



## Safeguarding Sub (Community & Children's Services) Committee

**Date:** TUESDAY, 16 APRIL 2024

**Time:** 2.00 pm

**Venue:** COMMITTEE ROOMS, 2ND FLOOR, WEST WING, GUILDHALL

**Members:** Ruby Sayed (Chair) Ceri Wilkins  
Helen Fentimen (Deputy Chair) Joanna Tufuo Abeyie  
Mary Durcan Benjamin Murphy  
Anne Corbett Eamonn Mullally

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**Ian Thomas CBE**  
**Town Clerk and Chief Executive**

# AGENDA

## Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

3. **MINUTES**

To approve the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 5 - 12)

4. **ADULT SOCIAL CARE SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE REPORT Q3 2023/24**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

**For Information**  
(Pages 13 - 16)

5. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE PERFORMANCE - MONTH 6 2023/24 (SEPTEMBER 2023)**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

**For Information**  
(Pages 17 - 24)

6. **ADULT SOCIAL CARE SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

**For Information**  
(Pages 25 - 58)

7. **CARE LEAVER OFFER**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

**For Information**  
(Pages 59 - 94)

8. **2023-24 CITY OF LONDON QUALITY ASSURANCE ANNUAL REPORT**

Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

**For Information**  
(Pages 95 - 110)

9. **CITY OF LONDON SAFEGUARDING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE, 2023-24 PARTICIPATION ANNUAL REPORT**  
Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 111 - 124)
10. **ADULT PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER ANNUAL REPORT 2023**  
Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 125 - 154)
11. **VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024**  
Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 155 - 174)
12. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) UPDATE**  
Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 175 - 180)
13. **WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (UPDATE)**  
Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 181 - 190)
14. **QUESTIONS OF MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**
15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
16. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**  
**MOTION**, that – under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

**For Decision**

## Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

17. **CITY OF LONDON POLICE UPDATE**

Report of the Commissioner, City of London Police.

**For Information**  
(Pages 191 - 194)

18. **NON-PUBLIC APPENDICES**

To receive non-public appendices in respect of agenda items 4, 5 and 9.

**For Information**

- a) **Adult Social Care Safeguarding Performance Report Q3 2023/24** (Pages 195 - 204)
- b) **Children and Families Service Performance - Month 6 2023/24** (September 2023) (Pages 205 - 230)
- c) **City of London Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, 2023-24 Participation Annual Report** (Pages 231 - 242)

19. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

20. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB-COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

## SAFEGUARDING SUB (COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE

Thursday, 23 November 2023

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 2.00 pm

### Present

#### Members:

Ruby Sayed (Chairman)

Deputy Anne Corbett

Mary Durcan

Eamonn Mullally

Helen Fentimen (Deputy Chairman)

#### Officers:

Chris Pelham	- Assistant Director, People, Community and Children's Services
Rachel Talmage	- Community and Children's Services
Theresa Shortland	- Community and Children's Services
Debby Rigby	- Community and Children's Services
Ellie Ward	- Community and Children's Services
Mandy Horsburgh	- City of London Police
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks
Shohel Ahmed	- City and Hackney Adults Safeguarding Board
Jim Gamble, QPM	- Independent Safeguarding Children Commissioner
Anna Jones	- Designated Nurse for Looked after Children

#### 1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Joanna Abeyie, Benjamin Murphy and Ceri Wilkins. The Chair welcomed Eamonn Mullally to his first meeting of the Sub Committee

#### 2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

#### 3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be approved.

#### 4. **CITY OF LONDON POLICE VULNERABILITY DEEP DIVE**

This Sub Committee received a report of the Commissioner, City of London Police in respect of supporting and safeguarding vulnerable people. The report provided an oversight of strategic governance, current and future demand and collaboration taking place across the following strands:

- A. Domestic Abuse (including Honour based abuse and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM))
- B. Sexual Violence
- C. Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Protection
- D. Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking

## E. Hate Crime

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

1. When domestic abuse cases are reported directly to the Police and not via a third party agency, as was the case during the pandemic, this can distort the data. The City of London Police (CoLP) are committed to pro-active engagement with the third sector to get a truer representation across all areas of vulnerability.
2. The COLP are committed to joint working and a whole systems approach, evidenced by a good conversion rate from charging to prosecutions, even if the victim cannot support the prosecution. A self-audit was underway in respect of improving prosecution levels and the journey for victims of sexual offences. Victim support also conduct victim surveys.
3. The CoLP also have a good track record for prosecutions for stalking and harassment. As coercive behaviour can be very difficult to spot, all officers receive mandatory training.
4. Public Protection Notices (PPN1) forms are submitted when an officer or staff member attending a call, or dealing with a crime, identifies any degree of vulnerability with a child. The form is risk assessed and passed to the relevant agency for action. Due to the demographics in the City, the forms are often completed for children who are non-residents, before being transferred to the relevant local authority for action.
5. There is evidence of increasing vulnerability in society but conversions to actual suicides remain low, evidenced by joint work in crisis management and interventions at an earlier stage. Post incident management procedures follow, which might also warrant a Serious Case Review at the Adult Safeguarding Board. Whilst an individual's borough of residence is key in a review, there is cross-borough and partnership working. The Chair asked if the next report to the Sub Committee could include data on mental health and suicide, noting that this would need to be in the non-public part of the meeting.
6. Data in the report in respect of hate crime pre-dated the current Gaza conflict. There has been a small rise in anti-semitism and islamophobia, which is being monitored and reported to the Police Authority Board. Community tensions are also monitored.

The Chair thanked the Police for attending this meeting, noting that there would be a police presence at all future Safeguarding Sub Committee meetings.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

## 5. **CITY AND HACKNEY SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

The Sub Committee received the Annual Report of the Independent Chair, City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board, as required under S43 of the Care Act 2014. The report outlined the key achievements and priorities for the forthcoming year, together with an overview of the safeguarding data for the London Borough of Hackney. The Chair commended a detailed and helpful report and Members welcomed the case studies.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. **ADULT SOCIAL CARE SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE REPORT Q2 2023/24**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which provided an update on safeguarding performance across the Adult Social Care Service during the first six months of 2023/24. In response to a question, Members noted that oil filled heaters are still available for vulnerable adults via the Fire Safety and Self-Neglect panel.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

7. **VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2022/2023**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which presented an overview of the activities and impact of The City of London Virtual School for the Academic Year 2022/2023. The report also provided information on the priorities for this Academic Year - 2023/2024.

In response to a question, Members noted that less than 5 children in the City are home educated but there was a slight increase during the pandemic.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO), ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022-2023**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which provided an overview of the Independent Reviewing Service in the City of London for 2022–2023. The report also identified the strengths of last year's practice and areas of development for 2023–2024.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

9. **CITY OF LONDON CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND EARLY HELP, ACTION FOR CHILDREN, ANNUAL SURVEY 2022-23**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, in respect of the Action for Children Annual Feedback Survey. Members noted that the exercise was undertaken in July 2023 and the report set out the responses and feedback received.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

**10. CARE LEAVERS COMPACT**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the Pan London Care Leavers Compact, which provides a framework for developing consistency, breadth and quality in the support offered to City of London Corporation care leavers.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The progress made on the six commitments, which all London Local Authorities have been invited to sign up to, be noted.
2. The Community and Children's Services Committee be recommended to sign up to the six commitment set out in the Compact, together with an additional policy to adopt 'Care Experience' as a protected characteristic.

**11. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SELF EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the Self Evaluation Framework, as part of the Annual Engagement Meeting (AEM) with Ofsted, which take place between inspections.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

1. The 34% of negative feedback might be due to perception, as the quality of support offered by the COLC is exceptionally high. This is most likely to arise from expectations in respect of housing needs and specialist advice.
2. There had been a perception of the Team's lack of diversity but it is very diverse across age, gender and ethnicity.
3. There are challenges to housing expectations amongst care leavers, in terms of market provision and their desires to remain with peer groups, but this is a high priority in the Care Leaver Covenant and Service Development Plan. Social workers try to keep young people with foster carers for as long as possible but they are likely to seek independence by their late teens.
4. Some improvement in the availability of smaller units/studio flats is expected over the next couple of years, as more units on Golden Lane become available. Care leavers are also at the top of bandings when bidding for accommodation.
5. The Chair suggested, and Members agreed, that consideration be given to providing City Corporation owned accommodation to care leavers, as a half way house, before they move into tenanted properties. There was a further suggestion for this to include disability and other care needs.



6. This is a local survey so there is no like for like comparison as such. However, there are ways of drawing high level comparisons from regulation and inspection data. A Member advised of organisations in the market place which can draw comparative data from different surveys.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

**12. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND EARLY HELP SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-23**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the Development Plan, which was refreshed for 2023-24. The recommendations in the Plan had arisen from learnings from a complaint.

Members noted that the service had been graded as 'outstanding' but the Team continue to strive for 'exceptional'. There is particular vigilance and advocacy for groups that might experience discrimination.

In response to a question, the officer explained that there had been some vaccination reluctance since the pandemic. The Integrated Care Board and Public Health have launched a number of campaigns and are working with schools, particularly in light of the recent increase in measles infections.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted

**13. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE PERFORMANCE - MONTH 6 2023/24 (SEPTEMBER 2023)**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which demonstrated where performance meets our statutory obligations and targets and identifies where action was taken for improvement in specific areas.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

**14. WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the work of the Early Years Service, in response to new guidance, and to meet the needs of our statutory school cohort by working together to improve school attendance.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

1. That national average stands at 93.6, with the Aldgate School at 96.3 (target of 97), noting that attendance is generally lower in the Autumn term.
2. 'Real time attendance' is now used, which enables persistent absences to be identified quicker. There have been no penalty notices this year but 12 warnings were issued last year.

3. There have been no requests this year for home educating.
4. Following the Chadrack Case Review in 2016, non-attendance procedures were enhanced to ensure that welfare and safeguarding are at the forefront. Families experiencing difficulties are always offered referral to Early Help or City Advice.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

**15. THE CHILD Q UPDATE REPORT - WHY WAS IT ME?**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Independent Safeguarding Children Commissioner in respect of the Child Q update report – ‘*Why was it Me?*’, which was published in June 2023. Members noted that the report provides an evaluation of progress against the Review’s initial 14 recommendations and looks at the work undertaken on wider community issues with trust and confidence in the police, schools and anti-racism.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

1. New policies and procedures were being implemented across police forces in response to the report. The Head of Service Co-chairs the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Forum where training in adultification and safeguarding awareness has been at the forefront of searches and children being taken into custody.
2. This Review will continue to attract scrutiny from safeguarding practitioners and partners until evidence can be gained in terms of the outcome of actions and impacts arising from the recommendations.
3. The first set of recommendations are being tracked through the Case Review Sub Group, with clear reporting lines into the Executive.
4. The report and responses cross into work underway by the Police Authority Board but the Chair asked for the Sub Committee to be kept updated on progress.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

**16. YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE ACTION PLAN**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services which provided an update on progress in the Youth Justice Service and summarises the inspection findings.

Members noted that, whilst there are currently no City of London Children in the Youth Justice System, the COLC commissions Tower Hamlets to run this service on their behalf. A few years ago the service was graded as inadequate but there have been significant improvements since. Members commended the monitoring and early intervention work in achieving this outcome.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

**17. QUESTIONS OF MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

There were no questions

*At 3.55 pm, Members agreed to extend the meeting to conclude the business on the agenda*

**18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

The Chair was very pleased to provide the following updates :

- An agreement in principal for three City of London Corporation apprenticeships to be ringfenced for care leavers.
- The ‘*Bridge Across the City*’ Scheme to make the Financial Services Sector more open to care experienced young people.
- The ‘*Shining Stars*’ inaugural award ceremony for care experienced young people across London.

**19. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED**, that – under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Paragraph</b>
20-24	1,2

**20. NHS NEL ICB (CITY & HACKNEY) CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**

The Sub Committee received the Children in Care Annual Report of the Designated Nurse and Doctor for the City of London and Hackney, which is a statutory requirement for all NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs).

The report covered the period April 2022 to March 2023 and provided an opportunity for the City of London Corporation to consider how health agencies are delivering on the duty to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of all care experienced children, as required under ‘*Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked after Children*’ (2015). This duty includes the commissioning of statutory initial and review health assessments (IHA, RHA) to meet the health needs of all children who are looked after by the City of London and who are placed in other areas.

Members noted that the report provided an update on the progress made against the care experienced children priorities agreed in 2022/2023. It also highlighted the many achievements of the team and concluded with a summary of key risks, priorities and the focus areas for improvement in 2023/2024.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

21. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) - UPDATE**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which provided statistical information about the number of children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) who are known to the local authority (LA); those who receive additional support from the LA through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) due to their complex needs, and those who are receiving SEN Support. Members noted that the City of London Corporation is in a very strong position as the schools share data.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

22. **NON-PUBLIC APPENDICES**

The Sub Committee received the following non-public appendices

- 22.1 Adults Performance Report
- 22.2 Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report for Academic Year 2022/2023
- 22.3 Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), Annual Report for 2022-2023
- 22.4 City of London Children's Social Care and Early Help, Action for Children, Annual Survey 2022-23
- 22.5 Children's Social Care Self Evaluation Framework
- 22.6 School Attendance
- 22.7 Youth Justice

23. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

24. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB-COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

One item was considered whilst the public were excluded.

**The meeting closed at 4.15 pm**

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Chairman

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<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Safeguarding Sub-Committee	16/04/2024
<b>Subject:</b> Adult Social Care Safeguarding Performance Report Q3 2023/24	<b>Public</b>  <b>Appendix 1 (Non-public)</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1, 2 and 3
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Ellie Ward, Head of Strategy and Performance	

## Summary

This report updates Members on safeguarding performance across the Adult Social Care Service during the first nine months of 2023/24.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## Main Report

### Background

1. The Adult Social Care Service at the City of London Corporation provides a range of services, including safeguarding.
2. The service collects and monitors a range of performance information to ensure that statutory duties are being met, and that services are delivering the best possible outcomes for people.
3. Appendix 1 presents the safeguarding performance dashboard for 2023/24. It provides a range of detailed information in different areas of safeguarding.

## **Current Position**

4. Overall, performance across the service is good, meeting a range of statutory requirements and local targets.
5. It should be noted that, due to small numbers in cohorts in the City of London Corporation, there can sometimes be significant variance in out-turns. These are noted where this is an issue.
6. Appendix 1 includes a summary and some of the headlines from the data.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

7. Strategic Implications – The Adult Social Care Service provides a range of statutory services and also a range of early intervention and prevention services. These all contribute to meeting outcomes 1, 2 and 3 of the Corporate Plan.
8. Financial implications – N/A
9. Resource implications – N/A
10. Legal implications – N/A
11. Risk implications – N/A
12. Equalities implications – Monitoring intelligence on all of our social care processes and associated demographics allows us to assess and then investigate if there are any unintended impacts of any processes or practices.
13. Climate implications – N/A
14. Security implications – N/A

## **Conclusion**

15. This report provides a summary of performance data from the Adult Social Care Service in relation to safeguarding for 2022/23, comparing it to performance from the previous quarter or year, and other benchmarks, where appropriate.
16. It demonstrates strong performance across this area of the service.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Adult Social Care Safeguarding Performance Dashboard Q3 2023/24 (Non-public)

**Ellie Ward**

Head of Strategy and Performance  
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<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Safeguarding Sub-Committee	16/04/2024
<b>Subject:</b> Children and Families Service Performance – Month 6 2023/24 (September 2023)	<b>Public</b>  <b>Appendix 1 (Non-public)</b>  <b>Appendix 2 (Public)</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1, 2 and 3
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Judith Finlay Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Ellie Ward, Head of Strategy and Performance	

## Summary

This report updates Members on service performance across the Children and Families Service. It demonstrates where performance meets our statutory obligations and targets and identifies where action was taken for improvement in specific areas.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## Main Report

### Background

1. The Children and Families Service at the City of London Corporation provides a range of services including Early Help, Child Protection, and Supporting Care Leavers.
2. The service collects and monitors a range of performance information to ensure that statutory duties are being met, and that services are delivering the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families.

3. Appendix 1 presents the performance dashboard from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> December (month 9) 2023/24. It provides an overall summary of performance in each of the service areas and more detailed information in each area.
4. Appendix 2 provides a glossary of some of the terms used in the performance dashboard.

### **Current Position**

5. Overall, performance across the service is good, meeting a range of statutory requirements and local targets, and comparing well with regional or national benchmarks.
6. It should be noted that, due to small numbers in children's services cohorts in the City of London Corporation, there can sometimes be significant variance in out-turns. These are noted where this is an issue.

### **Headlines**

7. Demand continues to be high. In the first 9 months of 2023/24, there were 566 contacts. Based on this, it is estimated that there will be nearly 700 contacts over the year. This is similar to last year when there were 707, which was also higher than the total number for 2021/22. This is in keeping with an annual trend but shows a significant increase over 2021/22 and the estimate for this year.
8. Overall, the number of Children in Need has reduced over the nine months from 19 in April 2023 to 17 at the end of December 2023.
9. The number of children looked after (CLA) by the City of London Corporation decreased over the three quarters from 12 in April 2023 to 7 in December 2023. This follows a trend in recent years of decreasing numbers of CLA.
10. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) recorded 19 contacts in the first 6 months of 2023/24 (3% of referrals). MASH contacts have already exceeded the number in 2022/23 which was 17.
11. There were 14 Early Help referrals in the first three quarters. It is estimated that the total number of referrals will be lower than the previous two years which saw a particularly high number of referrals reflecting the support provided to families as part of the Afghan Resettlement Programme.
12. Overall, during the three quarters, an average 81% of assessments were completed within 45 days. This is lower than the 90% average of 2022/23 but is an area that is being monitored.
13. There were 55 care leavers being supported at the end of December 2023. This has been increasing overall over time (42 at the end of 2020/21) but is a slight decrease on the end of March 2023 when the number was 59.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

14. Strategic implications – This report represents a picture of the Children and Families Service which includes both statutory requirements and early intervention and prevention work (known as Early Help). The work of the service helps meet Corporate Plan Priorities 1, 2 and 3 for families, children and young people.
15. Financial implications – N/A
16. Resource implications – N/A
17. Legal implications – N/A
18. Risk implications – N/A
19. Equalities implications – Monitoring intelligence on all of our social care processes and associated demographics allows us to assess and then investigate if there are any unintended impacts of any processes or practices.
20. Climate implications – N/A
21. Security implications – N/A

## **Conclusion**

22. This report provides a summary of performance data from the Children and Families Service from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, comparing it to performance from the previous month, quarter or year, and other benchmarks where appropriate.
23. It demonstrates strong performance across the service, with some specific areas where some action was taken for improvement. These areas are all now back on a positive trajectory.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Children and Families Service Performance Dashboard 2023/24 (Non-Public)
- Appendix 2 – Glossary for Performance Dashboard (Public)

## **Ellie Ward**

Head of Strategy and Performance  
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# Glossary

## Children Social Care

CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

<b>C&amp;FA</b>	Child and Family Assessment – single assessment undertaken by Children Social Care
<b>CAF</b>	Common Assessment Framework (part of Early Help)
<b>CAFCASS</b>	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
<b>CHSCP</b>	City and Hackney Children's Safeguarding Partnership
<b>CIC</b>	Child/ren in Care
<b>CICC</b>	Children in Care Council
<b>CIN</b>	Child In Need
<b>CL</b>	Care Leaver
<b>CLA</b>	Children Looked After
<b>CPP</b>	Child Protection Plan
<b>CPS</b>	Crown Prosecution Service
<b>CSC</b>	Children's Social Care
<b>CSE</b>	Child Sexual Exploitation
<b>CYP</b>	Child and/or Young Person (up to 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday)
<b>CYPP</b>	Children and Young People's Plan
<b>DSL</b>	Designated Safeguarding Lead
<b>DV</b>	Domestic Violence
<b>EDT</b>	Emergency Duty Team (out of hours duty provided by Hackney)
<b>EET</b>	Education, Employment and Training
<b>EH</b>	Early Help
<b>FE</b>	Further Education

<b>HMO</b>	House of Multiple Occupancy
<b>ICPC</b>	Initial Child Protection Conference
<b>IFA</b>	Independent Fostering Agency
<b>IHA</b>	Initial Health Assessment
<b>IRO</b>	Independent Reviewing Officer
<b>LA Services</b>	Local Authority Services
<b>LAC</b>	Looked after child / ren
<b>LADO</b>	Local Authority Designated Officer
<b>LASC</b>	London Asylum Seekers Consortium
<b>MACP</b>	Multi-Agency Child Protection
<b>MARAC</b>	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
<b>MARF</b>	Multi Agency Referral Form
<b>MASH</b>	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment or Training
<b>NFA</b>	No Further Action
<b>QSW</b>	Qualified Social Worker
<b>RCPC</b>	Review Child Protection Conference
<b>RHI</b>	Return Home Interview
<b>S47</b>	Section 47 Enquiry, part of Child Protection investigation (the outcome may be that the subject is escalated to an ICPC)
<b>SCR</b>	Serious Case Review
<b>SEND</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disability
<b>TAC</b>	Team Around the Child meeting (Early Help measure)

**TAF** Team Around the Family (Early Help measure)

**UASC** Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child (up to 18<sup>th</sup> birthday)



<b>Committees:</b> Community & Children’s Services Committee – For Information Health & Social Care Scrutiny Committee – For Information Safeguarding Sub-Committee – For Information	<b>Dated:</b> 01/05/24  15/05/24  16/04/24
<b>Subject:</b> Adult Social Care Self-Assessment	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1, 2, 3, 4
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Judith Finlay, Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Scott Myers, Strategy & Projects Officer	

## Summary

This report introduces the City of London Corporation’s Adult Social Care Self-Assessment 2024, which will support the inspection of our Adult Social Care services by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## Main Report

### Background

1. The Health and Care Act 2022 introduced a new inspection regime for local authority Adult Social Care services, to be carried out by the CQC. Traditionally, only services that provide direct care – for example, reablement services, homecare and residential care – have been subject to inspection in the Adult Social Care field.
2. The roll-out of the inspection regime has started following a pilot period with several local authorities.
3. As with other inspections, we are required to produce a self-assessment to support the inspection of our services. Although there is no set format or

template for the Self-Assessment Framework (SEF), it is designed to provide a space for the local authority to reflect on their delivery and performance, their challenges and how they have responded to them, and the impact they have had on Adult Social Care clients.

### **Current Position**

4. As part of our inspection preparation which this self-assessment supports, the City Corporation has a specific programme in Adult Social Care focusing on transformation and inspection. The programme board is chaired by the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services.
5. In August 2023, in co-operation with the Local Government Association, our inspection readiness was tested by a peer review and areas that are likely to be raised within an inspection. This peer review complemented our self-assessment and did not raise any areas of concern.
6. An Adult Social Care Service Improvement Plan will be established to support the improvement work emerging from the SEF. This improvement plan will include an update on service outcomes and will be submitted to Members on a six-monthly basis.

### **Key themes from the Adult Social Care Self-Assessment**

#### *Vision*

7. Our vision for the City Corporation's Adult Social Care Service is to: support people to maintain their independence at home for as long as they are able and wish to; and enable them to meet their desired outcomes.

#### *Strengths-Based Approach*

8. One of our key strengths is our personalised and strengths-based approach to identify and deliver individual outcomes, and there is strong partnership working to deliver this. Though there are specific challenges around complex needs (specifically rough sleepers), there has been a proactive and innovative response which has reduced risk in this area.

#### *Commissioned Placements*

9. Some of our key areas of work include: strengthening triangulation around commissioned placements; developing a stronger performance culture within the service; strengthening quality assurance; and improving on some specific processes such as timeliness of reviews.
10. There are no accommodation-based support options within our boundaries, and placements are therefore purchased when required (also known as spot purchasing). A project is underway to make this process more efficient, to strengthen quality assurance and to triangulate this with our practice and systems.

### *Adult Social Care Workforce*

11. The City of London Adult Social Care workforce is stable and experienced, creating a flexible and agile response to need. A strengths-based approach practice model and manageable workloads allow staff the time to build relationships and trust with people to identify and meet their outcomes. Strong partnership working across the system supports this approach.

### *Hospital Discharge*

12. We have developed a new hospital discharge model and an innovative social worker post within the Homelessness Team.

### *Carers*

13. Our specific support to carers has been strengthened and our new carers strategy will continue to focus on supporting carers.

### *Co-production*

14. Our aim is to co-produce the Adult Social Care services that are needed. Going forward, our engagement with service users and their feedback will be strengthened to provide us with richer data on how outcomes are achieved and the impact this has. Essential information and how it is provided to services users is currently being reviewed.

### *Safeguarding Practice*

15. Safeguarding practice in the City of London is robust, and the promotion of safety and reduction of risk is built into both our internal and external systems. Our Safeguarding Adults Board function is delivered jointly with the London Borough of Hackney but with an additional sub-group for the City of London to ensure a specific focus.

### *Areas for Improvement*

16. The self-assessment sets out several improvements that focus on strengthening our existing robust work. These are summarised in the 'Key themes' paragraphs 7 to 15 above, and are included in the Adult Social Care Service Development Plan.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

17. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.
  - Strategic implications – None identified.
  - Financial implications – None identified
  - Resource implications – None identified

- Legal implications – None identified
- Risk implications – None identified
- Equalities implications – None identified
- Climate implications – None identified
- Security implications – None identified

## **Conclusion**

18. The City of London Corporation's Adult Social Care self-assessment shows that our practice and service to residents is good quality, but there are areas of development around systems and processes that could be delivered to strengthen the service further.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Adult Social Care Self-Assessment 2024

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### **Overall Summary and Assessment**

The City of London and its governing body, the City of London Corporation are unique. There are 8,600 residents who live in the Square Mile, 14% of whom are aged 65 or over. There is high life expectancy in the City of London and this, coupled with the high number of rough sleepers in the City of London, create the key drivers of demand for health and social care support in the City of London.

Our vision is for residents to get the right information, advice, support and care to live their best lives, maintain their health and wellbeing, and live safely in the place of their choice.

There is one commissioned homecare provider and a high rate of people who have a direct payment to purchase their own provision. There are no accommodation-based support options within our boundaries and placements are therefore spot purchased. A project is underway to make this process more efficient, to strengthen quality assurance and to triangulate this with our practice and systems.

The City of London Adult Social Care workforce is stable, experienced and generic, creating a flexible and agile response to need. A strengths-based approach practice model and manageable workloads allow staff the time to build relationships and trust with people to identify and meet their outcomes. Strong partnership working across the system supports this approach.

Our service is innovative and impactful, operating in a complex, high risk and financially challenging environment. Complex hospital discharge and rough sleeper cases present specific challenges for us but a new hospital discharge model and innovative rough sleeper social worker post within homelessness have helped reduce some risk. These areas remain specific challenges for us, however. Census data shows there are nearly 500 unpaid carers in the City of London. Recently, specific support to unpaid carers has been strengthened and more unpaid carers have been identified. A new Carers Strategy will continue to focus on this.

Innovative approaches to care and support planning in partnership with the individual are put in place and people are supported with direct payments where desired and appropriate. Our aim is to co-produce the ASC services that are needed. Going forward our feedback and engagement with service users will be strengthened to have richer data on how outcomes are achieved and the impact this has. The information provided to services users and how is currently being reviewed.

Safeguarding Practice in the City of London is robust, and the promotion of safety and reduction of risk is built into both our internal and external systems. Our Safeguarding Adults Board function is delivered jointly with the London Borough of Hackney but with an additional sub-group for the City of London to ensure a specific focus.

The City of London Corporation is governed by a committee system and the Adult Social Care Service and budget is governed by the Community and Children's Services Committee. There are also strong links to the Health and Wellbeing Board and services are also scrutinised by the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee. There is strong political support for Adult Social Care.

In response to new legislative requirements and knowing our areas for development, an Adult Social Care Transformation Programme is currently being delivered.

Our overall assessment is that our practice and service to residents is good quality but that there are areas of development around systems and processes. One of our key strengths is our personalised and

strengths-based approach to identify and deliver individual outcomes and there is strong partnership working to deliver this. Though there are specific challenges around complex needs, there has been a proactive and innovative response which has reduced risk in this area. Some of our key areas of work include strengthening triangulation around commissioned placements, developing a stronger performance culture within the service, strengthening quality assurance and improving on some specific processes such as timeliness of reviews.

## Overview

### The City of London

The City of London, also known as the Square Mile, is the financial centre of the UK. It has 8,600 residents, half a million daily commuters and 10mn visitors a year. It sits at the heart of London and is surrounded by 7 local authorities.

The number of residents in the City of London has increased by 16% since 2011. The majority are working age but there are 1200 people - 14% - who are aged 65 and over. Although the percentage of population aged over 65 has stayed the same between the censuses, the actual number of people has increased. There is high life expectancy in the City of London with females having a life expectancy at birth of 90.7 years and males 88.8 years.

Compared with the England average, overall, the City of London has significantly lower levels of income deprivation, child poverty and older people in deprivation. However, according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019, the City of London's most deprived ward, Portsoken, on the east side of the City of London, was among the top 20% in the country for levels of income deprivation, including income deprivation affecting older people. The Mansell Street & Petticoat Lane area is the most deprived in the City of London falling into the 40% most deprived in England.

Asian people are the largest global majority group in the City of London accounting for 16.8% of the population; and 3% of the City of London population are Black according to the 2021 census. Portsoken, in the east of the City of London is the most ethnically diverse ward.

Census data shows that the City of London has 496 self-identified unpaid carers. The majority provide 19 hours or less of unpaid care per week. However, there are a small percentage who provide upwards of 20 hours per week.

There are a significant number of people sleeping rough in the City of London. In 2022 (the most recent full year data) 372 people were rough sleeping within the boundaries of the City of London which is the 7<sup>th</sup> highest level amongst London's local authorities. Many of these rough sleepers have significant mental health or substance misuse issues.

There is one GP Practice in the City of London which has around 75% of City of London residents registered while around 16% of residents (on the east side of the City of London) are registered with Tower Hamlets GPs. All these practices now sit within the North East London Integrated Care System. In terms of acute hospitals, City of London residents generally go to the Royal London Hospital in Tower Hamlets or University College Hospital London in Camden (which is in the North Central London Integrated Care System). Community Services for City of London residents are provided by Homerton Hospital. This creates a complex pattern of service delivery for City of London residents.

## The City of London Corporation

The City of London Corporation (the City Corporation) is the governing body of the Square Mile and provides local authority services to its residents. The City Corporation has 125 Members operating on a committee system and has its own Lord Mayor and independent police force.

The Department of Community and Children’s Services delivers local authority services including social care, homelessness and rough sleeping, public health, education and SEND, housing and libraries.

The Corporate Plan is being relaunched in 2024 and the Community and Children’s Services Business Plan will support the outcomes in the Plan. The Departmental Business Plan focuses on safety, independence and choice, potential, health and wellbeing and community.

The Department also delivers several strategies including Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, Carers, and Joint Health and Wellbeing.

### Adult Social Care

#### Key Statistics

<b>181</b> Residents requesting support from ASC services (2022/23) <b>94</b> April – December 2023	<b>102</b> Discharges from hospital supported (2022/23) <b>86</b> April – December 2023	<b>96</b> Adults receiving a Long – Term Service on 31 December 2023	<b>34</b> Carers Supported on 31 March 2023 <b>33</b> 31 December 2023
<b>24</b> Safeguarding Enquiries (2022/23) <b>16</b> April – December 2023	<b>50%</b> Percentage of all working age clients receiving care and support related to Mental Health on 31 December 2023	<b>42%</b> Percentage of all clients aged 65+ receiving Personal Care and Support on 31 December 2023	<b>£6.3mn</b> Adult Social Care Gross Budget 2023/24

Our vision is for residents to get the right information, advice, support and care to live their best lives, maintain their health and wellbeing, and live safely in the place of their choice.

Our skilled workforce will work with people through the options, and actively champion equality, diversity and inclusion so all people can get the support they need, when they need it.

This underpins all our work and our practice model. The table below sets out some of the key principles of the Care Act 2014 and ASC good practice and how the City Corporation approaches this.

Principle	City of London Corporation Approach
<p><b>Empowerment, engagement and co-production</b></p>	<p>A Strengths Based Approach practice model is used in the Service which places the individual at the centre, working with individuals to identify their outcomes and using these to underpin all the actions taken together from there. Individuals or their advocates are involved in care planning and review processes.</p> <p>Innovative approaches to care and support planning in partnership with the individual are put in place and people are supported with direct payments where desired and appropriate (see theme 2).</p> <p>In 2021, the homecare service was recommissioned, and this was a co-produced approach (see theme 2). There is a recognition that we need to strengthen our approach to co-production with service users and we are currently developing this approach.</p> <p>Going forward our feedback and engagement with service users will be strengthened to have richer data on how outcomes are achieved and the impact this has. The information provided to services users and how is currently being reviewed.</p> <p>An Anti-Racist Practice Framework has recently been adopted across Adult Social Care which is being embedded into the service with staff. There is also a range of other initiatives to strengthen our approach to equality and inclusion (see theme 4) and a key area of work for us is to strengthen the collation and recording of equalities data and use this to inform and shape service delivery.</p>
<p><b>Safety, protection and risk management</b></p>	<p>Safety, protection and positive risk management are all embedded into our system work (see theme 3). This is in place right from the start, in our preventative work, with our commissioned providers and with our colleagues at the City Corporation.</p> <p>In meeting our statutory requirements around safeguarding, a timely, proportionate and person-centred approach to managing risk is used. There is good feedback from Making Safeguarding Personal in terms of meeting people’s outcomes and reducing or removing risk (see Theme 3)</p> <p>ASC are active partners in the local Safeguarding Adults Board (City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board) but also have a specific City of London focus through a designated sub-group which is chaired by the Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board.</p>
<p><b>Prevention and delay of needs</b></p>	<p>Prevention is a key tenet of all our work in ASC and is delivered in a wide range of ways including an innovative Early Intervention Project, a commissioned Early Intervention and Prevention Service and through a range of information and advice (see theme 2).</p> <p>There has been significant investment in prevention through our new Target Operating Model which at a time of financial constraints, prioritised ASC and</p>



	prevention and saw the establishment of Strengths Based Practitioners in the service.
<b>Working in Partnership</b>	Partnership working is a key principle of our Strengths Based Approach (see theme 2). There is good partnership working with local health partners, commissioned providers and other stakeholders. Despite its size, the ASC team has to build relationships and partnerships across a wide breadth of partners. Innovative responses such as the Care Navigator post which provides links between several acute hospitals, GPs and social care helps facilitate some of this partnership working.

### *Workforce*

Our ASC Team is a generic team of experienced practitioners with good rates of retention. The Team includes Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Strengths Based Practitioners. The Strengths Based Practitioner roles were introduced as part of a new Target Operating Model and reflected the organisation’s commitment to Adult Social Care and prevention in a context of financial constraints. These innovative roles are designed to support people at the edge of care with short term interventions to improve wellbeing and delay the need for care.

Caseloads in the team are manageable and are managed dynamically, taking into account complexity and aiming for under 20 cases per social worker (this can include assessments, support planning and reviews). This gives staff the time to develop positive relationships with residents to enable effective and ongoing assessment of need and subsequent care and support planning.

Within the team, there are designated champions who act as expert leads in certain areas such as carers, dementia or transitions. These champions keep up to date with current good practice and engage in local and national partnerships and support peers to develop in these specific areas. This is also designed to help support development of leadership skills.

An ASC workforce development plan for ASC has recently been updated to ensure it is fit for purpose and meets needs. Social Workers have access to a wide range of training, both internal and external and over the past year have attended training on applying the legal framework of the Mental Capacity Act and the need for speed to discharge people safely, Safeguarding Adults Level 3, Motivational Interviewing and Making Every Contact Count. Recent team wide training has focused on development of the Strengths Based Approach and the specific skills required for this.

ASC has recently appointed a dedicated Principal Social Worker (PSW) as a standalone role, rather than it being embedded into the Head of Service role, to strengthen practice governance and staff development amongst other things. The Principal Social Worker is consolidating some of this skills-based training noted above.

A survey of the children’s and adult social care teams was undertaken in September 2022, based on the Employers Standards. Though feedback was generally positive, an action plan has been developed (across both services) to consolidate reflective practice, career development and improved induction for new staff (this is also reflected in a wider corporate commitment as part of the People Strategy).

**Case Study – Feedback from Staff Survey (Survey, September 2022 and Suggestions Box, January 2024)**

***How do we respond to staff concerns and suggestions?***

Staff feedback: *“Being part of such a small stable team, has lots of positives but also challenges. New **ideas**, ways of working, wider conversations are less likely to happen. It's important to keep practice current and alive rather than falling back on our 'uniqueness' which can sometimes stop changes in our practice to align ourselves with the London LA's.”*

**We listened:**

We now have full-time stand-alone post of Principal Social Worker, and our Senior Occupational Therapist is a member of Principal Occupational Therapists Network. These practitioners enable local and national networking, share policies and guidance, and make improvements to our processes and practice.

We also have a “Staff Suggestions digital box” system, where our staff can make positive suggestions and share their views, and we learn from our Exit Interviews, which are reviewed by the Principal Social Worker.

We invite external guests and speakers to our events, to boost our engagement in ASC national and local agenda, such as at World Social Work Day or visit by Chief Social Worker, Lyn Romeo.

Staff feedback: *“I think there is a well-balanced understanding of case workload and stress. I feel listened to and understood, for example if I ask for a little space/time to finish off work before new cases are allocated.”*

**We listened:**

We also review themes shared as positive feedback to ensure we maintain good mental health of our practitioners.

An anonymous staff comment through our Suggestions Box: Response to question what we can do to improve our work: *“A total review of ASC proportionality of roles and how work is distributed.”*

**We listened:**

Principal Social Worker (PSW) addressed the issue of allocations and how work is distributed with the Head of Service (HoS). Agreed and shared with the team an action for PSW and HoS to review the allocation and distribution of long-term and short-term cases, safeguarding work and other tasks. At the same time managers updated case allocation Case Note template on Mosaic to include specific information about the case, its complexity, timeframes, and expected tasks, which can help practitioners to manage caseloads better.

Supervision plays an important part in supporting and developing our workforce and our commitment to this is demonstrated by:

- The development of a new supervision protocol and new supervision forms that include a reflective approach
- Auditing supervision as part of the annual audit schedule and annual staff survey
- Establishment of new peer group reflective supervisions, held once a month on complex case studies using a reflective model

Other support is provided to social workers around wellbeing including an Employee Health and Wellbeing Hub and various team wellbeing tools. There is also guidance for Managers in the Team about how to support wellbeing. Social Workers also have access to the PSW for individual practice improvement sessions or wellbeing support.

The City Corporation has joined the South East London Teaching Partnership (SELTP) which brings together Goldsmith and South Bank Universities, Royal Borough of Greenwich, London Borough of Lewisham, London Borough of Southwark and now the City Corporation. The SELTP's ambitions align with the Department for Education's vision for teaching partnerships and aim to raise standards in children and adults' social work by supporting high-quality training for social work students and qualified practitioners.

ASC supports students on regular basis, which enriches practice with their academic research, social work models and theory. Having a social work student in the team has a positive impact on the workforce, enhancing motivation and enthusiasm levels. At the same time we embrace our partnership with academia and contribute to developing the social work profession.

### *Working in Partnership*

Working in partnership has been a key approach in our work over recent years but is specifically strengthened in the Strengths Based Approach practice model.

There are good working relationships with the one NHS GP practice in the City of London and the relevant GP practices in Tower Hamlets. A social worker or the Care Navigator attend the Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings at these practices.

The City Corporation is part of the North East London Integrated Care System which provides some benefits as it includes Tower Hamlets where 16% of our residents are registered with a GP and access health services. As noted above, the pathways for delivery of health services and therefore integration are complex for the City of London.

More locally, the City Corporation is part of the City and Hackney placed based partnership, reflecting our previous partnership with City and Hackney CCG. This local partnership is well developed in terms of integration and has a neighbourhood model for care closer to home and out of hospital services. It is underpinned by a principle of tackling health inequalities. Primary Care Networks across City and Hackney mirror the eight neighbourhoods across City and Hackney. Our unique situation and different infrastructure means that often bespoke models for integration have to be developed for us, for example in the neighbourhood.

At the neighbourhood level, social workers are active members of the Multi-Disciplinary Meetings which are designed as a space for complex cases to be considered, owned as a group and lead organisation agreed. A number of City of London cases have been taken here and this has been beneficial in terms of partners being accountable and taking responsibility for certain areas of work.

There are a number of new roles emerging within the neighbourhood structure such as care co-ordinators, health and wellbeing coaches and Care Co-ordinators for proactive care. Community

Mental Health Services have also been re modelled on to neighbourhood footprints with Community Connectors. The Service is proactive in making connections with all these roles to ensure that City of London needs are recognised and responded to and that services work for us.

The voluntary and community sector in the City of London is small but vitally important for our residents and our practice model. There are two key voluntary sector providers of large contracts – a City Advice Service provided by Toynbee Hall and an Early Intervention and Prevention Service (known as City Connections, provided by Age UK). It is recognised that there are other smaller VCS groups providing support within the community and there is work currently underway looking to build the capacity and scope of the VCS in the City of London to play an ongoing role as key partners. There is also a strong Healthwatch organisation within the City of London.

Our Care Navigator, who is part of our Early Intervention and Prevention Service, plays a key role in building partnerships between acute hospitals, GPs and ASC to facilitate safe hospital discharge from a number of hospitals that City of London residents attend.

There are strong relationships with our other commissioned providers such as the London Borough of Hackney who provide our out of hours service, the East London Foundation Trust who provide our Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMHP) Function and the providers of our reablement and rapid response service.

Having external providers for these services ensures capacity and continuity of service and in the case of the AMHP, ensure there is appropriate clinical supervision and embedding within a relevant discipline.

## CQC Theme 1: Working with People

### Our Strengths

- Experienced and knowledgeable workforce (managers and staff with good rates of staff retention) and a workforce who know our residents well and develop positive relationships
- Strengths Based Approach Practice Model
- A co-ordinated, multi-agency approach to the assessment and support of our residents

### Areas for Improvement and Direction of Travel

- Continuing to strengthen our Strengths Based Approach practice model
- Exploring timeliness and impact of assessments and reviews
- Capturing and recording equalities data more effectively and using this to shape services
- Improving the quality and accessibility of our information offer for residents

### Key statistics

<b>181</b> Residents requesting support from ASC services (2022/23)	<b>49</b> Supported Self-Assessments (2022/23)	<b>31</b> Occupational Therapist assessments (2022/23)
<b>94</b> April – December 2023	<b>33</b> April – December 2023	<b>38</b> April – December 2023
<b>8</b> New Carers Assessments completed (2022/23)	<b>0</b> % waiting more than 6 months for an assessment (any assessment) (April – December 2023)	<b>64%</b> <b>(37 cases)</b> % ongoing reviews completed within 12 months of previous review (April – December 2023)
<b>10</b> April – December 2023	<b>26</b> Receiving a Direct Payment 31 December 2023	

ASC operates within the People’s Directorate which includes Children’s Social Care and rough sleeping. It also works closely with the Education and Early Years Team who sit within the Education Unit. This enables cross-cutting work across, for example, transitions or homelessness. There are monthly People’s Senior Management Team meetings (which also includes Education and

Early Years) where various policies and initiatives are discussed, and cross-cutting work is identified or reported back on. There is also a complex cases meeting where teams from across the Peoples Directorate bring their most complex cases and teams work together to share ideas and good practice and identify if / where they may need to be involved.

#### *A Strengths Based Approach Practice Model*

The ASC Team use a Strengths Based Approach Practice Model which was implemented in 2022 and is designed to support people to maintain their independence and meet their outcomes and aspirations. The model is built on:

- Working in collaborative ways on mutually agreed goals
- Using the community as a resource
- Having trusted and workable relationships

Empowering residents through preventative measures and clients through our assessments, service planning and delivery is a key tenet of our approach. This includes:

- Working together on assessments to ensure that the individual is able to identify and express their outcomes
- High rates of Direct Payments. In 2021/22 placed 28th out of 151 Local Authorities for direct payments)
- Service users are part of various commissioning cycles for example for the Homecare Service which was recommissioned throughout 2021. This was co-designed with service users, carers, Healthwatch and City Connections. Stakeholder feedback was used to understand service priorities and needs, which shaped the service model and specification, the procurement approach, and the design and scoring within the tender.

The ASC service meets the Care Act duty to prevent, delay or reduce needs wherever possible in a variety of ways including Occupational Therapy, Reablement, Commissioning and Social Work Practice, all set within the wider context of a strengths-based approach across the service.

ASC developed an innovative Early Intervention Service which is a pot of funding that empowers ASC practitioners, together with a resident, to identify and implement low-cost one-off interventions which help improve wellbeing and in turn prevent, reduce or delay needs. This has included things like a microwave so that someone was able to have hot food to eat, a zoom licence to reduce social isolation amongst unpaid carers and fishing equipment to help improve mental health. During an 8-month pilot period in 2022, 26 individuals were supported, and 46 purchases were made costing a total of £5,288. All the people supported in the pilot had identified social care needs but were considered to be 'at the edge of care' in relation to the meaning of the Care Act. Of the 26 people supported, none were receiving costed social care support and in all cases no care needs increased.

The pilot has now been made a permanent service. Work has now been undertaken within our system to report more systematically on the impact of the intervention and evidence is now showing that there is greater take up and confidence in the use of the fund by social care practitioners. One practitioner noted:

*'Having the support from management to use my initiative and listened to what would actually be helpful to the service user, led to improved outcomes for clients and improved relationships. I could show to clients that we actually do want to help in a person-centred way and prioritise what they need to make meaningful change'.*

The City Corporation also commissions an Early Intervention and Prevention Service called City Connections. This is provided by Age UK and includes a signposting service, a general wellbeing support service and a specific memory café for people with memory issues and their carers. Recently, a specific carers support service has also been provided through a sub-contract (see Theme 2).

**Case Study – working in partnership with the voluntary sector.**

The Carer is 40 years old, caring for a parent-in-law and lives in a small household with 4 other family members. They are linked in with the City Connections service commissioned from Age-UK by City of London. The Carer reports that the caring role can sometimes be frustrating, and they feel they do not have time for themselves. In addition, the Carer does not use English as their first language and can sometimes find it difficult to access services.

As a result of living in a small space, it was important that the Carer was provided with opportunities to have break from their living situation by encouraging them to join as many community activities and trips as possible with one of our community groups. City connections took into account the Carer’s religion and culture when planning these with them.

The Carer took part in many of the organised trips, such as Hampton Court, Kensington Palace, Sky Garden, and Buckingham Palace. They said that they enjoyed the outings very much as it enabled them to see places in the city. The carer was able to go out with people from the same estate and it helped them make new friends.

The Carer also accessed the exercise classes and commented, **“The exercise we do is hard, but when I go home, I feel good. I like that the classes are every week, whereas before when it was only two times a month.”**

City Connections linked in with another City of London commissioned service, City Advice, to provide an information session. The whole group were actively engaged in the topics being discussed. This particular Carer engaged with City Advice advocate coordinator, who speaks the same language, and they talk about issues with housing and the support they would like to receive.

This was a good example of voluntary services working together, City Connections providing the space and audience for City Advice to do their work and it has shown how important multi-agency can be for residents in the City of London.

The ASC service has also developed innovative winter warmth packs and summer cooling packs to respond to cost-of-living pressures and extreme weather. These are given out by the Strengths Based Practitioners and include things like fleeces, cuppa soups, a small fan and jelly drops which help with hydration.

### ***Case Study – Strengths Based Practitioner Support***

A resident described our Strength Based Practitioner as outstanding saying: **“she has an outstanding gentle, step by step approach to making progress in a friendly way”**.

The Adult is a 74-year-old and had a number of medical conditions including persistent pain, weight loss and a skin condition. There was a general lack of strength to cook and care for themselves and concerns over possible self-neglect.

The Strengths Based Practitioner’s intervention was planned with the intention of re-establishing a personal care routine, support with setting up a self-funded package of care with a previous provider. The practitioner enabled the Adult to build back their personal care routine and improve skin condition. This was achieved through going through the skin care procedure together, setting up a system of text prompts to remind the Adult to carry out the skin care routine regularly and then visiting again to check in.

This resulted in improving their general wellbeing and self-confidence. The adult reported in their feedback that they had benefitted from the intervention and that they felt more independent because of it.

Following the intervention and final visit, the Strengths-based practitioner arranged for a social worker to visit as the adult wanted to discuss future options around potential private residential care.

### ***Case Study – Strengths Based Practitioner Support***

The Adult had been married for over 50 years until their partner passed away 2 years ago. They had kept themselves to themselves, not been known to local services and were not registered with a GP. The property was very cluttered and the adult, who is in their 90s was very reluctant to engage with Adult Social Care.

The Strength Based Practitioner engaged with them on weekly basis via telephone and in person building a relationship learning about their history, estranged family and love of Jazz. SBP persevered over an extensive period of time and despite initial reluctance the adult began to discuss the risks in the home with the SBP and agreed to suggestions on how to mitigate these with equipment and support at a level acceptable to them.

The SBP also supported him to access a GP and navigate the phone call system.

The Adult is now more accepting of care and support and engages with ASC, equipment and telecare have been installed, and domestic home care support is in place, which keeps him safe, independent, and living at home. They are now registered with a local GP and engages with the surgery, is more confident and has made contacts & friendships within the local community.

The SBP used the Early Intervention pathway to provide a fan during the heatwave and a fire safe heater for the cold weather.

The Adult said that the SBP had been wonderful & they didn’t know what they would have done without her. They reported that he has regained confidence due to the SBP encouragement, reassurance, and support.



### **Case Study – Social Worker support**

The Adult came to the UK in 2022 as a sponsored refugee from Ukraine and presented to the City Corporation as homeless, unable to speak English and with possible care and support needs. At that time, they were supported by a daughter who was caring for them.

Our work focused on needs and risks, for both Adult and Carer, while enhancing their independence and resilience. The social worker completed a Care Act Assessment, assisted with applying for sheltered accommodation and helped to access a range of different grants (for clothing, furniture, bedding, and kitchen items). Reablement support was provided followed by a longer-term package of care. The Adult and their Carer were both referred to City Advice, for assistance with a benefits review. A Carers Assessment was offered several times. Social Worker guided both through our processes and understanding of relevant legislation, offered advocacy when needed, and emotional support, time, and empathy.

Information was given to the daughter about Ukrainian groups, befrienders, churches, and church groups.

The adult's anxiety and depression began to improve, and the number of panic attacks reduced. Her needs stabilised and they are now independently accessing their local community, supermarket, and shops.

They moved into sheltered accommodation in another local authority, and while it took time for the adult and their daughter to access the appropriate benefits the accommodation is now stable. They have a lot of phone contact with their extended family, and they occasionally go and stay with a sister, who lives outside of London.

Feedback from the daughter of Adult with care and support needs (10.05.2023):

**"I just want to express my heartfelt appreciation for all the support and assistance you provided to me and my ... (parent) during one of the most difficult times in my life. Your unwavering dedication and commitment to helping my ... (parent) and me through our struggles were truly invaluable. I will always be grateful for your guidance in funding resources and solutions that were tailored to my ...(parent's) unique situation! Your expertise in navigating the complex web of services available to my ...(parent) was a true blessing, and I am confident that I would not have been able to find my way without your help! I want to commend you for your professionalism, kindness, and dedication to helping those in need. Your passion for helping others truly shines through in everything you do, and I feel incredibly lucky to have had you as my ...(parent's) social worker! Thank you! You have made a lasting impact on my ...(parent's) life, and we both will be always grateful for your support."**

Within our practice model, the Strengths Based Approach is operational from first contact. Rather than 'screening out' at the front door, practitioners are expected to be 'helping out' with information, advice and signposting. ASC are the main referrer to the City Connections service which supports people to access some of the services signposted to.

A commissioned information and advice service (City Advice), covers a range of issues and provides advice to residents and workers in the City of London along with our tenants in housing in various London boroughs. Part of the specification for the service includes some of the basic information and advice about accessing social care services. During 2022/23, there were 27 requests for this information. Our carers webpages were recently reviewed with carers and updated to make them useful and user friendly. Other ASC service pages are currently being reviewed to ensure that information is most relevant and user friendly.

Our mechanisms for feedback and how people's outcomes from the service are measured are currently being strengthened (see theme 2).

### *Assessments*

The service uses a supported self-assessment model for assessments and there is an expectation that timeframes are responsive to the needs of and risk to the individual and their family. They can also be impacted by other factors such as the need to discharge someone from hospital. There is an expectation in our practice standards that assessments will be completed within 30 days, while our current reporting uses an indicator of 28 days. We will review and align these targets. Where assessments are more involved, discussion around this would take place within supervision.

#### **Summary**

- Our ASC workforce is experienced with good rates of retention and with manageable workloads allowing presence and time for strong relationship building as a core of our Strengths Based Approach
- The generic nature of the team allows for a flexible and agile approach and a more holistic view of the person
- A new Target Operating Model for the City Corporation recognised the importance of Adult Social Care and of prevention and as a result a new innovative role – Strengths Based Practitioner was developed
- A new standalone Principal Social Worker Post is in place which will allow for the strengthening of practice assurance and personal development
- Working in partnership is well established but is strengthened within our Strengths Based Approach
- There is active engagement with our place-based partnership and within this, the neighbourhood model
- Relationships with the voluntary sector are strong but the voluntary and community sector in the City of London is small. This is an area for development
- Strong relationships with health providers provides a base for working in a co-ordinated and multi-agency approach to assess and support residents (see also theme 2)
- Our approach to service delivery is person centred and empowering, but it is recognised that feedback mechanisms and measurement of outcomes from our work need to be strengthened

## CQC Theme 2: Providing Support

### Our Strengths

- A strong hospital discharge model
- Agile and flexible approach with the ability to spot purchase to meet needs
- Well established integrated care models locally and established relationships with health and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations

### Areas for Improvement and Direction of Travel

- Improving the timeliness of reviews
- Improving triangulation of quality assurance of services
- Strengthening collection of feedback and measures of outcomes from service users

### Key Statistics

<b>21</b> Receiving domiciliary care directly on 31 December 2023	<b>26</b> Receiving a direct payment on 31 December 2023	<b>23</b> Living in supported housing on 31 December 2023
<b>1</b> Using Day Care on 31 December 2023	<b>18</b> Living in residential care on 31 December 2023	<b>7</b> Living in nursing care on 31 December 2023
	<b>14</b> Received a Reablement Service April – December 2023  <b>92%</b> those over 65 who required less support following a period of reablement April – December 2023	

### *Agile and flexible approach to meeting needs*

Our approach to commissioning services is set out in our [Market Sustainability Plan](#), and our Market Position Statement is emerging. Our strategic commitment is to support people to remain at home, which shapes demand for homecare, also informs a more complex need, and costly delivery when a placement is required.

The City of London has no accommodation-based support within its boundaries other than a sheltered accommodation unit which is provided by a housing association.

There has been a consistent level of demand for residential and / or nursing home care over the past 5 years. It is expected that at any one time there would be 20 – 25 placements in place, with an annual placement rate of around six to eight. The growth and ageing of the resident population have not led to a corresponding increase in demand for residential care provision.

As part of the ASC Transformation Programme, a project around brokerage is currently underway. This is designed to make our processes around commissioning residential, nursing and supported living placements more robust, to increase the strength of quality assurance and to ensure that all information on placements is triangulated through our social care system, Mosaic.

There is one commissioned homecare provider and a number of people who have a direct payment to purchase their own provision – some people chose a direct payment when the homecare provider changed, and they wished to remain with the previous provider.

### *Rough Sleepers*

There has been an innovative approach to supporting rough sleepers with a permanent social worker post within the homelessness service but with professional supervision from the Head of ASC. This brings knowledge and expertise to working with a cohort who experience some of the highest health inequalities and poorest outcomes. Our work with rough sleepers involves strong engagement with outreach and mental health services to support and inform effective assessments.

As part of our approach to meeting the needs of rough sleepers, a complex needs hostel for City of London rough sleepers was established in partnership with a homelessness charity and a neighbouring local authority. This year, a specific rough sleepers assessment centre to bring together all our assessment services into one physical place will be opened. The Rough Sleeping Social Worker will have strong links into this assessment centre.

#### **Case Study – Rough Sleeping Social Worker**

An adult was rough sleeping in and around the City of London for 15 years prior to the pandemic. They made a claim for asylum, but this was declined.

The Adult was experiencing a mixture of mental and physical health problems and was assessed as having care and support needs under the Care Act (2014) and that the local authority had a responsibility to offer support under the Human Rights Act (1998). Following an Occupational Therapy assessment, temporary accommodation was organised.

The adult had a care package of support, which over time was reduced and later discontinued, as they readapted to living independently and their mental and physical health improved. Our Strengths Based Practitioners supported the adult over time, building their confidence and relationship within the local community and with services.

The strengths-based practitioner helped him look into aspirational training courses which he had identified, such as security and forklift driver, following his lead to help him work out what he can and can't do rather than shutting doors. They also supported him to attend the local library to use their computers, so that he can do his own research.

The adult appealed the previous asylum decision, and in summer 2023 was granted asylum status in the UK. Now with our support they are building a new life. The adult is being supported to present as homeless and it is hoped that they will soon have an option to move into a property provided via the statutory homelessness pathway.

**Adult's views/ comments:**

The adult says that their community – the GIANTS group with Praxis, the British Red Cross group, and the African Rainbow Family – have all given them “a sense of motivation and encouragement even when times have been hard”. They say that it is something they really value and enjoy. The adult has recently been in the GIANTS group’s published cookbook talking about food they enjoy. GIANTS group with Praxis is a peer group for men applying for asylum, the British red cross is a similar resource, and African rainbow family is for people originally from Africa who identify as LGBTQI+. These groups have given the adult a sense of community and belonging, and motivation when times have been hard.

The adult also reported that Homelessness and ASC staff working with have been like ‘therapists’ and added: “I am not good in a crisis” and “a problem shared is a problem solved”, as an appreciation of being supported by us.

**Carers**

The ASC Team were supporting 33 carers at the end of December 2023. All carers’ assessments are carried out by social workers ensuring that carers assessments are carried out with a high degree of expertise and support plans are developed together. Carers receive individual budgets in the form of a direct payment to meet individual need, and these are not means tested.

In October 2022, an internal audit was carried out to assess the quality of carers assessments. Findings were largely positive with carers reporting a good overall experience with some recommendations for improvement. This included developing a toolkit for practitioners to improve consistency in approach to assessments and a guide for carers outlining what to expect before, during and after the assessment to help improve both experience and outcomes. There was also a recommendation for management to strengthen monitoring of carers assessments including monitoring of annual reviews to ensure timeliness and avoid slippage.

Initially, general wellbeing support for carers was provided through a commissioned early intervention and prevention service (City Connections). Following engagement with carers, it became evident that there was a need for a higher level of specific support for carers. This was piloted and will now be continued as a standalone service.

The Carer Connections service has been running since October 2022 with a dedicated Project Manager, through the Tower Hamlets Carers Centre. Initial work reflected the national picture that there are a significant number of hidden unpaid carers in the City of London who may not recognise themselves as a carer, and who are not in contact with a carers support organisation. A creative approach to community outreach identified 45 new carers, 51% who identified as being from a Black and global majority background and 49% who live on the east side of the City of London. This has been a significant area of focus for us.

Feedback from carers who had used the service showed an average score of 6.1 / 10 that they are consulted and co-produce the services delivered for them and an 8.2 /10 that they can stay independent and get help when they needed it.

A new Carers Strategy is now in place and to inform this, an innovative peer researcher approach was used to gather the views of carers which allowed us to reach a wider range of carers than usual.

### *Hospital Discharge*

The number of hospital discharges the service has supported has increased since the pandemic but more significantly, so has the complexity of these cases as people are discharged more quickly. During 2022/23 102 hospital discharges were supported by the service (86 April – December 2023).

There is a strong model of services around hospital discharges including the Care Navigator who supports safe hospital discharge by building bridges between services, a rapid response service who can provide intensive care and support for short periods to facilitate discharge to assess and to prevent hospital admissions in the first place, a commissioned reablement service and an in-house Occupational Therapy team. There is also close working with health services such as therapy services.

The City Corporation discharge model is designed to best meet local need. Since April 2020, weekend discharge activity represented just 0.02% of overall discharges and therefore a fixed 7-day discharge service was not appropriate. The approach is built on the following:

- A full discharge service operates during normal working hours of Monday to Friday 9-5. A clear expectation is set for the service to work flexibly outside these hours, subject to demand and need
- Friday pressure points are expected, which may require ASC cover outside of normal hours; allowing weekend discharge arrangements to be secured
- The City Corporation's Rapid Response Service provider can support pre-arranged weekend discharge
- Bank holidays will not typically be covered, however, cover arrangement requirement will be assessed and responded to, with cover provided based on discharge demand and 'in hospital' figures. The ASC Head of Service provides the final decision on the requirement of responsive weekend cover
- Placing significant emphasis on prevention and early intervention in relation to safeguarding
- Ensuring that appropriate actions are taken where there is reasonable cause to suspect that an adult with care and support needs is at risk of abuse or neglect

Our Better Care Fund Plan is the primary source of funding for most of our hospital discharge work.

#### **Case Study – Hospital Discharge, Care Navigator**

The Care Navigator from Age UK worked with an Adult in hospital who had been struggling at home for some time but had been reluctant to ask for help and to share information. However, working with the Care Navigator, the individual wanted to be fully involved in their discharge planning but had a difficulty hearing, so by using email, they were able to provide more information about needs and requirements to help with the discharge home.

The Care Navigator acted as a bridge to adult social care to create positive outcomes for the adult by ensuring equipment such as key safe and pendant alarm were in place to prevent delays and ensure a safe discharge. The hospital did not provide a discharge summary for the Adult, but the Care Navigator ensured relevant details were shared with the GP including the arranged outpatient appointments.

Despite the level of complexity, the work of the care navigator helped facilitate a whole range of organisations working together to support the adult home safely and to meet their needs.

#### Feedback from the Adult

The Adult said they were proud of their independency and had not had to rely on social services for support before, but, as they said: “things are getting difficult for me now”.

The person continued: “I have a hearing problem so using the phone is difficult, but I like using iPad”, so they asked the Care Navigator to inform ASC to contact them directly about future discharge to help if access home visit was necessary so “I can point things out things I am concerned about”.

The Adult shared that they enjoyed “computers and music in the past, like the trombone and guitar, but these have become more difficult to do now”.

During a follow up meeting with the Care Navigator the Adult expressed their anxiety around the home environment being ready for their discharge and their wish to be fully involved in the discharge planning.

The Care Navigator spoke to Adult Social Care Duty on their behalf and a social worker was allocated, instead of managing the discharge through the duty team. The social worker visited the Adult in hospital and completed joint home access visit with an occupational therapist, ensuring the Adult was fully informed and in control of their own discharge.

#### *Learning Disabilities*

There are currently 12 adults with Learning Disabilities open to the adult social care team, 1 is aged under the age of 30 and the rest are aged between 30 and 60. 4 live in their own homes in the City of London (2 with family) 1 lives in residential care and 7 live in supported living setting.

There is a joint Learning Disabilities Service in the London Borough of Hackney which brings together the Local Authority and health services for Learning Disabled people together. City of London residents with Learning Disabilities are able to access the health services through this model.

#### *Transitions*

The ASC Team are part of a Transitions Group with the Education and Early Years Service and Children’s Social Care. A register is kept of children and young people who will need to be reviewed to assess whether they need to transition to ASC services. There is also an ASC social worker who is a champion for transitions cases.

There have been very few transition cases in recent years, but these have been well planned from the age of 14 (through the Transitions Group) and have been a smooth transition.

## Summary

- There is an agile and flexible approach to meeting need with spot purchasing, direct payments and innovative approaches
- In responding to the complex needs of rough sleepers we have a homelessness rough sleeper who has had excellent results in providing person centred approaches and linking up with specialist services
- Hospital discharges have become more complex and in response, a new hospital discharge model was developed to meet government requirements. This is supported by our Care Navigator who supports safe hospital discharge and acts as a bridge between partners
- Carers have been a specific area of focus for us over the last couple of years with an audit on carers assessment and associated actions and the development of a specific carers support service



## CQC Theme 3: Ensuring Safety Within the System

### Our Strengths

- Strong City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board with multi-agency support and commitment for safeguarding; but with a distinct focus on City of London through a separate Sub-Group
- Robust and rapid professional response to safeguarding concerns, incidents and provider issues, ensuring safe and personalised responses
- Safety built into all levels of the system

### Areas for Improvement and Direction of Travel

- Implementing robust and routine feedback from people who have been safeguarded
- Safety challenges around the Cost-of-Living Crisis and Rough Sleeping
- Responding to the complexity of hospital discharges

### Key Statistics

<p><b>50</b></p> <p>Safeguarding concerns inside COL (2022/23)</p> <p><b>31</b></p> <p>April – December 2023</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>S42 Enquiries (2022/23)</p> <p><b>16</b></p> <p>April – December 2023</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>S42 conclusions (2022/23)</p> <p><b>18</b></p> <p>April – December 2023</p>
<p><b>63%</b></p> <p>Of Safeguarding concerns were related to neglect and acts of omission and self-neglect (2022/23)</p> <p><b>63%</b></p> <p>April – December 2023</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>Cases where outcomes were expressed (2022/23)</p> <p><b>15</b></p> <p>April – December 2023</p>	<p><b>86%</b></p> <p>Percentage of outcomes that were fully or partially achieved (2022/23)</p> <p><b>87%</b></p> <p>April – December 2023</p>
<p><b>24</b></p> <p>Number of cases where risk reduced or removed (2022/23)</p> <p><b>12</b></p> <p>April – December 2023</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Number of MCAs which took place (2022/23)</p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p>April – December 2023</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>Number of clients with a DOLs in place on 31 March 2023</p> <p><b>25</b></p> <p>31 December 2023</p>

### *City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board*

The City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board (CHSAB) is a multi-agency partnership including statutory and non-statutory stakeholders. The role of the Board is to assure itself that robust safeguarding procedures are in place across City and Hackney to protect adults with care and support needs who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Where abuse and neglect does occur, the Board and its partners are committed to tackling this and promoting person-centred care for all adults experiencing abuse or neglect.

The CHSAB has been chaired by Dr Adi Cooper, architect of Making Safeguarding Personal, for more than five years which has provided strong and stable leadership around safeguarding locally.

The Assistant Director for People chairs the Safeguarding Adults Review sub-group for the CHSAB and although the City of London has not had any Safeguarding Adults Reviews for a number of years, a discretionary one was carried out in November 2022 in relation to a rough sleeper who died in the City of London. A multi-agency action plan is currently in place via the CHSAB and all actions for the City Corporation Homelessness and ASC teams have been completed. This led to a full review of our participation and engagement work with rough sleepers and the development of an innovative participation project with Groundswell which is now in place.

ASC has been proactive in reviewing any SARs from Hackney and nationally to consider and embed any recommendations where appropriate.

#### **Case Study – Learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews**

Following two Safeguarding Adult Reviews in Hackney, a panel was established to provide a person-centred, timely and effective multi-agency response to situations where the person referred has been assessed as a high level of risk because of complex self-neglect, fire risk or other high-risk issues. The aim of the panel is to ensure that all relevant agencies work together to provide a co-ordinated and accountable response to the person's presenting issues and risks and to focus on the outcomes the person wants to achieve to the greatest extent possible given individual circumstances and risks.

The panel has strong representation from partners and oversees a whole range of interventions from long term therapeutic work with adults with hoarding disorder to short term preventative measures.

For example, in 2022/23 £1,790 was spent on fire prevention equipment for adults in the City of London, this included replacing fan heaters or other high risk portable heating devices with safe electric oil filled radiators, replacement of multiplugs with fused power boards, and provision of fire-retardant bedding.

The Chair of the panel (Head of ASC) also attends the City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board SAR group creating strong links between both groups and the ASC service. Following a fire leading to the death of a resident in March 2022 a SAR referral was made. While the referral was not adjudged to meet the SAR criteria, and the Coroner concluding the death to be the result of an accident, it has been agreed with the CHSAB independent chair to hold a discretionary learning review to examine how services across the City of London may be able to learn and improve from this.

In terms of work of the Board, the City of London have been active partners in this work. Historical work has included financial abuse and self-isolation and more recently a focus on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

The Board provides training for professionals in 3 key areas:

- Recognised safeguarding training at the required levels
- Specific training commissioned by the SAB relevant to the work it is doing
- SAR learning events

To ensure that there is sufficient focus on the City of London, there is a City of London sub-group of the Board which is again independently chaired by Dr Adi Cooper and includes more local City of London partners and providers. The role of this sub-group is to provide assurance, accountability and the sharing of good practice in relation to the City of London. It considers City of London specific data and priorities in the Board's workplan.

#### *Robust and rapid professional response to safeguarding concerns*

The ASC service has a personalised approach at the forefront of its safeguarding work, alongside the assessment and mitigation of risk. These principles are applied equally to the proportionate responses taken to those concerns not meeting S42 enquiry criteria.

As with other London local authorities, the Service applies the London Safeguarding procedures. It is also familiar with Transitional Safeguarding and Joint Working with Children and applies these to support a smooth transition to adulthood.

Within the Team, social workers are qualified to undertake Mental Capacity Assessments and the AMPH, who is provided by the East London Foundation Trust, carries out any Mental Health Act Assessments as necessary. Best Interests Assessments are spot purchased from an independent provider to ensure independence although several of our social workers have training in this to ensure an understanding within the service and a link to the commissioned provision.

Mental Capacity Act (MCA) Assessments and safeguarding are included in our schedule for annual audits.

#### *A system wide approach to safety*

The promotion of safety and the understanding and management of risk is embedded across all elements of the system, both internally and externally. This includes:

- A corporate Safeguarding Policy which sets out expectations for Members, Officers and commissioned providers around their role in safeguarding
- Regular safeguarding reporting to Members of the Safeguarding Sub-Committee
- Online Safeguarding Awareness Training across the organisation
- An early intervention project focused on prevention and improving people's wellbeing by keeping them safe in ways defined by themselves
- The Care Navigator who facilitates safe hospital discharge and links hospitals and GP practices supporting more informed hospital discharges and sharing of information to reduce risk
- The ASC Team Manager and Deputy Team Manager are embedded in the Neighbourhood Multi-Disciplinary Meetings

- Social Workers and the Care Navigator attend GP Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings in the Practices where residents are registered
- The People’s Directorate working closely together with ASC presence at all cross-service meetings and work together with colleagues to minimise risk and support safer and more informed transitions between services
- Working closely with colleagues in commissioning and having a quality alert process in place to pick up domiciliary care concerns that are below the level of formal safeguarding and ensure that these are resolved at any early stage and prevent harm. When clients are placed in supported living, residential or nursing care our aim to use providers who are rated good or above wherever possible. When alerts about safety arise, commissioning work with the host local authorities to assess risk. Performance improvement letters are issued where safety or quality is a concern
- Providing access and support to training for commissioned providers such as City Connections and involving them in our City Safeguarding Sub-Group

### Summary

- There is a robust approach to ensuring safety that is built across the system including Members, Officers, Health Partners and Commissioned Providers
- Although our Safeguarding Adults Board is a joint one with Hackney, there is a City of London sub-group which is also Chaired by the independent chair of the Board to ensure appropriate focus on the City of London
- Responding to the complex needs of rough sleepers and hospital discharges continues to present a level of risk but our innovative responses have helped to reduce some of this risk
- Though there have not been any mandatory City of London specific Safeguarding Adults Reviews any learning from SARs in Hackney and nationally have been reviewed and responded to accordingly – for example with the establishment of the Hoarding and Self-Neglect Panel

## **CQC Assurance Theme 4: Leadership**

### **Our Strengths**

- Strong, stable political and officer leadership across the City of London Corporation, underpinned by robust and effective financial management including scope for innovation that supports ASC. The development of the Target Operating Model facilitated growth for ASC when there were corporate pressures to reduce budgets elsewhere
- Clear visibility and access of senior management within the Department
- Assistant Director of People's Services provides leadership across all relevant services

### **Areas for Improvement and Direction of Travel**

- Work to increase diversity across the service, as part of wider organisational approach, to reflect our community
- Retain a skilled workforce who are constantly learning

ASC benefits from strong officer member relationships which provide accountability and direction. This is underpinned by an effective formal and informal governance structure.

#### *Informal governance*

The ASC Senior Management provide visible and supportive leadership to staff as well as wider health and care partnerships.

There are monthly ASC Management Team meetings as well as People Management Team Meetings which allows cross cutting themes and issues to be considered. There is also a complex needs panel for ASC, a Category Board for the Department and Adult Performance Meetings.

There is also an internal Integration Programme Board which consists of a range of relevant staff and provides the space for system partners to come and talk to us at the City Corporation about our involvement in certain integration initiatives as an efficient way of gaining our input rather than us attending multiple meetings.

#### *Formal governance*

The Community and Children's Services Committee is the committee which holds responsibility for ASC and its associated budget. There are regular meetings between the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee with the Director of Community and Children's Services and the Assistant Director of People.

Members on the Community and Children's Services Committee also sit on committee relating to the Integrated Care system, the Safeguarding Sub-Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board providing a strong cross cutting approach to key issues. These all underpin our strategic decision making and include regular scrutiny of our performance data. The Health and Social Care Scrutiny meets 4 times a year and specifically includes social care items on each agenda. Recent items have included an evaluation of the early intervention pilot, hospital discharge processes and proactive care in the local integrated care system.

As noted under Theme 3, our Adult Safeguarding Board function is delivered jointly with the London Borough of Hackney. The Assistant Director of People chairs the SAR sub-group of the Board.

Although the City Corporation attends and participates in key ICS and place meetings, it does not hold any specific leadership roles within this.

### *Quality Assurance*

There is a strong golden thread and connection from management to operational practice with annual direct observation of practice from the Assistant Director of People as well as the Head of ASC alongside that of the Principal Social Worker and operational management.

ASC has recently appointed a dedicated Principal Social Worker (PSW) as a standalone role rather than it being embedded into the Head of Service role to strengthen practice governance amongst other things. This is already having a range of positive benefits including:

- Keeping Social Work practitioners up to date with relevant developments on areas that link with their practice. This is done through a weekly bulletin and a weekly 5-minute reflection is also sent to the whole directorate for use across services. This has enhanced communication with the team and built a habit of reflective practice
- Enabling us to engage more widely across the PSW network regionally as well as nationally and learn from this to update our practice. Recently, the PSW has taken part in an LGA peer review in Bournemouth, learning from other LAs and bringing this good practice back
- Strengthening our approach to Quality Assurance with the development of an annual audit schedule and feeding back learning into the service and reporting to ASMT. For example, following the audit of carers assessments, a guide for practitioners was developed to strengthen the approach to assessments. This was based on direct feedback from carers.

It is recognised that quality assurance could be strengthened by the addition of some external quality assurance. This has been taken forward and the first round of external audit took place in October 2023. A full report is due shortly.

### *Using Performance Data*

The Departmental Performance Team produce monthly performance scorecards for the service which provides Senior Managers and the service with intelligence and performance data to provide assurance that statutory obligations are being met, that any risks are identified and mitigated, targets are being met and any emerging trends or issues are identified. The monthly performance scorecard is discussed at an officer performance meeting in the service. A more detailed summary of safeguarding data is scrutinised at the Safeguarding Sub-Committee quarterly.

Performance monitoring identified that some reviews were not taking place within timescale and changes have been made to the Mosaic system to flag these up so that none are missed.

Across the Directorate, there is a move towards the use of more PowerBI dashboards. One is being developed for ASC and our strategy is that different levels of dashboards will be developed so that they can be used at the front line to support self-management of work and performance.

### *Leadership on diversity and inclusion*

- The Head of Service and Assistant Directors attended Leadership in Colour Conference and reflections from this were discussed at the People's Senior Management Team meetings and the People's Equality Group

- A People’s Equalities Steering Group who monitor approaches in this area and established a book club for staff to read and discuss the book Me and White Supremacy
- Anti-Racist Practice Standards have been introduced which are being considered section by section at Team meetings led by the Head of Service, Principal Social Worker and Team Manager
- Reflection and learning on good practice around recording people’s diverse needs in our Care Act Assessments were included as part of internal training on the Strengths Based Approach
- During celebrations of World Social Worker Day in March 2023, Tricia Pereira was a guest speaker at the City Corporation. Tricia is the Co-Chair of the Department of Health Social Care (DHSC) Social Care Workforce Race Equalities Standards Advisory Group and is the co-author of Strength-Based Practice Framework and Handbook published by DHSC in 2019

Comment by Principal Social Worker.

“City of London Community and Children’s Department’s senior leaders monitor the impact our work has on safety and wellbeing of people in our community by leading various board meetings and forums, such as Transformation Board, People’s Senior Managers Meeting (PSMT) or Adult Senior Managers Meeting (ASMT), reviewing complaints/compliments and feedback from our citizens and encouraging co-production.

They are interested in wellbeing and performance of our staff receiving regular updates and listening to staff concerns by utilising quarterly meetings between DASS and PSW and by establishing Staff Forum. Both of our Executive Directors, Judith Finlay and the Assistant Director Chris Pelham, and Head of Service Ian Tweedie take part in our quality assurance activities by undertaking Direct Practice Observations of our front-line practitioners, which is very well received by the workforce and champions core ethics and values of our profession.

Example from observation notes, by Chris Pelham, October 2023: “There were interesting dynamics in terms of the relationship between the couple. SH’s wife was from Thailand and there was a lot of consideration given to the relationships between the family members. Maria (SW) demonstrated curiosity re. these family relationships and how they might impact in terms of where the ‘power’ sits within the wider family systems – i.e., SH’s wider family and SH not wanting his wife to go to Thailand without him/leave him at home. In doing this, Maria was considering both SH’s needs as the cared for as well as his wife the carer.”

Our senior leaders are visible and easily accessible having their offices next to operational teams, often “doing the walk” speaking with individual staff, attending our larger and smaller events, such as World Social Work Day or opening of ASC Library.

As PSW I feel reassured that our senior leaders encourage culture of learning and partnership working while promoting wellbeing of the workforce.”

## Summary

- There is strong and active political commitment to ASC in the City of London
- Senior Managers within the Department are visible and accessible to staff
- Opportunities for staff to develop leadership skills are being rolled out with staff having the opportunity to be champions in certain areas and the PSW focusing on personal development with staff
- Staff undertake a range of training and reflective supervision is developing. There is always the opportunity however to ensure that staff are continuously developing
- There are several initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion amongst staff and within the service. Promoting more diversity amongst staff to reflect our community is a priority

## Areas for Development – Summary

Area	Response / Activity
Strengthening triangulation around commissioned placements quality assurance	Undertaking brokerage project as part of Transformation Programme
Developing a stronger performance culture within the service	Power BI dashboards being developed which will be able to be used at different levels of the service including at the front line, to help staff manage their own performance  Training planned for Social Work Teams on understanding the role of data and the importance of data quality. Ongoing training in use of Mosaic to ensure correct data is added in correct place  Review of reporting and KPIs underway as part of the Transformation Programme
Strengthening Quality Assurance	An external quality assurance mechanism has now been added
Timeliness of Reviews	Traffic light system has been added to Mosaic system to flag reviews. ASC are working with performance and MOSAIC teams to address system issues leading to differing target dates being indicated. Work is underway with practitioners as a whole and individually to ensure timeliness of reviews. Options are being explored to capture reasons for delays in reviews taking place.
Capturing and recording equalities data more effectively and using this to shape services	Review of system and recording of equalities data has taken place and changes identified – will be taken forward as part of the Transformation Project
Improving the quality and accessibility of our information offer for residents	Review of offer underway as part of Transformation Programme
Strengthening co-production and collection of feedback and measures of outcomes from service users	Currently underway as part of the Transformation Programme. Also wider piece of Departmental work underway to look at our framework for



	engagement and co-production and a reward and recognition policy.
Implementing robust and routine feedback from people who have been safeguarded	Currently underway as part of the Transformation Programme
Increase diversity across the service to reflect community	Will be taken forward as part of Corporate wide approach

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<b>Committees:</b> Safeguarding Sub-Committee – For recommendation Department of Community and Children’s Services (DCCS) Grand Committee – For decision	<b>Dated:</b> 16/04/2024 01/05/2024
<b>Subject: Care Leaver Offer</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	3, 10
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	<b>For Recommendation to approve at CCS Committee</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Rachel Talmage, Head of Children’s Social Care and Early Help, People Department, Department of Community and Children’s Services	

### Summary

This report to Members shows the fully revised offer to Care Leavers supported by the City of London. The offer was redesigned following: (1) ideas and feedback from care leavers and their social workers; (2) the Care Leaver Covenant; (3) the Care Leaver Compact; (4) consideration of other outstanding local authorities’ offers; and (5) a request by the Town Clerk that the offer be world class. The offer was approved by the Children in Care Council.

### Recommendations

Safeguarding Sub-Committee Members are asked to:

- Discuss and recommend the Care Leaver Offer for approval at the Grand Committee.

DCCS Grand Committee members are asked to:

- Approve the Offer.

## Main Report

### Background

1. It is a duty under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 that England's local authorities must publish information about the services offered for care leavers.
2. Following approval by the Safeguarding Sub-Committee of a paper presented to the Grand Committee in December 2023, the City of London is a signatory to the Pan London Care Leavers Compact and affords care leavers protection and support equivalent to the protected characteristics under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
3. The Care Leaver Offer fully adopts all six recommendations from the Compact.<sup>1</sup> The Compact was formally launched on 5 March 2024.
4. City of London Corporation Members have always demonstrated a commitment to supporting our care leaver population. Following a focused visit of our care leaving services in November 2018, Ofsted noted that:

“Care leavers in the City of London benefit from a strong service that ensures that they are very well supported. They receive effective help which enables most to achieve good outcomes. There is a determined and appropriately ambitious political and corporate focus to sustain and improve outcomes for care leavers.”

5. Furthermore, in 2020, during the full Inspection of Children's Social Care Services, Ofsted judged the experience and progress of children in care and care leavers to be 'outstanding', noting the following:
  - Children in care and care leavers are extremely well supported.
  - Commitment to ensuring that needs are met is demonstrated by senior leaders, councillors, health partners and children's social workers, resulting in an extremely good level of service.
  - Extremely strong involvement and interest from council members.
  - Particular sensitivity shown regarding cultural diversity.
  - Strong use of advocacy and independent visiting.
  - Good housing offer, with support and moving only when ready.

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<sup>1</sup> The six requirements of the compact are:

- 1) London local authorities offer a full council tax exemption for their Care Leavers (18–25) that live within the borough.
- 2) London local authorities adopt the principle that no care leaver (18–25) should be found intentionally homeless.
- 3) London local authorities adopt the principle that their care leavers up to the age of 25 are to be found as being in 'priority need' under homelessness legislation.
- 4) London local authorities offer a rent deposit scheme for their care leavers (18–25) for whom private rented accommodation is assessed as a suitable option.
- 5) London local authorities have a joint protocol between Housing and Children's Services for care leavers in line with good practice advice.
- 6) London local authorities become signatories to the Care Leavers Covenant.

6. In 2023, Ofsted introduced a separate judgement on care leavers, in recognition of the unique set of presenting needs of this cohort of young people.
7. The Care Leaver Offer has been updated after listening to the views of our care leavers, the people who work with them, from national research, and from reviewing other offers from local authorities that are also graded as 'outstanding'. The final offer is appended for review and decision (see Appendix 1).

### **Current Position**

8. The Care Leaver offer is fully updated to realise the commitments in the Compact.
9. Since becoming a signatory to the Compact, a fully revised joint protocol between housing and children's social care has been approved; care leavers have ringfenced apprenticeships, attended university taster sessions, learnt more about apprenticeships via introductory sessions, and taken up our enhanced travel offer (Transport for London pay 50% of bus passes, City of London top up the remainder).
10. Following a decision by the Grand Committee, care leavers have protection akin to protected characteristics under the Equality Act. The Corporation as a whole organisation is corporate (community) parent to each of our children in and leaving our care.

### **Key features of the 2024 offer**

11. Our Care Leaver Offer seeks to include our young people in every opportunity within the City of London Corporation. The Corporation includes high-profile green spaces, tourist attractions, the Port Authority, our own police force, the Barbican, Museum of London, related institutions such as Guildhall School of Music and Drama along with employment in surveying, law, IT, environment, media, strategy and community services among others.
12. Care leavers will have the support needed to obtain citizenship. This includes help with finding and securing legal aid lawyers, social work support in home office interviews, support with applications for Indefinite Leave to Remain and citizenship applications. If eligible, all care leavers will have a passport. This offer meets care leavers' immediate basic need for security and supports this through their life course.
13. Care leavers are given the highest priority in respect of a council tenancy. Care leavers will be supported to stay with their foster carers where this is the right plan. Care leavers will be in supported accommodation that meets their needs until their tenancy is granted.
14. Apprenticeships, work experience, interview practice, exposure to career fairs and connections between the Virtual School Head, participation and adult skills are a core part of our 'family firm' offer.

15. Care leavers are supported with the same level of funding for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, including masters and PhD programmes of study.
16. Care leavers are supported to vote.
17. Care leavers receive free prescriptions.
18. Care leavers can experience theatre, art and music, and have a Barbican young person's pass, with a full enrichment programme giving access to oracy classes, sport and forest school at Epping Forest.
19. Care leavers are included in the Children in Care Council, with independent visiting and advocacy – it is a choice to opt out. All care leavers are supported to access charitable/leisure groups to build friendships and social connections.

### **Care leaver views**

20. Care leavers appreciate the offer and think it is comprehensive. Two further requests are made: a travelcard for tube/train/buses within London each year to age 25; and monthly gym membership to age 25 (it currently stops at age 21).
21. The cost of the travelcard would not be subsidised by Transport for London as the current 50% bus pass is. The cost is prohibitive without additional funds being awarded.
22. The monthly gym membership would cost £30 per month per care leaver, and is beyond the scope of the budget. The other costs in the offer can be contained within our local risk.

### **Corporate plan**

23. Work to support care leavers sits within a commitment to a flourishing society, ensuring equality of opportunity. We would like to see equal outcomes for our young people: being able to access well-paying jobs and receive a good-quality education. Our ambition for care leavers is equivalent to our hopes for our own children.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

- **Financial implications** – Costs to meet these commitments are managed within local budgets. Any enhancement to the gym membership to age 25 and the travelcard to 25 would require additional funds.
- **Resource implications** – Resource needs are met within the Department's resource base. Wider corporate engagement, for example, the procuring of laptops, will see wider commitment and distribution of resources to support our ambitions.
- **Legal implications** – none

- **Risk implications** – Providing a full, creative, enrichment programme and ensuring that young people are provided with opportunities and courses that will stretch them offers an antidote to boredom and the risk of unhealthy behaviours on an individual basis. The City of London will be subject to an Ofsted inspection in this area. There is a risk that, should the impact of the offer not continue to innovate and grow, then the City of London would suffer reputational risk.
- **Equalities implications** – The London Innovation and Improvement Alliance Report on Local Authority Commitments notes the following:

“Care Leavers and those who support them have advocated for some time that care experience should be recognised as a ‘protected characteristic’. This gained further traction through the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care. The Review discusses the stigma and discrimination that people experience as a result of being in care or care experienced and argues that it is similar in nature to other groups that have a legally protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2021). It recommends that care experience should be made a protected characteristic to give employers, public services etc greater authority to put in place programmes to promote better outcomes for care experienced people. “

The Safeguarding Sub-Committee proposed and the Community and Children’s Services Grand Committee approved our care leavers as having support equivalent to those protected characteristics under Equality legislation.

- **Climate implications** – none
- **Security implications** – none

## Conclusion

24. The Care Leaver Offer sets out a comprehensive ambitious offer for all our children. The ambition is to be a world-class service to care leavers, to ensure that they reach their potential, vote, enjoy arts/music/sport, have good friends and relationships and obtain better quality and higher paying jobs, including within the Corporation and its institutions.

## Appendices

- **Appendix 1:** The City of London Care Leaver Offer

### Rachel Talmage

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## **Immigration**

The UK: OK plan

You are welcome here.

All care leavers who need it get help with immigration. Talk to your social worker to find out about the help we can offer. The City of London is signed up to the South London Refugee Association [Pledge](#).

Your social worker will

- Be skilled and informed on immigration issues
- Connect you with good quality legal support as soon as possible
- Want to support you through immigration applications and appeals (alongside your legal representative)
- Know when your status expires and make sure you have your next application in to extend/appeal (if eligible)
- Help you make plans if you do not get status in the UK
- Enable you (if eligible) to apply for permanent status and British citizenship
- Enable you (if eligible) to apply for a British Passport

### **Things we will not provide**

- Travel documents (passports only are provided).

Because they are temporary, not all countries accept them, and it is not in our duty to provide.

## **Communication**

We will use interpreters if you need them, via telephone, in writing or face to face.

We have a range of languages used to different levels of understanding within our service, currently including Polish, Farsi, Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Patois, Creole, Yoruba, Igbo, Pidgin, French, Italian, Makaton and British Sign Language.

## Housing

We can help you find a home and also support you with living independently so that you feel confident and prepared.

All care leavers can get help with accommodation. Talk to your social worker to find out about the help we can offer.

Options include:

- staying with your foster carer
- moving into supported or semi-independent accommodation
- renting your own home privately
- applying for a council home

## What is social housing and why is it good?

Social housing is a great choice. The rent is much cheaper than private rent. This is very important because the cost of living is very high.

As a care leaver, you are at the front of the queue for the City of London Social Housing. As a single person you are eligible for a studio property. This may be one large room which includes a kitchen space, some studio properties have a separate kitchen.

Lots of people want social housing because it is affordable, and many thousands of people are waiting because there are not enough properties. The cost of rent in central London is extremely high, and most people cannot afford to live here. You are at the front of the queue (along with people who are homeless, and people escaping from violence in the home).

There are not enough properties so you might wait 2-4 years before one becomes available.

You are responsible for your rent once you are 18 or over. This may be paid via Universal Credit if you are in college, or from your earnings if you are in work.

An example rent of a studio flat in London is between £1,500 and £2,000 a month

An example rent of a studio flat in social housing is £500 a month

When your social worker completes the housing application with you, choose your preferred three housing areas. Put your favourite first, then the one you like second best and then the one you like third.

You have a choice of:

Holloway Estate and York Way in the London Borough of Islington

Golden Lane and Middlesex Street (in the City of London -the square mile)

Avondale Square in the London Borough of Southwark

A council tenancy has the lowest rent in the UK. It is much cheaper for you than private renting.

A council tenancy is the best sort of tenancy you can get it means you have stronger rights within the property good for staying for a long time, so long as you are paying rent. As long as you pay the rent and follow the tenancy conditions you can stay there for as long as you need. You are less likely to be asked to leave.

Most people never get a council tenancy. Even if it is small and in an area of Central London you have not chosen, it is a good option.

For the first year you are in your tenancy with the City of London you are on an introductory tenancy. After 12 months, if you have paid your rent and kept to the tenancy agreement you will become a secure tenant.

Once you are in a secure tenancy you can [swap your home](#) if you want to move area or find a bigger home. This can take a long time because lots of people want bigger homes. As a secure tenant you can apply to buy your property through the [Right to Buy](#) scheme if you have enough money to do so.

If you get a partner or start a family and your flat becomes too small, if you are a 'secure tenant' you will be eligible to apply for a larger one within the City of London.

Once you are a secure tenant you can apply to do a mutual exchange which enables them to swap with a social housing tenant – both Local Authority and Housing association – anywhere in the UK. The Housing Needs Team can provide full details of how this works once you are a secure tenant

To be eligible for social housing you need a local connection to the area where that housing is situated. You have a local connection to the City because you are a care leaver under City of London Children's Services. In some instances you may be able to apply to another local authority.

- You have a local connection if you're under 21 and were previously in care in the area for at least 2 years even if you were placed there by another council.
- You also have a local connection if you're under 25 and you get advice and support from the council's social services team under a pathway plan.

- If your pathway plan is provided by a county council, you have a local connection to every local housing department in the county council area.

Things we will not provide:

- One-bedroom flats or bigger

These flats are reserved for people with children over the age of 6 months

## **Rent Privately**

If you want to rent privately then we can help you with a deposit. We can be your guarantor so that you can rent.

This can be a good option if you want to move with friends, or if you want to move to a different location in the UK which is more affordable than London.

Your social worker will:

- ensure you are supported to find a home that you can afford (check you can afford the rent on your wages from your job, or that that rent will be covered by Universal Credit)
- seek approval for the deposit and first month's rent if you have found somewhere that you can afford
- arrange for the City of London Corporation to act as a guarantor for your first year of tenancy (when you are ready and able to be a tenant) so you can rent a room/studio/flat privately
- you can rent a room/studio privately whilst you wait on the list for a council tenancy

## **Housing and Risk**

It is important that your accommodation is for you. The support in this offer is to help you build safe caring friendships. Sometimes people involved in criminal activity (such as dealing drugs) might want to use your home. This is called 'cuckooing'. This is unsafe and puts you at risk. Please tell us if you feel unsafe and we can work to support you.

-

## Supported Living

You do not have to move into your council home/private renting until you are ready.

We will provide you with accommodation until you move into private renting or council tenancy (or you reach 25 years of age)

- You will have keywork support for as long as you need and use it.
- The keyworker will support you to learn how to run your own tenancy, including how to:
  - use a washing machine
  - use a launderette
  - budget for food and bills
  - make healthy food
  - use a bank account
  - make a doctors/dentist/optician appointment
  - call your immigration lawyer
  - travel around by bus
  - keep yourself safe sexually
  - set up services and pay bills (e.g. electricity) and anything else agreed between you, your social worker and support worker

## **Apply for a council home**

As a care leaver you can apply for a City of London home. As a care leaver you will be given priority.

The home will be in one of five City of London estates. You will be offered a studio flat when one becomes available. The flat will be suitable for you. Do not accept the flat as you will not be offered another.

Your social worker will

- help you apply for a City of London home
- work with you to understand the responsibilities of running your own home
- ensure your keyworker helps you be confident with running your own home
- offer you the opportunity to practice living in your own home and/or access expert financial support via <https://www.mybnk.org/>
- you will have the support of your own Tenancy Support Officer as you move into your own home and afterwards

### **Things we will not provide:**

- One-bedroom flats or bigger

These flats are reserved for people with children over the age of 6 months

- Permanent housing outside of City of London properties

We have no access to these properties. You can join the housing register in another borough/county if you have lived there for 2 years or more but you only have priority with the City of London as a care leaver. This means you would wait many more years for a permanent place to live.



## **Council Tax**

As a care leaver you are exempt from paying Council Tax until you are 25.

Your social worker will:

If you live in the City of London (square mile)

- make sure that the City of London exempts you from Council Tax bills if you reside in the square mile

If you live outside of the City of London (square mile)

- make sure you have single person/any other subsidy from the local authority (borough) you are living in
- arrange for payment for the rest of your council tax bill (to be paid direct to the local authority where you live)

## Help with moving into a new home

When you are ready to move into your own home we will support you to buy the essential things that you need. This is known as a setting up a home allowance.

You will receive up to £3,000

Your social worker will support you to make the most out of your money. This will include accessing low cost/second hand items and charity funding to set you up in your first home.

- furniture, flooring and white goods
- decorating costs
- your first TV licence
- removal and transport costs for moving in
- cooker and washing machine connection costs
- one year of contents insurance
- support with winter fuel payments for your first winter (December-February £10 a week)
- additional support for single parents

Your social worker can also provide you with luggage to help you move.

## **Culture, music and arts**

We will support you to enjoy culture, music and arts.

The City of London [runs](#)

- Epping Forest
- Hampstead Heath and their men's and women's swimming ponds
- The Barbican
- The Guildhall Art Gallery
- The Museum of London
- Tower Bridge
- A large number of green spaces

Your social worker will take you to see drama/music/art at least once a year, in addition to organised CiCC group activities. Your social worker will celebrate your culture with you throughout the year.

## **Education, employment and training**

We want you to succeed and we will support you to achieve

Your social worker will be able to help you decide what route is the best for you.

You can also get help and advice from:

- Our Virtual School Headteacher
- Our Participation Officer
- Our Careers Coordinator
- Our Adult Education Service

Your social worker and/or keyworker will support you into education training or employment.

### **ESOL**

You will have access to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) if you need it. For new arrivals there is a college set up for you in the Guildhall.

### **Enrichment**

There are learning activities to add to your college timetable. We know that ESOL at college takes up 15 hours per week, and if you are studying you would benefit from extra opportunities.

There will be enrichment activities such as:

Monthly visits to Epping Forest (for wellbeing)

Music

Physical Education (PE/sport)

History

Arts/design/crafts

Oracy: learning to speak clearly – this helps with succeeding in interviews

Football/sport activities

## **Bespoke courses**

We can find bespoke courses to help you in your journey to work. Recent examples include lifeguarding and security training.

## **Work experience**

You have priority for work experience within the City of London Corporation. Ask your social worker to set this up.

## **Support with college**

To qualify for help, you must be able to show you have good attendance and that you are doing your best to keep up with the work.

## **Laptop**

You will be given a laptop when you enter into care. You should take care of your laptop and use it to study, complete homework and apply for college and work.

If you are going to be with us for a short time, before you move to your permanent area via the National Transfer Scheme, then you will need to return your laptop before you move.

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## **Government bursary**

You might be able to get help with education related costs from the Government if you are:

- aged 16 to 19
- in care or a leaving care

Find more [information on the Government bursary for 16 to 19 year olds external link](#).

You can also speak to your social worker who can support you apply to charities such as the [Trussell Trust](#) or the [Buttle Trust](#) for additional funds.

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**Travel**

We will provide you with an annual bus pass until you are 25

Speak to your social worker for more information.

We will continue to lobby central government to be able to provide funding for the tube and trains

## University

We offer you university taster days in February half terms, so you can see what university is like.

We can help with finding universities with flexible admissions processes and those with foundation courses.

We will help you with your UCAS form

If you decide you would like to go to university, we will support you to go to university if you are able to and would like go

Our support includes:

- supporting you to apply for student loans
- paying for accommodation in the holidays
- your social worker will, if you would like them to, visit university campuses with you before you apply
- keeping in contact and reviewing your pathway plan
- supporting you to move into your university accommodation (if you move outside of London)
- up to £100 towards graduation costs (gown & photo)
- retaining the place on council tenancy waiting list whilst you study

The university may also offer bursaries and student finance can offer grants and loans. We can help you with that.

### [Find out more about student finance](#)

We will offer you a bursary of £3K per year whilst you are studying for your first degree and/or masters degree (or PHD) if you conclude your study before you are 25, in addition to paying for your holiday accommodation

## **Employment and training**

You have access to an information and guidance specialist who has extensive experience in supporting children who are in the UK unaccompanied by an adult to care for them.

If your immigration status allows, we will support you with finding a job or training to do a job.

- We will offer you work experience and practice interviews
- We will help you write and update your CV
- We will help you search for work
- We can help you into extremely short (a week or two) training or longer training
- We often use [Breadwinners](#) to support you with work/training

If you decide you want to [find a job or a training course, get information and guidance from the National Careers Service external link](#). Or [contact](#) your dedicated careers worker

## **Help with money if you are working or in training**

We can support you to buy clothes for an interview, and for starting work.. We will apply to Suited and Booted, Dress for Success or Smart Works for this clothing.

We will provide you with an annual bus pass to support your travel

There may be support via the job centre if you are on universal credit



## **Health and wellbeing**

We will support you to be healthy and well.

You can speak to your social worker and/or your keyworker for help and advice.

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**We will provide you an annual health card so that you have free prescriptions until you are 25.**

**We will pay for gym/physical exercise until you are 21 years old**

The cost of a council run gym (currently £30 a month) will be paid direct to the gym, and usage reviewed in your pathway plan. This is to help keep you healthy. You can choose a different sport/exercise if you do not want to go to the gym. Discuss with your social worker.

---

### **Support with health appointments**

Your keyworker or social worker can help you with any health appointments. They will help you find the nearest GP/walk in clinic/sexual health clinic/dentist/optician nearest to you and can help you with appointments.

We will cover the cost of your prescription if you have to pay, until you are 21 years old. Ask your social worker to find out how.

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### **Access to the Family Therapy Clinic**

You have access to the family therapy clinic attached to our service.

The clinic offers therapeutic support to any child and/or family open to social care or early help in the City of London.

The clinical lead has a doctorate in global mental wellbeing and the clinic will be there to welcome you.

Your social worker will look with you at your health and wellbeing when they meet up with you and in your pathway plan review. Do ask if there is anything worrying you.

## **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity**

### **Race & Ethnicity**

You are valued for who you are. We will celebrate your race and ethnicity with you and support connect you with others who share similarity with you. We will promote your rights and belonging.

Racism: racism is not acceptable, and is against the law. We will support you to complain or report and we will listen to you and be your champion.

### **Ability/Disability**

You are valued for who you are. We will support you recognising your ability and championing enabling environments. We will listen to you, ask your advice and views and advocate for you to achieve your goals.

Abuse based on your ability/disability is not acceptable and is against the law. We will support you to complain or report and we will listen to you and be your champion.

### **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual +**

You are valued for who you are. We will support you in your identify. We will record your preferred name and pronouns and use these in all our communication with you. We will not assume heterosexuality or gender binary norms. This includes in pregnancy and parenthood. We will tailor our services to you and we will know about and/or find out about support for you and your identity. We will think about safe spaces for you.

Homophobic and Transphobic abuse is not acceptable and is against the law. We will support you to complain or report and we will listen to you and be your champion.

## **Your Say**

To make sure you are able to share your views and experiences we will communicate with you in a way that you can understand. We will use interpreters if you need them during phone calls, or face to face meetings, and to translate important documents for you. This might include using Makaton or sign language for those that need it.

You have a right to be involved in all decisions affecting your life and this includes having your voice heard in meetings and plans made for you. We will try and include you in planning meetings, so that we hold meetings at a time that suits you, in a place that you feel comfortable. Your social worker, and carer or key worker if you have one, will support you to attend meetings, have your say, and understand the decisions made.

Sometimes you might want someone outside of Children's Social Care to support you, and help you understand how decisions are made, and how to share your views, these people are called advocates.

## **Advocacy**

When you come into care you are always asked if you would like an independent advocate – someone independent who works for you, helps you share how you are feeling, and what you want.

You can have any advocate at any time, please ask your social worker to make a referral or contact; [London Advocacy Service | Action For Children](#)

An advocate is someone who understands the law, knows how social services work and knows about your rights. Your advocate can speak up for you. It is their job to make sure that you are listened to and taken seriously in decisions being made about you and your life.

## **The Promise**

The City of London has made a promise to all our children in care and care leavers, about how we will look after you, and what we will offer. We spoke with children in care and care leavers to ask what you feel it is important for us to do, and how we can best help you have the life you want.

These were then written down and are translated into a range of languages. [\[link to updated version of The Pledge?\]](#)

If you do not think that the service, you are getting meets these promises, you should let us know so we can make sure we do meet our promises to you. You can speak with your social worker directly, speak with a manager, talk to an advocate, or you might want to make a complaint.

## **Complaints and Compliments**

You have a right to complain if you are not happy with a service you have received from the City of London Corporation. If you've a positive experience, we would love to hear your compliments too.

You can call: 020 7332 3498

Or Email: [Complaints and Compliments Team](#)

## **Having your say about services for care leavers**

It is important that we are always working to improve our services, so that children in care and care leavers achieve the best outcomes possible. The Children in Care Council (CiCC) is a group for children and young people aged 12 to 25 years. They meet regularly and work together to talk about what is working well, what might not be working well, or things that young people are finding difficult, and come up with suggestions to improve the services care leavers receive from the City of London Corporation.

It's a great way to meet other care leavers, share your views and experiences, and work together on important campaigns and projects.

You can join the group or share your views by contacting the [Participation Worker](#) or by calling; 020 7332 1215, or messaging; 07795 090649.

## London Children in Care Council

The City of London also works with the London Children in Care Council run by Partnership for Young London. You can find more information here; [London Children In Care Council | PYL \(partnershipforyounglondon.org.uk\)](https://partnershipforyounglondon.org.uk)

The London CiCC helps to;

- Improve the care experience for looked-after children & young people and care leavers across London.
- Identify common themes and issues across London.
- Enable opportunities to influence policy and services affecting looked after children & young people and care leavers in London.
- Improve young people's skills and confidence through participation.

If you would like to get involved speak with your social worker, the [Participation Worker](#) or contact Partnership for Young London directly, from the link above.

## Social Activities and Events

There are a range of activities and events that you can attend if you would like. The Children in Care Council run activities, which help you to meet other care leavers, and contribute your experiences and feedback. Please speak with your social worker or the [Participation Worker](#) (020 7332 1215 or 07795 090649)

The Virtual School also offer a number of activities and events which can support your learning not only educationally, and emotionally, but also practically e.g. cooking. They also support opportunities to access employment. Your social worker or the Participation Worker can share these details with you, or you can contact the Virtual School directly to discuss; [Virtual School Head](#) or [Virtual School Deputy Head](#)

Your social worker, carer or keyworker, can also explore local social opportunities for you depending on where you are living.

## Independent Visitor

You might want to develop a relationship with an adult outside of the services you work with, especially if you don't have a family network locally. We can match you with an independent visitor who is an adult

who volunteers to regularly spend time with a young person in care. They will meet with you each month for a minimum of 2 years. You can spend your time with as you like, doing activities, or going for a coffee and a chat. They will support you to develop your interests and provide guidance and advice as needed.

To find out more please see; [London Independent Visitors | Action For Children](#), or speak with your social worker.

## **Getting your say through elections**

From the age of 18 if you are a British Citizen you will have the right to vote. You will need to register to do this. This also makes it easier to do other things such as applying for housing, your passport or a bank account.

If you need support with this speak to your social worker. Find out about your rights when you are leaving care.

## **Accessing your social care records**

Find out more on [your rights and access to your social care files with the Care Leavers' Association](#).

Find [films, podcasts and blogs produced by young people in care and care leavers with IMO](#).

Your advocate via Action for Children can help if you need <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/>

## **Becoming a parent**

Your social worker will support you in preparing for and becoming a parent. Support will be clearly set out in your pathway plan. There is a special section for this so you know what is available local to where you are living, and the plan is updated as your child(ren) grow.

You can join our online parenting programme and/or in person programme to help you prepare and to meet other parents. Ask your social worker or email [children.duty@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:children.duty@cityoflondon.gov.uk). It is a programme accredited by the [Race Equality Foundation](#).

If the timings don't suit you, we can find other online parenting programmes to help.

## **Support services and financial help**

Your social worker or keyworker can support you to attend doctor, initial midwife and health visitor appointments. As well as this, you can get the sure start child maternity grant and vitamin vouchers for when your baby is born.

If you want to return to education, training or an apprenticeship, your personal advisor can help you access costs for child care and [apply for care to learn grants](#).

If you're a lone parent and have sole care of your child moving into your first home, you can get additional financial support on top of your setting up home allowance, to help you furnish the property.

There are lots of other services and financial support that you may be able to access:

---

## **Support during pregnancy or if you've recently given birth**

### **Prepare for a baby**

Get help to prepare for your new life as a parent.

Get free vouchers each week to spend on:



- milk
- fruit and vegetables (tinned, frozen or fresh)
- pulses (fresh, tinned or dried)
- infant formula milk
- vitamins

Find [more information on Healthy Start](#).

## Help with money

You could get a one off payment of £500 to help towards the cost of having a child. This is known as a Sure Start Maternity Grant. Find [more information on GOV.UK](#).

## Family Information and Support

Family services in the City of London can be found via <https://www.fis.cityoflondon.gov.uk/> . This includes information on [childcare](#), the [children's centre](#), [libraries](#) and services available to families.

You may be living outside of the City of London. Your social worker will ensure you know about information and support nearest to where you are living and will include this in your pathway plan.

## City of London Children's Centre

You can access our [children's centre](#) wherever you are living. We can also help you find a children's centre near to where you are.

Find a variety of services in our Children's centre including:

- stay and play groups
- parenting courses
- a nursery

Children over the age of two get 15 hours per week free nursery (subject to criteria)

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## **Financial support for care leavers**

Find out about the financial support and advice available to you from your social worker.

There may be times when you find yourself short of food or struggling to pay some of your bills. We want to help if you are having difficulties.

If you speak with your social worker they will help you work out what help you need and make sure you have the right support moving forward. This could be helping you to make some budget plans or sorting out any benefit problems. They can also get you food parcels or help towards energy bills if things get really difficult – subject to financial assessment.

## **Birthdays and religious festivals**

We want to celebrate your birthday and will give you £60 each for these, as well as for one religious festival a year such as Christmas or Eid until you are 21 years old.

## **Clothes**

You can get costs for interview clothes and shoes via the job centre.

You will be supported of up to £150 per year until you are 21 (unless you are in employment) to help with winter clothing/to assist with sportswear/clothes.

## **Identity Documents**

You will need ID for lots of things. This includes opening bank accounts, starting a new job, getting a library card, accessing services and going abroad.

We want to make sure that you have a suitable form of photo ID, so we will support you to get your first adult passport or provisional drivers licence if you do not yet have British Citizenship. We will keep a copy of

your immigration ARC card, and your provisional licence on our database so that we can support you to get a replacement if you lose it.

## **TRAVEL: Driving lessons, tests and licence**

In London, public transport is easily accessible. [You can travel by bus, tram, tube or train](#). We support you with an annual bus pass.

London is aiming to be an environmentally friendly city, and there is a [congestion zone](#) for drivers, and the [ULEZ](#)

Learning to drive can be expensive. We can help you pay for it if it is relevant to your education or your job. Your social worker will help you access:

- one provisional driving licence
- 10 driving lessons (up to £400), you will need to top up the rest yourself
- one theory test and one practical driving test
- help to find a good instructor

We may be able to support you with driving lessons subject to grant funding if it is not relevant to your job/study if your college attendance is excellent.

### **Things we will not provide**

- A car or motorbike

## **TRAVEL: Cycling**

Cycling in London is a good travel option.

[Transport for London](#) have bikes to hire as well as cycle maps which show quieter roads.

[Dr Bike](#) offers bike checks and cycle safety training. Your social worker can help access this.

Your social worker can also access cycles via the Police schemes and via charitable organisations. It is important to wear a cycle helmet, and we will fund this for you.

## **Claiming benefits**

If you are a British Citizen or you have immigration status (such as limited leave to remain) you may be entitled to benefits to help you pay rent and money to live on.

You can speak to your social worker or keyworker who can help you.

Your social worker can connect you to [City Advice](#) who are experts on making the most of your money. They can also provide emergency vouchers if you have run out of money.

The department for work and pensions is the government department that pay most benefits, such as [Universal Credit](#).

## **Free gym/exercise support for 18 to 21 year olds**

We will pay the cost of a council gym membership directly to your gym. If you do not want to go to the gym/swimming we can fund a sport/physical fitness activity up to the equivalent funding (currently £30). Use will be reviewed in your pathway plan as we want to support you to be fit and healthy.

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<b>Committee:</b> Safeguarding Sub-Committee	Dated: 16/04/2024
<b>Subject:</b> 2023–24 City of London Quality Assurance Annual Report	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1–4
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
<b>Report author:</b> Laura Demetriades, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Department of Community and Children’s Services	

## Summary

The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service within the People’s Directorate oversees the Quality Assurance of the operational Children’s Social Care and Early Help Service. This activity is undertaken within an agreed framework involving commissioned external agencies and internal activity. The process seeks to elicit feedback from children, young people and families who directly experience our services, as well as multi-agency partners, allocated workers, and line managers. This integrated approach enables the triangulation of information, experience, expectations, and perceptions of outcomes. It also enables service development plans to be made and actions taken to resolve any barriers or blockages to service improvement.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## Main Report

### Background

1. To continually develop and improve our services and outcomes for children, young people and families, we must be able to accurately assess where we are performing well, and where improvements could be made. The needs of our service users are continually evolving and therefore our learning and development process must also be continuous.

2. Our Quality Assurance Framework enables us to demonstrate how we ensure that there are checks and balances in place which support our measurement of success from an evidence-based approach.

### **Current Position**

3. There is a comprehensive Quality Assurance programme in place with a range of elements and approaches in gathering evidence and feedback in relation to the services we provide to children, young people and families, and the impact this has on their lives.
4. Much of the work reviewed and feedback received was at a grading of 'Good or above', which demonstrates that many children, young people and families have good experiences of our services.
5. Where experiences are not 'Good or above' there are clear actions identified at a child and service level, which are robustly monitored monthly by managers and overseen by the Achieving Excellence Board. This ensures that measurable action is taken to address areas for development, with the impact on children at the centre.
6. There are proactive efforts made to include multi-agency partners and peers in quality assurance activity, to allow us to remain innovative and aspirational. This also ensures that we are not being inward focused, that we are supporting collective partnership learning, and also learning from what works elsewhere.
7. It is recognised that quality assurance is not a static process, and we continue to hone, refresh, and update our approach. We aim to make sure that staff, partners and, most importantly, the children, young people and families, are included in this process.

### **Options**

8. The Quality Assurance Programme is updated in line with learning and recommendations from activity this year. Our work reflects the aspiration to continue to be a continuous learning organisation, which is responsive and adaptable to changing community and individual needs, and to direct feedback received.

### **Proposal**

9. The above issues continue to sit within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance service to retain impartiality as a core function of the service area.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

10. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.



- Financial implications – N/A
- Resource implications – N/A
- Legal implications – N/A
- Risk implications – N/A
- Equalities implications – N/A
- Climate implications – N/A
- Security implications – N/A

## **Conclusion**

11. A comprehensive and varied programme of quality assurance has been undertaken over the past financial year. This work has provided evidence-based reassurance of the general 'Good and above' rating for practice delivered by the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service. It has also helpfully provided an analysis of thematic areas for wider development, as well as some more individualised practice issues to be addressed. Recommendations will continue to be robustly monitored, to ensure that they are addressed and that they have a positive impact on children. We will continue to develop the quality assurance programme to support and provide evidence of excellence in service delivery and outcomes for children, young people and families.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – 2023-24 Quality Assurance Annual Report

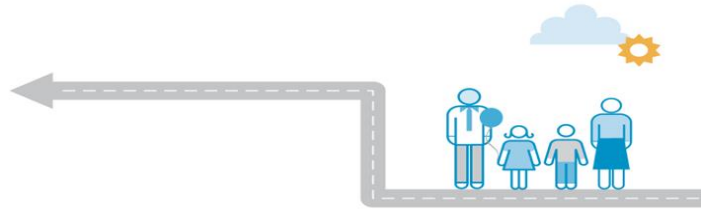
### **Laura Demetriades**

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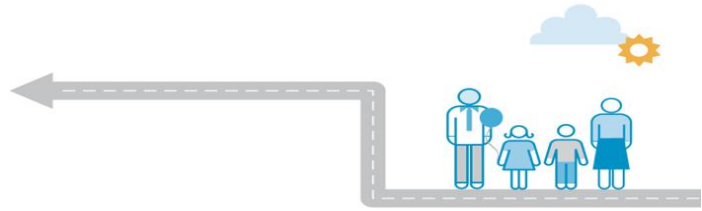


# City of London

## Department of Community and Children's Services

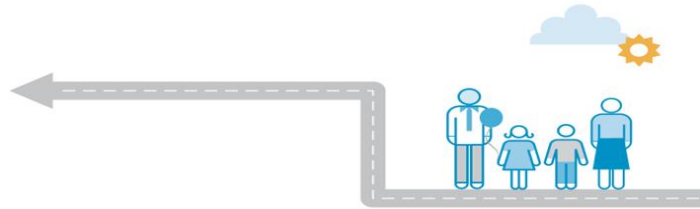
### Quality Assurance Annual Report 2023-24

**Author:** Laura Demetriades,  
Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance



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## 1. Introduction

The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service sits within the People's Directorate, within the Department for Community and Children's Services. It provides scrutiny, challenge, and support to the operational children's service. To ensure that practice is not only inline with statutory expectations and our own practice standards ([Children's Social Care Practice Handbook 2022.docx](#)), but is going above and beyond to provide excellent services for children, young people and families to promote the best outcomes possible for them.

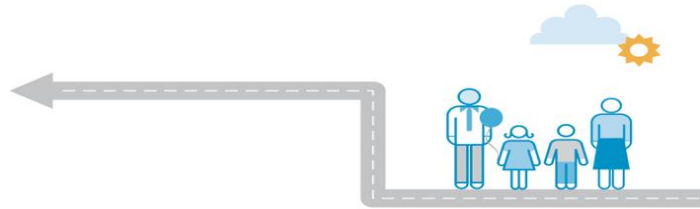
Since being graded as an Outstanding Authority in March 2020 and following the Focused Visit in November 2022, we have continued to work hard to ensure we know ourselves, understand the experiences of children, young people, and families in the City of London, provide services which contribute to improving the daily lived experiences of these groups, and continually challenge ourselves to work in more efficient and effective ways.

We recognise that we do not work in isolation with children, young people, and families and that our multi-agency partnership work, relationships, and commissioning arrangements are key to providing a holistic and wrap around service which fully meets the needs of those who use our services. Therefore, our quality assurance processes must also have an external focus to best understand how relationships with partner agencies is supporting our work, and where there may be barriers or competing needs which requiring addressing at a strategic level. Our strong engagement with the City and Hackney Children's Safeguarding Partnership (CHSCP - [chscp | City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)) supports this approach.

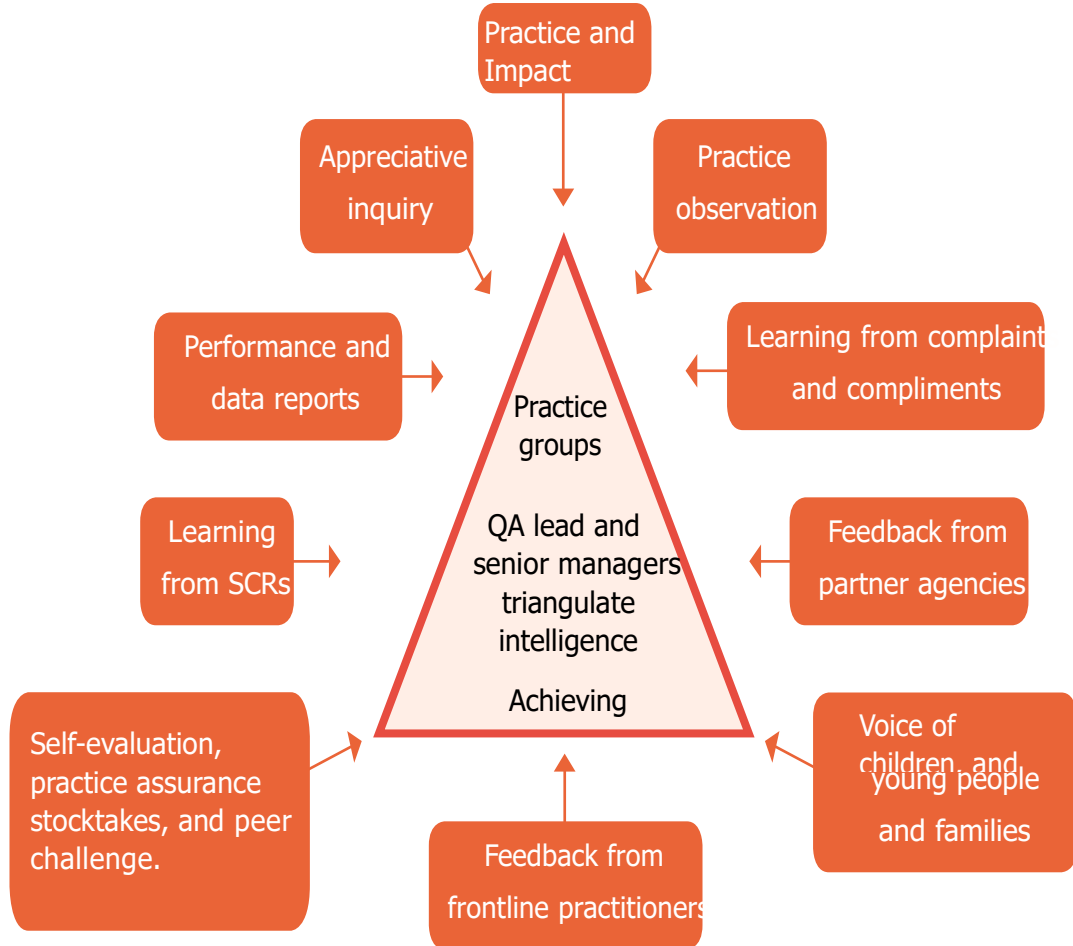
## 2. Quality Assurance Framework

The Quality Assurance Framework was last reviewed and updated in March 2023. The principles and purpose of the quality assurance framework are aligned with the journey of children and families through the services they receive, their lived experience and the outcomes achieved. This being attained through being:

- **Child Centred:** focusing on the experience of children and young people, making sure that they are safe and protected from harm, and that their voice is heard clearly.
- **Restorative:** quality assurance will be restorative. This approach reflects the significant investment and training in systemic thinking and practice. Instead of a 'top-down' approach, quality assurance work will be based on working with staff and managers and building relationships. As a restorative process, quality assurance will be characterised by high support and high challenge.
- **Outcomes Based:** the focus of quality assurance will be on outcomes rather than processes. While processes play an important part, the real test is on the impact of our services for each child and family. We expect staff to have a relentless focus on impact and outcomes.
- **Positive:** our approach to quality assurance will be positive. By doing so, we shall inform and encourage improvement and support the development of staff and services.
- **Reflective:** our quality assurance framework is designed to promote reflective practice and shared learning.
- **Creative:** having a pioneering and 'can do' culture.



Using a mixed methodology to triangulate information, data, and feedback to complete an honest self-assessment of our performance and outcomes.

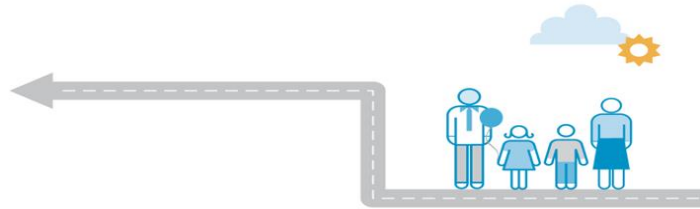


The Quality Framework utilises external review to provide a different perspective and distance from operational work, given the small numbers in the City children are often well known across the management team. This creates debate and challenge in a small system, which is healthy and needed. Also refines our narrative as to why we work in the ways we do, given some of the uniqueness of our context.

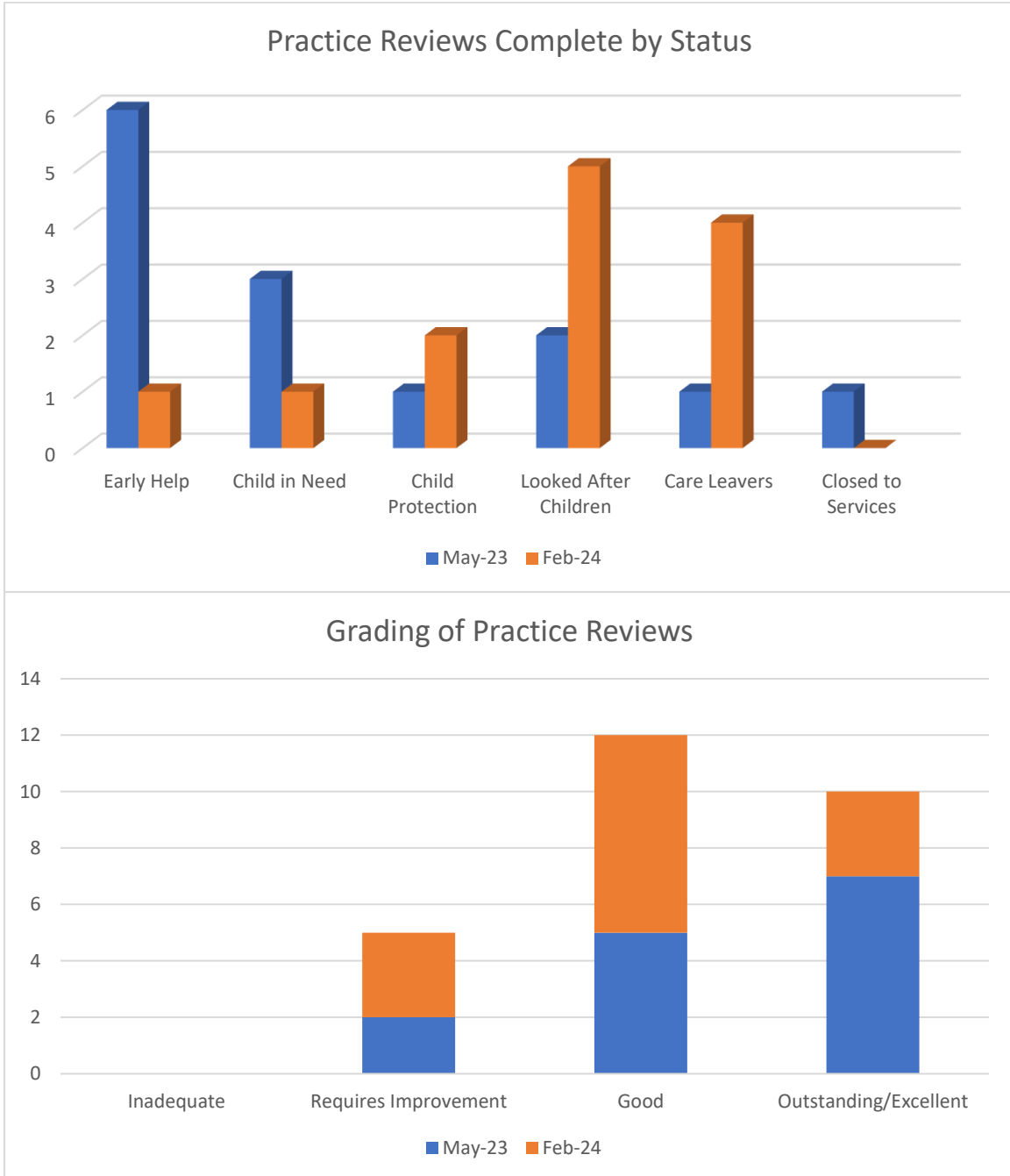
### 3. Quality Assurance Activity in the year

#### Practice Reviews

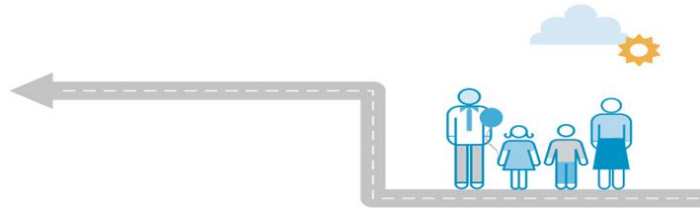
This year we have utilised our external practice review partners, Aidhour, to complete 2 sets of practice reviews of up to 15 children and families each time, at approximately 6 monthly intervals. In May 2023 they reviewed 14 children and families, who were allocated within the below areas/had the following support statuses. The common theme amongst these children and young people were that they all had Special Educational Needs.



From 29<sup>th</sup> January up to 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024 13 practice reviews were completed, 11 by Aidhour and 2 by the Head Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. These were a mix of children and young people across the service, with no specific themes or link in common.



It is very positive that no practice reviews were found to be Inadequate throughout the last year. Most practice reviews were graded as Good or better, there was a changing with grading terminology between the two rounds of review between Excellent and Outstanding, as Outstanding is the standard Ofsted terminology.



In each round of practice reviews there have been a small number of reviews found to be Requiring Improvement. Where a review is judged to be anything less than Excellent/Outstanding we ensure that there are clear, tangible recommendations made which will improve outcomes from the child/young people. Where there are systems blocks to providing the support children and families need, these are also incorporated into service level recommendations.

During this year we have implemented a monthly recommendation tracking and impact meeting with managers, to review that recommendations have been actioned, and what the impact has been for the child of doing this. This has supported the feedback loop in terms of ensuring learning from quality assurance is acted upon and results in service development and improvements in service delivery and the overall experiences for children, young people, and their families. Through these meetings we are confident that the recommendations from the May round of case reviews have been completed or are in progress. From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024 we will start tracking the implementation of the recommendations from the February reviews.

### **Practice Observation Week**

In June 2023 we held a Practice Observation Week the purpose of this observation was for Senior Leaders to gain insights into the daily tasks, challenges, and approaches employed by workers working in children and families, and the experience of those children and families of the services they receive.

Practice observations were carried out over a period of one week, during which time 4 Social Workers and 1 Early Help Practitioner were observed while performing their duties. The activities included a Looked After Child Review meeting, direct work with children, and home visits. The observations were undertaken by the Executive Director, Assistant Director, and various Heads of Service. In addition, practice development workshops in Direct Work, Role Play and Clinical Systemic Group Supervision were also provided for practitioners. Feedback was also requested from children, where age appropriate, parents and carers, and care leavers over the age of 18 years.

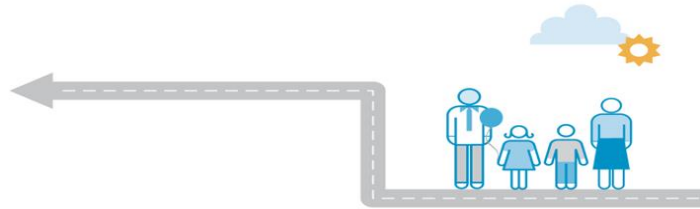
The practice observation revealed that several workers exhibited notable strengths, including effective planning, skilful use of age-appropriate tools, age-appropriate communication skills, holistic assessment abilities, understanding of child needs, and the establishment of positive working relationships with the children and their parents. These strengths contribute significantly to their effectiveness in addressing the complex needs of the children they work with and play a crucial role in promoting their overall well-being and development.

Given the small sample size (5) it was a challenge to draw tangible and realistic recommendations in relation to areas for development. Things that did arise which resonated with findings through other quality assurance work were in relation to; concerns about accommodation options and timeliness of securing permanent housing, understanding and support in relation to the broad range of needs of Autistic children, the coordination and link up between Social Care support and Special Educational Needs support, and understanding/assessment of risks over time.

### **Peer Challenge Events**

The Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance is part of the East London Peer Review Group. The group last met in July 2023 and there are plans to meet in April 2024, to review and reestablish the terms of the group. The aim being that this is a space in which Local Areas can ask for independent peer review and challenge in relation to current or proposed quality assurance processes. In the last





meeting there were helpful and interesting approaches shared to moderation processes, and what areas have found effective and efficient in doing this.

City will be hosting the group in April 2024 and will be seeking views on the practice review template, and moderation process of the reviews completed, by reviewing a sample of completed reviews. This will support us to continue to develop our framework, considering different approaches and procedures. Given the contract with Aidhour is long standing this will provide helpful scrutiny to ensure this remains the best method of providing independent scrutiny which meets current need and service delivery models.

Senior Leaders also attended a Peer Challenge event hosted by London Councils on 20/02/2024 with two other neighbouring Local Authorities, focusing on our Care Leaver Offer. This provide an opportunity to showcase our services, be questioned about what our gaps or areas for development are, but also hear what is working well in other areas, what innovations have been successful or are being piloted, and think about how these could be adapted to a City context. This provided some helpful reflections, but also reassurance about the quality of the offer in the City for Care Leavers.

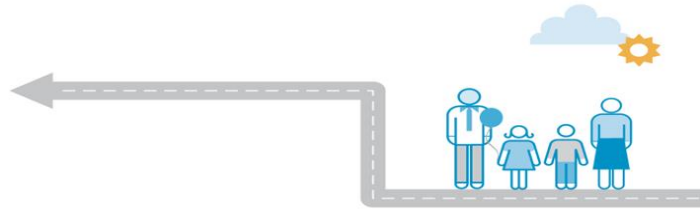
### **Multi Agency Case Audits (MACA)**

These are audits coordinated by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children's Partnership, for further information see [Case Audits | chscp](#). The volume of cases considered within these thematic audits tend to be Hackney cases, so therefore the relevance of the recommendations to the City context can be small. However, we recognise that we benefit from reviewing our processes from a partnership perspective. In this spirit we held a scrutiny event between Children's Social Care and City Police on 13/03/24. This involved reviewing a mixed sample of contacts from the City of London Police to Children's Social Care and Early Help made in the past 6 months, including contacts which progressed to Assessment, or allocation, those contacts in relation to open cases, and those that resulted in no further action. These were critically analysed by the group considering; the quality of information initially provided, communication between agencies, the appropriateness of the decision making, feedback from Children's Social Care and Early Help around decisions made and next steps, and any lessons learned, or training needs identified.

### **Scrutiny of Care Arrangements**

Due to the size and demographic of the City our looked after children and care leavers are generally provided care and accommodation outside of City borders, through commissioned services. We are keen to strengthen the quality assurance of these arrangements from a safeguarding perspective. To this end regular Contract Monitoring meetings have been reestablished with our most used care providers, attended by both commissioning colleagues and the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. These whilst in their initial stages have provided useful and take a dual approach of contractual review underpinned with safeguarding rigour, to ensure the needs of our children and young people are being appropriately considered and responded to.

The second stage of this approach will be to embed a series of in person visits by Senior Managers to care providers across the coming financial year. This will enable first-hand experience of the care and accommodation our children in care and care leavers are provided, qualitative information about the feel of the home, the presentation of the staff, and enable us to respond honestly to the questions 'as a Corporate Parent would this be good enough for my own child?'



### Practice Assurance Review

From 29<sup>th</sup> January to the 9<sup>th</sup> of February, we undertook a two-week Practice Assurance Review to self-assess areas of strength and excellence across Children’s Social Care and Early Help, analyse and review data reports and identify areas of development and make plans to address these if they are not already in place.

The process was overseen by an Independent Reviewer, Marcie Taylor, who is the Independent Chair of the Achieving Excellence Board, she then provided an overview report at the end of the process, outlining findings of strength and suggestions for areas of improvement. Alongside the Independent Reviewer, 13 case reviews were completed as outlined above in Case Review section.

Performance data was scrutinised by the Independent Reviewer, to consider if there are any specific themes or trends within this, and compared with findings from previous case reviews completed, feedback from the Annual Survey, the Service Evaluation Framework, Service Development Plans, and any other associated feedback or quality assurance information. The whole process included the involvement of allocated workers, line managers, Senior Leaders including the Deputy Lead Member, as well as seeking direct feedback from children, young people, and families.

It was a robust process, and the findings were consistent with quality assurance activity in that relationships between workers and families are strong, needs are well understood, and there is strong multi-agency working. There were recommendations made in relation to improving the consistency and moderation of practice reviews, developing the focus of risk assessments, strengthening senior management oversight and that of the Independent Reviewing Officer.

## 4. Feedback and Consultation

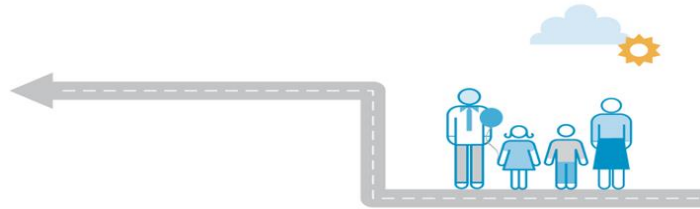
### Annual Survey

In July 2023 Action for Children, undertook an Annual Feedback Survey. This involves individually contacting all children, parents and carers, looked-after children, and care leavers, who have received services from Children’s Social Care and Early Help. A tailored survey of questions is spoken through with each person, dependant on the type of service they have accessed. This enables the service to receive anonymous feedback, which is independently collated and analysed, to demonstrate service performance, direct service user experiences, and inform service development.

Feedback in general remains positive: there are clear strengths identified by our service users, particularly in Early Help and Children in Need, where overall satisfaction of families increased to 66% from 53% last year; and 100% of these families feel included in the development of their Child in Need Plan and its review and believe that this has been explained to them adequately.

The strength of relationships for children in care is notable: 100% of children in care spoken to feel able and comfortable in contacting their social workers. Children in care also unanimously feel safe where they are living, and happy with the support they receive from a range of professionals, including the Independent Reviewing Officer, participation worker and Virtual School.

The largest cohort of survey participants are care leavers: 91% feel ‘comfortable and easy’ to contact their worker, 83% feel that they see their worker at an appropriate frequency; 81% of care leavers



are happy with where they live; and 75% feel that the education they access is good or very good, which is an increase from 59% last year.

There are some common themes of concern in relation to accommodation issues, such as: lack of space; awaiting permanent accommodation; location of available accommodation options; and social isolation due to this. Moving through services, and workers leaving, are also areas that some respondents find difficult, particularly those who have been involved with services for many years. There is also feedback around lack of clarity in relation to some processes and how services worked together, specifically in relation to children with Special Educational Needs and the Education, Health, and Care Plan process.

To support participants understanding of what their feedback does in terms of service development and delivery a You Said, We Did, feedback mechanism is being put in place. This outlines how feedback has been acted upon and will hopefully support the good take up rate of feedback and response gather through this process.

## 5. Impact and Outcomes

The Quality Assurance activity across the year has been regular, thorough, and far reaching. This has enabled us to identify some specific areas for development, as well as recognising the range of excellent work that is done which results in impactful outcomes for children, young people, and families.

We've worked hard to ensure that there is a consistent and clear feedback process from quality assurance work, and that there is evidence available in one place which demonstrates the action taken in relation to recommendations made and the impact this has for children. This has been done through the establishment of a Recommendation and Impact Tracker, which is updated by the Head of Service for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance will all child level and service level recommendations from quality assurance activity. Managers then meet monthly to provide updates on the progress of the recommendations, and the impact this has had for the child or young person. Meetings are held until all recommendations are completed.

This process is also supporting the strengthening of clear and SMART recommendations being made in the Practice Reviews, as if it is challenging to evidence that the recommendation has been implemented and what impact this has had for the child or young person, then it is potentially too nebulous an action.

Service Level recommendations received from quality assurance activity are either monitored through the monthly meetings, or if it a larger piece of work might be moved to the Service Development Plan where progress is scrutinised by the Achieving Excellence Board. Recommendations have led to or supported pieces of active service development, for example, the Care Leaver Offer and information in relation to housing pathways is being updated, there is development of workshops in relation to the transition to adulthood and independence for children leaving care to support their understanding of the processes, and exploration of new accommodation pathways which will support earlier identification of permanent housing.

All workers in Children's Social Care and Early Help have been provided with training from an Autism specialist in relation to communicating with children with Autism and additional communication needs, ensuring children's views are clearly informing plans and support, which will support



intervention to be fully child centred and informed. Workers have increased skills which they can use to support parents in implementing good routines in the home. There is continued development about our learning offer for staff in this area. There is also a range of specialist support which families have been signposted to. This also led to discussion with health colleague across Hackney and the City about the development of more City based parent/carer support groups, which is being considered.

There has been a large amount of work undertaken in relation to updating, standardising, and collating operational procedures. Given the mixed nature of the workloads in Children's Social Care and Early Help, it is recognised that workers don't necessarily do certain pieces of work regularly, therefore consistency can be harder to achieve. To this end it is recognised that we need to support staff to have clear and easy to access guidance, and have been updating our Trix Document Library to make it more streamlined, up to date, and easy to navigate; [The City of London Children and Young People's Services... \(trixonline.co.uk\)](http://trixonline.co.uk). The same principle applies for our partners and therefore this year we have developed guidance in relation to Child Protection Conferences, a standardised report template, a LADO Risk Assessment Template, and leaflet for employees and volunteers, these are hosted on the CHSCP website.

## 6. Oversight

### **CHSCP Quality Assurance Subgroup and Safeguarding Partnership**

Quarterly reports are taken to the CHSCP Quality Assurance Subgroup which outline the practice review activity in the last quarter, feedback received and performance data, this provides independent multi-agency scrutiny of activity, learning and action taken. This information is then fed up to the CHSCP as part of wider feedback about service delivery and development.

### **Achieving Excellence Board**

The Board meets quarterly and is Chaired independently by a scrutiny partner, it is there to provide challenge and external feedback on how we understand ourselves as a service, the experiences and outcome for children and young people, and robustness of plans to improve and develop services and operational practice. The Independent Chair has been working closely with the Head of Service to review current quality assurance arrangements and consider how these could be strengthened going forward.

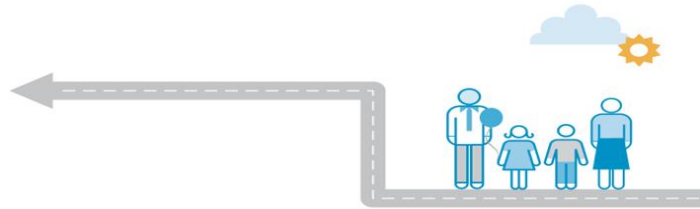
### **Safeguarding Sub-Committee**

The Quality Assurance Framework and Annual Report are taken to the Safeguarding Sub-Committee for consideration of Members, to ensure that Children's Social Care and Early Years are continually learning from the children, young people, and families they support, best practice evidence, and updated guidance, to provide excellence services which achieve the best possible outcomes for all.

## 7. Priorities for the next 12 months

### **Updating the Quality Assurance Framework**

Learning from the activity undertaken this year we will be refreshing the framework to continue to refine and develop processes which support learning and lead to improve practice, good experiences of services, and positive outcomes. We recognise the need to assure practice not just from file reviews but also through observation of direct work. Direct line managers are keen to have more



opportunity to undertake observation and this is something that will be explicitly incorporated into the future Quality Assurance Framework.

Learning from the Practice Assurance Review we will develop our Practice Review Template, to ensure prompt questions help reviewers focus on the experience of children, provide clear evidence for the grading rationale, as well as focused actions which demonstrate impact for the child with clear timescales applied. This will be linked with the implementation of clear moderation process so that consistency of Practice Reviews is increased, as well as the understanding across the Leadership team as to what 'excellence' looks like.

The sequencing of Practice Reviews will also be considered, and whether a smaller number of reviews being conducting more frequently might be trialled to assess the impact on workers, service delivery, ability to moderate, and greater inclusion of internal managers completing these.

### **Maximise the Voice and Experiences of the Children, Young People, and Families**

Maintaining an increased focus on ensuring that the voices and experiences of children, young people, and their families, are sought and where this is provided ensuring that feedback is given about what impact this has. There has been more consistent use of You Said, We did, documents to demonstrate the impact feedback has had on service development. Over time we will be able to measure whether this approach supports continued engagement and helps participants feel we are being transparent about what we do to respond to feedback and improve experiences of our services.

Whilst the Annual Survey provides a rich source of information greater efforts will be made to elicit feedback during Practice Reviews, and from other points of service contact e.g. service closure feedback forms, feedback in Plans, feedback from Looked After Reviews or Child Protection Conferences etc. Enabling a 360° triangulation of experiences at various points of interaction with the service, and more focussed feedback about specific functions which can then be acted upon.

### **Quality Assurance of Commissioned Care Providers**

From April 2024 it is proposed that we implement a series of in person visit by the Senior Leadership Team to commissioned care providers. This will take the form of one visit a month, with a written report then completed, agreed with the provider and progression of any recommendations monitored by the Commissioning Service and Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance.

This will provide a more consistent and robust approach to the monitoring of the quality of services and the daily lived experience of children in care and care leavers across our system. It will also make Senior Leaders more visible to children in care and care leavers and demonstrate an authentic will to hear and act upon any concerns they may have, and to firsthand experience what their life is like.

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<b>Committee:</b> Safeguarding Sub-Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 16/04/2024
<b>Subject:</b> City of London Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, 2023–24 Participation Annual Report	<b>Public</b> Appendix 2 non-public
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1–4
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	N/A
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
<b>Report author:</b> Laura Demetriades, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Department of Community and Children’s Services	

## Summary

The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service within the People’s Directorate oversees the participation offer to children in care and care leavers. It is a statutory expectation that all local authorities must provide the opportunity for children in care and care leavers to share their experiences through a Children in Care Council. However, to support young people to do this, the participation offer goes beyond formal meetings and consultation events, providing opportunities for children and young people to: develop friendships with each other; foster relationships with senior leaders; and try new activities and cultural experiences which foster a sense of collective belonging and identity. It also serves as a conduit to share information with young people in an informal environment, signpost to services and professionals who can help, and act as bridge to support the engagement and interaction with new services and workers.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## Main Report

## Background

1. To deliver services that meet the needs of our children in care and care leavers, it is fundamental that we receive their honest and individual feedback about what is done well and what can be improved. While there are the usual mechanisms for

doing this, such as surveys and forms, it is nationally recognised that this isn't always the most helpful way for young people to share their views. Therefore, the Children in Care Council offers a space that is centred around the young person, and which is supported by workers not directly involved in operational social work practice and decision making. This enables young people to come together to share their experiences and views in a safe, supportive and facilitated way.

2. We need to ensure that we are being proactive, sensitively persistent, and creative in the ways we communicate our offer and the activities that are available. We also need to demonstrate the impact that young people can have on service development and the support they receive.

### **Current Position**

3. During the last year we have offered six Children in Care Council meetings. This equates to one every academic half term, which is in line with our aims. The average attendance at each meeting has been six young people. Ideally we would like to increase this to eight to 10 young people. However, it is positive to be establishing a core membership.
4. The Children in Care Council has had the opportunity to share their views with the Lead Member, Town Clerk, Executive Director for the Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS), Head of the Virtual School, Head of Children's Social Care, and the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. This ensures that the lived experience of children in care and care leavers is heard and understood at all levels of the Corporation, and that they receive feedback about what action was taken following their feedback.
5. Based on feedback from the Children in Care Council we have developed a 'one stop shop' website full of information that supports young people to understand their rights, feel safe in the community, access education and employment opportunities, manage their physical and emotional health, understand accommodation processes and available support, and raise awareness of London-wide social opportunities as well as those with the Children in Care Council. [Children in Care Council \(CiCC\) - City of London Family Information Service](#)
6. We have increased take-up at social events throughout the year, supporting young people to access a range of extracurricular activities that build confidence and support personal learning and development. Young people have been keen to make suggestions for future events and engage in WhatsApp polls to give feedback.
7. We have developed a more consistent and comprehensive communication strategy, ensuring that we have up-to-date contact details for all young people. We have also created a group email to share opportunities, promote the private WhatsApp group to receive information, and call young people directly to promote engagement and attendance. This enables us to ensure that all young people are



receiving information and can make an informed choice about whether they would like to attend events.

## **Options**

8. The participation work continues to provide a pre-planned calendar of Children in Care Council meetings and events throughout the year. The Council also links with partners that are also working in this space, such as the Virtual School, Prospects and Partnership for Young London, to offer a wide range of opportunities that meet the variety of needs for our children and young people.

## **Proposals**

9. The above arrangements continue through the Participation Officer who reports to the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance within the People's Directorate.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

10. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.

- Strategic implications – N/A
- Financial implications – N/A
- Resource implications – N/A
- Legal implications – N/A
- Risk implications – N/A
- Equalities implications – N/A
- Climate implications – N/A
- Security implications – N/A

## **Conclusion**

11. The participation offer is continually developing to respond to the needs and interests for our children in care and care leavers. Those who access the offer provide positive feedback about their experiences and the opportunities provided, and so we will continue work to increase take-up. There are areas of co-production that we would like to expand on with the Children in Care Council, which would help us move from consultation to more meaningful collaboration. With the establishment of a core group of attendees, this can be progressed over the next 12 months.

**Laura Demetriades**

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**City of London**  
**Children in Care and Care Leavers**  
**Participation Annual Report**



**1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

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## **1. Introduction**

The 2007 Care Matters: Time for Change White Paper set out the then government's intention for all local authorities to establish a Children in Care Council to provide children and young people, in and leaving care, with additional opportunities to voice their views and experiences of the care system and increase their ability to influence and improve the services they receive from their local authority corporate parents.

The City of London has an established children in Care Council which is coordinated by a Participation Officer, who sits within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service. The remit of the participation worker is wider than coordinating the half termly Children in Care Council meetings and holiday programmes and extends to supporting engagement in all opportunities and services available to children in care and care leavers, including supporting the Virtual School programme of activities.

The participation programme recognises that children and young people's views and experiences are central to service development, and that no policy or service which impacts children and young people should be developed or created without their input. Therefore, the participation offer seeks to engage children and young people in sharing their experiences and views to consult and codesign service delivery.

## **2. What is the Children in Care Council?**

The City of London Children in Care Council (CiCC) is a group for all children and young people who are currently looked after or have previously been looked after by the City of London.

It meets throughout the year to hear the views of children and young people on the services they receive, to make suggestions to make services better, and to get involved in making changes and improvements. The voice of children and young people matter, and it is important the City of London know what they need and want from our services, so we can give them the best opportunities in life as their Corporate Parent.

We hold meetings every half term to do this, where children and young people have the opportunity to meet with Senior Managers, Lead Members, the Town Clerk, and anyone else they'd like to speak to. So, they can share their experiences and wishes for the future and get the support they need to achieve their ambitions.

Through the Children in Care Council children and young people also get opportunities to be part of bigger networks and groups such as the London Children in Care Council, and the Youth Parliament.

Most of the Children in Care Council meetings are held at the Guildhall in the City of London and we provide support for people to attend. We also make sure that we provide food and drinks at meetings, so young people need not worry about missing any meals. We try and hold meetings at times that suit most people, generally early evening after school or college.

Some young people don't necessarily want to attend a meeting, but we would still like to hear their views so will send out surveys or ask young people to try out new systems. We have a participation email address and Whatsapp group so young people can share their views and any thoughts they have on things that are important to them at any time.

We recognise that young people's time and contributions are valuable, and that sharing their experiences with us and hopes for the future isn't always easy. Therefore, when young people attend a Children in Care Council meeting, or take part in a consultation event, or specific piece of work, we will recognise and thank them for this by providing a £20 online voucher.

Participating with the Children in Care Council is more than just meetings and sharing views. Throughout the year we run lots of activities that are about having fun, getting to know new people, or keeping in touch with those they've met before, trying new things, learning new skills, and having different experiences. We have done many different activities across London and outside and are always keen to try exploring new things based on feedback from the group.

### **3. Membership**

The group is open to anyone who is in care or has been in care previously. We work hard to make sure that everyone who meets these criteria is aware of the activities and opportunities available to them. We email those with an active email address, invite young people to join our Whatsapp group, ask social workers to promote events to young people they are working with, notify care and accommodation providers of activities taking place, and have set up a website to share information.

Given our numbers of children in care this year have been relatively low, and some of those live at a distance due to their specific needs, the main attendees of the Children in Care Council meetings and events have been care leavers. The majority of our care leavers are unaccompanied asylum seekers so English is a second language. This tends to mean that they prefer to have discussions face to face rather than online, additional time needs to be factored into supporting conversation, preparation needs to be considered, and a couple of topics/questions focused on per meeting.

### **4. Summary of Activity**

As outlined above the participation programme offers a range of meetings and activities across the year which aim to engage young people in contributing their views, but also in developing a network of support from other young people, and in building confidence in trying new things and experiences.

#### **Children in Care Council Meetings**

There have been 6 Children in Care Council meetings held during the year, which is the expectation. On average each meeting has approximately 6 attendees. During the meetings young people have had the opportunity to speak with the Town Clerk, Lead Member, Executive Director for DCCS, Head of Children's Social Care and Early Help, Head of the Virtual School, and Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance.

The group has provided feedback on The Pledge, accommodation providers, training and apprenticeship options, the Care Leaver Offer, transport access, access to gyms, and the Children in Care Council website. Where specific feedback is given we are keen to ensure that follow up is provided so that young people can see what is done with the information they give us about their lived experiences. This year we have implemented a You Said, We Did response mechanism, which we hope will encourage more young people to share their views with us as they can see the impact that this has, see Appendix A.

We are keen to establish a core group of regular Care Council members ideally approximately 10 young people, so that we can build on them setting the agenda and inviting managers along to speak with them. At present the group is more consultation based with the participation officer and managers setting the agenda, with a core group of established members we could work on building confidence to move to a space of co-collaboration. A group of about 10 young people would allow for drop out and support attendance of 6-7 per meeting, and efforts would need to continue to be made to engage new young people to allow for nature move one as young people age out of the group.

## Events

This year we have held 10 events in additional to the meetings. This has included 4 care leavers attending a Committee Dinner with members, they were supported to buy formal black-tie outfits for the occasion and were impressed by the grandeur of the Guildhall and the interest that members showed in them and their ambitions for the future.

We took 11 young people on a 5 day/4-night residential trip to Buckinghamshire. The group participation in a range of outdoor and trust building activities supported by the participation officer, a social worker from the team, and with visits from other members of the Children's Social Care team. The young people really enjoyed this experience and were able to get to know each other and share their journeys to the UK (as all were unaccompanied asylum seekers). One young person discovered a talent for archery, and one young person subsequently requested and was supported to access swimming lessons. Feedback from the trip included.

I enjoyed every minute of our residential trip from the first to the last day and it has been an amazing experience for me which was my first trip outside London with you. Additionally, I like the environment around the building or the area we stayed in, activities that were going on and primarily the accommodation. It was quite a relaxed atmosphere in comparison to big cities. Finally, I would like to thank to the City of London staff members for organising the trip for us and I am looking forward to the next year if there is an opportunity. Thank you again.

Thank you so much for the holiday. I enjoyed it and had fun with others, you are always good, and you care about us.

Just wanted to say it was a great experience for me I felt like I'm living with my family thanks for taking us to excellent place nice views, great couches thank you for your time, and supporting us. We really appreciate it from our bottom hearts 😊😊😊😊😊

We also held our big annual celebration event which celebrates the academic achievements of all our children in care and care leavers. This was held at the Guildhall and was very well attended with 21 young people coming to take part and have their achievements recognised. Certificates were presented by the Lead Members and young people enjoyed having their progress and recognised. There were two young people present who had completed their degrees that year, and a whole range of ESOL training, and vocational courses such as plumbing and electrics. The Pledge was formally launched at the event and has been translated into the 11 most spoken languages amongst our children in care and care leavers, and can be found on our website; [our-pledge-to-the-children-in-care-council \(cityoflondon.gov.uk\)](https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/our-pledge-to-the-children-in-care-council).

We had seven young people attend a Pan London Children in Care Council visit to Kings College University to hear about the support available to them to access higher education opportunities. They found this a really interesting session and had lots of questions, which was great, and we hope it has inspired them to consider higher education opportunities.

Young people also had the opportunity throughout the year to go horse riding, go karting, to the cinema, bowling, to a pantomime, and to plenty of lunches and dinners. We also promote all the extra curricular activities available through the Virtual School, Prospects, Partnership for Youn London and the Pan London Children in Care Council, so that young people are able to access a range of opportunities through various forums and agencies.

## **5. Impact and Achievements**

This year we have worked on ensuring consistent communication methods with young people to ensure all are made aware of the events and opportunities available to them. We have a regularly updated email distribution list so we can share information directly with young people, a private Whatsapp group which young people can request access to, so they receive information, and follow up phone calls from the participation officer to encourage and support attendance. We have seen this led to more consistent attendance at events, and the start of the development of a core membership.

We have also responded to feedback from young people who have requested a 'one stop shop' of information which is relevant to them. Therefore, a Child in Care Council webpage was developed hosted on the City Family Information Service webpage. This covers a wide range of areas, providing not only information about City based services but also how to access local service depending on where our young people live, as most are not resident in the City. Feedback has been positive, and the young people have requested information in relation to Apprenticeships is added, which is in process. [Children in Care Council \(CiCC\) - City of London Family Information Service](#). Ideally we would like to monitor how many people are accessing this platform but at present that functionality is not available but being worked upon. In Commissioning Review meetings we have been sharing the resource with care providers so that they can promote this with their staff who work with City young people.

We have also drafted an introduction leaflet to explain the Children in Care Council, provide clarity on what impact young people's feedback and views have, to be clear how their time and contribution will be reimbursed, and to highlight that young people can attend Children in Care Council activities without being part of the meetings or consultation processes. This will be ready for distribution in



the next financial year and will form part of the welcome to care pack for new children coming into our care.

We have been able to create links and friendships between our care leavers, who can often feel isolated due to not having family networks in the UK. Young people now attend Children in Care Council activities together.

## 6. Priorities for the next 12 months

Over the next 12 months we want to build on the current momentum in terms of attendance and create a stable core number of Children in Care Council participants to help us progress the below aims.

1. **Young Inspectors** – we would like to train and support young people to get involved in the quality assurance of services provided to our children in care and care leavers. This supports collaboration with those with lived experience to provide insight, different points of view and expectations, and create service development based on coproduction. Training and support will be offered to young people who volunteer to be part of this project, as will recompense for time and travel required. We would like to support young people to inspect commissioned care arrangements to gather their feedback, which can then support strengthened commissioning arrangements and ensure that young people are receiving high quality care that meets their needs.

*“Youth inspection is a method of youth participation that is focused on giving critical feedback to projects, organisations, services, funders, institutions or other bodies that are connected to young people in order to improve the quality of their work. These can be bodies that are directly delivering an offer of services to young people or those involved at arm’s length in policy, strategy or funding.”<sup>1</sup>*

2. **Supper Club** – to support links and relationships between our young people we are looking to establish a monthly supper club starting in April. This would be held on the same day/time each month to be a consistent space in which young people can come together informally and share experiences through food. We would like young people to make restaurant recommendations based on foods from their cultural backgrounds, or favourite foods they have found since being in the UK or during their journey here. This will enable the meeting places to be more flexible and in various locations of London, hopefully making the opportunity accessible to more young people who can find travelling to the City more of a challenge.
3. **Communication Strategy** – we want to build on the progress of this year in terms of consistent communication to our children in care and care leavers. Coordinating with opportunities available through the Virtual School and Prospects to ensure that young people are consistently made aware of opportunities available to them and are given the necessary support to attend. This includes continued development of the website based on feedback from young people, the implementation of an introductory leaflet explaining the Children in Care Council, and ideally the creation of some videos involving young people explaining what they like about being involved in the Children in Care Council, and to show new children in to care places like the Guildhall etc so they can orientate themselves with the City.

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<sup>1</sup> Moxon, D, 2020, Young Inspectors | a guidance framework, Youth Focus North West

## 7. Gallery

### Residential Trip July 2023



### Pantomime 11/01/2024



### Visit to Kings College 14/02/2024



## 8. Appendix A

### Feedback from the CiCC Meeting 26/10/23

What you said.....	What we did.....
<b>Travel Pass availability</b>	All young people have been given the equivalent of 4 months money to cover bus fares, pending the Tfl London Mayor scheme that starts in January 2024
<b>Access to the internet at home</b>	Checks are being made with all care providers to ensure that they are providing Wi-Fi access to all our young people. If you are having problems with access to Wi-Fi in your home speak to your social worker
<b>Accommodation - small, unsuitable</b>	When commissioning accommodation providers we do check on the size and type of accommodation being offered. We want to offer our care leavers permanent accommodation as soon as possible and this does mean that they are likely to be studio flats rather than one-bedroom flats. However, being in permanent accommodation provides more stability than temporary accommodation. Where specific concerns are raised, a manager will offer to visit your accommodation to check the size and functionality of the property to ensure it is appropriate. Where accommodation is unsuitable alternative options will be explored.
<b>Access to working laptops</b>	Replacement laptops can be provided by the Virtual School. If you have an issue with your laptop please contact <a href="mailto:Debby.Rigby@cityoflondon.gov.uk">Debby.Rigby@cityoflondon.gov.uk</a> the Head of the Virtual School, or speak with your social worker.
<b>Extra tuition</b>	Where extra tuition is assessed as a learning need this can be provided by the Virtual School, please contact <a href="mailto:Debby.Rigby@cityoflondon.gov.uk">Debby.Rigby@cityoflondon.gov.uk</a> the Head of the Virtual School, or speak with your social worker.
<b>Careers guidance</b>	<p>All City children in care and care leavers can access providing Information, Advice and Guidance on Education, Employment and Training from Prospects, contact Matilda Newman-Smart at <a href="mailto:City@prospects.co.uk">City@prospects.co.uk</a> or call 07585 401280</p> <p>A new online app CiCi can be accessed from December, which is funded by the Virtual School. The new CiCC website also has a range of support services which can help you find advice around employment opportunities.</p> <p>All will receive an invitation to special sessions at the London Careers Festival in February 2024.</p>
<b>Better communication around events and opportunities</b>	<p>We now have a full up to date contact list for all children in care and care leavers. For those with an email address we will email information of events and opportunities.</p> <p>A great way to stay up to date is to join our CiCC Whatsapp Group <a href="https://chat.whatsapp.com/1rqr4Pk6INLFD2QaVtEuW3">https://chat.whatsapp.com/1rqr4Pk6INLFD2QaVtEuW3</a> you can also find lots of information on our new CiCC website page.</p> <p>We will also be sending a Seasonal Newsletter of upcoming events, the 1<sup>st</sup></p>

	one will come out in December 2023.
<b>Including young people in the development of the Care Leaver Offer</b>	Draft copies of the Care Leaver Offer are available at the CiCC meeting on 19/12/23 for those that attend and would like to take away, review, and respond with suggestions. The offer of a session to review and feedback on the document will be made for those that would like to attend.

<b>Committee:</b> Safeguarding Sub-Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 16/04/2024
<b>Subject:</b> Adult Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2023	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1, 2, 3,
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	N/A
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Wioletta Lewandowska, Principal Social Worker, Adult Social Care	

## Summary

This report outlines the role and statutory responsibilities of Adult Principal Social Worker (PSW) and highlights the role’s impact on the workforce, practice, partnership working and positive outcomes for The City of London community. The PSW role is vital in preparing Adult Social Care for Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assurance Assessment and supporting service transformation to achieve personalisation and improved outcomes for residents in the context of the Care Act 2014, the Mental Health Act 1983, and the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Section 5 of the attached PSW report (see Appendix 1) refers to safeguarding practice.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## Main Report

### Background

1. Adult PSW is a statutory requirement and is referenced in the regulations of the Care Act 2014, which states that the local authority should: *“Have in place a designated principal social worker in adult care and support. Local authorities should make arrangements to have a qualified and registered social work professional practice lead in place” Care Act Sec1.27*

2. As a member of the Adult Senior Management Team, the PSW contributes to the strategic leadership of the service. The PSW also develops and implements standards to ensure a cohesive and high performing social work workforce that embraces cultural change and continued service delivery and practice improvements.
3. The standalone, full-time role of PSW in Adult Social Care (ASC) has been in place since January 2023; previously it was a shared role fulfilled by the Head of Service. Having a dedicated PSW was recognised by ASC Peer Challenge (LGA, June 2023) as “a strength to drive practice improvement.”
4. The City of London Adult PSW role is to:
  - influence organisation at strategic level
  - ensure that senior managers are aware of the experience of front-line staff
  - provide operational and motivational leadership of all staff
  - promote Social Work Values
  - support social work performance of social workers, occupational therapists, strengths-based practitioners, and assistant social workers
  - lead on improving practice standards and on ensuring that performance improvements and agreed objectives and targets are met
  - establish and maintain systems for practice governance and service quality monitoring
  - develop and sustain partnership arrangements
  - ensure there are key connections between practice and strategy
  - promote and take part in research
  - support a strengths-based practice and Making Safeguarding Personal culture
  - support the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy within the workforce and within practice
  - influence the development and maintenance of an organisational culture where principles of social justice, social inclusion and equality are applied to strategic decision making.

### **Current Position**

5. The City of London Adult PSW submitted their Annual Report to the Director of ASC in December 2023, outlining their main activities and their impact on the service, workforce and the people supported by ASC.

### Impact of the PSW role

6. Over the last year, PSW have provided a stronger voice for social work practice. They have demonstrated visible leadership and engagement with practitioners,

ensuring the best working conditions and support to staff, as required under Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England 2020.

7. PSW set clear quality practice standards and put the voice of people who use social work services at heart of all social work interventions. This has a positive impact on more diverse engagement with the City of London community on practice and strategy.
8. PSW provides the link between national bodies and the organisation on best practice, case law and development of the social work improvement agenda by their membership in national networks and groups, and by renewing the Teaching Partnership with Goldsmith and South Bank Universities.
9. Through strategic and operational implementation of strengths-based practice and anti-racist practice standards, the PSW ensures the best balance between practice-led and process-supported ways of working with people and communities. This enabled ASC to meet the CQC's Single Assessment Assurance Framework expectations, as per their statement: "I have care and support that enables me to live as I want to, seeing me as a unique person with skills, strengths, and goals."

#### Highlights from the PSW Annual Report 2023

##### 10. Main achievements:

- implementation and evaluation of strengths-based approach in practice
- development of new Supervision Protocol to provide a framework of core principles and minimum standards for supervision available to staff within ASC
- enrichment of learning and development activities by producing a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis, renewal of the South-East London Teaching Partnership, and creating more career pathways
- development of quality assurance model based on our social work values system, professional standards and capabilities, service improvement plan and transformation agenda.

11. PSW is active member of the City & Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board (City sub-committee and Quality Assurance sub-committee) and promotes good safeguarding practice through internal measures and commissioned independent audits and learning.

12. The Mental Capacity Assessment and safeguarding audits identified areas of good practice, as well as development areas for our social workers, which are now included in the practice development plan 2024.

13. The introduction of the Adult Social Care Quality Assurance Framework provides structure and governance on how the City of London will ensure that the work we do is of the highest quality, leading to better outcomes. It is designed to be

flexible in approach, reactive to emerging needs and provide the methodology for continual review of practices.

- City of London ASC is committed to providing and commissioning high-quality ASC services.
- Quality assurance and continuous improvement is not an additional activity, but an integral part of everyday practice within the ASC service.
- Our quality audits focus on various areas of practice, which align with ASC functions and our statutory obligations.
- Practice Audit Protocol was designed in April 2023 to help our workforce on a journey of continuous self-assessment and improvement. This includes practice audits, direct practice observations, feedback from the adults and carers we support, learning from complaints and compliments, and learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews.
- The purpose of the ASC practice audit is to support with:
  - promoting evidence-based practice
  - implementing strengths-based practice
  - ensuring outcome-based assessment and care planning processes
  - continuous practice improvement
  - measuring success and performance
  - creating a culture committed to learning and continuous workforce improvement
  - ensuring that our workforce takes responsibility for the quality of their work.

14. During 2023, seven audits were completed covering all aspects of practice. These were followed by Development Action Plans, reviews of the impact of our practice on the wellbeing and safety of the people we support, and celebration of good practice.

15. Quality assurance activities proved that the ASC workforce knows their community well and develops positive relationships with the people they support. Our strengths have been identified as our commitment to strengths-based practice, and our co-ordinated and multi-agency approach to the assessment and support of residents.

16. The key areas for practice development in 2024 are: some elements of safeguarding practice; identification and recording of protected characteristics and diverse needs; and providing strong evidence of the impact of the strengths-based approach application.

17. The Annual Report sets priorities for 2024 that are aligned with the Chief Social Worker's national agenda and The City of London specific requirements and development plans.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

18. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.



- Financial implications – N/A
- Resource implications – N/A
- Legal implications – N/A
- Risk implications – N/A
- Equalities implications – N/A
- Climate implications – N/A
- Security implications – N/A

## **Conclusion**

19. The PSW role is well established and embedded to influence strategy and service delivery priorities in the City of London. The PSW takes a lead within the department for promoting and identifying social work learning and development, working closely with Corporate Learning & Development and the People's Directorate Workforce Development Lead, to ensure that workforce development priorities are delivered.

20. There is good oversight in place to monitor and influence organisational culture – its impacts, drivers, and influences. Moving forward, the PSW will continue to promote a relationship-based approach to leadership and advocacy, using feedback from people who use social work services and co-producing good practice with adults, carers, and social workers. The PSW takes a place-based approach to integration, and to support this we will form critical links between our vision, values and culture and ensure that these links are embedded in governance and service delivery arrangements.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Annual Report 2023, For the work of the Adults Principal Social Worker (PSW) Wioletta Lewandowska

### **Wioletta Lewandowska**

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## Annual Report 2023

**For the work of the Adults Principal Social Worker (PSW) Wioletta Lewandowska.**

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## 1. Introduction

### City of London Adult Social Care Vision

Our vision is for residents to get the right information, advice, support, and care to live their best lives, maintain their health and wellbeing, and live safely in the place of their choice.

Our skilled workforce will guide people through the options, and actively champion equality, diversity, and inclusion so all people can get the support they need, when they need it.

### The role of Adults Principal Social Worker (APSW)

The role of the Principal Social Worker (PSW) has developed since 2011 when it was first introduced by the Social Work Reform Board and recommended in the Munroe report.

APSWs are now a statutory requirement and referenced in the new regulations of the Care Act 2014, which states that the local authority should:

*“Have in place a designated principal social worker in adult care and support. Local authorities should make arrangements to have a qualified and registered social work professional practice lead in place” Care Act Sec1.27”*

As a member of the Adult Senior Management Team (ASMT) PSW contributes to the strategic leadership of the service and develops and implements standards to ensure a cohesive and high performing social work workforce which embraces cultural change and continued service delivery and practice improvements.

In CoL ASC the Principal Social Worker's role is to:

- influence organisation at strategic level; ensure that senior managers are aware of the experience of front-line staff
- to provide operational and motivational leadership of all staff

- promote Social Work Values
- support social work performance of social workers, occupational therapists, strengths- based practitioners and assistant social workers
- lead on improving practice standards and on ensuring that performance improvements and agreed objectives and targets are met
- to establish and maintain systems for practice governance and service quality monitoring
- develop and sustain partnership arrangements
- ensure there are key connections between practice and strategy
- promote and take part in research
- to support a strength-based practice culture
- Support Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy within the workforce and within practice

#### Purpose of report

- To update on Key achievements for 2023 of the Principal Social Worker (Adults)
- to promote and improve the quality of social work practice, highlighting the achievements for this year
- Identify priorities for the coming year. This report reflects priorities set in Chief Social Worker report 2023

## 2. City of London, ASC context

The number of residents in the City of London has increased by 16% since 2011. The majority are working age but there are 1200 people - 14% - who are aged 65 and over. Although the percentage of population aged over 65 has stayed the same between the censuses, the actual number of people has increased. There is high life expectancy in the City of London with females having a life expectancy at birth of 90.7 years and males 88.8 years.

Asian people are the largest minority ethnic group in the City of London accounting for 16.8% of the population; and 3% of the City of London population are Black according to the 2021 census. Portsoken, in the east of the City of London is the most ethnically diverse ward.

Census data shows that the City of London has 496 self-identified unpaid carers. The majority provide 19 hours or less of unpaid care per week. However, there are a small percentage who provide upwards of 20 hours per week.

There are a significant number of people sleeping rough in the City of London. In 2022 (the most recent full year data) 372 people were rough sleeping within the boundaries of the City of London which is the 7<sup>th</sup> highest level amongst London's local authorities. Many of these rough sleepers have significant mental health or substance misuse issues.

The [Corporate Plan](#) outlines 12 strategic outcomes of which the Department and Adult Social Care Services directly contribute to four : People are Safe and Feel Safe, People enjoy good health and wellbeing, People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and communities are cohesive.

ASC operates within the People's Directorate, which includes Children's Social Care, Education and Early Years and Rough Sleeping/ Homelessness.

The Adult PSW supports ASC workforce, which includes Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Strengths Based Practitioners, in delivering good service to our citizens.

### Program Management Approach

We have taken Programme Management Approach to support timely delivery of various projects within ASC. We have developed Transformation Programme Board to provide governance and oversight across the programme delivery, as set out in the ASC Transformation Programme Business Case (*DLT sign off 25.05.22*).

The Board will delegate responsibility for delivery through three Sub-Boards and its workstreams, outlined as follows:

- ASC Finance Sub Board: *Finance & Budgets, Systems*
- People Sub Board: *Learning & Development, Practice and Policy & Process*
- Partnerships & Commissioning Sub-Board: *Care Market, Equalities & Communications*

Principal Social Worker is a member of People Sub-Board, as all identified projects within this sub-group align with statutory responsibilities of PSW role.

### Recruitment & Retention

We experience challenges with the recruitment of experienced Social Workers including the recruitment of Locum staff. We have supported our recruitment process by updating our job adverts to attract more candidates with diverse characteristics, introducing Values- Based interviewing and enriching our staff development offer. To maintain good staff retention, we are enhancing career pathways, providing mentoring, building staff specialism and promoting healthy work environment to assure wellbeing of our workforce.

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

One of the PSW responsibilities is influence the development and maintenance of an organisational culture where principles of social justice, social inclusion and equality are applied to strategic decision making. Since appointment to this role in January 2023 PSW has been supporting the department in implementation of Anti-Racist Practice Standards, leading on learning and reflection on good practice standards in this area and auditing quality of recording of people's diverse needs in social care assessments.

To promote EDI across the service PSW included relevant discussions at World Social Worker Day in March 2023 by inviting well known speaker and member of Social Care Workforce Race Equalities Standards Advisory Group.

Other PSW activities include:

- New supervision protocol and supervision forms recognise and encourage the valuable contribution from people of all backgrounds and experiences they bring to the service.
- Update of social work vacancies advert by emphasising the need for our workforce to represent our local community and encouraging applications from diverse backgrounds and people with various protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
- Update of ASC Practice Standards document to ensure that our practitioners are aware and sensitive of basic cultural characteristics of people they work with and have the confidence to discuss individual differences to find out how best to offer them help and support. This will enable equity, inclusion, and fairness without bias.

### 3. Achievements 2023

#### Implementation of Strengths Based Practice (SBP)

Strengths-based practice is a collaborative process between the person supported by services and those supporting them, working together to determine an outcome that draws on the person's strengths and assets.

Focus is on the quality of the relationship that develops between those providing support and those being supported.

In the last year PSW led on various activities supporting the workforce to develop relevant knowledge and skills.

This is the list of some of these activities:

- Training: All ASC practitioners completed Strengths-Based Approach (SBA) training delivered by PSW. Front-line staff also completed Motivational Interviewing and Every Contact Counts courses.
- Standards: Clear SBP standards have been agreed and shared with the team. Existing ASC Practice Standards document have been updated accordingly.
- Practice Guide: SBA Framework and Handbook was introduced and shared with the team.
- Supportive systems: Strengths Based Practitioner role; monthly reflective practice sessions; 1:1 coaching by PSW, as required; IT recording systems update to ensure good recording; Early Intervention Fund.
- Closing the Learning loop: Case File audits review the application of SBA; audit reports and improvement action plans trigger change in practice and set new objectives for improvement.





Strengths-Based Practice Implementation Loop

SBA next steps:

- Extend the learning offer to teams supporting ASC and new staff
- Review initial interventions (Duty work systems) to ensure good practice
- Explore Strengths-Based Leadership within the department
- Monitoring ongoing learning loop

Outcomes (from national research):

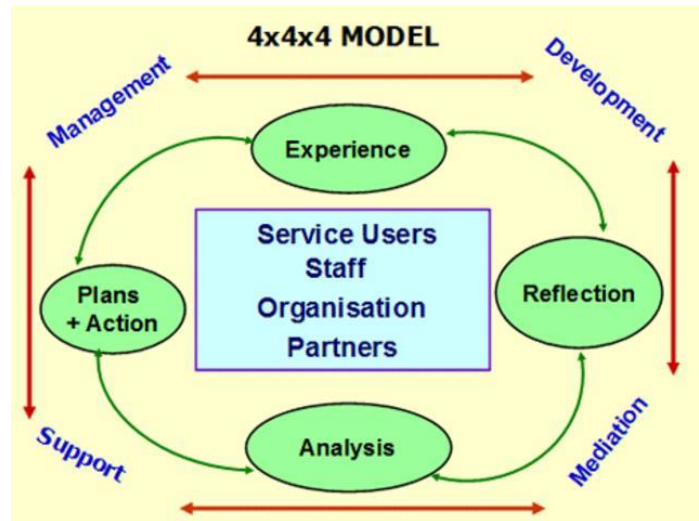
- Meeting nationally agreed standards of good social work practice, which is one of the CQC Assurance Framework.
- Improving outcomes for adults with care and support needs by building their resilience, self-esteem, and sense of empowerment. People feel more in control and engaged with their local community
- Professionals have more autonomy and increased job satisfaction when applying relationship-based practice

Specific outcomes for CoL will be measured during 2024 by auditing quality of work and staff satisfaction survey. However, 2023 Customer and staff feedback confirms the above outcomes.

Supervision & Reflective Practice

New Supervision Protocol and recording forms have been developed in May 2023 to provide framework of core principles and minimum standards for supervision available to staff within ASC. We ensure that our supervisions actively promote equality of opportunities and freedom from discrimination on grounds of position within the organisation or the protected characteristics under the Equality's Act: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, sex, sexual orientation, marriage, and civil partnership.

Our recommended model of supervision is the 4x4x4 model (Morrison, 2005). This model aligns well with a strengths-based approach and provides a useful framework for approaching supervision for both the supervisor and supervisee.



New supervision forms also include elements of professional reflection. Reflective supervision, either one to one or in group setting, provides a space for practitioners to reflect and consider the emotional impact of their work, the unquestioned assumptions, and biases they bring, varying perspectives (including theoretical perspectives) and ethical dilemmas inherent in practice. This approach enables practitioners to develop self-awareness, critical thinking and sound decision making.

PSW facilitates reflective practice sessions using a variety of models including Action Learning and Systemic Reflective model, where professionals can reflect on complexity of their work, impact on all involved in social care intervention and their emotional intelligence and resilience.

### Outcomes:

- National requirements of good social care supervision are being met, which includes anti-racist supervision standards and emphasis on staff wellbeing and professional development.
- Clarity and consistency of recording
- Promotion of reflective practice

These outcomes and ASC quality of supervisions will be audited early next year.

### Learning & Development

Developed comprehensive Training Needs Analysis allowed more in depth understanding of individual and team's development needs, identified gaps in learning and highlighted the importance of monitoring compliance with mandatory training.

ASC staff have access to all legal training through contract with "Edge" and specific safeguarding training through City & Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board. Formal learning is overseen by PSW and management with close working with People's Directorate Workforce Development Lead.

Various learning options have been emphasised, including the importance of professional reflection and self-directed learning, for example by introducing monthly reflective practice sessions and establishing a self-directed learning space- ASC Library.

PSW also initiated creation of career pathways by promoting new courses, such as "Supporting those with long term conditions" and "Supervisor development programme" and by reviewing team structure with the Head of Service to allow progression.

The City of London Community and Children's Service renewed their membership with South—East London Teaching Partnership. SELTP's ambitions and objectives are aligned with the Department of Education's vision for teaching partnership, which in practice means delivering on the aims set out in SELTP's agreed budget forecast with the DfE for financial year 2023-25.

The expected outcomes are:

- Strong working relationships between the stakeholders have been established and will provide a collaborative basis on which workforce and other issues can be addressed.
- Quality pre- and post-qualifying programmes at Goldsmiths, South Bank University and other SELTP training providers to produce high-calibre, capable and ambitious social workers.
- Execution of SELTP objectives (as set out in budget forecasts) for 2023-25, including identifying sustainability options beyond March 2025.

The programme aims to raise standards in children and adults' social work and local authorities, in line with reforms recommended in the Narey and Croisdale-Appleby reviews of 2014 and the Government's direction since. It supports high quality training for social work students and qualified practitioners, to develop their practice in statutory setting.

#### Partnership working

To be able to fulfil responsibilities of the PSW role, partnership working is one of the most important elements. During the first year of appointment APSW established lines of communication and cooperation with internal and external partners. ASC workforce is co-designing, or co-producing internal protocols and tools and their voice is heard by the DASS through PSW during quarterly meetings.

PSW works within People's Directorate and have influence on the delivery of services and other social care roles connected with social work. [See Annex 3 for details of partnership working.]

#### Quality assurance and Performance

Quality assurance is a continuous improvement cycle using a range of interdependent methods to measure prevalence, monitor practice, listen to people's experiences, identify areas of improvement, and enact change as a result. An effective model will identify both "what is working well and why" and "what we need to do better". Our

quality assurance model must be based on our social work values system, professional standards and capabilities, service improvement plan and transformation agenda.

The introduction of the Adult Social Care Quality Assurance Framework provides structure and governance on how City of London will ensure that the work we do is of the highest quality, leading to better outcomes. It is designed to be flexible in approach, reactive to emerging needs and provides the methodology for continual review of practices.

#### **4. Practice Improvement**

##### *Measuring practice, outcomes and performance*

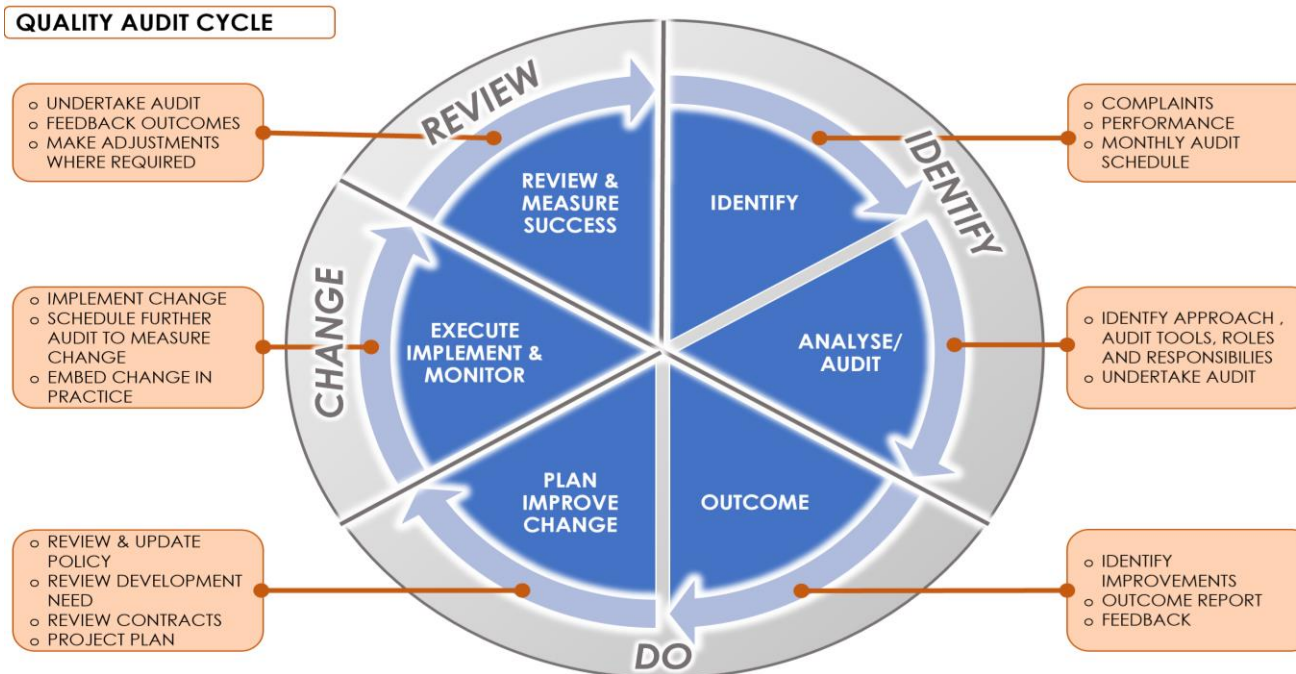
City of London Adult Social Care is committed to providing and commissioning high quality adult social care services. Quality assurance and continuous improvement is not an additional activity, but an integral part of everyday practice within the adult social care service.

Our quality audits focus on the following areas of practice, which align with ASC functions and our statutory obligations.

- Wellbeing (Annual Workforce Health Check/ local survey)
- Working with Risk and Making Safeguarding Personal
- Complaints
- Safeguarding Adults Reviews
- Mental Capacity
- Assessment, Care and Support planning
- Transition to Adulthood
- Carer
- Decision Making, Recording & Accountability
- Supervision & Management oversight
- Direct Practice Observation
- Feedback from People with Lived Experience

It is expected that the outcomes of audits, alongside other available performance information, is used in supervision and appraisal to support practitioners to improve the quality of their practice, and the delivery of good outcomes for the person with lived experience (PLE), unpaid carers and their families, tackling any issues in respect of poor

performance. In addition, audits should inform team and service development and can reflect wider systemic issues which impact on the service delivery.



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### Tools and activities

Practice Audit Protocol has been designed in April'23 to help our workforce on a journey of continuous self-assessment and improvement.

The purpose of the adult social care practice audit is to support with:

- Promoting evidence-based practice
- Implementing Strengths Based practice
- Ensuring outcome-based assessment and care planning process
- Continuous practice improvement
- Measure success and performance
- Creating a culture committed to learning and continuous improvement of the workforce
- Ensuring that our workforce takes responsibility for the quality of their work

Annual Audits Schedule

Quarter 1: Jan- March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case File audit</li> <li>• Supervision audit</li> </ul>
Quarter 2: April- June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding Principles audit/ other safeguarding</li> <li>• MCA audit</li> </ul>
Quarter 3: July-Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management Oversight audit</li> <li>• Case File Audit/ Transition to Adulthood</li> </ul>
Quarter 4: Oct-Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Wellbeing Survey</li> <li>• Working with Risk audit</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Direct Practice Observations- at least 10 annually (Note: students' practice observations by Practice Educator are additional and not included in this schedule)</li> <li>➤ Feedback from People with Lived Experience is continuous and will be reviewed and analysed quarterly by PSW/HoS.</li> </ul>	



Note that the above schedule is flexible and can be amended if “ad-hoc” requests for audits are made, such as by Safeguarding Adults Board or DASS, or if appropriate to meet national/ local prioritised agenda.

We use a range of audit tools, surveys, and feedback forms, which were co-produced with management team and the front-line workers. All Improvement Action Plans have been reviewed to monitor change in practice and service development, which is governed by Quality Assurance Group meeting bi-monthly.

Monitoring implementation of audits action plans:

<b>Audit type</b>	<b>Date of Improvement Plan approved by ASMT</b>	<b>Review of actions by PSW/ Others</b>	<b>Outstanding actions</b>
<b>Case File audit</b>	20/03/23	08/09/23	None
<b>MCA</b>	17/04/23	08/09/23	None
<b>Transitions- Case Files</b>	16/05/23	08/09/23	None
<b>Peer Review Case File audit</b>	19/06/23	08/09/23	None
<b>Rough Sleepers Safeguarding Concerns/ Risk Management audit</b>	11/09/23	March 2024	Ongoing work
<b>Decision Making &amp; Accountability (Management Oversight) audit</b>	October	April 2024	Ongoing work
<b>Independent Safeguarding audit</b>	Planned December’23	June’24	Report received 17/11/23

### Outcomes of Direct Practice Observations

City of London Community and Children's Department's senior leaders and ASC managers monitor the impact our work has on safety and wellbeing of people in our community. They are interested in wellbeing and performance of our staff. For example, both of our directors, Head of Service, PSW and ASC managers take part in quality assurance activities by undertaking Direct Practice Observations of our front-line practitioners, which is very well received by the workforce and champions core ethics and values of our profession.

The purpose of the observations is to assist in understanding of the nature of the work carried out by Social Workers in improving outcomes for Adults and older, to assist in reviewing the quality of the interventions and to provide an opportunity for Social Workers to reflect on their practice and any wider system issues.

Between November 2022 and November 2023, we had 8 formal and recorded observations of our workers' practice. Evaluation of feedback reports is qualitative and can be demonstrated by examples of comments made by observers.

*"Culture was explored in the wider sense by asking about his interests and around possible further connections with community groups." - Social Worker observation*

*"K is definitely a very knowledgeable and experienced social worker. Particularly the conversation with SO was exceptional and could be used as a "teaching session" of how to communicate with an adult with dementia". - Social Worker observation*

*"Clearly a good relationship has been built – evident from our introduction when KC said of KJ 'she's brilliant". - Social Worker observation*

*"An excellent visit that helped inform further work to be undertaken to support MH, e.g., sign posting to City Advice to help improve benefit maximisation opportunities." - Social Worker observation.*

*"KC feels like other workers don't have the time for her that she needs, as they visit infrequently, whereas with KJ they have more time with weekly visits, she is able to talk about things, sort things out and put her mind at ease which increases her wellbeing" – Strengths Based Practitioner observation.*

## 5. MCA & Safeguarding

### Mental Capacity Assessment

MCA audit completed in April 2023 provided an opportunity to review our staff practice in this area and identify any skills and knowledge gaps. As a result of improvement action plan, we have updated relevant forms on recording IT system, developed good practice tools to support social workers, ensured all staff complete relevant training and updated Practice Standards to include the voice of the Adult ("I Statements"). Our social workers become more confident, share their learning, and reflect on this practice area.

### Safeguarding

As a member of City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board we share safeguarding training and good safeguarding practice with Hackney, which allows us wider access to learning options and collaborate in the area of safeguarding quality assurance (we have relevant SAB sub-groups).

PSW is an active member of these groups and promotes good safeguarding practice. For example, in 2023 we had one internal safeguarding audit reviewing safeguarding concerns related to Rough Sleepers/ Homeless people, and one independent safeguarding audit across our practice and processes.

The Independent Safeguarding Report by Annie Ho (Inspiring social work) dated 17/11/2023 noted areas of good practice, such as risk identification, assessment and management, evidence of Adult's at-risk consent to safeguarding procedure and information sharing and evidence of Safeguarding Adults Managers' good oversight and support, including recording of case discussion and consultation in supervision. Recommended areas for improvement are, for example more in depth application of Mental Capacity Act principles aligned with 6 principles of safeguarding, clearer evidence of Adults' at-risk voice by including "I statements" and greater focus on wider wellbeing outcomes for the person by curious practice around social isolation. These will be included in PSW practice improvement plan 2024.

## 5. Leadership and PSW development

The Capability Statement for Principal Social Workers in Adult Services states: “As the professional lead with a unique remit within the organisation, there is a danger of isolation. Support from the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and access to professional supervision is, therefore, vital to the successful execution of the PSW role.”

### Regular professional supervision

PSW receives supervision every 4 weeks and annual appraisal by Head of Service, who by profession is a Social Worker.

### Regular meetings with DASS

PSW has quarterly meetings with the DASS where we discuss current issues, set new priorities and direction for ASC in the City of London.

### Influencing senior leadership by promoting SW values

As PSW I have influenced Workforce Development plans for the organisation and developed new practice Quality Assurance Framework, introduced new programmes and guidance supporting front line staff and management team. PSW is placed at a strategic level in the organisation and is a member of Adult Senior Management Team (ASMT).

### Professional membership

PSW is a member of ADASS, ADASS Carers working group, national and local PSW Networks and British Association of Social Workers (BASW), and maintains close working relationship with Skills for Care, Research in Practice, Social Care Institute for Excellence and our professional regulator Social Work England.

PSW participates in North-East London Integrated Care Partnership networks on quality assurance and preparation for CQC Assurance Assessment.

Being a board member of South-East London Teaching Partnership (SELTP) with Goldsmith and South Bank universities allows PSW direct access to academic colleagues, national and local research and workforce learning and development priorities, as set by Department for Education.

PSW is a member of City & Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board (CHSAB)- City subgroup and quality assurance subgroup.

## **6. PSW Priorities for 2024 (aligned with national priorities in Chief Social Worker's Annual Report 2023)**

### **Provide leadership and support to Principal Social Workers**

- Maintain high level of PSW professional development

### **Improve social work workforce capacity and effective deployment of social work resources, including improvements in practice educator and supervisory quality and capacity**

- Support performance management
- Pilot a role of Assistant Social Worker within the team
- Further develop the role of a Senior Social Worker
- Develop clear career pathways

### **Support effective hospital discharge arrangements and promote the impact of social workers in health setting in improving individual and carer outcomes**

- Regular engagement with Carers Forum

### **Support and promotion of social work digital capability and use of digital and tech support for people, including digital inclusion and improving access to timely care and support**

- Implement Digital Capabilities Professional Standards

**Refresh and embed trauma informed, strengths-based approaches to delivering social work and social care, including safeguarding practice in working with people experiencing homelessness, addictions and mental ill health and those living in institutional settings**

- SBA next implementation stage
- Introduce Trauma Informed Practice training

**Promote equality, diversity and inclusion for people receiving social care support and those working in social care, including specific work on anti-racist and poverty aware practice**

- Monitor anti-racist practice evidence
- Promote development of a diverse workforce

**Further improve social work evidence and research activity to deliver improved interventions and outcomes for people and communities, including in integrating responses to people's health and care needs**

- Update Quality Assurance Framework
- Further develop QAF by introducing triangulation of evidence including voice of people with care and support needs and staff interviews.
- Active involvement in SELTP activities and projects

**Specific City of London priorities**

- Continuous support with ASC reform and service transformation
- Evidence gathering and implementation of service improvement plan as part of preparation for CQC Assurance process
- Focus on safeguarding practice addressing recommendations from audits.

## 7. Conclusion

The PSW role is well established and embedded to influence strategy and service delivery priorities in the City of London.

The PSW supports service transformation to achieve personalisation and improved outcomes for residents in the context of the Care Act 2014, The Mental Health Act 1983, and the Mental Capacity Act 2005. PSW takes a lead within the department for promoting and identifying social work learning and development, working closely with Corporate Learning & Development and People's Directorate Workforce Development Lead to ensure workforce development priorities are delivered.

There is good oversight in place to monitor and influence organisational culture – its impacts, drivers, and influences. Moving forward, the PSW will be engaging with the NEL and Place Based Approach to integration, to do so we will form critical links between our vision, values and culture and ensure these are embedded in governance and service delivery arrangements.

**Annex 1:**

**Adult Principal Social Worker Plan on a Page- 2023/2024**

**Workforce (1 & 4)**

**Aim**

To support, advice and advocate for the needs of ASC staff.

**Priorities**

ASC wellbeing plan linked with corporate wellbeing strategy.  
Clear workforce strategy.  
Learning and career development.

**Activities**

Develop and imbed team’s wellbeing plan.  
Staff annual survey.  
Update workforce strategy and training plan.  
Create clear career pathways.  
Celebration of practice.  
Supervision audit.  
Support managers.

**Outcome**

Healthy and happy workforce, which has the right skills and knowledge to meet the needs of our vulnerable citizens.

**Excellent Practice (1)**

**Aim**

To build a learning culture where excellent practice is an ultimate goal.

**Priorities**

Evidence of strengths-based practice.  
QA framework and learning culture.  
Link our organisation with local and national bodies on best practice, case law and the developing social work improvement agenda.  
Support development of coproduction.  
Promote use of performance data on strategic and individual level.

**Activities**

Update quality assurance framework.  
Imbed strong culture of monitoring practice.  
Imbed self-directed assurance and professional self-awareness.  
Promote professional curiosity and creativity.  
Develop strong reflective practice activities.  
Gather and act on feedback from people who need care and support.  
Analyse performance data to inform improvement plans.

**Outcome**

High standard of practice of all workers, who enable our local citizens’ independence and coproduction with our corporation.

**Leadership (2& 3)**

**Aim**

Take a relationship-based approach to leadership and advocacy, using feedback from people who use social work services and co-producing good practice with adults, carers and social workers.

**Priorities**

Be a highly visible and valued figure, accessible to front line social work staff.  
Advocate and champion social work values and ethics within the organisation.  
Provide a conduit between frontline practice and strategic decision-making, creating a bridge between policy and practice.  
Active participation in Transformation projects.

**Activities**

Quarterly meetings with DASS and contributing to ASMT.  
Develop and maintain strong collaboration with academia, community, and partners.  
Updating workers on research, law, policy and professional practice.  
Provide practice leadership in complex cases.

**Outcome**

High quality practice standards and a clear sense of accountability for the impact of social work on the lives of people and communities.

**Links to Leadership Competencies:** Drives Service Performance (1), Embraces change (2), Builds relationships (3), Develops self and others (4) [Annex 2](#)



### PSW written work and facilitated learning events

#### Written guidance/protocols in 2023:

Carers Assessment guide and Checklist  
Supervision Protocol and supervision form  
Practice audit protocol  
Various audit tools/ forms and reports  
Trainings needs analysis  
Case Complexity allocation tool  
Feedback form  
Self-directed learning tool  
Mental Capacity Assessment tools  
New staff ASC Induction Checklist  
Monthly PSW Bulletin  
Weekly reflective practice message  
Workforce Development Plan update  
Practice Standards update  
PSW One-Page Plan

#### Workshops/trainings and events delivered:

Strengths-Based Approach training  
Co-production awareness workshop  
Mental Capacity Assessment and Executive Functioning reflective workshop  
Values-Based recruitment workshop  
World Social Work Day celebration event  
Creation of Self-directed learning space (ASC Library)  
Chief Social Worker visit event

**Annex 3**

**Partnership working**

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Internal</b>	<b>Areas of work</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Workforce</b>	Y	Practice/ Wellbeing/ L&D	Co-production and co-design/ Good staff retention / CPD
<b>Management Team ASMT</b>	Y	Leadership/ QAF/ Governance/ Performance	Strengths Based Leadership Shared understanding of QA
<b>Transformation Board</b>	Y	Service transformation & development/ CQC Assurance	Preparation for CQC Assurance
<b>DASS</b>	Y	High risk situations/ Policy vs practice/ Leadership	Linking strategy with practice
<b>CSS PSW</b>	Y	Joint Leadership/ L&D	Develop and sustain partnership arrangements
<b>Workforce Development Lead</b>	Y	L&D/ Career pathways	CPD
<b>Corporate L&amp;D</b>	Y	L&D	CPD
<b>ADASS PSW Networks</b>	N	All areas	Support, learning, tools sharing....
<b>ADASS Carers Group</b>	N	Informal carers	Inform internal Carers Strategy and linking with the national agenda
<b>LGA</b>	N	Peer Review Challenge team member	Skills development
<b>Research in Practice</b>	N	Practice and research	Knowledge and skills update
<b>SELTP</b>	N	Workforce development/ Research and academia	L&D CPD
<b>CHSAB</b>	N	Quality Assurance Group/ City sub-group	Develop and sustain partnership arrangements
<b>City Connections</b>	N	Carers group	Develop and sustain partnership arrangements
<b>North-East London ICP</b>	N	CQC Assurance Leads / Quality Assurance	Develop and sustain partnership arrangements
<b>C&amp;H Neighbourhoods OD Oversight Group</b>	N	Co-production	Develop and sustain partnership arrangements

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Safeguarding Sub-Committee	16/04/2024
<b>Subject:</b> Virtual School Headteacher School Development Plan Academic Year 2023/2024	<b>PUBLIC</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>To contribute to a flourishing society</b> 1d, 2c,3b,3c.3d
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Judith Finlay Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Debby Rigby Headteacher of Virtual School for Children with a Social Worker	

## Summary

This report provides Members with an update on the progress of the work of the Virtual School as set out in the School Development Plan (Appendix 1). This serves as a mid-year report on the work of the Virtual School. A detailed assessment of the work and impact of the Virtual School will be presented to Members in the Autumn of 2024 in the form of the Virtual School Annual Report.

At this stage of the academic year, work on all the priority areas in the School Development Plan is on track.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the plan attached as Appendix 1.

## Main Report

### Background

The School Development Plan is divided into five main priorities.

- To effectively and creatively, meet the statutory duties of a Virtual School.
- To increase access to apprenticeships, further and higher education for care experienced young people.
- To develop awareness of barriers and raise educational expectations of children with a social worker.
- To encourage early engagement in education and smooth transitions for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and refugee arrivals.
- To provide successful education and enrichment projects for identified groups of children and young people.

There is an action plan for each priority area with targets, actions and success criteria. Each academic term the plans are evaluated, and impacts are noted. All work is currently on track for completion by August 2024.

## **Current Position**

### Highlights

- The Virtual School continues to monitor and promote educational opportunities of all children in care, including academic attainment and school and college attendance.
- New 'Kinship Care' responsibilities for Virtual Schools are being introduced, following the publication of 'Championing Kinship Care - The National Kinship Care Strategy,' in December 2023.
- The Virtual School has secured two City apprenticeship positions that are currently being advertised. One position is for business administration and the other is for a youth worker to support young people with applications, interviews and project work.
- The Virtual School is working in partnership with Open Spaces to run a Forest School project in Epping Forest called 'Four Seasons.' This project allows young people to explore and appreciate the changing seasons, join in team games and creative activities. All have said how being outside increases their sense of well-being.
- The Virtual School has offered online training to school staff, where City children attend, focusing on how to support children and young people who have experienced trauma. The course provides school staff with a deeper understanding of the effects of trauma and gives them strategies to help them pre-empt or deal with challenging behaviour positively.
- The Virtual School is working in partnership with The City of London Boys School to deliver enrichment lessons to unaccompanied asylum seekers on

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses. These include drama, science, sport and cookery. These sessions provide learners with a more broad and balanced learning experience.

- The Virtual School has secured additional funding to provide all primary aged children with a social worker, additional books and educational resources. All children will also be provided with access to a Storytime subscription – ensuring that new stories are delivered to them at home every month.
- Two Virtual School celebration events are booked for Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July and Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

### **Sub-headings**

- Strategic implications – None identified.
- Financial implications – Work undertaken is built into the DCCS Local Risk Budget. DfE funding also supports the work of the Virtual School in respect of the school's extended duties.
- Resource implications – The Virtual School works with a number of internal partners across education, Open Spaces, the CoL School to provide enrichment activities for our Children in Care and Care leaver population.
- Legal implications – None identified
- Risk implications – None identified
- Equalities implications – None identified
- Climate implications – None identified
- Security implications – None identified

### **Conclusion**

This report has highlighted that at the mid-way point in the academic year the Virtual School is delivering on all its priority areas.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Virtual School Development Plan 2023/2024

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Appendix 1

# City of London Virtual School



Pride Pace Passion Professionalism Relevant Reliable Responsible Radical

## School Development Plan

2023-2024 March 2024

*"The City of London is a place where children and young people feel safe, have good mental health and well-being, fulfil their potential and are ready for adulthood whilst growing up with a sense of belonging." CYPP 2022 - 2025*

## **Introduction**

This School Development Plan sets out the planned developments of the City of London Virtual School over the next twelve months. The plan promotes high expectations of attendance, attainment and achievement for all pupils and students from 0-25 years. The plan builds on the work of the previous year and brings forward any activities not completed in the previous academic year. The plan identifies success criteria, where possible, that are both specific and measurable in terms of success. The plan reflects the school's priorities for development and how they are to be monitored and evaluated. The plan is updated termly and reported on at Senior Management Team meetings throughout the year.

## **Related Documentation and Supporting Evidence**

Evidence to support the content and judgements within the School Development Plan can be found in a variety of documents held by the City of London Corporation.

- Ofsted Self-Evaluation Documentation
- Children and Young People's Plan
- Meeting reports and minutes
- Case notes and studies
- Personal Education Plans
- Asset Information System

## **Virtual School Key Functions are to:**

- Monitor and promote the educational progress and achievement of looked-after Children and Care Leavers
- Ensure that Personal Education Plans are current, relevant and effective
- Promote and advise on the use of the Pupil Premium Plus Grant, including KS5 from September 2023
- Support schools and Designated Teachers to develop effective strategies and support for looked-after children and previously looked-after children
- Provide advice and guidance for social workers, parents and carers on issues relating to the education, employment and training of looked-after children, previously looked-after children and Care Leavers
- Commission or fund additional resources to support education of looked-after children and Care Leavers
- Provide information, advice and guidance to looked-after children and care leavers about education, employment and training

## **Additional Duties for Children with a Social Worker**

- Identify, monitor and promote the educational progress and achievement of all children with a social worker or who have had a social worker in the past
- Enhance partnerships between education settings and social care, promoting high expectations of all children with a social worker or who have had a social worker
- Provide information, advice, education and guidance for schools, social workers, parents and carers on possible barriers to learning and issues relating to education, employment and training of all children with a social worker or who have had a social worker
- Commission or fund additional resources to support the education of all children with a social worker or who have had a social worker



## Priorities and RAG Rating System

These are the priorities which will form the basis of the school improvement this academic year. Each section has its own action plan. Each priority is RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated to indicate progress being made towards the success criteria. This rating is updated every academic term.

- Red indicates that work is unlikely to be met within the timescales.
- Amber indicates that some of the success criteria is likely to be met within timescales.
- Green indicates that all the success criteria is on track to be met within timescales.

Priorities for Improvement		RAG Rating		
		R	A	G
<b>Priority 1</b>	<b>To effectively and creatively, meet the statutory duties of a Virtual School</b>			
1.1	Identify, monitor and promote the educational progress, attainment and attendance of all children in the school			
1.2	Ensure Personal Education Plans are current, relevant, and effective, ensuring that the use of the pupil premium plus grant funding is linked to PEP targets, including new pupil premium funding for 16-19 year olds			
1.3	Provide advice and guidance to all working with the children and young people on education, employment, and training			
1.4	Ensure clear line of reporting and accountability to elected members, DfE and external partners			
1.5	Work effectively with partners to benefit all children and young people in the City of London Virtual School			
<b>Priority 2</b>	<b>To increase access to apprenticeships, further and higher education for Care Experienced Young People</b>			
2.1	To identify all Care Leavers' education and work dreams for the future			
2.2	To provide a consistent package of support to Care Leavers on their educational journey			
2.3	To support Care Leavers to get into well paid, rewarding work placements			
<b>Priority 3</b>	<b>To develop awareness of barriers to learning and raise educational expectations of Children With a Social Worker</b>			
3.1	To increase awareness of Barriers to learning for CWSW of social care, school, college and health staff			
3.2	To monitor the progress of CWSW and provide advice and support to parents, carers and professionals			
3.3	To identify and provide advice and support to parents and carers of previously looked after children			
<b>Priority 4</b>	<b>To encourage early engagement in education and smooth transitions for UASC and refugee arrivals</b>			
4.1	To formalise and embed package of educational support for new arrivals			
4.2	To ensure there is a smooth educational transition for young people on the National Transfer Scheme			
4.3	To increase the use of The City's unique facilities to enrich the educational journey for UASC			
<b>Priority 5</b>	<b>To provide successful education and enrichment projects for identified groups of children and young people</b>			
5.1	To provide successful education and enrichment projects for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People			
5.2	To provide successful education and enrichment projects for Care Experienced Young Women and Girls, incl young parents and families			
5.3	To provide successful education and enrichment projects for CWSW and Ever 6 children attending The Aldgate School			
5.4	To provide successful education and enrichment projects for City of London CWSW educated outside The City			

## Action Plan for Priority 1

### To effectively and creatively, meet the statutory duties of a Virtual School

#### Targets

- 1.1 Identify, monitor, and promote the educational progress, attainment and attendance of all children in the school
- 1.2 Ensure personal education plans are current, relevant and effective, ensuring that the use of the pupil premium grant funding is linked to PEP targets, including new pupil premium funding for 16-19 year olds
- 1.3 Provide advice and guidance to all working with the children and young people on education, employment and training
- 1.4 Ensure clear line of reporting and accountability to elected members, DfE and external partners
- 1.5 Work effectively with all partners to benefit all children and young people in the City of London School

#### Supporting Evidence

Asset Information System  
Dashboards  
Reports – Achieving Excellence and Safeguarding Sub-Committee  
Annual Report  
Mosaic  
Personal Education Plans  
Minutes of Meetings, Terms and Conditions

Ref	Target	Actions	Success Criteria	Who	Cost	When
Page 162 1.1	Identify, monitor, and promote the educational progress, attainment and attendance of all children in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update and publish monthly school dashboards</li> <li>• Update attainment and attendance data</li> <li>• Monitor attendance weekly and refer poor attendance to social workers and key workers when required</li> <li>• Reward and value high attendance and exceptional effort at award ceremonies and with financial incentives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data systems accurate and updated monthly</li> <li>• New arrivals added within ten days</li> <li>• Attainment, achievement and attendance data recorded on mosaic in education section termly</li> <li>• Award ceremonies to value and reward high attendance, attainment, effort and a variety of achievements</li> </ul>	Debby Ismail	£6,000 ceremonies and incentives	Ongoing until July 2024
1.2	Ensure personal education plans are current, relevant and effective, ensuring that the use of the pupil premium grant funding is linked to PEP targets, including new pupil premium funding for 16-19 year olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete initial PEPs within first ten days of arrival</li> <li>• Ensure that PEPs have SMART targets reviewed termly</li> <li>• Pupil Premium Grant spent to meet targets and increase engagement, achievement and attainment</li> <li>• Meet with Heads of Education and Social Care to ensure the current term time work practices of the Virtual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children up to age 18 have termly PEPs</li> <li>• All PEPs are Quality Assured as good or better</li> <li>• Pupil Premium Grant is linked to targets in PEPs</li> <li>• Review of term time working for Virtual School and alternative options explored, if required</li> </ul>	Debby Ismail  Chris Teresa Rachel	All Pupil Premium funding provided by DfE Any changes to school staff contracts to be funded by central risk and Virtual School government funding	Ongoing until March 2024  New pupil premium grant funding from April 2024

		School meet the needs of the young people and support the directorates				
1.3	Provide advice and guidance to all working with the children and young people on education, employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update all Virtual School policies and procedures</li> <li>• Provide training for social workers on effective PEP meetings and writing</li> <li>• Provide training in PEP process for all designated teachers for Children in Care within The City of London and Family of Schools</li> <li>• Provide training in PEP process and importance of monitoring for social care, participation and education teams within The City of London</li> <li>• Raise profile of the Virtual School and what it offers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and procedures updated</li> <li>• Policies and procedures agreed with Senior Leadership Team, social care and education colleagues</li> <li>• Training well attended by 80%+ of schools</li> <li>• Training well attended by 80%+ of officers including all social workers</li> <li>• Banners sited in The Guildhall to raise profile of the work of The Virtual School and the support it offers</li> <li>• Article in The Buzz about the Virtual School</li> </ul>	Debby Ismail Juliette Proscovia Sati	£1,000 banners	March 2024
Page 163 1.4	Ensure clear line of reporting and accountability to elected members, DfE and external partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot new Virtual School Advisory Partnership Board</li> <li>• Select participants from range of services and areas of expertise</li> <li>• Diary meetings for the academic year</li> <li>• Agree terms and conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High attendance and commitment of participants</li> <li>• Range of expertise and knowledge held amongst board</li> <li>• Terms and conditions agreed</li> <li>• Impact evident of board in providing Virtual School with support and challenge</li> </ul>	Debby Tony Chris	Chair funded through School Improvement budget  £300 venue/refreshments	Termly November March June
1.5	Work effectively with all partners to benefit all children and young people in the City of London School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalise meetings with Education colleagues to support vulnerable children and young people with attendance, attainment and achievement</li> <li>• Attend National Virtual School conferences and meetings</li> <li>• Attend Pan London meetings and events with other London Virtual Headteachers</li> <li>• Join the City of London Educators Guild</li> <li>• Attend Department for Education activities and events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong links continue with Education colleagues, as directorate arrangements change</li> <li>• Evidence of shared knowledge and resources</li> <li>• Involvement in Pan London activities, projects and working parties</li> <li>• Attendance at Educators Guild meetings and lectures to increase knowledge of Virtual School staff and increase awareness of opportunities for Care Leavers</li> </ul>	Debby Ismail Deborah Teresa Kirstie	£300	

- Share and offer information and ideas to the DfE that can be used to benefit all children with a social worker in The City of London and across the UK

### Ongoing evaluation and impact

#### Autumn

- Attendance data collected and acted upon if required
- All Autumn Term PEPs completed with SMART targets, QA as good or outstanding
- Sample PEPs QA by SIP
- Pupil Premium linked to targets
- Annual Report 2022/2023 presented to Safeguarding Sub-Committee
- Celebration Event held on 1<sup>st</sup> November in Guildhall, well attended and received by young people and staff, valuing work of the school and its pupils
- SIP provided positive report on previous year's work to Assistant Director
- Head attended Vulnerable Children's meetings to advise and support with cases of low attendance
- Inaugural meeting of Virtual School Advisory Partnership took place on 7<sup>th</sup> December – all posts filled with representation from across health, social care, housing and education with a range of experience and expertise
- Meetings in diary for the rest of the year for VSAP and terms and conditions agreed
- Meetings agreed with education colleagues to ensure excellent partnership working is maintained
- Head attended DfE working party meetings to discuss the future role of Virtual Schools and how they can support more vulnerable groups

#### Spring

- Head attended and participated in workshop on increasing opportunities in work for children and young people with SEND at Mansion House
- Designated Teacher Training booked
- Attendance information provided to Education Team for Vulnerable Children's meetings and for DfE reporting
- Head attended DfE workshops regarding additional support for Care Leavers
- Award ceremonies booked for Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July (Pan London Shining Stars) and Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October (City of London Celebration)
- Head attended meeting with the Share Foundation about unclaimed trust funds for care experienced young people and will disseminate information to all UK Virtual Heads to increase numbers of claimants
- Head and Deputy attendance at National Virtual school conference in Birmingham – 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> March provided latest updates from Department for Education and Ofsted. Speeches from Children's Commissioner and care experienced young people about effective working. Opportunity to share good practice, make contacts that benefit all.

#### Summer

- A

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pan London work with ‘Partnership for Young London’ to increase opportunities for City children and young people, including residential and employment opportunities</li> <li>• Shining Stars Pan London group set up to run 2024 event to celebrate academic achievements throughout the coming year.</li> <li>• Head and Deputy attended Pan London Heads meetings and a House of Lord’s dinner to celebrate the work of Virtual Schools</li> <li>• Restructure of school began to ensure holiday coverage and additional capacity to respond to all scenarios and workstreams following a review of term time working</li> <li>• Kinship Care document published by the DfE on 15<sup>th</sup> December setting out additional duties for Virtual Schools regarding children in kinship care</li> </ul>		
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**Action Plan for Priority 2**

**To increase access to apprenticeships, further and higher education for Care Experienced Young People**

<p><b>Targets</b></p> <p>2.1 To identify all Care Leavers’ education and work dreams for the future</p> <p>2.2 To provide a timely and consistent package of support to Care Leavers on their educational journey</p> <p>2.3 To support Care Leavers to get into well paid, rewarding work placements</p>	<p><b>Supporting Evidence</b></p> <p>Pledge to Children and Young People</p> <p>Asset Information System</p> <p>Mosaic Education Information</p>
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Ref	Target	Actions	Success Criteria	Who	Cost	When
2.1	To identify all Care Leavers’ education and work dreams for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend Children in Care Council meetings to collect views, hopes and dreams</li> <li>• Speak to social workers of all Care Leavers to ascertain current education and work plans</li> <li>• Note hopes and dreams for the future and follow up with individual conversations with young people</li> <li>• Analyse need and plan to move forward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at three termly meetings</li> <li>• Information collated from all social workers</li> <li>• Individual follow up conversations with Care Leavers</li> <li>• Analysis of patterns, trends, needs</li> <li>• Action plan to move forward</li> </ul>	<p>Debby</p> <p>Ismail</p> <p>Chantelle</p> <p>Laura</p> <p>Social Workers</p>		<p>October</p> <p>2023</p>

2.2	To provide a consistent package of support to Care Leavers on their educational journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sheet prepared for all care Leavers about the Virtual School and how it can support them on their school/college/world of work/life long learning journey</li> <li>• Package agreed with social care and education colleagues</li> <li>• Support and advice provided on request, in liaison with Prospects and Adult Education Service</li> <li>• Pilot new Chatbot called CiCi providing information, advice and guidance with careers for Care Experienced Young People</li> <li>• Support provided with applications to colleges, universities and employment opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sheet written, agreed and published</li> <li>• Package agreed</li> <li>• Timely support and advice provided</li> <li>• If successful Chatbot CiCi pilot cascaded to other Virtual Schools</li> <li>• Reduction in those Not in Employment, Education or Training or NEET</li> </ul>	<p>Debby Ismail Matilda</p> <p>Dierdre from CiCi</p>		<p>October 2023</p> <p>March 2024</p>
Page 2.3 166	To support Care Leavers to get into well paid, rewarding work placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Adult Education Service to provide courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages or ESOL, maths and ICT</li> <li>• Work with City colleagues to create opportunities for in house apprenticeships</li> <li>• Work with Prospects to provide entry into universities, colleges and work placements</li> <li>• Plan and deliver a university taster day</li> <li>• Short courses funded to improve employability chances, including driving tuition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courses running throughout the year for new arrivals and those wishing to return to study</li> <li>• Creation of in-house apprenticeships for Care Experienced young people</li> <li>• Evidence of joint working with Prospects</li> <li>• High attendance at University Taster Day with aspirations raised and increase in numbers aiming for a university education</li> <li>• Variety of short courses funded leading to work opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Debby Ismail Matilda Barbara</p>	<p>£2,000 short courses £2,000 driving tuition</p>	<p>September 2023</p> <p>October 2023</p> <p>August 2024</p>

**Ongoing evaluation and impact**

<p><b>Autumn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Care Leavers contacted by Virtual School staff to discuss current and future educational plans</li> <li>• Much interest shown in apprenticeship routes to allow earning and learning to take place at the same time</li> <li>• Adult education service set up an ESOL Summer school with the Virtual School to support any new UASC arrivals and other students who wished to</li> </ul>	<p><b>Spring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apprenticeship meeting took place on February 1st in The Guildhall, ten care experienced young people attended</li> <li>• Young people will now decide on areas of interest to complete work experience and then apply for apprenticeship positions, interests ranged from electrical engineering to agriculture, business and admin and nursing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Summer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
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<p>take up the opportunity for additional English study, 3 young people attended throughout the Summer and made outstanding progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In House apprenticeships discussed and meeting booked with Melody Thornton for all young people 16-25 in the Virtual School for after Christmas</li> <li>• CiCi careers chatbot launched and piloted by The City with Care Experienced young people, allowing easy access to information regarding courses, work and qualifications required</li> <li>• Joint working with Prospects to provide sound careers advice and guidance</li> <li>• Short courses funded in security, driving, construction and beauty to increase employability prospects</li> <li>• Apprenticeship funding agreed for Virtual School £24,000 to employ youth worker to assist with Virtual School activities, project work, attendance at interviews and enrolments, communication and support getting to events</li> <li>• Monthly NEET meetings attended with clear actions for all involved to reduce numbers to as low as possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University visit took place on 14<sup>th</sup> February at King's – 7 young people attended the day to find out more about entrance criteria, courses available and support available</li> <li>• Support given to young person to apply for bursary to allow more focus on university work and less on working to cover costs</li> <li>• Virtual school attendance at London Careers Festival, supporting young people as they find out more about possible careers and employment opportunities</li> <li>• Funding secured for two apprenticeship positions in the Virtual School, adverts placed and support given to care leavers to apply</li> </ul>	
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**Action Plan for Priority 3**

**To develop awareness of barriers to learning and raise educational expectations of Children With a Social Worker**

<p><b>Targets</b></p> <p>3.1 To increase awareness of Barriers to learning for CWSW of social care, school, college and health staff</p> <p>3.2 To monitor the progress of CWSW and provide advice and support to parents, carers and professionals</p> <p>3.3 To identify and provide advice and support to parents and carers of Previously Looked After Children</p>				<p><b>Supporting Evidence</b></p> <p>Attendance Strategy</p> <p>Asset Information System</p> <p>Mosaic Education Information Website</p> <p>Family Information Service</p>		
Ref	Target	Actions	Success Criteria	Who	Cost	When
3.1	To increase awareness of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan training programme for colleagues to increase awareness of barriers to learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training programme delivered and well attended</li> </ul>	Debby	£2,000 training	March 2024



	Barriers to learning for CWSW of social care, school, college and health staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer funded places on DESTY programme for key staff in schools on dealing with childhood trauma and effects on learning and behaviour</li> <li>• Write and publish leaflet for all teachers in the Family of Schools about overcoming barriers to learning and how they can help and support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 school staff attending DESTY training programme</li> <li>• Leaflet written, agreed and published to schools</li> </ul>			
3.2	To monitor the attendance and progress of CWSW and provide advice and support to parents, carers and professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect attendance and progress data of CWSW and analyse to find patterns and areas to target</li> <li>• Provide advice and support to school, professionals, parents and carers</li> <li>• Update Family Information Service</li> <li>• Add Virtual School Information on City of London Council website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance and progress data collected and analysed</li> <li>• Advice and support provided to schools, professionals, parents and carers</li> <li>• Family Information Service Updated</li> <li>• Council website updated</li> <li>• No permanent exclusions of CWSW</li> </ul>	Debby Ismail	£4,000 ASSET system	January 2024 July 2024
3.3	To identify and provide advice and support to parents and carers of Previously Looked After Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify self-reported cohort</li> <li>• Provide leaflet explaining the duties of the Virtual School and contact details of people and places to contact for support and advice</li> <li>• Update Family Information Service and council website for parents and carers of Previously Looked After Children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cohort identified</li> <li>• Leaflet written, agreed and published</li> <li>• Family Information Service Updated</li> <li>• Council website updated</li> </ul>	Debby	£200 leaflets	November 2023

**Ongoing evaluation and impact**

<p><b>Autumn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers to learning training provided to social care and education colleagues, 12 attended and all reported that it was helpful, worthwhile and they had learnt something new</li> <li>• DESTY places obtained for schools where City children attend – course due to start in January 2024, 12 staff signed up</li> <li>• Family Information Service updated to include CWSW and PLAC information</li> <li>• Attendance of CWSW monitored and Vulnerable List meetings attended monthly to provide advice and support</li> <li>• No permanent exclusions of CWSW – one exclusion switched to managed move</li> </ul>	<p><b>Spring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance SEF updated with new initiatives and data</li> <li>• DESTY course begins to increase knowledge and awareness of trauma and how to support children and young people in a school setting – 12 school staff attending</li> <li>• Training provided for school staff who are designated teachers for children in care – information shared about personal education plans and how to access pupil premium funding</li> </ul>	<p><b>Summer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A</li> </ul>
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### Action Plan for Priority 4

#### To encourage early engagement in education and smooth transitions for UASC and refugee arrivals

**Targets**

- 4.1 To formalise and embed package of educational support for new arrivals
- 4.2 To ensure there is a smooth educational transition for young people on the National Transfer Scheme
- 4.3 To increase the use of The City's unique facilities to enrich the educational journey for UASC

**Supporting Evidence**

- Asset Information System
- Mosaic Education Information
- Care Leavers Offer
- Personal Education Plans
- Newsletters

Ref	Target	Actions	Success Criteria	Who	Cost	When
4.1	To formalise and embed package of educational support for new arrivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write, agree and publish procedures for professionals meeting with all new arrivals</li> <li>• Check offer is consistent across different placements</li> <li>• Issue laptops to all new arrivals who are committed to remain in placement and engage in education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures written, agreed and published</li> <li>• Offer is reported as consistent by social workers and young people</li> <li>• Laptops available and in use for all who need them</li> </ul>	Debby	£2,000 Laptops	
4.2	To ensure there is a smooth educational transition for young people on the National Transfer Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enrol all new arrivals aged 14 plus in the college based at The Guildhall to learn spoken and written English</li> <li>• To offer online lessons in English and Maths</li> <li>• To hold PEP meetings as soon as possible after arrival</li> <li>• To provide all information held to transferring authorities when moves take place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESOL Courses running throughout the year at The Guildhall</li> <li>• Online lessons booked and attended by all willing to engage and who would benefit from them</li> <li>• All PEP meetings held within ten days of becoming a UASC Child In Care</li> <li>• Transfer documents passed to receiving local authority</li> </ul>	Debby Ismail Barbara	£2,000 online tuition	
4.3	To increase the use of The City's unique facilities to enrich the educational journey for UASC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write into PEPs the need for key workers to provide educational trips to museums and galleries in London, to take young people sightseeing and help to enrol them in local community facilities including places of worship, gyms and clubs of interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PEPs contain targets for key workers to provide educational trips and support enrolment in community facilities</li> <li>• Enrichment projects and activities evident</li> <li>• City based businesses providing support</li> </ul>	Debby Ismail Partnership Coordinators within	£2,000 Projects	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide enrichment projects and activities for UASC to enhance their ESOL learning</li> <li>• Work with Prospects and City Based Businesses to provide work experience opportunities to young people</li> <li>• To work with the independent schools based in the City and in The Family of Schools to provide support, advice, guidance and joint projects for UASC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent Schools providing support, advice, guidance and joint projects for UASC</li> </ul>	Family of Schools Matilda Members of the Virtual School Advisory Board		
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**Ongoing evaluation and impact**

<p><b>Autumn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laptops issued to new arrivals and online or in house Guildhall ESOL and PEP provided within 10 days</li> <li>• Additional laptops purchased</li> <li>• Head and Deputy attended CICC meeting to check on consistency of educational support across placements, some internet issues resolved and laptops upgraded or replaced</li> <li>• Key workers encouraged to support new arrivals with trips and visits to enrich educational offer, whilst placed on National Transfer Scheme</li> <li>• Oracy Project delivered at the City of London Boys School in partnership with The Freemans School – attended by City of London care experienced young people and UASC from across London</li> <li>• City of London Boys school providing additional maths tuition to support a Year 13 with maths exams</li> </ul>	<p><b>Spring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of London Boys School providing enrichment lessons in cookery, art and design, science, drama and sport to compliment and enrich ESOL college offers</li> <li>• Breadmaking workshop for care leavers, working with Borough market company planned</li> <li>• ESOL lessons available in The Guildhall from 16 years plus now available – this will increase easy access provision for new arrivals</li> </ul>	<p><b>Summer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
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**Action Plan for Priority 5**

**To provide successful education and enrichment projects for identified groups of children and young people**

Targets				Supporting Evidence		
5.1 To provide successful education and enrichment projects for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People				Project Case Studies		
5.2 To provide successful education and enrichment projects for Care Experienced Young Women and Girls, including young parents and their families				Photographs		
5.3 To provide successful education and enrichment projects for CWSW and Ever 6 children attending The Aldgate School				Asset Information System		
5.4 To provide successful education and enrichment projects for City of London CWSW educated outside The City				Mosaic Education Information		
				Newsletters		
				ImpactEd		
Ref	Target	Actions	Success Criteria	Who	Cost	When
5.1	To provide successful education and enrichment projects for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with Open Spaces team to set up regular forest school days for UASC</li> <li>Agree activities, experiences, success criteria of project and which other LAs to be invited</li> <li>Book venues and advertise to agreed LAs the second year of Oracy project days, in conjunction with The Freemans School</li> <li>Provide enrichment education through The City of London Schools, to enhance ESOL college offers</li> <li>Set up and deliver cookery course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diary of events agreed, funded and advertised and dates advertised to all young people 16-25</li> <li>Attendance of 10 young people at Epping Forest activity days reporting benefits to well-Being and increase ability to learn</li> <li>Attendance of 10 plus young people at Oracy days reporting benefits and impact</li> <li>Attendance of 10 young people at enrichment and cookery projects</li> </ul>	Debby Ismail Chantelle  Catherine Bennet Freemans  Andrew McBroom CoL Schools	£1,200 Open Spaces  Oracy Project £5,000 brought forward from last year's ImpactEd project funding	September 2023 through to June 2024
5.2	To provide successful education and enrichment projects for Care Experienced Young Women and Girls, including young parents and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with, agree focus and run an education enrichment day specifically aimed at Care experienced girls</li> <li>Set up half termly meetings with Early Years Education Team to ensure that all Care Experienced Young People have access to all City initiatives</li> <li>Ensure young parents are linked in with their local Children's Centre or Family Hub for support and advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting attended and focus decided by girls and Virtual School staff</li> <li>Meetings set up and attended by all staff able to support young parents and their children</li> <li>Every young Care Experienced young parent has a named Children's Centre or Family Hub</li> </ul>	Debby Ismail  Isabelle and Early Years Team	£1,000	December 2023
5.3	To provide successful education and enrichment projects for CWSW and Ever 6 children attending The Aldgate School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with Headteacher to finalise two projects for the academic year</li> <li>Focus 1 Improving the attendance of children in Reception</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projects agreed</li> <li>Meetings with Reception parents well attended</li> <li>Activity days held for families</li> <li>'Stickability' workshops</li> <li>'Superhero' days</li> </ul>	Debby Ismail KABs workshops	£2,000	February 2024

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus 2 Developing perseverance, courage and a determination to succeed and complete tasks in years 1-6</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved attendance of cohort</li> <li>Teachers reporting improvements in attitudes</li> </ul>	Isabelle and Early Years Team		July 2024
5.4	To provide successful education and enrichment projects for City of London CWSW educated outside The City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of cohort needs and individual and group initiatives provided to support to enhance educational opportunities, ranging from training of school staff to additional tuition, support with assessments and specific group projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of cohort needs and running spreadsheet of children and schools</li> <li>Training delivered</li> <li>Individual and group support in place</li> </ul>	Debby Ismail	£1.000	Ongoing until June 2024

**Ongoing evaluation and impact**

**Autumn**

- Four Seasons Project agreed, planned and booked with Open Spaces Team, advertised to all City of London Care Experienced young people and Virtual Schools across London
- 'Autumn in the Forest' held on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1 young person attended and 4 staff due to train strike and inclement weather, very much enjoyed, new young person to UK felt welcomed and supported
- Oracy Workshop held on 7<sup>th</sup> October for 16 care experienced young people, all reported increased confidence, all enjoyed the event and 60% reported that the session had increased their knowledge of English vocabulary
- Aldgate Project focus' changed to meet the need of changing cohorts and to avoid duplication of service support – new projects - to provide training for staff to support for children who have experienced trauma and in school support for children with selective mutism and social care involvement
- Spring enrichment project planned for Spring/Summer terms at City of London Boys School focusing on art and Design, Sport and Cooking
- Care experienced parent supported to return to education with 'Care to Learn' grant for nursery fees

**Spring**

- 'Winter in the Forest' Day held on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January, 6 young people attended and 4 staff, increased well-being and experience of nature reported
- Well-being project planned for care experienced girls after seeking views and interests to increase female numbers at CICC events
- School trip to The Palladium to see Peter Pan the pantomime took place on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January
- Head attended Government dinner at Mansion House focusing on 'connectivity' providing networking opportunities
- Sailing trip for young people booked for 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> July from Ramsgate to St Katherine's dock to increase well-being, teamwork skills and exciting opportunities for young people
- Additional tuition provided to CWSW Ever 6 on request to increase exam success
- Support provided to child in kinship care with application to new school
- Headteacher met with group of young women to discuss extracurricular activities that they would be interested in taking part in during the Summer term, planning now in progress

**Summer**

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- Addition tuition provided to CWSW on request to increase chances of exam success

- Reading project funding secured for children with a social worker and care experienced young parents and their children, to increase numbers of books at home and to provide access to Storytime monthly subscription for a year

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# Agenda Item 12

<b>Committee</b> Safeguarding Sub-Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 04/03/2024
<b>Subject:</b> Special educational needs and disability (SEND) – Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributing to a flourishing society</li> <li>• Support a thriving economy</li> <li>• Shape understanding environments</li> </ul>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report authors:</b> Sharon Cushnie, Lead SEND Advisor – Education and Early Years and Theresa Shortland, Head of Service – Education and Early Years	

## Summary

- The City of London’s Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2020–24 sets out three key outcomes to be achieved by 2024. This report provides an update on the progress in implementing the second key outcome, which is to ensure that all children and young people with SEND are well-prepared for and have successful transitions to adulthood.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The City of London (COL) SEND Strategy 2020–24 presents the City’s aspirations. The three key outcomes in the SEND Strategy are:
  - i. We have a robust and inclusive multi-agency approach to identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.
  - ii. All children and young people with SEND are well-prepared for and have successful transitions to adulthood.
  - iii. Children and young people with SEND are integral and valued members of the City of London community.
2. As planning for the next SEND strategy starts, this report provides Members with an update on transitions to adulthood and progress on how children and young people are being prepared for adult life.

### **The SEND Transitions Task and Finish Group**

3. In July 2021, a Task and Finish Group was set up by the Education and Early Years Service to focus on and improve outcomes in key areas that support how the COL prepares children and young people with SEND for adult life from the earliest years. The SEND Code of Practice (2015) details that preparation for adult life should include a focus on: further education, training, and employment; living independently; being included within the local community; and being healthy. A group was established to ensure that progress was made in these four key areas. It was arranged as a multi-agency group which included the Education & Early Years Service, Children’s Social Care and Early Help, Adult Social Care, health, schools, colleges, housing, SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), commissioning, City Parent Carer Forum representatives and young people.
4. In October 2022, Members were informed of the progress with this work. This included:
  - The development of a ‘Steps to Adulthood’ pathways guidance document for parents, carers, and young people with SEND to provide a range of accessible information on preparing young people with SEND for adult life, which can be accessed on the SEND local offer website.
  - A Preparation for Adulthood Hub, which is live on the SEND local offer website.
  - A review of the housing policy to include young people with SEND as a priority group for housing allocation and the development of guidance for parents, carers and young people with SEND on how to apply for housing, and the housing options available.
  - A sports programme at Golden Lane Leisure Centre was commissioned to provide children and young people with SEND access to a range of sporting facilities and clubs. The City SEND project has provided a range of activities for children, including football, gym sessions, and swimming. A short film from



September 2022 documents the work and the impact of this provision – see the film at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eR8Tsn5-zZI>.

- Children and young people with SEND continue to enjoy and benefit from these activities. Swimming lessons are continuing, with 16 sessions per week; football and gym sessions take place on Friday afternoons. There are plans this quarter to implement respite sessions for parent carers on Friday afternoons, incorporating gentle exercise and mindfulness as well as nutritional advice.
  - The offer of independent travel training for all young people with SEND from the earliest appropriate age. A new travel training service through Tower Hamlets local authority has been commissioned. This will support children and young people to develop the skills and confidence to travel independently.
  - A 'Ready, Set, Launch' transition model from children's to adult's health services has continued to be developed, and a consistent approach is applied across the COL and Hackney and Tower Hamlets Integrated Care Board (ICB), to ensure that the model will apply similarly for all COL residents.
  - Chapter 8 of the SEND Code of Practice is about preparation for adulthood from the earliest years. The Early Years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) Level 3 Training and documentation and guidance were reviewed and updated to include how to prepare children with SEND for adult life from the early years. All participants on the SENCO Level 3 training course in previous years have reported that the training makes them feel more confident in their roles and more confident to talk to parents about their child's needs.
  - The SEND Ranges – a framework for staff in educational settings 0–25 years to address the early identification of any SEND – provides ideas for curriculum adaptation, guidance on assessment and the effective deployment of resources, and includes guidance on preparing for adulthood from the earliest years. This guidance was rolled out to settings in the COL in the summer of 2023. The Aldgate School have reported that they are finding the preparing for adulthood guidelines particularly helpful in preparing their children for transition.
  - An evaluation of the SEND Ranges is in progress and will be reported to a future SEND Programme Board meeting.
5. In terms of areas for development, we reported that there was work to be done to develop the pathways and offer within the COL for further education, training and employment opportunities for young people with SEND. The Adult Education and Skills Service was to lead on this.

6. Progress on this work includes:

The development of the SEND Employment Forum:

- In 2022, the Government reinforced its commitment to supporting more young people with SEND into employment, with the Department for Education (DfE) funding a three-year programme to strengthen Supported Internship provision.

The programme is delivered by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi), British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) and DFN Project SEARCH.

- The NDTi has supported the Adult Education and Skills Service to develop a SEND Employment Forum and supported internships for young people in the COL. The aim of the SEND Employment Forum is to bring together all the local partners who can develop and deliver supported internships in the local area to create routes that will support more young people with SEND into paid employment. Partners include representatives from the local authority, schools, employers (which includes St Bartholomew's Hospital), the City Parent Carer Forum and the careers service. The SEND Employment Forum meets once a term.
- Supported Internships are work-based learning placements within mainstream employment settings for young people aged 16 to 24 years who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The aim is to secure a job at the end of the placement.
- Although there are no COL young people who are ready to access the programme, the offer is being developed for young people in the future. Of the three young people who are leaving secondary or further education provision in 2023/2024, they are currently being supported to explore the options of apprenticeships and university.
- On 7 December 2023, the Adult Skills and Education Service held an outstanding breakfast event at Mansion House, with the goal to encourage businesses to provide opportunities for young individuals with SEND through supported internships. The event boasted a range of esteemed speakers who discussed the importance of advancing social mobility and creating a more inclusive future for young people. The speakers included a wide variety of advocates who provided vital insights on the narrative around supported internships, emphasising the importance of collaboration between educational institutions and businesses to create more inclusive work environments.
- Deputy Chairman of the COL Corporation's Education Board, Naresh Sonpar, said: "By combining structured training, work experience, and learning, we can help to bridge the gap between education and employment. Supported internships can also enable young people with SEND to develop a sense of independence and achievement, knowing that they have secured a nationally assessed qualification and good quality work experience."
- Attendees were able to discuss these important issues and exchange ideas on how to best provide opportunities and break down barriers to empower young individuals with SEND. The inspiring discussions highlighted the importance of creating a supportive environment that encourages skill development as well as professional and personal growth for young people with additional needs or disabilities.
- A short film of the highlights can be accessed at this link: <https://f.io/MyuS72Jv>.

7. Currently there are 23 children and young people supported through an EHC plan, with three EHC needs assessment in progress. The SEND Team has recruited a part-time EHC Caseworker to bring additional capacity. The caseworker will also bring expertise in transitioning to adulthood.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

8. Strategic implications – Corporate outcome: Contribute to a flourishing society by ensuring that all children and young people with SEND and their families have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
9. Resource implications – The SEND functions are resourced through the Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block.
10. Financial implications – The SEND functions are resourced through the Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block.
11. Legal implications – The duties on local areas regarding provision for children and young people with SEND are contained in the Children and Families Act 2014. This legislation sits in the context of the Equality Act 2010. The Ofsted/Care Quality Commission inspection framework sets out the legal basis and the principles of inspection.
12. Risk implications – If children's and young people's SEND issues are not identified early, assessed and supported, this will impact on their educational attainment, progress, and wider lifetime chances.
13. Equalities implications – All children and young people, regardless of their SEND issues, will be part of a community where they can learn, achieve and participate in activities with other children and young people, and they will be prepared to have a fulfilled adult life.
14. Disability and race are protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.
15. Climate implications – n/a
16. Security implications – n/a

## **Conclusion**

17. As part of the area SEND inspection arrangements, in addition to the area SEND inspections, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission also carry out a series of thematic visits each academic year. They visit a small number of areas to investigate a particular aspect of the SEND system in depth. The theme for 2024 is 'preparation for adulthood'.
18. We will continue to develop and monitor this key strategy outcome to ensure that children and young people with SEND are well prepared for and have successful transitions to adulthood. Our aim is that this is well evidenced when the COL local

area is inspected through the area SEND inspection, as well as through any thematic visits.

## **Appendices**

- None

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<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Community and Children’s Services Safeguarding Sub-Committee	16/04/2024
<b>Subject:</b> Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Update)	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	Providing Excellent Services – Supporting people to live healthy, independent lives, and achieve their ambitions, is dependent on excellent services. Vital to that continued pursuit is enabling access to effective adult and children’s social care, outstanding education, lifelong learning, quality housing, and combatting homelessness
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	Yes
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	The Dedicated Schools Grant
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	Yes
<b>Report of:</b> Judith Finlay, Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Kirstie Hilton, Head of Service – Education and Early Years	

## Summary

- The Department for Education (DfE) published new guidance in May 2022 for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. *Working together to improve school attendance* came into effect from September 2022 and was due to become statutory from September 2023. The purpose of the guidance is to help maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities to work together to maintain high levels of attendance. Each group plays an essential and different role and will need to work collectively to improve attendance.
- The purpose of this report is to update Members on the work that has been carried out by the City of London’s Education Team since September 2023 in response to the new guidance, as well as progress against the implementation of the Attendance Strategy and meeting the needs of our statutory school cohort and schools by working together to improve school attendance.

- The report will also cover how the team responds to its most vulnerable children and young people, including children performing under child employment.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

### **Main Report**

#### **Background**

1. The City of London has one maintained primary school and no maintained secondary schools. There are four independent schools and one independent college (David Game College). Most children attending these schools are non-City of London residents. Most of the City of London's primary-age children and all secondary-age children in the maintained sector are educated outside the City of London altogether.
2. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. When parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
3. It is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 (Year 6) and key stage 4 (Year 11) have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor as it offers the best opportunity for children's needs to be identified and appropriate support to be provided.
4. Where barriers to attendance for a pupil or family are complex, and signposting to services is not sufficient, the City of London, schools, and other services will continue to work together to provide more intensive whole-family support to address those barriers. All multi-disciplinary support will be co-ordinated using existing Early Help structures. For children resident in the City of London, a referral will be made to the City of London Early Help Team. For children attending schools in the City of London but residing in other areas, the Education Welfare Manager will be responsible for facilitating referrals to the local authorities where they live.

#### **Persistent Absenteeism**

5. Persistent absenteeism (when a child's attendance falls to 90% or below), has always been a challenge within schools. However, COVID-19 has exacerbated the situation, resulting in an increase in the number of children with growing absence concerns. Some pupils who are experiencing social, emotional, and mental health

difficulties can resort to emotional-based school avoidance. This is especially apparent in secondary schools, resulting in persistent absenteeism. Children attending at 50% or below are considered to be 'severe absentees'.

## **Attendance Strategy**

6. At the last Committee meeting in November, The City of London's School Attendance Strategy 2023–2025 was presented, with a key emphasis that *improving attendance is everyone's business*. The Attendance Strategy was developed with all our key partners, and all schools in the City of London local area have engaged with us in developing this strategy. This is a collaborative approach to managing school attendance.
7. Over the autumn term of 2023, following the development of an action plan, the Attendance Support Team has been working with all City of London Schools to ensure that the key priorities are translated into actions, with progress that can then be measured over the academic year. The five key outcomes are:
  - **Priority 1:** Develop systems and processes to collect and monitor data; to manage and report on the performance of school attendance for all City based schools in the local area.
  - **Priority 2:** Establish a City of London School Attendance Support Team.
  - **Priority 3:** Establish a City of London multi-agency governance framework approach to monitor performance outcomes for school attendance.
  - **Priority 4:** Establish governance to ensure there is an emphasis on vulnerable children and children missing education that focuses on their school attendance, progress, and attainment.
  - **Priority 5:** To ensure there are sufficient good quality options for alternative provision for all children that need this type of provision.
8. On 29 February, the City of London and other local authorities received correspondence from the Minister for Schools confirming further government action on school attendance, including making *Working together to improve school attendance* statutory. This will include publishing a revised version as statutory guidance from 19 August 2024.

## **Attendance Data**

9. To ensure that the City of London has a strategic overview of attendance for all schools located in the City of London, a schedule of dates was sent to all schools at the beginning of the autumn term 2023, requesting data at the end of each term. All schools submitted their data by the required date, which has enabled the School Attendance Team to analyse the data. This will continue on a term-by-term basis.

The key findings from the data are:

- Overall attendance for the City of London is 95.8% for the autumn term 2023; this is above the national average of 93.7%.<sup>1</sup> We will be working with our schools, families, and partner agencies to ensure that school attendance continues to move in an upward trajectory.
- Targeting support meetings are taking place in all schools, on average twice a term (once every half term). For the Aldgate School, our one maintained primary school, the Education Welfare Manager visited three times. This is going to be increased to two times every half term to ensure that there is continuity of support for our one maintained school.
- The majority of schools in the City of London have a low percentage of persistent absenteeism, compared to the national average calculated over the 2022/23 academic year. By analysing the attendance data, we have been able to identify that most persistent absenteeism is authorised absence as opposed to unauthorised absence; this is something that is being discussed this term during the targeting support meetings.
- There is currently no evidence of a direct correlation between children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and persistent absenteeism.

### **Attendance Support Team**

10. The Attendance Support Team includes the Lead Advisor for Universal Services, Education Welfare Manager, and Admissions and Attendance Manager, and is now formally part of the Education and Early Years Service. The Attendance Support Team has been working with all schools during the autumn term to encourage all referrals and enquiries to be sent to the team's inbox ([attendance@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@cityoflondon.gov.uk)), which schools can use to alert the team to any pressing attendance issues.
11. The Attendance Support Team is developing a solid framework they can use to provide a comprehensive and continuous programme of support and challenge to the schools. The Education Welfare Manager is currently building positive relationships with school staff, including the attendance leads and Dedicated Safeguarding Leads.

### **Governance**

12. Dedicated Safeguarding Leads from all schools attend the Safeguarding Education Forum, which is held once a term and provides schools with an opportunity for the City of London Schools (including the City of London Academy Trust (COLAT) academies) to meet on a termly basis to share and consider policy, practice and procedural issues relating to safeguarding arrangements in school settings in the City of London.

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<sup>1</sup> [Pupil attendance and absence in schools in England \(shinyapps.io\)](https://shinyapps.io)



13. The Education Welfare Manager is in the process of establishing a network meeting for school staff, which will provide a platform for sharing information and best practice and discussing any areas for development. An initial questionnaire has been developed and will be sent out to key personnel this term. It is proposed that this network will take place at least once a term and will report to the Safeguarding Education Forum.

### **Vulnerable Children**

14. Since the pandemic, the Department of Community and Children's Services has maintained a Vulnerable Children's Register, which includes children known to the Education and Early Years Service, Children's Social Care and Early Help Service, and the Virtual School. This includes children who are missing education, children at risk of missing education, children being electively home educated, children with Education, Health and Care Plans, children known to Early Help, Children in Need, children with a Child Protection Plan, Ukrainian and Afghan children who have resettled here, Children in Care and care leavers who are in Year 13 and in full-time education.
15. At the end of February 2024, there were 60 children on the register. Specific, higher-risk cases on the register are considered and reviewed each month by the different teams, with actions agreed on. This provides support and challenge, reduces the possibility of 'drift', and quickly highlights incidents of low school attendance and missing education so that support can be provided.

### **Alternative Provision**

16. One local priority for the City of London is for all children and young people living in the City of London to have access to high-quality alternative provision (AP). With no AP in the local area, this is a particular challenge for the City of London, however, work has begun on developing a more robust approach to ensure that children accessing AP receive quality services.
17. The SEND Panel will be developed and extended to oversee all AP agreed for all children and young people, including those with and without special educational needs. A new Terms of Reference for the SEND and AP Panel will be written to ensure that there is a rigorous quality assurance framework for any AP commissioned by the City of London Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) Commissioning Service. A review of children's progress at AP will be held at regular intervals and brought to the SEND and AP Panel. This is similar to the annual review process for children with Education, Health and Care Plans.
18. Following receipt of the London QA Framework, the Commissioning Team will adapt the framework to City services. This will include tutor services, which the City of London uses as an interim or long-term arrangement when presented with a child or young person who has been permanently excluded, or who cannot attend school for medical reasons.

## **The Aldgate School**

19. The Aldgate School is the one maintained primary school in the City, with a Pupil Admission Number of 210 children. The school has historically been very proactive in addressing any persistent absence issues.
20. In September 2022, the Aldgate School re-launched its attendance policy to include a more robust system, including penalty notices to address persistent absence. Penalty notices have not been issued previously. To enable school leaders to tackle increased persistent absenteeism, the Education and Early Years Service also revised its Code of Conduct Policy, supporting the school's decision to issue parents with penalty notices and fines for:
  - children whose attendance is poor.
  - children who have been taken on an unauthorised term-time holiday
  - instances where the pupil is present in a public place during the first five days in the cases of exclusion or long suspension from school.
21. Regular half-termly meetings have taken place since the start of the academic year to address any attendance issues and will continue at this frequency throughout the year. Monitoring meetings have taken place over the year to ensure that absence is being coded correctly and that measures are in place to address and challenge attendance issues. The City of London's Code of Conduct Policy is currently under review to reflect the new penalty notice system. The system will allow the team to record and monitor all activity relating to the issue of court warning letters and any penalty notices. The system will also provide parents with a platform they can use to pay any fines.
22. During the 2023/24 academic year so far, the City of London Attendance Support Team has received five referrals for further action, resulting in penalty notice warning letters. Last year, during the 2022/23 academic year, the City of London Attendance Support Team, received 12 referrals.

## **Virtual School**

23. The City of London Virtual Head Teacher continues to oversee the education, training and employment opportunities provided to all care-experienced children, children who have been assessed as needing, or previously needing, a social worker for safeguarding and/or welfare reasons. This includes all children aged 0 to 18 years across all education settings subject to a Children in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan. This cohort has been identified as a group of children who face significant barriers to education due to experiencing adversity – most commonly abuse and neglect.
24. In November 2023, the Virtual Headteacher and Lead Advisor for Universal Services delivered training to colleagues on the importance of attendance and barriers to learning. This gave attendees the opportunity to learn about the education statutory duties and have open conversations about the current challenges and how groups in the department can work together to address attendance issues.

## **Child Employment**

25. The City of London offers itself as a prime location to host filming, musical, and theatrical performances, and therefore many young performers have been issued with Child performance Licences from their home borough. There was a total of 21 Child Performance notifications during the autumn term 2023. Six performances have been inspected by officers, all resulting in satisfactory safeguarding visits.
26. The City of London also receives a high number of requests for Body of Persons Approvals (BOPAs), mainly for performances held at the Barbican and Guildhall School of Music and Drama. During December 2023, there was a sharp increase in Child Performance notifications and BOPA exemption requests. This was due to Christmas-related and end-of-year performances.
27. For all BOPA applications, a risk assessment, safeguarding policy, full schedule of the event and chaperone information are required before a BOPA is granted. There have been five BOPA applications, one four-day rule performance, and two collective worship performances. From these notifications, three have been inspected. All inspections have resulted in an assessment of a 'satisfactory standard'.

## **Future Priorities**

28. Over the academic year, the Education and Early Years Service will continue to develop its sustainable approach to managing school attendance. The Attendance Support Team will ensure that measures are put in place to meet the statutory guidance. The team will continue to support schools and partners to work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and ensuring that the right support is in place.
29. The Attendance Support Team will lead the collection of attendance data on a termly basis (twice termly for the Aldgate School), which will then be analysed and presented in the form of a termly report.
30. Twice-termly meetings will take place in the schools to support school leaders in identifying and addressing whole school attendance issues as well as individual cases. The Attendance Support Team will lead in reviewing school attendance policies where required and supporting the independent schools in adding rigour to their processes to develop sanctions.
31. Work will take place in preparation for the implementation of the new statutory guidance from August 2024.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

32. **Strategic implications** – Corporate outcome: Contribute to a flourishing society by ensuring that people have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
33. **Resource implications** – There is a dedicated Education Team (the Attendance Support Team) that manages attendance and case management work. The

guidance says the offer of support to schools should be free of charge. The funding for extending this role will likely be via the Dedicated Schools Grant. The funding may be required for the local risk budget. The post of Education Welfare Manager has changed from a commissioned post to a permanent full-time role, which is integral to the success and sustainability of the work delivered in the Attendance Strategy.

34. **Financial implications** – There is currently no additional funding to local authorities to deliver the new statutory guidance from August 2024.
35. **Legal implications** – There is a statutory duty to ensure that all children attend school regularly and that the City of London ensures that all children have a school place.
36. **Risk implications** – There is a reputational risk if the City of London does not comply with the guidance. The established School Attendance Support Team will mitigate this risk and build on the historic work of the Education Welfare Service.
37. **Equalities implications** – All children have the right to an education.
38. **Climate implications** – N/A
39. **Security implications** – N/A

## **Conclusion**

40. The DfE guidance *Working together to improve school attendance* published in May 2022 has been updated to become statutory guidance from 19 August 2024. The guidance has been further developed to support trusts, governing bodies and local authorities to maintain high levels of school attendance. The City of London is working with schools to address whole-school and individual attendance concerns.
41. The Education and Early Years Service has established the School Support Attendance Team, and new referral forms. The team is actively collecting attendance data to gain a strategic overview of the attendance landscape within the local area.
42. Work will continue with the schools and local partners to formalise referral pathways and access to key services, which schools will need when addressing attendance concerns. Ultimately, this will lead to better outcomes for our children and young people.
43. The Education and Early Years Service continues to prioritise its most vulnerable children and young people under the child employment regulations by issuing BOPAs, carrying out on-site performance licence inspections, and overseeing and maintaining the co-ordination of the Vulnerable Children Group.

## **Appendices**

- None

## Background Papers

### References to DfE documents:

- a. *Working together to improve school attendance: Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*

Published: 29 February 2024

Applies from: September 2024

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

This guidance from the DfE is statutory and has been produced to help schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities maintain high levels of school attendance.

- b. *Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance: Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities.*

Published: 29 February 2024

Applies from: September 2024

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/publications/summary-table-of-responsibilities-for-school-attendance)

This document summarises the attendance responsibilities for parents, schools, academy trusts, governing bodies and local authorities that are outlined in *Working together to improve school attendance*.

- c. *Children's social care: Virtual school head role extension*

Published: 16 June 2021

Last updated: 19 June 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/virtual-school-head-role-extension-to-children-with-a-social-worker>

This guidance details how local authorities should extend the Virtual School Head role to champion and promote the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care.

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