

Item No. 7.	Classification: Open	Date: 2 November 2022	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Fostering Service Annual Report 2021-22	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Care	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the corporate parenting committee note the 2021-22 Annual Report of Southwark Fostering Service.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The purpose of the annual report 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 covers: performance and developments in the council'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 and as set out in the 2020-21 annual report this included the very tragic deaths of a foster carer and a fostering team manager due to COVID-19 in 2021. The annual report for 2021-22 outlines the activity of the fostering service over that year and while there is progress and achievements it is fair to say the service are on a recovery journey from the impact of COVID-19 on the service and the fostering community it supports. In Q1 of 2022-23 there will be a new service manager joining the fostering service and progress will at that stage be further accelerated and developed with the managers and supervising social workers in the service.

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 2021-22 sets out 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. Southwark are committed throughout the sufficiency strategy to promoting local homes for Southwark children.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. The council's approach to equality commits the council to ensuring that equality is an integral part of our day-to-day business. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.

Health impact statement

12. Not applicable.

Climate change implications

13. Southwark fostering service are committed to local homes for Southwark children. More Southwark foster carers are located in or near to the borough when compared to IFA carers and residential children's homes. Supporting Southwark children to live locally will reduce travel and reduce the carbon footprint impact of supporting children living far from Southwark.

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 Directorate, Children's and Adults' Services 4 Floor, Children's and Adults' Services Tooley Street 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	Helen Woolgar 0207 525 1973
Web link (please copy and paste into browser): https://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/equality-and-diversity/equality-objectives		

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark's Approach to Equality	Safeguarding and Care, Children and Families Directorate, Children's and Adults' Services 4 Floor, Children's and Adults' Services Tooley Street 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	Helen Woolgar 0207 525 1973
Web link (please copy and paste into browser): https://www.southwark.gov.uk/news/2022/mar/southwark-s-progress-against-its-borough-plan		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Annual Report – Southwark Fostering Service 2021- 2022

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	
Report Author	Helen Woolgar, Assistant Director - Safeguarding and Care	
Version	Final	
Dated	17 October 2022	
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		24 October 2022