

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committees: Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee	Dated: 13/10/2025
Subject: Draft Children and Families Service Self-Evaluation 2025	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes. 	Providing Excellent Services Diverse, Engaged Communities
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
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 draft City of London Corporation (City Corporation) Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) Families in the City self-evaluation (SEF) 2025. This was previously called the Children and Families Service SEF.

The SEF sets out the DCCS's assessment of the quality and impact of Children and Families services, actions in response to Ofsted recommendations, and areas for development over the next year. Areas for development include delivering the Families in the City programme in response to national government children's social care reform, completing a multi-agency audit on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and disproportionality, and strengthening our offer for care leavers and children in care. The SEF also reflects on progress against areas for development in the Children and Families Service SEF 2024.

Overall, the SEF demonstrates the City Corporation's commitment to constantly improving and providing excellent services. Strong relationships and partnership working, a commitment to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as a willingness to learn and listen to families, continue to underpin high-quality services and positive outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Families in the City SEF is completed annually. The most recent draft version is dated September 2025. A draft non-public version of the SEF is provided for Members in Appendix 1.
2. The SEF sets out achievements across Children's Social Care and Early Help services, linking to SEND, the Virtual School and Adult Social Care. It also identifies areas for development over the coming year.
3. The SEF reflects the DCCS's Families in the City programme which was established in response to national government reform around developing family help and Best Start Family Hubs for children and young people aged 0–19 years, or up to 25 years for young people with SEND.

Current Position

4. 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.
5. The City Corporation is ambitious for the children and young people and strives to achieve the best possible outcomes for them. An Ofsted inspection of the Children and Families service in September 2024 found services to be outstanding.
6. Teams effectively work together across DCCS, as well as with external partners such as the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership which continues to effectively co-ordinate how local partners co-operate to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people locally.
7. 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 with a focus on early intervention.

8. At the end of July 2025, Children's Social Care supported 17 active Early Help cases, 16 short breaks, 14 children in need, one child subject to a Child Protection Plan, four children in care and 47 care leavers. Two children in care had an Education, Health and Care Plan.
9. Children and young people are supported throughout their journeys which start 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.
10. Activities for children and young people during the Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays, funded in part by the holiday activities and food (HAF) programme were well-received by families. Children and young people, including those with SEND and from global majority communities, enjoyed a range of activities and experiences in a safe, structured environment.
11. 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. A diverse enrichment programme and apprenticeship opportunities provide young people with a wide range of experiences to support them through their transition to adulthood.
12. The Virtual School has responded to changing demands on its remit and an agreed new structure will be implemented as soon as Ambition 25 (a City Corporation-wide HR project) is completed.
13. 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.
14. Evidence in the SEF, including from child and family practice reviews, highlights a wide range of services and support that helps children, young people and their families achieve positive outcomes. A range of workforce development opportunities support staff to continue to develop. Positive feedback was received from two student social workers who successfully completed their final year placements within DCCS.
15. The SEF updates on progress against areas of development for 2024–2025 which were initially set out in the September 2024 SEF. Positive progress has been made against all 10 identified areas for development. This includes increasing the visibility of Early Help in the community through promotional work and successful holiday activities, and further developing the Children in Care Council which now has an established core group of approximately 10 members and improved consistency in meeting and events attendance. The Care Leaver Offer has been strengthened through termly sessions with young people on housing and support for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Outcomes included a care leaver making excellent progress on a City-funded Virtual School apprenticeship and university taster days resulting in three young people working towards a university education.

16. The SEF identifies areas for development over the coming year, including: delivering the Families in the City programme; implementing the Children's Social Care and Early Help service delivery plan; completing a multi-agency audit on SEND and disproportionality; and strengthening our care leavers and children in care offers in response to children and young people's feedback as part of an annual survey.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. **Strategic implications** – the Families in the City 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.
17. **Financial implications** – none.
18. **Resource implications** – none.
19. **Legal implications** – none.
20. **Risk implications** – none.
21. **Equalities implications** – Equalities implications are considered within the SEF. Where any new services are developed or services change, an Equality Impact Assessment would be carried out.
22. **Climate implications** – none.
23. **Security implications** – none.

Conclusion

24. Overall, the City Corporation remains ambitious for children and young people and is committed to delivering excellence through continuous improvement. Strong relationships provide a bedrock for joined-up working and successfully supporting children, young people and families to experience positive outcomes. The SEF enables teams to reflect, monitor and assess progress against areas for development against the context of national government reform which is driving change at pace. A six-month review against the identified areas for development 2025–2026 will be completed.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft Families in the City Self-evaluation 2025 (Non-Public).

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