

Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 27th September 2022

Title of report: Children's Rights Team Annual Report

Purpose of report: To inform the Board of services delivered by the Children's Rights Team during the period of 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 (annual report)

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not Applicable If yes give the reason why
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u>	Not Applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not Applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Elaine McShane , Service Director, Child Protection and Family Support - 15/09/2022 No No
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: N/A

Ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

The Kirklees Children Looked After Independent Service (Children's Rights team) offers advocacy support to, and shares the views and opinions of, Children Looked After to ensure that the voice and experiences of Children Looked After is heard and influences policy and service delivery development and design. Additionally, the service also provides advocacy support to children and young people aged ten and over who are subject to the Child Protection process.

The Children's Rights team also works with children and young people to support them to use the Children's Services complaints process, to be active participants in the recruitment of professionals, i.e., Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers, and operational and strategic managers, and to deliver their own training session to adults (Total Respect Training). This training helps adults to consider what the barriers are to the participation of children and young people and why it's important to listen to what children and young people say.

Two Advocacy & Participation Workers co-ordinate and support the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF). The CiCC and CLF enable children and young people looked after and care leavers to come together to work on projects, and to meet with senior managers to enable their voices to be heard and influence service provision. **Appendix 1 of this report provides an outline of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum activities undertaken during 2021 to 2022**

Every child or young person who is new into care (or when they reach the age of 7 years old) receives an 'Initial Visit' from a Children's Rights team, Advocacy & Participation Worker. During this, children and young people are informed about the service and the support that they can receive, as well as what participation opportunities they can become involved in.

Within the Children's Rights team, currently, one part time officer co-ordinates the Independent Visitor's Scheme. This scheme matches children Looked After with volunteers, who offer support and guidance and opportunities to engage in positive activities. **A separate annual report is produced for the scheme which is included within the Children's Rights Annual Report at Appendix 2.**

2. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

The Service works with children and young people, families and carers, and across the council and wider partnership. Adult volunteers in the Independent Visitors provide a valuable service to children and young people Looked After by the local authority.

3.2 Working with Partners

The Service works with partners to deliver outcomes for children and young people, within the Council and across the wider partnership

3.3 Place Based Working

The team works with young people at locations of their choosing, both in Kirklees and outside of the local authority area

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

Not Applicable

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

The Children's Rights team enable children and young people who are Looked After by the local authority to ensure that their voice is heard in relation to decisions that are made which affect their lives, and that service delivery and provision is influenced by the voice and experiences of children and young people.

It is important that children and young people feel that they are included in decisions which affect them and that their views are listened to. This can help lead to stability in their lives, overall health and wellbeing, higher attainment and long term positive outcomes for children and young people.

Through advocacy children and young people often achieve a positive outcome. If it is not possible for a child or young person to achieve the outcome they sought, their Advocates support children and young people to understand the reasons why. Some specific examples of positive outcomes for children and young people achieved in 2021/22 included:

- Access to savings
- Support for driving lessons
- Stability of placement
- Move of placement
- Family Time
- Finances
- Support in Pre-birth Assessments/Care Proceedings

3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

Not Applicable

4. Next steps and timelines

Key Priorities for 2021/22 include:

- Introduction of improved quality assurance mechanisms, to support the development of the Children’s Rights Service and the team. A further quality assurance activity is required to provide assurance that a consistent and high-quality service is provided.
- Advocacy support offer to all Care Leavers and Children Looked After who are going through Care Proceedings in relation to their own children.
- Child Protection Advocacy to be a high quality, consistent offer to children and young people
- Strengthen links with strategic groups and Boards
- To continue to work with others across Children’s Services to capture children’s voices, experiences, and help support participation and inform service development
- To review the service against the new Advocacy Standards when published
- To ensure key links and relationships are developed and maintained with Magdale House, this is a new therapeutic residential home located in Netherton which is expected to open in the summertime.

4 Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted

5 Cabinet Portfolio Holder’s recommendations

Not Applicable

6 Contact officer

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Anna Gledhill, Service Manager, Quality Assurance and Safeguarding– 01484 221000 extension 71493 email: anna.gledhill@kirklees.gov.uk

7 Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not Applicable

8 Service Director responsible

Tom Brailsford, Service Director, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships