

Committee: Safeguarding Sub-Committee	Dated: 23/11/2023
Subject: City of London Children’s Social Care and Early Help, Action for Children, Annual Survey 2022–23	Public Appendix – Non-public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Outcomes 1–4
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: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Discussion
Report author: Laura Demetriades, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Department of Community and Children’s Services	

Summary

For the past eight years an independent agency, Action for Children, has been commissioned to complete 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 given to 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. This exercise was undertaken in July 2023, and the attached report shows the responses and feedback received.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Receiving honest, independent, and constructive feedback is of fundamental benefit to ensuring that services can adapt, improve, and respond to the ever-changing needs of our children, parents and carers, children in care and care leavers. Those who use our services are able to, (and regularly do), provide feedback directly to workers, managers, the Independent Reviewing Officer, and

others. Providing an independent, anonymous space to reflect on more broad experiences across the year, provides a rich repository of information from which to triangulate the current performance of our services, where things are working well and need to be maintained, and the areas where improvements and developments can be made.

2. The exercise ensures that an impartial view of service user experience is collated, and demonstrates to children, parents and carers, children in care and care leavers that their experiences matter, and that services can and will adapt in response to their feedback.

Current Position

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Some respondents who have taken part in the survey over a period of years queried what has been done with their feedback. Therefore, the process for those who participate in the survey, and actions taken in relation to their feedback and suggestions, needs to be made clearer.

Options

8. It is proposed that a feedback process is initiated in the form of a 'You Said, We Did' response to this year's survey, which can be circulated in written format and also via an online template.

9. Given that this survey has been completed for several years, it is proposed that a more longitudinal review is also completed. This would assess the impact on service delivery over time, and ascertain how this has changed the experiences and feedback of those working with Children's Social Care and Early Help.

Proposals

10. It is proposed that the above points are completed by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, who commissions this activity, with support from internal colleagues as required. Therefore, there are no additional costs associated with these pieces of work, as they will be absorbed by the day-to-day operational costs of the service.

Key Data

11. N/A

Corporate & Strategic Implications

12. 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

13. The needs of children, parents and carers, children in care, and care leavers is constantly evolving and changing, dependent on individual needs, societal expectations, and local and national pressures. Ensuring that the services we deliver are flexible, accessible, timely and targeted, is key to children and families getting the right support at the right time. Unconstrained feedback from service users is instrumental in measuring and understanding our performance, and making sure that we make the right changes and adaptations to deliver outstanding services to all. Continuous feedback between our service users and ourselves, demonstrates the City of London's commitment to being a learning organisation, centred around those who use our services.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – City of London Children’s Social Care and Early Help, Action for Children, Annual Survey 2022–23

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