

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 25 March 2010	MEETING NAME Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Strategy – Progress Update	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Head of Service in Children in Care	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. To note the progress of the Children Looked After (CLA) Services Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Strategy since presentation to Corporate Parenting Committee in November 2009.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Adolescent and Aftercare service was established in 2007 as part of a single business unit for looked after children and care leavers.

The Adolescent and Aftercare service (A & AC) is one of three services which make up the overall service for children in care and care leavers, these being the:

- Adolescent and Aftercare service
- Services for children in care 0-12
- Adoption & Fostering Services

Each service area is led by a service Manager consisting of a number of social work teams and support from administration, finance and specialist co located staff.

3. The Adolescent and Aftercare service provides the care planning function for looked after children aged from the age of 13-18 and aftercare support until the young person achieves the age of 21 (24 if attending university/higher education).

The service has four teams which provide the full range of services for looked after children and care leavers (13-21). These being:-

- Two teams for children in care aged 13-18
- An aftercare team for care leavers aged 18-21 (24 if in university or higher education).
- One team for unaccompanied minors and unaccompanied minor care leavers.

The main remit of the Adolescent and Aftercare service is:

4. Effective care planning to include health, education, pathway and transition plans
5. Maintain meaningful contact and support for young people who have left care up to age of 21.
6. Deliver support to young people who wish to attend university/higher education up to the age of 24.
7. In partnership with PCT, SLAM and Specialist Health Trusts and DTA deliver effective health interventions to include reducing teenage pregnancy and substance misuse.
8. Deliver specialist partnerships with Police, Community Safety and Youth Offending Services to address issues relating to youth offending including children in care who are on the cusp of crime or associating with gangs.
9. To work alongside colleagues in schools and children's services to narrow the gap relating to attainment especially at Key Stage 4 (GCSE).
10. Deliver a range of interventions post 16 to promote semi independence training including group work, mentoring, life skill training and placement stability.
11. Deliver effective participation arrangements with young people and Speakerbox to improve and shape services.
12. Working in partnership with Southwark housing, supporting people (including Adult Services) and the private sector (commissioned services) deliver appropriate living accommodation for care leavers post 18.
13. Deliver an effective strategy to support young people in employment, education or training from the age of 16 -21. Delivered in partnership with Connexions, Southwark works, Southwark College, Council Apprenticeship Scheme and targeted youth support.
14. Provide specialist advice, intervention and support, specific to unaccompanied minors and unaccompanied minors leaving care.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

15. The Drop in Service (Appendix 1) was launched on 24th January 2010. This is an innovative programme whereby the adolescent and aftercare services are open during the day Monday's Tuesdays and Thursday's to offer a range of engagement activities for looked after children and care leavers (16-21) who are not in employment, education and training.

16. The Drop in Service has already had a significant impact with over 30 people attending.
17. The NEET Strategic group which includes partners from Connexions, Southwark Works, 14-19 Partnership, Organisational Development (Apprenticeship and Coaching Schemes), CLA Education Team and CLA Services has signed off a strategy document and action plan for CLA and care leavers who are NEET (Appendix 2 is the NEET Strategy for looked after children).
18. Terms of reference for the NEET Strategy group has been agreed (Appendix 3).
19. The cohort tracking group (sub group of NEET Strategic Group) has now met three times to monitor the progress of all looked after children and care leavers aged 16,17 & 18. The cohort tracking group has front line staff from the CLA Education, Employment Advisors, Connexions Advisors, 14-19 year old partnership officers and staff from Adolescent and Aftercare Services to develop specific interventions and identify lead professionals.
20. The NEET Strategy has a targeted action plan involving all agencies to commit resources and direct interventions to target the most vulnerable looked after children and care leavers. (Appendix 4 is the CLA NEET action plan).
21. Performance is managed by the CLA NEET Strategic group and CLA Services. Tracking reports are provided as well as being included in standing Corporate Parenting performance reports. The overall strategy was implemented from November 2009 and is expected to have a gradual impact on the significant needs of this group of looked after children and care leavers. There is already evidence of much more effective communication and targeted interventions for individuals although significant resistance and motivation issues are being experienced as expected.
22. It is expected that the performance for the 2009/10 financial year (for care leavers at 19 not being in employment, education or training) will be around 64%. This would represent a very small increase on last year's figure but given the concerns identified earlier in the financial year that NEET outcomes were worsening; this represents a degree of progress. It is expected that a performance of 64% would place Southwark just below the top quartile compared with our statistical neighbours.

Policy implications

23. There are no new policy implications relating to this report.

Community Impact Statement

24. The decision to note this report has been judged to have no or a very small impact on local people and communities. As part of the overall looked after service, the Adolescent and Aftercare Service has a key role in delivering direct involvement of young people in their individual service plan and in evaluating and shaping service delivery.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

25. There are no financial implications to this policy and it should be noted that the drop in service has been delivered from within existing resources using innovative practice including engaging students and volunteers and other services in delivering this new facility.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
All background papers are appended to this report. Please refer to the list of appendices below.		

LIST OF APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Drop In Service Report
Appendix 2	NEET Strategy for looked after children
Appendix 3	NEET Steering Group Terms of Reference
Appendix 4	NEET Action Plan

Audit Trail

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson	
Report Author	Chris Saunders	
Version	final	
Dated	16 March 2010	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Executive Member	Yes	No
Date final report sent to constitutional team	16 March 2010	