

<b>Item No.</b> 9.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 20 April 2022	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Annual Report on the Health of Looked After Children (LAC): 2020-2021	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		Children in Care of LB Southwark	
<b>From:</b>		Dr. Stacy John-Legere, Designated Dr for Looked After Children (LAC), Southwark and Michele Sault Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children, Looked After Children & Care Leavers	

## RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the corporate parenting committee note the report contents.
2. To note further updates provided via:
  - Southwark Corporate Parenting panel – February 2022
  - Southwark Borough Based Board – quarterly.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The Designated Professionals for Looked After Children (CLA) provide, on behalf of the CCG, an annual report to inform the GSTT NHS Foundation Trust/ Evelina London (provider) board and the Southwark commissioners.<sup>1</sup>
4. The purpose of the CLA annual report includes the following:<sup>2</sup>
  - The delivery of health services for children and young people looked after should be evaluated annually by the designated doctor and nurse. It should consider the above and the effectiveness of health care planning for individual children and young people looked after, and describe progress towards relevant performance indicators and targets.

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<sup>1</sup>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/276500/promoting\\_health\\_of\\_looked\\_after\\_children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/276500/promoting_health_of_looked_after_children.pdf)

- The results of any independent local studies of the accessibility of health assessments to the children and young people themselves, to foster carers, parents, social workers and to health professionals.
  - Presentation to the Chief Executive of the clinical commissioning group (CCG) who commissioned it and the Director of Children’s Services.
5. This report should be read in conjunction with the following reports provided by Southwark CCG:
- Safeguarding Children’s Annual Report
  - Safeguarding Adult’s Annual Report.
6. This report should be read in conjunction with the following reports provided by Southwark Children’s Services:
- Adoption Annual Report
  - Fostering annual report
  - Report of the Head Teacher – Southwark Virtual School
  - Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

7. We define health in this document as “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. This definition underpins the work of the Designated professionals and the many teams providing services to Southwark’s looked after children. Health care forms an explicit part of care planning for looked after children.<sup>3</sup>

8. **Key Points**

This annual report covers an unprecedented period in our global lives, with all services needing to deliver services to children, young people and their families in a meaningful way whilst in a pandemic

This report highlights the delivery of health services to children and young people in care of LB Southwark during the reporting year April 2020 to March 2021. Crucially, nearly all services continued to be provided during restrictions of the pandemic; and contact maintained with the most vulnerable and their carer.

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<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/959/contents/made>

The health consequences of the pandemic are wide ranging and far reaching – from the acute and long-standing impact of the Covid-19 disease (infection related mortality to identifying and treating long-Covid) to the collateral impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing, as well as access to education; and the impact of digital and absolute poverty.

**Key messages : impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic**

- Services continued to be delivered albeit switching in modality including mental health support to children and young people we needed to be seen face-to-face but I for this not all children and young people are able to able to access video therapy in a meaningful way
- The differing rules between education and health regarding PPE use as well as rules on visitors to school establishments, made delivery of some aspects of care ( such as school observations) more challenging.
- Enhanced provision to foster carers was successful in improving placement stability enhanced support was provided to care leavers both in terms of professional as well as financial support

In addition to delivery on service specifications, commissioning considerations for the year ahead included:

- Continuing contribution to the Southwark Sufficiency strategy and delivery thereof
- Formalising service level agreements for Medical Advisor input to Adopt London South (Regional Adoption Agency)
- Ensuring parity of access to mental health services and support for Southwark looked after children and for care leavers wherever they are placed - including those in high-cost residential placements as well as those in secure accommodation
- Ensuring looked after children regain access to immunisations and dental care

**9. Statutory reporting measures 2016-2021**

	<b>31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>CLA at 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	491	461	459	<b>449</b>
	<b>CLA looked after for 12 months continuously as at</b>	347	343	307	<b>337</b>

	<b>March 31<sup>st</sup></b>				
<b>Key performance Indicators</b>	Health Assessments up to date	90%	94%	98%	<b>97%</b>
	Immunisations up to date	71%	90%	91%	<b>86%</b>
	Dental Assessments up to date	80%	79%	82%	<b>30%</b>
	Developmental assessments up to date	91% N = 10/12	82% N= 9/11	100% N= 9/9	<b>72%</b> <b>N= 18/25</b>
	Substance abuse problem	6%	4%	5%	<b>3%</b>
	SDQ % completed	84%	90%	86%	<b>94%</b>
	SDQ average score	13.9	13.9	14.1	<b>14</b>

## Analysis

### 10. Success Stories 2020-2021

- SEL partnership work – sharing of best practice
- Child being matched for long term foster placement. Placement was in jeopardy; he would have been in residential children's home if not for the funded support provided for his psychotherapy and that of his foster carers.
- Continuation of care for someone who was previously accessing local CAMHS is in a residential placement is now looked after far away from Southwark however, by use of virtual means and collaboration with the treating clinician, who knew her whilst in the family home. Diagnostic assessment for ASD will be completed by this team as opposed to having to start again afresh in a new area where waiting lists are several months to more than a year long.
- About the Clinical Service: *KB lives out of London and therefore it was paramount that we support her (particularly) in the Lockdown. The clinician has been in regular contact with KB to ensure she had access to services either in her own area or by regular t/c contacts...I would like to thank [clinician] for her: Professionalism and patience whilst working with KB. Very pleased with service that was offered to our y/p.*
- In considering young people with additional needs - Access to Speech and Language Therapy via the Virtual school – attached as a separate appendix

## 11. Strengths

- Multi-agency investment in getting it right for looked after children and careleavers.
- Improving outcomes and life chances for Looked after children and careleavers remain a Southwark Council and SEL CCG priority.
- There is a robust system in place across the partnership for constructive challenge, scrutiny and learning around issues pertaining to looked after children and careleavers.
- Strong performance on health measures is maintained.
- There remains equitable consideration of looked after children placed further away as those placed within LB Southwark boundaries.

## 12. Challenges

- There continued to be challenges in completion of initial health assessments ( IHAs) within the statutory timeframe. Resolving this is a priority for 2022-2023.
- There is a changing statutory landscape across the country resulting in difficulties in access to resources such as school placements and mental health support depending on where children are placed.
- There is an increasing complexity of individual children and the cohort as a whole – particularly around safeguarding issues such as exploitation and violence including exposure to knife crime, impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); and mental health need.
- The Covid-19 pandemic and resulting national response has posed a challenge to delivery of services. The impact of social distancing restrictions on health and education will become more apparent in the future.

## 13. Opportunities

- The Southwark Children in Care and Careleaver's Strategy 2016-2019 is due for refresh. This is an opportunity to embed strategic links with adult

services in health; education and social care to optimise transition and care across sectors to age 25years.

- Children’s Social Services have established multi-agency panels to enhance care planning and delivery for looked after children and careleavers.
- The Sufficiency Strategy and refreshed momentum of the steering group to promote delivery of improved outcomes for Southwark children looked after.
- Delivery of the NHS Long-term Plan goals and post-Covid recovery plans.
- Embedding the principles of contextual safeguarding through utilisation of the Harm Reduction Hub.
- Southwark Clinical Service project to create a system of recording mental health provision that our children and young people are receiving in order to allow us to monitor issues around access and outcomes.
- Integration of SLT service commissioned by virtual school to strengthen recognition of previously unrecognised neurodevelopmental needs.

#### 14. Threats

- Transition to adult services remains an area of further work. Ensuring a smooth transition across health and social care systems remains a challenge for a significant proportion of young people.

There is a good working knowledge across health, social care, education and the police, the local community and the voluntary sector of the issues noted above; with resulting focus and increasing coherence on strategy and delivery related to looked after children and careleavers.

#### Policy framework implications

##### The Case for Change – The independent Review of children’s social care

The devolved government commissioned an independent review of children’s social care in 2020. This ambitious review has as its objective a “bold set of recommendations that will meaningfully improve things for children and families”

The Case for change published June 2021 identifies the following high level themes:

- Support for families
- Intervention to keep children safe
- Safety, stability and love for children in care
- System factors.

The themes identified are not new, but can assist with a critical appraisal of health services provided for children and young people in care.

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

### **Community impact statement**

15. The health of looked after children is an important aspect of their care. It is hoped that the attention we give to the health and well-being of children in care makes an important impact on the community both now and in the future in relation to their health and wellbeing.

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

16. This paper applies to all children and young people in care of LB Southwark

### **Health impact statement**

17. This paper considers the health needs and access to services for children and young people in care of LB Southwark

### **Climate change implications**

18. There are no overt implications regarding climate change

### **Resource implications**

19. There are no additional resource implications at this time. The services described in the report are commissioned.

### **Legal implications**

20. There are no additional legal implications at this time.

### **Financial implications**

21. This paper is for information only. There are no financial implications attached

## Consultation

22. The annual report is written with consultation from the services provided to children and young people in care of LB Southwark
23. The voices of children and young people in care are captured in relevant sections of the report.

## SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

### Director of Law and Governance

24. Not applicable

### Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

25. Not applicable

### Other officers

26. Not applicable

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
As set out in referenced foot notes		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Annual Report of the Health of Looked After Children 2020-2021
Appendix 2	Impact report of Speech and Language Therapy Service 2021-2022
Appendix 3	PowerPoint with the key updates

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Dr. Stacy John-Legere, Designated Dr for Looked After Children, Southwark	
<b>Report Author</b>	Dr. Stacy John-Legere, Designated Dr for Looked After Children , Southwark  Michele Sault, Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children, Looked After Children & Care Leavers  Unlocking Language, Katrina Bradford & Shermeena Rabbi	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	18 February 2022	
<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>		22 February 2022