

Item No. 11.	Classification: Open	Date: 19 April 2023	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Overview Report of Quality and Safety Reviews of Children in Care with Disabilities and Complex Health Needs Placed in Residential Schools Registered as Children's Homes	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director of Children and Families	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the corporate parenting committee note the findings of this report, so that the welfare and care of children with disability and complex needs remains a key corporate parenting consideration.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel¹ ("The Panel") has been undertaking a national review² ("The Review") into safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings.
3. The review has been considering the experiences of children placed in three specialist independent residential settings located in the Doncaster area (Fullerton House, Wilsic Hall and Wheatley House) and operated by the Hesley Group.
4. The review is being led by Dr Susan Tranter, supported by Dame Christine Lenehan, Director of the Council for Disabled Children (CDC), for the National Children's Bureau (NCB).
5. The review focused on children with disabilities and complex health needs who are looked after children and who are currently placed in residential specialist schools which are registered as children's homes. It is estimated that there are around 1,700 children nationally who would meet these criteria. The review is considering allegations of widespread abuse (and which are subject to a live criminal and associated investigation). The Panel expects that families of children living in similar settings may rightly be concerned about the safety and welfare of their children if and when

¹ [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

² [CHILD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE VIEW PANEL: REVIEW OF CASES AT FULLERTON HOUSE, WILSIC HALL AND WHEATLEY HOUSE \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

they learn about what has happened in the Hesley provision in Doncaster.

6. The review is being completed in two phases. Phase One reported in October 2022³. Its main findings were that children placed in the settings in Doncaster experienced sustained, significant abuse and harm over an extended period of time. The voices of children and adults were not heard. Placements far from home increased vulnerability and that some children were placed in such settings inappropriately.
7. Phase Two of the review has asked directors of children's services to ensure that quality and safety reviews are completed for all children in care with complex needs and disabilities currently living within placements with the same registrations (i.e., residential specialist schools registered as children's homes) to ensure they are in safe, quality placements.
8. The director of children's services was asked to provide an overview report on key findings and issues to both their local corporate parenting committee, and to local safeguarding partners, together with assurance that the quality and safety reviews have been completed.
9. The director of children's services was also asked to send a copy of the overview report on the quality and safety reviews to the relevant Department of Education regional improvement support lead (RISL). This was done in December 2022.
10. The panel's national review has highlighted how information may be held locally but that it is also important to develop a fuller and more comprehensive picture of quality in these type of placements. This will also allow for regional and national assurance that these actions have been undertaken.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

11. The council had 37 children placed in residential settings, but only a small number met the criteria specified in this review. A quality and safety review of the children who met the criteria was undertaken by an independent social worker on behalf of the council.
12. The findings are presented in detail in a closed report for the committee. The reason why this was presented in a closed report was because given the small number of children, details would make them very identifiable. It is necessary to put detail into the reports to provide the assurance that was sought by the instigation of this review process.
13. In summary the review found good levels of care and education for all children that met the review criteria. Safeguarding issues were dealt with appropriately and there were no major issues of concern.

³ [Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings - Phase 1 report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Policy framework implications

14. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the local authority, or is under 25 and was looked-after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent. Local authorities have a responsibility for safeguarding all children, in line with Sec 47 of The Children Act 1989, but there are certain risks that particularly affect children in care and care leavers that corporate parents need to be aware of.

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

Community impact statement

15. Many children in care come into care when sadly their families who are local residents cannot safely care for them and they are already part of the diverse Southwark communities.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

16. The council is committed to providing fair and just services, addressing inequality. The welcome and provision of services to children with disabilities is an important way the council and its partners demonstrates their commitment these principles.

Health impact statement

17. There are no specific identified health impacts resulting from any of the proposals or recommendations, so a health impact statement is not necessary for this report.

Climate change implications

18. There are no specific identified climate change impacts resulting from any of the proposals or recommendations, so a climate impact statement is not necessary for this report.

Resource implications

19. There are no specific resource implications over and above the council's existing commitments resulting from any of the proposals or recommendations in this report.

Financial implications

20. There are no specific financial resource implications over and above the council's existing commitments resulting from any of the proposals or recommendations in this report.

Consultation

21. There was consultation with the child, parents and staff involved with the child who met the review criteria.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance

22. The assistant chief executive – governance and assurance notes the recommendation of the open and closed reports. In line with the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Southwark Constitution, the closed report contains information exempted from publication and which must not be discussed at the meeting when the public are present. This exemption applies by virtue of paragraphs 10.3 and 10.4 (1&2).

Strategic Director of Finance REF: [03EN2023-24]

23. The strategic director of finance notes the reports and agrees with the financial implications in paragraph 20.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Child Safeguarding Practice Review of Cases at: Fullerton House, Wilsic Hall and Wheatley House Specialist, Independent Residential Schools	Children and Families Directorate, Children and Adult Services 4 th Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	Tendai Murowe 020 7525 0486
Link: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1047730/Letter_to_SoS_Doncaster_formal_launch.pdf		
Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings, Phase 1 Report	Children and Families Directorate, Children and Adult Services 4 th Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	Tendai Murowe 020 7525 0486
Link: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1113508/safeguarding_children_with_disabilities_in_residential_care_homes_phase_1_report.pdf		

Southwark Council's Constitution dated 31 March 2023 – PART 4 – Access to Information Procedure Rules	Children and Families Directorate, Children and Adult Services 4 th Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	Tendai Murowe 020 7525 0486
https://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/g7700/Public%20reports%20pack%20Friday%2031-Mar-2023%20Constitution.pdf?T=10&Info=1		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children and Adult Services	
Report Author	Tendai Murowe, Assistant Director, Quality Assurance and Practice Development	
Version	Final	
Dated	11 April 2023	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistance Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance	No	No
List other officers here	N/a	N/a
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	11 April 2023	