

<b>Item No.</b> 7.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 3 November 2021	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Fostering Service Annual Report 2020-2021	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Alasdair Smith Director, Children and Families	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Corporate Parenting Committee note the Annual report of Southwark Fostering Service.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The purpose of the annual report document is to report on the activity of the Fostering Service fulfilling obligations in the Fostering Services Regulations (2011) to review and improve the quality of care, and National Minimum Standards (2011) to report to the executive side of the local authority. It will cover: performance and developments in Southwark's delivery of fostering services; how the council is compliant with key national minimum standards; and the service offered to those seeking to foster and those children in care who are fostered.
3. The pandemic added significant pressure to the Fostering Service as several carers with underlying health conditions made the difficult decision not be available to foster children due to their own household circumstances. Southwark foster carers and staff in the Fostering Service have experienced huge loss during the pandemic. Many foster carers were touched by loss in their close families and very sadly one foster carer died in January 2021 and a Fostering Team Manager died in March 2021, both from COVID-19.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. Southwark Fostering Service continues to provide good quality care for a significant proportion of children and young people in care to the council. The Fostering Annual Report for 2020- 2021 sets out in the Appendix the key areas for consideration.

## **Policy framework implications**

5. The Borough Plan has a commitment to a great start in life for all children and young people in the borough. This particularly has in mind those who are in care, for whom Southwark foster carers are a key part of ensuring the Borough Plan commitment is met.

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

### **Community impact statement**

6. Southwark is committed to ensuring children looked after by its Fostering Service, from all parts of the community, are enabled to live close to their communities as far as possible and appropriate and with families able to meet most of their needs.
7. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, lays out the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. The council's [Approach to Equality](#) commits the council to ensuring that equality is an integral part of our day to day business.
8. The Council's Children and Families Directorate involves working closely with all relevant stakeholders and partners across the sector and collectively we are committed to upholding the responsibilities towards advocating the Public Sector Equality Duty and complying with the Equalities Act 2010.
9. The PSED enables public bodies to consider the diverse needs of groups and have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Due regard is about considering the different needs of protected characteristics in relation to the three parts of the duty.
10. The Equalities Act 2010 define the following as protected characteristics; age; disability, gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

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

11. Southwark foster carers are a diverse group in respect of ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality and disability. They are the heart of our services for children in care. The service is highly committed to challenging all forms of

discrimination and seeking to uphold and have an action plan to address anti-racist practice and the commitments of Southwark stands together.

**Health impact statement**

12. Not applicable.

**Climate change implications**

13. Not applicable.

**Resource implications**

14. Not applicable.

**Legal implications**

15. Not applicable.

**Financial implications**

16. Not applicable.

**Consultation**

17. Not applicable

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark's Approach to Equality	Safeguarding and Care, Children and Families, Children's and Adults' Services 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Children's and Adults' Services Tooley Street 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	Helen Woolgar 0207 525 1973
<b>Link (please copy and paste into browser):</b> <a href="https://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/equality-and-diversity/equality-objectives">https://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/equality-and-diversity/equality-objectives</a>		
Southwark's Borough Plan 2020-22	Safeguarding and Care, Children and Families, Children's and Adults' Services 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Children's and Adults' Services Tooley Street 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	Helen Woolgar 0207 525 1973
<b>Link:</b> <a href="https://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/fairer-future/council-plan">https://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/fairer-future/council-plan</a>		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Annual Report – Southwark Fostering Service 2020-2021

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	David Quirke Thornton, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Helen Woolgar, Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Care	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	25 October 2021	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Director of Law and Governance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		25 October 2021