

REPORT TO:	Corporate Parenting Panel 23 rd June 2022
SUBJECT:	Update on the South London Commissioning Programme and Sufficiency Strategy
LEAD OFFICER:	Shelley Prince, Head of Integrated Commissioning and Procurement – Children, Young People, Education and Health
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Maria Gatland Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning
WARDS:	All
PUBLIC/EXEMPT:	

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

Corporate Parenting Panel have requested an update on the progress of the South London Commissioning Programme (SLCP) and Sufficiency Strategy.

This report provides an update on work that is in being taken forward by the South London Commissioning Partnership, which is seeks to address, and collaboratively respond to a number of commissioning workstreams for Children and Young People.

The report also contains an update on the commissioning teams intentions to refresh the accommodation and sufficiency strategy due to the

It also contains a summary of the strategic priorities of the programme for the period 2022-23

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

N/A – Report is for information only.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to note the updates and progress of the South London Commissioning Programme and the strategic priorities of the programme for 2022-23

It is also being asked to note the update of the refresh of the accommodation and sufficiency strategy for children looked after and the associated timescales for this workstream.

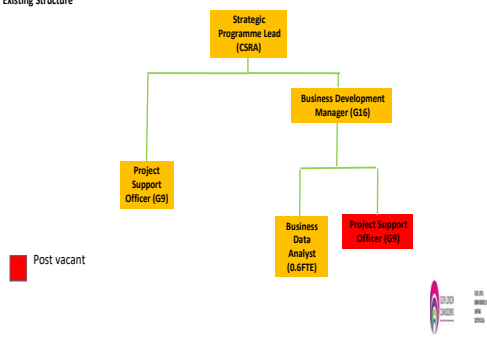
1. Background and Context

SLCP

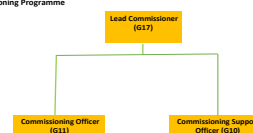
Non-Executive Template

- 1.1 The South London Commissioning Programme (SLCP) was established in 2013 to support the commissioning of quality placements in the NMI special school and FE College sectors as a collaboration of the 12 South London boroughs. The aim of the Partnership was to develop regional commissioning models which operate at sufficient size to provide economies of scale and a varied range of placement options.
- 1.2 In 2017, SLCP was awarded a Department for Education Innovation Fund grant £1 million to establish a light touch framework Approved Provider Panel Agreement (APPA). The framework is part of a commissioning approach that is designed to secure long-term high-quality placements for children in care within a stable pricing structure.
- 1.3 Over the years, the membership of South London boroughs has reduced as other commissioning vehicles have come online, and where boroughs have felt more aligned with these vehicles' commissioning programmes.
- 1.4 The London Borough of Croydon is the lead local authority for the SLCP. A further three South London boroughs form part of the children looked-after work programme, comprising of Lambeth and Lewisham, several other boroughs dropped out of the programme due to differing strategic priorities. Each borough contributes £20,000 per annum for membership of the children looked-after work stream and access to the APPA framework.
- 1.5 Discussions are taking place with commissioning borough partners about future plans for SLCP and the workstreams beyond 22/23
- 1.6 As at the beginning of 22/23, SLCP's membership had reduced to 6 members, alongside the significant reduction in the DfE fund available for the programme,

Appendix 1
South London Commissioning Programme
Existing Structure



Appendix 2
South London Commissioning Programme
Proposed Structure



the team was restructured in 2021 from the diagram on the left, to the diagram on the right, to deliver the revised workstream programmes.

- 1.7 Work plans for the CLA workstream for 22/23 have been agreed with the reduced resource, the proposed areas of focus are as follows:
 - APPA for Residential and IFA – refresh
 - Quality Framework and Contract Management
 - Fee negotiations with providers
 - Support Pan London Projects including ASD/SEMH

Sufficiency Strategy

- 1.8 The CYP Accommodation Strategy was completed in November 2021. It provided an outline for specific plans to address several needs and changes that were appearing in the population of children in our care, and in the provision available for them. These included:
- Significant changes nationally to how we accommodate Unaccompanied and Separated Children
 - An ageing in-house foster care population
 - A residential market which is expensive and does not meet the needs of our children
 - Significant quality issues reported by our care leavers in housing provision
- 1.9 Plans were set out in this document to address these issues, however due to recent policy changes, the rising cost of placements and recommendations from The Care Review, the decision have has been taken to refresh the Children Looked After sufficiency strategy (of which the Accommodation Strategy was an appendix).
- 1.10 The following high level programme of activity is as follows:
- Bring together a children looked after Sufficiency Board to oversee the development and delivery of the sufficiency and accommodation strategy – **JUN/JULY**
 - Undertake a mapping exercise in relation to children looked after provision - **JUN/JULY**
 - Undertake a strategic needs assessment which will inform current and future levels of service provision - **AUG/SEPT**
 - Publish a refreshed children looked after sufficiency strategy- **MAR 23**
- 1.11 Alongside this programme consultation with stakeholders, children, young people, and their families will take place in quarter 4 of 22/23 once a draft strategy is in place. However, there is an expectation that engagement of system partners and residents will take place through the development of the strategy
- 1.12 The voice of the children and young person will be at the centre of this work and will inform areas for co-design and co-production.

2. APPA Light Touch Framework for IFA Residential and Residential Care

- 2.1 The APPA tender was published by the South London Commissioning Programme on October 11 2019 and closed on November 11 2019. The tender was evaluated and moderated in November and December 2019.

The tender was divided into 2 lots as follows;

Lot	Service Area	Sub-Lot
Lot 1	Residential Care	1a: Standard Placements.

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		1b: Specialist Placements.
Lot 2	Independent Fostering Agency	2a: Standard Placements. 2b: Specialist Placements. 2c: Emergency Placements.

- 2.2 The quality threshold for providers that can operate through the framework, are those providers with a 'good' or 'outstanding' OFSTED judgement overall. This is to give assurance to local authorities and children in care that all placements are with providers with a minimum of good quality services. The APPA is currently used by Lambeth and Croydon, with Lewisham set to implement the APPA imminently.
- 2.3 A further 43 providers have now joined the APPA in the last tender refresh in January 2021. The additional providers will increase the choice for member boroughs considerably, resulting in better improved matching of children to placement provider and in a reduction in the use of spot purchasing.

The following table contains the breakdown of providers for the framework.

Total Number of Providers on the APPA

Area	Total Providers
Residential Care	25
Independent Fostering Agency	53

- 2.4 The intention from the team is to refresh the APPA again in September 2022, and award places in January 2023. The team are actively exploring ways to involve young people in the tender while keeping to procurement guidelines.

3. Quality Assurance

- 3.1 All providers on the APPA are required to be OFSTED 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. This ensures that children placed through the framework are placed with a minimum standard of provider. SLCP have developed a quality framework for non-maintained and independent special schools for the SEND programme. Visits to the 40 most commonly used schools will be carried out on a bi-annual basis from January 2021. This will provide quality assurance to the member boroughs and will focus on raising the quality of the providers. The programme has agreed a similar quality framework for APPA providers in 2022. This enables all member boroughs to share information on the quality and practice of key providers, and member boroughs will be conducting and sharing joint visits over the coming months.

4. PAN London Commissioning Solutions

- 4.1 SLCP is working closely with other sub-regional organisations in London and with the Association of London Directors of Children's Services on the PAN London Placements Panel. The Panel is focused on tackling sufficiency for particular groups of children in care. There are a number of projects being undertaken, including;
- Resettlement and alternative to youth custody.
 - Complex adolescents.
 - Provision for ASD/SEMH.
 - Mother and baby residential.
 - Secure provision.
- 4.2 SLCP is involved in all of these projects and leads on the ASD/SEMH project. The aim is to increase the availability of appropriate good quality placements for children in care that are in the groups set out above.
- 4.3 **ASD SEMH Project:** SLCP is leading an ALDCS PAN London Placement Panel project to tackle issues relating to ASD/SEMH. Funding has been secured from the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance.
- 4.4 This project has particular emphasis on young people with significant social emotional and mental health needs. Research will be carried out into the criteria for access to specific services, residential educational provision, key worker preventative services, and diagnostic pathways.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Appropriate consultation and engagement will be undertaken throughout the refresh of the strategy, as highlighted above., which will be informed by the voice and needs of the children and young people that access the services.
- 5.1 SLCP holds regular meetings and events with providers and national representative bodies. This work has contributed to the development of the framework model, in terms of focus, quality, and price.
- 5.4 As part of the development of the quality frameworks for children with SEND and children-looked-after providers consultation takes place with the providers of these services.

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2. CONSULTATION

N/A

2 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

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N/A

3 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

N/A

4 EQUALITIES IMPACT

N/A

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

N/A

6 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

N/A

7 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

7.1 WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?

NO

8 Approved by: Róisín Madden Director Children's Social Care

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