

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee	Dated: 13/10/2025
Subject: City of London, DCCS, City of London 2025 Annual Survey	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	Providing Excellent Services
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
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Summary

For the past 10 years an independent agency has been commissioned to complete the City of London Annual Survey. This involves individually contacting all children, parents and carers, children in care, and care leavers who have received services from Children's Social Care and Early Help. A tailored survey of questions is asked 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, which demonstrates service performance, direct service user experiences, and informs service development. In March 2025, this exercise was undertaken, and the attached report shows the responses and feedback received (see Appendix 1).

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. Our service users regularly provide feedback directly to workers, managers, the Independent Reviewing Officer, and others. However, an independent anonymous space can be useful for reflecting on more broad experiences across the year. It also provides a rich repository of information that can be used to triangulate the current performance of our services. This information can determine where things are working well and need to be maintained, and the areas for improvements and developments.
2. The exercise helps to collate an impartial view of service user experience. It 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. This year there was a 51.2% completion rate, which equates to 37 individual children responding to the survey. There was no response to 26 calls, and a further 10 individuals declined to respond to the survey. In all cases, five calls were made to all potential respondents on different days and times to try and catch them at a convenient time.
4. Although all agreed that the questions are relevant, attempts have been made this year to streamline the survey questions, especially for care leavers. An option was given to complete a shorter survey, and this was taken up by 11 young people, demonstrating that it is a successful method of gaining feedback.
5. Feedback received about the work of Early Help and Children's Social Care services was consistently positive. Although, it was noted by a small number of families that they would welcome more support around housing and managing or supporting the additional needs of their children.
6. All children in care responded to the survey. All are happy with where they are living and gave positive feedback about support and accessibility of social workers. All children felt that they had safe people in their lives to speak to.
7. There is more work to do to promote the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer and Virtual School with children in care, and to tackle any discrimination felt about their care experience status.
8. Given that most care leavers are former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, it is not surprising that themes of loss and isolation continue to prevail within this cohort. This year, callers were able to refer young people to a range of support services.

9. Where young people said they were unhappy with their home, this was mainly due to wanting a permanent tenancy. There was some variance in the feelings around support provided to care leavers, but this often related to tenancy matters or keywork support. There were strong positive feelings towards social work support. One young person said they did not have a social worker, which the service assured was not the case.
10. Several care leavers felt that they had barriers to accessing education, training, and employment, stemming from having limited English or English as a second language. Care leavers are aspirational for their future but have concerns about the cost of living, stability of immigration status, and securing housing.
11. Overall, young people felt confident in accessing health services and were able to meet their health needs. All young people thought that they had someone they could talk to if they felt they were harmed or bullied in any way.
12. There were many positive points of feedback in the survey. Where issues were raised, these are being acted on, as outlined in a 'You Said, We Did' feedback response (see Appendix 2).

Options

13. The City of London Annual Survey consistently provides rich and varied feedback which informs ongoing service development. We will continue to use an independent anonymous survey style approach, while considering how survey questions, approaches and experiences can be improved.

Proposals

14. The above arrangements continue through commissioned arrangements which are overseen by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance within the People's Directorate.

Key Data

15. Key data is contained within the Survey Report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. 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

17. 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 our services 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. A continuous feedback loop between our service and our users 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 Annual Survey 2025
- Appendix 2 – 2025 Annual Survey, You Said, We Did

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