



## Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on Wednesday 17 July 2024 at 2.00 pm at Ground floor meeting rooms, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Charlie Smith (In the chair for the meeting)  
Councillor Youcef Hassaine

**OTHER  
MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

Rosamund Marshall (foster carer)

**OFFICER  
SUPPORT:**

Alasdair Smith, Director, Children and Families  
Helen Woolgar, Assistant Director – Safeguarding and Care  
Elaine Reid, Head of Service: Permanence and Resources  
Dr Stacy John-Legere, Designated doctor for Looked After Children, Southwark  
Dr Jenny Taylor, Head of Clinical Service  
Joy Edwards, Designated Nurse for Looked after Children  
Sophie Jones, Fostering Service Manager  
Dechaun Malcolm, Children’s Rights and Participation Officer and chair of SpeakerBox (and young people)  
Usha Singh, Virtual Headteacher  
Paula Thornton, Constitutional Officer  
Beverley Olamijulo, Constitutional Officer (clerk)

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Jasmine Ali (chair)  
Councillor Esme Dobson  
Councillor Natasha Ennin  
Councillor Sarah King  
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall and  
Dr Mark Kerr.

Councillor Charlie Smith took the position as chair for this meeting.

**2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS**

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

**3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE 2024-25**

**RESOLVED:**

That the election of the vice-chair for the corporate parenting committee 2024-25 be deferred until the next meeting.

**4. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT**

There were no urgent items.

**5. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

None were declared.

**6. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

**7. SPEAKER BOX - VERBAL UPDATE**

Dechaun Malcolm, children's rights and participation officer, along with the young people and representatives of SpeakerBox provided an update to committee:

**SPEAKERBOX VERBAL UPDATE**

The committee noted:

- Focussed on engagement between April to June which had increased by 34%

- During the last quarter there were 436 episodes where young people participated in various events
- There was a 34% increase compared to 2023, and over 300 forms of engagement took place

Young people participated in the following ways:

- Delivered training
- Recruitment
- Co-facilitated at the Learning Fest
- Attended consultations
- Attended meetings of the corporate parenting committee.

## **Engagement**

Building the community which included:

- Summer cook-out and Thorpe Park; Events like these provided an opportunity to attract new young people to the service and meet other young people with care experience.

## **Website**

- Young people worked on the SpeakerBox website with a professional web designer
- The purpose of the site was to extend the services that was designed by young people, whilst encouraging more engagement for the young people that lived outside the borough
- To ensure the website would be a great source of information – young people’s rights and what they were entitled to.

## **The young people’s influence – the big ones**

### **The innovation project**

- Purpose of the group
- Current projects (current guidance)
- Future goals
- Empower – on the opportunities the young people wanted to achieve
- Feedback from staff and parents, provided a space that allowed people to come together to create solutions
- Staff said it was with to share ideas with the young people

### **The director’s forum – which highlighted the following:**

- Issues that affected young people in Southwark

- Covered topics such as immigration and issues facing care leavers
- Networking with the directors and present feedback to the young people
- Directors met with young people face to face and discussed creating the best opportunities and benefits for young people
- Build on the three main priorities: “What home means to you”
  - Home, lets create a nice space, family, friends or my own space, x-box and soft bed. *Created by children 5 – 7 years old*
  - Home is the place I can go, where my heart feels free, people I see and the neighbours next to me. *Created by children 7 – 12 years old*
- Representatives of Speakerbox worked with young people particularly those from a younger age group. The children were interested in being role models also, they came up with some amazing ideas.

### **Consultation with SEND**

- Aims of the session
- Topics they talked about
- What they left them with

### **Feedback from staff – some comments below:**

“It was good to be part of the space provided to listen to the young people and hear some of the deep rooted things that they have to process which impacts their thoughts, feelings and decisions and talking about their hopes/aspirations for the future.

It highlighted even more the importance of continuing to have the young person’s voice present and ensuring that schools/professionals are connecting with their voice and seeking to understand it.”

### **Feedback from Young People - summary**

“At the beginning of the consultation, I felt intimidated by all the adults there because I have social anxiety and I am shy. As I got to know them I opened up more and I found it inspirational. The lady that spoke to me was very funny and made me feel comfortable sharing my experiences. She never judged me. The department listened and took what we said into consideration. I could see them trying their best to help us in every way they can.”

“I think other departments should do this to help young people in care. I think if

young people and departments work together young people will get the help they need and feel more comfortable sharing their view and vision of the care system.”

The meeting were given updates on:

### **Children’s home project**

- Visiting Mary’s mansion
- Children’s guide consultation
- Recruitment

### **Event Planning**

The big celebration  
The summer cook-out  
The Speaker Box party (20 years)

### **Moving forward**

Opportunities:

- Employment and accessibility
- Entry level experiences
- Equity over equality

Corporate Parenting:

- Wanting to engage more from our community
- Meetings twice a year - in the evenings
- School holidays

Elections:

- Central government change
- Changes for young people

Directors’ Forum:

Six Speaker Box members ran a take-over session on the 24 June 2024, at the Southwark’s Directors Forum. They met with the team of directors who included the chief executive.

The young members highlighted their six top priorities which were:

- Housing
- Finance
- Education

- Care
- Employment Accessibility Opportunities
- Immigration.

Positive outcomes for children and young people

During the past ten months, Speaker Box provided opportunities for young people, which included:

- Developing and acquiring new skills
- Feeling heard through direct advocacy via CROs
- Having a secured base with consistent adults
- Became more confident in public speaking
- A better understanding of rights for young people
- Improved emotional well-being
- Improved aspirations and career paths.

### **Looking ahead 2024-25**

- To re-brand and develop the Speaker Box website and extend their outreach to more children and young people
- To attend their first residential in over seven years, partially funded by the VS and LEAP (listen, empathise, ask, paraphrase and summarise)
- More campaigning
- To work in partnership with human resources so as to develop a programme for young people in recruitment.
- To start a pod-cast that would be led by care leavers.

In conclusion with an extended team, the young people plan to do more, reach and empower more of the children and young people.

The young people responded to questions from members.

The chair thanked the young people for their presentation.

## **8. DRAFT ANNUAL HEALTH REPORT FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER**

Joy Edwards, designated nurse for Children Looked After (CLA) Southwark. Dr Jenny Taylor, virtual mental health lead for Looked After Children and Dr Stacy John-Legere, consultant community paediatrician – designated doctor for Looked After Children, Southwark were present to give an overview on this item.

The committee noted:

- The health and residential needs; and seeking assistance from providers – concerning service delivery

- Reported issues and concerns – referred to the board
- Regular review of 16 – 15 cohorts
- Review of older young people going into care – continued support and full access to these services
- With the change in demographics in the borough – especially with young people reaching the age of choice – they sometimes return to their birth parents
- Health services – accessing areas of health services and identifying the young people’s needs – ensuring they are dealt with in a timely manner
- Addressed the mental health challenges of young people
- Identify areas of needs for children – gender identify services – Doncaster review placed in residential care management
- Audit of children placed, learning and development
- Brief overview – relating to speaker box, strategy health assessment and engagement with young people
- To address the difficulty of young people receiving a routine health check
- Training was provided – to promote the health of care-leavers
- Free prescription for care leavers; exemption certificate which was received through their parental guardian
- Strategic meetings – which was attended by the integrated care board
- Children that were seen and knowing what their experiences, data collecting, completed health assessments
- Immunisations amongst young people had a 69% increase from the previous years – which was undertaken through the public health emergency
- Sunshine house can book clinics during the summer holidays (CAMPHS and LAC) – could also access clinics
- A focus on dental care for young people was addressed
- Speaker box – to create more awareness about it to help bridge the gap
- Virtual school – Education health plans (EHPS)
- Focus on social and emotional needs (e.g., autism)
- Mental health - looked after children that struggle with their well-being
- Difficulties getting foster carers
- Health assessment with specialist team and Care Link
- Care Link work on unaccompanied asylum seekers and care leavers
- Post care leavers (18+) are provided counselling and support
- New processes in place to prevent long delays with assessments
- Southwark’s launch on lifelong links – to support young people in care particularly those that have lost contact with their relatives
- Outer borough services for care leavers were difficult and Care Links helped to address this issue
- Providing awareness for young people with a healthy eating programme especially when they are on a budget.

Officers responded to questions.

The chair thanked officers for their presentation.

## **RESOLVED:**

1. That the committee noted the report contents in relation to the delivery of health services for Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers that are in the care of the London borough of Southwark.
2. That the committee agreed to feedback any comments on the Southwark Children Looked After Health report for consideration by the Children Looked After Health leads across the health economy.

## **9. FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024**

Sophie Jones, Fostering Service manager and Emma were present at the meeting along with foster carers, Rosamund and Kenny.

Officers presented the report and provided an overview on the fostering services.

- Priority: Recruitment and providing support, to ensure there was stability for placements and for carers receive the necessary support
- Counselling services for young people which had special guidelines which involve:
  - Development time during the support process – example; arranging coffee mornings
  - Recognising the needs of the carer and
  - Training programme for a foster carer
  - More data analysis on special guardian support plan review.

Kenny mentioned he had been a foster carer for 6 years. He explained that he receives full support from the fostering team especially during challenging situations.

Rosamund stated that she had been a foster carer for 20 years. She had experience fostering a child who used to be a gang member. She said without the backing of Southwark who provided her with support the situation would have been difficult to manage.

Helen Woolgar:

- Long term carers are often in very overcrowded conditions in their accommodation
- Four bedroom flat specially built for foster carers
- Extra help needed and more resources and help should be provided especially as some were council tenants and others were in private accommodation.

A young person asked about the difference between connected carers and special guardians allowances.



- Connected carers is the same as fostering allowances
- Special guardianship – means tested or put on a support plan; works in a slightly different way
- Connected carers have the same allowances as fosters carers.

The chair thanked everyone for their contribution to the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

That the annual report of Southwark’s fostering service for 2023-2024 be noted.

**10. CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2024-25**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the workplan 2024-25 draft outline be noted as set out in the report.
2. That the committee would review any further items for consideration in the workplan.

**Note:** It was agreed an item on the employment charter would be considered at a corporate parenting committee meeting.

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm.

**CHAIR:**

**DATED:**