Open Agenda

# Corporate Parenting Committee

Wednesday 21 October 2026
5.00 pm
Ground floor meeting rooms GO1A and B, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

**Membership**

Councillor Rebecca Corn (Chair)
Councillor Victor Chamberlain (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Natasha Ennin
Councillor Jasmine Ali
Councillor Selena Gray
Councillor Patrickson Amechi Obanya
Councillor Suzanne Wise

**Reserves**

Councillor Ruth Bannister
Councillor Francesco Guerrieri
Councillor Felicia Johnston
Councillor Sunny Lambe
Councillor Dean Peters
Councillor Jane Salmon
Councillor Janice White

**Non-voting Members**
Mark Kerr (subject matter expert) and Rosamond Marshall (foster carers)

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**INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

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**Access to information**

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**Contact**
email: paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk or beverley.olamijulo@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting
**Althea Loderick**
Chief Executive
Date: 13 October 2026

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

# Corporate Parenting Committee

Wednesday 21 October 2026
5.00 pm
Ground floor meeting rooms GO1A and B, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

# Order of Business

| Item No. | Title | Page No. |
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**MOBILE PHONES**

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

**PART A - OPEN BUSINESS**

**1. APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS**

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

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

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

**4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

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

**5. MINUTES** 1 - 6

To note the minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 22 April 2026.

| Item No. | Title | Page No. |
|---|---|---|
| 6. | **SPEAKERBOX UPDATE (5.05PM - 5.30PM)** | - |
| 7. | **DRAFT CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY AND DELIVERY PLAN 2026-2030 (5.30PM - 6.30PM)** | 7 - 31 |
| 8. | **ANNUAL HEALTH REPORT FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (6.30PM - 7.00PM)** | 32 - 71 |
| 9. | **CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2026-27** | 72 - 76 |


**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: 13 October 2026

Agenda Item 5

# Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on Wednesday 22 April 2026 at 5.00 pm at the Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)
Councillor Charlie Smith (Vice-chair)
Councillor Emily Hickson

**OFFICER SUPPORT:** Alasdair Smith, Director of Children's Services
Helen Woolgar, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Care
Elaine Reid, Head of Service: Permanence and Resources
Jenny Taylor, Head of Clinical Service
Joy Edwards, Designated Nurse for Looked after Children
Dr Stacy John-Legere, Designated Doctor for Looked after Children
Sadie Dann, Policy Officer, Children and Adults
Kathleen Salawu, Social Worker
Sheherazade Aanchawan, Team Manager
Joy Hopkinson, Head of Safeguarding & Community Services, Governance and Assurance (legal)
Usha Singh, Virtual Head Teacher
Alice Beresford, Deputy Head of the Virtual School
Oyeyinka Olaniran, Head of Quality Assurance & Workforce Development
Poppy Laurens, Service Development Officer
Ekta Gupta, Children Rights and Participation Officer
Representatives of Speakerbox
Paula Thornton, Constitutional Officer

## 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Dr. Mark Kerr, Councillors Sarah King and Maria Linforth-Hall.

## 2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

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

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

There were none.

## 4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

## 5. MINUTES

Subject to a correction of Dr Stacy John-Legere name on the minutes.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

## 6. SPEAKERBOX VERBAL UPDATE

Speakerbox provided an update to the committee on several initiatives and work being undertaken as follows:

### Foster care training

An opportunity had been provided to take part in existing training so that the young people could provide their observations and influence the foster care training. For example, an observation about the use of language was made in by the young people in the training session and outlining the importance of showing young people in a positive light through the use of language/words. Additionally, comments were provided to request that realistic expectations were created in respect of what fostering means and the challenges ahead should be included as part of the training.

### Education and employment

A meeting had taken place with the virtual school, discussing the detail about mentoring and ways to improve and how this could be expanded in education (including training for teachers and support for this role). Further discussions were

planned with the virtual school and how Speakerbox could fit into this role of improvement and further development of mentorship.

Also discussed was the issue of safeguarding and to increase awareness of subtle signs with the hope of providing training in June/July.

**Residential visit to St James Farm**

Speakerbox highlighted another successful and enjoyable visit for the under 13s to St James Farm. The trip provided a safe place for young people to develop their confidence and positive relationships with other children, through discussion and team activities.

**Finance guidance document**

The committee were impressed to see the work undertaken by Speakerbox to produce and design a finance guidance document to provide a clear understanding for young people. It helps manage their expectations and reduce some of the stress in this area that can arise on finance in their relationships.

Noted that the grant for this work coming to an end soon.

**Moving forward**

Key aims include:

- A visit to be arranged for approximately 10 young people to visit Houses of Parliament
- The finance document
- Future vision and how young people have can an impact and ensure their voices are represented and heard to ensure their input.

**Discussion arising:**

- The chair to look into what can be done to ensure the visit to Parliament goes ahead
- Acknowledged the need to receive the input of young people, but important to ensure that this is focused
- Discussion on the mentor topic that has been highlighted previously at the committee and understanding the capacity issues
- The virtual head explained that the designated teacher is a statutory role which is set out in guidance. To highlight the role of mentors, plans to meet with designated teachers to highlight and develop
- A discussion took place regarding the recent trip to St James Farm and the importance of ensuring that all children who wish to attend are able to do so. It was noted that there were capacity issues, however, it was suggested that communication around attendance and allocation of places could be reviewed

to help manage expectations and inclusion.
- It was also confirmed that funding has been secured for the 2027 visit to the farm.
- Noted the ‘oustanding’ newsletter of Speakerbox
- Paula Thornton to send details of the new membership of the committee once agreed at annual council so that Speakerbox can invite members to a meeting in advance of the next meeting of the committee in July.
- Committee pleased to hear contact made by a local MP to provide paid and seasonal work to young people for job experience.

**MOTION OF ADJOURNMENT**

At 5.50pm it was moved, seconded and

**RESOLVED:**

That the meeting stand adjourned for 20 minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 6.10pm.

**7. VIRTUAL SCHOOL SUSPENSION, EXCLUSION AND PERSISTENT ABSENCE OF GIRLS REPORT - ARISING FROM THE ANNUAL HEADTEACHER REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE 22 OCTOBER 2025**

Usha Singh, virtual school head presented the report to the committee highlighting key areas. The detail of the presentation were contained within the published papers for the committee.

The presentation demonstrated the extent of the collaborative work that the virtual school undertakes with the schools to obtain the best outcome for children and young people who have been suspended / excluded. This has resulted in a reduction on the final figures and statistics presented and positive outcomes for the children and young people, through the stability provided by remaining in their school.

It was identified that historically behaviour policies have been directed towards boys and the policies have not changed, so it is important to note that these policies are developed to address all relevant issues, including mental health.

The virtual head outlined measures undertaken to address persistent absenteeism, including the use of pupil premium.

**Discussion arising:**

- Noted that historically public policy has focused on young men and the chair expressed her thanks to the virtual school for their work undertaken in respect

of suspension and permanent exclusions
- Query about pupil referral units. The virtual head explained that the primary focus is to retain stability. Explained that these units have an Ofsted rating and that discussions would take place with other virtual heads, depending on the area of the placement when last resort measures have to be considered but the key emphasis is to retain stability.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the virtual school suspension, exclusion and persistent absence of girls' report - arising from the Annual Headteacher report to corporate parenting committee on 22 October 2025 be noted, with any feedback any comments for consideration by the virtual school headteacher.

2. That ethnicity data presented in the virtual school report and other reports, should in future include the ethnic category for Latino. It was noted that the category is not currently within the Department of Education ethnic breakdown which is something that Southwark can add as an additional category.

3. That Speakerbox work with the virtual school to include experiences of young people and their voice in work on suspensions, exclusions and absences.

## 8. KINSHIP LOCAL OFFER DEVELOPMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Officers prevented an overview of the kinship offer for Southwark, one of the first to have a published and enhanced offer.

In addition, to the summary of the report the following issues were also identified:

- Therapeutic care
- Help with legal advice
- Virtual school links
- Ofsted extending census to include return to kinship so schools have a better understanding of children and young people
- Support group meets every two weeks and coffee morning for carers
- Celebration events and work around increasing reach and numbers of kinship carers
- Looking at developing a newsletter built on the model of the Speakerbox news letter to be rolled out in June 2026
- Support group offer
- Enhanced postal offer and final broader offer made and ensure at least a check and call for the carers.

**Summary of discussion**

Dr Stacy John-Legere offered to provide support to kinship carers on autism and

neurodiverse children and young people and how this presents.

**RESOLVED:**

That the contents of this report and the overarching developments and implementation plan be noted.

## 9. CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2026-2030 - UPDATE

Helen Woolgar (deputy director, safeguarding and care) and Poppy Laurens (service development officer) presented the report to the committee.

It was confirmed that Brightspots were presenting findings of recent work to young people next week based on the eight pillars and work will begin to develop the corporate parenting strategy.

Officers confirmed the intention to work with teams across the council and the leadership network.

**RESOLVED:**

That the contents of the report and timeline for the delivery of the new corporate parenting strategy 2026-2030 be noted.

## 10. CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2026-27

**RESOLVED:**

That the workplan be agreed.

## 11. VERBAL UPDATE ON THE KENT MENINGITIS OUTBREAK

Dr Stacy John-Legere provided an update to the committee arising from the recent Kent meningitis outbreak. She confirmed that all vaccination records had been checked and those contacted who had outstanding immunisations.

The meeting ended at 7.15pm.

**CHAIR:**

**DATED:**

Agenda Item 7

| | |
|---|---|
| **Meeting Name:** | Corporate Parenting Committee |
| **Date:** | 21 October 2026 |
| **Report title:** | Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy and Delivery Plan 2026-2030 |
| **Ward(s) or groups affected:** | All |
| **Classification:** | Open |
| **Reason for lateness (if applicable):** | N/a |
| **From:** | Helen Woolgar - Deputy Director of Children's Social Care<br>Poppy Laurens – Senior Service Development Officer |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

For the Corporate Parenting Committee to:

1. Review and comment on the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2026-2030 (Appendix 1) and draft Delivery Plan (Appendix 2).

2. Support the next steps of the strategy and delivery plan implementation.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3. Our Corporate Parenting Strategy and Delivery Plan for 2026–2030 builds on the progress we have made and sets out a new shared vision for the next five years:

   *Together, we will ensure every child and young person feels safe, loved and listened to throughout their journey, supporting them to feel confident in who they are, and to have every opportunity to thrive.*

4. At the heart of this strategy and delivery plan are the voices of 241 children and young people who completed the Bright Spots surveys last year, alongside:

   - 40+ children and young people, including Speakerbox representatives and Young Inspectors, who joined four co-design workshops and four thematic working groups.
   - Attendance and feedback at Children's Services Learningfest webinar, People and Organisational Development, Local Economy and Leisure Management Team meetings and the council's Leadership Network – building cross-council visibility and ownership.
   - 30 council staff and partner representatives who participated in thematic working groups, including NHS, NNECL (National Network for the Education of Care Leavers), and higher education partners.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. Together with children and young people, cross-council colleagues and partners, we have identified four key priorities to drive our ambitious strategy (Appendix 1):

   - Your home and money
   - Your learning and career
   - Your health and wellbeing
   - Your identity and belonging.

6. The strategy is underpinned by a co-produced delivery plan (Appendix 2) developed collaboratively with children and young people, cross-council colleagues and partners, setting out the actions required to deliver our four priorities.

7. The delivery plan will be a live document, reviewed and updated regularly in line with feedback from children and young people. The plan will be monitored through our programme board, the Corporate Parenting Committee, Annual Reports and future Bright Spots surveys.

### Policy framework implications

8. An updated and ambitious Corporate Parenting Strategy that recognises the shift in national policy context and builds capacity across the local public sector system to deliver outcomes for our children in care and care leavers, will increasingly serve the delivery of our ambition of a good start in life for every child and young person.

### Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

#### Community impact statement

9. Successful delivery of a strategy to improve outcomes for children in care and care leavers will have a significantly positive impact on the outcomes of one of the most vulnerable groups.

#### Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

10. Children from black/black British and mixed/multiple global majority groups are overrepresented in our children in care population when we compare them against the overall population of children in Southwark. Overrepresentation of global majority communities is compounded when we account for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

11. Overall, there are more males (58%) in our care than females (41%). This trend is exacerbated again by age with more males entering care in later adolescence.

12. In the 2025/26 academic year, over 40% of Statutory School Age children in care have identified special educational needs (EHCP or SEN Support), significantly above the national average for all pupils (19.5%).

**Health impact statement**

13. The health and wellbeing of our care-experienced children and young people is an integral element of our refreshed strategy.

14. The Bright Spots survey asked directly about the mental and physical health and wellbeing of children and young people. Each young person aged 4-17 had the support of a trusted adult to complete the survey.

15. Clinical service, commissioning and health colleagues have been integral to developing the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026-2030 and will be involved in developing our delivery plan - particularly the Virtual Mental Health Lead for Looked After Children, Designated Doctor for Children Looked After and Care Leavers, and Designated Nurse for Children Looked After.

**Climate change implications**

16. There are no climate change implications associated with the development of the strategy.

**Resource implications**

17. There are no resource implications associated with the development of the strategy.

**Legal/Financial implications**

18. There are no legal or financial implications associated with the development of the strategy.

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

| Background Papers | Held At | Contact |
|---|---|---|
| None | | |

**APPENDICES**

| No. | Title |
|---|---|
| Appendix 1 | Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026-2030 |
| Appendix 2 | Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy Delivery Plan 2026-2030 |

**AUDIT TRAIL**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Lead Officer** | Helen Woolgar, Deputy Director of Children's Social Care | |
| **Report Author** | Poppy Laurens, Senior Service Development Officer | |
| **Version** | Final | |
| **Dated** | 12 October 2026 | |
| **Key Decision?** | No | |
| **CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER** | | |
| **Officer Title** | **Comments Sought** | **Comments Included** |
| Director of Law and Governance | No | No |
| Strategic Director of Resources | No | No |
| **Executive Member** | No | No |
| **Date final report sent to Constitutional Team** | | 12 October 2026 |

APPENDIX 1

# Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026-2030



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Southwark Council

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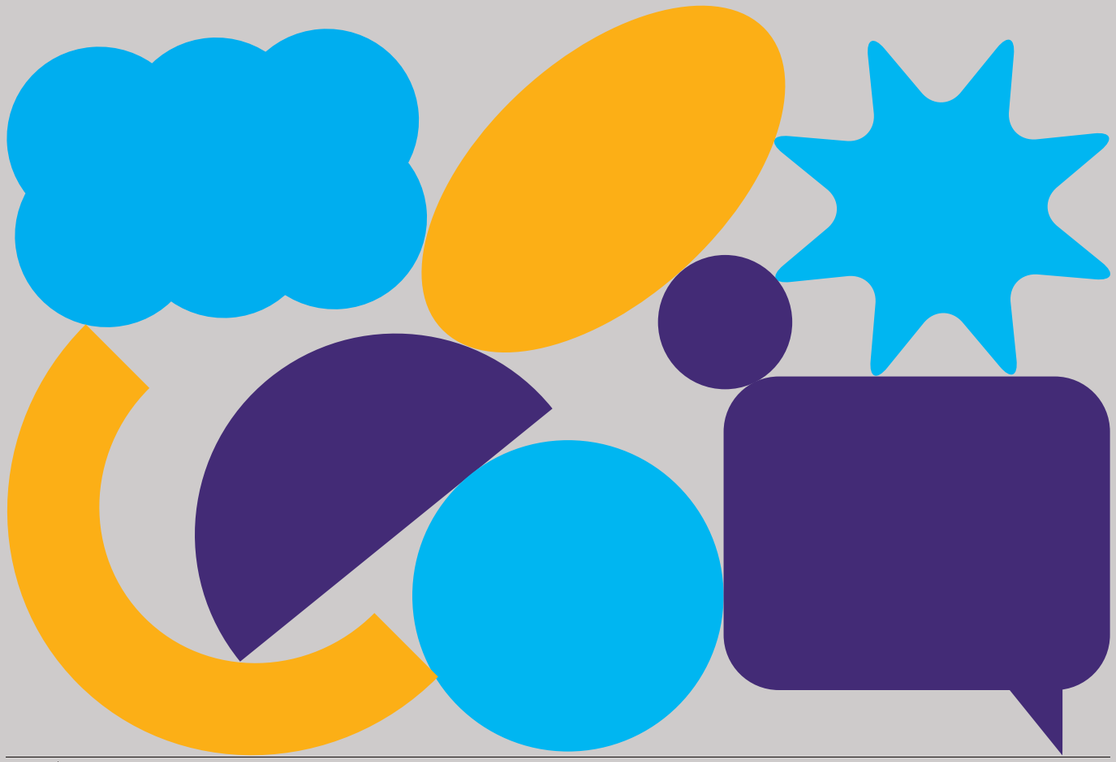
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# Our strategy

This visual shows the key parts of our strategy. At the centre is our vision, supported by the values that guide how we work and the four strategic priorities that will shape our focus. Together, they provide a clear framework for turning our ambitions into action.



# Foreword

## SpeakerBox

We are SpeakerBox – Southwark's Children in Care Council. We are a diverse and determined community of care-experienced children and young people. We are united by a shared purpose: to represent children and young people with care-experience and to use our voices to influence change.

At SpeakerBox, we believe in the power of participation. In line with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, we create safe and supportive spaces where children and young people can share their views, knowing their voices are heard, respected and acted upon.

Our work is guided by five core aims:

- **Engage** – To build a community of confident and passionate change makers who are empowered to use their voice
- **Enable** – To build the confidence and skills of children and young people to use their voice safely
- **Explore & Envision** – To identify gaps in the system, build on what already works, and design solutions for the change we want to see
- **Engineer & Execute** – To build knowledge and expertise within the council and its partners to enable young people to use their voice, listen and act on their feedback
- **Embed** – To make sure our lived experience is recognised, valued and embedded across the system (Children's Services, the council and wider community) to create lasting change

We don't just talk - we take action. We contribute to Corporate Parenting Committee, take part in the Innovation Project, train foster carers, help design employment support, and act as Young Inspectors. Through this, we have been honest about our experiences, about what is working and what needs to change.

This strategy matters, but what matters most to us is what happens next. We want to see real change, not just words. We want to be meaningfully involved in the decisions that affect our lives, and for services to work with us, not around us.

We will continue to share our voices, challenge when things are not right and hold the council to account to make sure this strategy delivers real improvements - for us, and for every child in care and care leaver in Southwark.





## Councillor Rebecca Corn, Executive Member for Safeguarding and Care

As Executive Member for Education and Care, I am proud to introduce Southwark's Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2026-2030.

Every child deserves to grow up feeling safe, loved, and supported to achieve their ambitions. For children and young people in our care, and those who have left our care, we have a special responsibility to make sure this happens. Being a corporate parent is about more than providing services. It is about building meaningful relationships, creating opportunities, and standing alongside them as they navigate life's successes and challenges.

This strategy has been shaped by the voices of children and young people. Through our engagement and participation work, you have told us what matters most: a safe and stable home, strong and consistent relationships, opportunities to learn and achieve, and support to feel proud of your identity and individuality. Thank you for sharing your experiences, ideas and aspirations - you are at the heart of this strategy and will continue to guide our work.

Corporate parenting is everyone's responsibility. Whether you are a councillor, teacher, social worker, health professional, employer, volunteer or community member, we all have a role to play in helping children and young people feel supported, empowered and optimistic about their future.

Over the next four years, we will work together to deliver the commitments set out in this strategy, ensuring that care-experienced children and young people are heard, championed and given every opportunity to thrive.

I would like to thank the children and young people, carers, cross-council staff and partners who have helped shape this strategy. Together, we will continue to build a borough where every care-experienced child and young person feels safe, valued and respected, with the confidence, support and opportunities to thrive.

# Introduction

## What is Corporate Parenting?

Corporate Parenting describes the shared responsibility of Southwark Council, our public and private sector partners, to provide the best possible care, support and opportunity for the children and young people in our care and young people who have left our care.

Being an excellent Corporate Parent means being ambitious for every child and young person - championing their potential and doing everything possible to support them to achieve the lives they want for themselves. It means using every opportunity, resource and influence available to ensure they have access to the same opportunity, support and experiences as their peers.

Corporate Parenting is not the responsibility of a single service - it belongs to all of us. Whether someone works in the council, runs a business, or is part of the local community, they play a role. It is a shared commitment to work together to provide the best possible outcomes for every child and young person.

## Corporate Parenting Principles

Corporate Parenting is based on responsibilities set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The Act explains what it means to be a good corporate parent and sets a national expectation for local authorities to provide the best possible care and support for children and young people in their care.

The law sets out seven key principles to guide how we support children in care and care leavers:

- Act in their best interests, and promote their physical and mental health and wellbeing at all times
- Encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- Listen to and take account of those views, ensuring they shape decisions and actions
- Help children and young people access and make the most of services, working collaboratively with partners
- Promote high aspirations and strive to secure the best possible outcomes for every child and young person
- Ensure safety and stability, including in their homes, relationships, education and employment
- Support preparation for adulthood and independence, equipping young people with the skills and confidence they need for the future

These principles set the foundation for this strategy and challenge us not only to meet statutory requirements, but to be consistently ambitious for our children's futures.





## The purpose of this strategy

This Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out our ambition for the next four years - to improve the experiences of every care-experienced child and young person in Southwark, helping them to thrive, succeed and achieve the lives they want for themselves.

This strategy is rooted in what children and young people have told us matters most, alongside insights from colleagues and partners. Our children and young people's voices sit at the heart of this strategy, shaping our priorities and holding us to account.

We know there is strong practice to build on. Many children and young people tell us they feel safe, supported and value the relationships they have with people around them. However, they have also told us that more needs to be done. They want greater stability in their homes and education, to be genuinely listened to and involved in decisions about their lives, and to have consistent access to opportunities and support that prepares them for adulthood.

This strategy is our commitment to go further by creating a system that works consistently around every child and young person, delivering real, measurable improvements.

**A note about language**

Throughout this document, we use the term **care-experienced** to describe both children and young people currently in our care and those who have left our care.

When we refer to **children and young people in care**, we mean those under the age of 18 who are 'looked after' by Southwark Council.

When we refer to **care leavers**, we mean young people aged 16 to 25 who are eligible for support from the Leaving Care service.



# Developing the strategy

## What we've achieved

In 2021, we launched our previous Corporate Parenting Strategy. Over the past four years, we have worked with partners across Southwark to deliver on our commitments and improve outcomes for children and young people. The achievements highlighted below, alongside the voices and experiences of children and young people, have shaped this strategy and the priorities that will guide the next phase of our journey as corporate parents.

**No children or young people** in care **have been permanently excluded** over the past three academic years.

Since 2021, the **percentage of children living with their relatives** and wider support networks has **increased from 11% to 21%.**

**Supported more 18-year-olds to remain living with their former foster carers.** The 'staying put' rate increased from 22% in 2023/24 to 26% by the end of 2025, compared to the national average of 18%.

**121 young people signed up for the free gym and swim** offer available to all care-experienced children and young people up to the age of 25 at the council's in-house leisure centres.

**Enhanced our support offer for families to safely stay together**, including Family Group Conferencing, SWIFT (Southwark Works Intensively with Families Together) and Keeping Families Together services.



Launched our **Trailblazer employability pathway for young people** who are not in education, employment, or training offering skills and confidence building workshops, mentoring, and work experience placements.

**35 care leavers were in higher education** - including a record number going to university or degree-level apprenticeships.

**Launched Giving HOPE Boxes for babies entering care**, helping to maintain connections between mothers and babies separated at birth.

Launched our **Young Inspectors scheme for care-experienced young people to play an integral role in quality assurance** of homes and accommodation.

**Opened the first council-run Children's Home in Southwark for over 20 years** and received an **'Outstanding' rating** from Ofsted.

Transformed Talfourd Place **Hub to be a welcoming place for young people** to take part in activities, workshops and one-to-one sessions.

**Launched the NEST mental health drop-in** clinic offer at Talfourd Place Hub.

Launched an **independence skills programme for young people**, including sessions on cooking, money, home skills, and tenancy sustainment.

**Developed our Innovation Project** – co-led by Speakerbox and Family Council – to bring together children, young people, families and workers to explore ideas to improve services.

Supported **35 young people to reconnect with important people in their lives** through our Lifelong Links programme.

# Developing the strategy

## The journey so far

A range of activity has shaped this strategy, reflecting what children and young people are telling us now and where we know we need to improve.

### SpeakerBox Pillars

2025

SpeakerBox worked together over the year to create eight pillars' which set out what is important to care-experienced children and young people in Southwark:

1. Education & Employment
2. Non-Discrimination
3. Safety & Support Services
4. Freedom of Expression
5. Standards & Treatment in Care
6. Voice of the Child
7. Knowledge of Rights
8. Health Services

### Ofsted Inspection

March 2026

Southwark Council Children's Services were inspected by Ofsted. We received an overall grading of 'Good' with the experiences and progress of both children in care and care leavers being individually graded as 'Good' also.



### Corporate Parenting Roadshow

May 2026

To build shared responsibility and ownership of this strategy, we held workshops with council teams, senior leadership and partners.

This strategy is a shared commitment across the council and our partners to provide consistent, high-quality support to children and young people.



### Corporate Parenting Delivery Plan

October 2026

This strategy will be underpinned by a Delivery Plan, co-produced with children and young people, colleagues and partners.

This will set out the actions required to deliver our four priorities, with named leads responsible for delivery and clear, measurable outcomes to track progress. progress.

### Bright Spots Survey

August to December 2025

241 children and young people completed the Bright Spots surveys, providing a well-rounded insight into overall wellbeing across a broad range of areas:

- Living in safe, suitable and settled homes
- Having access to positive opportunities in and outside of school/college
- Feeling optimistic about the future and themselves
- Having positive relationships with workers in which their rights and identity are supported
- Feeling connected to the people they want in their lives and having access to emotional support

### Collaborative Workshops

May 2026

To bring to life the findings from the Bright Spots surveys, we hosted three workshops attended by 22 care-experienced young people, focusing on:

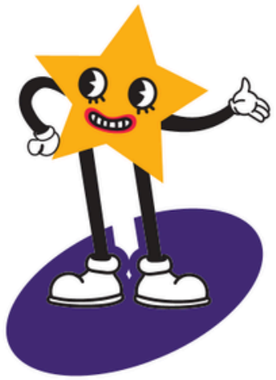
- What do you think of the survey findings based on your experience and what matters to you?
- What should be our priorities for the next five years?
- How will we know we are making a difference?



### Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026-2030

July 2026

This document sets out our vision and core priorities for the next five years to improve the experiences and outcomes for care-experienced children and young people in Southwark.

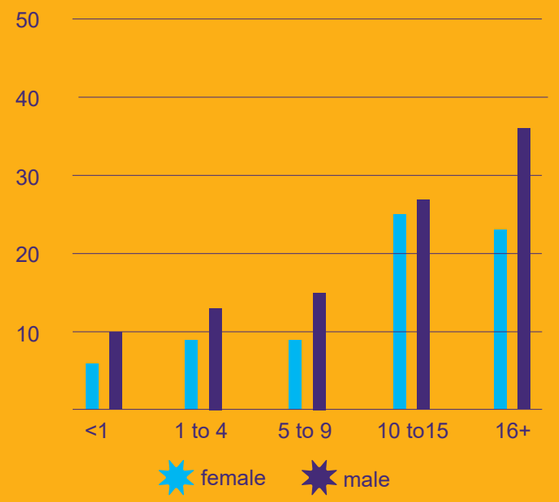


# Who are the children and young people in our care?

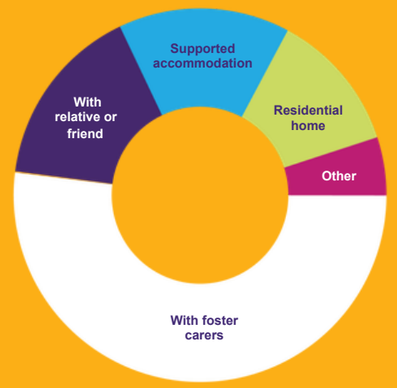
In March 2026, there were **350 children and young people in our care**, including **44 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.**

In the **last 12 months, 172 children came into our care**. Most children who enter our care are **older teenagers, particularly young males**.

**Children starting in care by gender and age at entry 25-26**




**Most (52%) of our children live with foster carers**, 16% live with a relative or friend and 12% live in residential homes.




Compared to the population of Southwark as a whole, **children from a black or mixed heritage are more likely to be in our care** than their white peers.



**Most of the children in our care (68%) live within 20 miles of their home address**, and within the greater London area.





**41%**

of children in care aged 5-15 have an identified special educational need or disability.

**Most children who enter our care return home** to the care of parents, relatives or other people in their support network. This is followed closely by those who remain in our care until 18.



Very few of our children

**7%**

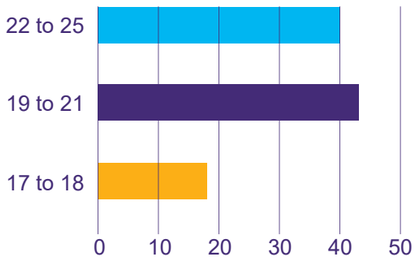
have lived in 3 or more homes in the past 12 months.



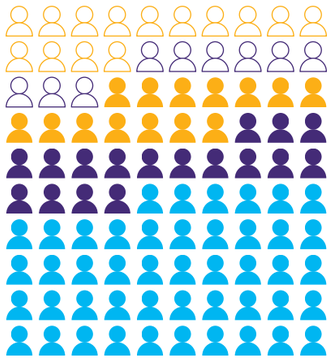
# Who are the young people we support as care leavers?

We continue to **support 663 young people aged 18-25** who have left our care.

**Percentage of Care Leavers by Age (March 2026)**

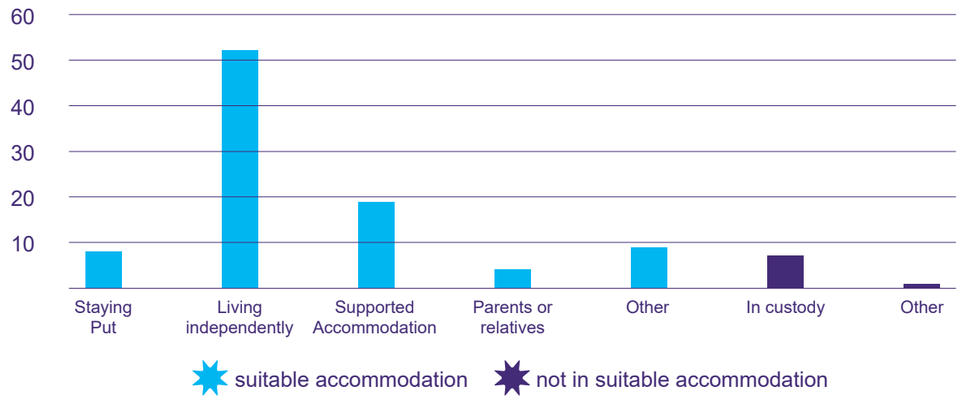



**46% of our care leavers are black or black British,** 17%are white, 14% are of mixed ethnic background, and 9% are Asian or Asian British.



**89% of our care leavers are in suitable accommodation,** including 52 young people who are 'Staying Put' with their former foster carers.

**Percentage of Care Leavers in Accommodation Types (March 2026)**




Young people who were previously Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children make up

**29%**

of our care leavers.

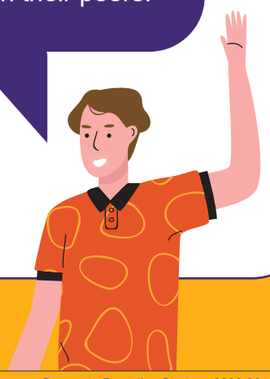
**65% of our care leavers are male** and 35% are female.






**60% of our care leavers aged 19-21 are in education, employment or training**. This is higher than the national average of 54%.

Whilst many young people who have been in care lead positive and happy lives, we know that outcomes for those who have been in care remain significantly poorer across health, housing, education and employment than their peers.



# Our vision

**Together, we will ensure every child and young person feels safe, loved and listened to throughout their journey, supporting them to feel confident in who they are, and have every opportunity to thrive.**

## Our values

To achieve this vision, we are committed to a set of values that shape how we work with children, young people and families every day. We will:

**Be transparent and accountable,** being open about our decisions, actions and progress.



**Listen and act on the voices of children and young people,** ensuring their experiences and aspirations shape what we do.



**Be responsive and evidence-driven,** adapting what we do based on what works and what children, young people and families tell us.



**Be inclusive and equitable**, promoting and modelling anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice, and recognising and responding to the different needs and experiences.



**Support children and young people at every step of their journey,** providing consistent, joined-up support as they grow and move into adulthood.





# Our Priorities

Together with children and young people, colleagues from across the council and our partners, we have identified four key priorities that will drive this strategy and improve experiences and outcomes of care-experienced children and young people.



### Your home and money

We will ensure children and young people live in safe, stable and nurturing homes where they feel trusted, valued and listened to, and where relationships are built with patience, honesty and respect. We will equip young people with the knowledge, skills and financial support you need to feel confident and prepared for adulthood.



### Your learning and career

We will support children and young people at every stage of their education and employment journey, with learning environments that are empathetic and meet their needs, and tailored guidance on their next steps to build their confidence, skills and aspirations for the future.



### Your health and wellbeing

We will ensure children and young people receive support that feels safe, personal and non-judgemental, they can easily access information and build the knowledge to care for their mental and physical health and wellbeing to lead a long and happy life.



### Your identity and belonging

We will support children and young people to feel proud of who they are, to explore and express their individuality, and to build a strong support network, so that every young person has the confidence to shape their own story.



# Your home and money

**Our commitment:** We will ensure children and young people live in safe, stable and nurturing homes where they feel trusted, valued and listened to, and where relationships are built with patience, honesty and respect. We will equip young people with the knowledge, skills and financial support you need to feel confident and prepared for adulthood.

**This will look like:**

- Welcoming, supportive homes with carers who build trusting relationships
- Supporting children and young people to live in or nearby to Southwark where safe to do so, so they can benefit from our local services and support
- Children and young people are involved in decisions about where they live, who they live with and their next steps
- Homes that meet the day-to-day needs of children and young people, including personal care items that reflect their identity, culture and background
- Clear and fair financial support, starting early and building over time
- Practical support to prepare for the next stage of young people's lives, including life skills and help to find and sustain accommodation that is right for them

**We will know we are making a difference by:**

- More children and young people report feeling safe and settled where they live
- More children and young people report trusting the adults they live with
- More children and young people report feeling like they have a say about decisions about their lives
- Fewer young people report finding it difficult to cope financially

"I live in a very comfortable and peaceful environment still need to get things sorted within my home to feel more homely but it's peaceful with my son"

"I need more freedom and more money, £10 per week is not enough at all"

"I wish I had more of a say about things that happen to me"

"I feel there needs to be more support for care leavers to know how to budget their money when they have to pay rent and a detailed explanation when moving out on what things to focus on."





# Your learning and career

**Our commitment:** We will support children and young people at every stage of their education and employment journey, with learning environments that are empathetic and meet their needs, and tailored guidance on their next steps to build their confidence, skills and aspirations for the future.

**This will look like:**

- Learning environments which are supportive, inclusive and trauma-informed
- Earlier, personalised support with next steps, especially at key transition points and when young people have a significant change in their lives
- Access to meaningful opportunities to build skills, experience and pathways into careers, not just jobs
- Maximising the connections, opportunities and resources across our network of Corporate Parents in the council, public and private sectors

**We will know we are making a difference by:**

- More children and young people report liking school/college
- Fewer children and young people are persistently absent or suspended
- More children and young people report feeling satisfied with their lives and positive about the future
- More young people are in education, employment or training for longer

"It is really hard to stay in education as you get older because you have to pay for your travel. To get yourself into education, it can be really hard."

"I want opportunities to get into something that I am proud of"

"Treated less like I'm in care and more like everybody else"

"I need support from college and support worker sides so I can study, and I need to work towards getting a job in the future with their help"

# Your health and wellbeing



**Our commitment:** We will ensure children and young people receive support that feels safe, personal and non-judgemental, they can easily access information and build the knowledge to care for their mental and physical health and wellbeing to lead a long and happy life.

**This will look like:**

- Consistent, approachable professionals who build trusted relationships
- Safe spaces to talk about health and wellbeing, including sensitive or difficult topics
- Easier access to services through better coordination between health, education and social care

**We will know we are making a difference by:**

- More children and young people report feeling happy yesterday, satisfied with their lives, and positive about the future
- More children and young people report spending time outside and doing hobbies and activities they enjoy
- More children and young people report having at least one good friend and people in their lives for emotional support
- More children and young people access the free gym and swim offer with Southwark's in-house leisure centres
- More children and young people have up to date health assessments, immunisations, and dental assessments

"I feel like I missed key health information at school due to placement moves, like puberty and sexual health"

"Things are going in a positive direction and people are very open when I need to talk and help."

"I really like playing football and cricket"

"Leaving care makes you feel lonely even when you have people"



# Your identity and belonging



**Our commitment:** We will support children and young people to feel proud of who they are, to explore and express their individuality, and to build a strong support network, so that every young person has the confidence to shape their own story.

**This will look like:**

- Opportunities to explore and celebrate identity and individuality
- Support for children and young people to understand their life story at a pace that is right for them
- Strong, sustained relationships with family, friends and support networks
- Strong relationships, stability and consistency in the adults supporting children and young people
- Promoting and modelling anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice and challenging language, behaviour and practice that is not inclusive or culturally competent

**We will know we are making a difference by:**

- More children and young people report that they are happy with the amount of time they have with their family, including their siblings
- More children and young people report having a good friend or trusted person in their lives
- More children and young people report understanding why they are or were in care
- More children and young people report feeling happy about the way they look
- More young people report having the same social worker or leaving care worker in the past year, trusting them, and finding it easy to get in touch with them

"Throughout the care system, over the years, I've felt babied. And now, leaving care. …. How am I meant to live. How am I meant to become my own person."

"My leaving care worker now makes sure all my things are sorted out for me as soon as possible and is easy to contact."

"We need safe spaces for queer people in care"

"I like the option of being able to choose when I see my family"

# How we will deliver this strategy

This strategy is based on what we know now and the information we have today, but we will keep learning and adapting as we listen to children and young people. This strategy will continue to change over time as we learn what works and where we need to do more.

We are committed to being transparent, accountable and focused on what makes a real difference. Strong monitoring and governance will ensure this strategy leads to meaningful change:

- We will **co-produce a Corporate Parenting Delivery Plan** with children and young people, colleagues and partners by Autumn 2026, with clear actions and measurable outcomes
- Our **Corporate Parenting Programme Board** will meet every eight weeks to monitor the Delivery Plan, provide support and report regularly to the Children's Services Leadership Team
- Our C**orporate Parenting Committee**, including elected members, partners and children and young people, will review progress every three months and hold us to account
- The **Deputy Director for Children's Social Care** will meet with SpeakerBox at least four times a year, and the Director of Children's Services at least annually, to ensure priorities reflect what matters most to children and young people
- **A Participation and Engagement Annual Plan** will provide opportunities for children, young people and staff to work together
- We will publish a **Corporate Parenting Annual Repor**t on progress, impact and changes needed based on feedback and performance
- We will continue using **Bright Spots surveys** to track children and young people's wellbeing and experiences over time

Through this approach, we will ensure this strategy remains responsive, accountable and focused on improving outcomes, so that children and young people can see and feel the difference it is making.





# Feedback

We value your feedback and want to hear from you, whether things are going well or not. Please let us know if:

- You are unhappy with the support you are receiving
- There are areas where we need to improve
- You have feedback about a particular service

You can share how things are going with your foster carer, support worker, social worker, personal adviser, or independent reviewing officer (IRO).

You can also join Speakerbox – our Children in Care Council. This group provides their feedback directly to the Corporate Parenting Committee as well as other services within the council and our partners.

To join, contact your social worker or personal advisor, or e-mail Speaker.Box@southwark.gov.uk.



# Important terms

**Care leaver** is a young person aged 16 to 25 who is no longer in the care of the local authority. Even though you're now legally an adult, Southwark Council still has a responsibility to support you until you're 25.

**Child in care or looked after child** is a child or young person being supported by social services and has a social worker. They might live with a foster carer, in a residential home, or in supported accommodation.

**Corporate Parenting** is the responsibility of the council and its partners to care for children in care and care leavers, acting like a good parent would and supporting them to have the best possible experiences and outcomes.

**Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP)** is a legal document which sets out a child or young person's needs, the support they need, and the outcomes they would like to achieve.

**EET** refers to a young person who is in education, employment, or training.

**Elected members** are councillors who are voted for by local residents to make decisions about how the council is run.

**Eligible care leaver** is a young person aged 16 or 17 who is still in care and has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since turning 14, including time after their 16th birthday. They qualify for support like a personal adviser and a pathway plan to help prepare for leaving care.

**Former relevant care leaver** is someone aged 18 to 25 who was in care after age 14 and was still in care at age 16 or 17. They qualify for ongoing support, including a personal adviser, a pathway plan, and help with things like housing, education, and finances.

**Foster carer** is an approved carer who looks after a child in their own home.
**Local Authority** (also known as the Council) is part of the government and is responsible for providing services in your local area. This includes education, housing, and social care.

**NEET** refers to a young person who is not in education, employment, or training.

**Qualifying care leaver** is a young person aged 16 to 25 who was in care but doesn't meet the full criteria for more extensive support under the care leaver categories. They may have been in care for a shorter time or under different arrangements.

**Relevant care leaver** is a young person aged 16 or 17 who has left care but was previously an eligible care leaver (in care for at least 13 weeks after age 14 and still in care at 16).

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)** means a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need particular support with their education, health or care.

**'Staying Put'** is an arrangement that allows a young person to continue living with their foster carers after they turn 18 to support their transition into adulthood.

Suitable accommodation is housing that is safe, stable, and appropriate for a young person's needs.

**Supported accommodation** is where young people live more independently but receive support with things like daily living skills.

**Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child (UASC)** is someone under the age of 18 who is applying for asylum. Many of our children in care have come from other parts of the world and are cared for by the council.



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Southwark Council

# Southwark Council Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026-30

# Delivery Plan (2026-27)

## Priority 1: Home & Money

**Our commitment:** Ensure children and young people live in safe, stable and nurturing homes where they feel trusted, valued and listened to, and where relationships are built with patience, honesty and respect. We will equip young people with the knowledge, skills and financial support you need to feel confident and prepared for adulthood.

| Objective | Actions | Owner | Timeline | Short term outcome | Outcome Measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.1** | | | | | |
| Equip children and young people with the financial knowledge, practical skills and confidence to understand their entitlements, manage money effectively, make informed financial decisions and access support when needed as they prepare for adulthood. | Ensure children and young people can access practical advice and guidance around money management through the **Local Offer.** | Leaving Care Service Manager & Service Development Team | April 2027 | Children and young people have a better understanding of financial entitlements, budgeting and money management.<br><br>Children and young people know where to access advice and support before financial difficulties escalate into crisis. | Fewer young people report finding it "quite" or "very difficult" to cope financially (Bright Spots)<br><br>More children and young people accessing the Local Offer and financial guidance document. |
| | Promote and encourage usage of co-designed **financial guidance document** to children and young people, providing practical information, support and advice. | Children's Rights and Participation Officer | December 2026 | | |
| | Embed age-appropriate financial education and conversations into care reviews and pathway planning for all children and young people. | Care & Leaving Care Service Managers | April 2027 | | |
| **1.2** | | | | | |
| Ensure children and young people receive care that recognises, values and responds to their individual identity, culture, and ethnicity, enabling them to feel respected, understood and confident in who they are. | Ensure every child and young person has access to **personal care items and products** that reflect and support their identity, culture and background. | Fostering Service Manager & ART Service Manager | December 2026 | Children and young people feel their cultural, identity and personal needs are understood and supported within their homes. | Number of children and young people receiving product packs.<br><br>More children and young people report they are happy with their appearance (Bright Spots)<br><br>More children and young people report feeling safe and settled where they live (Bright Spots) |
| **1.3** | | | | | |
| Increase access to safe, stable and affordable housing options while ensuring young people have the information, skills and confidence required to | Explore opportunities for **cross-borough collaboration** to expand access to safe, affordable housing outside of Southwark. | Leaving Care Service Manager | September 2027 | Improved access to safe, high-quality affordable | Number of cross-borough housing opportunities offered and secured. |

| Objective | Actions | Owner | Timeline | Short term outcome | Outcome Measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| successfully prepare for, secure and sustain suitable accommodation. | Re-commission high-quality **supported accommodation** in collaboration with Young Inspectors that provides sensitive, skilled and nurturing support for young people as they move into adulthood. | Start Well Commissioning Manager & Head of Placements, Sufficiency and Resources | April 2028 | housing that meets young people's needs. | More young people accessing pre-tenancy and independence skills support.<br><br>More young people reporting improved confidence managing a tenancy.<br><br>More children and young people report feeling safe and settled where they live (Bright Spots) |
| | Expand opportunities for young people to develop practical **life and independence skills** and build understanding of their housing options. | Experienced Practitioners for Housing and Youth Work | January 2027 | Young people feel more prepared and confident to move into and maintain independent accommodation.<br>Young people understand the housing pathways available to them and know where to seek support. | |
| **1.4** | | | | | |
| Improve how children and young people experience transitions by ensuring they are well-planned, relationship-based and centred on their individual needs, helping them feel safe, informed and supported through periods of change. | Co-design and implement a **transitions checklist** that supports consistent, relationship-based practice and ensures children and young people are actively involved in planning and preparing for change. | Permanence Lead | April 2027 | Children and young people experience smoother transitions between homes, services and stages of life and feel supported by trusted and consistent relationships throughout the process.<br><br>Staff feel more confident and equipped to support transitions effectively. | Number of transitions supported by completed checklist.<br><br>More children and young people report they trust their social worker all or most of the time (Bright Spots)<br><br>More children and young people report they know who their leaving care worker is (Bright Spots)<br><br>More children and young people report they have a trusted adult (Bright Spots) |

## Priority 2: Learning & Career

**Our commitment:** We will support children and young people at every stage of their education and employment journey, with learning environments that are empathetic and meet their needs, and tailored guidance on their next steps to build their confidence, skills and aspirations for the future.

| Objective | Actions | Owner | Timeline | Short term outcome | Measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2.1** | | | | | |
| Increase employer understanding of care experience and strengthen commitment across employers and council services to creating inclusive employment, training and work experience opportunities. | Deliver **training and support to employers and council services** to improve awareness and understanding of care experience. | Virtual School & Leaving Care EET Team | January 2027 | Employers and council services have greater awareness of the barriers and strengths associated with care experience and are more confident in creating inclusive opportunities. | Number of employers and council teams attending training sessions and reporting improved understanding of care experience.<br><br>Number of pledges from employers and council teams. |
| | Embed a corporate parenting culture across council services and local employers, securing **clear commitments** that increase access to employment, training, work experience and career progression for care-experienced young people. | Virtual School & Leaving Care EET Team | April 2027 | | |
| **2.2** | | | | | |
| Raise aspirations and broaden awareness of education, training and employment pathways so that young people are empowered to pursue ambitious and achievable goals for their future. | Continue to showcase a diverse range of education, career and training **pathways** through activities and events that reflect young people's interests and ambitions. | Virtual School & Leaving Care EET Team | April 2027 | Young people have greater awareness of available opportunities and feel more confident and optimistic about their future aspirations. | Number of young people attending events and activities.<br><br>More children and young people report feeling very positive about their future (Bright Spots)<br><br>More children and young people report feeling that the things they do are worthwhile (Bright Spots) |
| | Continue to facilitate taster sessions and work experience to help young people gain first-hand experience of different careers and sectors. | Virtual School & Leaving Care EET Team | April 2027 | | |
| | Continue to celebrate and share the **achievements and successes** of children and young people to raise aspirations and promote positive outcomes. | Virtual School & Leaving Care EET Team | February 2027 | | |
| **2.3** | | | | | |
| Ensure children and young people are supported to achieve their potential by removing barriers to learning and achievement, embedding trauma-informed, attachment-aware and inclusive practice across education settings. | Expand support for education settings to strengthen **trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice** for care-experienced learners of all ages, including those attending provision outside the borough. | Virtual School | September 2027 | Care-experienced children and young people feel understood, supported and included within their education settings, enabling them to engage positively with learning. | Support a further 3 schools to Trauma-Informed and Attachment Aware Schools accreditation in 2026-27.<br><br>More children and young people report that they like school or college a lot (Bright Spots) |
| | Explore opportunities across the partnership to address the **barriers to learning and achievement**, including early identification of SEND, school stability, attendance, suspensions and exclusions, and share best practice. | Virtual School | September 2027 | | |
| **2.4** | | | | | |
| Tackle the practical barriers that prevent young people from accessing and sustaining education, employment and training opportunities. | Support young people to develop core **employability, workplace and communication skills** that increase confidence and readiness for work and training opportunities. | Virtual School & Leaving Care EET Team | April 2027 | Young people feel confident navigating education, employment and training systems and | Number of young people completing employability programmes and reporting increased confidence. |

| Objective | Actions | Owner | Timeline | Short term outcome | Measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ensure **financial support** effectively removes barriers to participation in EET, including support available to young people progressing into higher education. | Service Development Team | January 2027 | are supported to overcome financial and practical barriers to participation. | Number of young people accessing bursaries and grants. |

## Priority 3: Health & Wellbeing

**Our commitment:** Ensure children and young people receive support that feels safe, personal and non-judgemental, they can easily access information and build the knowledge to care for their mental and physical health and wellbeing to lead a long and happy life.

| Objective | Actions | Owner | Timeline | Short term outcome | Outcome Measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3.1** | | | | | |
| Ensure children and young people can easily access timely, appropriate and accessible information about health, wellbeing and mental health support. | Ensure children and young people can easily access information about wellbeing support, including crisis provision, advocacy services and drop-ins, by adapting the **Local Offer** and communication methods to reflect their needs and preferences. | Leaving Care Service Manager & Service Development Team | April 2027 | Children and young people understand what health and wellbeing support is available, feel confident accessing it, and know where to go for help when they need it. | More children and young people report receiving support for their feelings and worries (Bright Spots)<br><br>More children and young people accessing the Local Offer. |
| **3.2** | | | | | |
| Improve young people's wellbeing, sense of belonging and social connections by increasing access to positive community activities, relationships and opportunities within and beyond Southwark. | Work in partnership with local community organisations, businesses and council services to **widen access to activities** that support physical health, emotional wellbeing, social connection and personal development. | Service Development Team & Public Health Team | April 2027 | Young people can easily access activities that match their interests, develop positive relationships and strengthen their connection to their local community. | Number of partner organisations involved. |
| **3.3** | | | | | |
| Ensure carers have the knowledge, skills and confidence to respond effectively to support the wellbeing of children and young people. | Deliver a test-and-learn **therapeutic fostering** programme providing enhanced support and training to strengthen carers' understanding of trauma, attachment and build confidence in supporting children and young people. | Clinical Service & Fostering Service | September 2027 | Carers feel more confident and equipped to understand and support children's emotional wellbeing and mental health needs, resulting in more nurturing, stable and therapeutic home environments. | Number of carers involved in programme and improved confidence.<br><br>Number of children and young people supported and improved outcomes, including wellbeing, home stability, and EET. |
| **3.4** | | | | | |
| Increase equitable access to physical activity opportunities that promote physical health, emotional wellbeing, confidence and healthy lifestyles for all children and young people, regardless of where they live. | Expand uptake of the **free gym and swim offer** for children and young people across Southwark leisure centres. | Head of Care, Care Leavers, and Fostering & Leisure Service | September 2027 | Young people regularly access enjoyable and affordable physical activities that improve their health, wellbeing, confidence and social participation. | More children and young people access the free gym and swim offer in Southwark leisure centres.<br><br>More children and young people outside of Southwark accessing funded gym, swim and activities. |
| | Develop arrangements that provide **equivalent physical activity opportunities** for children and young people living outside Southwark. | Head of Care, Care Leavers, and Fostering | April 2027 | | |

| Objective | Actions | Owner | Timeline | Short term outcome | Outcome Measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | More children and young people report high overall wellbeing (Bright Spots) |

## Priority 4: Identity & Belonging

**Our commitment:** Support children and young people to feel proud of who they are, to explore and express their individuality, and to build a strong support network, so that every young person has the confidence to shape their own story.

| Objective | Actions | Owner | Timeline | Short term outcome | Outcome Measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4.1** | | | | | |
| Ensure children and young people are supported to develop, maintain and strengthen important family, sibling and lifelong relationships, wherever it is safe and in their best interests to do so. | Continue to invest in supporting children and young people to understand their history, identity and support networks through **Lifestory Work and Lifelong Links.** | Permanence Lead | Ongoing with six-monthly updates | Children and young people have a stronger understanding of their personal history, identity and family networks, and are supported to maintain meaningful relationships that are important to them. | More children and young people report that contact with their family and siblings is "about right" (Bright Spots)<br><br>More children and young people report understanding why they are in care (Bright Spots) |
| | Deliver a test-and-learn **reunification team** to provide children and families with targeted support to enable a safe return home. | Head of Care, Care Leavers and Fostering | April 2027 | Children, young people and families receive coordinated support to strengthen family relationships and, where appropriate, enable safe and sustainable reunification. | Number of children and families supported through the Reunification Team.<br><br>Sustained reunification outcomes over agreed review periods. |
| **4.2** | | | | | |
| Ensure LGBTQ+ children and young people feel safe, respected, included and empowered to express their identity, while having access to supportive relationships and peer networks. | Undertake further engagement and co-design with **LGBTQ+ children and young people** to develop peer support opportunities, activities and spaces that promote inclusion, connection and wellbeing. | Children's Rights and Participation Officers | April 2027 | LGBTQ+ young people feel accepted, valued and connected to supportive peer networks, with opportunities to share experiences and influence the support available to them. | Number of children and young people involved in designing support. |
| **4.3** | | | | | |
| Increase opportunities for children and young people to explore their interests, talents and aspirations, helping them build confidence, develop skills, broaden their experiences and achieve their potential. | Develop an **annual programme** of activities, cultural experiences and creative opportunities shaped by the interests, talents and aspirations of children and young people. | Children's Rights and Participation Officers | January 2027 | Children and young people can access a wider range of enriching experiences that help them discover new interests, develop skills, build relationships and increase their confidence and sense of achievement. | Fewer young people report feeling often/always feel lonely (Bright Spots)<br><br>Number of children and young people involved in designing programme.<br><br>Number of children and young people taking part in programme. |

| Objective | Actions | Owner | Timeline | Short term outcome | Outcome Measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4.4** | | | | | |
| Ensure all children and young people receive inclusive, culturally competent and anti-discriminatory care that recognises, respects and responds to their individual and intersectional identity, culture, heritage, beliefs and lived experiences. | Deliver **regular training** for carers and professionals, co-produced with young people, on culturally competent and inclusive care, further embedding anti-discriminatory practice across the partnership. | Quality Assurance and Workforce Development Team | September 2027 | Carers and professionals have greater knowledge and confidence of how to support young people's identity, culture and individual needs.<br><br>Children and young people feel understood, respected and supported to maintain connections with their culture, community, identity and heritage. | Number of children and young people involved in developing training.<br><br>Number of carers and professionals attending training session and increased confidence in supporting children and young people. |

Agenda Item 8

| | |
|---|---|
| **Meeting Name:** | Corporate Parenting Committee |
| **Date:** | 21 October 2026 |
| **Report title:** | Annual Health report for Children Looked After |
| **Ward(s) or groups affected:** | Children in Care and Care Leavers, London Borough of Southwark |
| **Classification:** | Open |
| **Reason for lateness (if applicable):** | Not applicable |
| **From:** | Dr Stacy John-Legere, Designated Doctor for Children Looked After and Care Leavers (CLA).<br>Joy Edwards, Designated Nurse for Children Looked After Southwark Integrated Care Board (ICB).<br><br>Dr Jenny Taylor, Virtual Mental Health Lead for Looked After Children. Southwark Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)<br><br>Rachel Massey, Consultant Paediatrician.<br>Sarah O'Connor, Named Nurse Looked After<br>Luca Monilari, Medical Advisor Adoption, Looked After Children's Health services Guy's and St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust. (GSTT) |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Corporate Parenting Committee note the report contents 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 Corporate Parenting Committee feedback any comments on the Southwark Children Looked After Health report for consideration by the Children Looked After Health leads across the health economy.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3. The following report is an annual overview of the provision of health services across the health economy for Children Looked After and Care Leavers including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

4. The purpose of the report is to inform and to advise the Corporate Parenting Committee of the annual evaluation of health services by the Senior Health Leads for Children Looked After (and Young People). The report outlines the effectiveness of health care

planning and describes the progression of services to fulfill relevant performance indicators including statutory timescales within the current commissioned services.

5. The report aims to advise the Corporate Parenting Committee of initiatives, considerations and challenges within health with the aim of improving and developing current and future service delivery.

6. This report has been collated with the Virtual Mental Health Lead for CLA in Southwark and contributions from provider health services.

**KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

7. Health services for Children Looked After continue to provide services in line with current commissioning arrangements.

8. This report highlights the Children Looked After Health service delivery to children and young people in care to London Borough of Southwark during the reporting period of April 2025-March 2026
9. The key areas of progression within health and recognizing the plans for the year ahead.

**Policy framework implications**

10. The Children Looked After report reflects both national and local polices that aim to improve the health and well-being of Southwark Children Looked After and to support those that care for them.

**Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts**

**Community Impact Statement**

11. Improving health outcomes for CLA and Young People remains a priority. The report aims to reflect the progression of work, key achievements and future plans to continue to highlight and improve the health needs and outcomes of the CLA population across the health economy.

**Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement**

12. The report outlines the delivery of health services to all Children and young people in care to Southwark Local Authority.

13. Health services are committed to delivering health services to everyone and consider individual need and accessibility with all areas of health service provision.

**Health impact statement**

14. Promoting the heath needs of Looked After Children and Young People continues to be highlighted across the health economy.

**Climate change implications**

15. There are no overt implications to climate change.

**Resource implications**

16. At the time of reporting there are no resource implications.

**Other officers**

17. The report has been shared with the Senior Leads both within Southwark ICB and Provider Services.

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

| Background Papers | Held At | Contact |
|---|---|---|
| Safeguarding Children's Annual Report<br><br>Safeguarding Adult's Annual Report<br><br>Southwark Annual Looked After Children and Care Leavers Health report 2024/2025 | Southwark ICB | Julie.lane@selondoncis.nhs.uk |

**APPENDICES**

| No. | Title |
|---|---|
| Appendix 1 | Annual Health Report 2026:<br>Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers |

**AUDIT TRAIL**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Lead Officer** | Rebecca Jarvis Director of Partnership Delivery and Sustainability Southwark Place. |
| **Report Author** | Dr Stacy John Legere, Dr Jenny Taylor, Joy Edwards and LAC health GSTT |
| **Version** | Final |
| **Dated** | 8 October 2026 |
| **Key Decision?** | No |

| **CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Officer Title** | **Comments Sought** | **Comments Included** |
| Director of Law and Governance | No | No |
| Strategic Director of Resources | No | No |
| **Executive Member** | No | No |
| **Date final report sent to Constitutional Team** | | 8 October 2026 |

APPENDIX 1

# Southwark Corporate Parenting

# **Annual Health Report 2026**: Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers

# Contributing Authors

- Dr Stacy John-Legere  - Designated Doctor Looked After Children, Young People and Care Leavers. (Southwark Integrated Care Board).
- Joy Edwards - Designated Nurse Looked After Children, Young People and Care Leavers. (Southwark Integrated Care Board)
- Dr Rachel Massey  - Named Doctor Looked After Children and Young People (GSTT NHSFT)
- Sarah O'Connor - Named Nurse Looked After Children and Young People (GSTT NHSFT)
- Dr Jenny Taylor - Virtual Mental Health Lead ( Southwark Children's Services )
- Dr Luca Molinari - Medical Advisor Adoption (Adopt South London)

# Executive Summary

The **Southwark Corporate Parenting Annual Health Report** details the medical and mental health support provided to **children in care and care leavers** between 2025 and 2026. Prepared by the **Designated Professionals and Health leads;** the document evaluates service performance against key indicators such as **dental check-ups, immunisations, and health assessments**. Highlight is paid to **mental health** support.

It demonstrates a demographic shift toward **older children entering care** and takes stock of inequities in service provision.

The report also discusses **budgetary challenges**, including a mandated cost reduction that will impact the work of the Designated Nurses.

Finally, the report outlines future goals, such as improving **health literacy for young people** transitioning out of care and supporting Southwark based **residential care facilities**.

# Purpose of Report

- Annual update on health outcomes and services
- Covers children and young people in care and care leavers
- Includes performance, quality improvement and strategic priorities
- Provides an update on changes to the ICB landscape
- Highlights quality improvement initiatives undertaken

# Looking back to look forward – Summary of progress 2023 -2026

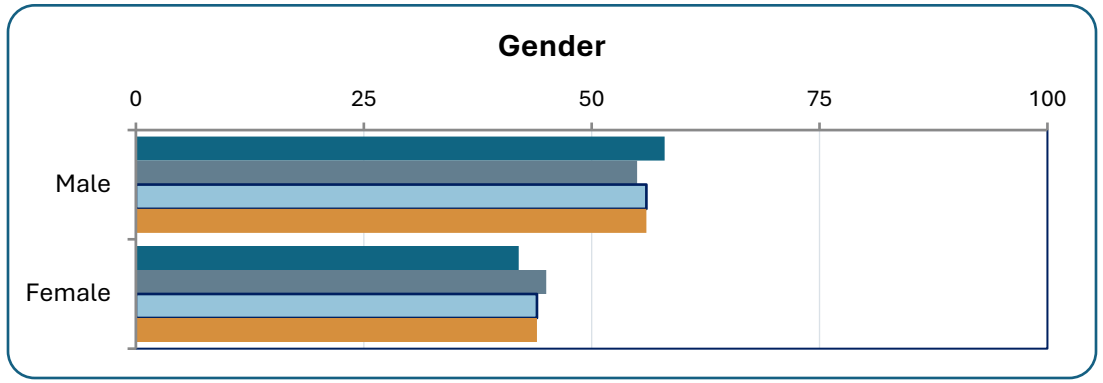
- Expansion of the Looked After Children's Health team, including a specialist fixed term post funded through Health Inequalities for children placed out of borough.
- Developed and sustained a fast-track neurodiversity assessment pathway in partnership with Mental Health Services for children in care and those on child protection plans.
- Influenced commissioning arrangements for Drug and Substance Misuse services to better meet the needs of looked after children and care leavers.
- Embedded free prescription certificates offer for care leavers across South East London
- Supported the opening of Southwark's first residential children's home through training, audits and reviews, contributing to an outstanding OFSTED rating.
- Progressed work with CAMHS and Speakerbox to improve direct access to mental health support for 16+ young people, alongside development of therapeutic fostering and reunification services with embedded mental health provision.
- Participated in a project across South East London to provide independent consultancy support for care leavers, improving access to employment skills and NHS job opportunities.

# Changes in the last reporting year

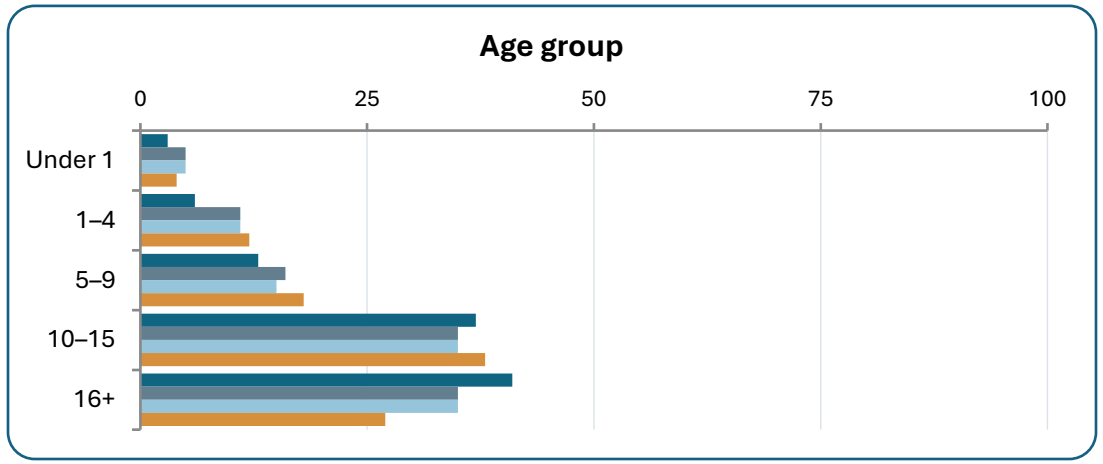
A government-mandated 35% cost reduction across South East London ICBs has led to restructuring, including fewer Designated Looked After Children Nurses (LAC) and increased caseloads. While changes for 2026/27 remain under review, partners have been kept informed, and the continuation of a Designated LAC role reflects its recognised importance within commissioning.

- **The Designated Doctor Looked After Children role is unchanged and the provision of front- line services remain unchanged.**
- **Work progresses within the ICB's to conclude the change management program with an end date of March 2027, whilst employment and human resource processes progress.**
- **Corporate Parenting will be updated once final decisions on substantive Designated Looked After Children's Nurses are completed**

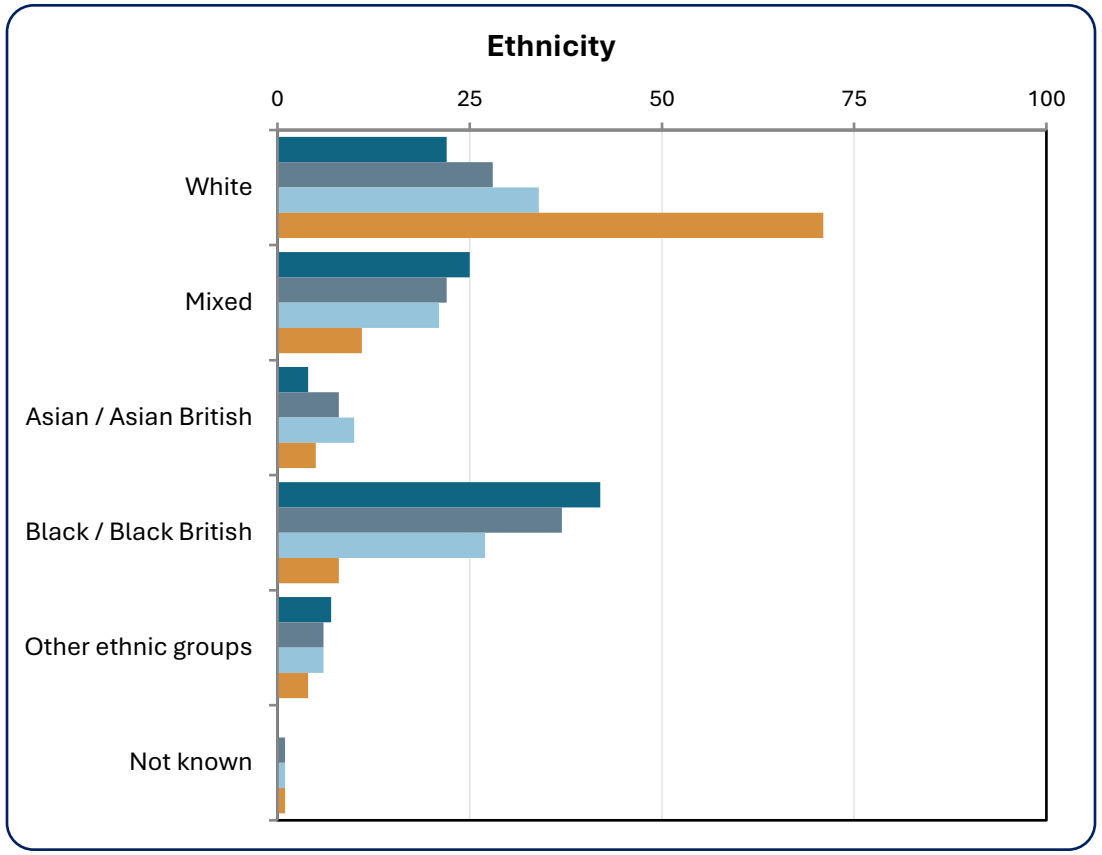
# Demographics




The gender split is similar to the national picture




62% of the children and young people are aged over ten years.




42% are recorded as black or black British in ethnicity, unlike the national picture, and higher than the local population not in care ( 36.2%)

# Trend of statutory returns- Southwark

| | 31st March | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | CLA (Children Looked After) as of 31st March | 449 | 457 | 417 | 383 | 387 | 357 |
| | CLA looked after for 12 months continuously as of March 31st | 337 | 317 | 346 | 276 | 263 | 212 |
| **Key performance Indicators** | Health Assessments up to date | 97% | 94.6% | 98% | 97% | 98.2% | 99.1% |
| | Immunisations up to date | 86% | 82.3% | 65% | 69.2% | 80% | 80% |
| | Dental Assessments up to date | 30% | 57.4% | 76% | 84% | 90% | 91.3% |
| | Developmental assessments up to date (under 5's) | 72% | 100% | 79% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| | Substance misuse | 3% | 5.4% | 8% | 13% | 15.3% | 11.3% |
| | SDQ % completed | 79.9% | 79.1% | 63% | 87% | 82.4% | 75% |
| | SDQ average score | 13.9 | 13.2 | 13.5 | 14.3 | 14.0 | 12.3 |

# Analysis

A notable 12% of Southwark's children in care are **unaccompanied minors** ( UASC).

**Immunisation uptake** remains a priority, with targeted actions including additional clinics, opportunistic delivery during health assessments, and follow-up for non-attendance; however, challenges persist around coordination and consent.

**Dental access** and **health assessment completion** are strong, with proactive management of delays.

Increased recording of **substance misuse** has been reviewed, and actions have been implemented in response to Corporate Parenting Board direction, with findings reported back.

# Update of aims and ambitions 2025-2026

| To develop and build upon the influence of the voice of the child; Including the value and meaning of their health summary as they transition to adulthood. | Work continues to engage with young people, via working with Speaker Box/Leaving Care Group as they deliver on their priorities |
|---|---|
| Locally support and review guidance and support for children and young people in care who are seeking information in relation to gender identity and development | Whilst a Southwark 'wrap around service' was considered in 2024/2025 the national guidance has been revised. Children Looked After and their carers will be directed to specialist services, with support and guidance continuing at a local level. |
| Support the planned opening of a second residential unit. Continued partnership working with Olive House | A second unit is potentially due to open towards the end of the year and they will be offered similar support /training in partnership universal health services, prior to formal opening.<br><br>Olive House has direct links to the LAC specialist health provision and the Named Nurse who offers support and guidance as required. The Designated Professionals have supported Olive House with medication audits and any significant challenges to health that arise. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Continue to develop and progress learning across the partnership. In addition, aiming to support the partnership with any identified learning needs that are specific to Children Looked After.** | **Quarterly Looked After Children Health Forums continue alongside the Safeguarding Children Health Forum.**<br><br>**Health are represented at Complex Case Panel.**<br><br>**Partnership Learning Opportunities continue.**<br><br>**Serious Case review outcomes and learning events are shared.** |
| Develop a specific pathway to help young people leaving care to understand their health history and build confidence in managing their health independently | Work continues with engaging young people in how this can be promoted.<br><br>Speaker Box have been approached to support promotion of the importance of the health summary. |
| Clarity on data regarding CLA identified within GP patient recording systems with a diagnosis of ASD/LD | The Named GP reviewed data collection across Southwark GP practices and identified variation across practices.<br><br>Next steps include promoting standardised practice across primary care In South-East London |

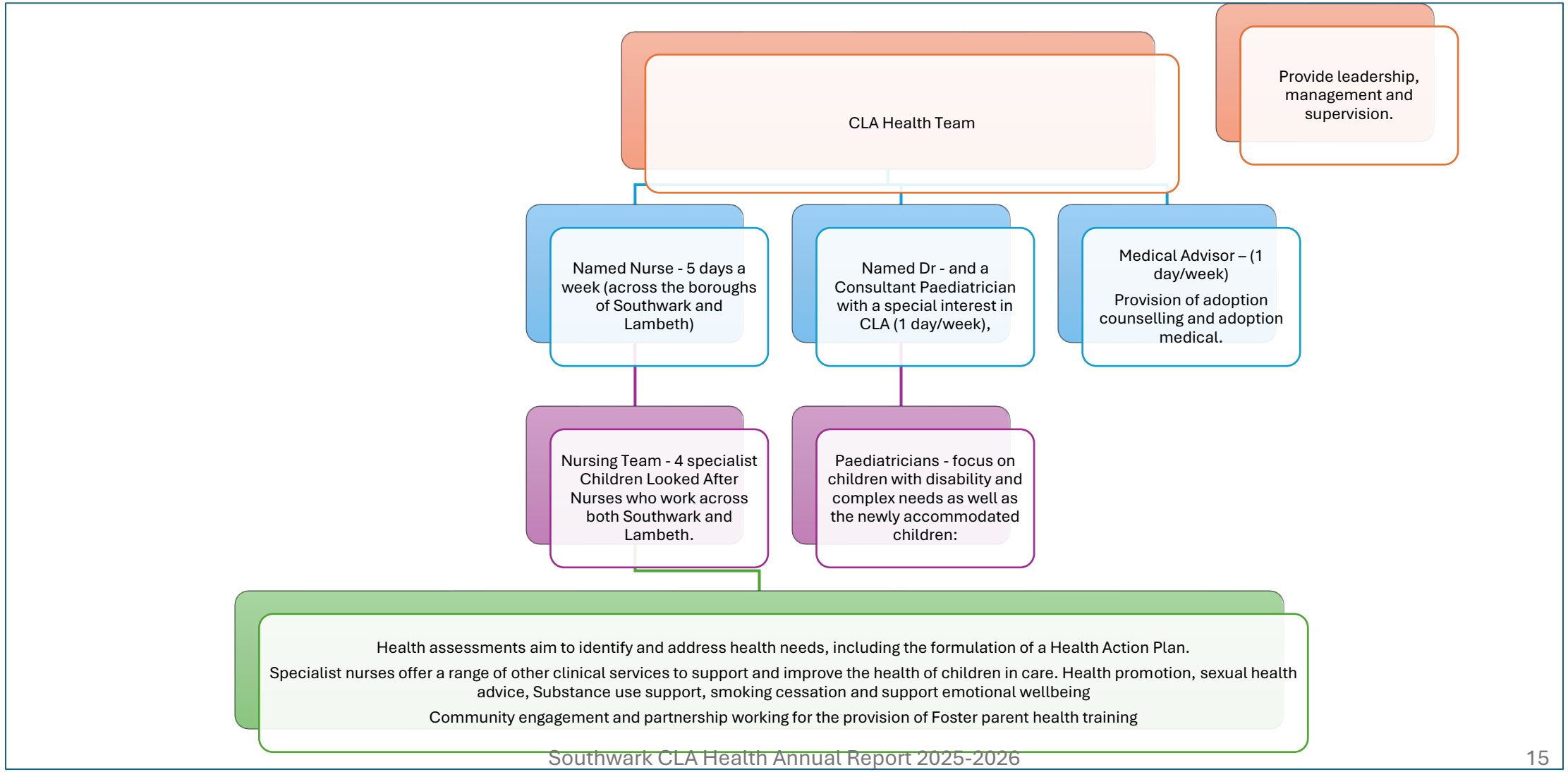
| | |
|---|---|
| Continue to progress the joint neuro-diversity assessment clinic developed and commenced by Designated Doctor and Mental Health Leads, to expedite ARD(Autism and Related Disorders) assessments for Children Looked After and Children who have a Child Protection Plan. | Following its success this has been embedded in practice and is showing positive results.<br>The challenge remains in the identified national issue of assessment delays for those children placed out of borough.<br><br>This supports our children in accessing additional services in a timely manner.<br>Performance<br>- Average wait: ~8–10 months ( approaching 24 months in mainstream ARD clinics)<br>- Peak: ~12 months (late 2025)<br>- Current trend: improving (~7 months)<br><br>Diagnostic outcomes<br>- ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder): ~60%<br>- Non-ASD: ~25%<br>- Other dx: ~10%<br>- Pending: ~10%<br><br>~50–55% of referrals → ASD diagnosis<br>Strong clinical targeting |

| | |
|---|---|
| Work has been progressing across the partnership to ensure that looked after children are highlighted within the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategic groups/delivery including those on the Dynamic Support register (DSR) | All children looked after who are identified as having SEND needs are identified within the health needs tracker irrespective of the place that they reside. Identified health needs that are outstanding are reviewed every quarter to establish progress.<br><br>The Designated Professionals secured money following a bid within Health Inequalities funding for a Specialist Nurse to have distinct oversight of children residing out of borough. This post has been agreed and at time of reporting is out to advert. |

## 2026 -2027 Aims and Ambitions

The strategic priorities identified include improving understanding of **SEND & neurodiversity**, improving **engagement** with young people, **supporting Southwark residential** provision, progressing **ICB system changes**, strengthening **multi-agency safeguarding**, and ensuring children's health (physical, mental and emotional) needs are **reflected in commissioning**.

# CLA Health team – GSTT



# Quality Improvement

| Name of project | Findings and recommendations |
|---|---|
| **Improving the Accuracy and Accessibility of Health Implications in Looked After Children Reports: A Systematic Update of the Evelina London CLA Database** | **Context**<br>Children in care (Looked After Children) require comprehensive health assessments. Clinicians produce detailed reports for social workers and caregivers, including condition-specific health implications to guide care and support. Health implications are usually included in reports.<br><br>**The Problem**<br>The existing database had significant issues:<br>The CLA team undertook a structured review and reorganised the database into seven clear categories:<br>Neonatal Factors<br>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)<br>Common Childhood Conditions<br>In-Utero Exposures<br>Adolescent Health Mental Health<br>Other Relevant Areas<br>Each section was updated to be accurate and evidence-based, current, and written in plain language accessible to non-medical professionals supporting the child.<br><br>**Conclusion**<br>Reviewing and updating the health implications database represents a meaningful quality improvement for the Evelina London CLA service. Ensuring information is accurate, current, clearly categorised, and accessible to nonmedical professionals has strengthened the quality of health reports supporting looked after children and those caring for them. |

# Quality Improvement

| Name of project | Findings and recommendations |
|---|---|
| **Audit of quality of health assessments for children 2025-2026** | Timely & high-quality assessments are vital to monitor the health, emotional, behavioural and developmental needs of the CLA population.<br><br>**Design**<br>The audit tool in the Appendix H of Payment by Result Guidance (DH 2013-14) was used to assess quality.<br>The case mix was selected randomly to include 18 Review Health Assessments, completed by doctors and CLA nurse team. The auditors were asked to identify whether the chosen criteria were present/reported to have been discussed in the Part C report of the health assessment. In the absence of this we ticked no.<br><br>**Strengths:**<br>Comprehensive medical and social histories<br>Strong documentation of the child's voice<br>Appropriate referrals and clear recommendations<br>Consistent assessment of emotional wellbeing and development<br><br>**Areas for Improvement:**<br>Consistency in documentation<br>Preventative health discussions<br>Multi-agency information gathering<br><br>**Recommendations:**<br>Improve consent processes and recording<br>Strengthen health promotion conversations<br>Enhance recognition of neurodevelopmental needs |

# Quality Improvement

| Name of project | Findings and recommendations |
|---|---|
| **Improving access and overview of CLA health/emotional well being needs: The Health Needs Tracker**<br><br>**Re-developed 2026 – ongoing with yearly updates** | **Context**<br>Children and young people (CYP) who are looked after (LAC) are at increased risk of unmet physical, emotional, and safeguarding needs. Currently, information relevant to their health and wellbeing is often held across multiple systems, which can lead to fragmentation, delays in care, and missed risks. The development of a Health Needs Tracker aims to provide a single, integrated system to collate and visualise key health, emotional, and risk indicators for all CYP looked after by the Borough of Southwark, supporting proactive, coordinated care.<br><br>**The Problem**<br>There was no one place to access the overall needs of Lambeth CLA cohort. The health needs tracker was designed and implemented to consolidate key physical health, emotional wellbeing, and risky behaviours for all CYP looked after by Southwark, to enable improved identification of need and timely, coordinated interventions and review<br><br>**Objectives**<br>Developed centralised system to capture relevant CLA data<br>Improved visibility of health and emotional needs with RAG rating<br>Enhanced risk identification<br>Reduced delay in follow-up care<br><br>**Expected Impact**<br>Improved holistic understanding of CYP needs<br>Earlier identification of health and safeguarding risks<br>Better multi-agency coordination and communication<br>Enhanced outcomes for CYP looked after<br><br>**Recommendations to follow 2026-2027 as this is ongoing work** |

# Summary of Annual Data and Key Performance

| | 2023/34 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Initial health assessment for children looked after 20+ days | 117 | 117 | 110 |
| New accommodations of looked after children 20+ days | 155 | 149 | 137 |
| % IHAs on time (or not yet due) | 75% | 79% | 78% |

| IHA Performance Summary | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | IHA Breakdown | Referral received within 5 working days | Appointment within 20 days of referral | Appointment within 20 days of BLA |
| **167** | 157 SWK<br>10 OOB | 25% | 91% | 78% |

| RHA Performance Summary | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Total** | RHA Breakdown | Health Assessments up to date |
| **370** | Nurses 252<br>Paediatrician: 106<br>OOB: 12 *(completed by other CLA teams)*<br>Placed in Borough: 33 *(completed by GSTT for other CLA teams)* | 98% |

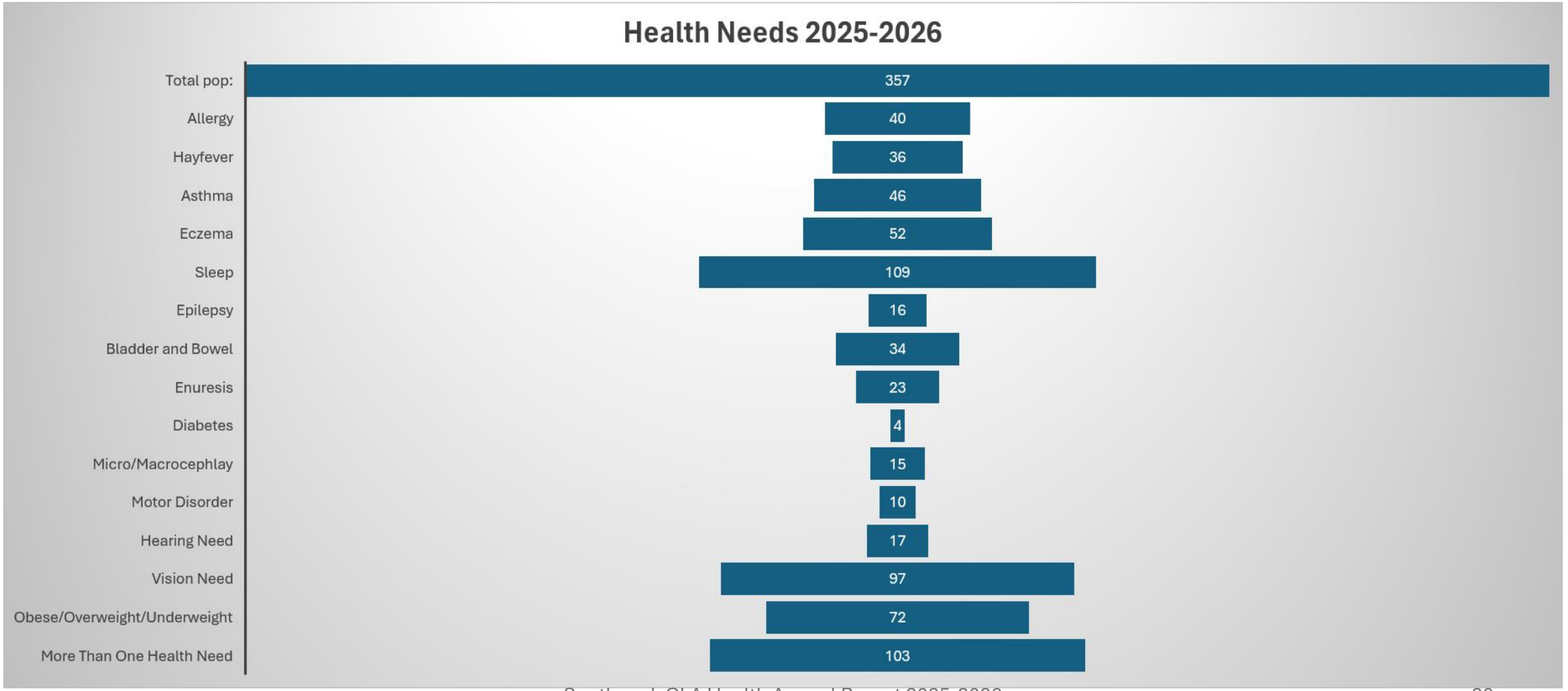
**Return of Part C ( Statutory health assessment report) :**
63% of reports were returned within 10 working days of appointment and 83% of reports were returned within 20 working days. This is an improvement from 2025 and remains an area of focus.

**Care Leavers Health Summaries:**
79 Young people required a CLHS and 100% were completed by the end of the year – Considerable improvement from 2024/25

**Adult health Summaries** Medical Advisor completed AH reports (MA Summary): 179 : 96 for fostering, 32 adoption and 51 Special Guardianship

# Identified Health Needs of Southwark CLA Population

Health needs tracker data collection (12/06/2026)



# Highlights of CLA Health Needs 2025-2026

Health needs tracker data collection (12/06/2026)

## Safeguarding:

Identifying and responding to risk remains a key priority, with missing episodes (19%) and YJS involvement (10%) requiring sustained multi-agency support and enhanced health needs assessment.

## Learning Needs:

SEMH ( social/emotional and mental health ) needs is the highest need identified (40%), with Autism (24%) ; ADHD (23%); SLCN( speech, language and communication needs)  (17%) and dyslexia (5%) remaining significant. Appropriate management continues via IHA/RHA pathways, with ongoing support with referrals occurring within the partnership

## Lifestyle:

Key concerns include cannabis use (21%), vaping (14%), and sexual activity (13%); smoking (6%) and alcohol (5%) are lower but still relevant. Ongoing harm reduction work and substance use conversations will continue. Improved Sexual health support, condom distribution and sexual health testing are identified as priorities for 2026-27

# CLA Health Service feedback 2025-2026

**Service user feedback**

- Very **thorough and kind** approach to work
- **Good reminders**, **good communication** from booking team
- Doctor was **amazing and helpful**
- I had the **opportunity to discuss my concerns** with the nurse, we had a long chat

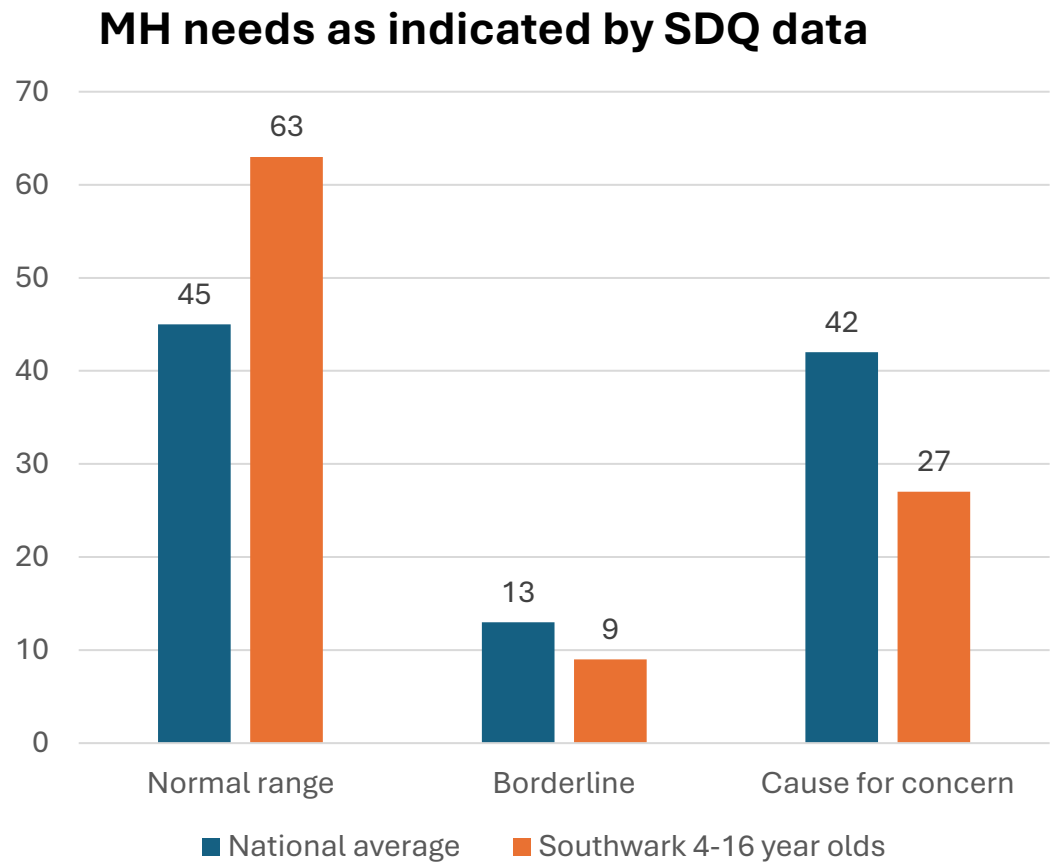
- **Foster parent training feedback**

What carers said

- Helping to **promote the health** of the looked after child in care
- **Great to meet** some of the team and hear about the service
- It gave me a **better understanding** of things such as ADHD
- The course was **useful**
- **Engaging** second half of the foster training. The first part was very **basic** and gave no strategies for making the various health needs happen
- **Very useful** refreshers course.

# Focus on mental health

# Monitoring our children and young people's mental health




- In line with national requirements we currently monitor our children's mental health with the SDQ – we had SDQ scores for 73% of our children at year end 2025/6 (lower than the 78% UK average)
- Encouragingly, significantly more of our children appear to be scoring in the normal range than the UK average (63% compared to 45%)

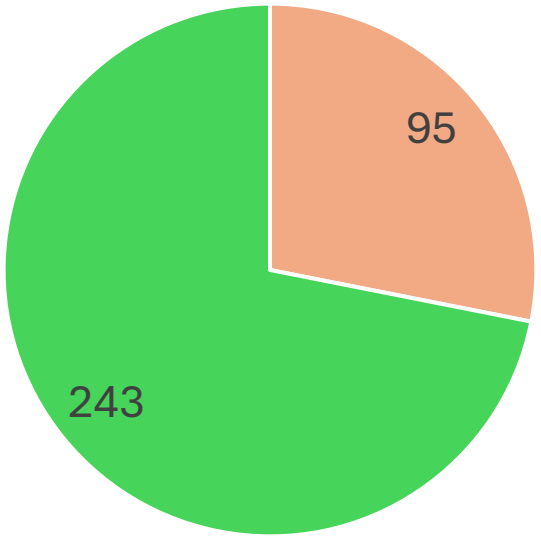
# Mental Health Provision

Southwark's looked after children continue to benefit from access to an array of mental health provision:

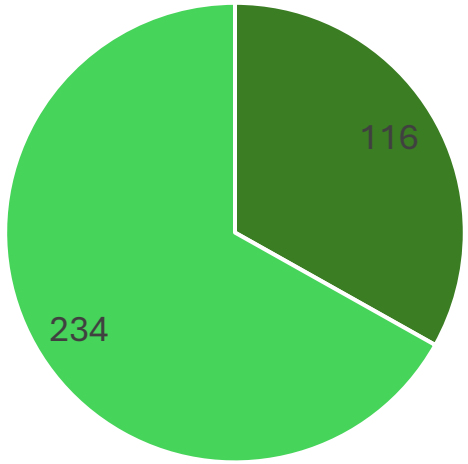
- **For all our children in care and our careleavers**
  - Embedded clinicians employed by the local authority advise SWs/PAs and provide direct support as needed
- **Children up to the age of 18**
  - our specialist NHS CAMHS provision (Carelink)
  - our Open Access CAMHS provision (The Nest)
- **18-25 year olds**
  - NHS AMHS provision
  - our Open Access CAMHS provision (The Nest)
- **Children/young people out of borough**
  - Carelink if within the SLAM boroughs
  - Local CAMH/AMH services out-of-borough
  - Private providers

# Positively, the number of our looked after children recorded as receiving mental health services in 2025-26 exceeds the number of children whose SDQ indicates 'cause for concern'

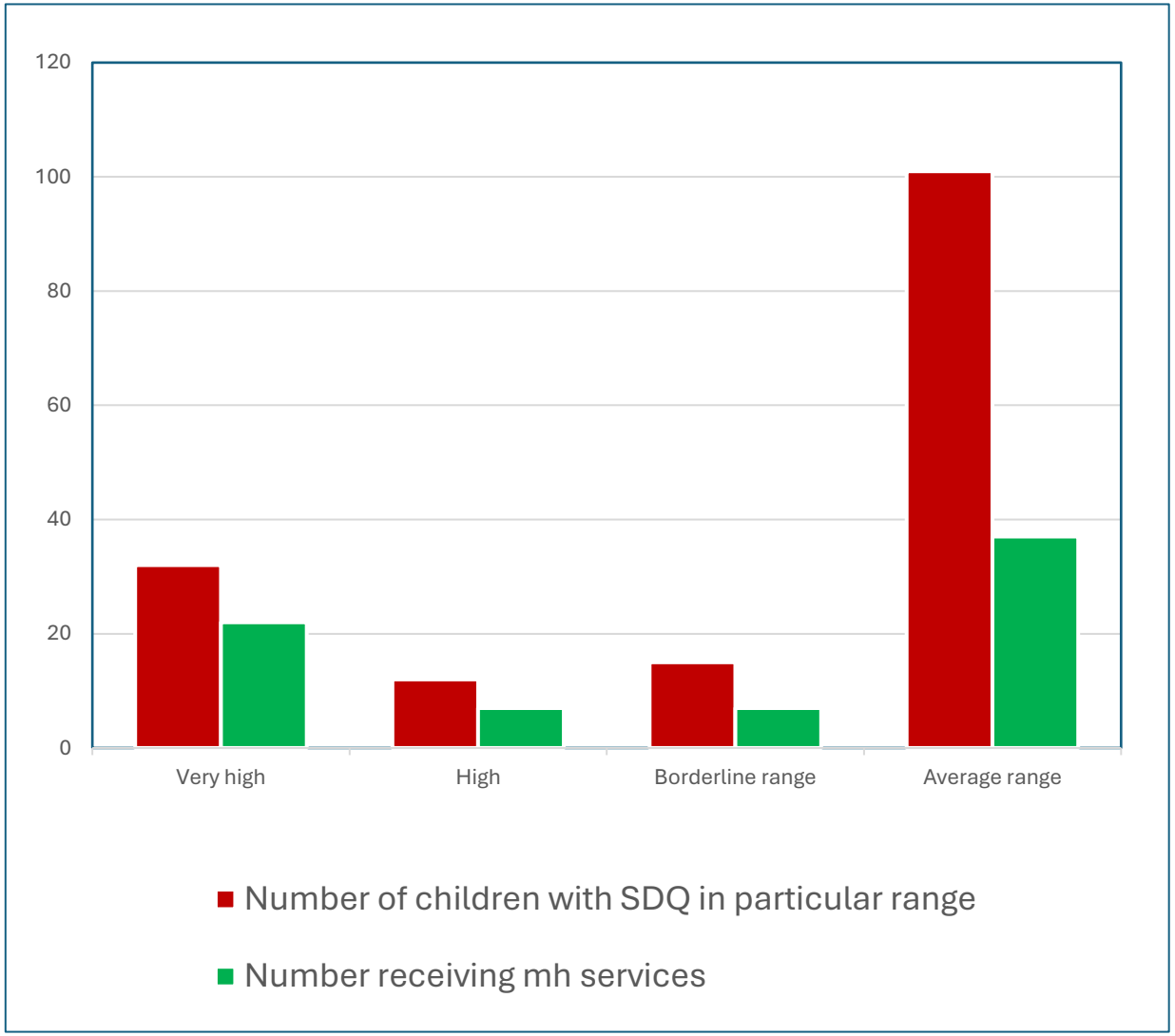
**Estimated number of looked after children in need of mental health services (extrapolated from SDQ scores)**




**Number of children recorded as receiving mental health services in 2025-6 by service**



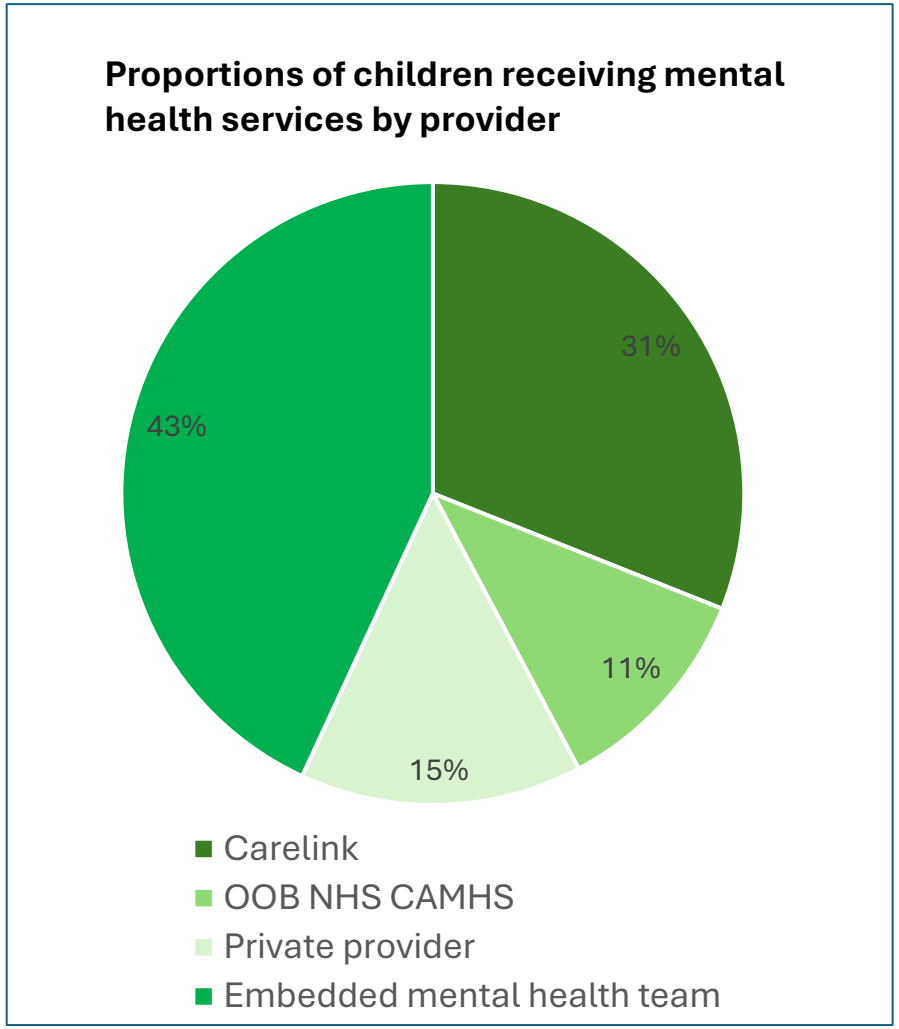
The data also shows us that the number of children who are in receipt of mental health services follows the pattern of level of need (according to SDQ)




62

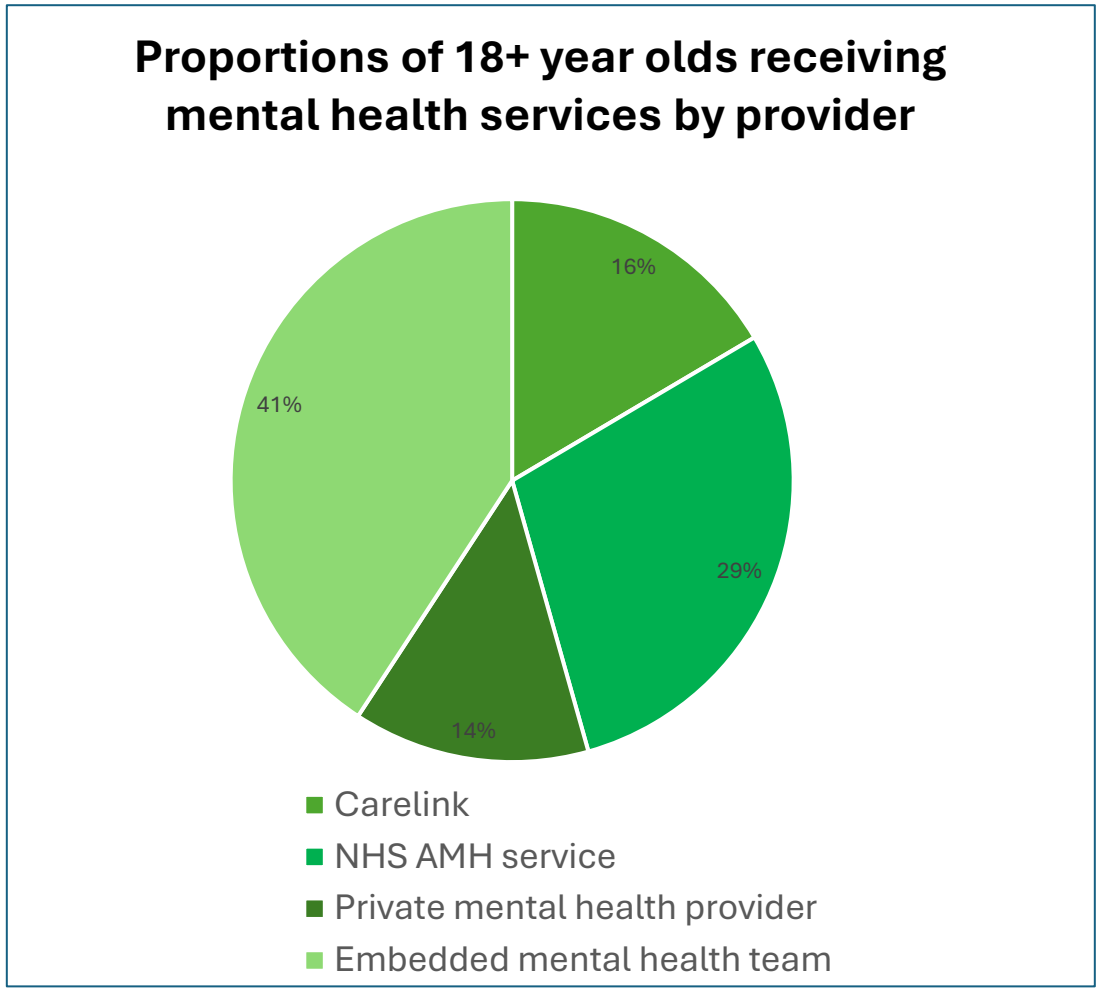
Our information tells us that over the last year our children were mainly accessing support via Carelink and the embedded mental health team, with additional children receiving support from NHS CAMH services from other boroughs or private providers.

NB it is likely that more children were receiving support from Carelink/other services than recorded - due to lack of administrative support there was a recording issue in the last few months of 25-26

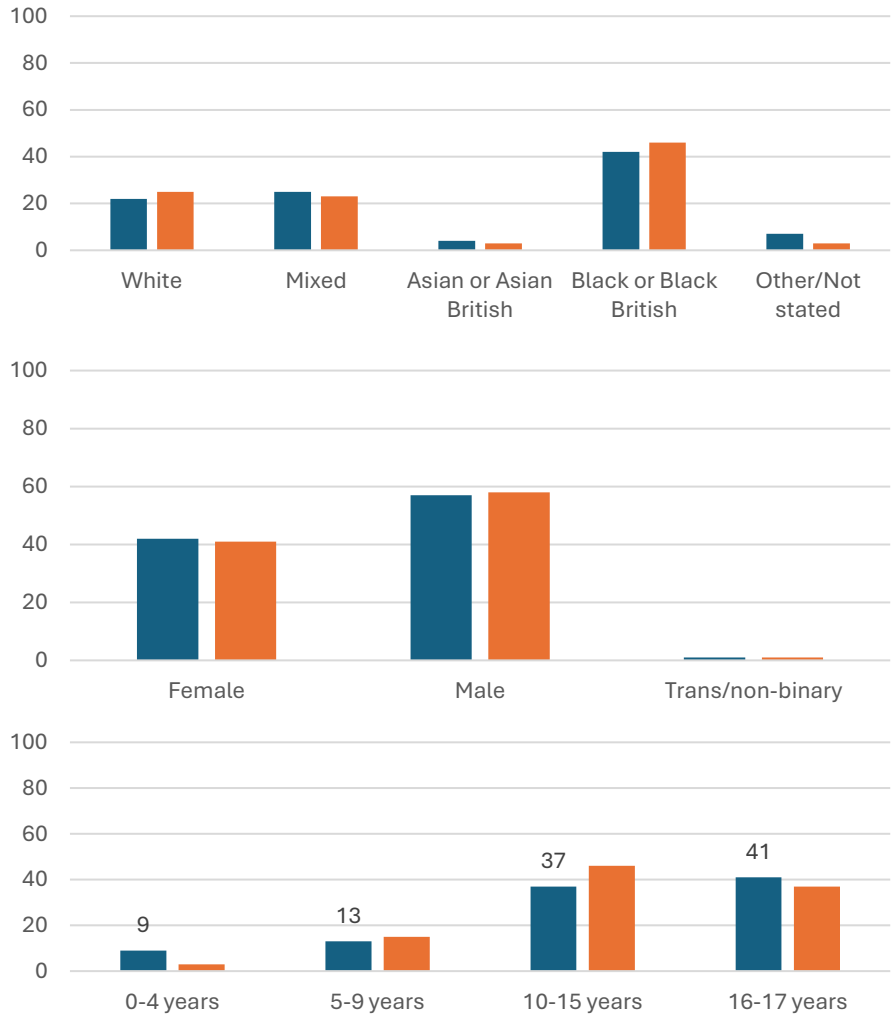


We know less about our 18+ care experienced young people, as they may access services independently.

Of our 498 18+ year olds with an allocated worker , we know that 122 (24%) received mental health services in 2025/26, mainly from our embedded mental health team's specialist 18+ provision.



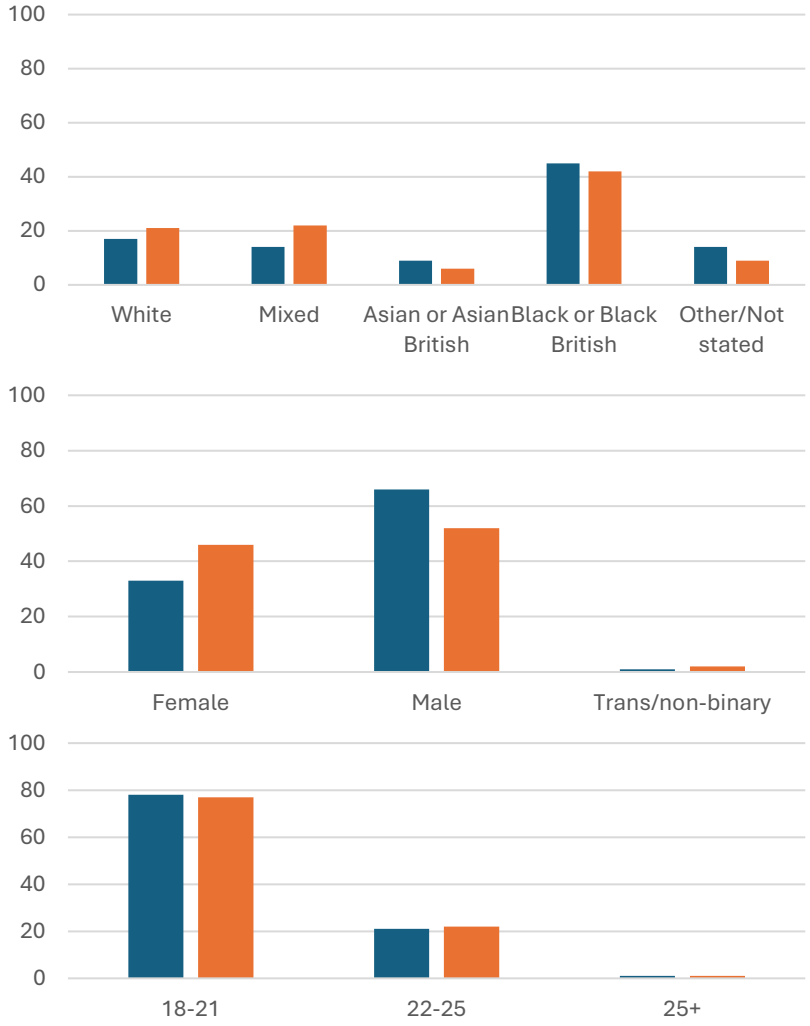
# Equity of access to mental health services for our under 18s




Our data on access to services by ethnicity and gender does not indicate any concerns about disproportionality

Mental health services are least likely to be involved with our under 4 year olds, and somewhat more likely to be involved with our 10-15 year olds than our 16-17 year olds.

# Equity of access to mental health services for our careleavers




Our data on access to services by ethnicity and age for our careleavers does not indicate any concerns about disproportionality

Our data suggests that more of our female careleavers are accessing mental health services than our male careleavers, which is worthy of further consideration in terms of accessibility.

# Adoption

The health services supporting adoption are an integral part of the GSTT CLA Health service

*"Panel is deeply appreciative of the medical advice and support provided by the agency medical advisors who sit on the Thursday panel. They are fully committed to the panel process, ask relevant questions and provide clear recommendations. It is disappointing that the Wednesday panel is unable to benefit from such expertise, as discussion about medical advisors attendance has continued for a number of years without a positive resolution." (from Panel Chair's Report 2026).*

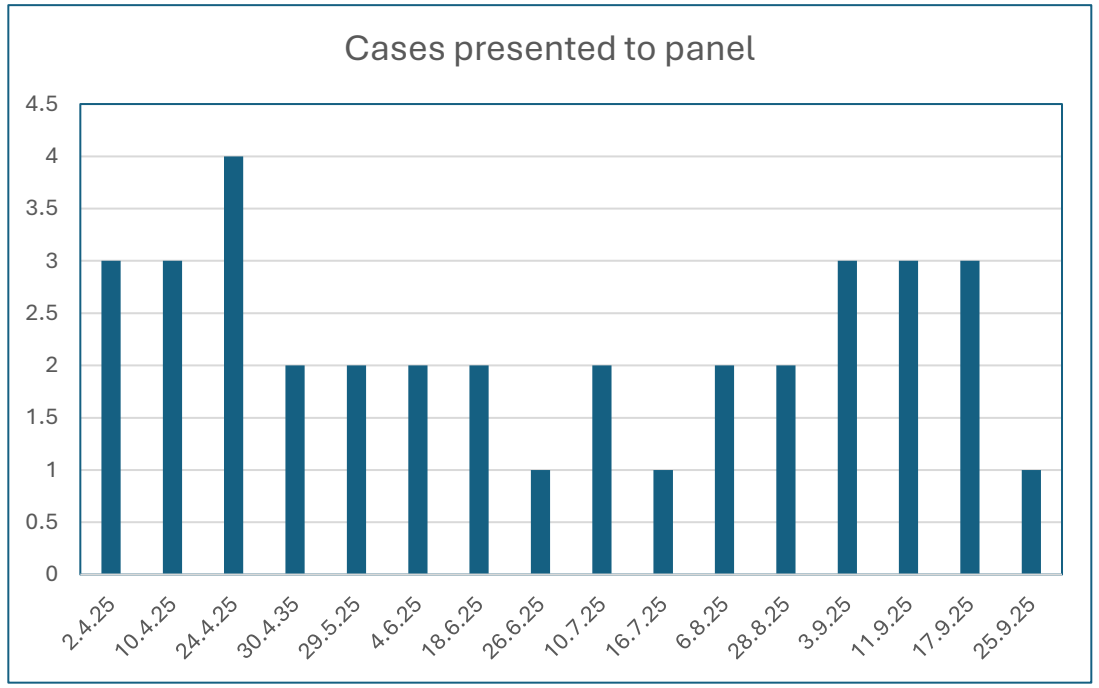
**ADOPTION ACTIVITY**

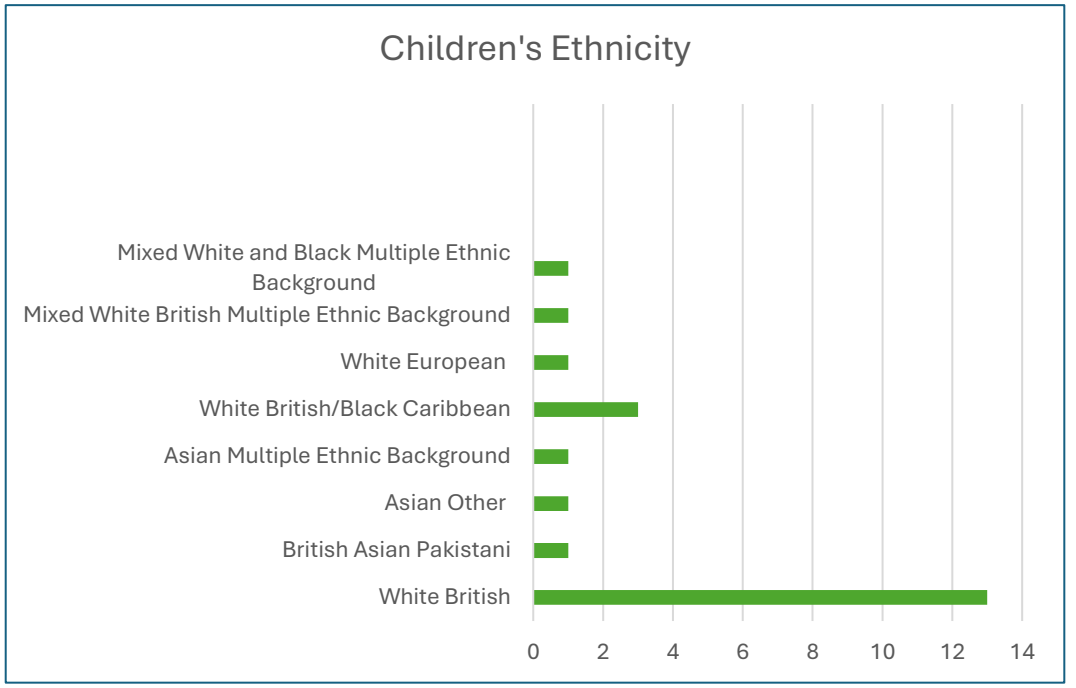
- Presenting a full and thorough assessment of the child's health and developmental needs
- Offering medical perspective on the health of prospective adopters regarding parenting – usually in the form of written reports made available to Panel
- Meeting with prospective adopters regarding ongoing health needs and any implications to future health of the child's previous life experiences/identified health conditions
- Teaching and training offered to prospective adopters and social workers
- Attending panel

# Panel Chairs' Report for period 1 April 2025– 30 September 2025

**Overall panel activity**

**A total of 36 cases were heard during this period involving 14 approvals, 1 of which also considered the applicants' suitability to be early permanence carers. There were 3 second time adopters and 4 foster carers seeking approval to adopt. In terms of matches, a total of 20 cases involving 23 children were presented to panel, with 3 of the cases involving sibling groups of two children. There were also 2 best-interest consented adoption cases heard during this period.**



# Conclusion

Work is progressing across all domains, with evidence of effective partnership working over the past 12 months. Overall, there have been positive improvements in how we, as Corporate Parents, collectively endeavour to ensure identified needs are met in a timely manner. We recognise the need to enable and empower both those who care for our children and young people themselves as they transition into adulthood.

NHS services are changing, with a focus on integrated health care services and neighbourhood health. This is alongside the NHS ten-year plan. There is a renewed focus on how services are commissioned, Safeguarding within the ICB will work as a “cluster arrangement” across SEL and SWL which will be shared in the forthcoming months once the change management process has been finalised, and commissioning ‘blueprint’ is reviewed and progressed as directed by Senior Executives.

Specialist practitioners within CLA health services continue to advocate for and promote positive health outcomes, both strategically within commissioning arrangements, and through the provision of health and mental health services for Southwark Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

We will build on the health needs tracker to further analyse and understand variations in health needs across different ethnic groups, ensuring that specific risk factors are identified and addressed.

Agenda Item 9

| | |
|---|---|
| **Meeting Name:** | Corporate Parenting Committee |
| **Date:** | 21 October 2026 |
| **Report title:** | Corporate Parenting Committee – Work Plan 2026-27 |
| **Ward(s) or groups affected:** | All |
| **Classification:** | Open |
| **Reason for lateness (if applicable):** | Not applicable |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the corporate parenting committee agree the approach and work plan as set out in 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 2026-2027 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 an annual 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.

**National and local context for care leavers**

4. There is national momentum towards improving outcomes for care leavers. The government introduced 'Keep on Caring' strategy in 2016, increased council statutory duties to care leavers in the Children and Social Work Act in 2017, appointed a national Adviser for Care Leavers who produced a report in 2018, alongside the national launch of the Care Covenant. The council has responded to the various recommendations, for example by prioritising education, employment and training outcomes for care leavers in the Council Plan and developing the care leaver local offer as well as increasing service capacity for the extended personal adviser duties to 25.

5. Although much has been done to improve services and outcomes for care leavers, the council has an ambition to go above and beyond, by creating the best Leaving Care Service possible, by co-designing this with young people, learning from other organisations and trialling new ideas to test what works best.

6. In 2017 the council and Catch22 received funding from the DfE Social Care Innovation Programme to work in partnership to design and test new ways of working to support care leavers. The Care Leavers Partnership (CLP) works to improve outcomes for young people in Southwark by working across boundaries, reshaping the service delivery model, unlocking capacity in the community, and co-designing solutions. There are a number of strands that the CLP is working on to achieve our goals.

**KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

7. The corporate parenting committee review and update the work plan each

meeting. Following the beginning of the municipal year 2019-20 and reflecting on the momentum towards improving outcomes for care leavers, the opportunity has been taken to review how the committee works and present proposals to refresh this in relation to: non-voting co-opted members; committee approach; and work plan and suggested agenda items.

**Corporate Parenting Committee work plan – 2026-27**

An indicative work plan is set out below:

**21 October 2026**

- Speakerbox update
- Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Annual health report for looked after children

**16 December 2026**

- Speakerbox update
- Annual Headteachers report
- Independent Reviewing Officer annual report.

**24 February 2027**

- Speakerbox update
- Annual adoption report
- Annual fostering report.

**21 April 2027**

- Speakerbox update
- Corporate parenting annual report.

**SpeakerBox**

8. 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 particularly service planning and design. 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 and councillors.

**Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts**

**Community impact statement**

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

**Equalities (including socio-economic) impact and health impact statement**

6. Relevant issues will be addressed in the reports submitted to the corporate parenting committee.

**Climate change implications**

7. The work plan process for the committee has no direct implications.

**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<br>160 Tooley Street<br>London SE1 2QH | Paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk |
| **Web link:**<br>http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=129&Year=0 | | |

**APPENDICES**

| No. | Title |
|---|---|
| None | |

**AUDIT TRAIL**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Lead Officer** | Alasdair Smith, Director of Children and Families | |
| **Report Author** | Beverley Olamijulo/ Paula Thornton, Constitutional Team | |
| **Version** | Final | |
| **Dated** | 12 October 2026 | |
| **Key Decision?** | No | |
| **CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER** | | |
| **Officer Title** | **Comments Sought** | **Comments included** |
| Director of Law and Governance | No | No |
| Strategic Director of Resources | No | No |
| **Executive Member** | No | No |
| **Date final report sent to Constitutional Team** | | 12 October 2026 |

**CORPORATE PARENTING DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)** **MUNICIPAL YEAR 2026-27**

**NOTE:** Original held by Constitutional Team; all amendments/queries to Paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk; Beverley.olamijulo@southwark.gov.uk

| Name | No of copies | Name | No of copies |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Membership – electronic copies**<br><br>Councillor Rebecca Corn (Chair)<br>Councillor Victor Chamberlain (Vice-Chair)<br>Councillor Natasha Ennin<br>Councillor Selena Gray<br>Councillor Suzanne Wise<br>Councillor Patrickson Amechi Obanya<br><br>**Membership – paper copies**<br><br>Councillor Jasmine Ali | 1 | Paula Thornton/Beverley Olamijulo | 6 |
| **Reserve members – electronic copy**<br><br>Councillor Francesco Guerrieri<br>Councillor Felicia Johnston<br>Councillor Sunny Lambe<br>Councillor Dean Peters<br>Councillor Jane Salmon<br>Councillor Janice White<br><br>**Co-opted members**<br><br>Mark Kerr (email)<br>Rosamond Marshall (email)<br><br>**Children's Services - electronic versions (No hard copy)**<br><br>Alasdair Smith<br>Helen Woolgar<br>Elaine Reid<br><br>**Legal – electronic version (no hard copy)**<br><br>Joy Hopkinson | | **Total: 7**<br><br>**Dated:** 13 October 2026 | |