

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	08/02/2021
Subject: Action for Children Survey October 2020	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

In October 2020, Action for Children carried out the Annual Service User Survey among children and young people supported by the City of London. Children across the spectrum of services in the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service were invited to take part in the survey. Out of a 106 children and young people who were contacted, 69 participated. At 65% of the young people, this is the highest response that has been received over the last five years. The survey shows that the majority of the children and young people feel supported by their social workers and they feel safe. COVID-19 has been difficult for young people, especially unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Action for Children Annual Service User Survey has been taking place annually. This year's survey covered all the children open to the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service. More than 106 children were contacted to take part in the survey and 69 participated. The largest cohort of young people open to the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service is Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). This year addition

questions were added on the impact of COVID-19 and young people's experience of racism.

Current Position

2. The survey shows that children and young people overall feel supported by their social workers and the intervention they receive. Families receiving Early Help and short breaks services gave the most positive feedback, saying they felt listened too and respected (94.1% in this cohort responded to the survey). Children in Need and children subject to a Child Protection Plan were less positive about the intervention. They felt, at times powerless, and this may be due to them being less likely to have requested support or services. Also, the report does identify that some were experiencing difficulties at the time they were contacted to take part in the survey.
3. The largest cohort of children and young people open to the Children's Social Care Service are UASC, who are either looked-after children or care leavers. The majority of young people from this cohort have indicated that they have a good relationship with their social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer. They are aware of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and they find this a good way to keep in touch with their peers.
4. COVID-19 appears to have affected this group of young people the most, as they have felt isolated, especially when they have not been able to go out.
5. There has also been an impact on their education as colleges and schools have been closed during lockdown. However, on a more positive note, the young people have felt safe and supported by their social workers.

Conclusion

6. The engagement in the survey has been improving over the past five years, and the response in 2020 was the highest level of participation since the survey started in 2015.
7. Overall, the feedback has been positive, especially in relation to the Early Help Service, which supports short breaks. It was also positive to see the level of support young people are receiving from their previous foster carers, whereby they are still having contact and support even though they are no longer placed with them.
8. The impact of COVID-19 on the young people does appear to be significant in relation to their emotional wellbeing, mental health and education. Information from this survey will assist in supporting children and young people going forward.

Appendices

Action For Children Annual Service User Survey 2020 – Non Public Appendix

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