

Committee(s): Safeguarding Sub Committee – for information	Dated: 14/11/2024
Community and Children’s Services Committee – for information	16/01/2025
Subject: Children and Families Service self-evaluation 2024	Public report Non-public appendix
This proposal a) delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes providing excellent services and diverse, engaged communities.	
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
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
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Summary

This report presents to Members the City of London Corporation (City Corporation) Department of Community and Children’s Services (DCCS) Children and Families Service self-evaluation (SEF) 2024.

The SEF sets out the DCCS’s assessment of the quality and impact of children and families services and areas for development over the next year. Areas for development include increasing the visibility of Early Help, exploring disproportionality of access to children’s services, further developing the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and continuing to strengthen the Care Leaver Offer. The SEF also reflects on progress against areas for development in the previous SEF 2023.

Overall, the City Corporation is committed to providing excellence and constantly improving. Strong relationships and a willingness to learn, as well as being open to scrutiny and new ideas, results in high-quality services and positive outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The SEF 2024 was submitted to Ofsted as part of the children’s social care services inspection in September 2024.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The children and family services SEF is completed annually. The most recent version is for 2023-24 and was completed in September 2024. The SEF sets out achievements across Children's Social Care and Early Help services, linking to Special Educational Needs, the Virtual School and Adult Social Care. It also identifies areas for development over the coming year.

Current Position

2. Our vision for children and young people is that the City of London is a place where they feel safe, have good mental health and wellbeing, fulfil their potential and are ready for adulthood while growing up with a sense of belonging.
3. The City Corporation is ambitious for the children and young people we work with and strives to achieve the best possible outcomes for them. This is underpinned by a commitment to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as safeguarding. Teams effectively work together across the Department for Community and Children's Services as well as with external partners.
4. An experienced, generic Children's Social Care and Early Help team supports children, young people and their families using a systemic relationship-based practice model and with a focus on early intervention.
5. At the end of July 2024, Children's Social Care supported 14 active Early Help cases, 6 children in need, 3 children subject to a Child Protection Plan, 5 children in care and 51 care leavers. 2 children in care had an Education, Health and Care Plan.
6. Children and young people are supported throughout their journeys which starts with effective screening through the front door. A strong Early Help offer is driven by a co-ordinated, multi-agency approach. There is a strong record of intervening when necessary with appropriate child protection processes in place.
7. The City Corporation is a proud corporate parent. Children in care receive a bespoke offer according to their needs and a robust Care Leaver Offer is in place. The City Corporation has adopted care experience as being akin to a protected characteristic. A diverse enrichment programme, alongside increased apprenticeship opportunities, provides young people with a wide range of experiences to support them through their transition to adulthood.

8. The Virtual School has responded to changing demands on its remit with a new structure due to be in place in January 2025 that will provide increased capacity.
9. Clear governance structures are in place which support, strengthen and scrutinise services for children and young people. The Safeguarding Sub-Committee acts as the corporate parenting board.
10. Evidence in the SEF highlights a wide-range of services and support that helps children, young people and their families achieve positive outcomes. Evidence from independent practice reviews reflects this; findings include good outcomes for children, timely and appropriate interventions and efforts to involve children's families as much as possible amongst others.
11. The City Corporation is committed to excellence and has identified areas for development over the next year including increasing visibility of Early Help in the community, exploring disproportionality of access to children's services, further developing the Children in Care Council and continuing to strengthen the Care Leaver Offer.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – the Children and Families Service SEF aligns with the Corporate Plan 2024–2029 outcomes of providing excellent services and ensuring that there are diverse, engaged communities. DCCS strategic objectives include: people of all ages and all backgrounds are prepared to flourish; people of all ages and all backgrounds can live independently, play a role in their communities and exercise choice over their services; people of all ages enjoy good mental and physical wellbeing; people of all ages and all backgrounds feel part of, engaged with and able to shape their community. The SEF also aligns with the statutory framework for children's social care.

Financial implications – none.

Resource implications – none.

Legal implications – none.

Risk implications – none.

Equalities implications – Equalities implications are considered within the SEF and where any new services are developed or services change, an Equalities Impact Assessment would be carried out.

Climate implications – none.

Security implications – none.

Conclusion

12. Overall, the City Corporation is ambitious for our children and young people and a commitment to providing excellence and constantly improving is underpinned by strong relationships and a systemic relationship-based practice model. Children and young people are supported by high-quality services resulting in positive outcomes. The SEF enables teams to reflect, monitor and assess

progress against areas for development. A six-month review against the identified areas for development 2024/25 will be completed to ensure focus remains on achieving the best for children, young people and their families.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Children and Families Service Self-evaluation 2024 – non-public.

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