

<b>Committee:</b> Safeguarding Sub Committee – For Information	<b>Dated:</b> 19/06/2023
<b>Subject: Children’s Social Care and Early Help Service Development Plan 2022–23</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	Contribute to a flourishing society  1. People are safe and feel safe.  2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
<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>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Claire Chamberlain, Interim Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Rachel Talmage, Head of Service, People Department, Department of Community and Children’s Services	

### Summary

The Service Development Plan has been fully refreshed for 2023–24 and sets out the overarching programme of work for the Children’s Social Care and Early Help Service. Key pieces of work include achieving every commitment from the Care Leaver Covenant and the Care Leaver Compact. Our care leaver offer will be revised and published accordingly.

The purpose of the report is to enable Members to see the array of work supporting resident children in need of help and protection in the City of London.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

# Main Report

## Background

1. The Service Development Plan 2023–24 (see Appendix 1) sets out objectives that aim to improve outcomes for children and their families. Objectives are drawn from listening to children and families, from staff, audit, the Achieving Excellence Board, Serious Case Reviews, Ofsted and work from the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA). Ofsted has a new separate judgement for care leavers and our ambition is excellence for all care leavers. The Plan sets out how we will achieve excellent outcomes for every child and young person.
2. In their *Inspection of children’s social care services 2 March 2020 to 6 March 2020*, Ofsted made two recommendations in their judgement on our practice<sup>1</sup> (published April 2020). These recommendations remain in the plan to ensure due focus and attention.

## Current Position

3. A new 2022–23 plan has been created following the completion of actions from the 2021–22 plan. Key achievements include:
  - Running a Race Equality Foundation parenting programme, training staff to be able to provide a shorter online version, to increase the flexibility of the offer to parents.
  - Supporting Afghan families well and preparing them to move on from the Bridging Hotels in the City; families were less anxious moving, and the preparation was detailed between our outgoing local authority and their new local authority.
  - Consistently including fathers, and creatively engaging them in supporting and safeguarding their children.
  - Having all staff in post as part of the Target Operating Model, meaning stability for children and families.
  - Completion of the Immigration Interview Project, the impact being quicker leave to remain in the UK.
  - Extending the virtual family therapy clinic, and significant improvement in children’s lives where families are going through separation.
  - The Threshold of Need document was fully refreshed, including Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI), following a national rise in deaths of children aged under one year nationally during COVID-19 (note, no child died in the City).

## Key Data

4. Performance data for the service is being considered separately within the Safeguarding Sub Committee. Data is used to drive the actions in the plan and to evaluate progress for children.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50149902> accessed 28 April 2022

## **Corporate & Implications**

5. Across every department, the Corporation is a parent to our children in care and care leavers.
6. More can be done in respect of work experience and job opportunities as set out in the Compact, and our plan is to make every recommendation an offer in the City.

## **Strategic Risk Implications**

7. Child safeguarding involves assessment and mitigation of risk. The service aims to protect and support the most vulnerable children in our society. The Achieving Excellence Board is in place to further scrutinise and extend our work for these children.

## **Equalities implications**

8. The 'social graces' are used in individual and group supervision, looking at the similarities and differences in every piece of casework. Equalities implications are core in every interaction. The 'social graces' include gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, ethnicity, education, employment, sexuality, sexual orientation and spirituality. Systemic relationship-based practice is central to our work, and the social GRACES (eg Gender, Race, Religion, Ethnicity, Employment, Class, etc.) offer us a framework for considering disproportionality and inequity.
9. The Plan sets out a path seeking to recognise 'care leaving' as a protected characteristic, and all implications extending to equalities will be explored and evaluated.
10. In Early Help we have noticed that incoming children who are white tend to have services set up for them, diagnoses and special educational needs (SEN) support/ and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), where relevant. We are noticing that black and brown children who are referred have some needs identified, but not all, and services are not in place. We are undertaking case reviews to identify what could have been done earlier and what the impact would have been for the child. We are advocating for more timely services and noticing in supervision, in assessment, in case discussion where it seems that these children's needs are not as visible.

## **Financial implications**

11. Children's social care is a statutory service. If, for example, children arrive in the City with additional needs, such as the Afghan arrivals, and/or further children with disabilities arrive, then a service must be provided. If risks escalate, then court action might be required. These unexpected needs will have financial implications.

### **Resource implications**

12. A recommendation in the Compact is for every care leaver to have an annual travel pass. The London Child in Care Council/Partnership for Young London are working with Transport for London (TfL) to make this happen- which is unlikely to be confirmed until 2024. In the interim, a report will be presented to CCS Committee seeking approval for additional funds to meet the cost of annual bus passes for all CoL care leavers for an initial 12 months until the TfL plan is approved.

### **Legal implications**

13. N/A

### **Climate implications**

14. N/A

### **Security implications**

15. N/A

### **Conclusion**

16. The Service Development Plan sets out the actions for the next year, with an overall ambition of providing the right help in the right place at the right time, to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and their families. This is a live document and will grow in response to family and staff feedback, national research, and audit.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Service Development Plan 2023–24

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