



## Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of Corporate Parenting Committee held on Wednesday 16 July 2025  
at 2.00 pm at Ground floor meeting rooms GO2B and C, 160 Tooley Street,  
London SE1 2QH

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)  
Councillor Natasha Ennin  
Councillor Emily Hickson  
Councillor Charlie Smith

**OTHER  
MEMBERS  
PRESENT:** Dr Mark Kerr (subject matter expert)

**OFFICER  
SUPPORT:** Helen Woolgar, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Care  
Elaine Reid, Head of Service: Permanence and Resources  
Michael Crowe, Assistant Director, Transformation and  
Operations in Children's Services  
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  
Sarah O'Connor, Designated Nurse for Looked after  
Children  
Danny Edwards, Head of Economy  
Rachel Massey, Community Consultant  
Joy Hopkinson, Head of Safeguarding & Community  
Services, Governance and Assurance (legal)  
Ekta Gupta, Children Rights and Participation  
Dechaun Malcolm, Children Rights and Participation  
Paula Thornton, Constitutional Officer  
Beverley Olamijulo, Constitutional Officer (clerk)

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mohammed Deen, Maria Linforth-Hall and Sarah King.

Apologies for absence was also received from Alasdair Smith.

## **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**

The chair agreed to accept the following item set out in the supplemental agenda as late and urgent. The reasons for urgency and lateness were contained within the report:

- Item 10. Southwark homes for Southwark Children – short report.

## **4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

None were disclosed.

## **5. MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

## **6. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE 2025-26**

Following discussions after the meeting it was noted the election of the Vice-Chair for the year 2025-26 should be deferred until the next meeting in October.

It was noted that a representative from Speaker box would be nominated as co. vice-chair for 2025-26.

## **7. SPEAKERBOX: PRESENTATION /DISCUSSION ON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

Representatives from Speaker Box introduced themselves to the meeting.

They presented a video about an organised residential trip to a farm with young people (under 13s) from Speaker box. They shared their experiences; some of

them were apprehensive about going on the trip but eventually decided to go and thoroughly enjoyed their time at the farm.

The purpose of the residential trip was to raise awareness, build confidence, and team working which would not have been possible without the support of the virtual school.

Summary of the presentation:

- Outlined information about the current levels of engagement
- Spoke about models of participation – voice not being heard even after completed surveys
- Share ideas – greater participation and being more involved
- Strategy – have a voice, engage, enable and deliver
- Our pillars – focused on how to best to tackle these topics
  - Education and employment
  - Standards and treatment in care
  - Apprenticeships, training, help with mental health and wellbeing
  - Growth in school – not to think it is a chore
  - More emphasis on school life and
  - School should be consistent for young people
  - Continued work on a project called “mental ships” – in conjunction with the virtual school
  - Standards and treatment in care
  - Suitable, stable, quality homes – long term matching with fewer matches.

Main priorities:

Six areas identified that would be focussed on:

- Key areas – reduced placements/moves
- Improved quality of care and informed support
- Improved trauma – informed support.

Young people spoke about care leavers’ experiences of moving outside an area that they were not familiar with or particularly happy about.

Dr Mark Kerr spoke about the issue of commissioning and the chair made reference to the proposed children’s homes in the borough.

Councillor Batteson, cabinet member for Climate Emergency, Jobs and Business stated:

- That it would be helpful to hear the views of the young people in regard to employment and training for them to secure job opportunities
- Joined up services to ensure that this was done efficiently
- Trailblazers programme that was specifically for care leavers
- He agreed to speak separately about outcomes of meeting, relating to

employment and training

- Local authorities provide their views on job opportunities for young people to central government, to get a broader view on the issues
- Young people asked about training and education and whether there would be enough resources to address this
- According to data there is a 75% success rate with young people that had received employment opportunities.

Note: Cllr Batteson agreed to attend a future committee meeting.

## 8. CARE LEAVERS EMPLOYABILITY PATHWAY

Michael Crowe, assistant director – Transformation and Operations in Children's Services presented:

The Children Act 1989 (the Act) as amended by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 the council has a range of duties and responsibilities for care leavers aged 16 to 21, that include:

- Assistant to access and sustain in education, training and employment with that support continuing through to 25 if the young person is engaged in education and training throughout.

Summary of presentation:

- Addressed whether the council could do more for care leavers' employment in order to maximise expectation
- Ensure that young people are better prepared for employment
- Referred to leadership network and the opportunities available in that area
- Local authorities **supporting** care leavers – Camden borough leading on this
- Noting the challenges; providing collective learning and support
- Reference to the allocated funding for learning and support
- Budget capacity in the virtual school and for personal advisers – to ensure there is adequate support.

### Action:

1. Include this as an agenda item for the next meeting.
2. To request the chief executive be invited to a meeting to address points covered during the meeting.

### RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

## 9. DRAFT ANNUAL HEALTH REPORT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The chair varied the order of business on the agenda - this item was taken after item 6.

Dr Stacy John-Legere, designated doctor for Looked After Children, Southwark introduced the report and outlined the health services for looked after children in Southwark which includes those looked after children outside the borough.

Summary of presentation:

- Children's homes built in Southwark – prime focus is a full access to health services
- Highlighted the health services in England – with reference to the draft model of ICB (integrated care board) structure
- To continue the delivery of services at Sunshine House
- The challenges for those looked after children that live furthest away from the borough
- Physical access needs, focus work on immunisation services
- Recognise the health needs; look at their specific needs and to receive further clarity on health support
- Continue close contact with Olive House (children's home) – where quarterly meetings are held, undertake medication audit, development training and work regularly /quarterly to ensure young people have a healthy lifestyle
- Develop partnerships and away days for staff – to build teamwork.

Sarah O'Connor, designated nurse for Looked After Children addressed the meeting and outlined the following:

- Positive up in performance /referral rate has increased, slightly seen people (98%) provide further health information
- Better processes in place
- Health needs of young people; track the most vulnerable to ensure they get the same access to timely services, and how they deliver these services to young people
- Review and commissioning of health services
- The baseline increase of teenagers that use substances with spectrum of drug use becoming wider
- Direct referrals are made due to the impact of substances
- Strategy on this would now be widened to address these types of substances
- Difference between abuse and use needs to be highlighted by way of 'strategic reporting'
- Continued conversation with young people on types of substance use.

Dr Jenny Taylor, Head of Clinical Practice addressed mental health services:

- It is estimated that 40 percent of looked after children or care leavers would

struggle with their mental health

- Not all care leavers would have direct access to mental health services
- Need to ensure that over 18s have access to these services
- Target those that are on the autism spectrum (address pathway)
- Gender related – work with them as a service
- Olive house – check whether a children's place is more adequate or a foster home – it also includes addressing family life and speak to them about returning to their birth family.

Points highlighted during the presentation:

- Access to mental health services (40%) focus on not having the care leavers services should be part of the cohort.
- Mental health services are available – up to the age of 25 (conduct surveys with young people)
- More work being done regarding access to health services, treatment and clinical decision
- Understanding the constraints that the health service has – providing other forms of support
- Access to GP services: Launch of bright spot in September 2025 to seek the views of young people to address their needs when it comes to their mental health needs
- Mental health main focus: Promote sport and a healthy diet through ways of communicating with young people and carers; this initiative would be incorporated in the health assessment
- Substance abuse and misuse – practitioner will be available to help those young people with the misuse and abuse of substances and provide service through the pathway programme
- Also check with other local authorities on their processes
- Provide early intervention when tackling issues like self-medicating and misuse of substances.

**Action:**

1. To note that the above be included as an agenda item, with reference on drug use and self-medication so there is a clear understanding of the issues young people face. In addition, invite the relevant professionals to attend a committee meeting.
2. Speaker Box be involved in addressing the issues young people face on substance misuse.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report and its contents be noted in relation to the delivery of health services for Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers who are in the care of London Borough of Southwark.

2. That the feedback /comments on the Southwark Children Looked After Health report for consideration by the Children Looked After Health leads across the health economy be noted.

## **10. SOUTHWARK HOMES FOR SOUTHWARK CHILDREN - SHORT REPORT**

The report was not circulated within five clear working days prior to committee because it missed the agenda despatch deadline. As the item was listed on the committee's workplan it was agreed that it should be considered at this meeting.

Helen Woolgar, assistant director Safeguarding and Care presented the report and addressed points about providing more homes for care leavers in the borough especially as some care leavers had moved back to the borough.

The report referred to 20 individual projects/ improvement activities that had been delivered that were matched with the corporate parenting strategy priorities:

- Developing the Kinship Care local offer; guidance requires local authorities to cover all forms of kinship care; where a child is being raised in the care of a friend or family member who is not their parent which can be done formal kinship care, special guardianships, child arrangement order
- Children's Residential Development
- Council's approach to corporate parenting
- Foster care sufficiency.

Other points that were addressed during the presentation:

- Recruitment of foster carers, providing more support and resources would be put into this
- There are more foster children in residential care due to lack of foster carers in the region.

### **Action:**

The council write formally to central government, detailing the points that were raised at the meeting.

### **RESOLVED:**

That contents of the report be noted.

## **11. CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2025-26**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the workplan be noted and the following included for the next meeting and meetings thereafter:

**22 October 2025**

- Speakerbox verbal update and report back on actions
- Exclusions report back
- Update on mental health support and CAMHS
- Foster annual report (including focus on recruitment)
- Southwark homes for Southwark children update
- Update on corporate parenting strategy 2025-30.

**Additional items:**

- Employment opportunities for care leavers
- Impact on substance abuse – young people.

**25 February 2026**

- Speakerbox verbal update / annual report
- Annual independent reviewing officer report
- Adoption annual report
- Annual virtual head teacher's report
- Southwark homes for Southwark children update.

**22 April 2026**

- Speakerbox verbal update
- Southwark homes for Southwark children update
- Update on local offer on Kinship care.

**To be allocated**

- Exploitation, risk and harm and measures to break the cycle.

The meeting ended at 4.10 pm.

**CHAIR:**

**DATED:**