

Item No. 9.	Classification: Open	Date: 3 November 2021	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Self-Evaluation of Social Work Practice with Children in Care and Care Leavers	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Alasdair Smith, Director of Children and Families	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Corporate Parenting Committee note the self-evaluation of social work practice for children in care and care leavers June 2021.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The self evaluation of social work practice in children's social care is prepared annually by the Children and Families Division following the close of the performance year. It follows the framework set out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate Ofsted in their Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) guidance
3. For more than thirteen years Southwark has maintained a record of good rated services to children and their families, and this was reaffirmed in June 2018 and January 2019 with a positive SEND Inspection and the Focused Visit to our Care Service under the new ILACS framework. It was also acknowledged in the [Covid 19 Focused Visit](#) by Ofsted in September 2020.
4. Facilitating and achieving the best outcomes possible for the children, young people and families that we work with, remains central to our goals for a fairer future for all vulnerable children and families in Southwark.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The self evaluation follows a standard format, asking us to consider
 - what we know about the impact and quality of social work practice
 - how we know it
 - what are our plans for improvement

6. The Ofsted Focussed Visit for children in care in January 2019 involved inspectors looking at a range of evidence; our threshold information, performance management, quality assurance activity and children's case records. Meaningful case focussed dialogue with social workers and managers that also evaluated the effectiveness of supervision and the range of supports available to social workers, was fundamental to the process and enabled staff to engage fully with the visit. As a result feedback was broadly positive with recognition by Inspectors of the significant improvements made to the Care Service since the Inspection in March 2017.
7. The Ofsted Focused Visit for Covid 19 in September 2021 was overall very positive about the progress we were making despite the pandemic, while acknowledging some areas still to improve and develop. It stated "*children in care have continued to make some progress despite the unprecedented impact of COVID-19. They live with carers who are committed to their well-being and they benefit from regular and sensitive interventions by their social workers. Well considered decisions are being made about children's care placements in difficult and complex circumstances*".
8. The self-evaluation set out in Appendix 1 is our second self-evaluation under the ILACS inspection framework and reviews the quality and impact of social work practice for children in care and care leavers specifically. It originates in the local self-evaluations completed by individual services which takes account of the findings of previous Ofsted inspection activity including the Focused Visits of 2019 and 2021, and along with related plans will serve as a key tool to inform service development and improvement across the Children's & Families Division throughout 2021/22.

Policy framework implications

9. 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 Ofsted have a key role as our regulatory inspectorate, in ensuring we meet our legal obligations.

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

Community impact statement

10. The decision to note this report has been judged to have no or a very small impact on local people and communities.
11. The work of the children's social care is intended to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and as far as possible ensure that this is within their own families.

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. 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

16. Not applicable.

Health impact statement

17. Not applicable.

Climate change implications

18. Not applicable.

Resource implications

19. Not applicable.

Legal implications

20. Not applicable.

Financial implications

21. Not applicable.

Consultation

22. Not applicable.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark's Approach to Equality	Children and Families, Children's and Adults' Services 4 th Floor, Children's and Adults' Services Tooley Street 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	Michael Crowe 0207 525 1832
https://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/equality-and-diversity/equality-objectives		
Southwark's Borough Plan 2020-22	Children and Families, Children's and Adults' Services 4 th Floor, Children's and Adults' Services Tooley Street 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	Michael Crowe 0207 525 1832
https://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/fairer-future/council-plan		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Self Evaluation of Social Work Practice for Children in Care and Care Leavers June 2021

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director, Children and Adults	
Report Author	Michael Crowe, Service Development Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	3 November 2021	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Governance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	25 October 2021	