

# Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2015

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## Foreword



*I am pleased to introduce our Children in Care and Care leavers Strategy. This strategy sets out the key challenges and strategic priorities to enable us to deliver high quality care and support to children and young people in care and care leavers. To develop this strategy we have gathered evidence from a range of sources.*

*We have sought feedback from children and young people via Speaker Box, our Children in Care Council. We have analysed the evidence that we have on the needs of our population and service users alongside current performance. We have completed self assessments and audits on our existing services, we have sought the views of our staff and have looked at best practice from other local authorities.*

*This strategy sets out the vision by which we aim to delivery services for children and young people in our care and those who have left our care. We want all our children and young people to be safe, happy and healthy and to enjoy life. We want them to develop into resilient adults who are ready for work and can make a positive contribution to their community. We will provide them with high quality care, support and guidance to ensure they get the best start they need.*

*As corporate parents we are committed to delivering our vision and ensuring we do our very best to improve the outcomes for those in our care and our care leavers.*

Councillor Victoria Mills, Cabinet Member for Children and Schools and Chair of Southwark Council's Corporate Parenting Committee

## Our vision

*“We want all our children and young people to be safe, happy and healthy and to enjoy life. We want them to develop into resilient adults who are ready for work and can make a positive contribution to their community. We will provide them with high quality care, support and guidance to ensure they get the best start they need.”*

## Our values and principles

To deliver our vision we will provide high quality care, support and guidance to our children and young people, we will listen to their views, champion their rights and their achievements and keep them safe. In line with our Fairer Future principle spending money as if it were from our own pocket, we will ensure that services for children in care and their carers are value for money.

The values and principles that underpin the planning, commissioning and delivery of services to support children and young people are:

- Be the champions our young people deserve
- Deliver high quality care, support and accommodation services
- Do our best to enable families to stay together, whilst keeping children and young people safe
- Keep children and young people safe at all times
- Keep children and young people’s needs central to our work
- Keep all children and young people in care and care leavers well informed about their rights and where to go for help
- Empower children and young people to take control of their own lives and realise their full potential
- Deliver proactive support that secures the best long term outcomes for all children and young people
- Ensure the views of children, young people and their families inform service improvement
- Deliver, through action, our commitment to the **Care Leavers Charter**:
  - To respect and honour your identity
  - To believe in you
  - To listen to you
  - To inform you
  - To support you
  - To find you a home
  - To be your lifelong champion

## Outcomes for children in care and care leavers

### The national picture.

National statistics, show that 62 per cent per cent of children in care as a result of abuse or neglect, children in care are four times more likely than their peers to have a mental health difficulty and they are less likely than their peers to do well at school. Furthermore, two-thirds have special educational need or disability (SEND) and of those a significant proportion will have a statement or a learning difficulties assessment.<sup>1</sup>

Children in care are nearly twice as likely to be cautioned for, or convicted of, an offence as their peers and although estimates vary, it is thought that nearly a third of children in custody have been looked after.<sup>2</sup>

National Audit Office research shows that young people who have had a background in care are more likely than their peers to have poor social outcomes in later life. The most recent estimates are that:

- In 2010, 25 per cent those who were homeless had been in care at some point in their lives
- In 2008, 49 per cent of young men aged under 21 who had come into contact with the criminal justice system had a care experience
- In 2014, 22 per cent of female care leavers become teenage parents; and
- in 2012, it was reported that those in care and care leavers were between four and five times more like to self-harm in adulthood.

In 2014 41 per cent of 19 year old care leavers were not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 15 per cent of the general population.

Despite these challenges many children in care and care leavers achieve positive outcomes and succeed into adulthood. The nature of the range of challenges they can face highlights the need for effective joint working across health, education, employment, housing, criminal justice and social care. It is our role, as effective corporate parents, to ensure that all children and young people in our care are not disadvantaged by their circumstances. It is our aim to ensure that the support we provide enables all children and young people in our care and care leavers to achieve the best possible outcomes at all times.

### The Southwark picture

Southwark is a diverse borough with a resident population of 293 500 (*date*). We are the 21<sup>st</sup> most deprived borough in England with 30 per cent of children living in income deprived households<sup>3</sup>. We are one of the largest social landlords in the country.

In March 2015 We had around 500 children and young people in care. This figure has been reducing steadily since March 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> [National Audit Office, July 2015, Care leavers transition to adulthood](#)

<sup>2</sup> [DfE, March 2015, Promoting the health and well-being of looked after children](#)

<sup>3</sup> [DCLG, September 2015, English indices of deprivation](#)

- Half of the children and young people who entered care between April 2014 and March 2015 did so as a result of abuse or neglect. 17 per cent entered because of family dysfunction and 11 per cent entered as a result of absent parenting.
- A high number of children and young people in care in Southwark are placed in foster care; the majority of those are in foster placements managed directly by the council.
- There has been an increase in the proportion of children in care who were subject to Full Care Orders<sup>4</sup>. The proportion has increased from 48 per cent in 2013/2014 year to the current position of around 50 per cent.
- There has been an increase in the number of children and young people accommodated under Section 205 - from 24 per cent in 2012/2013 to 32 per cent in 2014/2015.
- The highest percentage of children entering care across each of the past five years has been within the 10-15 age group, with the lowest percentage being within the 5-9 age group (with the exception of 2010/2011).
- 10-17 year olds accounted for almost 50 per cent of those entering care in 2013/2014, with the percentage of children within this age group accounting for at least 45 per cent of new care entrants across each of the preceding 4 years.
- In 2013/2014, almost a quarter of children entering care were aged 16-17, an increase of 5 per cent from 2012/2013, and the highest percentage for the past 5 years.
- In 2013/2014 43 per cent of those in care were Black or Black British, 35 per cent were white and 17 per cent were of mixed ethnicity.
- Around 3/4 of those in care live outside the borough boundary. Around 1/5 a fifth are placed more than 20 miles from their home.
- In 2014/2015 30 per cent left care because they turned 18 and 25 per cent returned home as part of the care planning process.
- 13 per cent of children in care achieved 5 A\*-C grades or equivalent at GCSE in 2013-2014.
- We have recorded concerns with the emotional wellbeing of over a third of our children and young people in care aged 5-16.

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<sup>4</sup> This is a court order which places a child in the care of Children's Services. It lasts until the child is 18 unless the court ends it before then. When there is a care order, Children's Services share parental responsibility for the child with the parents. Children's Services must find out the parents wishes about any decision they make about their child, but they always have the final say and can make plans for the child even if the parents don't agree with them.

<sup>5</sup> This is the part of the law (Section 20 of the Children act 1989) that gives Children's Services the power to look after a child when there is no-one with parental responsibility for the child or when the person caring for the child is prevented from caring for them, for whatever reason. This is also called voluntary Accommodation. <http://www.frg.org.uk/need-help-or-advice/an-a-z-of-terms>

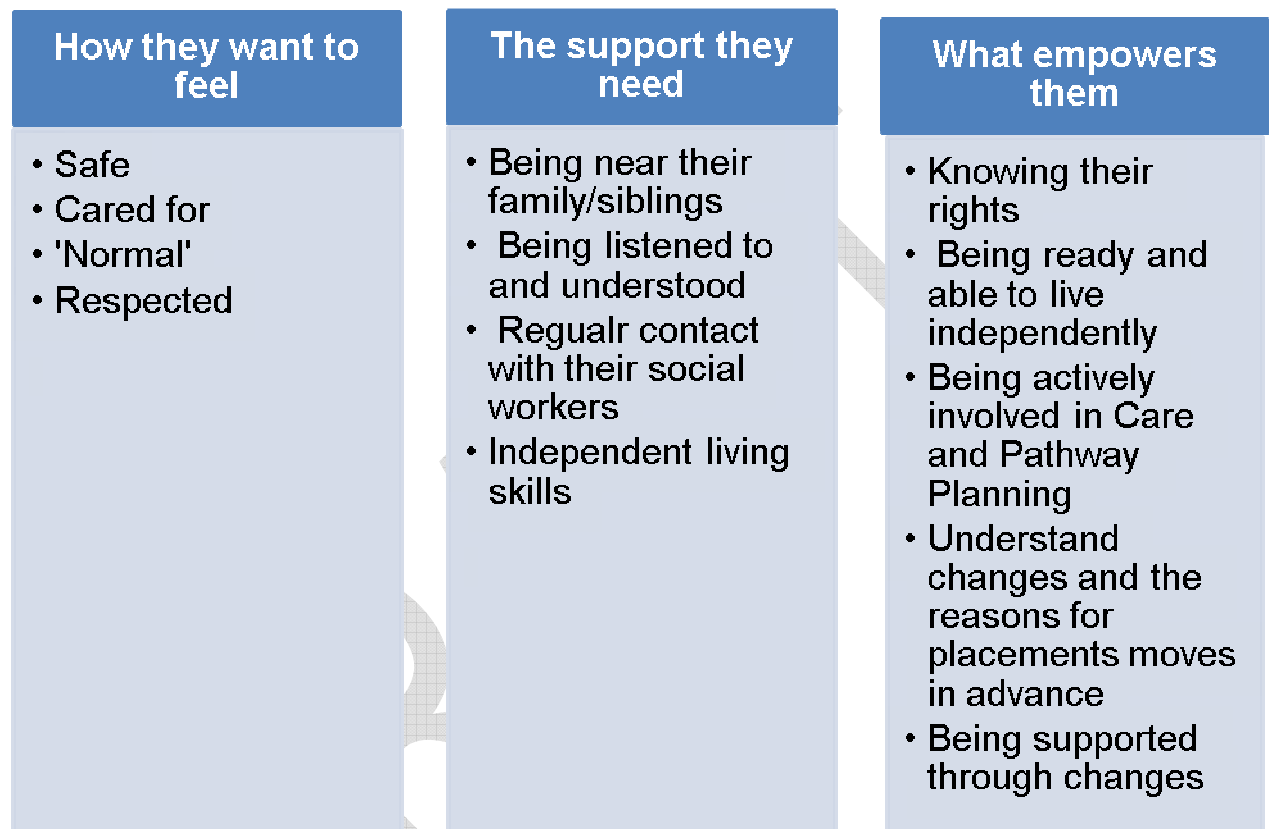
- Around half of our care leavers are in education, employment and training.
- Approximately 80 per cent of care leavers are in suitable accommodation.
  - Around 6 per cent of care leavers are in higher education. 6 per cent of care leavers are in custody.
  - In July 2015 there were 26 unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people in our care.

The key challenges locally are:

- High number of children and young people in care, and the increasing number of older children coming into care.
- Ability to delivery flexible services that respond to the range of needs of children and young people
- Providing a range of locally based, high quality accommodation and support provision – foster placements, adoptive parents
- Engaging with care leavers
- Increasing the number of care leavers in education, employment and training
- Identifying and meeting demand for mental health/emotional well-being support
- Mitigating the impact and implications of housing benefit reforms for young people
- Increased demand for services from those with no recourse to public funds
- Narrowing the gap in the outcomes achieved for those in care and care leavers and other children
- Supporting children and young people to be resilient

## What do our children and young people say is important to them?

Research conducted by the Children's Rights Team and Speakerbox, our Children in Care Council, provide clear messages about the issues that affect our children and young people and how they can feel empowered to take control of their lives.



### Strategic aims

#### 1. To be an effective corporate parent

The above presents a summary of the national and local picture for children in care and care leavers and highlights the key challenges the council and our partners face in delivering positive outcomes for those in our care. It is the council's role to lead the way in being an effective corporate parent and integrate services across all council departments, schools, the voluntary sector and other public sector organisations to deliver services that meet the needs of children in care, the carers that are supporting them and those who leave care.

#### 2. Reduce the numbers moving into care



In delivering this strategy we are working with an overarching drive to reduce the need to bring children and young people into care because they remain safe, in loving family homes. This means providing the right support to families before issues escalate, working across the local authority and its partners to provide effective housing, education, health, criminal justice and employment support at all times.

We have set out how we will deliver effective early help and preventative services to families in our Families Matter Strategy. Both the Children in care and care leavers strategy and the Families Matter Strategy recognise that many families in Southwark have complex needs, which vary over time. They need high quality services that respond to the underlying and changing needs through integrated working, supporting families to build their resilience and achieve positive outcomes together, reducing the need for intervention by social care through the delivery of responsive community based provision.

### **3. Build resilience of children in care and care leavers**

We want the best of our children and young people and we aim to provide services that promote self-esteem, positive learning experiences and nurturing relationships, and help children and young people to better cope with adversity. We aim to improve the resilience of our children and young people and prepare them for a successful adult life where they can live independently.

### **4. Improve the quality of care**

We need to have the mechanisms in place to effectively monitor performance, identify and address gaps in support and use intelligence effectively to inform commissioning and service improvements.

As well as meeting our statutory duties we aim to develop standards which make it clear what children and young people should expect from the services they are provided. We are working to introduce accommodation standards so that private sector providers and landlords understand their obligations and expected standards of our tenants.

We will continue to invest in the development of our workforce through programmes like Social Work Matters, our child centred, systemic practice approach to social work, which focus on providing a team around the child, and promote continued oversight and support from practitioners and managers. We will invest in training for our carers so they too can build resilience and provide the right support for all children and young people.

## **Strategic priorities**

The following presents our strategic priorities in responding to the above challenges, within the context of our overarching aims.

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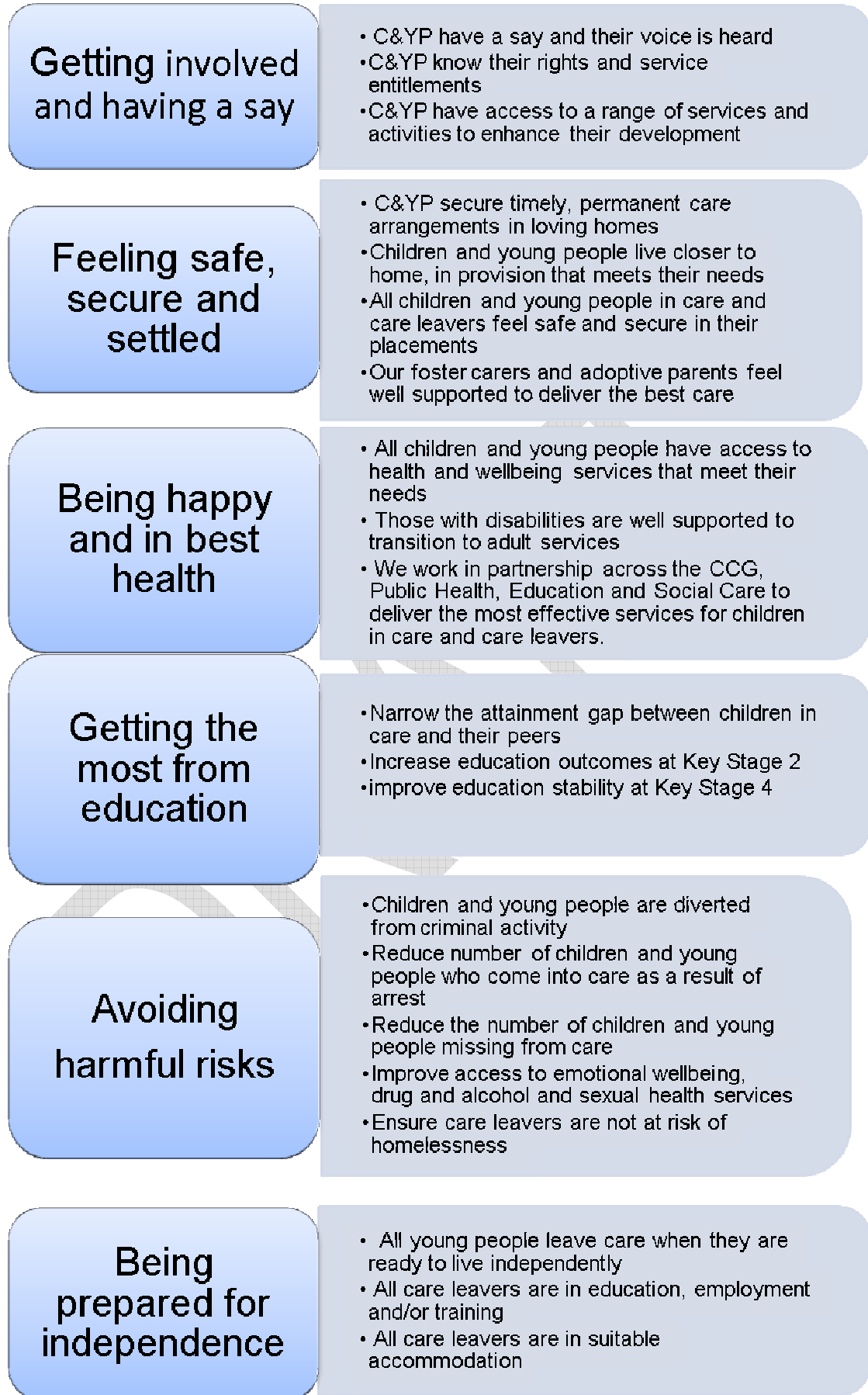
1. Children and young people have a say and their voice is heard
2. Whenever it is safe, children and young people are supported to remain with, and return to, their families or with their extended family
3. To work in the best interests of children and young people and remove them from harmful situations where necessary
4. Children and young people secure timely, permanent care arrangements in loving homes
5. Children and young people live closer to home, in provision that meets their needs
6. All children and young people in care and care leavers feel safe and secure in their placements and accommodation
7. Our foster carers and adoptive parents feel well supported to deliver the best care
8. All children and young people are happy and in their best health
9. All children and young people achieve their education outcomes at Key Stage 2 and 4
10. Children and young people are diverted from criminal activity
11. All young people leave care when they are ready to live independently
12. All care leavers are in education, employment and training

## **Delivering key outcomes for children and young people**

The outcomes framework sets out our strategic priorities in the context of the delivery of sustainable outcomes for children and young people which will support them to

succeed into adulthood. These outcomes reinforce our focus on the needs of children and young people.

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**1. Getting involved and having a say**

Like any child or young person, those in care need to be able to engage in activities that enable them to make a positive contribution to society, getting involved in decision making processes, helping them learn new skills, meet new people and develop their sense of value and belonging.

We will ensure children and young people are actively engaged with their care and pathway planning and are well informed about any changes to their plans. We will keep in regular contact with children and young people, and visit them in their placements. We will make sure young people have the opportunity to visit placements before they are move in.

We will continue to involve children and young people in our strategy and planning; building on successful programmes like the Young Inspectors. We know we have improvements to make to ensure children and young people are involved at the right moment and that they understand the parameters of their influence. We will continue to explore different ways for us to involve children and young people in planning and designing services and make better use of existing research and consultation.

We are proud of our Children in Care Council (Speakerbox), which provides a range of opportunities for children in care and care leavers to get involved in projects and activities. A group recently visited New York for example, and met with their peers in Harlem. Speakerbox developed the Young Inspectors programme where young people are trained to become inspectors of their placements. Their findings help inform commissioning decisions and the future standards for what young people expect from their accommodation.

We are part of the New Belongings programme, aimed at improving outcomes for care leavers. This is a year long programme, which is supported by The Care Leavers Foundation, delivered in partnership with Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham councils. As part of this project we will be conducting regular surveys of care leaver's experiences of leaving care and have established a Care Leavers Forum. This will help us define our enhanced support offer for care leavers.

We will continue to ensure children and young people know their rights and entitlements and know how to access the council complaints team and advocacy services if they feel unsafe or unhappy.

## **2. Feeling safe, secure and settled**

The majority of children and young people who come into care have been subjected to abuse and neglect, which can have a profound affect on their ability to form relationships with adults and feel settled. This feeling is affected by experiences children and young people have prior to coming into and whilst they are in care, the relationships they have with their carers and the support network around them, as well as their experiences of their placements.

Children and young people may come into care for a temporary period or for the longer term and some will be permanently removed from their homes. Whether a child or young person is adopted, in friends and family care, cared for through a special guardianship order, in long-term foster care or returning to their family, our aim is always to provide high quality and stable care that enables children and young people to develop a sense of identify and belonging. It is our duty to ensure that we

remove children and young people from harmful situations and to ensure that they remain safe and settled.

We assess needs as swiftly as possible and ensure plans address the immediate and continuing needs of the child. We will make placements based on our best understanding of the child or young person's needs.

Our foster carers and adopters will have the initial and on-going support they need to provide effective care and support to children and young people at all times. We will improve placement stability, limiting the number of unplanned moves, whilst providing training and support for carers to help them to deal with challenging behaviour.

Through the delivery of our Placement and Sufficiency Strategy we will ensure that children and young people in and leaving care have accommodation that meets their needs and that there is a broad choice of placement options available to children and young people locally. We will reduce the numbers who go missing in placements by responding to the needs and wishes of children and young people, who often report that they want to see their siblings and families and be closer to home.

We recognise the impact placement stability has on educational attainment where children and young people who are settled in home and school placements are more likely to achieve positive outcomes. Through joint working between our children's social care and the looked after children education teams we will ensure good or outstanding education placements are provided and that educational attainment is promoted and closely monitored.

We will support young people to be prepared for adulthood and independence by supporting young people to Stay Put with their foster carers, where this is possible. We will provide a range of supported accommodation options that allow young people to learn to live independently in a safe environment. We recognise that managing your own home can be stressful and that often young people feel isolated when they move into independence. We will keep our door open to young people who need our support.

We know that independence is about being responsible, having a job and knowing how to manage finances and we will ensure care leavers are equipped to manage this by providing independence living skills training, and additional support to secure apprenticeships, employment and training.

We will continue to provide dedicated support to families to keep them together and prevent moves into care. We will provide mediation support for families and support young people who may be at risk of homelessness.

### **3. Being happy and in best health**

The health risks and problems children in care and care leavers are often exacerbated due to their experiences of poverty, abuse and neglect. Children in care show significantly higher rates of mental health disorders than others; conduct disorders being the most prevalent, with others having emotional disorders (anxiety and depression) or hyperactivity. They are more likely to have physical health problems than their peers and there is often no one who has an overview of their health needs or history. Delays in identifying health needs and meeting their

emotional well-being can affect all aspects of their lives, including their chances of reaching their potential and leading happy and healthy lives as resilient adults.

Compared to their peers, a high proportion of young people in care being are pregnant or are young parents. We had invested in resources to support this group through our Young Women's Worker and through innovative projects like the Pause Project. We will continue to work with young people to promote sexual health through services that are accessible and free from stigma.

The Looked After Children Health Team provides health support to children in care, conducts annual health assessments and reviews to ensure they are in their best health and have access to the right health provision.

We have a specialist Children with Disabilities Team within social care who work with families where there is a disabled child with a severe and permanent disability or a child with a lifelong condition.

CareLink mental health support services are provided to those aged up to the ages of 0-18 and although programmes of support are available for care leavers, predominately through the voluntary and community sector, there is not a dedicated services in place to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of young people who have been in our care.

Developing emotional resilience is a key strategic aim and our Children's Rights Team is working in partnership with Young Minds to develop programmes to improve this. Our Care and Fostering Services work in partnership with CareLink to deliver assessment and intervention services for those diagnosed with mental health issues.

Feedback from consultations with children and young people concerning health draw some key themes:

The importance of:

- Being able to see a GP of the same gender (particularly for young women)
- Being listened to and being able to self refer
- Understanding their family health histories and the health risks that might present

The value of:

- Sexual health services and the different attitudes young men and women have to these
- Having a dedicated space, with walk-ins and appointments available, where young people can go to discuss health issues with health professionals and youth workers

We will work with our partners to ensure physical, mental and emotional health needs are assessed and met so that looked after children, regardless where they are placed; receive the high quality health care support they are entitled to. We will work to ensure the health needs of children in care and care leavers are reflected in health commissioning priorities and that strategic planning reflects the high need for child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) amongst the care population and those leaving care.



We will continue to develop joint health commissioning arrangements with the Clinical Commissioning Group and make the best use of available intelligence, such as our joint strategic needs assessments and feedback from consultations with children and young people and foster carers and adoptive parents to design and commission services that are accessible and better meet the health needs of children and young people.

#### **4. Getting the most from education**

Children in care, especially late entrants to care, tend to have poorer experiences of education and lower educational attainment, compared to their non care peers. Their educational outcomes, in terms of the proportion who reach the average levels of attainment expected of seven, eleven, fourteen and sixteen year olds, remain significantly lower than for all children. Many children in care have a Statement of Special Education Needs or Disability; a relatively small number of looked after children progress to higher education and too many are recognised as not in education training or employment.

Education is key to increasing life opportunities and we want all our children in care to have access to as many opportunities to learn and gain a good education as possible. We want them to enjoy their learning experiences; those in school and their hobbies and interests outside of school. We want them to be able to achieve their potential and feel well informed about the options available to them when thinking about their learning pathways and future careers.

Stability in education is vital to achieve positive outcomes, specifically around times of transition in a young person's life. We know, through our research, that that young people who are taken into care around the time of their GCSE are unlikely to achieve the threshold of good attainment, whereas those taken into care after they have completed their GCSEs are more likely to have already achieved a good outcome. We also know that care leavers who have been in care for a longer time before their 19th birthday are more likely to be in education, employment and training when they are older. This is why we are focused on improving placement stability and educational attainment at key stages 2 and 4.

Our LAC Education Team focus on delivering educational outcomes for children in care; they hold schools to account on their attainment, provide support to carers to help children in their care achieve a good education and track pupil progress. They help social workers to prepare Personal Education Plans (PEPs), which establish clear targets and actions to respond effectively to each child's needs and aspirations and provide a continuous record of their achievements.

We will continue to champion the educational achievements of children and care and care leavers and ensure we provide additional learning where this is required; ESOL for example. We will continue to support further educational attainment through PEPs that provide a good foundation to move from school/college to into education, employment and/or training. We will enable young people to go to university by providing them with financial assistant and support from their Personal Advisor.

## 5. Avoiding harmful risks

A young person's resilience to risk factors in their lives will also help minimise their own risk-taking at levels that pose safeguarding concerns; child sexual exploitation, engagement in criminal activity, for example. Children and young people become more or less resilient depending on the opportunities they are given. They will take risks as part of their development; this is natural. It is our role to make sure they are protected from harm, are equipped to make sound judgements and are not unnecessarily criminalised when they do take risks.

We recognise that adolescent and teenagers are most likely to display challenging and risky behaviour. Those who go missing from care in Southwark for example, are predominately aged between 15-17. Not all those who go missing (from home, care or education) are at risk from harm, but there are those who are at more risk of sexual exploitation, involvement with gangs and criminal behaviour, for example. We will continue to provide a dedicated service to those who go missing and prevent further incidences occurring.

We will work to develop a better understanding of the link between coercion and exploitation affecting children and young people involved with gangs as noted in Catch 22's recent Running the Risks<sup>6</sup> report. We will robustly monitor the data we have available and take all risks seriously whilst we continue to develop strong links between safeguarding, social care, youth offending and the police.

We recognise that young people in care may have particular mental health and emotional wellbeing needs that affect their behaviour and which may cause them to react negatively. We will ensure that young people are provided with services that improve their resilience and support them to deal with stress.

We will continue to provide training for carers to help them deal with more challenging and risky behaviour through emphatic behaviour management, an approach our Fostering Service has implemented to improve the quality of care children and young people experience which focuses on "connection not correction".

We will work to ensure that children and young people have consistent relationships with adults they trust, whether with their carer or social worker, mentor or advisor, and take time to understand the significance of their support networks, friends and families.

We will ensure care planning plays a key part in managing risks and that those placed out of the borough have access to the same level of support as those placed in the borough. We will actively engage young people, working through underlying issues with them, helping them to understand the consequences of their behaviour and be there for them.

Through our Youth Offending Service we will provide support that focuses on restorative justice interventions, raises awareness of risks to carers through direct support and training that ensures that carers have the skills to deal with challenging behaviour and recognise risks.

Will we support those young people who do spend time in prison to effectively integrate into the community and support their resettlement.

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<sup>6</sup> [Catch22, July 2015, Running the Risks](#)

## **6. Being prepared for independence**

It is our priority to ensure that our young people are fully prepared to leave care and live independently. 50 per cent of young adults aged 22 in the UK still lived with their parents in 2013. The average age for leaving home is 24 yet young people are considered 'care leavers' from their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and most move into semi-independent or some form of independent living before that.

The government has recognised that for some this is too soon and they have introduced the Staying Put arrangement so young people can remain with their foster carers up to the age of 21.

Young people are at an increased risk of homelessness as private renting costs increase and the availability of affordable housing is reduced. Young people aged 16 and 17 who present as homelessness can be accommodated under the Children Act 1989 and moved into care under section 20 of the act; we have seen an increase in the numbers accommodated through this route over recent years and an increase in the number of young people accommodated with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

We have a Housing Protocol in place between our children's and Housing services to ensure young people receive the correct assessment of their needs and are accommodated with the right support in place. We will continue to build on this relationship as we develop a new accommodation pathway for young people and create an integrated gateway into supported accommodation for young people in the borough.

It is our role to ensure that those in our care are effectively supported to make the transition to adulthood and independent living at a pace that is suitable to them. Our 16+ accommodation review has shown us that we are over-reliant on moving young people to semi-independent accommodation in their preparation for adulthood and that we need to increase the range of accommodation and support options to meet young people's needs and enable them to develop their independent living skills in a flexible and safe environment. The review also highlighted that young people spend too long in accommodation that is intended to be temporary and do not 'move on', indicating the challenge sourcing suitable accommodation for young people through private tenancies, a general shortage of options and also a need to adopt improved commissioning and contracting arrangements with providers.

We will work collaboratively with the provider network and with Housing and Regeneration teams to ensure we make the best use of local assets to meet the needs of our young people and care leavers.

Feedback from our care leavers has shown that some feel unsafe in their accommodation and often report feelings of isolation and loneliness. A recent external review of our support for care leavers, conducted by Catch 22 highlighted key areas for improvements. These included:

- Ensuring Pathway Plans are outcomes focused and are developed and monitored in partnership with young people.
- Developing clear accommodation pathways
- Improving the support offer for care leavers

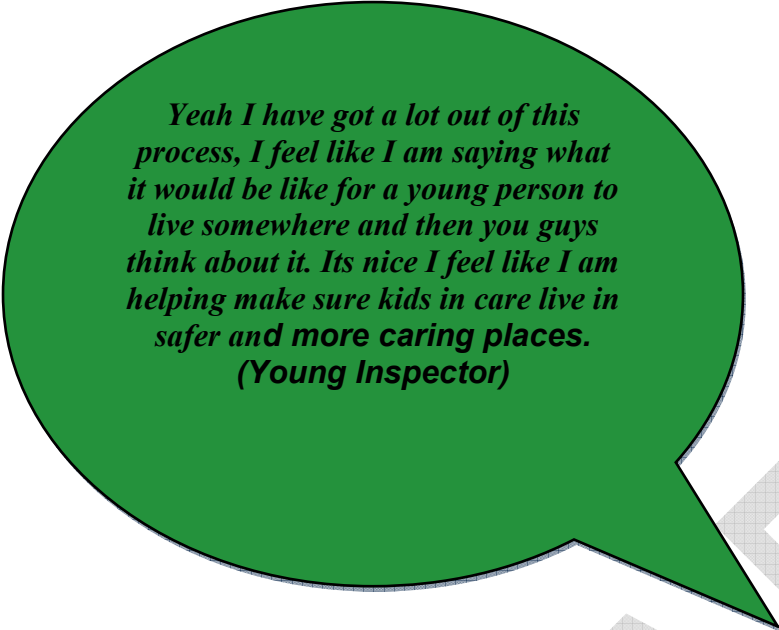
These areas are being prioritised in our New Belongings action plan for care leavers. In line with our overarching aims and priorities the action plan also focuses on improving emotional wellbeing of care leavers by providing support to increase their resilience and increase access to employment, training and apprenticeships.

The above provides some of the context for how we have determined our strategic priorities for children in care and care leavers in Southwark, based on the delivery of our key outcomes. The following section provides details of the action we will take to deliver our priorities

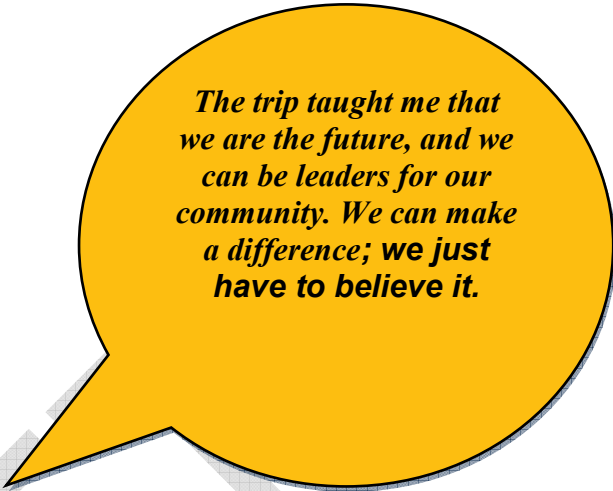
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## Priority actions

**Outcome:** Getting involved and having a say



*Yeah I have got a lot out of this process, I feel like I am saying what it would be like for a young person to live somewhere and then you guys think about it. Its nice I feel like I am helping make sure kids in care live in safer and more caring places.  
(Young Inspector)*



*The trip taught me that we are the future, and we can be leaders for our community. We can make a difference; we just have to believe it.*

### Strategic priorities

- C&YP have a say and their voice is heard
- C&YP know their rights and service entitlements
- C&YP have access to a range of services and activities to enhance their development

### Priority actions

- Continue to deliver programmes like Young Inspectors
- Ensure children and young people are fully informed of their entitlements
- Ensure the voice of the child is reflected in Care Planning and Pathway Planning
- Ensure children and young have access to independent advice and advocacy
- Ensure children and young people have regular opportunities to engage with peer groups and give feedback on issues that affect them
- Involve children and young people in the design and production of services that support their needs
- Learning from complaints is shared and there is evidence of impact

### Measuring impact

- No. of consultations/projects children and young people participate in
- Evidence that children and young people's voice is present in planning through regular audit
- No. receiving support through Children's Rights and independent advocacy
- No. of projects children and young people in care and care leavers are involved with to influence planning and service delivery
- Number and per cent of Stage 1 complaints answered within 10 working days (or other period agreed with complainant)

**Outcome:** Feeling safe, secure and settled



### **Strategic priorities**

- More children and young people secure timely, permanence arrangements in loving homes
- Children and young people live closer to home in provision that meets their needs
- All children and young people in care and care leavers feel safe and secure in their placements.
- Our foster carers and adoptive parents feel well supported to deliver to the best care

### **Priority actions**

- Increase use of Kinship care
- Improve timeliness of adoption
- Implement a Fostering Recruitment Strategy
- Ensure sufficient supply of good quality placements for children in care and care leavers
- Provide more placements in and closer to the borough
- Increase number of in-house foster placements that can support a range of ages/needs
- Ensure family contact in care planning
- Early identification of appropriate education
- Improve placement stability
- Improve access to therapeutic support services for families
- Reconfigure accommodation support offer, particularly for children aged 16+ (Placement and Sufficiency Strategy)

### **Measuring impact**

- Long-term stability: per cent children in care who have been looked after continuously for 2.5+ years who were living in the same placement for 2+ years, or are placed for adoption
- Short term stability: per cent of latest children in care cohort who have had 3 or more placements in the year
- per cent of children who ceased to be looked after due to a special guardianship order
- Number and per cent of children who ceased to be looked after due to adoption

- Permanency plans in place within x weeks of 2nd care plan review (cumulative)
- Number of registered foster carers in Southwark
- Proportion of foster carers receiving Empathic Behaviour Management training
- Proportion of adoptive parents receiving training
- Proportion of adoptive parents with post-adoption support plans
- The average time in days between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family.
- Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days)
- per cent Children who wait less than 18 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family
- No. of in house, in borough carers
- No. and per cent of children in care in placements over 20 miles from home
- per cent of children in care placed in residential care

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**Outcome:** Being happy and in best health



### **Strategic priorities**

- All children and young people have access to health and wellbeing services that meet their needs
- Those with disabilities are well supported to transition to adult services
- To work in partnership across the CCG, Public Health, Education and Social Care to deliver the most effective services for children in care and care leavers

### **Priority actions**

- Increase access to mental health and wellbeing support for children in care and care leavers
- All children and young people have an up-to-date health assessment and outcomes are achieved
- All children and young people have up to date immunisations and dental checks
- Children with disabilities are well supported to transition between children's and adult's care services
- Those placed outside of the borough receive the same high level of health service provision as those placed in and close to the borough
- All care leavers have access to their health records

### **Measuring impact**

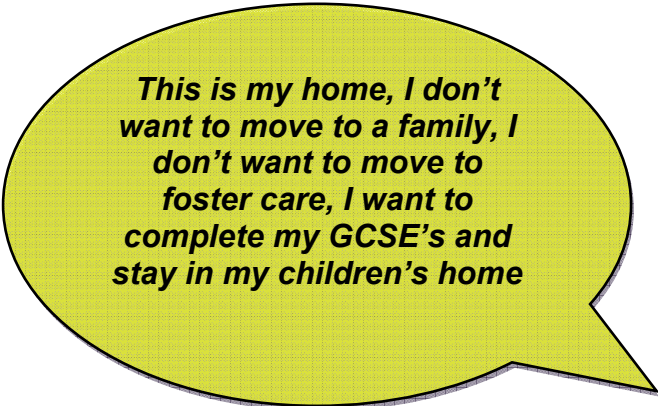
- Percentage of children in care whose immunisations were up to date
- Percentage children who have been in care for at least 12 months who had their annual health assessment
- Percentage of children who have been in care for at least 12 months who had their teeth checked by a dentist
- Number and per cent of children in care aged 5-16 who have been looked after for at least 12 months with an SDQ score in the last 12 months



- Number and per cent of children aged 5-16 who have been in care for at least 12 months without an SDQ score in the last 12 months
- Average SDQ score of children aged 5-16 who have been in care for at least 12 months and have an SDQ score in the last 12 months
- Percentage children aged 5-16 who have been in care for at least 12 months and have an SDQ score in the last 12 months whose score is a concern (a score of 17 or over)
- Percentage of children in care identified as having a substance misuse problem during the year
- Percentage of children in care identified as having a substance misuse problem during the year who received intervention
- Number of children in care who are pregnant
- Number of teenage children in care parents

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## **Outcome - Getting the most from education**



***This is my home, I don't want to move to a family, I don't want to move to foster care, I want to complete my GCSE's and stay in my children's home***

### **Strategic priorities**

- Narrow the attainment gap between children in care and their peers
- Increase education outcomes at Key Stage 2
- Improve education stability at Key Stage 4

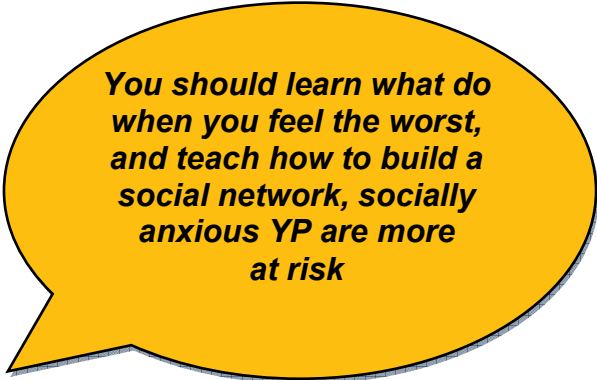
### **Priority actions**

- All children and young people eligible have in-date Personal Education Plans and outcomes are complete
- More children and young people achieving expected outcomes at key stage 2 and 4
- Children in care have good school attendance (over 90 per cent)
- All children in care attend an Ofsted rated good school

### **Measuring impact**

- Percentage children in care of statutory school age who are missing education
- Percentage children in care of statutory school age with an in-date PEP
- Percentage children in care achieving 5 A\*-C grades or equivalent
- Percentage children in care who were attending a school that was assessed as inadequate
- Percentage children in care achieving Level 4 in Reading at Key Stage 2
- Percentage children in care achieving Level 4 in Writing at Key Stage 2
- Percentage children in care achieving Level 4 in Maths at Key Stage 2
- Percentage children in care achieving Level 4 in Reading, Writing and Maths at KS2
- Percentage of sessions missed due to authorised and unauthorised absences from school

## **Outcome-** Avoiding harmful risks



***You should learn what do when you feel the worst, and teach how to build a social network, socially anxious YP are more at risk***

### **Strategic priorities**

- Children and young people are diverted from criminal activity
- Reduce number of children and young people who come into care as a result of arrest
- Reduce the number of children and young people missing from care
- improve access to emotional wellbeing, drug and alcohol and sexual health services
- Ensure young people who have been in care are not at risk of homelessness

### **Priority actions**

- To reduce the number of children and young people missing from care and school
- To reduce the number of children and young people with cautions and convictions
- To deliver the Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy (CSE) and Action Plan

### **Measuring impact**

- No. children missing in the month
- Rate of first time entrants (aged 10-17 years) to the Youth Justice System per 100,000 of 10-17 population
- Rate of custody use: the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 young people (aged 10-17) in the population
- Rate of re-offending of young people

## Outcome – preparing for independence

*She's not doing much [PA]; sorting out my bursary. She knows I can cope on my own. It would be nice if she popped around sometimes, just for a chat and to see what's going on*

*The way they prepare you for independence: Not just your laundry, but who to go to if your wall caves in, or a burglary.*

### Strategic priorities

- All young people leave care ready to live independently as happy and productive citizens, knowing the door is open if guidance and support is needed.
- All care leavers are in education, employment and/or training
- All care leavers are in suitable accommodation

### Priority actions

- To develop an enhanced Southwark 'offer' for young people preparing for and leaving care
- To deliver effective Pathway Planning, ensuring young people are fully engaged and have ownership of their plans
- To ensure access to a range of suitable accommodation options which meet the varying needs of young people and prepare them for independence
- For all care leavers to feel safe and secure in their accommodation
- Care leavers sustain council tenancies
- Health needs of care leavers are clearly assessed, prioritised and met

### Measuring impact

- Percentage of care leavers in Employment, Education and/or Training
- Percentage of care leavers in higher education
- Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation
- Percentage of care leavers in custody
- Annual care leavers feedback survey
- Number of care leavers Staying Put
- Proportion of care leavers participating in Southwark apprenticeship