This can affect system-generated statistics which suggest that reviews for children in care are not timely. Manual processes enable us to provide end of year performance data that is accurate, but system generated reports may still suggest a deficit.

6. The next area for challenge by IRO's was around drift & delay in the care planning for children with 23 (10.5%) affected. This issue relates to a delay in securing permanency for young people or where care plans have changed without the IRO being involved in discussions.
7. The following table relates to this reporting year April 2018 / March 2019 for the period up until November 2018. The main reason for escalation continues to be the issues around care plans outlined before, but at a reducing level suggesting that the targeted improvement work around this issue is having demonstrable impact. There was further cleansing activity in the immediate runup to the focused visit in January 2019 which will have improved performance further. There is still a core group of cases where care planning is delayed and this is subject to further investigation.

Reason for IRO Escalations Apr to Nov 2018 pre Mosaic:	Count of
Incomplete or inadequate care plans	38
Drift or delay in care planning	23
Other	13
Education	8
Action and effectiveness of management	8
Placement concerns	7
Concerns around social work provision	4
Non completion of review decisions	1
Safeguarding concerns including missing episodes, crime related or CSE risk	1
Grand Total	103

8. The following table relates to the first month of direct entry of IRO escalation onto Mosaic workflows and the consequent ability to run defined reports. One of the concerns around the scrutiny and challenge function of the IRO role was our difficulty in evidencing the levels of constructive challenge that workers and IRO's verbally reported. This was the basis for the committee's own challenge to the IRO service, and this very early data suggests that we will be able to provide the accurate information expected through Mosaic reporting. There will be a need to recognise that with enhanced reporting capability comes the potential for a seemingly greater volume of escalation that may appear at odds with previous levels of intervention, as evidenced by this table.

Reason for IRO Escalations Nov - Dec 2018 on Mosaic:	Count of
Inadequate care plan	19
Care plan delay	7
Other	6
Social work	3
Education	3
Follow-up actions	2
Safeguarding	1
Placement	1
Health	1
18+ planning	1
Grand Total	44

9. In the focused visit of 15/16 January 2019, Inspectors found that *"IRO's were having an increasing impact on improving the quality of practice and of reviews"* but that not all interventions were recorded well.
10. It is the service's aim to work constructively with the social work teams to improve recording and workflow performance leading to a reduction in escalations related to these issues. With the use of Mosaic – linked escalation forms to also be able to provide clear evidence of their footprint, and through that clearer evidence of their impact on better outcomes for children and young people.

Policy implications

11. None

Community impact statement

12. The decision to note this report has been judged to have no or a very small impact on local people and communities.
13. The work of the IRO's is intended to improve the outcomes for children and young people in our care

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
IRO Annual Report 2017-2018 Children's Services Focused Visit	Quality Assurance Unit Ofsted Published Report	N/a
https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80514		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Alasdair Smith, Director, Children & Families		
Report Author	Tom Stevenson, Assistant Director, Quality and Performance		
Version	Final		
Dated	14 February 2019		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included	
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No	
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No	
Cabinet Member	No	No	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		14 February 2019	

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 26 February 2019	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Brief Report on the 'We Will' Statements in Children Looked After and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2018- 2022 and Draft Sufficiency Dashboard	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director of Children and Families	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That committee members note the brief updates on the 'We Will' statements in the sufficiency strategy in this updating report and the development of a sufficiency dashboard addressing some of the 'We Will' statements (**the draft Sufficiency dashboard, Appendix 1 listed to follow**) to monitor progress. For members to have an opportunity to comment on the dashboard and any additional information that would be helpful before a final version is presented to the children and adults board by the end of March 2019.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The council's placement sufficiency strategy, 2018 – 2022, for children looked after and care leaver's sets out a number of 'we will' statements for each area of focus that is required to meet the aims of the strategy.
3. The sufficiency strategy group, co chaired by the director of commissioning and director of children and families, has been meeting on a monthly basis since April 2018 to track the progress of the placement sufficiency strategy 2018 – 2022 action plan. Underneath this group is a working group who are working on a thematic basis to progress the aims of the sufficiency strategy and this group has met bi-monthly, and from March 2019 will be meeting monthly. The last update on the strategy was provided to the corporate parenting committee in July 2018.
4. A draft sufficiency dashboard linked to the 'we will' statements has been devised to sit along side the sufficiency action plan in order to track the impact and progress of achieving the 'we will' outcomes. This sufficiency dashboard will be produced monthly and is going to be presented for agreement to the children and adults board by the end of March 2019. The draft of the dashboard will follow and be available to the corporate parenting committee as **Appendix 1**.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Update to Corporate Parenting Committee on the 'We Will' Statements within the Sufficiency Strategy

5. **We will reduce the need for children to come into care.**

Overall our numbers of looked after children are decreasing gradually. In April 2018 we had 492 looked after children this reduced and in November 2018 was 474 children and in December 2018 the dashboard shows this was 472 children.

We have achieved a reduction in the number of looked after children by a variety of means. The strengthening of the entry to care panel and input of a range of services in particular the keeping families together team and in-house clinical service has supported children to remain at home when safe to do so. The high cost placement panel has ensured rigorous challenge and support for placement requests with a targeted use of the clinical service to stabilise placements.

Southwark's family group conferencing (FGC) was set up in April 2018 providing a service to facilitate families to discuss and devise a plan of support around a child and their parents where safeguarding concerns arise, reducing the need for continued children services involvement. The FGC also serves to identify family members who could care for the child if the family plan is unable to keep the child safe.

A redesign of the services for 16-17 years olds approaching the council for accommodation and support will be undertaken in February 2019. The review will focus on the process of assessment to determine levels of need and ensuring only those who require the need to be looked after are accommodated.

6. **We will grow our own fostering service in each year of this strategy both to decrease reliance on the independent sector, and to create the range and types of fostering placements required for complex needs older children, respite crisis intervention, siblings and parent and child.**

To date in 2018-19 the fostering service has recruited 10 new fostering households all of who live in Southwark. The forward recruitment strategy has a focus on the retention and development of our current foster carers including in 2018 launching a specialist training to become parent child carers, well being days, enhanced training offer and financial incentives linked to training, strengthening the support offer to carers to care for teenagers and exploring larger housing options for experienced foster carers. In December 2019 a new fostering payments policy was agreed by the children and adults board which also introduces a clear payment structure for parent child placements, remand placements and for specialist placements with enhanced support for children coming out of residential care.

In February 2019 the council will launch a foster friendly employer scheme, the scheme provides up to 5 days extra leave to support carers when settling children into their homes, attend training as part of the carers development and meetings relating to the child. We believe the scheme will encourage more council employees to consider fostering.

We are not succeeding in reducing reliance on the independent sector and the dashboard demonstrates that as a percentage the increase of the use of independent fostering agency (IFA) placements has increased very slightly. This continues to be very closely monitored and while it is a clear aim to reduce the reliance of the independent sector the overriding focus of the access to resources team (ART) team is achieving the best possible matched placement for each child.

7. We will maintain and develop the sufficiency of adoption placements through taking leadership within the development of the Regional Adoption Agency in whatever form that takes for London.

From the 1 April 2018 end of December 2018, 11 adoptive households were approved, 3 of whom approved as early permanence carers. This compares to 9 households from the 1 April 2017 to the 31 March 2018. It is anticipated that by the end of March 2019 that this year 14 households will be approved which is a 55% increase on the previous year. Southwark continues to be the host authority for the regional adoption agency which will go live in 2019. The Head of the Regional Adoption Agency for Adopt London South will be appointed by the end of February 2019 following a rigorous recruitment process.

8. We will continue to build the success in developing the option of family and friends' placements for children and young people.

We want more children and young people placed with families when they are unable to live with their parents. In April 2018 Southwark launched our own FGC service to promote family decision making and early identification of family members who can support parents and who in circumstances where children can not safely remain in the care of their parents can offer a placement in the family network.

In 2017-18 a total of 6 family and friends households were approved by the fostering and adoption panel as foster carers and in 2018-19 as at the end of December 2018 9 households have been approved which is a significant increase on the previous year.

All foster carers including family and friends carers now have a direct offer of a family group conference if difficulties occur in the placement that could have an impact on stability.

9. **We will continue to strengthen our approach to supporting Special Guardians**

In July 2018 a restructure of services created a team dedicated to support for friends and family and special guardianship order (SGO) carers and this team now offers preparation training for all carers considering becoming a special guardian. In 2018 Southwark began working with Grandparents Plus with a support worker to support family members caring for children to develop their own resilient systems of peer support through forum meetings and coffee meetings that can be sustained in the community.

10. **We will work with 50 Children in care over the next 3 years, and support them to make lifelong links with extended family members that may include being cared for by those family members.**

To date 22 referrals have been completed to the Lifelong Links project. The process has been fully completed with an FGC for two children. The service has now trained 5 additional FGC co-ordinators and will be now able to accelerate the number of children who are engaged in the project. The impact of this project funded by the Innovation Programme is being independently evaluated.

11. **We will reduce the number of children placed in children's homes from 2018 to 2022 and we began this work in 2017.**

The purpose of the high cost placement panel, set up in 2017 when the council had 47 children placed in residential care, was to review children in residential placements and provided scrutiny and oversight as to the outcomes and progress children are making as well as understanding care plans regarding family based placements where possible. Panel provided challenge and support as to appropriateness of requests for residential care. In December 2018 there were 27 children and young people placed in residential care.

Combined with the new strength based referral form, the placements team quality assurance of placement offers and better multi agency working arrangements has resulted in a reduction of residential placements. This ensures the right placement is identified and monitored appropriately.

The council, in partnership with Coram, held its first fostering activity day in September 2018. Of the 11 children who attended the activity day, 4 were in residential placements. As a result of the activity day, 2 of the 4 children in residential care were matched to foster carers with one child already moved and the remaining with a plan to move in February 2019 following carefully planned introductions which included the young person, foster family and birth family.

12. **We will improve placement stability through a better supply of high quality placements, alongside improvements to practice in relation to assessment, care planning and placement.**

Short term stability is defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as the percentage of looked after children who have had 3 or more placement moves in the year, the national average is 10%. In April 2018 the percentage for children in care in Southwark was 12% as at December 2018 this has improved to 11%.

Long term stability is defined by the DfE as a percentage of looked after children who have been looked after for 2.5 years and have been in the same placement for two years, the national average is 68%. In April 2018 this percentage was at 58% and by December 2018 this had improved to 60%.

In January 2019 the first stability taskforce, chaired by the director of children services, was held to strategically oversee the work required to improve stability for children in care. This meeting will be convened monthly throughout 2019 to drive a focus on improvement in placement stability. Some of the initiatives to drive further improvements in stability include mandatory stability meetings to be undertaken when issues arise in placement that threaten stability, one nominated officer to approve all placement moves and increased robust matching of children to carers.

The contract monitoring team will provide robust contract monitoring of any properties in which young people are placed with providers. The contract team will meet regularly with primary care trust (PCT) commissioners to discuss any issues identified from the monitoring visits concerning the placements and required outcomes and will report and escalate any safeguarding issues as appropriate. Alongside this work we have worked with Speaker box and are working to launch a young inspectors scheme by 1 April 2019 linked to the existing young advisors scheme which will provide opportunities for 8 -10 care leavers to be involved with work to inspect and feedback on placement provision.

13. We will improve placement sufficiency through better matching of such placements to need, and the development of the provision of support to placements to meet need.

The tracking and focus on permanence led to an increase in 2017-18 to 15 children achieving a match which is a 400% increase from the previous year. In 2018-19 to date 16 children have been matched and it is projected by the end of year this will increase to 20 children. In 2019-2020 with the launch of a new policy and the development of a stability focus the aim would be for a further increase and at least 25 children to have their match agreed by the panel and the agency decision maker (ADM).

The new long term fostering policy allows for children and young people aged 14 and above to be matched to their foster carers through the looked after review process, allowing for recommendations to be made to the agency decision maker, outside of the adoption and fostering panel, to formally match a child to their carers. The new policy reinforces the focus on thinking about stability from the start of a placement and putting in early support and utilising a traffic lights system for all carers to consider stability from the outset and talk about difficulties as early as possible.

A review of the current request for placement referral form will be carried out by the end of June 2019. The current referral was introduced when ART placements was formed (2017), it is a strength based approach and has positively impacted on stability as more information on young peoples needs are presented at the start of placement searches which enables better matching. We will consult with social workers and speaker box regarding the improvements as well as learning from providers, through the South London Commissioning Programme (SLCP), as to what further information they would like when considering appropriate carers.

14. We will increase the opportunities for placing more children in or near to Southwark

In December 2018, 20% of children looked after by the council were placed 20+ miles out of the borough, this has significantly reduced from 25% in April 2018.

For those children who are based on their needs placed out of borough then collaborative work with health colleagues including child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and the clinical service has significantly increased the level of contact with and the supports accessed by children outside of the borough.

Alongside the placements team strive to ensure children and young people are placed in or as close to Southwark as possible and strengthening our own fostering service we are working with the SLCP to develop the independent placements market.

15. We will build on this success and continue to ensure care leavers remain with their former foster carers when this is right for them under Staying Put.

In December 2018 there were 43 young people (18 – 21 year olds) living with their former foster carers under Staying Put arrangements. We will continue to raise awareness of Staying Put with social workers and personal advisors to ensure this is being considered with young people and their foster carers. As part of the continued drive for matching children to permanent placements long term, social workers are undertaking conversations regarding staying put and carers understanding and availability to undertake these arrangements when the child turns 18 years old. It is positive that 40 of the Staying Put carers were doing so directly for Southwark and only 3 through an IFA agency. This reflects early planning so that when IFA carers want to provide support post 18 we ensure they are set up to be paid directly through Southwark rather than paying the additional fee to the agency which is generally an additional (£100 – 200 per week cost to the LA).

16. The Southwark Young People 16 + Support and Housing Project sets out a detailed plan in relation to improving sufficiency in this area. We will collaborate with other local authorities so that the council, as a commissioning organisation, improves the leverage in the residential care market so that we can get work with good providers that deliver excellent outcomes at a fair price.

The South London Commissioning Programme (SLCP) provider network is in place meeting every three months and Southwark is participating. Southwark is one of two boroughs that have opted to test the Integrated Commissioning Solution from March 2019. A financial modelling exercise is taking place next month. Ipsos Mori have been commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the programme which will include an economic evaluation of the impact from the new procurement processes. These steps will provide an opportunity to test the system and get a reliable forecast of benefits and cost savings.

In May 2019 the new framework for 16+ accommodation providers will go live in the authority, the 3 providers selected on basis of the tenders submitted already have an established presence in the authority as well as a range of suitable accommodation options for 16+ year old's.

17. **We will work with the CCG, CAMHS and independent therapeutic providers to improve therapeutic placement support for both children and young people and those that Care for them.**

The ART team have worked closely with Carelink (CAMHS) and the clinical service to consult on ensuring that for all children where looking for a placement there is consultation on the clinical needs of the children and advice is sought on ensuring that the right therapeutic place is in place for the children and the carer when a new placement request is made.

18. **We will further embed the Virtual School in the assessment, planning, and review of children looked after and their placements as well as co-working directly with all educational providers where our looked after children are.**

The virtual school sit on the placement panel and the complex cases panel to consider placement decisions. The virtual school education advisors play an active role in supporting all children in care to achieve their full potential.

19. **We will renew our approach to working with care leavers to improve outcomes and meet the challenges that increased demand places on the sufficiency and suitability of accommodation.**

There has been additional capacity through specialist housing workers linked to ART and housing to support care leavers to access housing via housing supporting them to have the skills and the resources they need to be able to manage their own tenancy.

Future Implementation of the Sufficiency Strategy

20. The council's placement sufficiency strategy, 2018 – 2022, for children looked after and care leaver's is a live and dynamic strategy and the action plan is updated bi-monthly and will be refreshed by 1 April 2019. The work has high priority due to the difference that achieving high quality placements for children in care will make for the outcomes for children in care and this is reflected in the steering group being chaired jointly by the director for children and families and the director for commissioning. Membership of the working group and steering group includes colleagues from commissioning, children's services, education, health, CAMHS, and clinical service.
21. The placement sufficiency dashboard will be monitored by the sufficiency working group monthly and presented bi-monthly to the sufficiency steering group. It is proposed to be presented to the children and adults board by end of March 2019.
22. In order to achieve the best placements for children in care in Southwark it essential to work with the market and this can only successfully be achieved by working together collaboratively with other local authorities. This is happening with The SLCP provider network encompassing 8 South London boroughs, focusing on market development for children looked after, negotiation and commissioning strategies, modelling future demand and sharing best practice. Southwark is one of two boroughs that have opted to test the integrated commissioning solution from March 2019 and the impact and cost saving of this is being independently evaluated.

23. Further work is required over the remainder of 2018-19 and indeed the next three years to 2022 to fully implement the aims and ambitions that have been set out in the sufficiency strategy 2018-2022.

Policy implications

24. None

Community impact statement

25. The decision to note this report has been judged to have no or a very small impact on local people and communities.
26. The work of the sufficiency strategy is intended to improve the placement choice and quality of placements for children and young people in care. The age of entry into care and the quality of the placement for the child are the two key factors that influence the overall outcomes for children in care.

Resource implications

27. Not applicable

Legal implications

28. Not applicable

Financial implications

29. It is anticipated that better sufficiency of placements for children in care will be more cost effective for the council and enable it to better fulfil the fairer future principle about spending money as if it was from our own pocket.

Consultation

30. In developing the sufficiency strategy 2018-2022, consultation took place with children in care and care leavers at a Forum led by Speakerbox and commissioning. This led to the development of 10 "I Statements" which young people felt were the most important factors in the delivery of a successful sufficiency strategy.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

31. Not applicable

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

32. Not applicable

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Children Looked After and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2018 -2022	Southwark Document	N/a

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Draft Sufficiency Dashboard (to follow)

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Alasdair Smith, Director, Children & Families,		
Report Author	Kelly Henry, Head of Service and Helen Woolgar, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Care		
Version	Final		
Dated	18 February 2019		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included	
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No	
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No	
Cabinet Member	No	No	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		18 February 2019	

Item No. 9.	Classification: Open	Date: 26 February 2019	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Corporate Parenting Committee – Work Plan 2018-19	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director, Children and Families	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the corporate parenting committee note the work plan for 2018-19 as set out in paragraph 4 of the report.
2. That the committee review and identify any further items for consideration in the work plan for 2018-19.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Role and function of the corporate parenting committee

3. The constitution for the municipal year 2018-2019 records the corporate parenting committee's role and functions as follows:
 - a. To secure real and sustained improvements in the life chances of looked after children, and to work within an annual programme to that end.
 - b. To develop, monitor and review a corporate parenting strategy and work plan.
 - c. To seek to ensure that the life chances of looked after children are maximised in terms of health, educational attainment, and access to training and employment, to aid the transition to a secure and productive adulthood.
 - d. To develop and co-ordinate a life chances strategy and work plan to improve the life chances of Southwark looked after children.
 - e. To recommend ways in which more integrated services can be developed across all council departments, schools and the voluntary sector to lead towards better outcomes for looked after children.
 - f. To ensure that mechanisms are in place to enable looked after children and young people to play an integral role in service planning and design, and that their views are regularly sought and acted upon.
 - g. To ensure performance monitoring systems are in place, and regularly review performance data to ensure sustained performance improvements in outcomes for looked after children.

- h. To receive an annual report on the adoption and fostering services to monitor their effectiveness in providing safe and secure care for looked after children.
- i. To report to the council's cabinet on a twice yearly basis.
- j. To make recommendations to the relevant cabinet decision maker where responsibility for that particular function rests with the cabinet.
- k. To report to the scrutiny sub-committee with responsibility for children's services after each meeting.
- l. To appoint non-voting co-opted members.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4. The corporate parenting committee review and update the work plan each meeting.

26 February 2019

- Sufficiency Strategy update
- Ofsted progress report update
- Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) – report back.

25 March 2019

- Virtual Head teacher report.

Corporate parenting committee meetings with SpeakerBox

- 5. SpeakerBox, established in 2005, ensures that the views of looked after children and care leavers are used to influence decision making that affects their care and support. Representing children and young people between 8 and 24 years the group also provides a peer to peer networking support system for looked after children. The programme is operated independently and run by the young people themselves, although it is supported by the council's children services team, senior managers and councillors.

Community impact statement

- 6. The work of the corporate parenting committee contributes to community cohesion and stability.

Resource implications

- 7. There are no specific implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Minutes of meetings of Corporate Parenting Committee	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Paula Thornton 020 7525 4395
Web link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=129&Year=0		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Alasdair Smith, Director, Children and Families		
Report Author	Paula Thornton, Constitutional Officer		
Version	Final		
Dated	14 February 2019		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included	
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No	
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No	
Cabinet Member	No	No	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		14 February 2019	

CORPORATE PARENTING DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018-19**

NOTE: Original held by Constitutional Team; all amendments/queries to
Paula Thornton Tel: 020 7525 4395

Name	No of copies	Name	No of copies
Membership		Constitutional Team	
Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)	1	Paula Thornton	10
Councillor Eliza Mann	1		
Electronic versions (No hard copy)		Total:	16
Councillor Evelyn Akoto		Dated: 24 May 2018	
Councillor Jon Hartley			
Councillor Charlie Smith			
Councillor Sunny Lambe			
Councillor Catherine Rose			
Co-opted members			
	1		
Florence Emakpose (external)			
Children's Services			
	1		
David Quirke-Thornton	1		
Alasdair Smith			
Legal			
Sarah Feasey	1		