

Corporate Parenting Committee

Monday 25 March 2019

2.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room GO2C, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Membership

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

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.

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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: 15 March 2019



Corporate Parenting Committee

Monday 25 March 2019

2.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room GO2C, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
	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 26 February 2019.	

Item No.	Title	Page No.
6.	BRIGHT SPOTS	5 - 98
7.	ANNUAL VIRTUAL HEADTEACHER'S REPORT	99 - 124
8.	CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2018-19	125 - 127
9.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	

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: 15 March 2019



Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on Tuesday 26 February 2019 at 2.00 pm at the Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)
Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor Sunny Lambe
Councillor Charlie Smith

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
Angela Brown, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children
Helen Woolgar, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Care
Kelly Henry, Head of Service Permanence
Dechaun Malcolm, Children's Rights and Participation Officer
Chair and Vice-chair of Speakerbox
Paula Thornton, Constitutional Team

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Catherine Rose.

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

No disclosures or dispensations were made.

5. MINUTES

It was noted that the head of service: children in care and care leavers, provided the update for the Catch 22 Project under item 11 on the minutes. Subject to this amendment it was:

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

6. OFSTED PROGRESS REPORT - OFSTED FOCUSED VISIT JANUARY 2019

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the Ofsted letter following the focused visit on 15 and 16 January 2019 (Appendix 1 of the report) be noted.
2. That 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 be noted.
3. The following comments were made in respect of the report:
 - The committee welcomed the positive report.
 - Mechanisms to audit the service. It was explained that plans were in place to undertake this including the use of peer reviews.
 - Issue discussed in respect of “analysis” of contact with young people and record keeping. The importance of building relationships was discussed by the committee which was considered the primary objective and the difficulty when balanced against the demands of record keeping requirements. The chair and vice-chair of Speakerbox also emphasised the importance of building a relationship and bond with young people in this contact (did not want to see this as a tick box exercise to fulfil the record keeping requirements).
 - The chair and vice-chair of Speakerbox were able to confirm in response to issues previously raised by young people on sibling contact that their magazine and publicity continues to raise the issue. Speakerbox had not received negative feedback in respect this issue recently. Indicated the need to recruit more young people to enhance contact and interest in relevant issues, which will in turn encourage greater participation by young people.
4. That officers report back to the July corporate parenting committee on progress and including a response to the above issues discussed.

7. PROGRESS REPORT ON INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) ESCALATIONS

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That a further report be received back to the July corporate parenting committee to look at the current data and trends. This data should include the ethnic and gender breakdown as standard. In addition the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), social workers and young people also be invited to attend to have a round table session to deal with the issues and concerns of the committee.

8. BRIEF REPORT ON THE 'WE WILL' STATEMENTS IN CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2018- 2022 AND DRAFT SUFFICIENCY DASHBOARD

Appendix 1 of the report was circulated at the meeting and an officer presented all the key issues arising.

RESOLVED:

1. That the brief updates on the 'We Will' statements in the sufficiency strategy in the updating report and the development of a sufficiency dashboard addressing some of the 'We Will' statements (the draft Sufficiency dashboard, Appendix 1 of the report) to monitor progress be noted.
2. The following issues /comments were made:
 - The importance of ensuring that the infrastructure is in place and that queries were answered quickly from potential foster carers
 - Initiatives in place to recognise foster carers highlighted including an annual ball, attendance at the Mayors ball, tickets for pantomimes (donated by local groups/businesses) and a wellbeing day. Officers confirmed the intention to open up some of these events by inviting members of the committee to celebrate foster carers
 - Discussed how to challenge some of the myths that prevail as barriers to people being interested in adoption and efforts to address
 - Assurance sought that no barriers to staying put (including financial) and young people being supported. Confirmed that links are maintained with relevant organisations including the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

9. CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2018-19

RESOLVED:

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 draft agenda for the next committee be agreed as follows:

- Virtual headteacher's report
- Children in care celebration event due to happen in July and celebration event for children in care October 2019 – seeking input/comments from the committee
- Care Covenant
- Verbal update on cards to young people for birthdays and key events
- Verbal update responding to points raised by Speakerbox on recruitment interviews and their percentage vote.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cards to acknowledge birthdays and other key events

The committee enquired on progress with regard this initiative set out in a motion from council assembly.

RESOLVED:

That an update be provided to the March meeting of the committee.

Recruitment interviews for service managers

Speakerbox confirmed the following issues in respect of their involvement with recruitment interviews for service managers as follows:

- Need sufficient preparation time
- Queried the current 33% voting allocation, feeling that it should be 50/50. This would be examined and reported back to the next committee.

The meeting ended at 3.50 pm

CHAIR:

DATED:

Item No. 6.	Classification: Open	Date: 25 March, 2019	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Bright Spots	
Ward(s) or groups affected:			
From:		Director of Children and Families	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That corporate parenting committee note the contents of the Bright Spots reports: Your Life Your Care children (aged 4 – 18) and Your Life Beyond Care (18+) attached as Appendices to this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Bright Spots Programme, developed by Coram Voice with the University of Bristol, aims to improve the well-being of children and young people in care / care leavers by identifying and promoting practices that have a positive influence on them. It recognises that children in care / care leavers want the same things as other children, but that their well-being is affected by experiences other children may not have. The program is endorsed by OFSTED as well as the Children's Commissioner.
3. The experiences of children in care aged 4 - 18 are identified by encouraging them to complete an online survey (Your Life Your Care) supported by a trusted adult. There is a focus on four areas: rights, resilience, recovery and relationships. Care leavers are also encouraged to complete an online survey (Your Life Beyond Care) which focuses on the thoughts, feelings and experiences of care leavers. The findings are analysed and compared to other local authorities. A comprehensive report is completed so that "Bright Spots" of practice can be identified along with areas where further work is required.
4. This is the first time that Southwark has participated in this programme and the expectation is that it will be repeated at meaningful intervals so that progress against identified areas can be measured and sustained. The intention is that the reports provided by Bright Spots will enable us to embed the areas of identified strength but also work to address areas where greater focus is required.
5. Following completion of the surveys and analysis of the data four reports were written by Coram Voice: a) Your Life Your Care – Full report b) Your Life Your Care – Summary c) Your Life Beyond Care – Full report d) Your Life Beyond Care – Summary. The findings were presented to the service and an event held with children and young people.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. Your Life Your Care found that 96% of children in care in Southwark (aged 11 – 18) trust their social worker and that almost every child trusted their carer all or most of the time (98% aged 11- 18 and 100% aged 4-11) with 96% of children

feeling safe where they live. Additionally 83% of children (aged 11 – 18) liked school or college “a lot”, or “a bit” whilst 98% of carers were said to take an interest in children’s education. The importance of these findings is that having a trusted adult has been shown to be the main factor in helping children recover from traumatic events (Gilligan 2009). This is very reassuring because along with teachers, carers and social workers are the primary people with whom children and young people have contact with and who support our children’s journeys whilst Looked After.

7. Your Life Beyond Care found that 78% of care leavers thought they had been treated better or equally to young people who had not been in care, whilst 72% trusted their Personal Advisor and also experienced fewer changes of worker than young people in care aged 11 – 18. 93% of care leavers felt they had the skills needed to take care of themselves with 59% always feeling safe in their homes.
8. A “You said – We Will” plan has been written that brings together some of the issues identified and the planned responses.

What could be improved: children aged 4 - 18

9. Bright Spots found that a significant proportion of children wanted to know more about why they were in care or felt they had not had an explanation and this is an area where we need to continue to improve. In the recent focused visit (Ofsted, January 2019) some examples of life story work were identified as evidence of excellent practice, and were commended by the inspection team.
10. Life story workshops led by senior social workers and clinical practitioners have been established and funding agreed for a second practitioner to undertake in-depth training which will be used to support the development of life story work across the service. In addition, organisational development is working with lead practitioners to consider which apps / programs will support this work following the planned roll out of laptops / iPads to the service.
11. Bright Spots reported that almost half of children and young people were unhappy with their level of contact with their siblings. This is an issue that has been a focus by Speakerbox who have worked to raise awareness of the importance of promoting contact. We have also been working to promote the “Siblings together Activity and residential camps” that are run by “Siblings Together” and we are monitoring referrals monthly. Siblings Together is an organisation that is well regarded and a number of our children have previously attended their camps / events.
12. Reassuringly, several months after the Bright Spots reports, the January 2019 Ofsted focused inspection reported that *“there is a strong commitment to maintaining and sustaining contact for children”* and that children’s contact arrangements are clear in their plans and reviewed regularly. There is a commitment by the care service to continue to promote sibling and familial contact.
13. Work with 4 – 7 year olds to build trusting relationships with their social worker is required because this was an area requiring improvement identified by Bright Spots.
14. Since the survey there has been a reconfiguration of the care service with the

establishment of a service for under sixteens and a sixteen plus service, both with their own service managers. These specialisms will allow social workers to develop additional expertise in working with and engaging younger children. Work has also been undertaken to build a stable work force, reducing the numbers of locums by recruiting permanent staff and using newly qualified social workers presents an opportunity to help shape and develop their practice at a key stage in their practice development.

What could be improved: care leavers 18+

15. Across all measures of well-being care leavers had much lower scores compared to the general population, with 19% reporting they had felt lonely all or most of the time in the last few weeks with 35% reporting high levels of anxiety compared to 18% in the general population.
16. There has been a review of roles in the leaving care service and an adult mental health experienced practitioner has been appointed along with a youth worker. These practitioners will have a reduced caseload but will also develop practice across the service and add value. We are making plans to make better use of the young people's group work area and are developing a group work program that will be delivered both at Talfourd Place but also in the community. Plans are to deliver these outside of core hours including weekends.
17. There is a need to improve access to accommodation that care leavers feel is suitable, particularly for males. In addition to the appointments outlined above, a specialist housing worker has been appointed on a one year secondment to the leaving care service from Southwark housing. This is initially funded by DFE funding from the cross-government rough sleeping strategy. This worker will provide advice and support to all staff and young people in the leaving care service for issues relating to housing.
18. Care leavers with regulated status in the UK who are assessed as having good independence skills are currently eligible for a priority housing nomination (studio flat) at band 2 and receive a leaving care grant of £2,000. Additionally there has been a recommissioning of support, housing and resettlement services for children in care and care leavers, and young people at risk of homelessness in Southwark (16+), and the new providers will shortly begin to manage services. This will bring bring more control over quality and location of provision along with greater accountability.

Policy implications

19. None

Community impact statement

20. The decision to note this report has been judged to have no or a very small impact on local people and communities. Children in care and care leavers mostly come from communities in Southwark and as such the progress of services for children in care and care leavers 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
Link: https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80514		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Your Life Your Care (summary)
Appendix 2	Your Life Beyond Care (summary)
Appendix 3	You Said, We will
Appendix 4	Full report: The views of care leavers in Southwark on their well-being & what makes life good

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Alasdair Smith, Director, Children & Families	
Report Author	Andrew Fowler, Head of Service, Children in Care and Care Leavers	
Version	Final	
Dated	12 March 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	12 March 2019	

APPENDIX 1

Your Life, Your Care:

A survey of the views of looked after children and young people aged 4-18yrs in Southwark

In January/February 2018 all children in care in Southwark were asked to participate in an online survey, mainly through their schools and colleges. This is a summary of the findings.

172 children and young people responded to the survey: a response rate of 38%

What is working well?



Almost every child and young person trusted their carers



Children and young people in care in Southwark were more likely to feel safe where they were living than their peers in the general population.



Every child aged 4-7yrs felt settled in their current placement. Young people (11-18yrs) in Southwark were also statistically more likely to report this than their peers in other authorities.



The majority of children and young people in Southwark felt that their lives were getting better.

*... foster parents understand you the most [when you] are feeling scared...
11-18yrs*

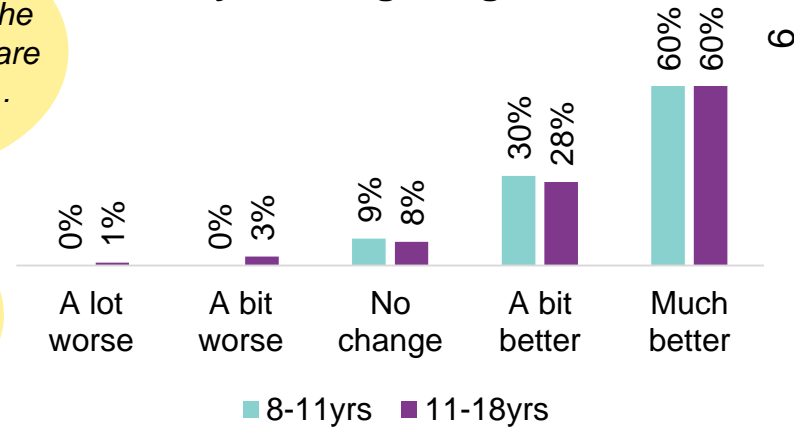
*I feel part of the family. I don't feel worried about anything.
11-18yrs*

*Being in care is not normal and it's hard but my carer makes it so much easier.
11-18yrs*

*I do miss my family but I love living here.
4-7yrs*



Is your life getting better?



Large proportions of young people (11-18yrs) in Southwark reported high levels of well-being. They were statistically more likely to report 'very high' life satisfaction and to be 'very positive' about their future compared to those in care in other local authorities.

School and college



Young people (11-18yrs) in care in Southwark were more likely than young people in the general population to record that they liked school.



They were also more likely than the general population to feel that their carers supported their learning.

However, boys aged 11-18yrs were significantly more likely than girls to say that they did not like school and did not have a good friend

I would like more regular checks at school to see how you are doing emotionally...
11-18yrs

Compared to other participating local authorities, significantly lower proportions of young people in Southwark reported bullying.



With one exception all children and young people who were afraid of bullying were receiving support from an adult.



Children in care aged 8-11yrs in Southwark were significantly less likely to worry about their feelings and behaviour than their peers in other local authorities.



Young people (11-18yrs) in Southwark were more likely than their peers in other LAs to be given opportunities to show that they could be trusted, but one in five 8-11 year olds didn't feel they had chances to help out in school.

I like being in care now as I have learnt to ride my bike, learnt to swim, & love all the clubs & activities my carers take me to.

11-18yrs

[I want to go] to more fun places when I want.

4-7yrs



Children and young people in care in Southwark had opportunities to explore the outdoors as often as their peers in the general population.



Compared to other LAs, much lower proportions of children and young people in Southwark had a pet.



Almost all young people (96%) **trusted their social worker** compared to 89% of young people elsewhere. All young people (11-18yrs) knew they could ask to **speak to their social worker on their own.**

The majority of children and young people **knew their social worker.** 93% of children aged 4-7yrs in Southwark knew their social worker compared to 80% in other LAs.

Low well-being



- 2 children aged 8-11yrs and 7 young people (11-18yrs) were identified as having low well-being.
- No children in the youngest age group (4-7yrs) gave answers suggesting low well-being.



- Not liking your appearance and not being able to pursue hobbies were factors most closely associated with low well-being among young people (11-18yrs) .
- All young people (11-18yrs) with low well-being in care in Southwark were girls.

What would make care better?

*[I would like]
more friends to
play with.
4-7yrs*

*[I want to be]
treated as everyone
else and get a
smartphone.
11-18yrs*

*I want more contact with
my siblings. They are
being moved [and] I am
afraid we will lose any
closeness we have
11-18yrs*

*I would like to do trips with
other children in care to
the beach, museums,
activity centres (rock
climbing) and swimming.
8-11yrs*

*[I want to] see my social worker
more and not have to go so far to
London for contact. To not have to
go to other carers if my carer is
going out because I don't like their
daughter. To be able to go to
places of my choice more.
8-11yrs*

What could be improved?

- **Review family contact arrangements, particularly sibling contact.** Around half of children and young people were unhappy with their current level of sibling contact. Ensure that children and young people understand why decisions about contact are made and that they are continually offered opportunities to ask questions.
- **Ensure all young people and children know why they are in care:** 43% of children aged 4-7yrs, 23% of those aged 8-11yrs and 13% of young people (11-18yrs) had not had an explanation or wanted to know more.
- **Consider the influence of gender when discussing issues with young people.** All young people (11-18yrs) with low well-being were girls. Boys in this age group were less likely than girls to like school and to have at least one good friend.
- **Work with young people to boost their self-esteem and address issues of poor self-image.** Not liking your appearance was shown to be the factor most strongly associated with low well-being.
- **Encourage carers to allow young people in their care to practise hobbies.** Low well-being was closely associated with not being able to pursue their interests.
- **Support children to have contact with animals.** Compared to elsewhere, much lower proportions of children and young people in Southwark had a pet. If pets are impractical, encourage contact through other means such as visiting city farms or neighbours' pets or dog walking.
- **Work with the youngest age group to build trusting and supportive relationships with their social workers and ensure social workers are accessible.** Lower proportions of 4-7yr olds trusted their social worker than in other LAs, and 12% of young people (11-18yrs) could 'hardly ever' or 'never' get in touch with their social worker.

bright spots

This survey was developed by Coram Voice and University of Bristol together with 140 children and young people in and from care as part of the national **Bright Spots** programme,

It asked children in care about their life, based on the things that are important to them.

To find out more go to:

www.coramvoice.org.uk/brightspots

Or email
brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk

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APPENDIX 2


Your Life Beyond Care

The views of care leavers in Southwark on their well-being & what makes life good

In March 2018 all care leavers in Southwark were asked to participate in an online survey to find out how they felt about their lives. This is a summary of the findings.

40% of care leavers in Southwark participated in the survey.



 Virtually all care leavers could identify at least one person (average 2-3 types of people) who gave them emotional support. Friends were the most frequent response followed by leaving care worker.

I am lucky enough to have a supportive foster family, birth family and partner



Many (78%) care leavers felt they had either been treated better or the same as young people who had not been in care.

It is too small for me and my child.

It's too big, far from where I want to be, I have a lot of locations that are unsafe for me to be in. I'm in a temporary studio flat with supported housing.

It's alright for now but I want my own place.



Care leavers in Southwark (24%) were more than three times as likely to report financial difficulties compared to the general population (7%).



A similar proportion of care leavers (13%) reported they had a disability as young people (12%) in the general population.



93% felt they had the skills needed to take care of themselves but 4 young people did not.

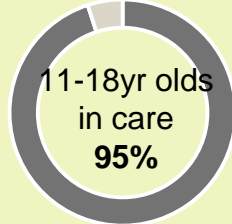


Just over half of care leavers lived on their own. Most of the comments on accommodation were negative with care leavers feeling that their accommodation was temporary or unsuitable.



Care leavers were as likely as their peers in the general population to live in households that had internet access and to have a smartphone.

Do you *always* feel safe where you live?





Most care leavers (72%) trusted their leaving care worker. Those who reported more negative experiences noted how their workers could be hard to contact and did not always do what they said they would do.

Care leavers experienced fewer changes of worker compared to young people in care (11-18yrs) in Southwark.

She tells me what I'm entitled to. Things that I was never given or told about with my previous workers. She encourages and pushes me to motivate me.

Sometimes it is hard to get the care worker on call or email



Care leavers enjoyed a range of activities in their spare time. The top 5 were:

- playing/ listening to music
- watching TV/films
- hanging out with people
- using social media
- shopping.

Lack of money and health issues were the biggest barriers to having fun.

[What fun stuff do you wish you could do more of?]

Going on holiday but money is a problem

[Is there anything that stops you having fun?]

Depression. I can barely drag myself to work. It's hard to enjoy yourself when you're in debt and the flat is a nightmare.



A greater proportion of care leavers (18%) recorded that they did **not** have a good friend compared to their peers (13%) in the general population.

The friends I do have can't support me 100% because I can't explain the bad things I went through in care because it won't make sense.



Fewer care leavers had a trusted person in their lives both compared to their peers in the general population and young people (11-18yrs) in care in Southwark.



Whilst many care leavers felt involved in pathway planning, 19% did not. They either did not know what a pathway plan was, did not have one or had rarely or never felt involved.



Low well-being:

Across all measures of well-being care leavers had much lower scores compared to young people in the general population.

12 (21%) care leavers had low well-being.

Care leavers with low well-being were more likely to report that they:

- often felt lonely
- did not like their appearance
- did not always feel settled in their homes
- were not involved in pathway planning
- did not have a person who told them when they had done well.

I only need support to achieve the best in life.

Stress, depression and discomfort generally. I have an expensive, stressful life that I didn't ask for and I can't lean on my parents like other families do.

Just want to achieve my goals in life and not give up.

Stressed with college and housing, money.

15

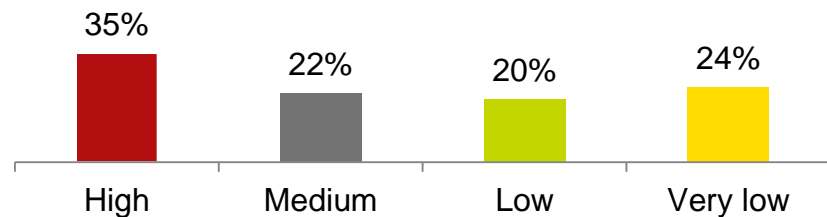


About a fifth (19%) of care leavers had felt lonely *all or most of the time* in the last few weeks.



35% of care leavers reported high levels of anxiety compared to 18% in the general population

How anxious did you feel yesterday?



[Is there anything you want to tell us about your feelings?]
I am lost.

I want to have my council flat, so that I can feel settled to finish my degree.



Many young people chose to write additional comments on their experiences of leaving care....

I am grateful for social services. I will like to continue receiving support to get the best out of my future.

Listen to us more

I'm really angry on how social services move and do not look into certain things the way they should.

Recommendations

- **Improve access to suitable accommodation.** A significant proportion of care leavers feel their accommodation is transient and not suitable for them. This seemed to be a particular issue for male care leavers.
- **Improve involvement in pathway planning.** Close to a fifth (19%) of care leavers rarely or never felt involved in pathway planning, did not have a pathway plan or didn't know what one was. Not feeling involved with pathway planning was associated with low well-being.
- **Help care leavers cope financially.** Care leavers in Southwark were more than three times as likely to report financial difficulties as young people in the general population.
- **Provide opportunities for care leavers to build positive social networks, make new friends and take part in society.** Not having the support of a trusted adult and feeling lonely were associated with low well-being. Care leavers in Southwark were less likely to have a good friend and an adult they could trust in their lives.
- **Explore partnerships in the local community (e.g. local gym memberships, activities for children) to give care leavers opportunities to do things they enjoy.** Young people named lack of money and health issues as being the biggest barriers to having fun.
- **Incorporate questions about well-being into regular reviews and explore what individual young people need to feel supported and like life is getting better.** Care leavers in Southwark were nearly twice as likely to report high levels of anxiety as young people in the general population.

bright spots

This survey was developed by Coram Voice and University of Bristol together with over 30 care leavers as part of the national **Bright Spots programme**,

It asks care leavers about their life, based on the things that are important to them.

To find out more go to:

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Or email brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk

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We asked you some questions about what life is like for you. We asked lots of children in care the same questions. This is what you all told us and what we want to do.

YOU SAID

What was good?

- Most of you were happy.
- All of you felt settled and safe where you live.
- All of you trusted your carers.
- All of you liked your bedroom.
- Almost all of you liked school.
- Almost all of you had fun at the weekends.
- Almost all of you had a really good friend.

What was bad?

- Some of you didn't know why you were in care and wanted to know more about the reasons why.
- A few of you didn't trust your social worker.

YOU SAID

*[I want to go]
to more fun
places when I
want.*

*[I would like]
more friends to
play with.*

*I do miss my family
but I love living
here.*

I like the food.

WE WILL

Start collecting memories of your life at an earlier point so you understand why you are in care.

Spend a bit more time getting to know you, so you can get to know us.

Try to have more fun with you.

If your contact is limited we will help you understand the reasons why.

 bright spots

The survey was created together with children in care to ask about the things that were important to them. Coram Voice and University of Bristol have done the same survey in other local authorities and will bring together your responses to show what care is like for children across the country. If you want to find out more email: brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk

Your Life, Your Care: 8-11 year olds survey findings



We asked you some questions about what life is like for you. We asked lots of children in care the same questions. This is what you all told us and what we want to do.

YOU SAID

What was good?

- Most of you thought your life was getting better.
- Almost all of you knew an adult you trusted.
- All of you trusted your carers and most of you felt they noticed how you were feeling.
- Most of you thought your carers were interested in what you were doing at school.
- Most of you liked your bedroom.
- Almost all of you felt settled at home.
- Almost all of you trusted your social worker.
- Almost all of you had fun at the weekend and played outdoors.

What was bad?

- Some of you wanted to see your birth family more.
- A few of you didn't always feel safe where you live.
- Some of you didn't know why you were in care or wanted to know a bit more about it.
- You didn't all know who your social worker was.
- Some of you didn't know that you could speak to your social worker on your own.
- Some of you thought social workers made decisions without telling you or explaining why.
- Some of you did not like school and some of you were afraid of bullying.
- Half of you wanted a pet but didn't have one.

YOU SAID

[I want to] see my social worker more and not have to go so far to London for contact. To not have to go to other carers if my carer is going out because I don't like their daughter. To be able to go to places of my choice more.

[I have] nothing to say; I am happy with how things are.

I would like to do trips with other children in care to the beach, museums, activity centres (rock climbing) and swimming.

WE WILL

Talk with you about your family and your life story and help you to understand the reasons why you came into care.

Talk with you about school and how we can help you succeed there.

Check you have activities to do that you enjoy.

Talk with your carers about whether it is possible for you to have a pet and think about other ways you can have more contact with animals.

Ask you what you want and explain decisions to you properly.

 bright spots

The survey was created together with children in care to ask about the things that were important to them. Coram Voice and University of Bristol have done the same survey in other local authorities and will bring together your responses to show what care is like for children across the country. If you want to find out more email: brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk

Your Life, Your Care: 11-18 year olds survey findings



In January and February 2018 we asked you some questions about what life is like for you to understand how we can make it better. We asked lots of young people in care the same questions. This is what you all told us and what we want to do because of what you said.

YOU SAID

What was good?

- Almost all of you trusted your carers.
- Almost all of you trusted your social worker.
- Most of you felt settled where you live.
- Most of you liked school and almost all of you felt that your carers were interested in what you do at school or college.
- Almost all of you spent time on hobbies and interests outside of school.
- Almost all of you liked your bedroom in the home you live in now.
- Most of you liked the way you look.
- Over half of you felt 'very positive' about your future.
- Most of you had at least one good friend.

What was bad?

- Some of you wanted more contact with your family.
- A few of you felt that life was getting worse.
- A few of you didn't always feel safe where you were living.
- Some of you didn't have an adult you felt you could trust in your lives.
- Some of you didn't know who your social worker was.
- Some of you wanted to know more about why you were in care.
- Lots of you wanted a pet but did not have one.

YOU SAID

I like being in care now as I have learnt to ride my bike, learnt to swim, & love all the clubs & activities my carers take me to.

I want more contact with my siblings .They are being moved [and] I am afraid we will lose any closeness we have.

I would like more regular checks at school to see how you are doing emotionally...

[I want to be] treated as everyone else and get a smartphone.

I feel part of the family. I don't feel worried about anything.



WE WILL

Keep reviewing your contact plan and keep it live, including reviewing whether it needs to be supervised and whether we can help you use social media to communicate with friends and family. For older children we will also consider extending the duration of contact.

Make sure you have the duty phone number and details of who you can contact if you can't get through to your social worker.

Make sure you have an accurate and up-to-date holistic picture of your life.

Check you have activities to do that you enjoy.

bright spots

The survey was created together with children in care to ask about the things that were important to them. Coram Voice and University of Bristol have done the same survey in other local authorities and will bring together your responses to show what care is like for children across the country. If you want to find out more email: brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk



Your Life Beyond Care

I am grateful for social services. I will like to continue receiving support to get the best out of my future.

Listen to us more

I'm really angry on how social services move and do not look into certain things the way they should.

bright spots

This survey was developed by Coram Voice and University of Bristol together with over 30 care leavers as part of the national **Bright Spots** programme,

It asks care leavers about their life, based on the things that are important to them.

To find out more go to:

www.coramvoice.org.uk/brightspots

Or email brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk

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Recommendations

- **Improve access to suitable accommodation.** A significant proportion of care leavers feel their accommodation is transient and not suitable for them. This seemed to be a particular issue for male care leavers.
- **Improve involvement in pathway planning.** Close to a fifth (19%) of care leavers rarely or never felt involved in pathway planning, did not have a pathway plan or didn't know what one was. Not feeling involved with pathway planning was associated with low well-being.
- **Help care leavers cope financially.** Care leavers in Southwark were more than three times as likely to report financial difficulties as young people in the general population.
- **Provide opportunities for care leavers to build positive social networks, make new friends and take part in society.** Not having the support of a trusted adult and feeling lonely were associated with low well-being. Care leavers in Southwark were less likely to have a good friend and an adult they could trust in their lives.
- **Explore partnerships in the local community (e.g. local gym memberships, activities for children) to give care leavers opportunities to do things they enjoy.** Young people named lack of money and health issues as being the biggest barriers to having fun.
- **Incorporate questions about well-being into regular reviews and explore what individual young people need to feel supported and like life is getting better.** Care leavers in Southwark were nearly twice as likely to report high levels of anxiety as young people in the general population.

YOU SAID

No ones helping sort things out with [...] accommodation, really cold, heating doesn't work. Mould.

Sometimes it is hard to get the worker on call or email.

I'm very well at managing money but certain circumstance like rent tax bills leaves it difficult to get by now I don't have a contract phone no Internet no extra bills than liveable ones

[My worker] doesn't offer me the help I'm actually entitled to

[My worker] treats me like an adult and supports me. •



WE WILL

1. Publicise that you don't need to pay Council Tax until you are 25. Ensure correct Benefits are in place. Make a budgeting plan with you, which highlights support you might need with managing your finances.
2. Work with you to create and review your Pathway Plan.
3. Support you to say "no" if you are given accommodation that isn't clean or is not in a good state of repair or if services (hot water etc.) aren't working. We will support you to remain somewhere that is suitable until good clean accommodation is available.
4. Provide information about your entitlements, about universal services and the local offer for care leavers. Help you identify supports within your own networks. Help PAs to provide encouragement to help you achieve your goals and communicate with you in ways that best suit you.
5. Create / promote a video to help raise awareness of university programmes. Talk with care leavers who have been to university to find out what worked well for them. Begin talking about university during your secondary education. Provide financial, practical and accommodation support to help you succeed at university.

bright spots

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Your Life Beyond Care

*The views of care leavers in
Southwark on their well-being &
what makes life good*

June, 2018

Dr. Claire Baker, Coram Voice



About this research

Bright Spots

This research is part of the Bright Spots programme: a partnership between the University of Bristol and Coram Voice, with the aim to:

- improve the care experience for all looked after children and care leavers;
- give young people a voice on their own well-being; and
- highlight the 'Bright Spots' of practice that contribute to children flourishing in and after care.

The project development of the care leaver survey 'Your Life Beyond Care' was funded by Coram-i through the DfE Social Care Innovation Fund.

- This report is part of a pilot project to develop a subjective well-being survey for care leavers, building on the *Your Life, Your Care* surveys for children in care (4-18yrs).
- The development of the new survey included a literature review of care leavers' views (Baker, 2017), research into comparative data, feedback and seminars with professionals working with care leavers and workshops with 31 care leavers to co-produce the survey. Through the workshops young people from two local authorities identified what was important to care leavers, selected questions and helped plan how to distribute the survey.
- The *Bright Spots Well-Being Indicators* put care leavers' experience and voices at the heart of measuring subjective well-being. The indicators are measured by the '*Your Life Beyond Care*' survey.
- The survey identifies the areas where care leavers are doing well and where things could be improved, providing an insight into young people's experience and well-being to inform service improvements.

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Section 1: Key Findings



Key findings (1):

60 care leavers (40%) in Southwark responded to the survey with slightly more women taking part.



Many (78%) care leavers felt they had either been treated better or the same as young people who had not been in care.



Virtually all care leavers could identify at least one person (average 2-3 types of people) who gave them emotional support. Friends were the most frequent response followed by leaving care worker.



Most care leavers (72%) trusted their leaving care worker. Those who reported more negative experiences noted how their workers could be hard to contact and did not always do what they said they would do.



Whilst many care leavers felt involved in pathway planning, 19% did not. They either did not know what a pathway plan was, did not have one or had rarely or never felt involved.



Care leavers experienced fewer changes of worker compared to young people in care (11-18yrs) in Southwark.

Key findings (2):

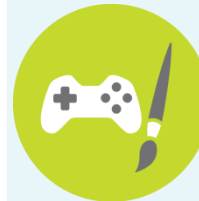


- Just over half of care leavers lived on their own.

- 59% of care leavers *always* felt safe in their home and a similar proportion (60%) thought their home was '*mainly right*' for them. 17% 'never' felt settled where they lived.
- Most of the comments on accommodation were negative with care leavers feeling that their accommodation was temporary or unsuitable.
- Care leavers were as likely as their peers in the general population to live in households that had internet access and to have a smart phone.



93% felt they had the skills needed to take care of themselves but 4 young people did not.



Care leavers enjoyed a range of activities in their spare time. The top 5 were:

- playing/ listening to music
- watching TV/films
- hanging out with people they liked
- using social media
- shopping.

Lack of money and health issues were the biggest barrier to having fun.

Key findings (3):



12 (21%) care leavers had low well-being.

Care leavers with low well-being were more likely to report:

- they often felt lonely
- did not like their appearance
- did not always feel settled in their homes
- were not involved in pathway planning
- did not have a person who told them when they had done well.



About a fifth (19%) of care leavers had felt lonely *all or most of the time* in the last few weeks.



35% of care leavers reported high levels of anxiety compared to 18% in the general population.

Key findings (4):

Compared to young people in the general population:



Care leavers in Southwark (24%) were more than three times as likely to report financial difficulties compared to the general population (7%).



A similar proportion of care leavers (13%) reported they had a disability as young people (12%) in the general population.



Fewer care leavers had a trusted person in their lives both compared to their peers in the general population and young people (11-18yrs) in care in Southwark.



A greater proportion of care leavers (18%) recorded that they did not have a good friend compared to their peers (13%) in the general population.



Across all measures of well-being care leavers had much lower scores compared to young people in the general population.

Section 2: Methodology



Methodology

- An online survey was used to capture care leavers' views on their own well-being.
- Paper surveys were also available and used in cases where no Internet was available, or when the young person preferred this method.
- In Southwark at the time of the survey there were 150 care leavers aged 16-25yrs able to do the survey.
- There are 40 questions in the survey.
- Care leavers mostly responded to the survey with a trusted adult present. The trusted adult role was given to a wide range of professionals including the participation and engagement officer, advanced practitioners, semi-independent accommodation providers, education and employment advisers, and colleagues from the Youth Offending Service.
- A student on work experience also helped distribute the survey with the support of the participation coordinator, contacting young people directly by phone and via WhatsApp and text message.
- Personal advisers were asked to promote the survey to their young people, but were not asked to act as trusted adults.
- Care leavers were asked to complete the online survey in February and March 2018.
- Young people completed the survey anonymously: individual identifiers such as name, locations etc. were not collected in order to allow responses without fear of consequences.
- If young people recorded names or any identifying information on the survey these were removed by the researchers.

Methodology

Subjective well-being:

- This survey measures 'subjective well-being' how young people themselves feel about their lives.
- There are questions in the surveys about affect (e.g. how happy a young person feels now), cognitive judgements (e.g. evaluations of relationships) and the inner world (e.g. life having meaning).
- All these elements help us understand whether young people are flourishing.

- Where possible, care leaver data are compared to data on young people in the general population (aged 16-24), to responses from looked after young people aged 11-18yrs in Southwark (Coram Voice, 2018) and to averages responses across 6 local authorities who participated in Your Life Beyond Care in 2017-18.
- Throughout the report there are examples of what care leavers wrote in relation to specific questions or themes, but not all quotes could be included. Your local authority will receive the full set of comments from young people in a separate document which can be used to explore issues in more detail.



On some pages of this report you will see a '**Bright Spots**' icon (shown left). This indicates a 'good news' story – a positive aspect of practice in your local authority. This is where 100% of young people have given a positive response, or report the same or higher well-being than their peers in the general population.

Section 3: Survey results



Who responded?

- Sample size, age & gender
- Ethnicity
- Number of years spent in care
- Parenthood
- Disability

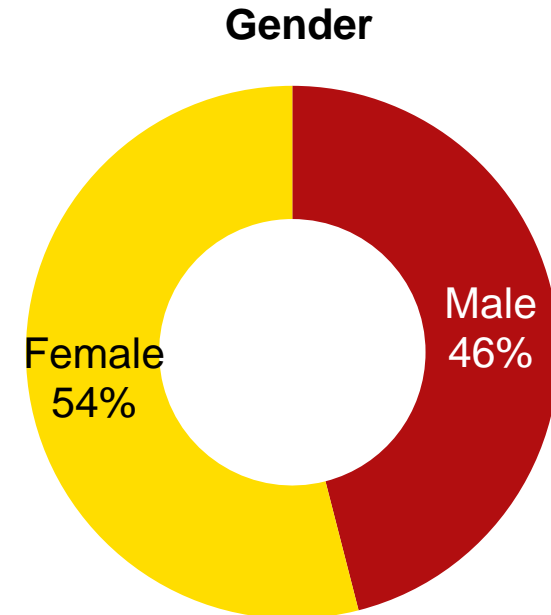


Sample size, age and gender

- 60 young people responded to the survey from a possible care leaver population of 150.
- The response rate was 40%.
- All the questions were optional.
- The biggest group of respondents (55%) were aged between 21 and 25yrs.

Age group	Total <i>n</i> (%)
16-17yrs	2 (4%)
18-20yrs	23 (41%)
21-25yrs	31 (55%)
TOTAL	56 (100%)*

*4 young people did not respond



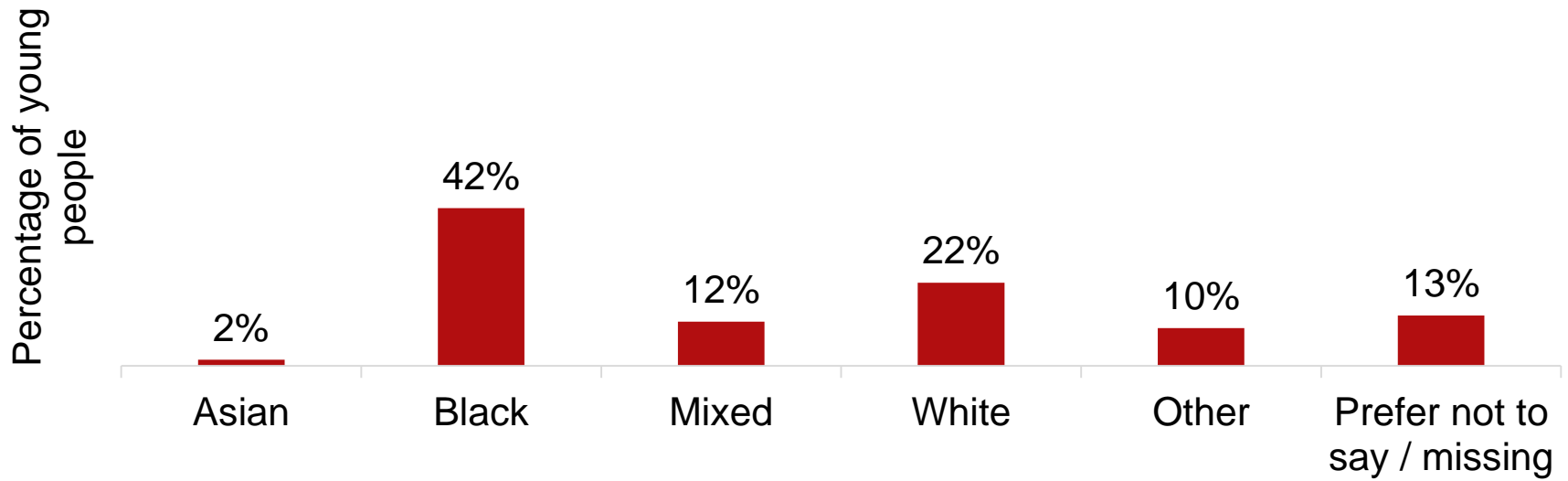
- In Southwark, slightly more women ($n=29$) than men ($n=25$) responded to the survey. 6 young people did not respond to the question on gender.

Ethnicity

Young people of Asian, black, mixed and other ethnicities appear proportionately represented in the survey, as they make up 70% of the care population in Southwark's statistical return to the DfE (2017) compared to 66% in our sample.

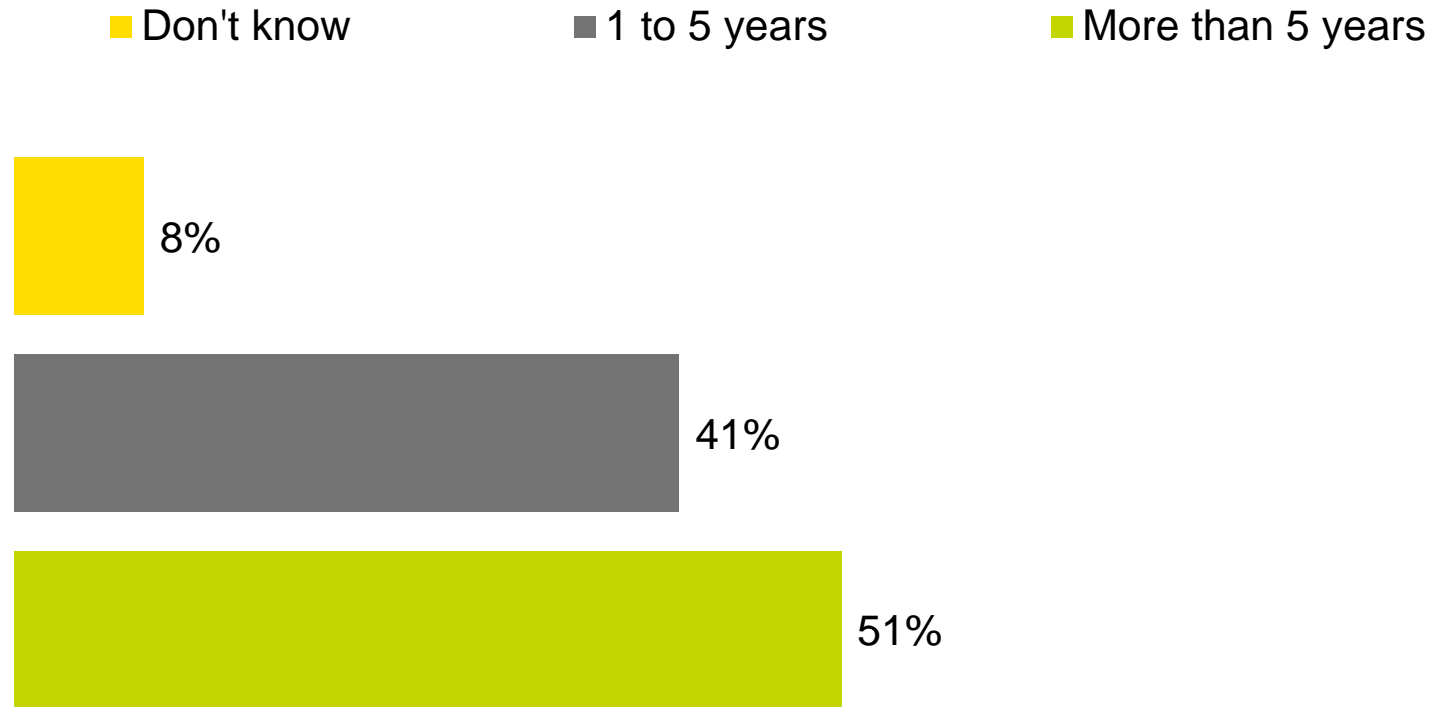
- Just under half (42%) of young people who completed the survey were black.

The ethnicity of young people who completed the survey $n=60$



Number of years spent in care

How many years were you in care in total?



Percentage of young people

- Just over half of the care leavers who responded had been in care for more than five years. No young people had been in care for less than a year.

Partners, being a parent and / or pregnant

All care leavers were asked, *are you a parent?* They could choose more than one answer: *'yes', 'no' or 'I am pregnant/my partner is pregnant'*

Research evidence shows the benefits of good quality, stable couple relationships for well-being. (Sserwanja, 2016)

Research with care leavers has shown that some felt living with a partner could reduce loneliness and provide emotional support, but others described their relationships as volatile. (Dixon, 2004)
Some young people had experienced abusive or manipulative relationships. (Kelly, 2016)

All care leavers were asked, *do you have a partner (are you in a relationship)?*

- 22 care leavers (37%) had a partner.
- Female care leavers were more likely to have a partner – 55% of female care leavers had a partner compared to 20% male care leavers.



10 (19%) care leavers were a parent and/or they or their partner was pregnant.

- 16 of care leavers with a partner (73%) said their partner gave them emotional support.

What would make leaving care better for you?

Don't allow you not having a mum or dad be the reason you get looked upon as being a bad parent.

The people in your life

- Good friends
- Pets
- Trusted person
- Who gives you emotional support?
- People who listen to, encourage and believe in you



Good friends

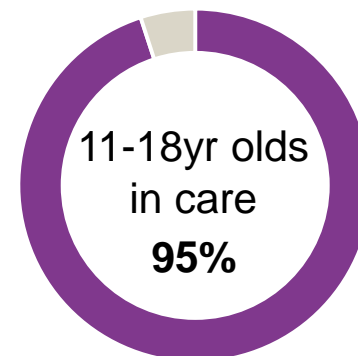
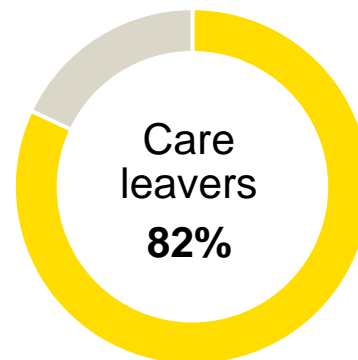
Young people in the focus groups identified good friends as important to them. Our research review also found that care leavers thought that their friends could be an important source of support and help reduce social isolation. (Baker, 2017)



All care leavers were asked whether they *had a really good friend*.

- Many care leavers stated that they had at least one good friend but 11 (18%) did not, which is a greater proportion than their peers (13%) in the general population. (Relate, 2017)

Do you have a really good friend?



My friend helps me a lot.

The friends I do have can't support me 100% because I can't explain the bad things I went through in care because it won't make sense.

Pets



Pets were important to some of the care leavers in the focus groups.

These young people said their pets loved them unconditionally. Care leavers were asked if they *had a pet*.

- 14% of care leavers had a pet but a larger number (31%) didn't have a pet and wanted one.
- In the 2018 Southwark survey of looked after children, 51% of young people (11-18yrs) had a pet where they lived.
- There may be a range of reasons why care leavers were less likely to have a pet. It may be that as young people become care leavers they lose the pets in their lives.

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Do you have a pet?	<i>n</i> (%)
Yes	8 (14%)
No, but I'd like one	18 (31%)
No, and I don't want one	23 (39%)
I'm not allowed a pet where I live	10 (17%)
Total	59 (101%)*

*Due to rounding does not equal 100%

Trusted person

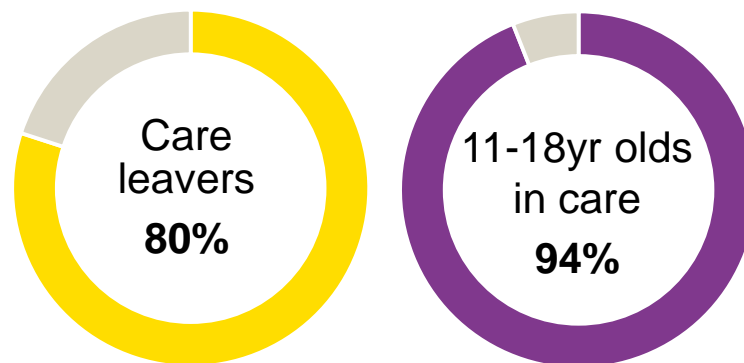
Care leavers were asked, *do you have a person who you trust, who helps you and sticks by you no matter what?*

The availability of one key adult has been shown to be the turning point in many looked after young people's lives. (Gilligan, 2009).

Having this person continued to be important for care leavers. In our research review (Baker, 2017) young people reported that coping with transitions was easier when they had a key person to rely on.

General population comparison: 98% of young people (16-24yrs) reported they had someone to rely on. (ONS, 2017)

Trusted person



- Four-fifths of care leavers (80%) had a trusted person in their lives, 12 (20%) did not.



Fewer care leavers (80%) felt they had a trusted person in their lives in comparison with their peers (98%) in the general population and young people in care (94%) in Southwark.

Who gives you emotional support?

Research has found that some care leavers reported that the availability of emotional support diminished after they had left care (Dixon & Baker, 2016). Care leavers were asked, *who gives you emotional support?* And we counted the types of people who care leavers thought gave them emotional support. It was possible to tick more than one answer.

I am lucky enough to have a supportive foster family, birth family and partner

- 3 care leavers reported having no-one to give them emotional support.



- Most care leavers had about 2 types of people in their lives (range: 0-7 types of people) who gave them emotional support (average 2.5).

Who gives you emotional support?	n	%
Friends	33	55%
Leaving care worker	22	37%
Mum	17	28%
Partner	17	28%
Brother(s) or sister(s)	16	27%
Other relatives	13	22%
Foster carer(s)	10	17%
Dad	7	12%
Counsellor / mental health professional	6	10%
Other care leavers	5	8%
Other e.g. church; Pause project	4	7%
Own child(ren)	3	5%
Pet(s)	3	5%
Residential staff	3	5%
I don't have anyone	3	5%

People who listen to, encourage and believe in you

Care leavers who were involved in developing the survey stressed how important it was to know that there was someone there for them in both “*good and dark times.*”

- Most care leavers (90%) had someone who listened to them.
- But fewer young people felt they had someone who believed in them or told them when they had done well.

- Not feeling involved in their pathway planning or trusting their worker was associated with low well-being.
- Often feeling lonely was associated with not having someone who told you when you had done well.

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Do you have a person who...	Yes <i>n</i> (%)	No <i>n</i> (%)	TOTAL <i>n</i> (%)
Listens to you?	53 (90%)	6 (10%)	59 (100%)
Tells you when you've done well?	48 (84%)	9 (16%)	57 (100%)
Believes you'll be a success?	59 (86%)	8 (14%)	58 (100%)

Being a care leaver

- Knowing & getting in touch with leaving care worker
- Leaving care worker: Continuity
- Leaving care worker: Trust
- Comments: Leaving care worker
- Involvement in pathway planning
- Understanding reason for care
- Being treated differently



Knowing & getting in touch with leaving care worker

All care leavers were asked if they *knew who their current leaving care worker was*. Knowing their worker was an important issue for young people in focus groups.

Young people who knew their worker were asked, *how easy it was to get in touch with their leaving care worker*.

Young people in care (11-18yrs) were asked, *how easy it was to get in touch with their social worker*.

- A slightly larger proportion of care leavers (92%) thought it was easy to contact their worker compared to 88% of young people in care aged 11-18yrs.



- Many young people (83%) knew their worker but 10 (17%) care leavers did not compared to 8% across other LAs who did the survey.

Ease of getting in touch with worker	Care leaver n %	11-18 year olds in care n %
All of most of the time / Sometimes	46 (92%)	74 (88%)
Hardly ever / Never	4 (8%)	10 (12%)

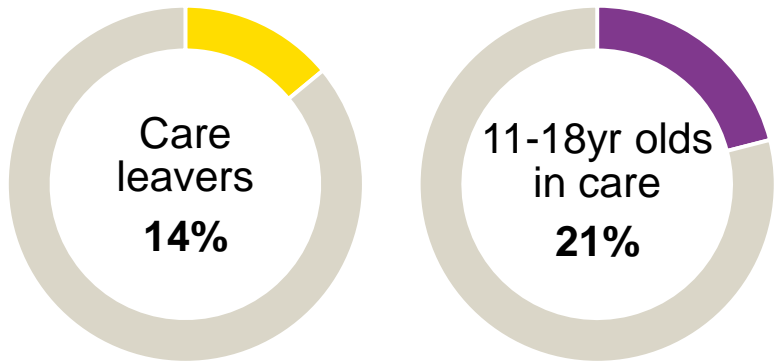
Leaving care worker: Continuity

Care leavers were asked, *how many leaving care workers have you had in the last 12 months?*

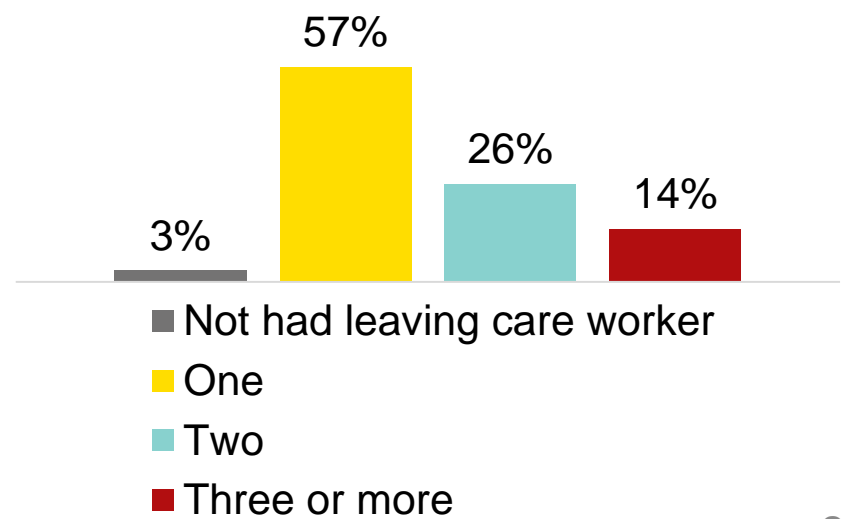
Across a range of research in our review (Baker, 2017), care leavers were clear about the qualities they valued in workers such as, someone who was responsive, consistent, and reliable.

- Just over half (57%) care leavers had the same worker over the past year.
- Care leavers experienced greater stability of worker compared to looked after young people (11-18yrs) in Southwark.

3 or more workers in a year



How many leaving care workers have you had in the last 12 months?



Leaving care worker: Trust

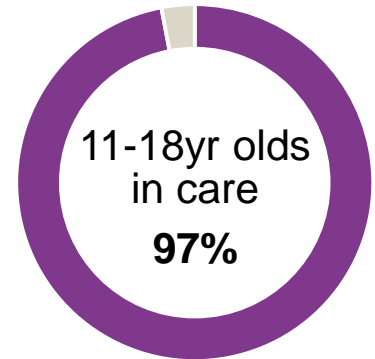
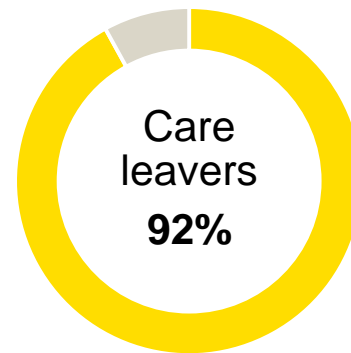
Both our focus groups and research review identified 'trust' as a very important quality in relationships with leaving care workers.

Care leavers were asked, *do you trust the leaving care worker you have now?*

My personal Adviser is [Name] and I don't feel like he understands my full potential I cannot trust him and we barely have conversations about me.

I think she is honest and she does what she says she will do

Trust workers 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes'



- 72% reported they trusted their worker 'all or most of the time'.
- 20% 'sometimes' trusted their worker.
- Only 4 (8%) care leavers recorded 'hardly ever' or 'never' trusting their leaving care worker.

Comments: leaving care worker

Young people were also given the option of providing *comments about their leaving care worker*. 24 (60%) young people wrote how they felt about their workers.

- About two-thirds of comments were positive. These young people tended to describe the help they received and how they valued it when their worker did what they said they would do.

Gets things done.

She is consistent.

She is so helpful and supports me.

I like her and I think she does her best for me.

She is brilliant and helps me in every way possible, could [not] ask for a better one.

She tells me what I'm entitled to. Things that I was never given or told about with my previous workers. She encourages and pushes me to motivate me. And it works. She is very encouraging and tells me that I can achieve what ever I want in life...

Negative comments: leaving care worker

- Care leavers who reported more mixed or negative experiences mainly described how their worker was not always available or emphasised frequent change of workers.

Doesn't offer me the help I'm actually entitled to.

Sometimes it is hard to get the care worker on call or email.

Involvement in pathway planning



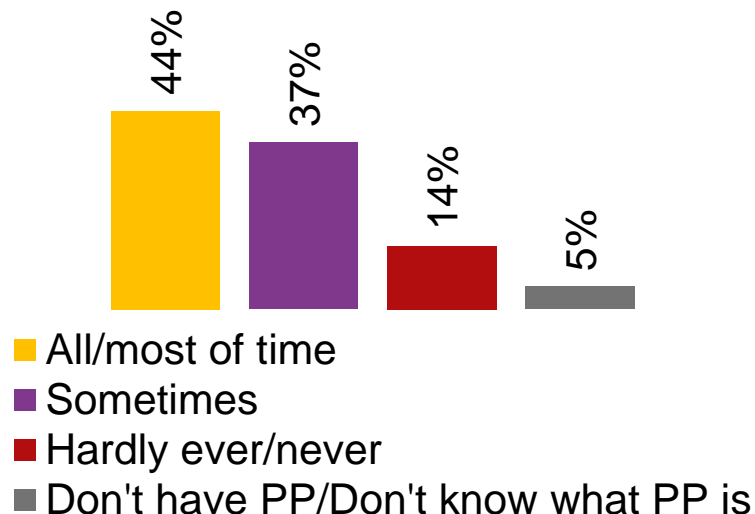
Pathway planning involves a local authority and young person setting goals and outlining the support needed to reach those goals.

Research shows care leavers have mixed experiences; some reported pathway planning as helpful, but others found it stressful and irrelevant. (Dixon & Lee, 2015)

Care leavers were asked, *do you feel involved in your pathway planning?*

- Only half (44%) of care leavers felt involved in their pathway planning 'all or most of the time' compared to 59% of care leavers in the 6 LAs who completed YLBC in the same time period.

Feeling involved in pathway planning



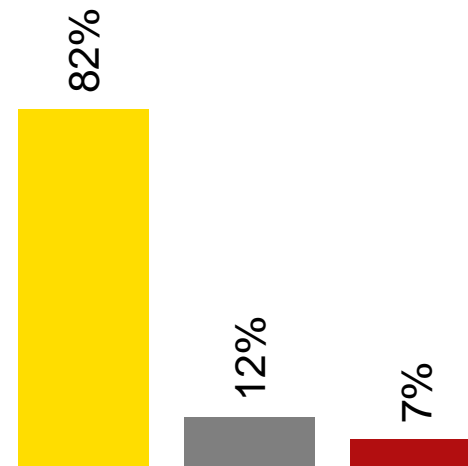
Understanding reason for care

Research with care leavers has shown that some young people felt strongly that the care system had not sufficiently equipped them with an understanding of their background and personal history. (Kelly, 2016)

All care leavers were asked, *do you understand why you were in care?*

- Many care leavers felt that they understood why they had been in care.
- However, about a fifth recorded that they wanted to know more or did not know why they had been in care ($n=11$; 19%).

Do you understand why you were in care?*



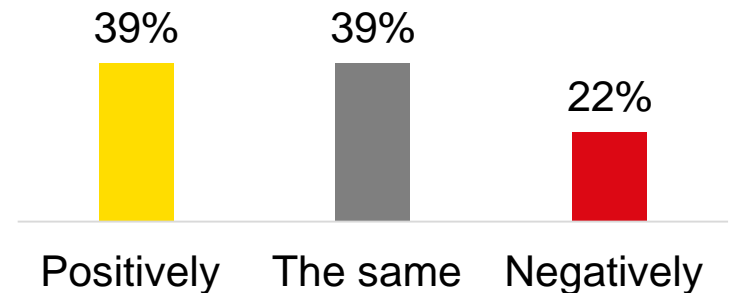
- Yes, I know all I want to
- Yes, but I'd like to know more
- No I don't know

Being treated differently

Care leavers taking part in research described the stigma associated with coming from a care background and some young people had experienced discrimination as a result of being a care leaver. (CRD, 2012)

Care leavers in Southwark were asked, *overall, as a care leaver I have been treated... 'positively', 'the same as any other young person' or 'negatively' by others.*

Overall, as a care leaver I have been treated...



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I feel very abandoned and treated unjustly by Southwark social services.

Great experience

Normal reactions as any young person

Always treated like I was below certain people or were raised by aliens.

Who care leavers live with

All care leavers were asked *who they shared a home with*. They could give more than one answer.

- Most commonly (53%) care leavers recorded that they lived on their own (compared to 33% of care leavers in other LAs who did the survey).

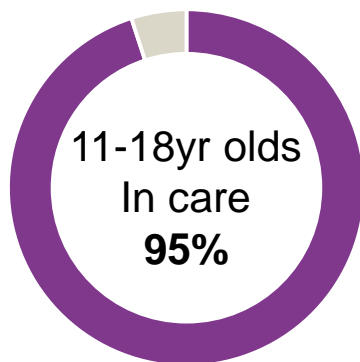
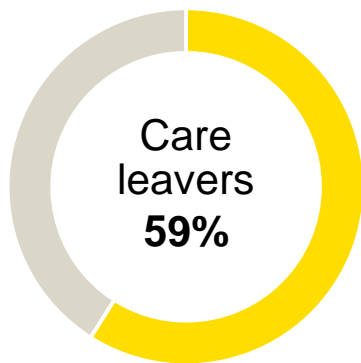
Who do you share a home with?	n (%)
I live on my own	31 (53%)
Foster carers	7 (12%)
Other residents	6 (10%)
Child/ren	4 (7%)
Partner	4 (7%)
Friend(s)	4 (7%)
Homeless	3 (5%)
Parents/relatives	3 (5%)
Other e.g. temporary accommodation	2 (3%)
Pets	1 (2%)
Custody	0 (0%)

58

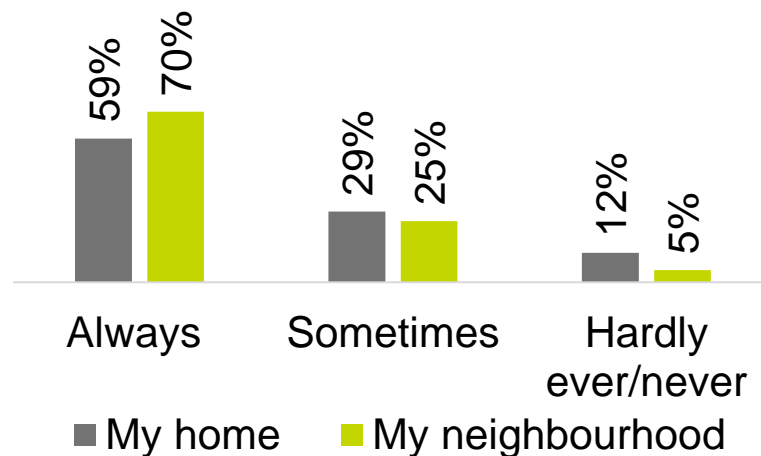
Feeling safe where you live

In our research review of care leavers' views young people emphasised the importance of feeling safe in their homes and neighbourhoods and having good quality housing. Care leavers were asked, *how do you feel about where you live?* and asked to rate *'in my home/ neighbourhood I feel safe'*. The answer options were *'always'*, *'sometimes'* or *'hardly ever/never'*.

Do you *always* feel safe where you live?



I feel safe where I live



Just over half (59%) of care leavers in Southwark reported that they *'always'* felt safe in their home.

This is a much lower proportion compared to looked after young people in Southwark aged 11-18yrs where 95% *'always'* felt safe.

Feeling settled where you live

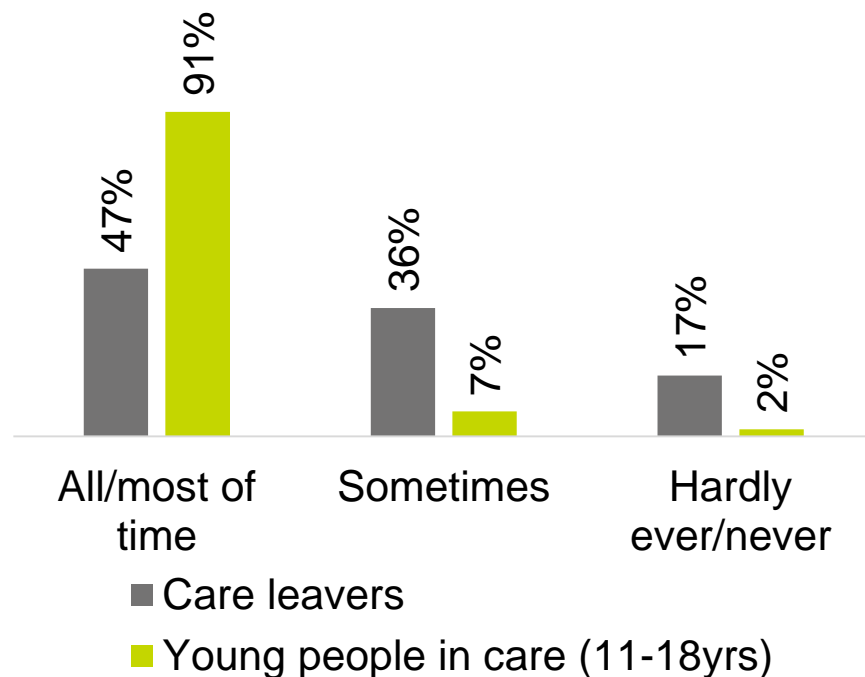
Our care leaver focus groups emphasised the importance of ‘security’ in relation to where they lived – not feeling ‘home’ was temporary but somewhere they could settle.

Care leavers were asked, *how do you feel about where you live?* and asked to rate *‘in my home I feel settled’*. Answer options were *‘always’*, *‘sometimes’* or *‘hardly ever/never’*.

- 47% of care leavers ‘always’ felt settled where they lived: a much smaller proportion than the 91% of looked after young people aged 11-18yrs who felt settled in Southwark.

I live in rented property. The landlord is going to sell the property. I want to have my council flat, so that I can feel settled to finish my degree.

In my home I feel settled



Suitability of accommodation



We asked care leavers, *is where you live now right for you?*

- Official statistics (DfE, 2017) show that 80% of care leavers in Southwark aged 19-21 were in suitable accommodation.
- Though not exactly the same question, young people in the general population aged 16-24 are asked how satisfied they are with their accommodation. 80% reported they were. (ONS, 2017a)

- In this survey 60% of care leavers responded 'mainly yes' to the question 'Is where you live now right for you?'.
61
- 23 (40%) care leavers answered 'mainly no'. Fewer care leavers felt their accommodation was suitable than the 80% reported to be in suitable accommodation (DfE, 2017) in Southwark.

It is too small for me and my child.

It's too big, far from where I want to be, I have a lot of locations that are unsafe for me to be in. I'm in a temporary studio flat with supported housing.

Comments: housing

- Nearly a third (30%) of care leavers provided comments about where they lived. Commonly young people described the **temporary nature** of where they lived. Some wrote about their **poor housing conditions** or why they felt their **home was unsuitable** for them and a few care leavers reported that they wanted to move.
- A couple of young people wrote about their positive experiences and emphasised how they felt settled where they lived.

Staying put in my foster care. I am not ready to move out yet. I am very happy there and I am part of the family. I am close to my step brothers who live there as well.

It's alright for now but I want my own place. I'm waiting for my bidding number.

Not a place of care, no not like it, want to leave.

...it's full of ants and bugs with drafty windows and doors and the heating costs so much.

I am moving to my council tenancy. Waiting for refurb to be completed.

I might move in a couple of years as my property might be pulled down.

Living independently

- Life skills
- Life day-to-day
- Coping financially
- Coping financially: comparison with general population
- Comments: coping financially



Life skills

- Care leavers are much more likely to live on their own at a younger age compared to young people in the general population.
- Feeling prepared for independent living and having the right support is crucial and was a theme in both our focus groups and research review. (Baker, 2017)
- All care leavers in Southwark were asked if they agreed with the statement, *I have the life skills needed to take care of myself.*



The majority of young people (93%) 'mostly agreed' that they had the skills needed.

- 4 young people felt that they did not have the necessary life skills.

I have ruined a lot of good properties so this accommodation is a test for myself ... When I was younger I wouldn't have dared staying here so it shows I'm growing and dealing with my mistakes. I don't wish to stay here but it's happening.

Life day-to-day

Care leavers were asked, *how do you spend most of your time day to day?* and could tick more than one answer.

Research has found that engaging in fulfilling activities (e.g. education, training, volunteering or work) is important to quality of life. Being unemployed has a negative impact on subjective well-being, diminishing young people's sense of purpose and reducing social connections. (ONS, 2017a)

General population:

Only one in 10 (11%) of young people in the general population (16-24yrs) were not in education, employment or training (NEET). (DfE, 2017)

In Southwark 39% of care leavers are recorded as NEET. (DfE, 2017)

- 16% of care leavers indicated that they were unemployed. About a third (34%) were in work. 43% were in education or caring for their children (7%).
- Young people who chose 'Other' recorded activities including waiting to start college or working part time.

How do you spend your time day to day?	n (%)
Education (school, college, Uni)	25 (43%)
Working (job, apprenticeship)	20 (34%)
Caring for my child/ren	4 (7%)
Volunteering	11 (19%)
Unemployed and not in education	9 (16%)
Other	5 (9%)

OS

I am working full time however I am trying to start the next level to my course, however, short of funds.

Coping financially

Having a very low income or experiencing economic deprivation is associated with low well-being. (What Works Centre for Well-being, 2017)

A theme in both our research review, and the focus groups, was the financial worries care leavers could experience.

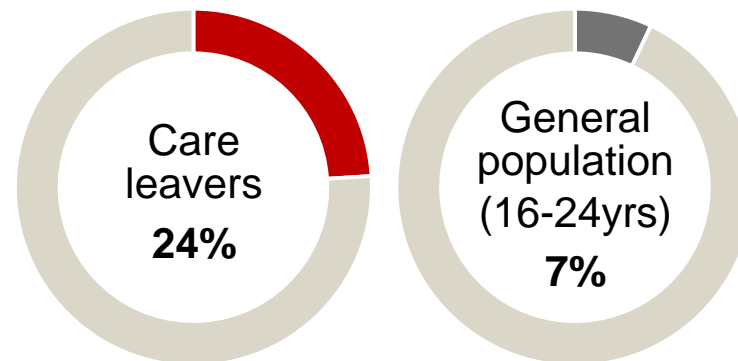
All care leavers were asked, *how are you coping financially?* Answer options were *'living comfortably,' 'doing alright,' 'just about getting by,' 'finding it quite difficult'*, and *'finding it very difficult'*.

The questions replicates one asked by the ONS to 16-24 year olds in the general population. This allows us to compare how care leavers are doing compared to young people who are not care leavers.



In comparison to young people in the general population, care leavers in Southwark were more than three times as likely to report financial difficulties.

Proportion finding it 'quite' or 'very' difficult to get by financially



Coping financially: comparison with general population

	Care leavers (16-25yrs) %	ONS (2017a) general population (16-24yrs) %
Living comfortably	15%	31%
Doing alright	36%	44%
Just about getting by	25%	18%
Finding it quite difficult	14%	5%
Finding it very difficult	10%	2%

Comments: coping financially

- 14 (23%) care leavers wrote comments on how they felt about managing money.
- Care leavers generally wrote that it was difficult to manage on the money they had available. Some young people reported how unexpected bills or change in circumstances could impact on their finances in a negative way.

I can manage my finances. I pay my rent and bills etc. but just because I can do it doesn't mean it doesn't drag me down. When I get a letter it can very easily throw me into my depression and just the general managing of adult life makes me very depressed.

I'm very well at managing money but certain circumstances like rent, tax, bills leaves it difficult to get by. Now I don't have a contract phone, no internet, no extra bills than liveable ones.

It's difficult to live on the money I earn but my leaving care tries to help out as much as she is able.

Not working at the moment and waiting for benefits. My PA gives me weekly allowance till my JSA comes.

It's difficult but I manage.

I manage very well but bills [and] tax makes it difficult.

Taking part in society

- Having fun
- Having fun: Comments
- Loneliness
- Internet access and phone use



Having fun

In our focus groups when care leavers talked about '*What makes a good life*' they were keen to emphasise that doing enjoyable things was important. However, young people were very aware that there were barriers to having fun such as not having enough money or having mental health concerns.

Care leavers were asked, *in your spare time what do you like doing?*

Top 5: What care leavers enjoyed doing

1. Listening to/playing music
2. Watching TV/films
3. Hanging out with people
4. Using social media
5. Shopping

Activity	%	n
Listening to/playing music	64%	37
Watching TV/films	60%	35
Hanging out with people I like	57%	32
Using social media	48%	28
Shopping	41%	24
Exercising/sports	34%	19
Exploring outdoors	31%	18
Pampering/looking after self	28%	16
Volunteering	24%	14
Clubbing	24%	14
Gaming	21%	12
Other e.g. run football club; church; acting/theatre	19%	11

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Having fun: Comments

Care leavers were asked, *what fun stuff do you wish you could do more of? Is there anything that stops you having fun?*

Going on holiday but money is a problem.

Money and a car.

Doing the normal things with my son. What stops me is only seeing him once a week.

Did do horse riding but social services no longer pay.

Depression. I can barely drag myself to work. It's hard to enjoy yourself when you're in debt and the flat is a nightmare. I'd love to go to the gym but the free membership has all but disappeared.

I have fun at church.

- 19 care leavers provided comments. Top of the wish list for some young people was to go on holiday more.
- Some care leavers wrote about the things that stopped them having fun: lack of money and health issues (such as depression) were most commonly cited.

Loneliness

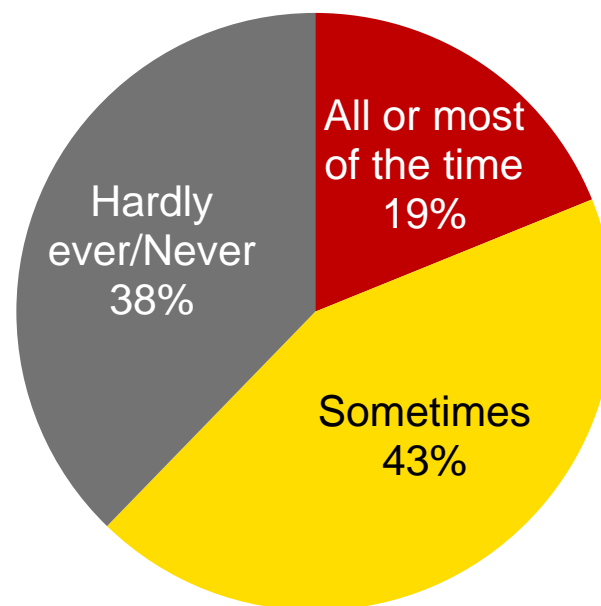
- ONS (2017a) work has shown that a key determinant of well-being is having positive social connections.
- Our research review found that care leavers in many studies described feeling very lonely and socially isolated since leaving care. Some reflected how this affected their emotional well-being. (Baker, 2017)
- All care leavers were asked, *in the last few weeks how often have you felt lonely?*



10% of young people (16-24yrs) in the general population report feeling lonely often/always. (ONS, 2018) Nearly twice as many care leavers in Southwark (19%) reported loneliness 'all or most of the time' in the last few weeks.

Felt lonely in the last few weeks

72



[Is there anything you want to tell us about your feelings?]

I am lost.

Internet access and phone use

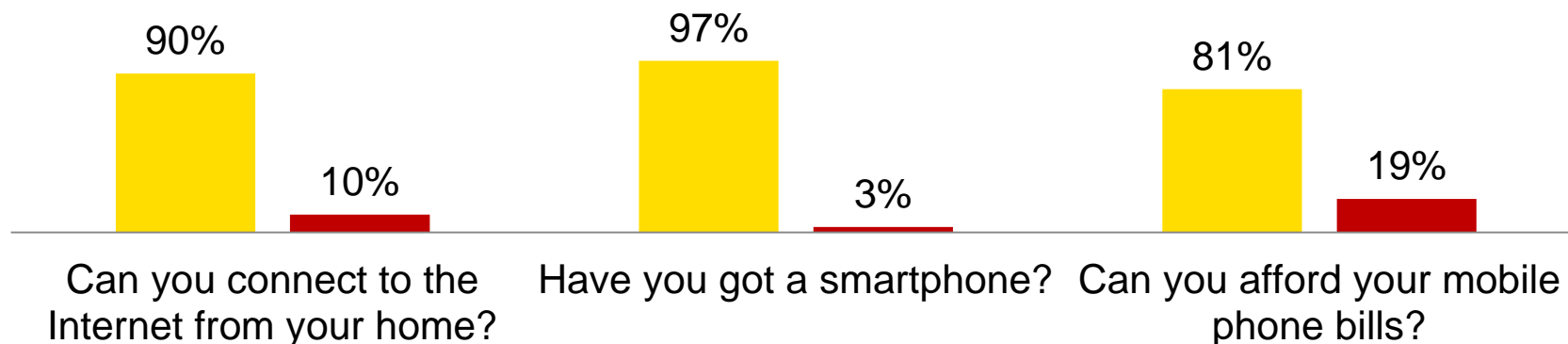
- 'Having and using a phone' was very important to care leavers in our focus groups – a phone was a way to keep memories and photos, keep you in touch with people and source information. It was especially important if living alone.
- Research has shown that social media can be beneficial to young people in care. It can help young people maintain networks and reduce isolation, contribute to increased self-esteem and mental well-being, and give opportunities to network with support organisations.

A comparable proportion of care leavers in Southwark lived in households (90%) that had Internet access compared to the general population (90%) (ONS, 2017b) – they were also as likely to have a smart phone (97%) compared to their peers (96%). (Statista, 2017)

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Mobile phone & Internet usage

■ Yes ■ No



Feelings

- Anxiety
- Happiness with appearance
- Different feelings in the last few weeks
- Stress



Anxiety

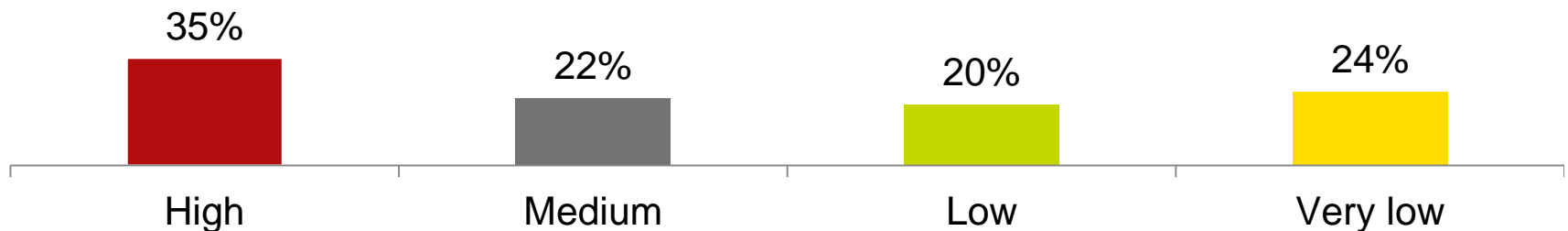


Care leavers were asked on an 11-point scale *how anxious did you feel yesterday?*

General population: The ONS found that in the general population (16-24yrs) 42% reported very low anxiety and 18% reported high anxiety. (ONS, 2017)

- 35% of care leavers reported high anxiety yesterday compared to 18% in the general population.

How anxious did you feel yesterday?



Happiness with appearance

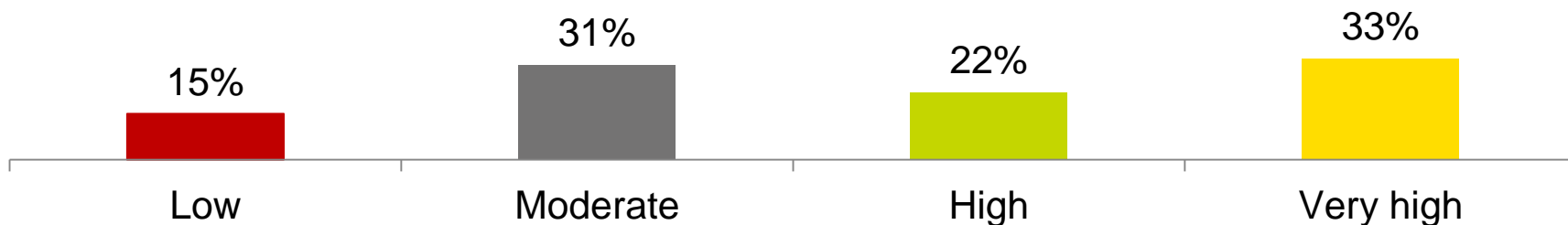


Studies have shown that poor body image is associated with low self-esteem, depression and self-harm. (Cash and Smolek, 2011)

Care leavers in our focus groups discussed how they thought that the way you felt about your appearance was closely linked to self-confidence.

- Our previous Bright Spots work showed that looked after girls were more likely to have a lower opinion of their appearance than boys. (Selwyn & Briheim-Crookall, 2017)
- In Southwark there was no difference between men and women care leavers and how they felt about their appearance.

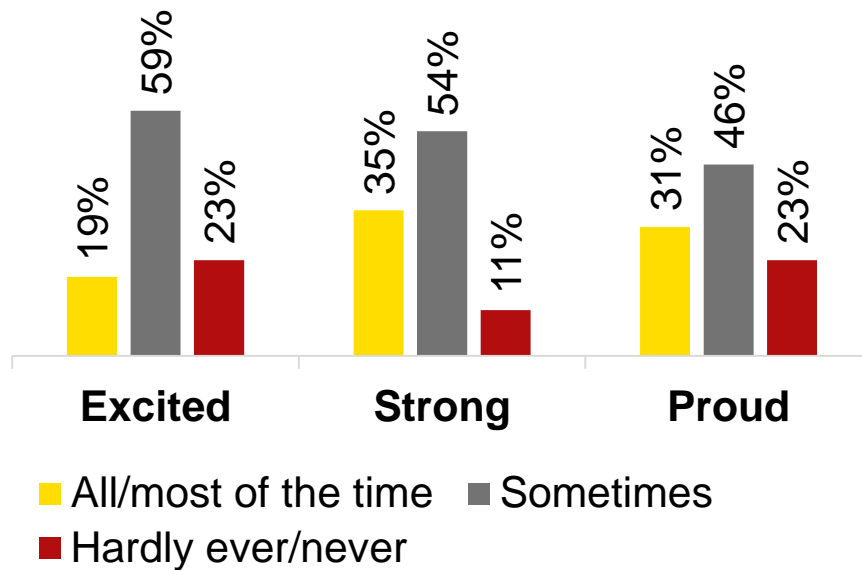
How happy are you with the way you look?



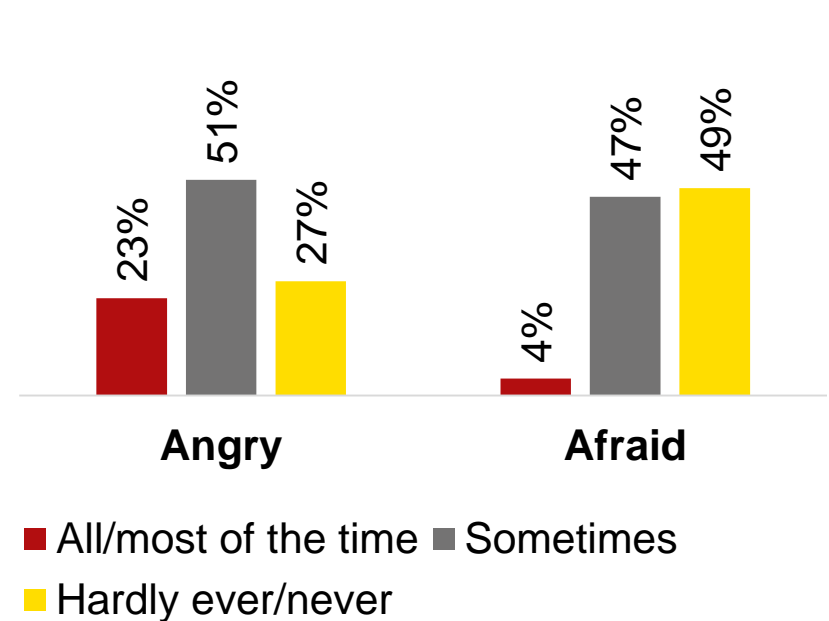
Different feelings in the last few weeks

All care leavers were asked, *in the last few weeks how often have you felt ... excited? strong? proud? angry? afraid?*

Positive feelings in last few weeks



Negative feelings in last few weeks



Stress

We used questions from the 'perceived stress scale' (Cohen and Williamson, 1983) to ask care leavers about their feelings and thoughts during the last month. The questions can be scored on a scale from 0-4 with a maximum of 16 and minimum of 0. High scores suggests a higher level of stress. (Warttig et al., 2013)

Stress, depression and discomfort generally. I have an expensive, stressful life that I didn't ask for and I can't lean on my parents like other families do.

- Care leavers had higher 'stress scores' (average score was 7.3) compared to peers in the general population (average score of 6.7).

	Often	Fairly often	Some-times	Almost never	Never
Unable to control the important things in life	9%	22%	46%	13%	9%
Difficulties were piling up higher than you could solve them	18%	14%	36%	20%	11%
Things were going your way	11%	16%	47%	16%	9%
Confident about your ability to handle your personal problems	33%	31%	31%	5%	0%

Happiness yesterday

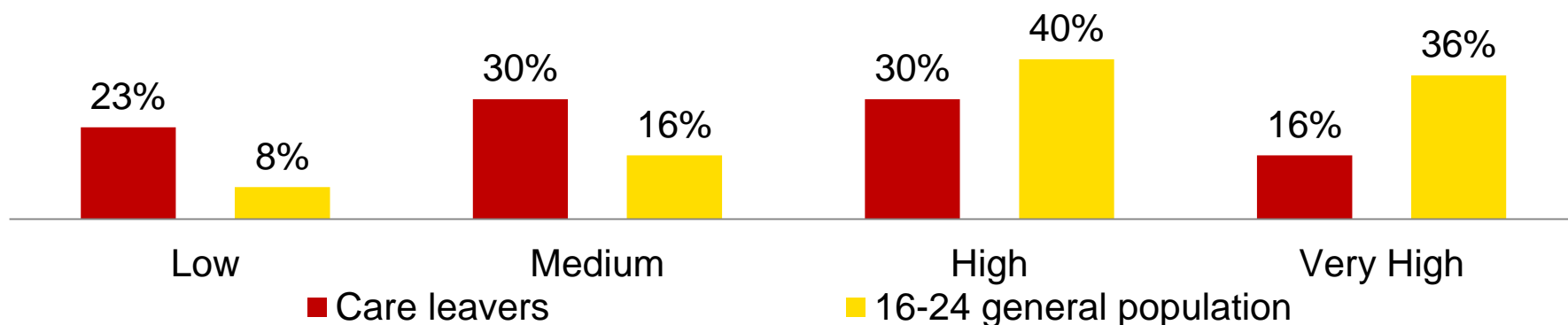
To compare to young people in the general population care leavers were asked the same questions that are used to measure subjective well-being by the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

All care leavers were asked, *how happy did you feel yesterday?* and selected a point on a 0-10 scale where 0 = 'not at all' and 10 = 'completely'.



- 46% of care leavers in Southwark reported high or very high happiness the previous day compared to 76% of young people (16-24yrs) in the general population.

Happiness yesterday (n=56)



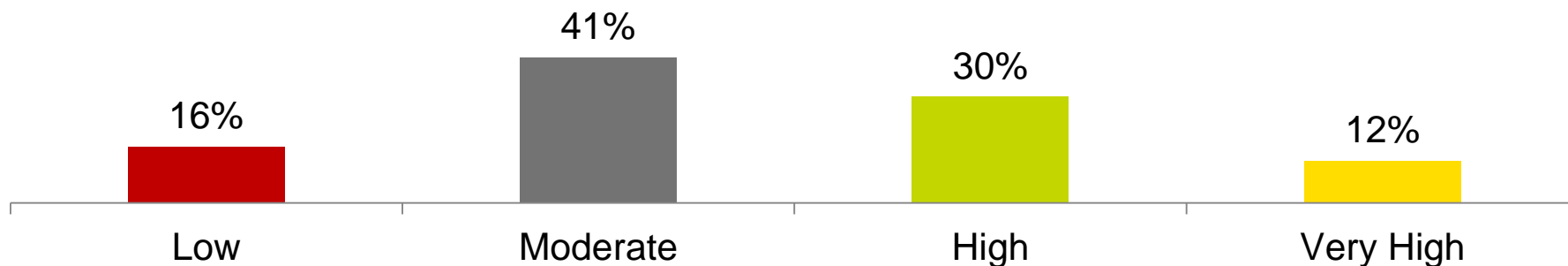
Life satisfaction



Care leavers were asked, *overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?* on a 0-10 scale. A score of 7-8 is considered to be high life satisfaction and a score of 9-10 very high.

- 12% of care leavers reported 'very high' life satisfaction compared to 27% of young people in the general population aged 16-24yrs.
- 16% of care leavers recorded low life satisfaction compared to 3% of young people in the general population.

Life satisfaction (n=56)



Are the things you do worthwhile?

Having a meaning or a purpose to life is strongly associated with well-being. (ONS, 2014)

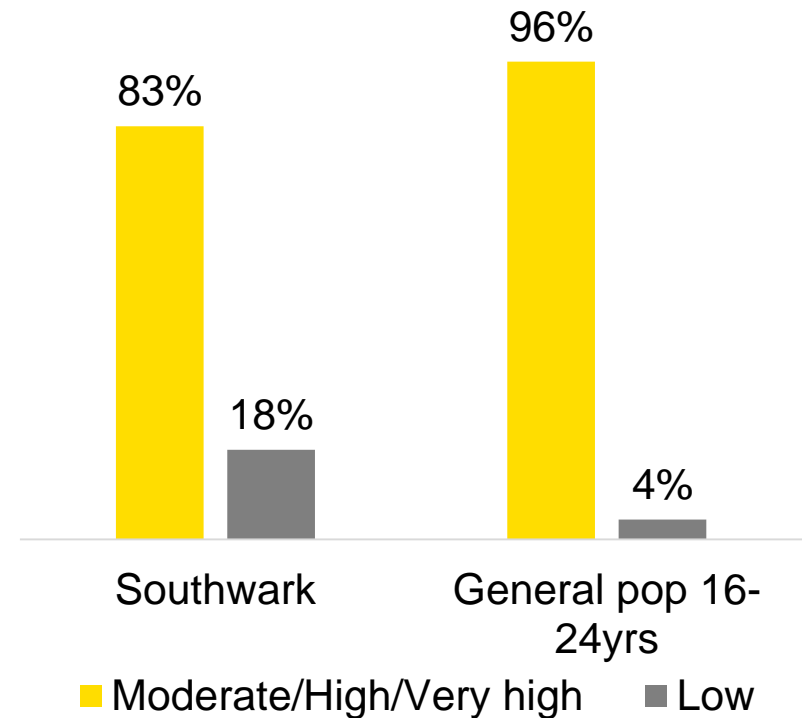
Young people were asked, *Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?*

Out of 56 care leavers in Southwark:

- 29% scored very high;
- 27% high;
- 27% moderate; and
- 18% low.

- In comparison with their peers in the general population a similar proportion (29%) of care leavers had very high scores: 29% of care leavers and 32% of peers in the general population.

Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

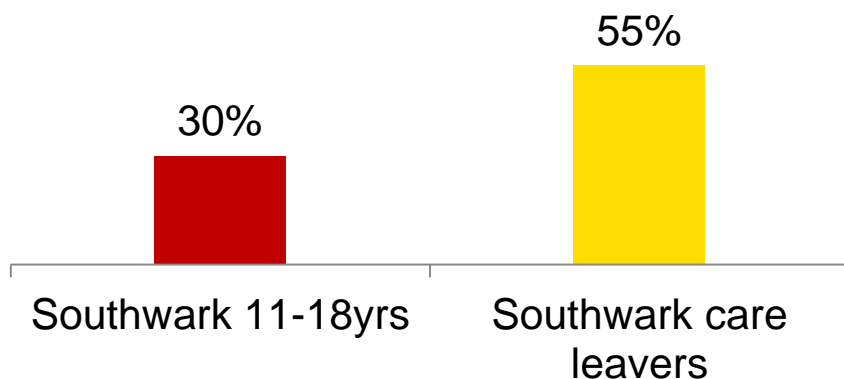


Positivity about the future



Young people were asked on a scale of 0-10, *how positive are you about your future?*

Very positive about the future scores



- 17 (30%) care leavers were **very positive** about their future.
- 12 (21%) had low scores and did not feel positive about their future

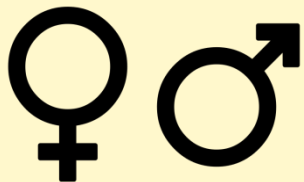
In the focus groups a main theme for young people was *'having and achieving goals'*. All care leavers in Southwark were asked if they agreed with the statement, *I've got goals and plans for the future.*

- Many young people (85%) 'mostly agreed' with the statement and had goals and plans for the future, but 8 (15%) disagreed with the statement.
- 7 of the 8 care leavers who did not think they had goals and plans for the future were women.

[Is there anything you want to tell us about your feelings?]

Just want to achieve my goals in life and not give up.

Gender differences



Our previous research with children in care (Selwyn & Briheim-Crookall,

2017) showed that girls in care felt the stigma of their situation more keenly than boys, were much more likely to worry about their appearance and less likely to enjoy school. Girls in care aged 11-18yrs were less likely to say life was worthwhile and were more negative about the future than boys.

Similarly ONS (2017a) found that young women in the general population were significantly more likely to report symptoms of anxiety and depression than young men; in 2014 to 2015, around 1 in 4 young women (25%) reported symptoms of anxiety or depression compared with fewer than 1 in 6 young men (15%).

Overall our analysis in Southwark revealed few gender differences:



- 7 of the 8 young people (88%) who didn't think they had goals and plans for the future were women.
- Women (55%) were more likely to report they had a partner compared to male care leavers (20%).



- Male care leavers (56%) were more likely to report that where they lived was not right for them compared to female (25%) care leavers.

Comparisons with LAC and general population



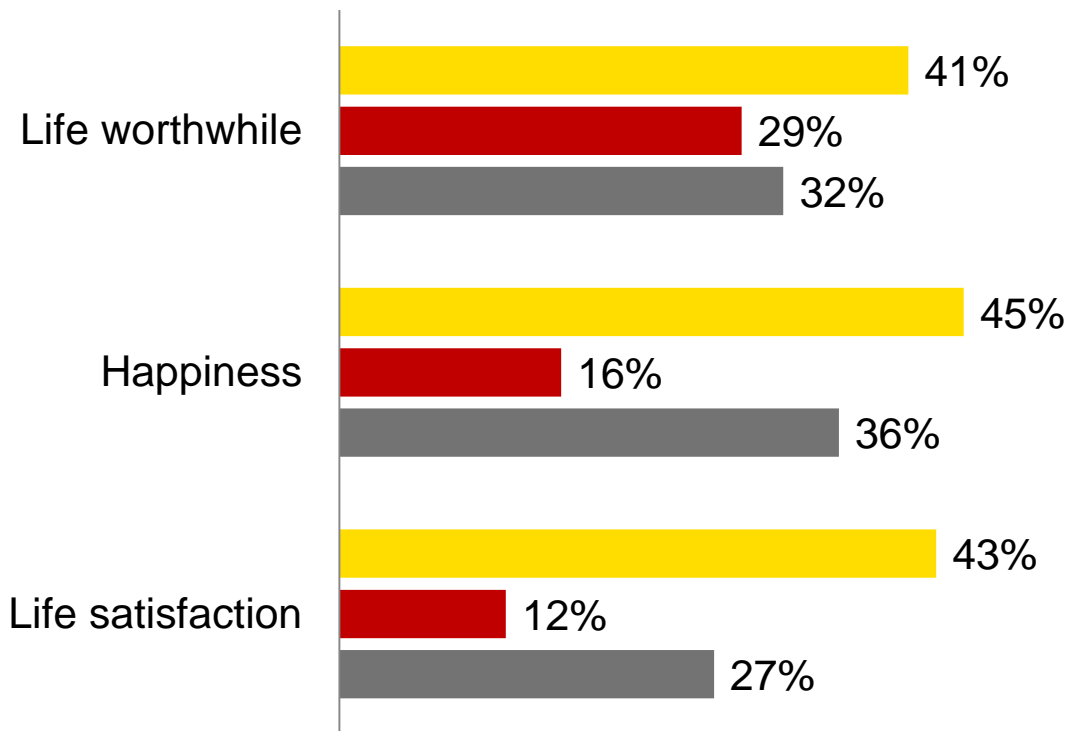
Levels of well-being – Southwark care leavers compared to peers (16-24yrs) in the general population (ONS, 2017a) and to the average scores of looked after young people aged 11-18yrs in Southwark (YLYC, 2018)

		Southwark care leavers (18-25yrs)	Southwark young people in care (11-18yrs)	ONS general population (16-24yrs)
Life satisfaction	Very high scores	12%	43%	27%
	Low scores	16%	13%	3%
Happiness yesterday	Very high scores	16%	45%	36%
	Low scores	23%	11%	8%
Things I do in life are worthwhile	Very high scores	29%	41%	32%
	Low scores	18%	8%	4%
Anxiety yesterday	Very low scores	24%	n/a	42%
	High scores	35%	n/a	18%

Very high well-being



Proportion of young people with high well-being – comparison with general population and looked after children



■ Southwark young people in care (11-18yrs) ■ Southwark care leavers

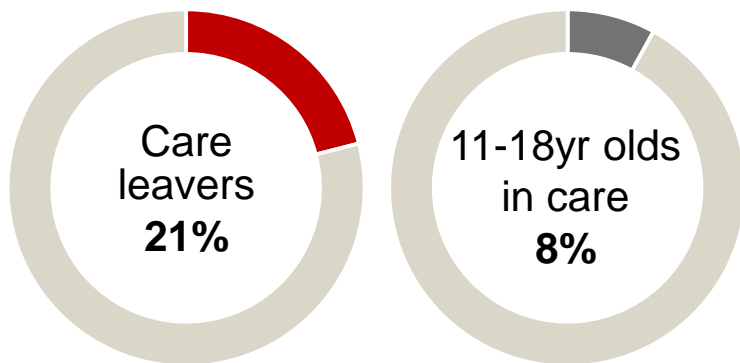
■ ONS general pop 16-24

Low well-being



12 (21%) care leavers had low well-being (i.e. scored 4 or less on two or more of the 0-10 well-being scales).

Young people with low well-being



- Age, gender and disability were not statistically associated with low well-being.

The factors with the strongest statistical effect on low well-being for care leavers were:

- Not being happy with appearance;
- Feeling lonely 'all or most of the time';
- Not having a person who tells you when you've done well;
- Not always feeling settled where you live; and
- 'Hardly ever/never' feeling involved in pathway planning.

Section 4: Care leavers' comments

What would you like to say or tell us about leaving care? What would make your experiences better?



Comments on leaving care

24 (40%) care leavers gave text responses on:

What would you like to say or tell us about leaving care? What could make your experiences better?

- Most care leavers emphasised that they would like more support; a few young people reported they were **not getting the help they needed** and were **unclear about their entitlements**. Others wanted extra **help with housing options** and **emotional support**.
- Some wanted services to **listen to their views** more.

*Been happy with it.
Been treated fairly.
No feedback.*

*Listen to
us more.*

*Having more support from
social services. They just
throw you away like a rag
doll.*

Comments: positive & negative experiences of leaving care

Positive experiences

- *I am grateful for social services. I will like to continue receiving support to get the best out of my future. I will like to have my council property so I can focus on my studies.*
- *I am very happy with the leaving care support they are very friendly. I hope to continue in the same way. A big thank you for their support.*
- *Leaving care is what you make it. Some people don't have a plan, so they sometimes don't know where they are heading, which comes with anxiety and lack of motivation. It's an experience and you don't have to dwell on the fact that your life didn't go to plan but you can control the way you engage with professionals. You're in control of your own situation and where you want social services are there to guide you.*

Negative experiences

- *I'm really angry on how social services move and do not look into certain things the way they should.*
- *I would prefer to have been shot like a dog, just as my grandparents in [name of country] were, than to live here in Southwark. No degree of money can effectively repair the damage made by the social services and I hope all of you realise that.*

Comments: improved support

Increased support:

- *My entitlements not being met.*
- *More information about going to University before I went. Would like more people to go.*
- *When children leave care there is no direction. No guidance of what to expect.*
- *More support, more opportunities, other boroughs open opportunities but not Southwark.*

Improve housing options:

- *If you can help me with moving from this house to other that will grateful. Wish you the best.*
- *I need my own tenancy. I am bidding but I can't win any property that I like. This is my only problem.*
- *Help with housing issues with people with immigration issues in care.*

Better emotional support

- *Dealing with emotional situations better, supporting and understanding the young person better.*

Comments: improved support

Leaving care, get every young person in with plenty of time prepared and ask them about every single care home. Ask them about things they might not have been able to say when they were younger. Ask them what they saw if they were abused etc. Let them move into adulthood completely healed and leave their life in care in the past. There is no acknowledgement of the years of suffering they might have been through and then we are casually tossed into adult life without really knowing what to do and some of us not believing that we've made it.

Section 5: Looking ahead



What could be improved?

- **Improve access to suitable accommodation.** A significant proportion of care leavers feel their accommodation is transient and not suitable for them. This seemed to be a particular issue for male care leavers.
- **Improve involvement in pathway planning.** Close to a fifth (19%) of care leavers rarely or never felt involved in pathway planning, did not have a pathway plan or didn't know what one was. Not feeling involved with pathway planning was associated with low well-being.
- **Help care leavers cope financially.** Care leavers in Southwark were more than three times as likely to report financial difficulties as young people in the general population.
- **Provide opportunities for care leavers to build positive social networks, make new friends and take part in society.** Not having the support of a trusted adult and feeling lonely were associated with low well-being. Care leavers in Southwark were less likely to have a good friend and an adult they could trust in their lives.
- **Explore partnerships in the local community (e.g. local gym memberships, activities for children) to give care leavers opportunities to do things they enjoy.** Young people named lack of money and health issues as being the biggest barriers to having fun.
- **Incorporate questions about well-being into regular reviews and explore what individual young people need to feel supported and like life is getting better.** Care leavers in Southwark were nearly twice as likely to report high levels of anxiety as young people in the general population.

Section 6: References



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For enquiries about the Bright Spots project see:
<http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/professional-zone/bright-spots>

or contact:

brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk



Funded by the DFE Social Care Innovation Fund through Coram I

Item No. 7.	Classification: Open	Date: 25 March 2019	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Annual Virtual Headteacher's Report	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director of Education	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the corporate parenting committee notes the virtual headteacher's report for Southwark Looked After Children.
2. To feedback any comments to be provided for the upcoming corporate parenting committee meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. As Southwark Council is the "corporate parent" for looked after children, it is our duty to ensure that the children within our care have the best possible chance at accomplishing high educational achievements whilst in our care. Through the role of the virtual headteacher, it is ensured that the best education provision is upheld along with continuous work to ensure swift action is taken in time of change and crisis to secure prompt change to the child's individual educational needs.
4. The virtual headteacher's report outlines the educational progress, attainment and attendance of Southwark's children in care and indicates key priorities for the virtual school and provides an overview of pupil premium looked after children (LAC) spend.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The virtual headteacher's report is attached as Appendix 1.

Community impact statement

6. This item will have an impact on the work that the council does with looked after children.
7. The decision to note this report has been judged to have no or a very small impact on local people and communities.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Virtual Headteacher's report

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Nina Dohel, Director of Education	
Report Author	Usha Singh, Headteacher, Children's and Adults' Services	
Version	Final	
Dated	13 March 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	13 March 2019	

Southwark Virtual School

Headteacher's Report

October 2018

Headteacher: Usha Singh

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1. Introduction

“The virtual school effectively supports and challenges the quality of provision of children’s education for those who are looked after. Children’s attainment is above that of comparators...”

March 2017, OFSTED Report: London Borough of Southwark
Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers

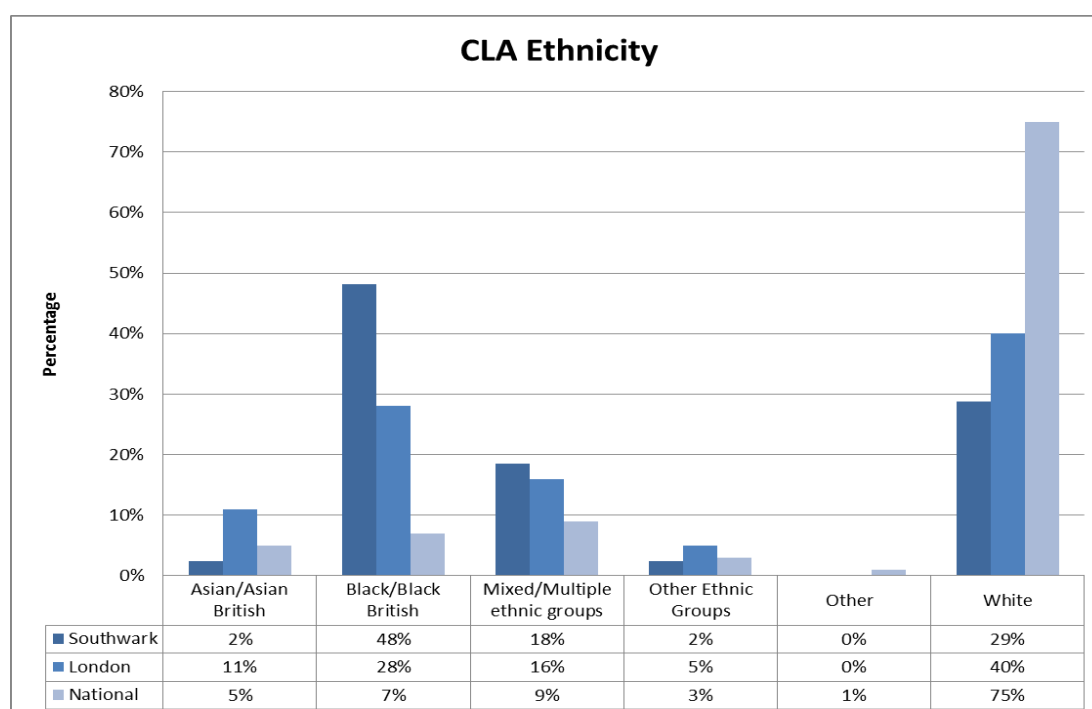
- 1.1. This report presents an overview of the activities and impact of Southwark Virtual School. The Virtual School supports all children in care and relevant care leavers regardless of their length of time in care but the educational attainment data in the report relates to those who have been in continuous care from March 31st 2016 to March 31st 2017. The data in this report is based on 2017 CLA outcomes, the most recently available DfE dataset. Published 2018 CLA performance data will not be available until spring 2019.
- 1.2. The local authority has a responsibility to promote the educational achievement of children looked after (Children & Families Act, April 2014). In February 2018, the government released updated guidance ‘Promoting the Educational of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children’ which reinforces the local authority’s duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children looked after and previously looked after, and promote the child’s educational achievement, wherever they live or are educated. There is a clear ambition, at national and local level, to narrow the attainment gap between children looked after and their non-looked after peers.
- 1.3. Looked-after and previously looked-after children start with the disadvantage of their pre-care experiences and, often, have special educational needs. Virtual School Heads have a key role to ensure these children have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential - an important part of why this role was made statutory.
- 1.4. The Virtual School is responsible for ensuring that children looked after and care leavers fulfil their potential at all stages of their learning journey so that they can go on to be successful in higher education, apprenticeships and employment.
 - For looked-after children, as part of a local authority’s corporate parent role, the Virtual School needs to be the educational advocate that parents are for others.
 - For previously looked-after children, the Virtual School will be a source of advice and information to help their parents to advocate for them as effectively as possible.
- 1.5. Southwark’s Virtual School has an extended responsibility that includes the authority’s duty to provide education other than at school (EOTAS). This area of work is not included in this report which focuses specifically on the education of Southwark children looked after. The gains made by including EOTAS commissioning within the Virtual School are particularly evident where children are on the edge of care.
- 1.6. This report reflects on the impact of our activities and identifies areas of future development to achieve improved outcomes for our looked after children.

2. Cohort Characteristics

- 2.1. Southwark's Children in Care population is constantly changing as children move in and out of the Care System.
- 2.2. In the 2016/2017 academic year, there were approximately 450 children who had been on Southwark Virtual School roll at any point in time. Of these 245 children had been in Care for more than 12 months and the 355 students were recorded on the school roll as at the end of March 2017.
- 2.3. Boys continue to form a larger proportion of the Southwark looked after cohort.

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	141	40%
Male	214	60%

- 2.4. The ethnic profile of Southwark Virtual School cohort is diverse and differs considerably when compared to the national picture.



*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

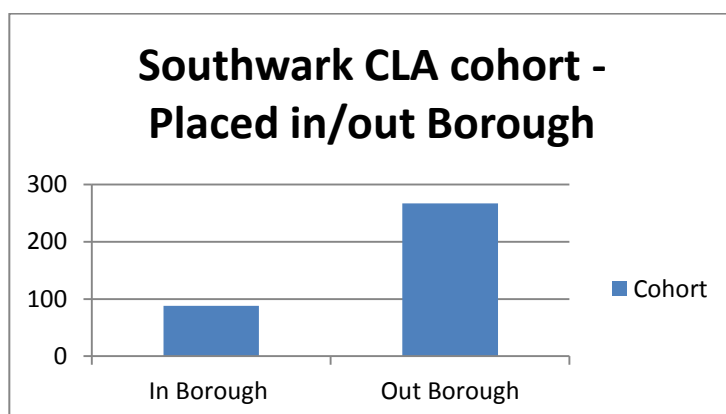
- 2.5. Nationally, looked after children are predominantly white. As at 31 March 2017, 75% of all looked after children were white, 9% were of mixed ethnicity, 7% were black or black British, 5% were Asian or Asian British and 3% were other ethnic groups. Over the last five years there have been small increases in the proportions of looked after children of non-white ethnicity which is likely to reflect the increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

- 2.6. The Ethnicity of Southwark's Children looked after cohort, while in contrast to the national cohort, is more in line with our closest statistical neighbours and reflects similarities of the demographics of Southwark's resident population and of Inner City London.

	Asian	Black	Mixed	EOTH	Oth	White
Southwark	4%	47%	17%	4%	0%	28%
Camden	11%	28%	17%	7%	0%	37%
Greenwich	3%	22%	18%	3%	0%	55%
Hackney	5%	42%	19%	5%	0%	29%
Hammersmith and Fulham	x	33%	17%	13%	x	28%
Islington	3%	23%	28%	x	x	43%
Lambeth	3%	54%	19%	6%	0%	18%
Lewisham	5%	42%	22%	x	x	30%
Enfield	x	27%	12%	6%	x	53%
Haringey	2%	48%	8%	6%	2%	33%
Waltham Forest	14%	23%	21%	x	x	36%

*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

- 2.7. The geographic spread of Southwark Virtual pupils remains similar to that of previous years. 75 % of children looked after were placed outside of Southwark.



- 2.8. The geographic profile of Southwark looked after care placements differs considerably with national (60% of looked after children were looked after within the local authority boundary and 40% were looked after outside).
- 2.9. Southwark has 25% of looked after children placed more than 20 miles outside of the local authority compared to 19% of London CLA and 14% CLA nationally.

	2015	2016	2017
Southwark	22%	24%	25%
LONDON	18%	18%	19%
ENGLAND	14%	14%	14%

*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>

The distribution of Southwark children looked after of statutory school going age is recorded as increasing as children progress through the education system. 63% of the Southwark Virtual School cohort is of secondary school going age.

	Total - Cohort Numbers	In Borough	%	Out Borough	%
R	5	3	1%	2	1%
1	13	2	1%	11	3%
2	13	2	1%	11	3%
3	20	9	3%	11	3%
4	24	8	2%	16	5%
5	29	7	2%	22	6%
6	33	10	3%	23	6%
7	33	10	3%	23	6%
8	33	9	3%	24	7%
9	45	16	5%	29	8%
10	44	6	2%	38	11%
11	63	6	2%	57	16%
Totals	355	88	25%	267	75%

- 2.10. Southwark Virtual School makes every effort to ensure that children looked after are placed in school that are good or outstanding in line with statutory guidance.

School Ofsted Ratings	Number	%
Outstanding	93	26%
Good	169	48%
Requires Improvement	18	5%
Inadequate	3	1%
No Grade	72	20%

- 2.11. Children in better-performing schools experience more stability. Children in schools rated as “Outstanding” by Ofsted are half as likely to experience a mid-year school move compared to children in schools rated “Inadequate”. Due to some children already being placed in a school that achieves an Ofsted rating after enrolment or in instances where exceptional circumstances were considered, 6% of the Southwark cohort are in ‘Requires Improvement’ or ‘Inadequate’ schools.
- 2.12. The number and rate per 10,000 at the age of 18 who are looked after by Southwark is 78, which is higher than national (62) and inner London (58).

3. A Changing Education Landscape

- 3.1. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 became an act of parliament in April 2017. The Act sets expectations about the provision of information and advice to promote the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children.
- 3.2. New statutory guidance for both schools and Local Authorities issued in February this year, has extended the role of the Virtual School Head Teacher to include promoting the interests of children who have been adopted or who are in long term care permanent arrangements (under an adoption, special guardianship or a child arrangement order).
- 3.3. The expanded role of Virtual School Heads and designated teachers includes providing information and advice to previously looked after children, their families and education providers. For many previously looked after children the impact of their pre-care experiences can continue to act as a barrier to educational progress.
- Adopted children do better than children in care at the end of key stage 4, but they still lag well behind the general population. In 2017, 32.8% of previously looked-after children achieved a pass in English and maths, compared with 58.9% of the general population and 17.5% of the looked-after population.
 - The changes to the Virtual School Head and designated teacher role will help previously looked after children receive support to help them achieve their full potential.
- 3.4. The amended Act has introduced a new set of measures in respect of care leavers. These include a new requirement on local authorities to consult on and publish a local offer setting out the support available for care leavers and allowing all care leavers to have support from a personal adviser up to the age of 25 if they need it (previously it was only those in education and training who have access to this support after age 21).
- 3.5. It is too early to assess the full impact of these changes but early indications suggest that by bringing adopted children under the remit of the Virtual School will double the monitoring and support work currently undertaken. Identifying and profiling the cohort of previously looked after children in the borough is dependent on self-disclosure by parents or guardians and is, by default, only required if there is a problem in school or if the parent has reason to believe that it will entitle them to a service or other provision.
- 3.6. DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016) strengthened the expectations on schools to safeguard pupils including Children Missing Education and more specifically a requirement on school staff to be aware of the legal status and issues around safeguarding children looked after. There is tighter regulation on the removal of pupils from the school roll.
- 3.7. Changes to the education landscape include evolving funding arrangements. The DfE announced its definitive proposals for a national funding formula for schools in England from April 2018 and a new formula for allocating high needs funding to schools. Changes to funding formulae may impact on Southwark Virtual School. In a climate of perceived budget reduction, schools' claims to Pupil Premium Plus may increase whereas a proportion of Pupil Premium Plus has been left unclaimed by schools previously.

4. Pupil Premium

- 4.1. The Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is grant funding from the DfE to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and to close the gap with their peers.

New Development with Pupil Premium Plus Funding:

- 4.2. For the 2018-2019 academic year, Southwark Virtual School will receive £2300 for each child of statutory school age looked after by Southwark Council as recorded in the SSDA30 DfE return of March 2018. Southwark Virtual School will retain £900 per child centrally and schools will receive £1500.
- 4.3. For the 2018-2019 academic year, schools will receive £2300 direct to their budgets for each previously looked after child as recorded in the January census 2018.

Pupil Premium Plus funding 2016-2017:

- 4.4. In 2016-2017 the total allocated Pupil Premium plus funding was £739,000. Southwark Virtual School retained £400 per pupil and pooled resources to maximise educational outcomes.
- 4.5. The amount of £400 per eligible pupil retained by the Virtual School in 2016-17 funded:
- Education Psychologist support dedicated to the Virtual School to support learning difficulties and early assessment of statutory assessments.
 - Fixed Term resourcing with the employment of 4 Specialist Education Advisors, 1 Project officer and 2 Information Advice and guidance officers. Southwark looked after children benefit from the direct support of their own Educational Advisor and direct transition support at different stages of their education.
 - Supplementary Home Tuition for pupils in full time education with a focus on English and maths to support academic achievement.
 - Interim Alternative provision: home tuition as part of Virtual School temporary transition provision for children who are between care placements, persistent absentees (school refusers) and other circumstances where this support is needed.
 - Commissioned Online learning programme to secure swift access to education for pupils without a school place due to care placement changes and those pupils who are placed in remote areas of the country where 1:1 tuition cannot be reserved.
 - Digital resource – Nimbl Electronic Tablets and targeted curriculum related software to complement learning and to mitigate for changes in placements or missed schooling.
 - Letterbox Literacy targeted resources for primary aged pupils targeted. Packages delivered to children are equipped with reading and writing material as well as stationery.
 - The Virtual School is playing a substantial role in supporting the emotional well-being of children looked after. In a number of cases, pupil premium funding has been used creatively to support children's emotional well-being.
- 4.6. Ofsted reported in March 2017 that the additional support provided by pupil premium funded posts in Southwark Virtual School is leading to improvements for children looked after.

5. Virtual School – Staff Structure

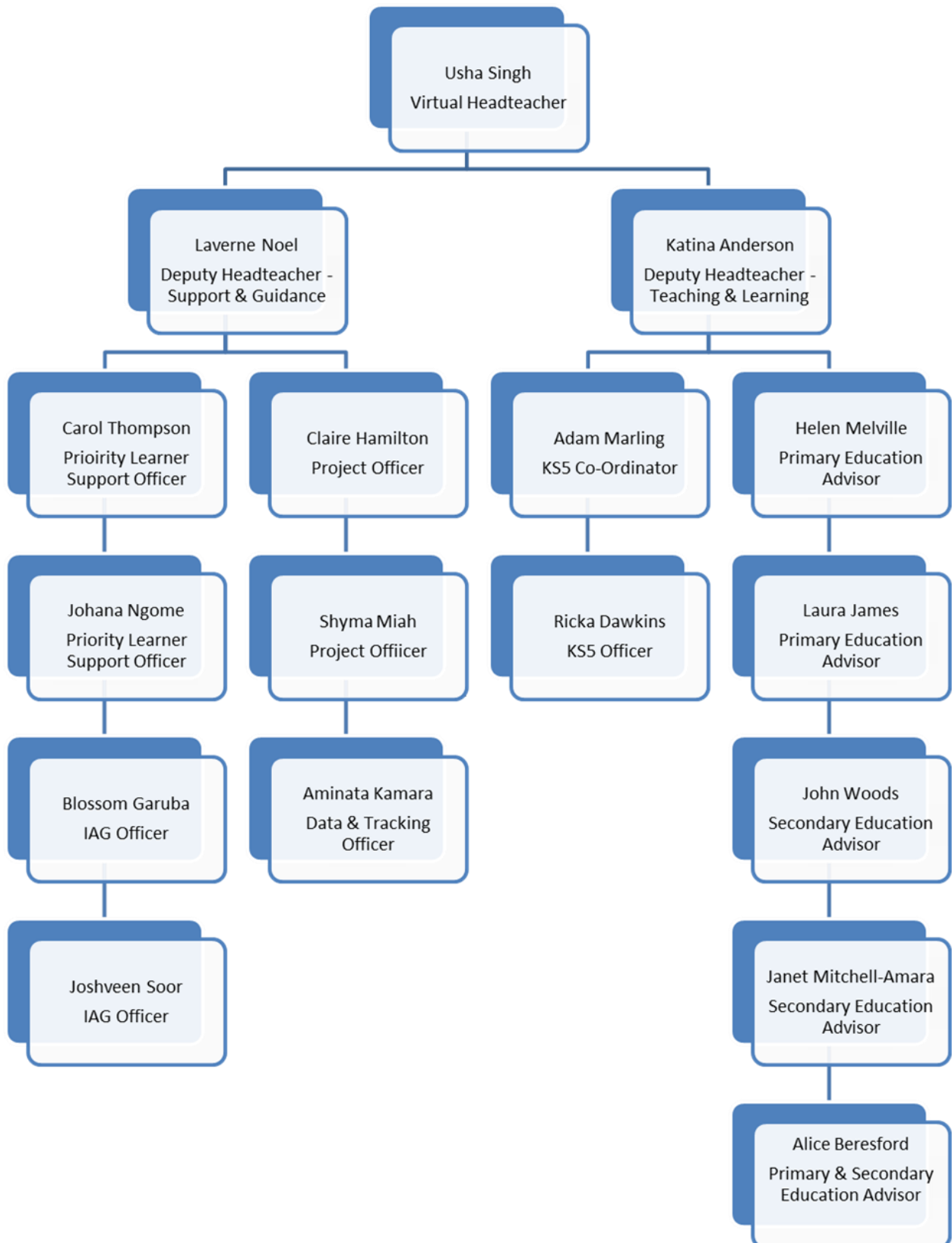
- 5.1. Research undertaken by the REES Centre, Oxford University Educational Progress of Looked After Children found:

‘Teachers and school staff were identified by young people as the main determinants of educational progress.’

If you’ve got really good, education-focused foster carers, really good, aware, designated teacher at the school who cascades information to other staff and helps provide the training, if the school’s attachment aware’, if you’re got good links with the social worker, and if you’ve got a good case-worker from the Virtual School, you put all those things together and that young person is going to progress and succeed in some way...’

<http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/EducationalProgressLookedAfterChildrenOverview>

- 5.2. The make up and nature of the Virtual School Team is kept under review to ensure that the skills available match the needs of the cohort. The team has evolved to provide more direct contact with children and young people so that the support can be more closely tailored to needs and monitored.
- 5.3. A portion of centrally pooled Pupil Premium (CLA) grant has been allocated to employing specialist Education Advisors. The outcomes achieved in 2016/17 are due, in part, to the effort, persistence and expertise of Virtual School officers, working closely with schools, carers, other local authorities and social workers.
- 5.4. In 2017, Southwark Virtual School fixed-term posts funded by Pupil Premium Plus were converted to permanent posts. It was recognised that these posts provide consistency in the lives of the pupils. They have built trust and lasting relationships, which remains a theme for so many children looked after. The work put in by these post holders, such as developing a strong working together ethos with the multi-disciplinary team and both internal and external networks relates to and directly impacts on the good outcomes of the Virtual School and its contribution to our Social Care colleagues.
- 5.5. The Virtual School supports the learning outcomes of children looked after, advocating for the best possible education provision for each child. Working with a range of professionals and partners, the Virtual School uses a range of strategies to remove barriers to learning and improve education outcomes. These include:
- Securing rapid, appropriate education provision at times of placement change, including the commissioning of interim Alternative Provision
 - Tracking pupil attainment and attendance; focusing on pupils’ academic progress and raising alerts regarding those at risk of disengagement
 - Securing the best possible placements for pupils with high risk factors and/or poorest academic progress
 - Commissioning interventions to increase literacy and numeracy skills and improve attitudes to learning
 - Supporting the development of Personal Education Plans (PEPs).



N.B. Not all staff represented on this staff structure work directly to CLA cohorts. The team is funded via a range of revenue streams.

6. Ofsted Report, March 2017

- 6.1. The March 2017, Ofsted's inspection of Southwark's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers found that:
- Managers of the virtual school understand well the strengths and areas for improvement of the service and are taking effective action to tackle these. Overall, most children looked after attend a good school regularly, receive good support and make positive progress
 - The virtual school effectively supports and challenges the quality of provision of children's education for those who are looked after
 - Education advisers in the virtual school provide good challenge to schools when they do not evidence sufficiently the progress that children are making. They act as effective advocates for children, leading to more timely assessments of their educational needs.
 - The virtual school maintains a sound oversight of children's progress and attainment, particularly of those who are at risk of under-achievement and those who have poor school attendance.

7. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

- 7.1. Personal Education Plans brings together a range of professionals, the looked after child, their teachers and carers in order to make educational decisions, set targets and monitor progress. PEPs are a key driver in ensuring our pupils receive good quality education provision that is suited to their needs. PEPs are a holistic tool to improve attainment and engagement.
- 7.2. In 2016 /17 Southwark PEP performance as at 31st July 2017 is reported as 53%.
- 7.3. To Improve PEP Completion rates and PEP quality, Southwark Virtual School has proposed the introduction of an electronic PEP platform – ePEP. While this is still in discussion the following actions have been taken to address low completion rates.
- The Virtual School and the Social Care Team are developing a joint strategy to address the current low PEP completion rates. This includes the introduction of a Compliance and Quality Assurance Panel.
 - It is recognised that the number of PEPs available on Mosaic does not correlate with the number of PEP attendance. Virtual school and Social Care are addressing this through cross referencing PEP meeting attendance and corresponding notes taken.
 - The PEPs of pupils with greatest academic drift or significant absence are prioritised for VS attendance, wherever the pupil lives or is educated.
 - The PEPs of pupils who are transitioning to different phases of education are also prioritised for completion.
- 7.4. PEP quality is variable. Improvements are needed in target setting and monitoring and this is being addressed through the Virtual School setting up a compliance and quality assurance panel together with Social Care.

8. Key Stage 1 Outcomes

- 8.1. The 2016-2017 Key Stage 1 Cohort was a small cohort consisting of 8 pupils. 5 pupils had a statement or Education and Health Care Plan.

Percentage of Key Stage 1 pupils achieving the expected standard 2016-2017

	Reading		Writing		Maths		RWM	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
Southwark CLA	20%	37.5%	20.0%	25%	33.3%	25%	20.0%	25%
DfE Region CLA	49%	57%	36%	47%	42%	50%	27%	42%
National CLA	50%	51%	37%	39%	46%	46%	32%	34%

*Source: <https://www.ncer.org/Nova/TreeView.aspx>

- 8.2. 25% of Southwark pupils reached expected standards in Reading, Writing, Math (RWM) combined, an increase of 5 percentage points on 2016 Southwark CLA performance.
- 8.3. Compared with Southwark Key Stage 1 outcomes from 2016, Southwark 2017 CLA attainment improved by 17.5 percentage points in reading and 5 percentage points in writing.
- 8.4. Southwark Virtual School was below DfE region and national levels for all comparators at Key Stage 1 but is closing the gap with the National CLA cohort in reading, writing and RWM combined.
- 8.5. Key Stage 1 maths attainment is 8.3 percentage points below 2016 Southwark CLA performance and significantly below both London and national attainment. This is in stark contrast to Key Stage 2 maths attainment which is significantly above national and signifies the need to embed numeracy strategies for this cohort as they progress to Key Stage 2.
- 8.6. These outcomes demonstrates the need for Southwark Virtual School to challenge schools, social workers and carers to ensure that appropriate interventions are put in place and recorded at PEP meetings to accelerate progress at Key Stage 2.

9. Key Stage 2 Outcomes

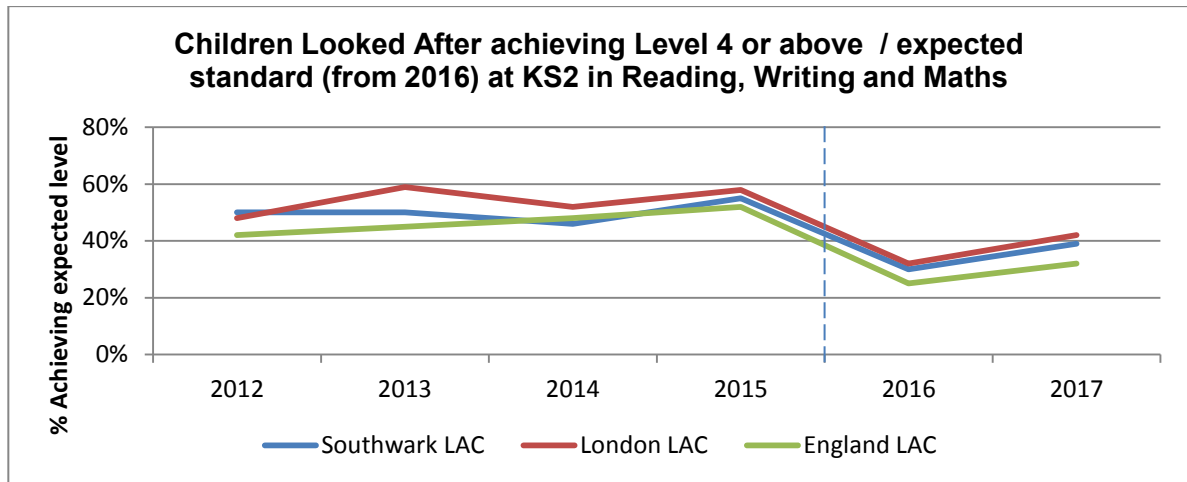
- 9.1. Changes in assessment methodology and performance measures introduced over recent years at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 mean that, in many instances, comparisons cannot be made with more than one year's data. The 2017 Key Stage 2 assessments were assessed against the new, more challenging national curriculum that was introduced in 2016.

Percentage of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected standard 2016-2017

	Reading		Writing		Maths		RWM	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
Southwark CLA	57%	52%	65%	61%	39%	61%	30%	39%
London CLA	48%	56%	55%	57%	47%	57%	32%	42%
England CLA	41%	45%	46%	47%	41%	46%	25%	32%

*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

- 9.2. 39% of Southwark pupils reached expected standards in Reading, Writing, Math (RWM) combined, an increase of 9 percentage points on 2016 Southwark CLA performance and an improving increase above England CLA. Southwark CLA attainment in Maths improved by 22 percentage points on 2016 Southwark CLA performance. This follows a focused approach to numeracy in the early Key Stages by the Virtual School.
- 9.3. Southwark Key Stage 2 attainment data showed some pleasing comparisons with national CLA and London performance.
- Compared with national CLA, Southwark looked after pupils were 7 percentage points above in reading, 14 percentage points above in writing and 15 percentage points above in maths. Southwark's combined RWM score was 7 percentage points above national CLA.
 - Compared with London CLA, Southwark's looked after pupils were 4 percentage points above in both maths and writing. For separate Reading, Writing and Maths (RWM) however, Southwark's looked after pupils performed less well, with gaps of 4 and 3 percentage points respectively.
- 9.4. Compared with **all** children, Southwark CLA closed the gap in maths with Southwark (from 35 percentage points in 2016 to 18 percentage points in 2017), London (38 percentage points to 20 percentage points) and national (31 to 14 percentage points). For combined RWM, Southwark CLA closed the achievement gap with all Southwark children (from 28 to 25 percentage points), London (29 to 28 percentage points) and National (24 to 23 percentage points).
- 9.5. Southwark CLA rank 1st for maths, 1st for Grammar Punctuation and Spelling and 2nd for writing against statistical neighbours.
- 9.6. Southwark Virtual School's introduction of a Raising Achievement Panel has stimulated greater focus to progress monitoring and joint approaches to the removal of barriers to learning. Pupil Premium funding has been used to purchase Nimbl curriculum-related software and curriculum-related Letterbox mail-outs, delivered to the homes of children in care.



---- Introduction of new testing framework

- 9.7. Changes to national testing and assessing arrangements in 2016 impacted at local, regional and national level. In 2018/19 the Virtual School will strengthen approaches to literacy development to narrow the gap with all children.

Key Stage 2 Average Progress Score (2017)

- 9.8. Average progress score data needs to be treated with caution given the comparatively small cohort size at individual local authority level. Small cohorts of pupils, on which children in care are determined, can skew progress scores significantly. Overall progress of the Southwark KS2 cohort is skewed adversely by 3 pupils having no prior KS1 attainment.

	Reading	Writing	Maths
Southwark	-1.8	-1.8	-0.7
London	-0.2	-0.7	-0.9
England	-0.5	-0.8	-1.1

*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

- 9.9. At Key Stage 2, Southwark CLA maths progress continues to be above London and England CLA. With 44% of the Key Stage 2 cohort identified with Special Education Needs, the Virtual School has focussed on early intervention to improve outcomes.
- 9.10. Individual progress scores show evidence of progress from low starting points;
- 48% (11) pupils in reading, 61% (14) pupils in writing and 65% (15) pupils in maths had a zero or greater progress score.
 - 26% (6) pupils achieved positive progress scores in all three strands and 22% (5) pupils achieved positive progress scores in two strands.
- 9.11. Ofsted reported that Southwark Virtual School maintains a sound oversight of children's progress and attainment, particularly of those who are at risk of under-achievement and those who have poor school attendance.

10. GCSE Outcomes

10.1. GCSE outcomes data is based on a cohort of 23 Southwark children looked after who have been in care for more than 12 months. 47.8% were boys and 52.2% girls. 43.5% of the cohort are recorded with SEND. 47.8% were education in Southwark.

ATTAINMENT & PROGRESS

		Virtual School	DfE Region (CLA)		National (CLA)	
Subject	Level	%	%	Gap	%	Gap
EBacc. Entered		20.6%	14.0%	+6.6%	9.0%	+11.6%
EBacc Achieved	Standard, 9-4 & A*-C	8.8%	6.0%	+2.8%	3.0%	+5.8%
	Strong, 9-5 & A*-C	8.8%	5.0%	+3.8%	2.0%	+6.8%
EBacc Eng. Achieved	Standard, 9-4	26.5%	28.0%	-1.5%	27.0%	-0.5%
	Strong, 9-5	20.6%	20.0%	+0.6%	16.0%	+4.6%
EBacc Mat. Achieved	Standard, 9-4	35.3%	27.0%	+8.3%	23.0%	+12.3%
	Strong, 9-5	20.6%	16.0%	+4.6%	11.0%	+9.6%
Achieved Basics	Standard, 9-4	23.5%	22.0%	+1.5%	17.0%	+6.5%
	Strong, 9-5	14.7%	11.0%	+3.7%	7.0%	+7.7%

*Source: <https://www.ncer.org/Nova/TreeView.aspx>

10.2. Published 2017 Key Stage 4 CLA performance data on the NCER database showed pleasing comparisons with national CLA and DfE Region CLA.

- Compared with National CLA and DfE Region CLA, Southwark Virtual School had more EBacc entries. 20.6% of Southwark Virtual School GCSE cohort entered for EBacc qualifications compared to 14% and 9% for the DfE region and National respectively.
- Compared with National CLA and DfE Region CLA, Southwark CLA achieved above for both Standard, 9-4 in English and maths & A*-C in remaining subjects, and Strong in English and maths, 9-5 & A*-C in remaining subjects.
- Compared with National CLA and DfE Region CLA, Southwark CLA achieved marginally lower in the EBacc English Achieved Standard, 9-4.

Southwark Virtual School was above Region and National levels for all other comparators.

Statistical First Release (SFR) data:

- 10.3. Following changes to the GCSE system, pupils received numerical grades in English and Maths in 2017. Grade 4+ in English and Maths are therefore not a direct comparison on A*-C in English and Maths in 2016 so a direct correlation cannot be made.
- 10.4. The newer measures of Attainment 8 and Progress 8 are a useful way of analysing the whole cohort and figures when comparing Southwark with performance nationally and across London.

Percentage achieving a pass in English and mathematics at grade 4 and above:

	2016	2017
Southwark	x	23.5%
London	20.8%	22%
England	17.5%	17%

*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

- 10.5. In 2017, 23.5% of Year 11 CLA achieved a pass in English and maths at grade 9 to 4 which was above London and England CLA.

Progress Scores

	Average Attainment 8		Average Progress 8	
	2016	2017	2016	2017
Southwark	28.5%	22.2%	-0.6	-1.55
London	23.2%	18.9%	-1	-1.2
England	22.8%	19.3%	-1.1	-1.2

*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

- 10.6. Southwark CLA Attainment 8 score remains above London and national CLA performance.
- 10.7. Southwark CLA Progress 8 performance was very closely aligned to Southwark statistical neighbours.
- 10.8. Support and challenge from Southwark LAC Education Advisors contributed to 2017 CLA outcomes. Interventions, including Supplementary Home Tuition, also funded by Pupil Premium Plus, have been central to these performance outcomes.

11. Key Stage 5 Outcomes

- 11.1. The 2017 Key Stage 5 looked after cohort consisted of 192 young people. The raising of the participation age by government to 18 has accentuated the need to ensure that post-16 CLA educational progress is monitored and supported. This provides continuity during a key stage in a young persons' life before leaving care.

Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

Year group	EHCP/Statement	SEND Learning support	Number in EET	% EET
12	13	9	17	77%
13	12	10	14	60%
KS5 total	25	19	30	70%

*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

- 11.2. 25 Southwark Key Stage 5 students had an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or historical statements. A further 19 young people had Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) learning support needs. For those with SEND, approximately 70% were in Education, Employment or Training (EET).

EET Strategies

- 11.3. Southwark Virtual School has a strong focus on engagement strategies to ensure that students remain in EET. Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) is delivered early in Year 11 by a skilled, qualified IAG officer and transitional arrangements are developed in partnership with Social Care and Southwark Choices to ensure all young people have an action plan.
- 11.4. At the end of the academic year, 80% of Key Stage 4 CLA were in EET, 85% of student who were at risk of exclusion were retained in education following representation by Key Stage 5 Education Advisors and 93% of unaccompanied minors coming into the service were placed in provision within 14 days.

Higher Education and Progress

- 11.5. Southwark Virtual School provides specialist support to all students planning to enter higher education. The strategy to support students includes personalised one to one meetings; financial advice, support with UCAS applications, personal statements and provision of a detailed care leavers guide to higher education. We are pleased to report that 10 out of 11 of our A level/level 3 pupils progressed to higher education (94%).
- 11.6. 76% of Key Stage 5 students from Entry Level through to A Level / Level 3 met or exceeded their academic targets through the course of the academic year. This was achieved through targeted skilled education-related support, delivering 1-1 tuition, students' transitions to A levels and exam support.

12. Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

- 12.1. As a group, children looked after are nine times more likely to have an EHCP or legacy statement of special educational needs than the general pupil population. The majority of looked after children have SEND.

	No SEND	SEND Support	Statement / EHCP	Total SEND
ENGLAND	43.7%	29.6%	26.7%	56.3%
LONDON	44.6%	26.6%	28.8%	55.4%
Southwark	43%	28.5%	28.5%	57%

*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

- 12.2. At 57%, SEND in Southwark Virtual School is in line with the national and London trends. The Virtual School secures soonest possible assessment of education need where appropriate.
- 12.3. Some children may have undiagnosed special needs when they start to be looked after. As part of the PEP process, Southwark Virtual School Education Advisors advocate to ensure any undiagnosed special educational needs are addressed through the SEND Framework as soon as possible. At least 4% of the current Virtual School cohort is in the process of obtaining a statutory assessment of special education needs.
- 12.4. Southwark Virtual School establishes links with SEND teams across local authorities to ensure that children with SEND are identified early and are in the correct school and making progress as quickly as possible. Education Advisors are involved if an application for a needs assessment is processed and provide contextual data which impact on the decision.
- 12.5. In circumstances where in-year school admission arrangements delay timely access to local education, Southwark Virtual School challenges these bureaucratic systems and commissions interim Alternative Provision to reduce the impact of pupils missing education.
- 12.6. A challenge facing children looked after with SEND and Virtual Schools is the delay experienced when finding a new school following changes in placements. This is particularly challenging due to limited number of schools that are able to meet the needs of pupils with complex SEND. The Virtual school offers Interim Education solutions while consultations take place and funding agreements are made.

12.7. Outcomes for All Southwark CLA with SEND:

Attainment and Assessments

		Virtual School	DfE Region (CLA)		National (CLA)	
Subject	Level	%	%	Gap	%	Gap
RWM	≥EXS/Exp. Std.	15.4%	23%	-7.6%	14%	+1.4%
Reading (test)	≥Exp. Std.	30.8%	37%	-6.2%	27%	+3.8%
Writing (TA)	≥EXS	38.5%	39%	-0.5%	24%	+14.5%
Maths (test)	≥Exp. Std.	30.8%	36%	-5.2%	26%	+4.8%

*Source: <https://www.ncer.org/Nova/TreeView.aspx>

At Key Stage 2, Southwark children looked after with SEND achieved better than national CLA with SEND in published outcomes for expected standards: Key Stage 2 attainment: writing 15% above, maths 5% above and reading 4% above.

Attainment and Progress

		Virtual School	DfE Region (CLA)		National (CLA)	
Subject	Level	%	%	Gap	%	Gap
Avg. Att8 Score		17.0	15.7	1.3	13.9	3.1
Avg. Prog8 Score		-1.91	-1.90	-0.01	-1.64	-0.27
EBacc. Entered		13.3%	10%	+3.3%	4%	+9.3%
EBacc Achieved	Standard, 9-4 & A*-C	13.3%	-	-	1%	+12.3%
	Strong, 9-5 & A*-C	13.3%	-	-	1%	+12.3%
EBacc Eng. Achieved	Standard, 9-4	26.7%	23%	+3.7%	15%	+11.7%
	Strong, 9-5	13.3%	10%	+3.3%	7%	+6.3%
EBacc Mat. Achieved	Standard, 9-4	26.7%	17%	+9.7%	13%	+13.7%
	Strong, 9-5	13.3%	9%	+4.3%	5%	+8.3%
Achieved Basics	Standard, 9-4	26.7%	16%	+10.7%	9%	+17.7%
	Strong, 9-5	13.3%	5%	+8.3%	3%	+10.3%
Any Qualification		73.3%	73%	+0.3%	70%	+3.3%

*Source: <https://www.ncer.org/Nova/TreeView.aspx>

12.8. At Key Stage 4, Southwark children looked after with SEND achieved better than DfE region and national CLA with SEND in published outcomes for all EBacc measures.

12.9. Progress was in line with the DfE region but marginally below all CLA with SEND.

13. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

- 13.1. An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) is an individual under 18, who has applied for asylum in his/her own right, is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so.
- 13.2. The number of Southwark looked after children who were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children continues to increase in 2017. The number of looked after children at 31 March 2017 who were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children increased compared to last year, up to 41 from 31 in 2016, and up to 53 in the current 2018 cohort.

	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 -2018
Number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	31	41	53

- 13.3. In recent years we have seen the increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children being largely driven by more males. Females account for 10 % of the Southwark cohort compared to 8% of all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children looked after at 31 March 2017.

Gender	Count of Gender	Percentage
Female	4	10%
Male	37	90%

- 13.4. The increase in the numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children aged 16 years and over in Southwark is above national trends. 90% of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children at 31 March 2017 were aged 16 years of age and over compared to 78% nationally.

Age	Count of Age	Percentage
14	2	5%
15	2	5%
16	15	37%
17	20	48%
18	2	5%

14. Attendance

- 14.1. Attendance is regarded as the best proxy indicator of attainment and progress. A contributing factor to this is the improved accuracy of data collection consequently the ability to intervene in a timelier manner.
- 14.2. Pupils with less than 90% attendance are recorded as being Persistent Absentees.
- 14.3. Southwark's rate of persistent absenteeism is higher than London and National figures. Attendance is tracked by the Pupil Premium (LAC) funded Project Officer daily and attendance protocols have been introduced.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Southwark	11.2%	10.7%	12%	13%
London	10.8%	9.8%	10.5%	10.1%
England	10.1%	8.9%	9.0%	9.1%

- 14.4. Southwark Virtual School is committed to every child receiving full time education and attending regularly.

To support regular attendance and improved attendance Southwark Virtual School:

- Monitors the attendance of children in care using alerts and data from Welfare Call. Schools are contacted every morning where a pupil is not attended school and the foster carer and Virtual school are notified.
- Attendance is tracked daily and a report of persistent absentees is available each month.
- A monthly Virtual School Attendance Panel is convened every month where every episode of absence is discussed with education advisors and social workers. Support strategies and interventions are put in place to support engagement.
- Attendance data is scrutinised and investigation of reasons for absence, particularly patterns of absence.
- Alternative education packages are created for Looked After Children who cannot manage good attendance in mainstream settings
- Interim education provision is arranged quickly (within five days) for children looked after with no school place following emergency placement changes.
- Attendance Action Plans are in place for Looked After Children with less than 90% attendance.

Delays in securing new out of borough school places will account for much of this persistent absence but there were several young people we were working very closely with who were experiencing very significant emotional difficulties who struggled to attend school regularly.

15. Exclusions

- 15.1. Children looked after are five times more likely to have a fixed period exclusion than all children and one and a half times more likely than children in need. Evidence shows that poor social and emotional wellbeing predicts a range of negative outcomes in adolescence and adulthood.
- 15.2. In the 2016-2017 academic year, 45 pupils received a fixed term exclusions and 4 received permanent exclusions. 69% of fixed term exclusions were male. All permanent excluded pupils were male.
- 15.3. Children looked after are often subject to external factors which mean that they do not, on average, make progress in line with their peers. The Virtual School has found this progress measure has had an impact on how willing schools and academies are to retain these students if they are not successful. This can often be complicated further for students that have special educational needs. Situations like this need powerful advocacy from specialist advisors who understand all of the relevant legislation and are able to challenge senior school staff in a professional and effective manner.
- 15.4. Distribution of fixed term exclusion indicate that pupils in secondary school have a significantly high rate of exclusion, with most fixed term exclusions taking place in Year 11.

16. Year Group	2016-2017
Year 1	1
Year 2	1
Year 4	3
Year 5	4
Year 6	2
Year 7	8
Year 8	6
Year 9	5
Year 10	5
Year 11	10

Gender	Number
Male	31
Female	14

Local Authority	Number
In borough	4
Out Borough	41

- 15.5. Minimising fixed period exclusions is a major priority for the Virtual School. It impacts negatively on placement stability, on emotional wellbeing, and on educational attainment. For every additional day of school missed due to fixed term exclusions, young people in care scored one-sixth of a grade less at GCSE (Rees Report).

15.6. To reduce exclusions Southwark Virtual School:

- Works with Head teachers to try and avoid excluding a Looked After Child. The Virtual School makes efforts to address all known cases of exclusions and challenges school when concerns are not shared.
- Convenes a monthly multi-agency Attendance Panel where every episode of absence is discussed and support strategies/ interventions are put in place to support engagement.
- Has been quick in its response to exclusion or threat of exclusions so that a joint plan for the child can be implemented which identifies any key triggers and also instances when the inappropriate behaviour does not occur and these strengths can be build on.
- Closely monitors those with exclusions, and appropriate and timely interventions will be put in place during the school year.
- Has worked hard to avoid a number of Fixed Term Exclusions, providing support and challenge to schools. The School has used Educational Psychologists to secure rapid assessment of pupils' educational needs and to challenge schools to find more appropriate ways of supporting pupils. We have raised Designated Teachers' understanding of the in-school challenges faced by children looked after.

Promoting attachment awareness in schools through central and school-based training is a key element in the endeavour to reduce fixed term exclusions, as is early intervention, and ensuring that young people have access to any additional support that is identified through the PEP process.

16. Virtual School Priorities

In order to continue to improve our impact, the Virtual School will:

- 16.1. Identify and implement changes resulting from the Social Care Act which includes additional responsibilities on the Virtual School Headteacher for previously looked after children as well as looked after children by:
- Investigating a joint approach from the Virtual School and Social Care in the alignment of staff and resources that will provide a congruent offer to social workers and care leavers,
 - developing a coherent and constructive Virtual School and Social Care approach to improved education planning,
 - supporting and challenging schools to be ambitious for every child looked after and previously looked after,
 - working with Fostering & Adoption and other Virtual Schools in order to develop appropriate advice and guidance for those with SGO, CAO from care and those children who have been adopted from care.
- 16.2. Continue to provide support and interventions for schools and children to improve outcomes, evaluating the impact of the intervention and use of Pupil Premium by:
- monitoring the impact of the newly developed pupil premium tracker which has embedded a focus on supplementary tuition to support focused learning,

- monitoring the impact of commissioned and frontline services through engagement, progress and outcomes.
- 16.3. Increase the quality of Personal Education Plans to improve education outcomes by:
- developing on an improved joint strategy between Southwark Virtual School and Social Care to address the current low PEP completion rates,
 - Establishing a regular and effective Compliance and Quality Assurance Panel with Virtual School and Social Care managers in conjunction with frontline staff,
 - cross referencing Virtual school and Social Care attendance to PEP meeting and corresponding notes taken,
 - Prioritising the PEPs of pupils with greatest academic drift or significant absence are for VS attendance, wherever the pupil lives or is educated,
 - The PEPs of pupils who are transitioning to different phases of education are also prioritised for completion.
- 16.4. Improve our response to the growing social, emotional and mental health needs of children on the roll of the Virtual School. This will include greater use of strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) data to identify children that need support and secure appropriate interventions leading to a reduction in incidences of challenging behaviour by;
- joint working with Southwark Education Psychology team to address Early identification of SEND, mental health concerns and challenges affecting education and education access,
 - addressing Continuous Professional Development and ensuring that training reaches foster carers, designated teachers, social workers and education staff.

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 25 March 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 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.

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.

25 March 2019

- Virtual Headteacher's report
- Children in care celebration events due to happen in July and October 2019 – seeking input/comments from the committee
- Bright Spots
- Care Covenant.

8 July 2019 *(date subject to agreement by council assembly 27 March 2019)*

- Ofsted progress report. That officers report back to the July corporate parenting committee on progress and including a response to the issues raised at committee on 26 February 2019
 - Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) current data and trends. This data should include the ethnic and gender breakdown. IRO, social workers and young people be invited to attend to have a round table session to deal with the issues and concerns of the committee.
- 5. The following draft 2019-20 committee meeting dates are subject to agreement by council 27 March 2019 as follows: 8 July, 4 November 2019, 25 February and 21 April 2020.

Corporate parenting committee meetings with SpeakerBox

- 6. 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

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

Resource implications

8. 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://modern.gov.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 March 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 March 2019	

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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

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Councillor Jon Hartley			
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Councillor Sunny Lambe			
Councillor Catherine Rose			
Co-opted members			
Florence Emakpose (external)	1		
Children's Services			
David Quirke-Thornton	1		
Alasdair Smith	1		
Legal			
Sarah Feasey	1		