

Public Document Pack



**Service Director – Legal, Governance and
Commissioning**

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Monday 26 October 2020

Notice of Meeting

Dear Member

Corporate Parenting Board

The **Corporate Parenting Board** will meet in the **Virtual Meeting - online** at **10.00 am on Tuesday 3 November 2020.**

The items which will be discussed are described in the agenda and there are reports attached which give more details.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Muscroft".

Julie Muscroft

Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning

Kirklees Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair/Clerk of their intentions prior to the meeting.

The Corporate Parenting Board members are:-

Member

Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)	
Councillor Karen Allison	
Councillor Fazila Loonat	
Councillor John Lawson	
Councillor Richard Smith	
Councillor Carole Pattison	Cabinet Member for Learning, Aspiration and Communities
Gill Addy	Designated Nurse for Looked after Children/Care Leavers
Julie Bragg	Head of Corporate Parenting (Children in Care and Care Leavers)
Tom Brailsford	Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships)
Steve Comb	Head of Corporate Parenting (Sufficiency)
Keith Fielding	Kirklees Fostering Network
Stewart Horn	Head of Joint Commissioning, Children & Familie
Colleen Kenworthy	Kirklees Fostering Network
Barry Lockwood	Kirklees Fostering Network
Sanna Mahmood	Looked after Children and Leaving Care
Elaine McShane	Service Director, Family Support and Child Protection
Mel Meggs	Director for Children's Services
Sara Miles	Interim Head of Service (Child Protection & Review Unit)
Jo-Anne Sanders	Service Director for Learning and Early Support
Ophelia Rix	Principal Social Worker
Janet Tolley	Virtual School Headteacher
Christine Carmichael	Kirklees Fostering Network

Agenda

Reports or Explanatory Notes Attached

Pages

1: Membership of the Board/Apologies

This is where members who are attending as substitutes will say for whom they are attending.

2: Minutes of previous meeting

1 - 8

To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 30 September 2020.

3: Interests

9 - 10

The Board Members will be asked to say if there are any items on the Agenda in which they have disclosable pecuniary interests, which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of the items or participating in any vote upon the items, or any other interest.

4: Admission of the Public

Most debates take place in public. This only changes when there is a need to consider certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual. You will be told at this point whether there are any items on the Agenda which are to be discussed in private.

5: Deputations/Petitions

The Board will receive any petitions and hear any deputations from members of the public. A deputation is where up to five people can attend the meeting and make a presentation on some particular issue of concern. A member of the public can also hand in a petition at the meeting but that petition should relate to something on which the body has powers and responsibilities.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10 (2), Members of the Public should provide at least 24 hours' notice of presenting a deputation.

6: Public Question Time

The Board will hear any questions from the general public. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, questions should be emailed to executive.governance@kirklees.gov.uk no later than 10am on 2 November 2020

7: Children's Services Highlight Report

11 - 24

The Board will consider a report giving key highlights on Performance Monitoring data for the Children's Service up to 30 September 2020.

Contact: Julie Bragg – Head of Corporate Parenting.

8: Virtual School Headteacher Report 2019-20

25 - 38

To brief the Corporate Parenting Board on how the Voluntary School has been working during the Covid 19 Pandemic

Contact: Janet Tolley (Virtual School Headteacher)

9: Kirklees Looked After Children (Children's Rights Team) Annual Report

39 - 64

To inform the Board of services delivered by the Children's Rights Team during the period of 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

Contact: Melanie Tiernan, Team Manager, Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service

10: Kirklees Looked After Children Service (Children's Rights Team) Six Monthly Update Report

65 - 78

To inform the Board of services delivered by the Children's Rights Team during the period of 01 April 2020 to 30 September 2020

Contact: Melanie Tiernan, Service Manager, Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service

11: Independent Visitor Scheme 6 Monthly Report (01 April 2020 - 30 September 2020)

79 - 88

To inform the Corporate Parenting Board about the work of the Independent Visitors Scheme during the first six months of the

financial year 2019 to 2020 (April to September 2019) and plans for development of the scheme.

Contact: Christopher Berridge – Independent Service Officer,
Kirklees Looked After Children

12: Children's Services Annual Complaints Report

89 - 114

To inform the Board of compliments and complaints regarding Children's Social Care during the period of 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 (annual report)

Contact: Helen Sanderson, Complaints and Compliments Manager

13: OFSTED and Improvement Board Update

The Board will receive a verbal update from Tom Brailsford.

14: Updates from Board Members on Interaction with Services

The Board will consider verbal updates from Board Members who will give an update on progress and key issues following interaction with Services and partners to challenge the role of the Corporate Parent.

Contact: Leigh Webb, Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer

15: Corporate Parenting Agenda Plan 2020-21

115 -
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Contact: Leigh Webb – Principal Democratic and Engagement Officer.

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Contact Officer: Leigh Webb

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Wednesday 30 September 2020

Present: Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)
Councillor John Lawson
Councillor Carole Pattison
Councillor Richard Smith
Councillor Andrew Marchington (Ex-Officio)
Julie Bragg, Head of Corporate Parenting
Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resource, Improvement and Partnerships)
Stewart Horn, Head of Joint Commissioning - Children and Families
Barry Lockwood, Kirklees Fostering Network
Janet Tolley, Virtual School Head Teacher

In attendance: Anna Gledhill, Service Manager Quality Assurance & Social Work Practice Lead
Andy Quinlan, Service Manager – Fostering
Laura Counce, Acting Head of Sufficiency

Apologies: Gill Addy
Sara Miles
Ophelia Rix
Jo-Anne Sanders

1 Membership of the Board/Apologies

The Chair welcomed Board Members. Apologies had been received from Gill Addy, Sara Miles, Ophelia Rix and Jo-Anne Sanders.

2 Interests

No interests were declared.

3 Minutes

RESOLVED-

That the minutes of the last meeting, held on 1 July 2020 be approved as a correct record.

4 Admission of the Public

It was agreed that all agenda items would be held in public session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

6 Public Question Time

No questions from the public were received.

7 Kirklees Looked After Children Annual Health Report The Board received a report outlining the work that has taken place in the Looked After Children's Health Team to provide assurance that the Clinical Commissioning Groups are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities.

The main body of the report set out the local activity related to Looked After Children, during the time frame 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020 and highlighted the latest relevant National data for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019, ('Statistical First release' DfE 2019)

It was reported that the Key Performance Indicator results have remained at a high level, with 95.5% of Initial Health Assessments (IHA) (n224) completed within the statutory 20 working days timescale and an average of 94% Review Health Assessments (RHA's) (n697) completed in Kirklees within their timescales. (National average 89%)

The report set out information in respect of the following key points:

- All the data for dental registration, dental attendance and immunisation uptake is higher than the national average.
- The work with sexual health and substance misuse outreach and the emotional health and well-being team, has continued, reinforcing a collaborative working model.
- The regional adoption agency is established and the Designated Doctor, continues to carry out adult and child medical reports.
- The Strength & Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ) process, continues to provide a robust formula for ensuring alerts are made about children, who may be struggling with their emotional health. The resulting scores are in line with national data. The return rate for questionnaires has improved significantly from 65% in April 2019 to 88% in February 2020, due to a targeted focus.
- The Ages & Stages Social & Emotional (ASQ–SE) questionnaire, has provided a further resource to measure the emotional health of children and babies under 4 years old and dovetails into the SDQ process.

Despite being outside the timeframe of the Annual report, information was included in relation to the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic which outlined the focus made to identify and target vulnerable children and families, while supporting the staff team and colleagues.

In response to a question from Councillor Lawson health assessments, Stewart Horn explained that video and phone assessments were taking place and were prioritised and marked accordingly.

RESOLVED -

The Board noted the Kirklees Looked After Children Annual Health Report 2019-2020.

8 Children in Care Services Performance Highlights

The Board considered a report giving key highlights on Performance Monitoring data for the Children's Service up to September 2020 presented by Julie Bragg, Head of Corporate Parenting.

The report outlined performance data relating to children entering care, children in care and placement stability, looked after children reviews, visiting and missing.

It was reported that there had been an increasing trend in the number and rate of children in care from 64.0 (641 children) in Sep 19 to 68.8 (689 children) in Aug 20. The current 12-month average for Kirklees is 66.9 (670 children), above the 31 March 2019 published rate of 62.0 and the England 2019 rate of 65.0, but below Statistical Neighbours 2019 rate of 91.6.

In response to a question from Barry Lockwood concerning payment of fines for foster children breaking Covid regulations, Tom Brailsford explained that a response was being drafted on the issue through Kirklees Fostering Network

Janet Tolley, Virtual School Head Teacher submitted an update on data in respect of Looked After Children Education Outcomes, providing performance information relating to Personal Education Plans, attendance figures and school moves.

With regard to the transition into post 16 education it was reported that C&K had worked to ensure transition plans are in place and that a further report would be submitted when results are validated.

RESOLVED -

1. That the report be noted
2. That an update in respect of examination results and transition to college be submitted to a future meeting.

9 One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report & Highlight Report

The Board considered an Annual Report from One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) and welcomed Sarah Johal from One Adoption to the meeting.

Sarah Johal presented the report and highlighted the following key points:-

- Between April 2019 and March 2020, 220 children had a plan for adoption ratified by the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities Agency Decision Makers which was a slight decrease on last year's full year figure of 226 children;
- There were 162 children with a plan for adoption agreed;
- 113 adoptive households were approved during 2019-20 which is an increase on the preceding 2 years

Corporate Parenting Board – 4 March 2020

- The final outturn position for 2019-20 was a £5k underspend
- There had been a lot of interest in adoption since the start of the pandemic.
- New ways of promoting the service have been introduced which includes an online film; facebook Q&A; and Zoom webinars.
- Between April 2019 and March 2020, 21 children from Kirklees were matched with families at adoption panels
- One Adoption introduced peer mentoring services for peer mentors in Kirklees and 9 families had benefited from this service.
- Between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, 76 successful applications have been made to the Adoption Support Fund in respect of adopted children in Kirklees accessing £335,545.30 for therapeutic support.
- There has been an increase in referrals for Adoption Support services; there was 12 families from Kirklees awaiting allocation at the end of March 2020. In the interim all the families continue to have access to the Core Support Services and some are accessing these. We hold monthly tracking and allocation meetings to ensure those families who are waiting are discussed routinely and progress to allocation is monitored. Keep in touch phone calls are made to some families who are waiting for an allocated worker.
- There are currently 262 letterbox contact plans facilitated for Kirklees children and young people by One Adoption West Yorkshire.
- Between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, 269 referrals were made to PAC-UK for families inclusive of adult adoptees, birth parents/relatives across West Yorkshire. 48 (18%) were families living in Kirklees.

RESOLVED –

The Board noted the Annual Report and Highlight Report from One Adoption West Yorkshire and thanked Sarah Johal from One Adoption for her contributions.

10 Statement of Purpose Fostering 2020

The Board considered the Statement of Purpose for the Fostering Service presented by Andy Quinlan, Service Manager (Fostering)

The Board was informed that each Local Authority must have a Statement of Purpose (SOP) for the Fostering Service. Andy Quinlan explained that there was a version of the Fostering Service SOP which had been developed with children for children and when finalised, this would be sent to children who had been fostered.

The Board was informed that the Statement differed from last year with regard to the fact that the Team had been re-aligned alongside the introduction of the Mockingbird project.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the Annual report on the Statement of Purpose for the Fostering Service and thanked Andy Quinlan for his contributions.
2. That the Statement of Purpose Fostering Service brochure be circulated to Board Members and Kirklees Fostering Network for information.

11 Statement of Purpose for Registered Children’s Homes

The Board considered the Statement of Purpose for Registered Children’s Homes presented by Tom Brailsford and Laura Caunce.

In response to a question from Councillor Lawson concerning whistleblowing, Laura Caunce provided details and assurance of the mechanisms in place within the Service.

During discussion of this item, it was explained that changes to the Statement would be required as a result of Orchard view moving back to being a respite facility; the purchasing of a new care home (as approved by Cabinet); and the developing contingency plans as a result of COVID 19

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the Annual report on the Statement of Purpose for Registered Children’s Homes and thanked Tom Brailsford and Laura Caunce for their contributions.
2. That an updated Statement of Purpose be submitted to a future meeting as a result of the upcoming changes referred to above.

12 Ofsted Improvement Board Update

Tom Brailsford provided a verbal update and reported that the Improvement Notice had now been lifted. This now gives the opportunity to rethink the focus of the Improvement Board going forward as a means of getting all areas of Children’s Services to being classed as outstanding.

RESOLVED –

The Board noted the update on the Ofsted Improvement Plan and offered congratulations to all staff who had contributed to this positive outcome.

13 Mental Health Support for Children in Care and Thriving Kirklees Update

The Board received a report providing an overview of the Emotional wellbeing and mental health support provided to Children in Care and the commissioning review of the Thriving Kirklees Partnership.

Kirklees has commissioned dedicated services to ensure that Children in Care receive a timely, high quality service. A dedicated multi-disciplinary team is embedded within Kirklees Council Children’s services to provide holistic support to children and families. Within the team are a number of specialised clinicians employed by South West Yorkshire Foundation Trust (SWYFT) to provide a high level of clinical support to children and their carers.

The team includes a Clinical Psychologist who, as well as providing direct mental health support to children and families, also provides clinical support and advice to the clinical teams and staff in residential settings. This includes supporting their learning and development and providing training.

Corporate Parenting Board – 4 March 2020

There is a dedicated Child Psychotherapist who provides in depth support and therapy, particularly to younger children and their carers, providing rapid access to this specialist service.

As a result of a recommendation in the 2016 Ofsted report, a Senior Mental Health Practitioner role was commissioned to work with Care Leavers (17+ years). The practitioner provides direct therapeutic work with young people, including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Moodmasters group therapy and holds drop-in sessions at no. 11 and no.12. It was reported that the drop-in sessions had to be postponed during the Covid restrictions but work is currently underway to re-open these facilities.

Additionally there is facility through Northorpe Hall Trust for Children in care to be referred for support from the Children's Emotional Wellbeing Service (ChEWS) where they have priority access to therapists and counsellors.

It was reported that currently there is no waiting list for Children in Care. In the past year 53 children have accessed the service. The average waiting time from referral to first appointment has been 4 weeks, compared to 20 weeks for the equivalent general service. The length of intervention for Children in Care is, on average, 15 weeks longer than that experienced by a young person in the ChEWS service.

With regard to the Thriving Kirklees Partnership it was explained that a report will be produced in early October with a summary of findings and initial recommendations. Stakeholder events will be held to inform an action plan, which will be developed between October and December.

RESOLVED-

1. That the following issues be considered as part of the scoping process for an updated Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

- when looking at early years, parental and maternal mental health be considered
- The importance of support following through a child's full life course, recognising adverse child experiences and the merits of a trauma informed approach.

2. That the Thriving Kirklees Action Plan be submitted to a future meeting of the Board.

14 Risk Register

The Board discussed whether it would be useful for the Board to be sited on relevant areas of the Council's Risk Register as a means of informing their work going forward.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Lawson would contact officers to discuss the matter.

15 Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2020/21

The Board considered the agenda plan of the Corporate Parenting Board for 2020/21.

RESOLVED-

That the agenda plan be noted

16 Dates of Future Meetings

RESOLVED -

The Board noted the future meeting dates:

- 3rd Nov 2020, 10am
- 13th Jan 21, 10am
- 23rd Feb 21, 10am
- 23th March 21, 10am

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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

**COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE MEETINGS ETC
DECLARATION
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

Name of Councillor

Item in which you have an interest	Type of interest (eg a disclosable pecuniary interest or an "Other Interest")	Does the nature of the interest require you to withdraw from the meeting while the item in which you have an interest is under consideration? [Y/N]	Brief description of your interest

Signed:

Dated:

NOTES

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your disclosable pecuniary interests under the new national rules. Any reference to spouse or civil partner includes any person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or as if they were your civil partner.

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner, undertakes.

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses.

Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority -

- under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
- which has not been fully discharged.

Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.

Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.

Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) - the landlord is your council or authority; and the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.

Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -

(a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and

(b) either -

the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or

if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

Corporate Parenting Board – Highlight Report

Date of Board: 3rd November 2020

Data is at 30 September 2020, unless stated otherwise. Benchmarking Source: DfE Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT). Benchmarking data is from March 2019 unless stated otherwise. SN = Statistical Neighbours average, Eng. = England average. Where no equivalent published data is available, “N/A” is shown.

Children Entering Care, Children in Care and Placement Stability

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Oct 19	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	SN	Eng.
4.02.01 Children in care - numbers in care per 10,000 of age 0-17 population.	Per 10,000 population aged 0-17	64.0 (641)	68.7 (688)	68.8 (689)	68.6 (687)	91.6	65.0
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
4.02.04 Children in care by placement within and outside the LA boundary: Total placed outside Kirklees and more than 20 miles from home address	% (number)	12.6% (81/ 641)	12.1% (83/ 688)	11.8% (81/ 689)	12.2% (84/ 687)	12.6%	15.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
4.05.01 Placement Stability Within Year - LAC with three or more placements	% (number)	6.2% (40)	8.0% (55)	8.1% (56)	7.7% (53)	9.3%	10.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
4.05.04 Social Worker change of LAC in care 12+ Months: Number of Social Worker changes	Number	314	293	293	267	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↔	↔	↓		
Average number of SW changes	Average	0.66	0.63	0.63	0.56	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↔	↔	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- We have seen an increasing trend in the number and rate of children in care from 64.0 (641 children) in Oct 19 to 68.6 (687 children) in Sep 20, albeit with a small reduction in Sep 20. The current 12-month average for Kirklees is 67.3 (674 children), above our 31 March 2019 published rate of 62.0 and the England 2019 rate of 65.0, but below our Statistical Neighbours 2019 rate of 91.6.
- The Legal Gateway and Permanence Panels continue to support consistency regarding decision making and planning around placement moves for children and young people. A two weekly External Placement Review Panel is now in place, to provide better oversight of children who are not placed in council provision. We have undertaken an External Placement Review of all children who are placed out of Local Authority to consider their care planning and explore options of returning to the local area if this is in line with meeting the children and young person’s needs, we have already made progress reducing this number placed outside of Kirklees and more than twenty miles away from Kirklees from 127 in 2017 to 84 in September 2020.
- For Placement Stability the placement support team are very active, and we have implemented innovative solutions to support several placements. An example of plans to limit unplanned moves is as follows: where a foster carer or placement is given 28-day notice, the Team Manager will coordinate a stability meeting within 5 working days to look at what can be provided to avoid placement breakdown and to maintain the current placement.

- Whilst the data shows improvement in certain areas we are focussing on the negative data particularly as it relates to three and four placement changes in the previous 12-month period.
- Whilst social work change data has improved compared to the previous month, we are mindful of the impact this has on our children and young people and we will continue to focus on the retention of staff and consistency in case allocation.

What do we want to improve?

- Placement stability - we will also use lessons learned to inform practice. Always have Placement Stability meetings in place. We are currently reviewing our model of practice and have established much better links with our supervisory social workers to help with better support to our foster carers.
- Improve allocated social worker stability.
- Reduce number of children placed more than 20 miles from their home address. We aim to recruit more local foster carers to provide more local placement options.

Looked After Children Reviews, Visits and Missing

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Oct 19	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	SN	Eng.
4.06.01: LAC Reviews Within Statutory Timescale	%	96.3%	96.8%	97.0%	97.6%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
4.07.01: LAC visits within statutory time-scale: % of LAC visited in line with Kirklees Practice Standards	%	86.5% (553/ 639)	94.6% (649/ 686)	91.6% (631/ 689)	93.1% (639/ 686)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
4.09.02: Missing children: a. No. of LAC having at least one Missing episode per month	% (number)	4.5% (29)	3.5% (24)	2.6% (18)	3.2% (22)	10%	11%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
b. No. of LAC that have more than one missing episode in the month (repeat Mispers)	% (number)	44.8% (13)	50.0% (12)	55.6% (10)	31.8% (7)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
4.09.03: Independent Return Interviews for LAC offered within 72 hours of the child being located	% (number)	48.0% (12/25)	70.6% (12/17)	80.0% (8/10)	70.0% (7/10)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- 49 requests for Initial Review forms were received by the Child Protection and Review unit between 1st June and 30 September 2020 relating to 82 children in total – 73 of whom remain Looked After as at end September 2020. As noted elsewhere, the total number of Children Looked After in Kirklees continues to increase. For all referrals received in June to August children and young people were allocated an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) within 24 hours and Initial Child Looked After Reviews were arranged for all but one child within 4 weeks of them becoming Looked After.
- Between June - September 2020, the Child Protection and Review Unit held 613 Looked After Review Meetings, with 168 meetings held in June 178 in July and 193 in September. 98% of these were held within timescales.
- Independent Reviewing Officers closely monitor Child Looked After Review timescales to ensure that this high percentage is maintained / increased upon, whilst a clear rationale is recorded on a child's file if there are circumstances which result in a Child's Review meeting not being held within statutory time scales. Mid-way reviews are embedded into practice and this continues to demonstrate improved evidence of Independent Reviewing Officer's oversight on children's files /of planning for children.

- In September 2020, 28 children and young people were supported by an Advocate from the Children's Right's Team at their Looked After Review. 14 of these were for children living out of Kirklees.
- At the end of September 2020, 30 Children Looked After were supported by an Independent Visitor together with 4 care leavers over the age of 18.
- There has been a slight increase with regards to the number of Children in Care who have received a statutory visit in line with practice standards we continue to monitor the visits as part of our service performance meetings. The introduction of Advanced Practitioners within the service will further enhance the improvement with regards to our performance.

What do we want to improve?

- The Service Managers are increasing focus on statutory visit compliance to improve the performance. Regular performance meetings are held within the service to ensure that we can improve our performance.
- Independent Reviewing Officers to continue to liaise closely with Social Workers to ensure that children are enabled to participate in their Reviews to ensure their voice is heard, which includes being made aware of their right to an Independent Advocate at the earliest opportunity. The IRO Service has liaised with Children's Rights Team and an IT Project Officer to make the Child's Review Participation forms available on a secure website, to enable direct access for children. IRO's will continue to promote this website to children, their carer's and social workers to help achieve increased input of children's views into their Reviews.
- Due to Covid-19 the service is exploring available technologies to help improve the current ways of working. The Service will be seeking to gain the views of children, parents and carers about their experiences of Looked After Reviews during Covid-19 to inform ongoing service developments.

Looked After Children Education Outcomes

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Autumn Term 19/20	Spring Term 19/20	Summer Term 19/20	Benchmarking	
					SN	Eng.
4.10.02 Personal Education Plans (PEP) up to date (current school age LAC with PEP in the last term)	%	96.8%	85.8%	100%		
	Direction of Travel	-	↓	↑		

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Oct 19	Jun 20	Jul 20	Sep 20	SN	Eng.
Initial PEP completed within 10 school days of Virtual School being notified child came into care	%	N/A	100%	100%	78%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↔	↓		
4.10.05 LAC Persistent Absentees	%	7.9% (27)	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.2%	10.6%
	Direction of Travel		-	-	-		
LAC with a mid-year school move	%	1.0%	10	0	28	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		

NB: We are unable to report on the Persistent Absentee measure because of the COVID-19 lockdown implemented in March and the resultant changes to the educational offer.

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- 100% of PEPs have been completed within the Summer Term in-line with the new termly processes following the reduction in the Spring Term due to the impact of Covid-19. The Virtual School is currently leading on all PEPs since the full lockdown was implemented. These are all currently virtually held meetings.
- 78% of initial PEPs have been completed within 10 school days of notification to the Virtual School since 01/09/2020.
 - 2 siblings were due to SW availability
 - 2 siblings were due to delay in notification
- We continue to work with social work teams to improve both PEP and initial PEP completion and the quality assurance of PEPs. We have successfully moved to termly PEPs to meet statutory requirements.
- 89.3% of school moves have been carefully planned across the service to ensure a smooth transition with no break in provision, with 96.4% within the statutory timescale of 20 working days.

What do we want to improve?

- Our initial focus will be the transition back into education following the Covid-19 school closures (vulnerable offer).
- We will continue to have a focus on termly PEP completion with transition support as the key focus area.
- Attendance / Persistent Absence (PA) remains a high priority and all pupils with attendance less than 90% have had a PA plan in place agreed by all professionals working with the young person. We will need to be mindful of some of the emotional issues for our young people as they return and respond creatively where there are issues or concerns. The attendance information is not comparable with previous data due to the impact of Covid-19 e.g. illness, self-isolation, bubble closures
- We will continue to maintain a strong focus on pupils not in full-time education provision. This will not be an immediate priority as many young people will have a phased transition back into education. We will look to ensure a return to full time education as soon as possible but these situations can be very complex.
- We will continue to work across service to reduce the number of school moves (2018-19 (82), 2019-20 (64)) and to reduce the number of young people with a break in provision whenever possible.

Looked After Children Health

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Oct 19	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	SN	Eng.
4.11.11 Dental Checks within last 12 months - timeliness	%	79.3%	73.3%	70.1%	64.8%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
4.11.12 Initial health Assessments completed on time - within 20 days	%	87.4%	90.9%	88.3%	89.2%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
4.11.13 Annual health assessments: a: Under 5's 6 month Developmental Assessments -percentage up to date	%	92.3%	83.3%	82.1%	88.8%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
b: Over 5s Annual Health Assessments – percentage up to date	%	96.8%	89.6%	88.5%	89.2%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
4.11.16 No. of LAC in care more than 12 month and identified as having a substance misuse problem during the last year	% (number)	1.05% (5)	0.43% (2)	0.42% (2)	0.42% (2)	2.8%	4.0%
	Direction of Travel		↔	↓	↔		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- Initial health assessments:** Kirklees Local Authority (LA) rolling 12-month data shows in September **89.2%** were completed in timescales. The current Covid situation requires virtual assessments to take place via phone or Skype by the Paediatricians. This has been challenging bringing all parties together to inform the assessments. Monthly Locala data for Sept shows that **100%** of the IHA's were carried out in timescales.
- Review health assessments:** Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **88.8%** and **89.2%** of the 'Developmental' assessments (under 5yrs old) and 'Annual' assessments (over 5 yrs. old) respectively, were completed in statutory timescales. An issue with rolling data is that positive previous months mitigate for poor results. This does not allow for a clear picture of the current situation, to see if there are improvements monthly. Locala monthly data for September shows that **55% & 60%** of developmental and annual RHA's respectively, were completed by the exact date they were due. **96%** were completed in September, the month they were due. The re-deployment of community nurses, due to the Covid NHS England directive, who support the completion of up to 48% of the assessments, resulted in the 3 LAC nurses completing all due assessments since May by phone. October has seen a return to some face to face assessments, as community nurses return to support the work.
- Dental Checks within last 12 months:** Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **64.8%** of LAC have been recorded as having received a dental check. The closure of dentists during the Covid lockdown and the subsequent re-opening only to do emergency work, has prevented looked after children accessing routine checks. This downward trend will continue for a long time, as routine checks are not available and then the data will need to catch up from subsequent RHA's. Discussions with the Kirklees Dental Commissioner, to ask for vulnerable children to be given priority routine dental checks was declined, stating that no vulnerable group can be given priority while surgeries are not up to capacity.
- Registered at dentist (Data only from Locala):** Locala monthly data for September showed that **63%** of under 5-year-olds (excluding U18 months) and **96%** of over 5-year-olds were registered with a dentist. The under 5's is showing a dramatic downward trend from 100% in June. This will be children 'new into care' and those who have moved placements, affected by the closure of dental practices and not accepting new patients during the pandemic.

- **Substance misuse:** 0.42% of looked after young people (2 individuals) were identified at their last review health assessment as having a dependant problem with substances. Consideration must be given to the difficulty in obtaining an accurate figure, as it is dependent on admission of the issue, the illegality of it and they may not wish to share the information. Any young person misusing substances at any level is offered support. Young people who refuse support, are discussed with the local Substance Misuse Service, to try to offer an alternative response e.g. group work or access through other agencies. The Health Team are looking at using a verified tool, to provide a more uniform method of assessing the level of need. Several young people identified previously, have now left care commonly due to their age.

Looked After Children Convictions

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Quarter				*Benchmarking
		Oct-Dec 19/20 Q3	Jan-Mar 19/20 Q4	Apr-Jun 20/21 Q1	Jul-Sep 20/21 Q2	
4.12.01 Number of young people who have been looked after continually for 12 months or more aged between 10 and 17 who have offended and received a substantive outcome (Youth Caution/ Conditional Caution or a Court Order)	%	0.86% (3/347)	0.29% (1/347)	1.24% (4/321)	1.87% (6/321)	Eng.: 3.00% SN: 3.46% Y&H: 3.00%
	Direction of Travel	↓	↓	↑	↑	

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- For the year 2018/2019 65.8% of CIC young people have successfully completed their interventions which in comparison with the previous year is a decrease of 10% but is however a much-improved picture from 3 years ago when less than 30% of CIC young people successfully completed their interventions. For the 4th quarter of this year (Jan to March 20) 93.7% of CIC young people successfully completed their orders- a huge improvement on the same period in 2018/19 where only 50% completed successfully.
- For the year 2019/2020 90.9% of CIC young people have successfully completed their interventions which in comparison with the last year is an increase of over 25% (65.8%).
- For the 6-month period April to Sept 20, 82.6% of CIC young people successfully completed their interventions. Whilst this performance is slightly worse than the same period of the previous year, it remains in line with that of the general population successfully completing their intervention.
- There is a continued decrease in the numbers of CIC young people offending however this remains a small number of young people compared to the total CIC cohort. The output for the 19/20 year shows a reduction of over 2% of CIC young people convicted of an offence.

What do we want to improve?

- Continued reduction in the numbers of CIC young people offending. The overall cohort for the 20/21 year is smaller than the 19/20 year (321 compared to 347), but through continued interventions by the YOT, restorative processes, liaison with Children's Homes and creative out of court disposals it is likely the offending rate will continue to fall.
- To maintain the high level of successful outcomes achieved by CIC young people, through creative interventions, restorative processes, liaison with Children's Homes and the continued development of the Youth Engagement Service.

Care Leavers

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Oct 19	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	SN	Eng.
5.01.04 Children in care aged 17 years and 4 months with a Personal Advisor	%	76.6%	73.7%	90.0%	78.2%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
5.01.08 Local Authority In Touch with Care Leavers	%	83.3%	93.4%	91.1%	95.4%	93.0%	95.3%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
5.01.09 Care Leavers in suitable accommodation	%	77.3%	86.7%	84.6%	88.2%	89.3%	85.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
5.01.10 Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training (EET)	%	50.6%	49.2%	49.0%	52.7%	51.8%	52.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
5.01.11 Number of Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan that is up to date	%	94.4%	94.9%	95.0%	95.8%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- *Contact with care leavers* – There was a significant increase during June and July 2020 with a slight decrease in August 2020 there has been an increase in September 2020. We continue to maintain a high percentage of care leavers we are in touch with, currently in touch with 95,4% of care leavers, this must be viewed in the context of this group all being aged 18 plus. In some situations, young people are not wanting to keep contact with their Personal Advisor, the team work innovatively to keep in touch, we have a best practice protocol in place.
- *Number of young people in suitable accommodation* – Performance on this indicator improved to a 12-month high of 86.7% in Jul 20 although a reduction to 84.6% was seen in Aug 20. In September 2020 we had an increase to 88.2%. In August we 6 young people who had been allocated a tenancy however due to the recent lockdown housing services were in the process of undertaking legionella testing on these properties. Due to the numbers of properties that require these tests there has been some delay in these young people being able to move into their properties. We have worked closely with our housing colleagues who have agreed to prioritise the properties for our young people. We have now been successful in resolving this issue for 4 young people. We continue to maintain strong links with KNH and Housing and the Housing Panel is enabling us to ensure that suitable accommodation is available. We have strong links with private housing providers and are considering how collectively we can improve our skills for independence training. We have continued to provide virtual life skills and pre-tenancy training during COVID19.
- *Kirklees Commitment to Care Leavers* – Unfortunately during the last few months our drop-in centres at no11 and no12 have been closed due to the COVID19 pandemic. However, we are currently working with colleagues in asset management to be in a position where we can open our drop-in centres to provide a safe space for our young people. We are formulating a plan and we are hopeful that we will be able to reopen in November 2020.
- *Personal Advisors* – There has been a significant increase in performance on this indicator from 73.7% in Jul 20 to 90.0% at the end of Aug 20. In September 2020 we have had a decrease however we are hopeful that we are now in a strong position to resolve this due to several new Personal Advisors joining the service. However, 100% of the cohort do have either an allocated PA or an allocated Social Worker. We have been able to strengthen our pathway planning in relation to developing timely transitions with young people.
- *Education Employment Training* – Our performance in relation to Employment, Education and Training (EET) indicator is a focus for improvement. We have a C&K Careers Advisor in the Leaving Care Service. We have a pro-active multi agency group to improve opportunities in partnership working and there is a real desire to ensure our young people are afforded the best of opportunities

in relation to EET. Due to the recent COVID19 pandemic some of our young people have unfortunately been in a situation where they have either been furloughed or made redundant from their employment to offer support to our young people we have recently established a virtual clinic for our young people where support is available from our careers advisor. This has led a slight increase to 52.7% in September 2020.

- *Pathway Plans* – We have seen a slight improvement in the numbers of young people who have an up to date pathway plan. We continue to work with the Personal Advisors to ensure pathway plans are completed in a timely manner to meet targets with a focus going forward on the improvement of the quality of plans, the involvement of young people and ensuring we capture their wishes and feelings.

What do we want to improve?

- *Number of young people with a pathway plan* – The number of young people with a pathway plan has slightly decreased. Work is currently ongoing within the service and it is expected that the measure will improve further. We continue to work with the Personal Advisors to ensure pathway plans are completed in a timely manner to meet targets with a focus going forward on the improvement of the quality of plans, the involvement of young people and ensuring we capture their wishes and feelings. We are currently undertaking work to analyse the decline in young people placed in suitable accommodation.

Adoption

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Oct 19	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	SN	Eng.
5.02.01 Number of children adopted as a percentage of children leaving care (12 month rolling period)	% (number)	15.9% (31)	9.3% (18)	8.2% (16)	8.6% (17)	18.5%	14.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↑		
5.02.03 A1 Average timescale (days) between the child coming into care and being placed with the adopter (Financial year to date)	Number	460.8	542.3	542.3	535.7	512.4 (15-18)	486.0 (15-18)
	Direction of Travel		↑	↔	↓		
5.02.05 A2 Average timescale (days) between Kirklees council receiving court authority to place a child and the council deciding to match the child with an adoptive family	Number	218.9	253.0	253.0	233.8	215.3 (15-18)	201.0 (15-18)
	Direction of Travel		↓	↔	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- To the end of Sep 20, 8.6% of children leaving care in a 12-month rolling period had been adopted, equating to 17 children. At the level of performance to Sep 20, Kirklees is significantly below the England rate of 12.0% (2019) and the Statistical Neighbours rate of 17.7% (2019).
- The average timescale has been increasing and stood at 542.3 in Jul and Aug 20. There has been a slight improvement this month to 535.7 days. This remains above the Statistical Neighbours average of 381.0 days and the England average of 376.0 days from the Adoption Scorecard (3-year average outcome to March 2019). Kirklees performance on the Scorecard was 388 days, so the average timescale has increased since this time.
- The average timescale decreased slightly to 253.0 days in Jul 20 and remained at that level in Aug. There has been a further slight improvement in Sep 20 to 233.8 days. Overall this remains above the Statistical Neighbours average of 174.0 days and the England average of 178.0 from the Adoption

Scorecard (3-year average outcome to March 2019). Kirklees performance on the Scorecard was 132.0 days, so there has been an increase in the average timescale since this time.

- We have established weekly clinics to support children's social workers who are undertaking child permanence reports, sibling assessments and considering whether a plan for adoption is appropriate. This is a joint initiative between the Assessment & Intervention Service and One Adoption and will be supported by regular training and workshops. One Adoption continue to attend legal gateway and permanence panels on a weekly basis to track children with a plan for adoption and to ensure a family finder is allocated.
- If an adoption placement ceases, then One Adoption have a 'disruption review' and their new procedure is on our procedures website. They will be working with Kirklees staff on the implementation of this process. We have a structured Agency Decision Making process in relation to adoption planning. This includes legal and medical advice as well as advice from One Adoption West Yorkshire.
- Adoption Support Fund offers funding for ongoing support to adoptive families and children. There has been an increase in successful applications for Kirklees children that resulted in an increase of support, training and therapeutic input.
- The progression of Adoption cases is now monitored by Head of Service at the monthly permanence tracking panel ensuring a more robust approach to avoiding drift and delay.
- During the recent COVID19 we have had some difficulties in relation to being able to progress transition plans however as restrictions have been lifted we are now in a much stronger position in being able to progress these plans to be able to move children into their potential adoptive placement. Because of the COVID 19 pandemic we have experienced delays in relation to court hearings for application for adoption orders again as restrictions have lifted this is now an improving picture. We recently successfully had three children who are now subject to adoption orders we also have three children where court dates are to be held during the next two weeks.

What do we want to improve?

- Develop an even closer working relationship between One Adoption West Yorkshire and Kirklees social workers and managers, to ensure we maximise the potential benefits of the regional adoption agency in Kirklees. Regular meetings between the Service Managers in One Adoption and Assessment and Intervention have been established which will improve areas of communication and partnership working to assist timely adoption for our children.

Fostering

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Oct 19	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	SN	Eng.
6.02.07 Total New Carer Approvals in Month:	Number	6	1	1	4	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↔	↑		
In-house Fostering approvals in the month	Number	4	1	1	4	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↔	↑		
In-house Fostering De-registrations in the month	Number	1	2	3	3	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↔		
6.02.09 Placements split: a. In-house foster placements	Number	225	230	231	243	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
b. Family and friend placements	Number	85	114	114	115	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↔	↑		
c. Independent Fostering Agency Placements	Number	179	193	191	185	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↔	↓	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- September 2020 saw 4 carer approvals (1 Kirklees carer and 3 Family & Friends carers), higher than in Aug 20 (including F&F carers). The rolling 12-month total to Sep 20 was 34 households. There were 3 in-house fostering de-registrations in Sep 20 (all F&F carers). The rolling 12-months total for in-house de-registrations is 31. This gives a net gain of 3 households. The rolling 12-month approvals figure is 50 including IFA carers.
- The number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers increased to 243 in Sep, compared to 231 in Aug and above the 12-month average of 234.
- The number of F&F placements increased to 115 in Sep 20. This is below the 12-month high of 118 in Jun 20 (Note that this figure includes Reg 24 placements). The 12-month average is 102.
- The Sep 20 figure of 185 Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements is a reduction over the 191 seen in Aug 20 and the 12-month high in Apr 20 of 197. The 12-month average is 188.
- During to last few months regular meetings have been held between Kirklees Fostering Network and the Fostering Service to offer support during the recent lockdown and to address some of the issues this has raised. We have provided emergency payments to our foster carers to assist with the extra pressures created during the last few months. We have provided laptops to our carers to ensure that the children in their care have had access to online educational provision.
- At the end of March 2020, we had a number of potential carers offering placement we have undertaken a number of Regulation 24 assessments to provide emergency placements. From these carers we currently have five households where we are undertaking assessments for them to be considered as foster carers.

What do we want to improve?

- Recruitment and retention of foster carers is a priority as is reducing the use of fostering agency care. We have recently undertaken a piece of work with our recruitment process and as a result we are developing a pathway with a more streamlined approach. We continue to develop the Recruitment Team to increase numbers of Kirklees carers and will have focussed campaigns for respite care that can be a softer introduction to fostering, and teenagers exhibiting troubled and troublesome behaviours.
- A recruitment and retention focus for our foster carers is a key strand of our improvement work and the Service Manager is working closely with the Recruitment Team to ensure that the numbers of assessments increase and that they are completed in a timely fashion. Due to the recent COVID19 we have been unable to hold live recruitment events however we have been innovative in creating

virtual events. We continue to pursue a range of recruitment activity: To improve our internet search presence to prospective carers we have entered into an agreement with “Google Ads”; an advertising campaign highlighting the need for Forever Families for our children in foster care is currently taking place.

- We are currently working with the National Fostering Network to implement two Foster Carer Mockingbird hubs in Kirklees. This model facilitates additional support to specific carers. We are currently in the process of recruiting two liaison workers to support the implementation of the mockingbird model.
- We currently also have 9 households who are being assessed as potential foster carers in order to increase our in-house capacity.
- The Service Manager is working closely with the Kirklees Fostering Network to continue to develop our fostering service offer and ensure that carers are supported appropriately. Foster carers now have membership of the Corporate Parenting Board. We have launched a new package of carer benefits including access to the employee health scheme, and access to the staff discounted shopping scheme.
- We continue to pursue a range of recruitment activity: To improve our internet search presence to prospective carers we have entered into an agreement with “Google Ads”; an advertising campaign highlighting the need for Forever Families for our children in foster care is currently taking place.

Performance Intelligence Unit – October 2020

Appendix – Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
A&I	Assessment & Intervention (part of Family Support & Child Protection)
ADCS	Association of Directors of Children's Services
ASYE	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (for a newly qualified Social Worker)
BSM	Business Support Manager
BSO	Business Support Officer
CIC	Child(ren) in Care (see also CLA and LAC)
CIN	Child(ren) in Need
CLA	Child(ren) Looked After (also see CIC and LAC)
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CPRU	Child Protection & Review Unit
CSC	Children's Social Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CWD	Children with a Disability
D&A	Duty & Advice (part of Family Support & Child Protection)
DCS	Disabled Children's Service / Director of Children's Services
EET	Education, Employment or Training
EHC	Education, Health and Care (Plan)
EITS	Early Intervention and Targeted Support
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
Form F	Assessment form for approval of Foster Carers
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HOS	Head of Service
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
IHA	Initial Health Assessment (for a Looked After Child)
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
KNH	Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Child(ren) (also see CIC and CLA)
LAIT	Local Authority Interactive Tool (DfE tool for access to nationally published data)
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NQSW	Newly Qualified Social Worker
PA	Personal Advisor (to Care Leavers)
PEP	Personal Education Plan (for a Looked After Child)
PLO	Public Law Outline
QSW	Qualified Social Worker
RCPC	Review Child Protection Conference
RHA	Review Health Assessment (for a Looked After Child)
S17	Section 17 of the Children Act – Relates to Children in Need
S20	Section 20 of the Children Act – Relates to a child accommodated by the LA
S47	Section 47 of the Children Act – Relates to Child Protection
SDQ	Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SM	Service Manager

Term	Description
SN	Statistical Neighbours (closest match Local Authorities for benchmarking)
SW	Social Worker
TM	Team Manager
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child
Y&H	Yorkshire and the Humber
YOT	Youth Offending Team

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Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board
Date: 3.11.20
Title of report: Virtual School Headteacher report 2019-2020

Purpose of report: To brief the Corporate Parenting Board on how the Virtual School has been working during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

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?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable – for information
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Jo-Anne Sanders for Mel Meggs
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Not applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Not applicable
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr V Kendrick (Children)

Electoral wards affected: None

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

Have you considered GDPR? Yes GDPR considered no service users identified

1. Summary

Kirklees Virtual School – Position Statement

Context

Ofsted – June 2019

The effective virtual school has high aspirations for the progress and well-being of children in its care. The virtual school has developed increasingly purposeful links with schools and colleagues in social care to check pupils' progress and provide additional support. Personal education plans are thorough and clearly capture the views of children, young people and carers on the support they receive. The virtual headteacher has supported the creative use of additional funding to improve attendance, provide extra tuition and promote children's involvement in wider experiences. As a result, children in care have achieved outcomes that are largely in line with children in care nationally. Additional support for young people over the age of 16 is encouraging increasing numbers to remain in education, employment or training.

Context July 2020 following the Covid-19 lockdown period

The role of the Virtual School is clearly defined in *Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children statutory guidance for local authorities February 2018*. Kirklees Virtual School currently works with all young people in the care of Kirklees from the age of 3 through to age 18 when they become care leavers. This is delivered by an EYFS / primary team and a secondary / Post 16 team. (Appendix A – Virtual School Staffing Structure).

The Virtual School Team support and challenge schools and other professionals to enrich the learning experience of our children and young people in care by striving to close the achievement gap through targeted support and intervention when needed. These key areas of work include:-

- Being proactive in supporting Social Workers with school applications (where a school move is unavoidable) and supporting the transition into the new educational placement.
- Leading and coordinating all initial Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings when a young person comes into care – or has turned 3 – to ensure that as much support is in place as soon as possible within their school or educational placement.
- Allocating all young people to an Achievement Coordinator or Teacher, who will be responsible for monitoring and tracking their cohort.
- Reviewing attainment and progress data on a termly basis to identify level of need and intervention and using this data to plan our support.
- Providing the specialist educational challenge and support in PEP Review Meetings according to need and liaising closely with Social Workers and Designated Teachers in these cases.
- Providing advice and guidance to Designated Teachers and coordinating individualised targets and support for our young people to accelerate their progress in education. These are funded through Pupil Premium Plus and their impact is reviewed as part of the PEP process.
- Commissioning work across services to prioritise work for our young people with the Educational Psychology Service, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Assessment and Commissioning Team (SENDACT) and the Early Years Outcomes Team.

- Strengthening partnership working with senior managers in Social Care to ensure that education is central to any decision taken about our children and young people in care.
- Closely monitoring attendance and establishing plans to improve engagement
- Offering support, guidance and training to Foster Carers, Head Teachers, Designated Teachers, Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officer's to enable them to work together to put education at the centre of all work with our young people.

As you can see from the above our role is crucial during this unprecedented time and it is very much "business as usual" for us even though the world feels to be a very different place.

The responsibility for a young person's education rests with their education provider. Our children and young people should currently be attending their education provision or there should be a Risk Assessment in place detailing how work appropriate for the individual young person is being set and monitored, and what support is being offered to them.

Our role is to support and challenge all providers to deliver education during this exceptional period with each individual young person at the centre of our approach.

These are some of the current areas of focus.

Contact and support for carers

- We have worked to create a centrally held email contact list for our Kirklees carers and have made initial contact with them, reminding them about the support we can offer and sharing our contact details.
- We have also provided carers with links to the DfE suggested resources for home education to enrich those being provided to them directly from school.
- This will enable us to give them access to specific sections in the electronic Personal Educational Plan (ePEP system) to support the completion of the learner view section (via the Squiddle module) prior to any PEP meetings.
- All children and young people have an allocated member of the Virtual School team providing a key contact for support.

Contact and support for children and young people.

- Our ePEP system allows us to support young people through the setting of targets, funding can be requested at any time and resources supplied for them by their school or education provider.
- Targets are being creatively set and managed to take account of the need to continue to support the education of those young people who are currently not accessing a provision based offer.
- Many of our young people already have the electronic devices and resources that they need at home.
- For others this has meant that we can get resources to them quickly in these difficult times, wherever they are in the country.
- Most young people already have digital devices for working at home, and we have issued an additional 104 since 30.03.20.
- A further 85 digital devices are also being issued through the fostering services team
- 42 young people have requested that they continue to access additional 1:1 tuition remotely.
- We have also approved a further 305 targets for other educational and emotional health and well-being support at home.
- We respond supportively to any request at this time and have a system that enables us to do this efficiently and effectively.

Young people not on a school roll or at risk of withdrawal of their offer

- We currently have 3 young people not on a school roll – we have contributed to Risk Assessments with the Social Worker as a priority for these young people.

- It is our role to ensure that there is work and resources available where possible.
- It is our role to work with other professionals to secure an education provision asap.

Risk Assessments

- Social Workers have been asked to coordinate and complete Risk Assessments for all young people who are not attending a provision and we have currently contributed to all requests.
- We have a particular focus on how the schools are “keeping in touch” and monitoring work - offering challenge and support.
- In most cases the support offered by the Social Worker and School have been very positive
- We have flagged concerns that have been raised within risk assessments so that they can be resolved/monitored by the young persons allocated worker from Virtual School in partnership with social care and the educational providers
- However, this has also raised concerns where a school may have not had an appropriate educational offer for some of our young people and we have challenged the schools in these situations.
- We have taken the lead on securing brokerage provision where a risk assessment has identified that the young person’s usual provision is closed, and alternative provision is needed to support placement stability

Attendance and monitoring overview

- We have developed an attendance and monitoring spreadsheet to keep an overview of the ever changing situation for our children and young people
- This has been coordinated across the service with input from the Virtual School, Social Work managers, Welfare Call and the Kirklees attendance data from schools.
- The information is collated, updated and circulated weekly across the service.
- On 20/07/20 239/446 (53.6%) school aged young people were attending their provision
- On 20/07/20 24/50 (48%) EY children (aged 2-3) were attending their provision
- We have been proactively working with Social Care to complete risk assessments for the young people who are working at home.
- There are particular challenges for the EYFS, Post-16 and Specialist provisions and we are working across service to support young people at an individual level.

Initial PEP’s

- Since 20.03.20 (lockdown) there has been an increase of 56 children and young people coming into care, with a further 23 young people turning 3.
- Except for 2 young people we have been coordinating and conducting all initial PEP’s (virtually) within the statutory timescales of 10 working days.
- These are particularly important during this period of lockdown to ensure that the young person and carers have access to all the support and resources they may need as soon as possible on entry to care.

Covid-19 PEP’s and squiddle

- We have worked with eGOV (the ePEP system provider) and other Virtual Schools nationally to produce a Covid-19 PEP that enables relevant information to be collected during the PEP meeting for a young person who is attending their provision, or who is being educated at home.
- The Virtual School are coordinating all PEPs this term (some will be joint skype meetings but others may be a summary of individual conversations), to pull together all of the information for PEPs– this is in response to this exceptional situation as we do not usually attend all PEP meetings.
- We will ensure that there is at least one completed PEP for all our young people this term.
- The Squiddle module is also a new addition to the ePEP system, this is so that we are able to capture the views of our young people, even when they are being educated remotely at home.
- The questions for the young people to respond to have been tailored specifically to capture the young person’s views in response to being educated in the current Covid-19 situation.

Prioritising PEP's for this term

- We have completed 666 PEP's during the summer term.
- We are currently prioritising PEP's as below:-
 - Initial PEP's For young people who are new into care
 - Children and young people not on a school roll
 - Young people who did not have a PEP last term
 - Transition planning / PEP's (including NEET)

School transition planning (to discuss during the PEP meeting)

- We now need to start thinking about how we can best support transition in these uncertain times and will work with the wider system locally, regionally and nationally to plan for this group of children.
- Transition planning is being looked at creatively and we are looking to ensure that all young people have an appropriate transition plan.
- It is our role to ensure that all information is transferred from one school / provider to another and that the necessary resources/support is in place when the young person starts.

Young people undergoing SENDACT Statutory Assessment

- This should be progressing under the usual timescales wherever possible and in line with Government advice and guidance .
- Our role is to highlight where this is not the case and work to move forwards without drift and delay.

Self-Evaluation Summary September 2020

Our Key Strengths	Our key areas for development	Actions we are taking to move forward
<p>We are well-resourced and have an experienced and effective team who work with all young people to monitor their educational progress, therefore we know our young people well and their progress and attainment are reviewed at least termly so that we can intervene as appropriate.</p> <p>We work well with other professionals including Social Workers (SW), Designated Teacher's, Carer's, Special Educational Needs Assessment and Commissioning Team (SENACT), Education Psychologist's (EP) to support and challenge others to provide the best for our young people.</p> <p>We have raised the profile of Personal Education Plans across service and completed initial PEP's in line with the new statutory timescales.</p> <p>We have robust systems and processes which provide accurate data linked to priorities and statutory duties.</p> <p>We have clear priorities for improving the work of the Virtual School (VS) and track and monitor our performance against these e.g. impact on Year 12 NEET (not in education, employment or training)</p> <p>Outcomes for our young people are generally in line with national outcomes for children and young people in care. We undertake detailed analysis and use our understanding of this to inform practice moving forwards.</p> <p>We have no permanent exclusions and low numbers of fixed term exclusions because we work proactively with educational providers.</p> <p>Clear evidence that Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding is used efficiently - funding is allocated through the <i>ePEP</i> system by the Virtual School Head Teacher – we know how every penny is allocated and track the progress made against each individual personalised target.</p> <p>Commissioned PP+ projects support all schools in Kirklees with an enhanced offer for our children – Early Years Outcomes Team, SENACT, EP and support workers, Childrens Emotional Wellbeing Service, whole school training linked to the Timpson project.</p> <p>We have a rigorous system of PEP quality assurance implemented by the team and signed off by the team managers. This enables team managers to have a rigorous holistic overview of the cohort.</p>	<p><i>Avoiding drift and delay when a young person needs a school move by early involvement in “stability meetings” and the placement search process.</i></p> <p><i>Reducing the number of Persistent Absentee (PA) pupils / pupils Not in Full Time (NIFT) education</i></p> <p><i>An ongoing focus on improving attainment and progress with a particular focus on KS2 outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>An ongoing focus on quality PEP completion within timescale</i></p> <p><i>Extension of offer for children in care from 0-25</i></p> <p><i>Improve understanding and practice around the work of the Virtual School, aspirations and educational progress</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close liaison between the achievement coordinators / SW when planning school moves • LAC education panel to discuss and move forward key cases • Offer to complete placement search proforma • Contact with other VS for advice when a young person is placed in another local authority • Input into placement protocol across service • All young people with attendance below 90% have a PA plan agreed by all professionals • Regular monitoring and tracking of PA/NIFT pupils by team managers to focus where strategies are or are not having an impact • Team training – use of welfare call analysis • LAC education Panel and weekly sharing of data with SW managers and Independent Reviewing Officer's (IRO) to work in partnership to improve NIFT and PA. • Training for key adults in Schools for Year 5 and 6 - reading comprehension • Primary teacher tracks and monitors target cohort ensuring appropriate support is in place • All Primary PEP's to have a reading, writing and maths target when appropriate • Letterbox – for all EYFS and primary pupils • All young people are allocated to a member of the team who quality assure (QA) all PEP's • Team manager sign off to further QA and check actions are followed up • Weekly sharing of data with SW managers and IRO's to work in partnership to improve quality and sign off within timescales. • Termly PEP's taking place for all young people led by the VS. • Partnership working with Early Years Outcomes Team and Early Years SEN team • Review and evaluation of early years PEP process and further development of tracking and reporting • Developing the work with the EET strategy group (16-25) • Awareness raising around statutory duties and development of advice and guidance offer to schools/providers/carers • Develop an internal and external training offer • Improved communications across partners including a newsletter

Kirklees Virtual School self-evaluation – Evidence of impact 2018-19 and 2019-20

(please also see position statement post Covid-19 lockdown period)

Verbal feedback during the Ofsted inspection July 2019

- *The Virtual School is held in high regard by schools.*
- *The team are accurate in Self-evaluation regarding their areas of strength and areas for development*
- *Most PEPS reflect the thoroughness of the reviews, and clear and ambitious and show evidence that professionals have a good understanding of children's needs, with a positive move planned to termly PEPs*
- *The voice of the child and carers are meaningfully and purposefully captured in the PEP process.*
- *The impact of Pupil Premium Plus is tracked at individual level and it is not just tracked it is evaluated – this is 'powerful and effective'.*
- *The Achievement Coordinators have high caseloads although schools confirmed that they are present at key meetings and prioritise according to need, and at points of transition.*
- *For most key stage outcomes we are more or less in line (at KS4 better) than CLA nationally.*
- *Good progress at EYFS*
- *Post 16 tracking...showing positive EET.*
- *Safeguarding – VS have a clear awareness of Gangs and CSE, schools involve the VS if there is an issue*
- *Kirklees College and other schools said that the Virtual School were 'good chasers up'*
- *The sign off process for PEPs is strong, and not just about compliance but about quality.*
- *Joined up communication is improving for young people in Year 12 and 13*
- *NEET is reducing for care leavers, heading in the right direction and is known as an area for focus*

Virtual School self-evaluation

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) outcomes are above national for children in care for both GLD and prime areas (2019 data)
- The vast majority of all children in care accessing 3 and 4 year old free early education are placed with a provider judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.
- All children and young people in care have a PEP from aged 3 until the age of 18; these are needs assessed and of good quality – signed off by the Virtual School Headteacher and team managers to ensure this quality and consistency.
- The percentage of KS1 pupils reaching expected or higher standard for Reading, Writing and Maths (RWM) combined is above the national average for children and young people in care in 2019.
- Outcomes for our young people taking GCSE's were the highest ever in 2019 and above national for children and young people in care. 2020 provisional results are an improvement on these.
- The monitoring of attendance by the Virtual School is strong and concerns are addressed promptly. Overall attendance was 94.02 % for 2018-19 (92.05 % in 2017-18).

- There has been no permanent exclusion of a child and young person in care for a number of years. This is testament to the collaborative approach to supporting those with challenging behaviour and the access to effective support services that ensure those pupils at risk of exclusion receive appropriate intervention.
- The electronic PEP system enables the Virtual School to monitor the completion and quality of PEPs and allows for systematic application, authorisation and monitoring of Pupil Premium Plus funding for individual pupils. All Designated Teachers (DTs), Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers have access to this system and can contribute to the PEP process. This process is used to challenge schools to support pupils' individual needs and is currently quality assured by the Virtual School Headteacher and team managers who signs off all PEPs. All previous targets must be reviewed in terms of impact before further targets are set.
- PEP completion in termly timescale – 100% summer term 2020
- Initial PEP completion in 10 school days of VS notification was 93 % in 2019-20
- The Virtual School Team Manager oversees school changes and makes sure the new school is 'good' and will meet the curriculum needs for the young person. In July 2020, 83% of children and young people in care were attending good or outstanding schools. We have a clear understanding of the 17% who are attending education provisions judged as requires improvement / inadequate at their last Ofsted visit. When a schools Ofsted judgement is downgraded extra monitoring and support is put in place to ensure that the educational needs of our young people are met.
- There has been an increase in the number of young people who attend an educational provision in Kirklees from 56% to 61% in 2019-20
- The LAC Education Panel, attended by the Virtual School, SENDACT and a Service Manager from the Looked After Children's and Care Leavers Service, meets regularly to monitor and to discuss strategies for those pupils receiving under 25 hours of education. This has reduced the number of pupils not in full time education to 47 in 2018-19 from 67 in 2016-17. Any complex educational issues for our children and young people in care are also raised with the Panel.
- We always work closely with other agencies and this can be clearly evidenced in the PEPs.
- We have commissioned multi-agency support working across the Education Psychology Service, and the Children's Emotional Wellbeing Service (ChEWS) and have additional capacity in SENDACT. Impact clearly evidenced in appendices.
- Designated Teachers and support staff received extensive attachment training in the education provision through the EP Services, who offer follow up bespoke whole school sessions. The feedback has been very positive.

Kirklees Virtual School self evaluation – Key Challenges

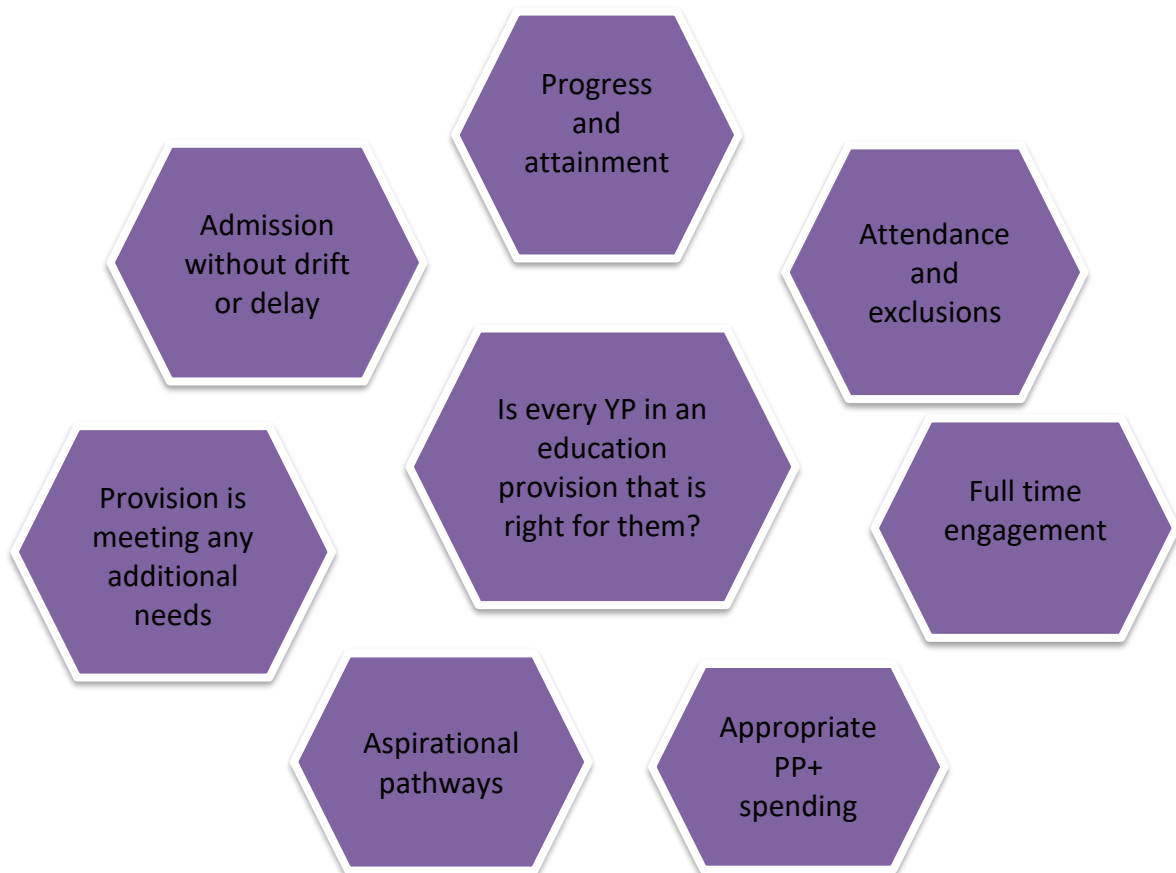
- The impact of COVID -19 lockdown and ongoing issues in terms of missed education and the emotional health and well-being of our young people.
- The ongoing concerns around inclusion being magnified by the current Covid-19 pressures on the system.
- Increase in the number of young people in care and on the roll of the virtual school by 24 in 2019-20
- Increasing number of boys in the cohort with the issues around boys attainment and progress in school.
- Linked to this is the stability of cohort – there has been an increase in pupil mobility by +47 since 2018-19
(119 pupils into care and 75 pupils leaving care in 2018-19, 166 pupils into care and 77 pupils leaving care in 2019-20)
- The cumulative effect of this is that we are working with more young people overall, and have more young people entering the system who need a high level of initial support and intervention.
- In the academic year 2018-19 there were 47 pupils not in full time education. These pupils were supported individually to return to a full-time provision that meets their needs.
- In 2018-19 the number of Persistent Absent students was 62 pupils (14.5%). This is a concern especially in Year 11 (28/62) where we believe study leave may be impacting on figures. Attendance is also impacted by fixed term exclusions (279.5 days) although this is better than national, and mid-term school moves where education was not planned at the time of transition.
- School stability remains a concern though we have seen a large decrease in 2019-20 (60 school moves outside of the natural transition process from Reception to Year 11 though this was a reduction from 82 in 2018-19, mainly in primary where it has reduced from 49 to 28))
- Linked to this KS2 outcomes continue to be an issue (data 2019). 33.3 % of pupils were disapplied and/or did not sit the KS2 tests. This impacted negatively on overall results compared to children in care nationally.
- Whilst outcomes at KS4 appear to be strong we have seen a reduction in the number of 5+ 9-5 inc E and M. This could be as a direct result of our inability to deliver an input to effect change from March 2020 due to COVID-19 and the lockdown. This suggests that our “catch up” in Year 11 has a direct impact on our young people attaining the higher grades.
- Extension of the age range working with Year 13 and considering next steps post 18 as young people become care leavers.
- Embedding processes and understanding of quality of education for children 3-5.
- Supporting a shared understanding of processes, timescales, and expectations across the wider service.

Key aims of Kirklees Virtual School - priorities moving forwards

- Ensuring all children and young people in care are in an education provision that is right for them
- Ensuring all children and young people in care have a high-quality PEP, completed within timescales, that meets their needs

1. Ensuring all children and young people in care are in an education provision that is right for them

Key focus areas



In order to assess whether a young person is in the right provision we will need to ensure:

- Progress and attainment are at least in line with expectations
- Attendance is good and exclusions are low
- Reduced timetables are only used in exceptional circumstances
- Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is used appropriately
- There is a suitable pathway in place to ensure aspirational outcomes
- Additional needs are identified, and appropriate support secured

Where the agreed professional view is that a provision is not the right place for a young person we will need to ensure:

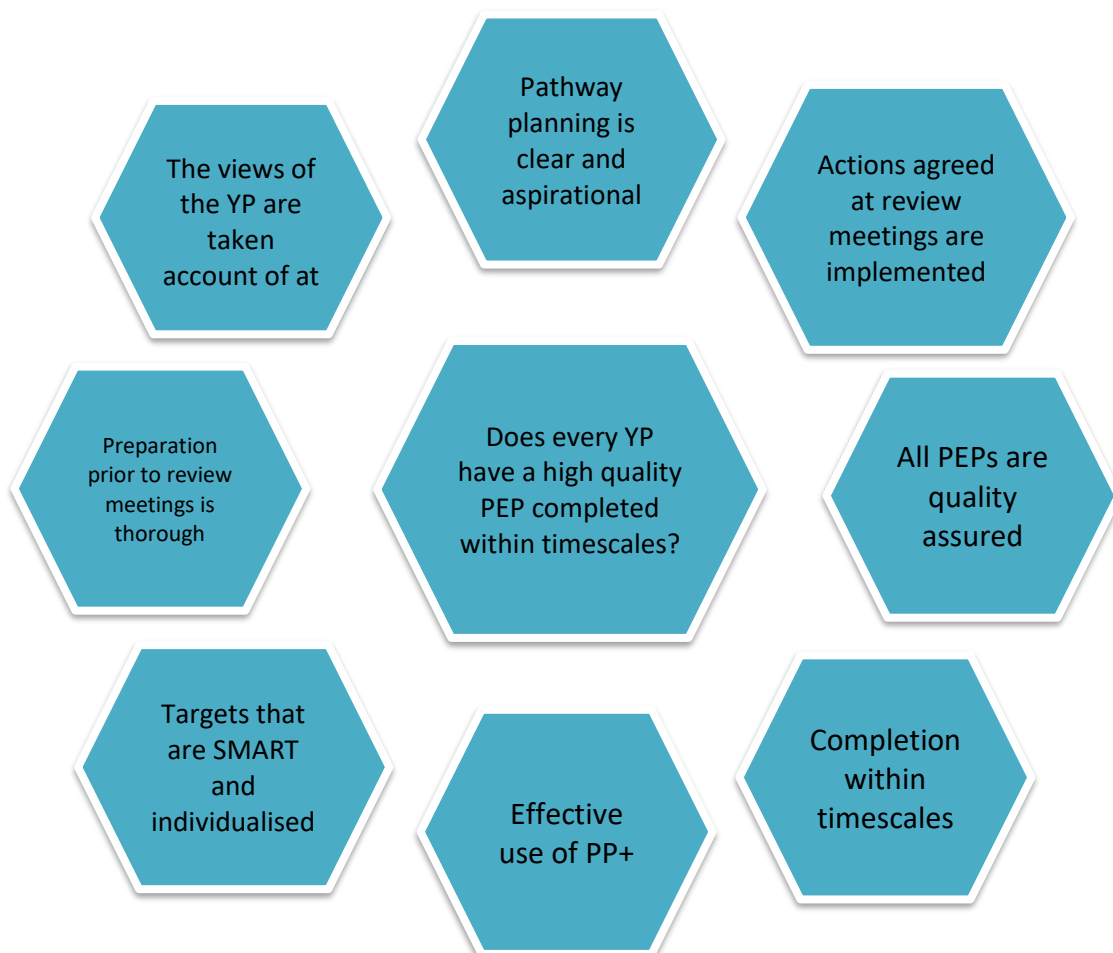
- Changes in provision are monitored and achieved without drift and delay

Measuring Virtual School Impact

- All young people have an identified provision
- Year on year decrease and in line or below national percentages for persistent absentees
- Year on year decrease and in line or below national percentages in the number of fixed term exclusions
- No permanent exclusions
- All learners making good academic progress
- Year on year decrease and in line or below national percentages of learners with a less than full time offer
- PEP targets are effective with appropriate funding requests
- Increased Y12 and Year 13 participation
- Minimal drift and delay in securing provision where change is necessary

2. Ensuring all children and young people in care have a high quality PEP completed within timescales that meets their needs

Key focus areas



In order to assess whether a PEP is of high quality we will need to ensure:

- Initial PEPs are completed within 10 working days and termly PEP reviews.
- Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is used appropriately
- Targets agreed at review meetings are relevant, achievable, measurable and regularly reviewed
- In preparation for a PEP meeting all relevant information is available in ePEP and key issues / concerns are identified
- Young people are consulted and invited to contribute to their PEP; their views are considered and taken into account
- There is a clear progression pathway identified, taking account of the young persons' ability, hopes and aspirations
- Any agreed actions are followed up and reviewed at subsequent meetings
- All PEPs are quality assured and where necessary appropriate challenge is made and / or action is taken

Measuring Virtual School Impact

- A consistently high completion rate of Initial PEP's within 10 school days, and PEP reviews within the new termly timescales
- Clear evidence that PP+ is used effectively through monitoring of individual PEP targets.
- Targets have clearly identified outcome / improvements and are RAG rated before new targets are set
- PEP's are submitted for sign off at the meeting as a result of good preparation
- Pupil views are clearly considered and taken into account during the PEP meeting
- There is a clear progression pathway identified, taking account of the young persons' ability, hopes and aspirations in all PEPs
- Agreed actions are clearly followed up and reviewed at subsequent PEP meetings
- All PEPs are quality assured and where necessary appropriate challenge is made and / or action is taken
- All PEP's have all appropriate sections completed before sign-off.

3.Improving outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2

Context:

Historically the outcomes for Kirklees CLA at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6) have been poorer than for all CLA nationally, for both measures - attainment and progress.

We are working to attempt to understand any key contributors to this picture and to turn the curve and narrow the gap.

What are we doing to address this?

At a strategic level:

- Early intervention – work is being undertaken across service to ensure that as many of our cohort as possible are taking up their entitlement to early education and care from age 2 so that early learning is prioritised and children are being supported to achieve and make progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Training for carers - work is being carried out through commissioned projects to support carers in supporting home learning – particularly in relation to early literacy and communication and maths.
- Kirklees Learning Partner support is being commissioned to offer targeted training to schools/education providers around improving outcomes/progress in the core curriculum areas/assessment tests.

At cohort level:

- Teacher assessment and progress data is submitted termly from individual schools and Early Years providers for each pupil and is the focus for the challenge and support provided by the virtual school through the Personal Education Plan reviews. Attainment and progress is tracked and monitored by Virtual School for all children from age 3 and reported on termly. Trends and areas of concern are identified and form the basis for decisions around whole cohort needs/interventions/training.
- From September 20 there will be an expectation that termly targets are set for reading, writing and maths for all primary aged children where below expected progress is recorded
- There is an identified targeted cohort made up of children who have achieved age related expectations at prior key stage assessment points (a good level of development at Reception or at least expected in one or more of the core subject areas (reading, writing and maths) at the KS1 assessment point.) Achievement co-ordinators are supported by the Primary Teacher and EY/Primary Team Manager to pay particular attention to progress for this cohort so that any dips are addressed where possible.

At individual child level:

- Bespoke targets (funded and non funded) are set and reviewed at least termly for each child to support individual attainment and progress in the core areas of reading, writing and maths. Targets also take account of the child's wider interests, preferred learning styles and build on strengths as well as areas for development.
- Progress and attainment of each child is discussed in regular cohort supervision meetings between EY/Primary Team Manager and allocated achievement co-ordinator

Measuring Virtual School Impact

- Attainment and progress continue to improve and the gap with national narrows.

2. Information required to take a decision.

Not applicable.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People.

Not applicable

3.2 Working with Partners.

Not applicable

3.3 Place Based Working.

Not applicable.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality.

Not applicable

3.5 Improving outcomes for children.

Oversight and monitoring of education outcomes for children in care. Corporate Parenting Board to monitor progress, as requested by the Chair.

3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources).

Not applicable.

4. Consultees and their opinions.

Not applicable

5. Next steps and timelines.

Virtual School Head to continue to lead on this way of working during the pandemic.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons.

That the report be noted.

7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations.

Not applicable

8. Contact officer.

Janet Tolley, 01484 221000
janet.tolley@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

For information only

10. Service Director responsible

Jo-Anne Sanders

Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 3rd November 2020

Title of report: Kirklees Looked After Children Service (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 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

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 Private Report/Private Appendix – not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not Applicable If no give the reason why not
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Tom Brailsford; 23/10/2020
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	N/A
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Viv Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: Not applicable

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

The Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children's Rights team) works collaboratively with Children's Social Care /Services to ensure that the voice of the child is heard and considered in respect of Local Authority policy development and service delivery. The service also offers advocacy support to children and young people aged ten and over when they are subject to a Child Protection plan.

The Children's Rights team deliver a number of other functions which include, supporting children and young people to use the Children's Complaints process and training them to be able to take part in the recruitment process for posts such as Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers. Children and young people are also trained to deliver their own training session to adults (Total Respect Training). This training helps adults to consider what the barriers are for participation of children and young people, and why it is important to listen to what children and young people say. 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 which, children and young people are informed about the service and the support that they can receive from the team, as well as what participation opportunities they can become involved in.

Within the Children's Rights team, one full time Officer Co-ordinates the Independent Visitor's Scheme. This scheme matches children and young people with volunteers who spend time with the child or young person they are matched with; supporting and listening to them, as well as undertaking positive activities. A separate annual report is produced for this scheme which is included within the Children's Rights Annual Report at Appendix 2.

The report includes statistics showing how many children and young people have had involvement with the Children's Rights team during the reporting period; these continues to evidence an increase year on year.

2. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

Not applicable

3.2 Working with Partners

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

3.3 Place Based Working Not applicable

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality Not applicable

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

The Children's Rights team enable and work with children and young people who are Looked After by the local authority to help ensure that their voice is heard in relation to decisions that are made which affect their lives, and to ensure that service provision in general is influenced by the voice 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 or a compromise regarding their requests. If it is not possible for the child or young person to have the outcome they desire their Advocate supports them in trying to understand the reasons why. Some specific examples of positive outcomes during 2019 to 2020 are given below:

- Placement stability
- Placement move agreed
- Young people's views taken into consideration with regard to placement
- A change of Social Worker agreed
- Keeping the same Social Worker agreed
- Allowances / savings clarified and received by the young people
- Family time increased or agreed and arranged as requested

**3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)
Not applicable**

**4. Consultees and their opinions
Not applicable**

5. Next steps and timelines

Priorities over the next twelve months

- To ensure that virtual methods of communication are developed and are used effectively with children and young people.
- To update social media platforms regularly with relevant and interesting information to enable the service to reach more children and young people.
- To develop a young people's Challenge project to be undertaken throughout the Covid-19 lockdown period to help maintain contact with children and young people.
- To increase the membership of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum and to also to develop virtual methods to help capture the views of children / young people who do not attend the groups, to influence service development and provision including those who live out of the Kirklees area.
- To increase the offer of advocacy support to children and young people aged ten and over, subject to a Child Protection plan.
- Development of the Independent Visitor Scheme
- To develop the Independent Visitor training package to make it relevant to delivering training to smaller groups / or individuals virtually.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted

7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Not applicable

8. Contact officer

Melanie Tiernan, Team Manager, Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service – 07794217459 or 01484 225288 melanie.tiernan@kirklees.gov.uk

Anna Gledhill, Service Manager Quality Assurance and Safeguarding, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships – 71493 anna.gledhill@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable

10. Service Director responsible

Tom Brailsford, Service Director – Resources, Improvements & Partnerships



Annual Report

Looked After Children Independent Service Children's Rights Team

April 2019 to March 2020

Melanie Tiernan Manager - Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children's Rights Team)
Anna Gledhill Service Manager, Quality Assurance and Social Work Lead, Children and Young People Service
Dated June 2020

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1. Introduction

Advocacy and children’s rights help to create a culture of openness where listening and responding to children’s voices is an integral part of everyday practice.

The Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children’s Rights Team) offer advocacy, advice and representation to children and young people who are Looked After by Kirklees Local Authority residing within the borough, or in external placements in host authorities.

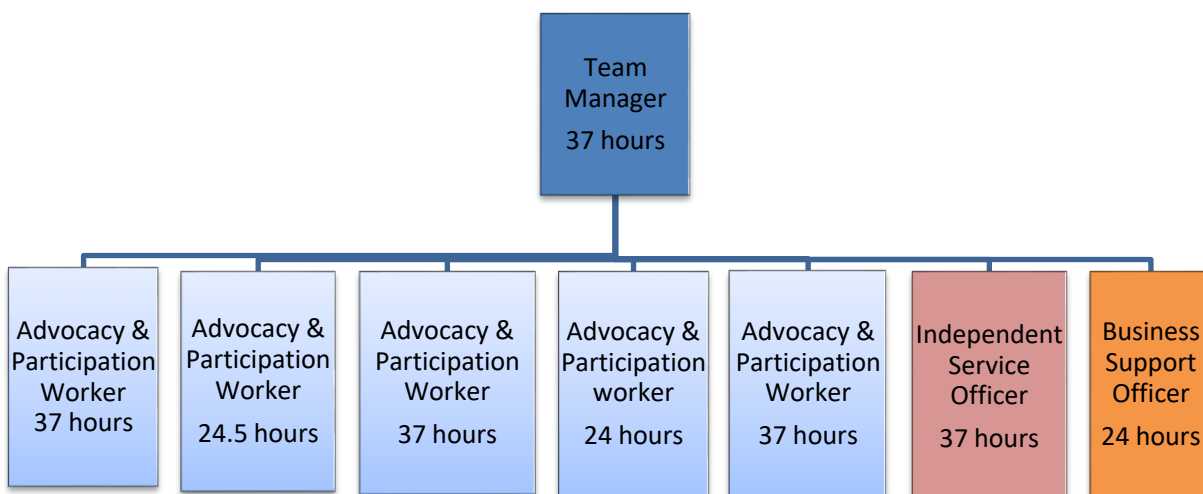
This report covers the period from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 therefore the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic was in its early stages and is therefore not fully reflected in this report. A six-monthly report covering the period April 2020 to September 2020 will contain more content about the longer-term impact of working throughout Covid-19.

2. The Aim of the Children’s Rights Team

The aim of the Children’s Rights team is to:

- Promote and support the rights of all children and young people Looked After by Kirklees Local Authority within the current framework of legislation, incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. (UNCRC)
- Support the empowerment of children and young people Looked After by Kirklees Local Authority, to help enable them to engage in meaningful participation in respect of decision-making that affects them, individually and collectively.
- Provide a quality assurance function in respect of services received by children Looked After by Kirklees Local Authority.
- Support children and young people involved in the child protection process to be enable them to voice their opinions.

3. Children’s Rights Team Structure

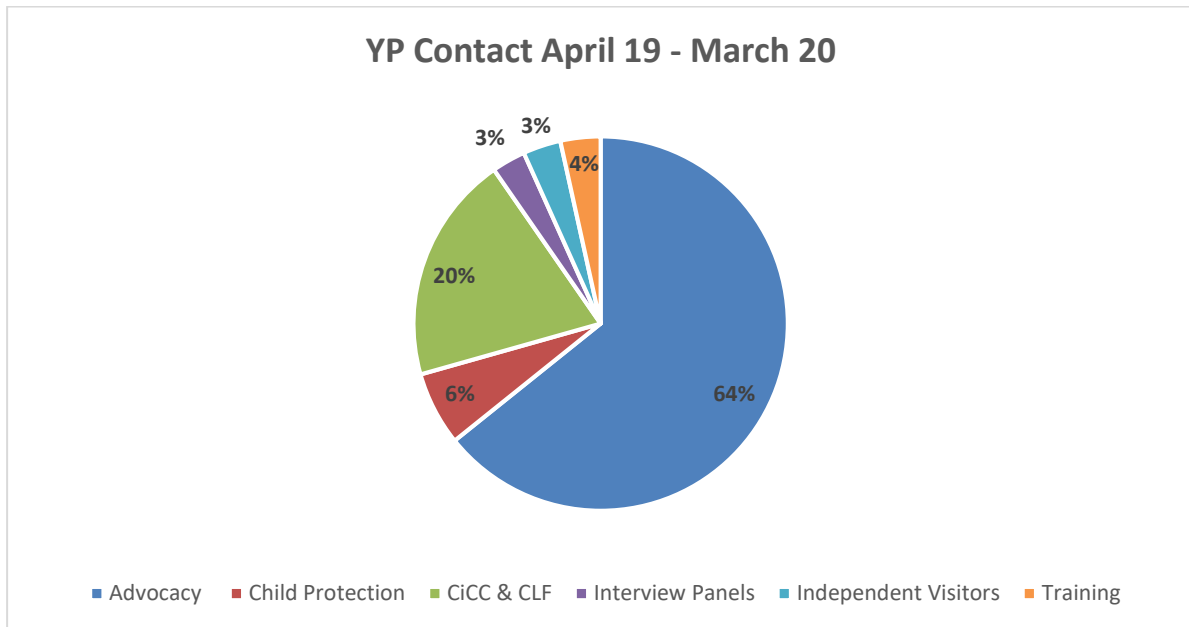


4. Children's Rights Team Overview

- 4.1 The Children's Rights team works collaboratively with Children's Social Care /Children's Services to ensure views and opinions of children Looked After are heard and considered in respect of service delivery and policy development. The service also supports children and young people aged ten and over when they are subject to a Child Protection plan.
- 4.2 The Children's Rights team deliver a number of other functions which include, supporting children and young people to use the complaints process, training and supporting children and young people to enable them to undertake a meaningful role in the Kirklees recruitment process and to deliver their own training session to practitioners and professionals (Total Respect Training); this helps practitioners and professionals to consider what the barriers for participation of children are, and why it's important to listen to what children and young people say.
- 4.3 Every child or young person who is new into care (or when they reach the age of 7) receives an 'Initial Visit' from a Children's Rights team, Advocacy & Participation Worker. During this visit the child or young person is informed about the service, what support that they can receive, and what participation opportunities they can become involved in.
- 4.4 An Advocacy & Participation Worker in the team has the responsibility for co-ordinating and supporting the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF). The CiCC and CLF enable children and young people Looked After by the Local Authority and who are 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 2019 to 2020.
- 4.5 The Children's Rights team also has a full time Officer who co-ordinates the Independent Visitors Scheme. This scheme matches children and young people who are in the care of the Local Authority with volunteers who spend time with the child or young person they are matched with; supporting and listening to them, as well as undertaking positive activities. A separate annual report is produced for this scheme and this can be found at appendix 2.

5. Contact with young people

- 5.1 Every child Looked After by the Local Authority has the right to an independent advocate. The Children Act 1989 placed a duty on Local Authorities to provide advocacy for children and young people Looked After, who wish to make a complaint. Subsequent updates and other legislation such as The Adoption and Children Act 2002, extended this to include care leavers, and to children and young people outside of the complaints procedure when decisions are being made that affect their lives.
- 5.2 The chart below shows that the highest proportion of work undertaken by the Children Rights team between April 2019 and March 2020, related to advocacy for children and young people Looked After (CLA) or care leavers (67%).



- 5.3 In the period between March 2019 and April 2020, in addition to referrals received directly from children and young people the team received 40 referrals for advocacy support for children and young people from professionals and carers.
- 5.4 The training that young people deliver is always well received and young people delivered 2 Total Respect sessions and 6 Skills to Foster sessions.
- 5.5 During 2019/20, the service has supported 22 children and young people in care, who have a physical or learning disability, on 48 separate occasions. For a small number of these children / young people the support offered was non instructed advocacy. This is provided when a young person does not have the capacity to clearly communicate their wishes or have an appropriate level of understanding. For these children / young people their Advocate will gather information from a range of sources such as parents / carers / professionals, to assess if the best interests of the child are being considered in any decisions that are made. The Advocate also ensures that the rights of the child are being upheld.
- 5.6 The majority of children and young people have received support from the team on more than one occasion, with the most common support being for their Children Looked After Review (CLA Review) or other meetings.
- 5.7 The service continues to receive more requests relating to girls and young women; within this reporting period the service supported 310 girls and young women and 197 boys and young men.

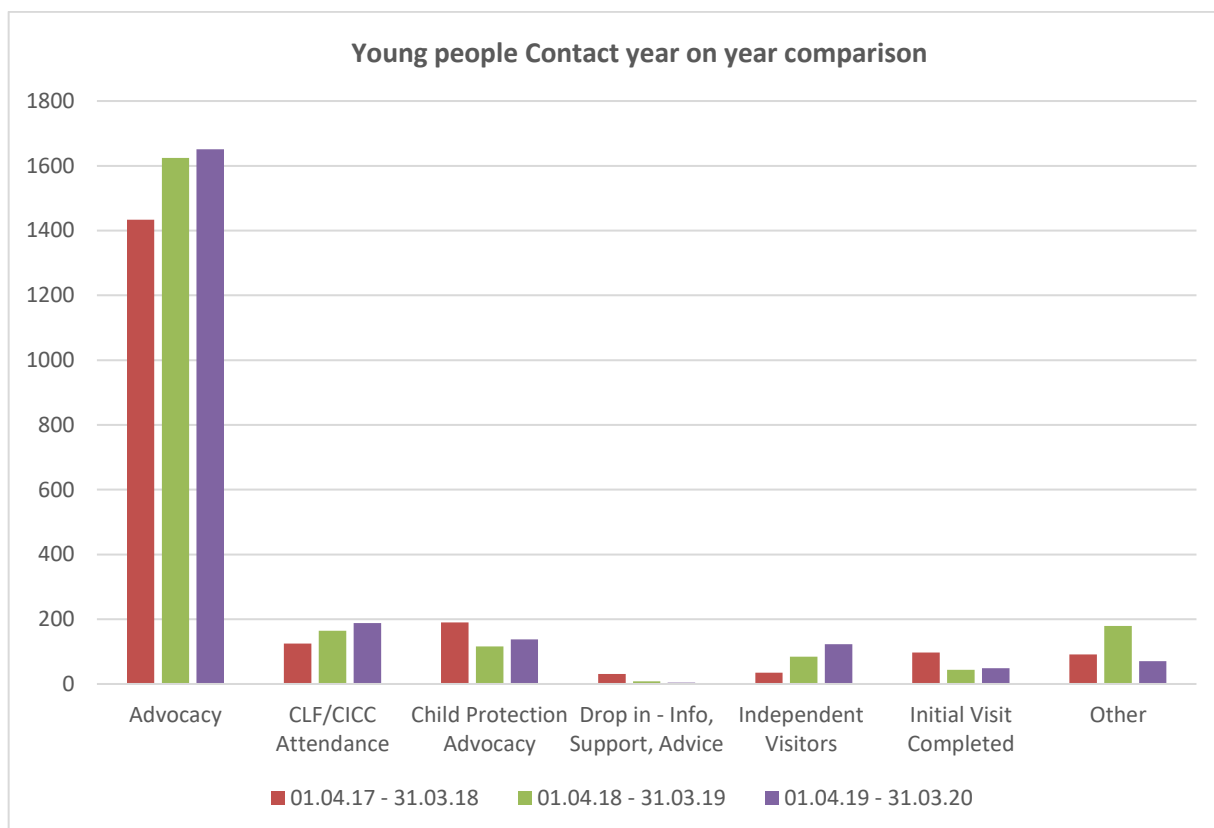
6. Comparison over a 3-year period

- 6.1 The chart below shows that contact relating to advocacy provided to children Looked After and care leavers continues to be the highest proportion of work that the team undertakes. There has been an increase in the amount of advocacy undertaken with children and young people subject to the Child Protection process over this reporting period. The increase of contact with regard to the Independent Visitors Scheme is indicative of the

continued growth of provision of this part of the service to young people and requests for volunteers to be matched with young people continue to be received.

6.2 Work undertaken under the heading of 'other' includes:

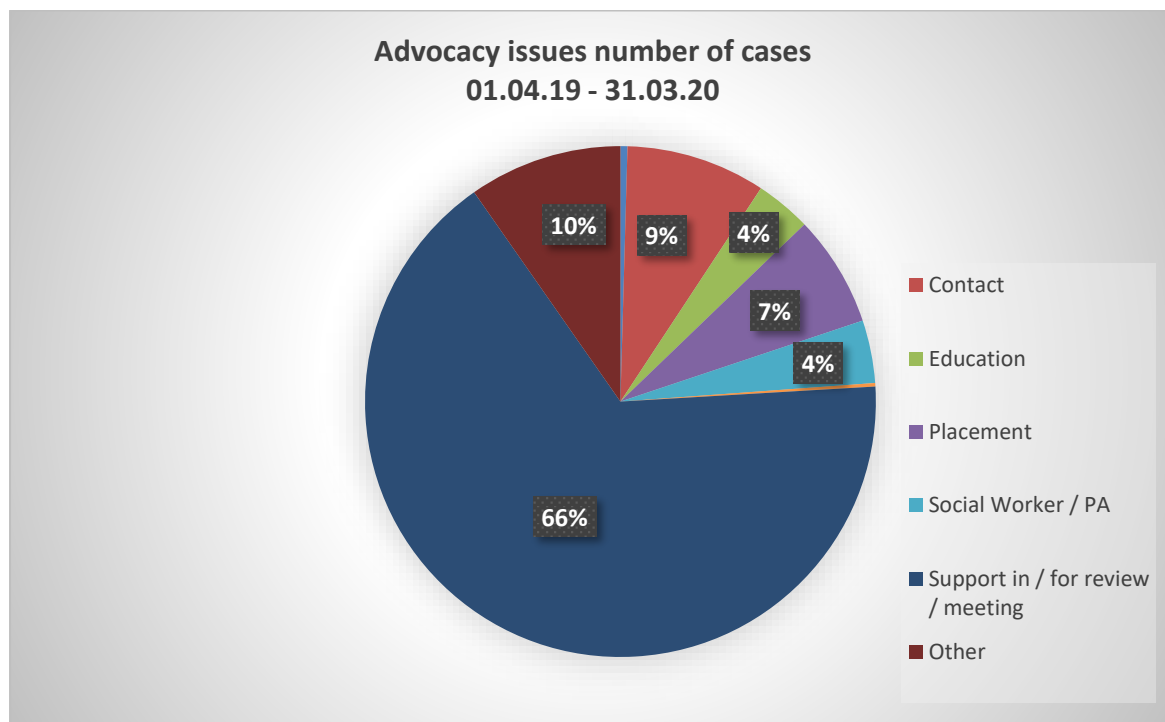
- Training and supporting children and young people to undertake interview panels as part of the Kirklees recruitment process
- Supporting children and young people to deliver training
- Monthly visits to the Kirklees Local Authority children's homes
- Weekly attendance at 'Number 11' and 'Number 12'; the Care Leavers Drop in facilities



7. Advocacy Issues for children and young people who are Looked After

7.1 The pie chart below shows that after support at their Child Looked After Review or other meetings, the highest number of advocacy issues for children and young people have related to contact and placement. The 'other' section relates to a number of individual issues that children and young people have raised such as:

- personal belongings
- residential day to day issues
- finance (including pocket money or celebratory allowance issues or requests for additional financial support)



- 7.2 In addition to the children and young people who were supported at their children Looked After review or other meetings, 112 issues were sorted to the satisfaction of children and young people and 31 felt that some sort of compromise had been reached; there were 27 issues for which children and young people reported that they did not get a satisfactory outcome. When identifying themes in relation to this, of these; 8 related to requests for additional family time (contact) which were turned down and 8 were in relation to care leavers financial support.
- 7.3 Children and young people Looked After who are placed in a host local authority, are some of our most vulnerable children, and over the last twelve months Advocacy support has been provided on 196 occasions to children and young people who live outside of the Kirklees area. This has been in respect of 79 individual children and young people. Children and young people were supported in 119 instances at their Child Looked After review meetings and a total of 77 other issues were also recorded, over half of which (45) children and young people felt they had achieved a positive or compromise outcome.
- 7.4 There were 40 issues in total relating to requests to see family or friends, 19 of these relating to children and young people placed in a host local authority. Of these; 20 young people were satisfied with the outcome and 10 felt they had achieved a compromise; this indicates that the views and feelings of young people have in the main been heard and taken into consideration when advocacy support has been provided.
- 7.5 Issues raised in terms of education included requesting a change of school, spending of the pupil premium, additional support in school and / or supplying of equipment. Only two of these related to children and young people who live in a host local authority. Of the 16 issues raised, 10 children or young people received a positive outcome or compromise and 3 issues were withdrawn, which again indicates the benefit and value of advocacy support for young people in reaching a positive outcome.
- 7.6 There were 27 issues relating to finance, 19 of these for children and young people living in a host local authority. Positive outcomes were achieved in the following areas; Support at university, savings, providing a bus pass for an out of area young person to travel within

Kirklees when seeing family and friends, birthday / holiday allowances, accessing Leaving Care Grant, maternity support and support with claiming child benefit and budgeting for payment of bills. In total, 13 young people were satisfied with the outcome or felt a compromise had been reached. There were no particular themes or issues for those not satisfied, although recording shows increased issues not resolved for young people living out of area. These related to young people not being exempt from paying council tax (whereas care leavers living in Kirklees are exempt up to the age of 21) and not receiving a gym pass.

- 7.7 5 issues relating to health all received a positive outcome which included support to attend appointments and accessing the Placement Support Mental Health Worker. 2 of these related to a young person who lived in a host local authority.
- 7.8 Out of 13 issues regarding personal belongings, 6 were pertaining to children and young people who live in a host local authority area. Of the 13; 8 young people received a positive outcome or a compromise; 4 issues were withdrawn, and 1 young person was not satisfied.
- 7.9 There were 32 instances of support provided in relation to where young people live, 8 of which were for young people living in a host local authority area. 8 of these related to Advocates finding out the wishes of young people in relation to where they lived / wanted to live so that this could be considered in the process for long term provision, 13 young people were happy with the outcome achieved, which included them not moving and for 5 a move being agreed.
- 7.10 In terms of 18 issues raised with regards to Social Workers / Personal Advisors, 6 were in relation to children and young people living in a host local authority area. 11 children and young people felt they had received a positive outcome or a compromise; this included better communication with their Social Worker / Personal Advisor, re-allocation and extension of support given. Other young people did not proceed with their issue and for two young people their Personal Advisor did not change.
- 7.11 Whilst Advocates in the team make every endeavour to resolve issues for children and young people quickly by using an informal process, there have been occasions when this has not led to an outcome which the child or young person was happy with, or the child or young person has said from the outset that they wished to make a formal complaint. It is the right of all children and young people to make a formal complaint if they wish and they are supported to do so if this is their choice. Overall, of the number of advocacy cases dealt with in this reporting year, 23 of these involved supporting a child or young person to make a formal complaint which is more than 50% less than in the previous 12 months. This indicates that more issues are being resolved for children and young people using informal methods rather than having to proceed to a complaint. There are no broad themes to be drawn from the complaints. The issues supported were evenly split between:

Social Worker / Personal Advisor (6):

- requesting a new Social Worker / Personal Advisor
- the length of time without an allocated Social Worker
- Not being kept updated about their situation
- Response and advice given.

Contact / Family time (4)

- 3 of the 4 issues related to requests for additional family time, and which 1 issue was in relation to a request for a new Contact/Family Time worker.

Placement (5)

- 4 of the 5 complaints were in respect of children or young people wishing to remain in their placement where they were settled rather than move somewhere else with their sibling.

Finance (6)

- All 6 issues related to Leaving Care finance; and although none of the young people were satisfied with the outcome as they did not receive the full financial support that they had requested, when looking at the decisions made it is clear that some financial support or alternate support was offered in each case.

Other (3)

- 2 young people withdrew their complaints, and one young person wanted to better understand why they were in care.

8. Child Protection Conference Advocacy

- 8.1 The Children Rights team have been notified of 301 initial Child Protection conferences and 339 Child Protection review conferences since April 2019 and 103 children / young people were visited or spoken to on the telephone; 99 accepted the support offered to have their views heard at the Child Protection conference meeting(s). 68 of these were for initial child protection conferences.
- 8.2 Due to capacity of the team, there were a number of children and young people who did not receive support at the initial conference stage, however, the level of support provided was an increase on the previous two years, this was achieved due to the team being fully staffed from July 2019, and there has been slightly less CLA advocacy cases in this reporting period which has allowed the team some additional capacity to undertake Child Protection conference advocacy.
- 8.3 When the team are advised of a Child Protection review conference, if the team have been unable to support the child or young person at the initial conference then a letter is sent to parents asking them to get in touch with the team if they would like their child or young person to have this support at the review conference. Such contact is rarely received but on occasions a Social Worker or Conference Chair will approach the team directly to support a young person at their Review conference.

9. Children's Rights

- 9.1 The team works to ensure that the rights of the child in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, are upheld for all children and young people who are Looked After by Kirklees. This includes ensuring that the voice of the child is heard within care planning and as stated in point 4.1 above, this is particularly important with regard to non-instructed advocacy.

10. Participation Opportunities

10.1 The Children's rights team works with children and young people in a number of ways to support participation opportunities, these include:

- Children in Care Council (CiCC): The council consists of children and young people Looked After aged between 12 and 16, who meet to consider issues relevant to being Looked After, and to work with professionals to promote the views of children and young people to inform change and best practice. See appendix 1 for more details.
- The Care Leavers Forum (CLF): This is for young people aged 16 and over, in which young people work with professionals to ensure that their views are heard when considering how best to deliver Care Leaver service provision. See appendix 1 for more details.
- Professional Interview Panels: The Children's Rights Team support services with the involvement of children and young people in the recruitment process for roles such as Social Workers, Team or Service Managers and Independent Reviewing Officers.
- Total Respect training: Two sessions have been delivered by young people to professionals in the past year. Evaluation from the training indicates that professionals find attending the course worthwhile, with feedback highlighting that it impacts on consideration being given to how professionals can improve their daily practice. The challenge remains with regards to attendance as the course is usually fully booked but up to 50% of attendees fail to turn up on the day. In 2019 an adapted session of Total Respect training was also delivered to Council Members in order to promote their knowledge with regard to children and young people who are Looked After or who are care leavers. Numbers booked onto the course were low (12) with a couple of attendees needing to leave early but again evaluation indicated that the training had been enjoyable, valuable and that it had increased attendees knowledge with regard to this group of young people who form part of their constituency.
- Skills to Foster training: Five sessions of this training have been delivered by young people to potential new Foster Carers. Training is held on a weekend; as with the Total Respect training, the Skills to Foster training continues to be well received. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the March session had to be cancelled. Consideration will be given going forward as to how young people's involvement can continue if the training is to be held virtually because of Covid-19.

11. Quality Assurance

11.1 The Children's Right team continues to work closely with the Child Protection and Review Unit (CPRU) to support positive outcomes for young people and to share information, such as trends from Advocacy.

11.2 In addition to this, the Children's Rights Team Manager meets regularly with the Complaints Manager(s) to discuss ongoing complaints and cater for joint working to resolve these. The Children's Rights Team Manager also meets regularly with the Head of Corporate Parenting (Children Looked After and Care Leavers Services) to discuss trends in advocacy and / or individual cases as required.

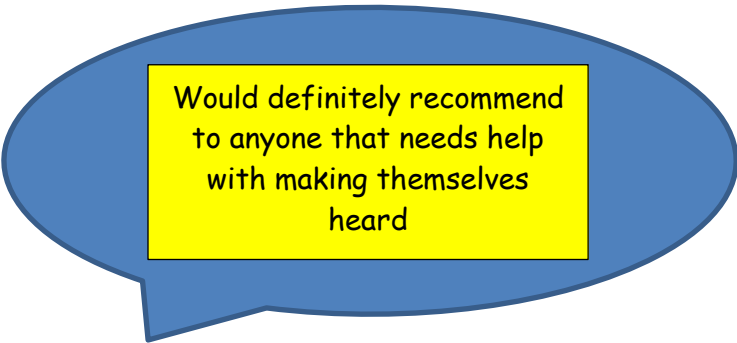
11.3 A Childrens Rights Team monthly report is completed regarding data, including themes and patterns relating to advocacy issues. The information within this report is used to inform the Improvement Board and the Corporate Parenting Board.

11.4 Every three months the Childrens Rights team writes to children and young people who have received advocacy in the previous three-month period to ask for feedback about their experience and any suggestions for improvement. There is an incentive to complete the form of a draw to win a high Street Voucher. Whilst this does not produce a 100% return, of those which are returned feedback continues to indicate that children and young people are happy with the support and services that they receive. Please see the next section for examples of comments.


12. Young People's Voice

12.1 Following the completion of any advocacy provision, children and young people are asked to complete an evaluation feedback form to share their views on what went well, and how or if the service could be improved.

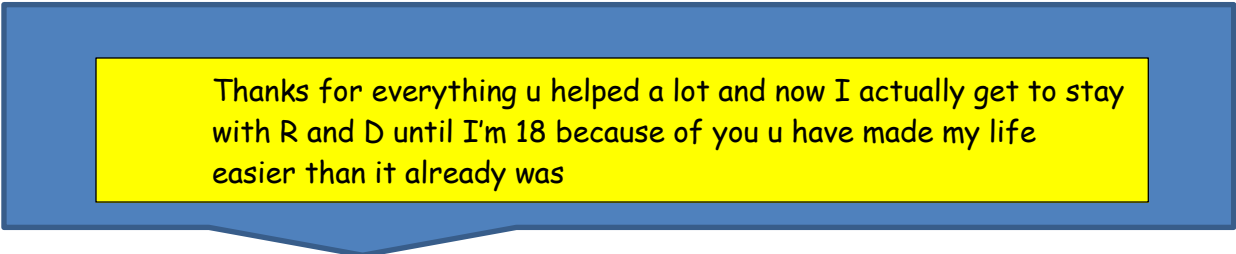
12.2 In addition to the 'formal' feedback route, how much children and young people value the service they receive can be measured in other ways, such as direct comments to Advocates and /or thank you cards, or by what children and young people say about the service to others. Some direct quotes from young people can be seen below:




Would definitely recommend to anyone that needs help with making themselves heard



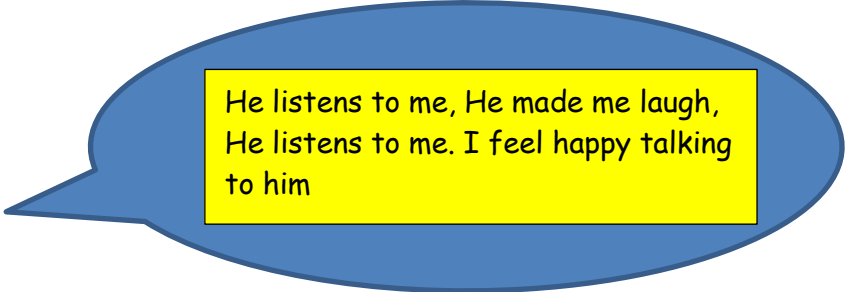
You have been great to me. I just want to say thank you



Thanks for everything u helped a lot and now I actually get to stay with R and D until I'm 18 because of you u have made my life easier than it already was



My Advocate is amazing!
She supported me and helped me through hard times



He listens to me, He made me laugh,
He listens to me. I feel happy talking to him

13. Independent Visitors Scheme

- 13.1 Whilst this scheme is one of the functions of the Children's Rights Team a separate annual report prepared by the scheme Co-ordinator is available at appendix 2. In summary, demand for the scheme continues and the number of volunteers who are matched with a young person, has increased during 2019/20. However, the scheme requires additional resources to enable it to be developed to fully meet demand.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 Within this reporting period the majority of issues raised by children and young people were resolved informally, rather than through the formal complaints process.
- 14.2 The team increased the support provided to Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan from the previous year.
- 14.3 The team continued to facilitate Young People's recruitment interview panels, which has supported recruitment to the Children's Services workforce.
- 14.4 The Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum continue to have fluctuating numbers but with a small core group of members. The Children in Care Council has a larger core group of 8 young people whereas the Care Leavers Forum has only 4 young people in the core group which meets regularly. To ensure a more balanced representation of children / young people views, the team will continue work to encourage new young people to join the groups and look at developing other effective mechanisms for gathering the views of other children and young people who do not wish to attend.
- 14.5 Demand for the Independent Visitors Scheme has continued. However, capacity to develop the scheme further is limited; how to build capacity to meet demand is under review.

15. Key areas of development (2019 to 2020) – What was achieved

- 15.1 To evaluate the effectiveness of student social work placements (to both students and the team). - There were elements of learning from this experience and definite positives that could built on, and when the opportunity arises the team would therefore like to offer placements again.
- 15.2 To continue to develop links between Senior Managers, the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Groups, with clear pathways that enable young people to present their views clearly and influence service provision. - This has been achieved, including Senior managers meeting with young people, to gain their views about their experiences and how to develop services.
- 15.3 To increase the direct membership of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum and to also to develop ways to capture the views of children / young people who do not attend the groups, to influence service development and provision. - Membership

of both groups has continued to fluctuate with some young people leaving and others joining the group.

- 15.4 To increase the offer of advocacy support to children and young people aged ten and over, subject to a child protection plan. – This has been achieved due to the team being fully staffed the number of young people aged ten or over who have been represented at child protection conferences has nearly doubled from 51 to 99.
- 15.5 As per the annual report / action plan for the Independent Visitors Scheme, develop guidance for Independent Visitors who are supporting young people over the age of 18 years old, this objective was achieved.

16. Key areas for development

- To ensure that virtual methods of communication are developed and are used effectively with children and young people.
- To update social media platforms regularly with relevant and interesting information to enable the service to reach more children and young people.
- To develop a young people's Challenge project to be undertaken throughout the Covid-19 lockdown period to help maintain contact with children and young people.
- To increase the membership of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum and to also to develop virtual methods to help capture the views of children / young people who do not attend the groups, to influence service development and provision including those who live out of the Kirklees area.
- To increase the offer of advocacy support to children and young people aged ten and over, subject to a Child Protection plan.
- Development of the Independent Visitor Scheme
- To develop the Independent Visitor training package to make it relevant to delivering training to smaller groups / or individuals virtually.

Appendix 1

Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF)

The Children in Care Council meets bi-weekly on a Monday evening and is a meeting for children and young people aged 12 to 15 who are in the care of the Local Authority. The aim of the group is to discuss the issues for children and young people who are in care, and to work with professionals to try to improve services, to ensure that they meet the needs of those who are in receipt of them.

The Care Leavers Forum is for young people aged 16 to 21 (or 25 if still in full time education) and the remit is to discuss the issues that young people face as they prepare to leave care and move into independence. Again, young people work with professionals to try to improve services and ensure that these meet their needs. This group meets bi-weekly on a Wednesday evening.

Both the CiCC and CLF now have a small number of core members who are working towards a specific action plan. During this reporting period they have been involved in the following pieces of work / activities:

- Undertaking of a graffiti project. A graffiti artist worked with the groups to produce art work which explored and presented some of the issues for children and young people in care and / or leaving care. The artwork was presented to Senior Managers and Council Members and at the annual Care Leavers Celebration of Achievement Event.
- The groups have met with a number of Senior Managers and the Lead Member for Children's Services throughout the last twelve months in order to take part in consultations and share their views on the following:
 - What life is like being in care, including producing a video to be used in training
 - Fostering Service
 - Semi-independent living
 - Leaving Care Team Financial support
 - Health Assessments
 - Regional events including a residential
 - Informational evenings at Huddersfield University including a tour of the Holocaust Museum, trip to the Student's Union and listening to the Author / Poet, Lemn Sissay
 - Reward trips to Bradley Woods and a Christmas meal out
- A music project began at the beginning of 2020 to work in a recording studio with a recording artist to produce a music CD on which young people talk about their experiences of being in care with their words put to a backing sound track. The groups will also record an audio / visual DVD on which they tell their stories about being in care and again share their thoughts about the positives and the challenges about being in care and leaving care. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic the project will take longer to complete than originally agreed.

What do we want to improve?

- To increase the membership of both the Council and the Forum, to ensure that both are representative of all groups of children and young people.
- To establish virtual sessions for young people who live in a host local authority to enable them to share their thoughts / views / ideas into the two groups.
- Continue to develop links with the managers of services, to ensure that there is an effective mechanism for communication and the development of services which are led by children

and young people, whilst also providing a forum for managers to consult children and young people.

Appendix 2

Kirklees Independent Visitor Scheme (IV)

Children Act 1989 Section 23ZB requires that:

(1) A local authority looking after a child must appoint an independent person to be the child's visitor if—

- (a) the child falls within a description prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State; or
- (b) in any other case, it appears to them that it would be in the child's interests to do so.

1 Introduction

1.1 Kirklees Independent Visitors Scheme, also known as Care2Listen, is a Local Authority funded scheme which sits within the Looked After Children Independent Service. The Scheme was established in its current format seven years ago. The scheme is coordinated by an Independent Service Officer and day to day administration is provided through Business Support within the team.

1.2 The scheme provides independent adult volunteers who befriend young people in care; to spend time with them on a one to one basis, undertaking activities and developing a positive relationship with a trusted, responsible adult. The volunteers are someone who the young person can talk to, seek advice, guidance, and support from and have fun with, in an informal setting.

1.3 Volunteers undergo a rigorous recruitment and selection programme which includes submitting a formal volunteer's application, adult and young person interview panel, and bespoke training package; tailored to equip and inform volunteers for the role of an Independent Visitor. Enhanced DBS checks are carried out together with employment checks and two references are taken up.

1.4 Young people are referred to the Scheme by either their Social Worker or Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The IRO has a duty to discuss the Scheme at a young persons' Looked After review. Young people are also encouraged to express an interest themselves in having an Independent Visitor and can apply through the Children's Rights webpage or they can discuss this directly with the Scheme Coordinator, their Social Worker, key worker or carer.

2. Current position

2.1 There are currently 43 trained volunteers. 40 Independent visitors are matched with a young person on a one to one basis. One experienced Independent Visitor has chosen to support

two young people who are seen separately. The total number of young people currently benefiting from the support of an Independent Visitor is therefore 41.

2.2 Seven Independent Visitors have left the scheme in the past 12 months. Independent Visitors who have chosen to leave are encouraged to have an exit discussion. An analysis of the reasons does not show any pattern which can be influenced through development of the scheme or support to Independent Visitor's. The main reasons given are work pressures, change of job, and moving area.

2.3 The last recruitment drive was between November 2018 and January 2019 and 11 volunteers completed training in April 2019. 10 have been matched with a young person. The remaining Independent Visitor decided not to be matched immediately.

2.4 There are currently 15 young people referred and waiting for an Independent Visitor. The details of those that are waiting are; 4 live in a host local authority area a number of miles away or it is assessed they would benefit from specialised volunteer; 4 young people live in host local authority area more local to Kirklees; and 7 young people live in Kirklees.

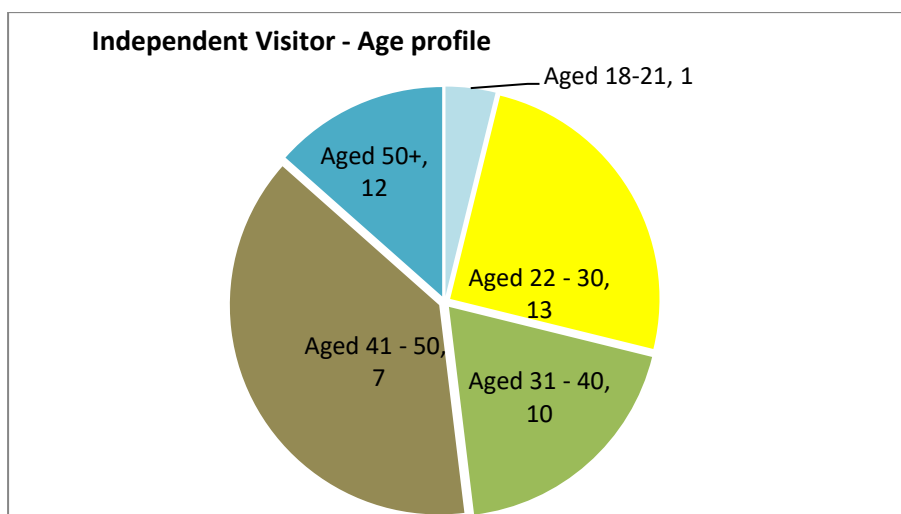
2.5 Once the existing three available volunteers are matched, the waiting times for young people who remain on the waiting list may increase as the Scheme would benefit from additional capacity to sustain additional volunteers. Due to current Covid-19 restrictions, it is difficult to say when the remaining 3 available Independent Visitors will be matched.

2.6 Consideration is being given to the development of the Independent Visitor Scheme.

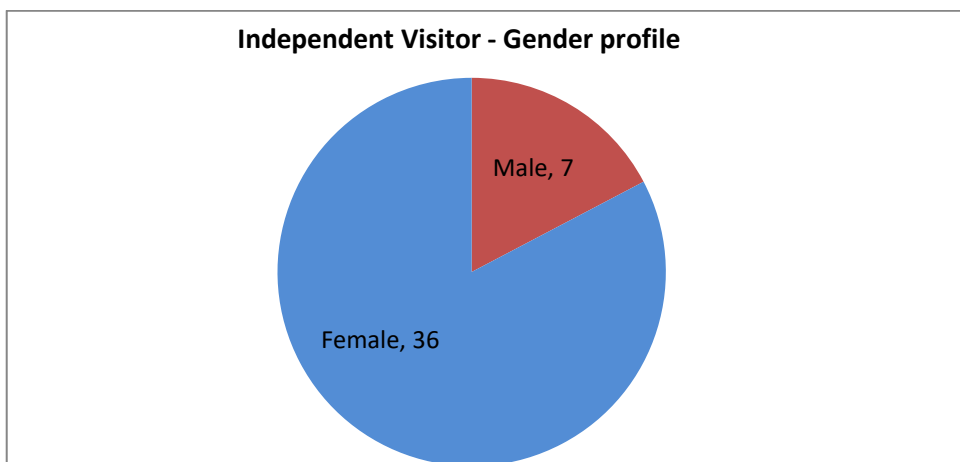
3. Volunteers and Young Person Profile

3.1 Volunteer profile

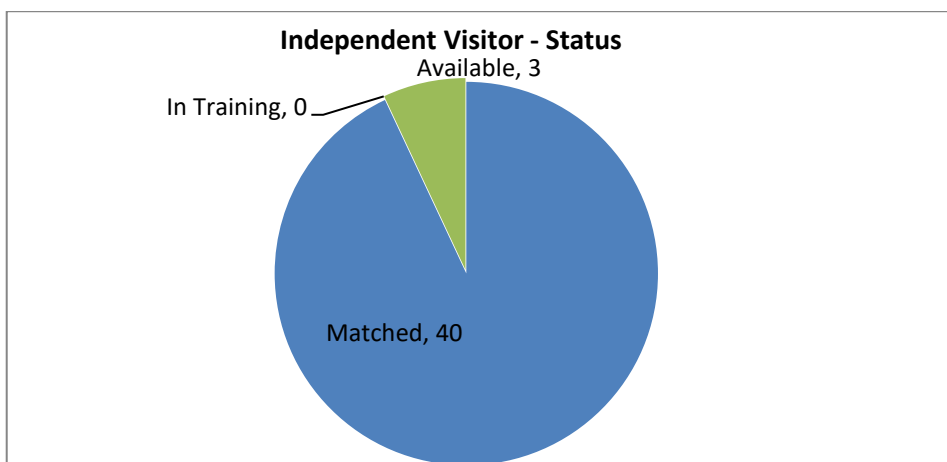
The Independent Visitor scheme has a diverse range of volunteers. Volunteers have to be aged 18 or over, with a minimum 5-year age gap between the adult volunteer and the young person they are matched to. Volunteers in the youngest age range are accepted only if they are able to demonstrate a degree of maturity appropriate to managing the challenges which young people may present.



84% (36) of the current volunteers are female and 16% (7) male. This is a similar cohort as seen in other regional schemes. Previously, attempts have been made to specifically identify and recruit more male volunteers with targeted advertising, however this has had little success. In practice, although some young people have specified that they would like a male volunteer, many have accepted a female volunteer and these relationships have been sustained.



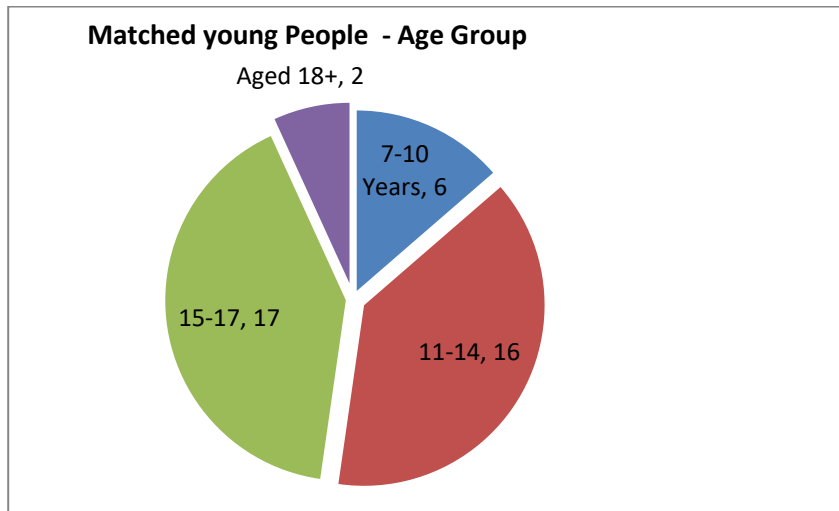
The scheme seeks to match volunteers within 8 weeks with a young person who meets their preference in terms of placement location, age and gender. This is challenging with the number of available trained volunteers depleted and the number of new referrals increasing.



3.2 Young Person Profile

There are currently 41 young people matched with an IV. There are more girls (56%) than boys (44%) benefitting from the scheme.

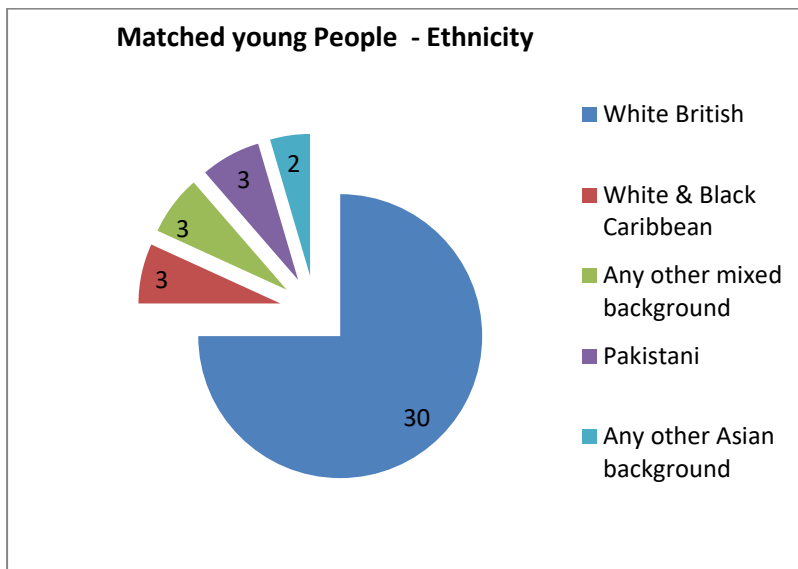
With regards to age, 17 older teenagers (15-17 years old) and 16 young people aged 11-14 currently have an Independent Visitor. There are 6 under 11s and 2 young adults over 18 being supported. Whilst some volunteer / young person relationships have ended shortly after a young persons' 18th birthday, the 2 young adults over 18 have each had their Independent Visitor for a number of years and continue to benefit from the support and guidance offered by their Independent Visitor.



• **41 young people are matched with an Independent Visitor**

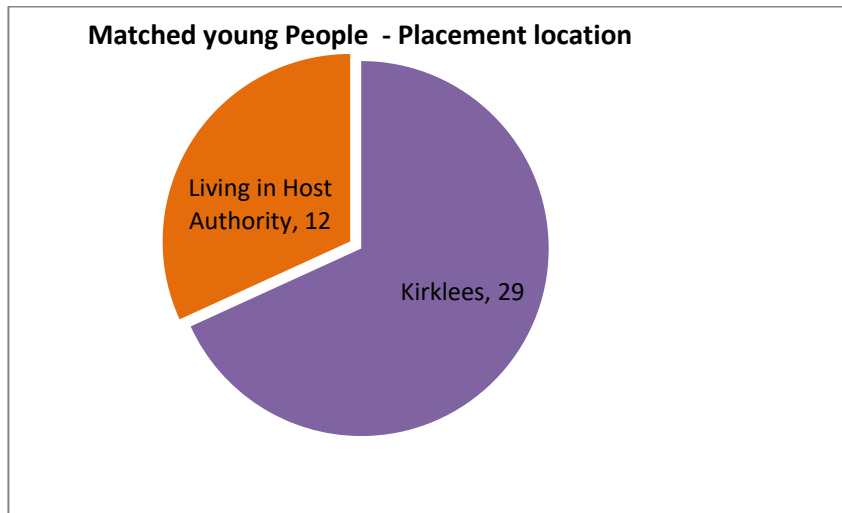
- 23 Boys and 18 girls
- 17 are aged 15-17
- 16 are aged 11-14 years old
- 6 are under the age of 11, and
- 2 are over the age of 18

The ethnic background of young people who have an Independent Visitor is broadly representative of the wider Kirklees community. ¹



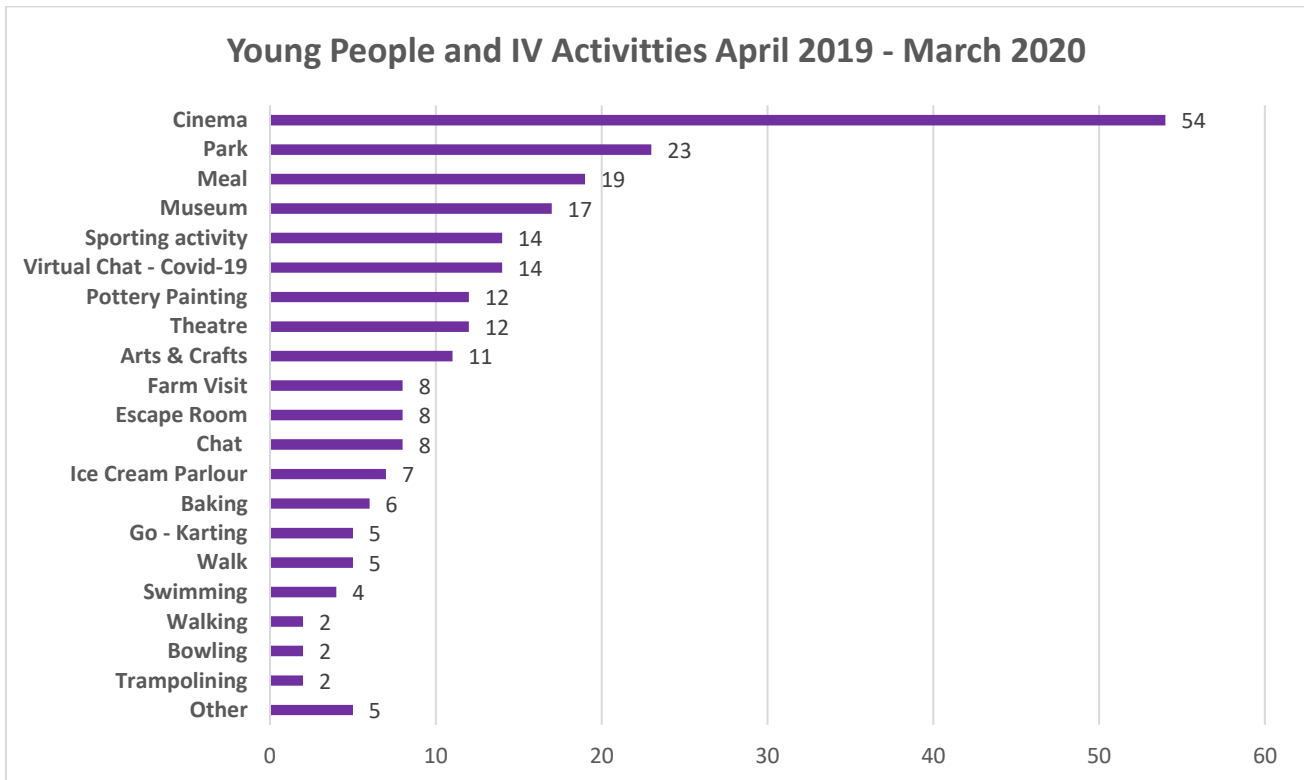
29% of matched young people live in a host local authority; with a high proportion living in neighbouring authorities i.e. Leeds, Calderdale, and Bradford.

¹ <http://observatory.kirklees.gov.uk/profiles/ethnicorigin>



4. Making a difference.

Independent Visitors are required to submit a short feedback form following each visit/contact with a young person. An analysis of these shows a total of 799 volunteering hours and 238 activities were undertaken with young people during the year.



5. Feedback from young people

A questionnaire was sent in March 2020 to all young people with an allocated Independent Visitor. The questionnaire asked young people if they were finding it helpful in having an Independent Visitor and, if so, how being part of the Independent Visitor scheme was helping and supporting them.

12 young people responded to the questionnaire. A summary of the responses is below:

- All but one young person said that they met up with their Independent Visitor at least monthly.

- Five young people said that they would like more visits. This may be because of the current climate due to Covid-19.
- All respondents said that they were found it helpful to have an Independent Visitor.
- Young People were asked how having an Independent Visitor has helped them. Young people responded:

<i>Improvement on my fitness</i>	<i>Tried new things</i>	<i>With my self confidence</i>	<i>Given good advice</i>
<i>Talked about how I'm feeling</i>	<i>Talked about things that are worrying me</i>	<i>Nice to talk with her and she understands me</i>	<i>With school exams</i>

Comments from young people:

- *My independent visitor is really nice. She is kind and I can talk to her about anything, also we have lots of fun and laughs.*
- *I get on with 'A' very well.*
- *Nothing (to change), it's great how it is.*
- *I would like 'K' to stay safe during this pandemic.*
- *He's great, He's the best IV.*
- *He is very kind, he came to my passing out parade and presentation evening at cadets.*
- *Its nice to meet new people and to get to know them. He's really kind.*

6. Responding to Coronavirus

Following the announcement from the UK Government on 23 March imposing restrictions on travel and social distancing; Independent Visitors were advised in line with Government guidance and local lockdown restrictions in relation to contact with children and young people.

Guidance was issued setting out plans for Independent Visitors and young people to keep in touch during the lockdown. The plan included a range of options depending on what the young person wanted and what the Independent Visitor was willing and able to provide. The options included writing a letter or sending a card to the young person or making arrangements for regular Skype / Whatsapp /Face -Time calls between the Independent Visitor and young person.

The response from Independent Visitors has been encouraging with the majority contacting their young person / carer and starting to establish regular virtual contact with their young person.

7. Support to Independent Visitors

The Scheme Coordinator is in regular contact with Independent Visitors and maintains a log of the date and type of contact. Peer Group meetings are held approximately every 6 weeks with occasional guest speakers invited to enhance the Independent Visitor's knowledge. Virtual Peer Group meetings are being planned to ensure that an appropriate level of contact and communication with Independent Visitors and the Scheme Coordinator is maintained during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Independent Visitor's receive supervision at 6 monthly intervals or more frequently if requested or required by the Scheme. Independent Visitors receive an Annual Review and discuss how the relationship with their matched young person is going, relationships with carers and any professional development requirements or opportunities.

8. Virtual Training

Due to Coronavirus, in person training of new Independent Visitors has not been possible. The intention is for the Scheme Coordinator to explore new ways to provide a suitable level of training for small groups or individual volunteers applying to become Independent Visitors in the future. It is anticipated that this training will be delivered by providing Independent Visitor training workbooks and supplemented through using Microsoft Teams or Skype training sessions.

Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 3rd November 2020

Title of report: Kirklees Looked After Children Service (Children’s Rights Team) Six Monthly Update Report

Purpose of report: To inform the Board of services delivered by the Children’s Rights Team during the period of 01 April 2020 to 30 September 2020

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 If no give the reason why not
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	23/10/20 Tom Brailsford
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	N/A
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Viv Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: Not applicable

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

The Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children's Rights team) works in collaboration with others to ensure that the views and opinions of children Looked After are heard and considered in respect of service delivery and policy development. The service also offers advocacy support to children and young people aged 10 years and over when they are subject to a Child Protection plan.

The Children's Rights team deliver a number of other functions which include, supporting children and young people to use the complaints process and to take part in the recruitment process in young people's panels. Children and young people are also trained to deliver their own training session to staff (Total Respect Training). This training helps staff to consider what the barriers are to the participation of children and young people and why it is important to listen to what children and young people say. Every child or young person who is new into care (or when they reach the age of 7) 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 from the team, as well as what participation opportunities they can become involved in.

Within the Children's Rights team, one full time Officer Co-ordinates the Independent Visitors Scheme. This scheme matches children and young people with adult volunteers who spend time with the child or young person they are matched with, supporting, and listening to them, as well as undertaking positive activities. A separate 6 monthly report is being provided in relation to the Independent Visitors scheme.

The attached report covers all other functions undertaken by the Children's Right's team in the period between 01 April 2020 and 30 September 2020. The report highlights the challenges / opportunities and good practice which the service has navigated due to the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic. This includes how service delivery has continued using modern technology and the positive / negatives of this for children and young people.

2. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

Not applicable

3.2 Working with Partners

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

3.3 Place Based Working

Not applicable

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

Not applicable

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

The Children's Rights team work collaboratively to help ensure the voice of children and young people who are Looked After by the local authority is heard in terms of decisions that are being made which affect their lives as individuals, and to ensure that service provision in general is influenced.

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 the child or young person to achieve the outcome they desire, their advocate supports them in trying to understand the reasons why. Some specific examples of positive outcomes during this reporting period are given below:

- Face to face family time agreed
- Life story work being completed
- Financial support being given
- Keeping current Social Worker
- Staying / moving to a different placement

3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not applicable

4. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

5. Next steps and timelines

The priorities for the next six months will be to:

- Develop the virtual offer for the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Forum groups, with a view to reinstating in person meetings when it is safe to do so.
- Explore establishing a virtual Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Forum group for children and young people who live outside of the Kirklees district
- Work with the Child Protection and Review Unit to develop how the voice of the child is captured within the Child Protection process.
- Update literature (My Review pack) which is given to children and young people when they first come into care.
- Re-introduce the 'Rate My Review' card for children and young people to support them to provide feedback about their Looked After reviews; to assist with developing child friendly review meetings.
- To develop the current service offer to enable an Advocate to be with a child or young person when they are attending a virtual review.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted

7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Not applicable

8. Contact officer

Melanie Tiernan, Service Manager, Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service – 07794217459 or 01484 225288 melanie.tiernan@kirklees.gov.uk

Anna Gledhill, Service Manager Quality Assurance and Safeguarding, Resources, Improvements & Partnerships – 71493 anna.gledhill@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable

10. Service Director responsible

Tom Brailsford, Service Director - Resources, Improvements & Partnerships

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Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children's Rights Team) Quarterly Report

Reporting Period	6 monthly report – 1 st April 2020 to 30 th September 2020
Report of	Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children's Rights Team)
Report to	Corporate Parenting Board
Report Originator	Melanie Tiernan
Date of Report	October 2020

1. Introduction

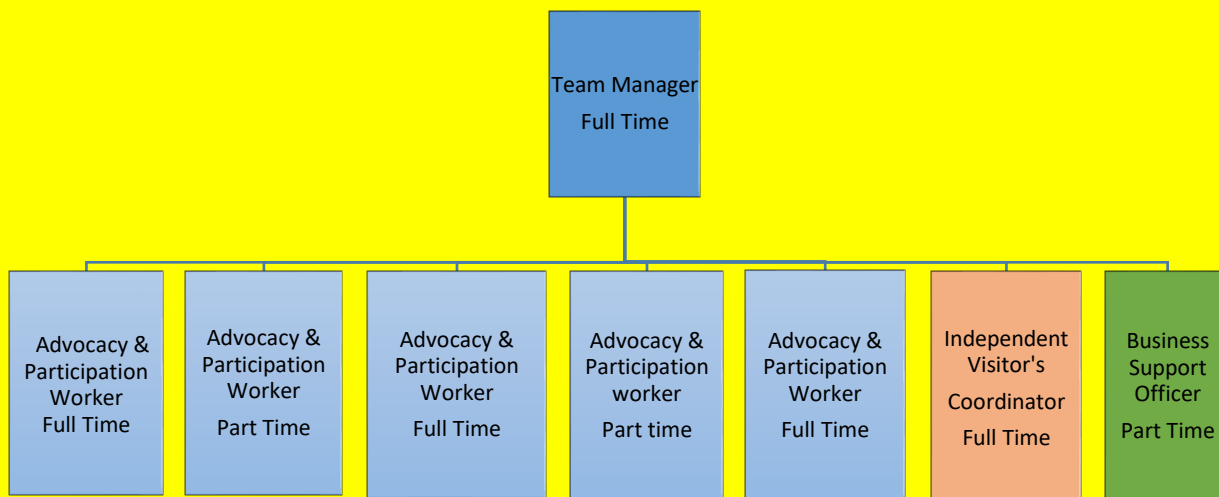
The Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children's Rights Team) offer advocacy, advice and representation to children and young people who are Looked After by Kirklees within the borough or in external placements. The team supports Children's Services to establish the views and opinions of Children Looked After in respect of policy development and service delivery and contributes to safeguarding individual children and young people.

The service also supports children and young people aged ten and over to express their views when they are subject to a Child Protection plan.

2. The aim of the Children's Rights Team is to:

- To promote and support children's rights within the current framework of legislation, incorporating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Support the empowerment of children and young people Looked After to enable them to meaningfully participate in decision-making, which affects them, both individually and collectively.
- To provide a quality assurance function for services received by Children Looked After
- To support the empowerment of children and young people involved in the Child Protection process.

3 Children's Rights Team Structure



4 Overview of the last six months

4.1 Opportunities / Good Practice

- The Children's Rights Team has continued to work with and support children and young people throughout the Covid-19 situation, albeit in a different way. There have been opportunities which the service has taken and built upon such as using 'WhatsApp' which has provided a successful way of keeping in touch with some children and young people and also enabled a young person living out of area to regularly take part in the Care Leavers forum. The Service now plan to develop a virtual Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum specifically for children and young people who live out of area.
- Following the national Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, the Team wrote to all Care Leavers and Looked After children and young people to remind them that the Children's Rights Service could offer them support and provided contact details. For children and young people with whom the team was already working, they were contacted by their Advocate to establish the level of contact they would like; a number asked for a more regular telephone/video call contact, which gave them the opportunity to let their Advocate know if they were struggling in any way. This resulted in building better relationships with some children and young people, including some who live out of the Kirklees area.
- During the national lockdown restrictions, the Children's Rights Team set a weekly challenge for children and young people to take part in with the opportunity to win a High Street Voucher. This was promoted on the Children's Rights Team web page, Twitter, and Facebook accounts and via a new Instagram account. This resulted in the Team having an increased profile on the social media platforms that children and young people use regularly. An end of project report was completed, and a summary article with examples of some of the challenges completed by children and young people, appeared on the Council's intranet site.

- The volunteer Independent Visitors have maintained contact with children and young people, utilising a breadth of creative ways such as sending cards / letters / craft activities / books etc through the post, making video calls to catch up and also playing games or quizzes virtually.
- The Annual Achieve Awards to celebrate the achievement of Children Looked After over the age of 16 and care leavers is timetabled for October 2020. The Children's Rights Team Manager has been working with the Leaving Care Team and young people to organise a virtual event, and the event will be delivered as a live stream on YouTube.
- Social Media platforms and the team's webpage of the Web page have been further developed and are updated regularly with information and opportunities of interest to children and young people. Work to further enhance these platforms and encourage children and young people to access them will continue.

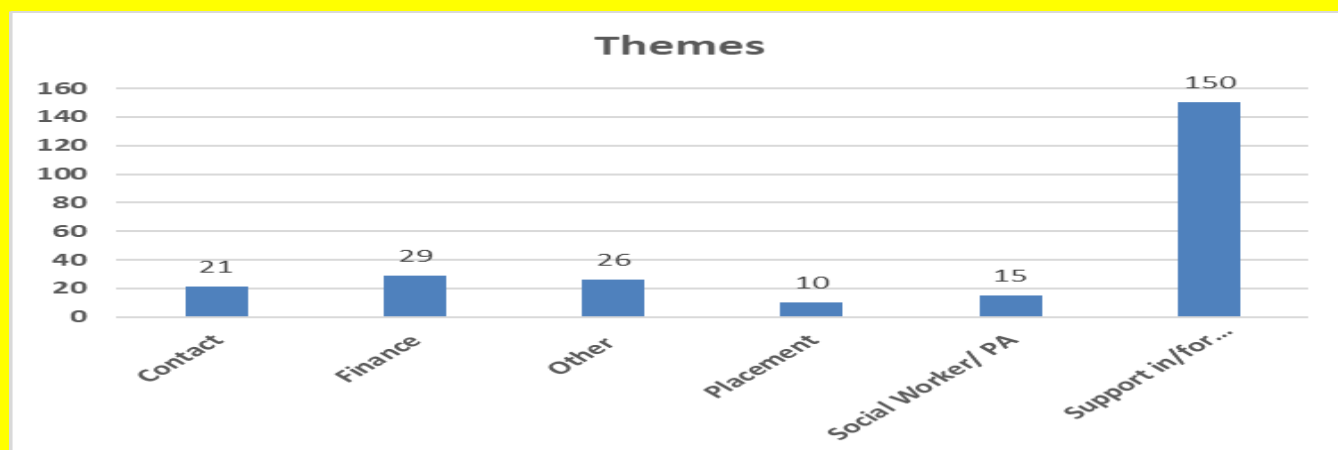
4.2 Challenges

- Over the last six months the main challenge for the service has been adapting in-person service delivery to adopting new ways of engaging children and young people. During the initial lockdown restrictions, the team only undertook in person visits to children and young people in exceptional circumstances, and communication and support mainly took place through telephone calls, and video calls. During this time some children and young people struggled to express their wishes and feelings; this was particularly the case with regard to children and young people who were subject to the Child Protection process and for children and young people who did not have a pre-existing relationship with the Children's Rights Team. When in- person visits were resumed, these children and young people were prioritised.
- Supporting children and young people in virtual meetings has been challenging, particularly in respect of Child Protection Conferences. The team has also experienced a number of children and young people choosing not to attend their Child Looked After review meetings because they struggled with the virtual format; where this was the case, Advocates have attended Review meetings on their behalf, to share their wishes and feelings.
- The team have found that children and young people who have attended virtual Looked After Reviews have overall preferred video calling; however technology has presented some issues when Carers have not had either the appropriate equipment to enable video calls. The team has also experienced occasions where the use of Skype has caused disruption to Review meetings, due to poor quality audio or connection problems.
- Using technology for facilitating the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum group meetings has also been challenging and the members have shared that they would like to resume in person meetings as soon as is practically possible. The use of Skype as a platform for these meetings has been a barrier, as Zoom is the preferred option for children and young people however, this has not been possible to facilitate.
- Covid-19 restrictions have had an impact on how the Independent Visitors Scheme has operated, however there have been examples of innovate practice utilised by the volunteers to help maintain relationships with children and young people, as outlined above.

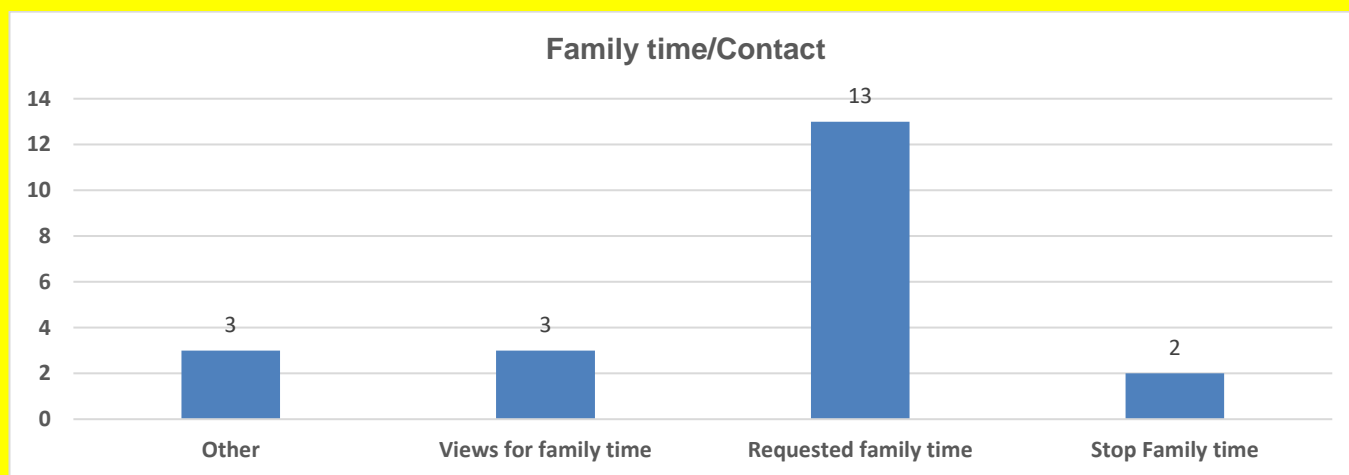
5. Advocacy

5.1 Between 01 April 2020 and 30 September 2020, the team has worked on 271 advocacy issues, 149 of which were to provide support at Child Looked After (CLA) Reviews or other meetings. Requests for advocacy from children and young people who are Looked After are allocated to a worker within 24 hours of a referral being received. 108 of the cases for this reporting period were for children who are placed out of area. In addition to support at Looked After reviews, the information below highlights other issues for which children and young people requested advocacy support:

- Finance – 29 (16 living in a host local authority)
- Family time (previously contact) – 21 (10 living in a host local authority)
- Social Worker / Personal Advisor – 13 (4 living in a host local authority)
- Placement – 10 (4 living in a host local authority)



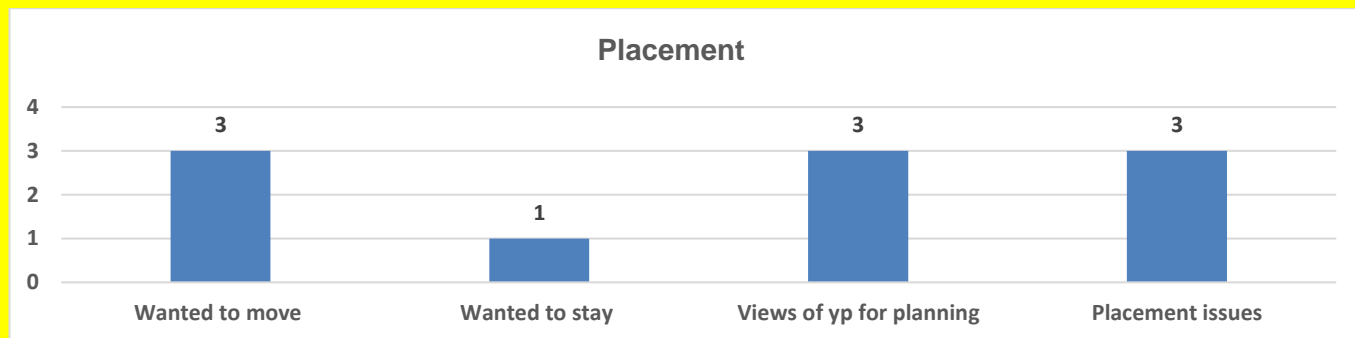
5.2 Summary of the most common issues



5.3 13 of the issues relating to family time were related to children and young people wanting support regarding family time, i.e. for it to either take place as agreed or to have some additional contact. Of the 21 issues raised overall:

- 7 young people were happy with the outcome

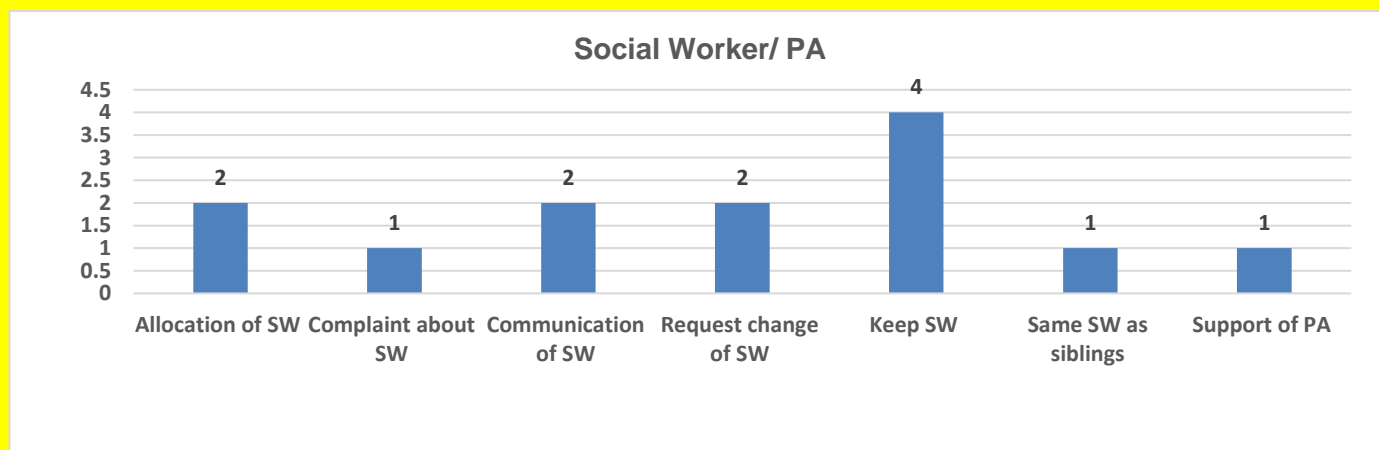
- 2 young people felt that a compromise had been reached with face time calls being arranged and risk assessments being undertaken so that family time could be reinstated as soon as Covid restrictions allowed.
- 2 young people were unhappy with the outcome, due to being advised they could not see their family as they had wished.



5.4 The graph above highlights issues raised by children and young people regarding their placement. These included:

- 3 young people who wanted a move
- 1 young person who wanted to remain in their current placement and
- 3 who experienced some issues within their placements.

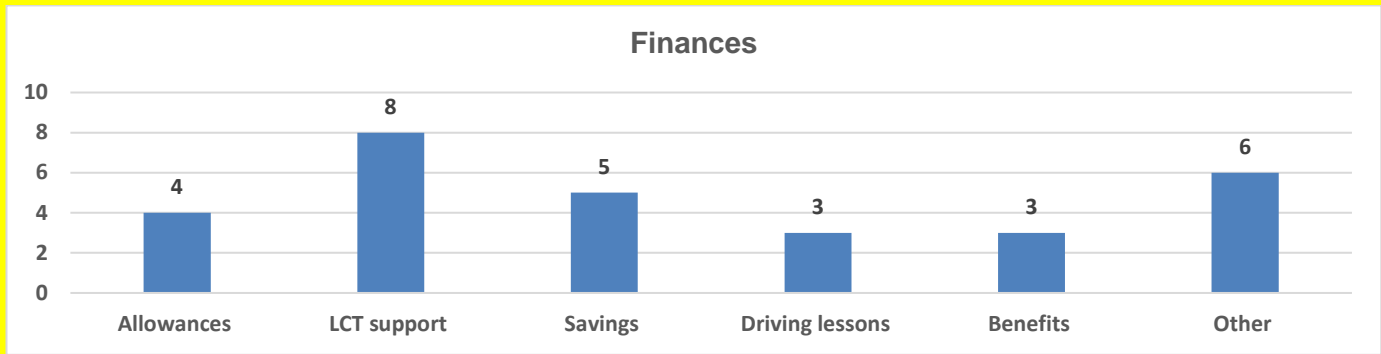
5.5 Advocates worked with 3 children and young people to find out their views about placement planning. Of the 10 issues raised, 7 young people felt that they had achieved a positive outcome, such as moving or staying in the placement of their choice, or their views being taken into consideration for planning.



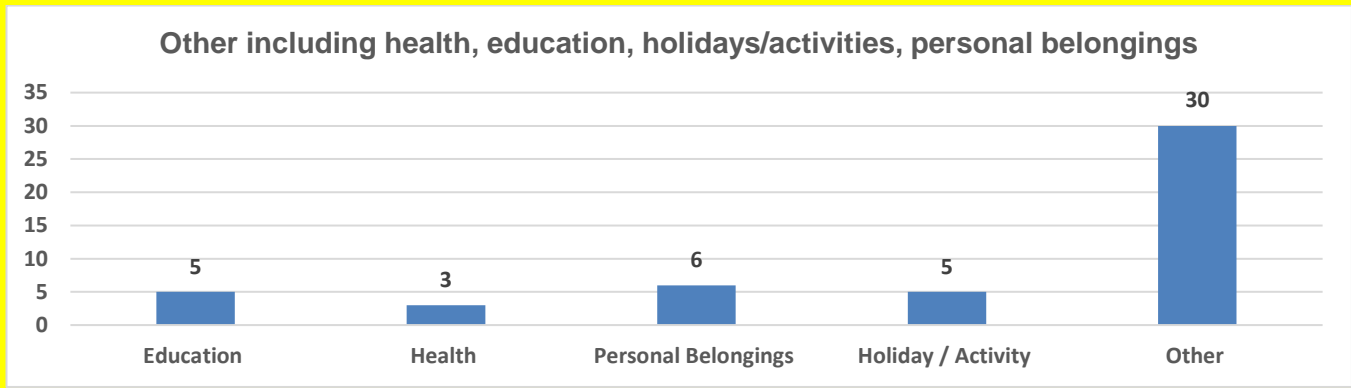
5.6 During this reporting period:

- 2 children / young people wanted to know who their newly allocated Social Worker was
- 2 requested a change of Social Worker, and
- 4 wanted to keep their current Social Worker or have the same one as their siblings.

5.7 7 young people were happy with the outcome achieved, 5 felt that they had received a compromise, such as agreeing to try to develop a relationship with the Social Worker; 1 young person withdrew their issue.



5.8 Of the 29 issues relating to finance, 17 young people were happy with the outcome achieved which included receiving of allowances / access to savings and clarity about support from the Leaving Care Team. Of the 3 who achieved a compromise 2 received some partial funding and 1 was supported by their foster carer to purchase an item. 2 young people did not achieve the outcome they were seeking.



5.9 The graph above shows the categories of the further 49 issues raised during this reporting period. There was no main theme for the area of education which included the impact of Covid-19, acquiring a laptop and arrangements for meetings. 4 of the issues regarding personal belongings related to when a young person moved placements, 1 of the issues related to a request for funding and 1 clarifying what support was available for moving placement.

5.10 Of the issues relating to holiday / activity, 2 related to requesting permission to go on a holiday, and 3 were related to undertaking activities. The 30 issues shown in the 'other' category were varied with no apparent theme, including issues such as, seeking support and outcomes of housing applications.

6. Summary

6.1 Whilst the range of issues for which children and young people seek advocacy support is wide and varied, there are recurring themes, such as:

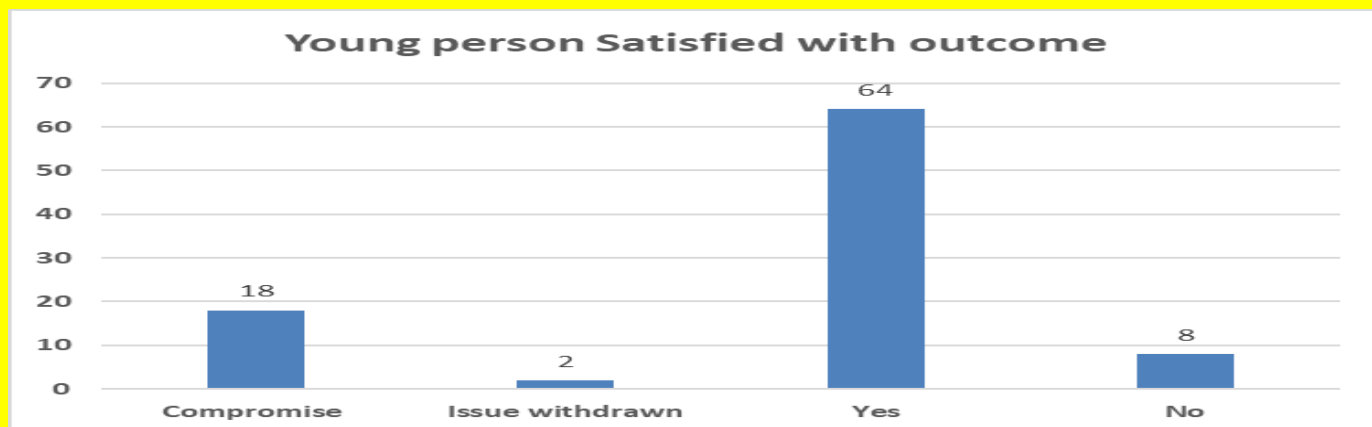
- Placements
- Family time
- Social Worker / Personal Advisor

15 issues raised by young people in this reporting period were dealt with through the formal complaints process. These related to:

- Finance (8)
- Family Time (contact) (1)
- Communication with foster carer (1)
- Social Worker (5)

Of these, the majority of young people felt they achieved a positive outcome and a number were happy with a compromise achieved, only one young person did not achieve their desired outcome, this was due to compliance with Covid-19 restrictions.

7. What difference did we make for Children?



7.1 Where young people received Advocacy support, other than support at their Looked After reviews, overall 64 young people were satisfied with the outcome they achieved, 18 felt that a compromise had been reached, 2 issues were withdrawn and only 8 felt that they had not achieved a positive outcome. Some positive examples of outcomes for young people included:

- Face to face family time agreed
- Life story work being completed
- Financial support received
- Social Worker stability
- Staying / moving to a different placement

Compromises included:

- Video calls agreed
- Meeting with the allocated Social Worker and try to develop a positive relationship
- Partial financial support awarded

For young people who felt they had not achieved a positive outcome, issues related to

- Family time not being able to be arranged as requested due to Covid-19
- Council tax payment

8. Advocacy at Child Protection Conferences

8.1 Children and young people aged 10 or over who are subject to a Child Protection conference can speak to an Advocate to ensure that their wishes and feelings are heard and taken into consideration. Due to capacity in the Service, currently it is not possible to represent every child or young person for whom a referral is received. Following an audit of the voice of the child within the child protection process by the Child Protection and Review Unit (CPRU) a

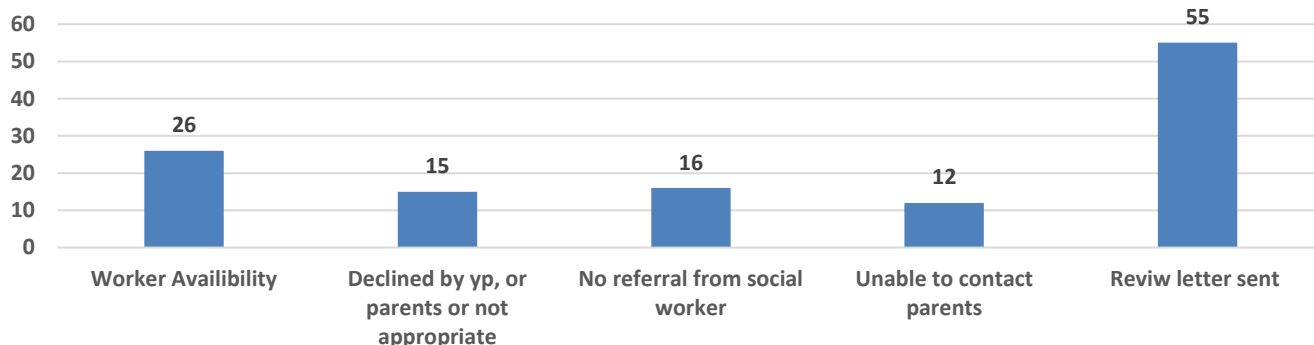
task and finish group is being established to develop how children and young people influence their planning; the Childrens Rights Team will form part of this working group.

Number of Child Protection Conferences



8.1 Of the 82 young people who were represented at their Child Protection Conference during this reporting period, 28 related to an initial Child Protection Conference. The Children’s Rights Service send letters to the parents / Carers of young people who have not been previously supported and have a review Child Protection conference due, asking them to make contact with the Service if they would like their child to receive support; whilst take up is limited requests are received from Social Worker’s and /or Conference Chair’s. The graph below show that 26 young people were unable to be seen because of worker availability

How many yp were not represented



9. Ways in which young people influence service provision

Interview Panels

9.1 Young people continue to be involved in the recruitment process for roles which involve working directly with or managing teams who work directly with children and young people. They provide valuable insight into how they feel that candidates would be able to undertake their role keeping young people at the heart of what they do, being able to communicate well and build good relationships with children and young people. Due to Covid-19 how this has been undertaken has been adapted, however from October young people will be conducting virtual interviews with some candidates.

9.2 How consistency of the involvement of children and young people within recruitment is achieved is a recognised area for further development.

Total Respect Training

9.3 Total Respect Training is mandatory for all staff who are new to Kirklees in a role which involves working directly with or managing services which are delivered to children and young people, including new Foster Carers, refresher training should also be every three years. Currently due to Covid-19 planning is underway to develop the training to enable it to be delivered virtually.

Skills to foster

9.4 This is a session delivered by children and young people as part of the overall Skills to Foster training. This virtual training now includes a video clip made by young people, talking about what are the positive and not so positive aspects about living in care. Attendees watch the video and are then asked some associated questions to undertake as homework. The team is giving further consideration to the Skills to Foster training which can be delivered by young people.

Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF)

9.5 During Covid-19 the two groups have continued to meet fortnightly using Skype. There have been some new members to both groups although core members remain low and as indicated above running the groups has been challenging because of technology issues and the meetings being virtual. A music project with The Basement remains underway with the CLF and CiCC although its progression has been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. Endeavours are being undertaken to complete this project which will see the making of a CD with a rap that the groups have created around their care experiences and a visual DVD. The groups have also taken part in some virtual regional events including a short training session which one of the young people then cascaded down to other members of the group.

10. Other work of the team

10.1 Exit Questionnaires

These are undertaken on behalf of the Leaving Care Team with young people six months before they reach the age of 21 to establish any issues / support needs that young people may have before they fully leave care, and to gain their views about what kind of service they feel they have received. The Children's Rights Team undertake the Exit questionnaires, to enable young people to speak freely to someone independent. Due to Covid-19 these are not currently being held in person and this has impacted on capturing the views of young people. The service is exploring how to resume Exit Questionnaires in person, giving full consideration to Covid-19.

10.2 Link visits

Monthly visits are usually made to each of the Kirklees owned Children's Homes and Ruby Lodge which is a contracted home but has Kirklees children placed there. This gives the opportunity for young people to see someone from the service monthly and raise any personal or collective concerns that they may have. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, children's homes have not been accommodating visitors and as a result, Advocates have continued to make regular contact by telephone.

10.3 Initial visits

Every young person who comes into care (or when they reach the age of 7) receives information about the Children's Rights Team. Covid-19 restrictions have impacted on these being able to be undertaken in person and consequently information packs have been sent out to children and young people, followed up by a telephone call. Due to the team assessing that this was impacting on building positive relationships with children and young people, where possible and assessed as safe, in person visits have now been reinstated

11. What do we want to Improve

The priorities for the next six months are:

- Develop the virtual offer for the CiCC and CLF groups, with a view to reinstating in person meetings when it is safe to do so.
- Explore establishing a virtual CiCC and CLF group for children and young people who live outside of the Kirklees district
- Work with the CPRU to develop how the voice of the child is captured within the Child Protection process.
- Update literature (My Review pack) which is given to children and young people when they first come into care.
- Re-introduce the 'Rate My Review' card for children and young people to support them to provide feedback about their Looked After reviews; to assist with developing child friendly review meetings.
- To develop the current service offer to enable an Advocate to be with a child or young person when they are attending a virtual review.

Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 3rd November 2020

Title of report: Independent Visitor Scheme 6 Monthly Report (01 April 2020 – 30 September 2020)

Purpose of report

To inform the Corporate Parenting Board about the work of the Independent Visitors Scheme during the first six months of the financial year 2019 to 2020 (April to September 2019) and plans for development of the scheme.

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 Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	“Not applicable” If yes also give date it was registered
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	“Not applicable” If no give the reason why not
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	23/10/2020 Tom Brailsford
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	N/A
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Viv Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: Not Applicable

Ward councillors consulted: Not Applicable

Public or private: Public

(Have you considered GDPR?) Yes

1. **Summary**

Kirklees Independent Visitors Scheme, also known as Care2Listen is a Local Authority funded scheme which sits within the Children Looked After Independent Service. The Scheme was established in its current format seven years ago and is coordinated by an Independent Service Officer; administration is provided by the Children's Rights Business Support Officer.

The aim of the scheme is for Independent adult volunteers to support young people in the care of the local authority; to befriend them, and spend time with them on a one to one basis, undertaking positive activities and develop independent trusted adult relationships. The volunteers provide children and young people with someone to talk to, and offer advice, guidance, and support, together with opportunities to have fun with, in an informal setting.

At the end of September 2020, there were 34 young people who had an Independent Visitor. 23 were living in Kirklees and 11 were living in a host local authority area. There were 14 young people waiting to be matched with an Independent Visitor, of these 8 were living in host Local Authority areas.

During the past six months the Covid-19 Pandemic has affected the ability of Independent Visitor's to engage with young people as previously; however virtual methods have been utilised, together with other methods, such as volunteers sending, cards and letters, books, craft activities etc to young people.

2. **Information required to take a decision**

For information only – no decision required

3. **Implications for the Council**

3.1 **Working with People**

Children and young people who are in the care of the Local Authority have the opportunity to work with someone who is not paid to be part of their lives but wants to spend time with them on a voluntary basis. The scheme provides young people with opportunities to build trusting relationships, have new experiences, chose what information to share information about themselves

Adults volunteering with the scheme have the opportunity to provide a valuable service to children and young people which they often say leads to them feeling that they have helped others and '*given something back to their community*'.

3.2 **Working with Partners**

Not Applicable

3.3 **Place Based Working**

Every effort is made to ensure that the range of volunteers who are part of the scheme are reflective of the diversity and location of the children and young people who are in the care of the Local Authority although there is a lack of male volunteers and those whose English is not their first language.

3.4 **Improving outcomes for children**

All children and young people who are looked after have the right to be allocated an Independent Visitor if it is felt that they would benefit from this service. The scheme offers a child or young person in care the opportunity to be supported by someone with whom they can build a trusting relationship with, speak to if they have worries or concerns and look up to as a positive role model. They are able to go out with someone who is not paid to be part of their lives and do fun activities with them. This often leads to improving a young person's confidence, self-esteem, and emotional well-being, whilst also providing them with opportunities to participate in new experiences.

During the last six months Covid-19 restrictions have impacted on the ability to support children in person, however volunteers have kept in regular touch with young people through telephone calls, texts, video calls and sending cards, letters or small gifts through the post; which has helped to continue the development of positive meaningful relationships

3.5 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not applicable

4. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

5. Next steps and timelines

The priorities for the next 6 months for the Independent Visitor Scheme are:

- In anticipation of the Coronavirus pandemic restricting the ability for group training to take place, an Independent Visitors training workbook will be developed, to be delivered and completed virtually with new Independent Visitors.
- Explore virtual matching / support for young people living in host local authority areas
- Support the safe resumption of in person contact /activities between Independent Visitors and young people in accordance with risk assessments.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendation

Not applicable

8. Contact officer

Christopher Berridge – Independent Service Officer, Kirklees Looked After Children
Independent Service 01484 225288 or 07976497735
christopher.berridge@kirklees.gov.uk

Anna Gledhill – Service Manager, Quality Assurance and Safeguarding, Resources,
Improvement and Partnerships 71493 anna.gledhill@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable

10. Service Director responsible

Tom Brailsford – Service Director, Resources, Improvements and Partnerships

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Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children’s Rights Team)

Independent Visitor Scheme 6 Monthly Report

Reporting Period	1 April 2020 – 30 September 2020
Report of	Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children’s Rights Team)
Report to	Corporate Parenting Board
Report Originator	Christopher Berridge
Date of Report	8 October 2020

1. Overview of the Service

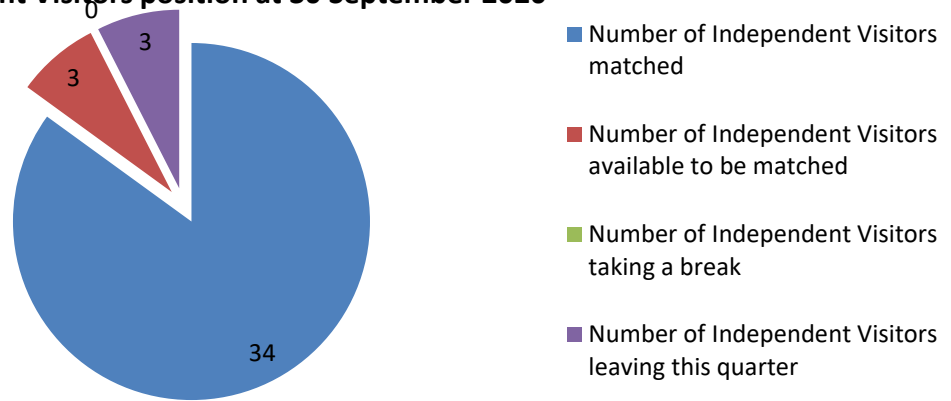
- 1.1 Kirklees Independent Visitors Scheme, also known as Care2Listen, is a Local Authority funded scheme which sits within the Looked After Children Independent Service.
- 1.2 The scheme supports independent adult volunteers to befriend children and young people in the care of the Local Authority; to spend time with them on a one to one basis, undertake positive activities and develop independent meaningful trusted relationships. The volunteers provide children and young people with someone to talk to, seek advice, guidance, and support from, and have fun with, in an informal setting.
- 1.3 The scheme is coordinated by an Independent Service Officer with the support of a part-time Business Support officer. The Children’s Rights Team Business Support Officer provides administration to the scheme by processing Independent Visitor’s expenses and recording the feedback provided by Independent Visitors when they have had a visit or contact with a child or young person.

2. Current Position

Volunteers

- 2.2 As of 30 September 2020, there were 37 trained volunteers involved with the scheme; this represents a reduction of 7 volunteers compared to 12 months ago. Of these 34 Independent Visitors (IVs) are matched with a child or young person on a one to one basis.
- 2.3 At the end of September 2020 there were 3 Independent Visitors available to be matched with a child /young person.
- 2.4 3 Independent Visitors have left the scheme during the reporting period due to moving home/ personal reasons.

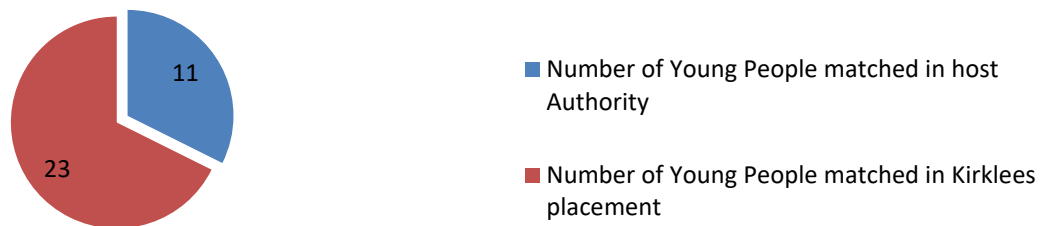
Independent Visitors position at 30 September 2020



Children and Young People

2.5 At the end of September 2020, of the 34 children and young people matched with an Independent Visitor, 23 were living in Kirklees and 11 were living in a host local authority area.

Young People Matched at 30 September 2020



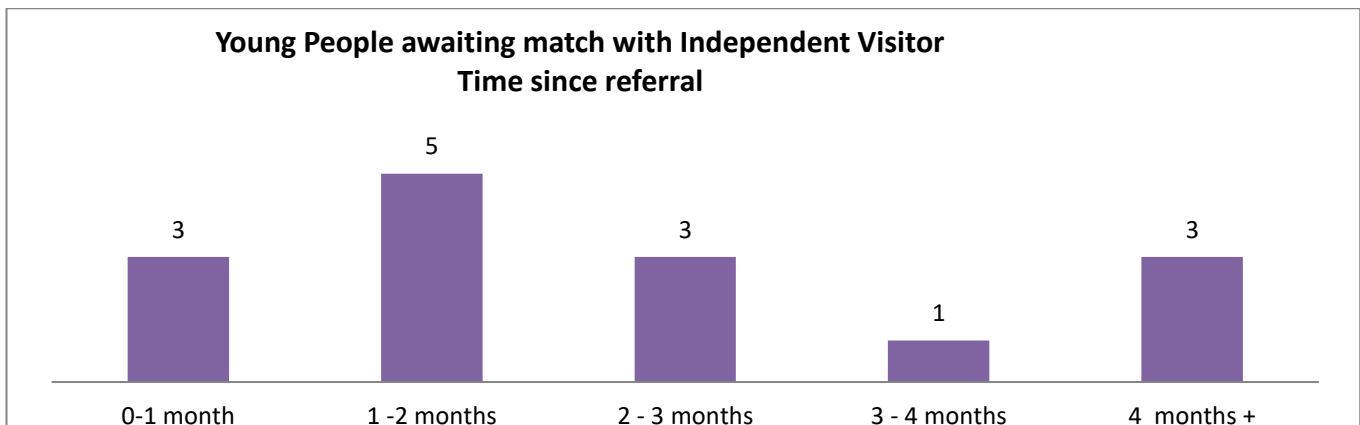
2.6 At the end of the period, there were 14 young people waiting to be matched with an Independent Visitor: of which 8 live in a host local authority area. Although there are 3 Independent Visitors available to be matched with a young person; the complex needs of some of the young people, combined with travelling distance and the impact of the Covid-19 local lockdown has hampered attempts to match the Volunteers.

2.7 For those young people waiting to be allocated an Independent Visitor, the length of time that they have been waiting to be matched from the time they were referred to the scheme is shown in the table below.

As of 30 September 2020:

Number of Referrals	14	Kirklees	6	Out of Area	8
Time since referral	0-1 month	1 -2 months	2 - 3 months	3 - 4 months	4 months +

	2	5	3	1	3
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3. Responding to Coronavirus

3.1 The last six months have been very different for the Independent Visitor's Scheme due to the challenges and opportunities which have arisen because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The main challenge for the scheme has been the suspension of in person visits between children and young people and volunteers as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions.

3.2 Challenges

- With the introduction of the national lockdown restrictions in late March 2020, the initial challenge was to ensure that all Independent Visitors matched with a young person were following Government guidelines not to meet anyone outside of their household. As a result, the scheme's Coordinator surveyed all Independent Visitors regarding their ability and willingness to keep in touch with young people virtually through the use of social media applications such as Skype/WhatsApp/Zoom or telephone calls. A number of the volunteers expressed concern about using social media as they had no experience of doing so, whilst others shared that 'they didn't have that type of relationship' with the young person they were matched with and highlighted that often the best conversations with young people were held when they were driving to their chosen activity.
- To support the volunteers the scheme's Coordinator offered to provide hardware i.e. mobile phones / laptops with social media applications pre-loaded, to facilitate ongoing communication between Independent Visitors and young people, This was not, however, taken up, as all the volunteers felt they had appropriate resources / equipment.
- Initially at the start of the national lockdown period all Independent Visitors sent a personal card or letter to the young person they were matched with, this was followed by a call to the young person / carer to establish the wishes and feelings and practicalities of introducing regular virtual meetings through Skype/WhatsApp/Zoom or telephone calls. After having spoken to the young person / carer, a small number (4) Independent Visitors responded that that the young person did not wish to have virtual meetings, in these cases the Independent Visitor was advised to maintain contact by sending letters /cards / small gifts.
- The challenge to keep all Independent Visitors fully engaged with the scheme during this time was recognised and as a result a series of virtual Peer Support meetings have been

held, (11 in total). This has provided Independent Visitors with opportunities to discuss both their individual relationship with the young person they are matched with, any areas of concern and to challenge guidance issued to them.

- Understanding and interpreting the changing national and local restrictions has been a challenge but this has not impacted on, what is felt, has been clear, concise guidance issued to Independent Visitors. (see Good Practice below)
- One specific and recurring challenge is that based on National guidelines and common practice amongst other Independent Visitor Schemes, guidance was issued relating to Independent Visitors not travelling with the young person they were matched with in the Independent Visitor's car. Some Independent Visitor's view this as a tool to help develop their relationship with children and young people, however where this was viewed as a challenge to achieving this Independent Visitors have maintained relationships with young people through social media.
- The Coordinator has made contact with all Independent Visitors during the reporting period, and 8 supervision sessions and 3 annual reviews have been conducted during the period and virtual supervision's are prioritised by the Scheme's Coordinator with a small number of Independent Visitors who have not maintained regular contact with Coordinator.
- A significant challenge faced during the reporting period related to matching young people on the waiting list with an Independent Visitor. During the period, there have been 3 Independent Visitors available to be matched and up to 14 young people, many of them living in host local authority areas. Although the profiles of a number of Independent Visitors have been shared with some young people, suitable matches were not achieved, in one case an introductory meeting was hampered by local Covid-19 restrictions and will be rearranged.
- During the period, there have been a small number (3) of enquiries from members of the public enquiring about becoming an Independent Visitor. These have been responded to, however none of the initial enquiries made have resulted in a completed application being received.
- A further challenge during the Covid-19 pandemic is for the scheme to offer the level of training necessary to prepare new volunteers for the role of an Independent Visitor, and provide ongoing support to a significant number of new volunteers (12 +), which are needed in order to reduce the waiting list of young people currently referred to the scheme.

3.3 Good Practice / Opportunities

- Whenever the Independent Visitors have been in contact with young people, either virtually or through a face to face outing they are encouraged to submit a short feedback form, and a total of 109 forms have been submitted during the reporting period equating to 175 hours of contact with the young people supported through the scheme.
- Throughout the Coronavirus pandemic many Independent Visitors have chosen to send cards, letters, and small gifts to young people, and where young people have indicated that they would like to remain in contact through social media /telephone calls, Independent Visitors have gone to great lengths to make these fun and interactive, examples being the

setting of weekly quizzes set by an Independent Visitor and young person in turn, and one Independent Visitor presenting a virtual birthday cake for a young person.

- It is evident that the majority of Independent Visitors have embraced keeping in regular contact with the young person they are matched with and some have developed their relationships further through use of social media. As a result of this the Scheme is exploring opportunities to create virtual friendships between young people and Independent Visitors, for young people who live in host local authority areas for whom the scheme would otherwise be unable to find an Independent Visitor due to the travelling distances involved.
- For a relatively short period of time when restrictions were lifted, risk assessments were undertaken in respect of Independent Visitors and young people's households and carer's were asked to transport young people to and from chosen venue, as all agreed to do this a number of outdoor visits to parks and indoor venues such as the cinema were able to take place.
- During the reporting period the Council Communications team ran a campaign to identify and celebrate Local Heroes and two Independent Visitors were nominated by the Scheme's Coordinator for their exceptional dedication to supporting young people through the lockdown period. Each were celebrated on the Kirklees website and it is believed that this helped raise the profile of Independent Visitors and the important role they play in young people's lives. The Scheme's Coordinator also arranged for every volunteer to receive a thank you card during National Volunteers Week.
- Independent Visitors have been supported through this reporting period, and Peer Support Group meetings have been held to enable discussions relating to their volunteering experiences. 20 of the 34 matched Independent Visitors have attended at least one Peer Support Group meeting, some on numerous occasions. Independent Visitors have taken the opportunity to discuss and share ideas about how to make the regular virtual meetings with young people fun; for example, by doing quizzes or setting challenges. The Scheme's Coordinator has supplemented these meetings by issuing two editions of IV News which keeps all Independent Visitors up to date with both local and national issues affecting Independent Visitor schemes.

4. What do we want to improve?

4.1 The priorities for the Independent Visitor Scheme over the next 6 months are:

- Resume matching visits when possible to ensure that the 3 available Independent Visitors are fully engaged with the scheme and actively supporting young people.
- Support the safe resumption of in person visits between Independent Visitor's and young people.
- As a result of the Covid-19 restrictions impacting on the ability for group training to take place, an IV training programme and workbook is to be developed, with a view to it being delivered and completed virtually by new Independent Visitors.
- Explore virtual matching / support for young people placed in host local authority areas who are waiting to be matched with an Independent Visitor

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Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 3rd November

Title of report: Children's Services Annual Complaints Report

Purpose of report: To inform the Board of compliments and complaints regarding Children's Social Care during the period of 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 (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?	<p>“ Not applicable”</p> <p>If yes give the reason why</p> <p>.</p>
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	<p>“Not applicable”</p> <p>If yes also give date it was registered</p>
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	<p>“Not applicable”</p> <p>If no give the reason why not</p>
<p>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?</p>	<p>23/10/2020: Tom Brailsford</p> <p>Not applicable</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr. Viv Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: Not applicable

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

This is the 2019/2020 Statutory Annual Compliments, Representations and Complaints report for Kirklees Children and Young People Service. Under the Children's Act 1989, the provision of an annual complaints report is a statutory requirement. Each financial year, the Local Authority must publish the Children's Act Complaints Annual Report (under regulation 13(3) of the Children's Act).

The report has been shared with Senior Leaders in Children's Services and is required to be shared with the Corporate Parenting Board. It will be published on the intranet and is available to the general public under Freedom of Information.

2. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required

3. Implications for the Council

a. Working with People

The Children's Complaints team works with adults and children who receive a service from Children's Social Care

b. Working with Partners

The Service works with partners within the Council and across the wider partnership, and national Bodies such as the Local Government Ombudsman.

c. Place Based Working

Not applicable

d. Climate Change and Air Quality

Not applicable

e. Improving outcomes for children

Improving Outcomes for Children

The Complaints Procedure informs learning from complaints, and the Complaints team, works with partners to help ensure learning extracted from Complaints informs practice improvement, service development, that the voice of the child is heard and the child's right to complain is adhered to.

3.4 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not applicable

4. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

5. Next steps and timelines

The Annual report will be posted on the intranet.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be received and noted by the Corporate Parenting Board as per Section 13 of The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Not applicable

8. Contact officer

Helen Sanderson, Complaints and Compliments Manager,
Helen.Sanderson@Kirklees.gov.uk

Yasmin Mughal, Complaints and Compliments Manager,
Yasmin.Mughal@Kirklees.gov.uk

Childrens.Complaint@Kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable

10. Service Director responsible

Tom Brailsford, Service Director, Resources, Improvement, Partnerships.

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Family Support and Child Protection



Statutory Complaints, Compliments & Representations

Annual Report 2019/2020

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1. Introduction

1.1 This is the 2019/2020 Annual Compliments, Representations and Complaints report for Kirklees Children's Social Care. Under the Children's Act 1989, the provision of an annual Complaints report is a statutory requirement.

1.2 The Council operates three separate Complaints procedures:

- Complaints about Children Social Care Services (as per statutory regulations under the Children's Act 1989).
- Schools have a duty under the Education Act 2002 to have their own Complaints procedure. The Council provides information and guidance to parents, pupils, school leaders and Governors to promote resolution of complaints about Schools.
- Corporate complaints procedure – this relates to Complaints which fall outside of the above regulations.

1.3 This report solely provides information on the Statutory Complaints Procedure

1.4 During 2019/20 328 initial contacts were made with the Children's Services Compliments and Complaints team resulting in 36 compliments and 175 complaints being recorded. This is a significant overall increase from 2018/19. However, the number of Complaints registered at Stage One of the statutory Complaints procedure decreased by 75%, with 90% of complaints received being resolved through the Early Resolution process. Compliments have increased by 50% compared with the number received in 2018/19.

2. Childrens Act Complaints (Statutory Complaints)

2.1 The Complaints team undertake an active role in seeking Early Resolution through engagement and advice to Children's Social Care services and Complainants. Most of complaints in 2019/20 were resolved by this approach, negating the need to proceed to a formal complaint.

2.2 The statutory complaints procedure has three stages.

- Stage One. Childrens Social Care Service teams and Independent Providers providing services on the Council's behalf are expected where possible, to resolve complaints at this initial point. The Statutory complaints procedure requires complaints at Stage One to be responded to within 10 working days (with an automatic extension of a further ten days where necessary).
- Stage Two. This stage is generally implemented when a Complainant is dissatisfied with the findings of Stage One. Stage Two is an investigation usually conducted by an Investigating Officer with an Independent Person. An Independent Person must be appointed to the investigation (regulation 17(2)). The Independent Person must be involved in all aspects of consideration of the Complaint, including any discussions about the action to be taken in relation to the child. The Manager responsible for the service which has been complained about, adjudicates on the findings. Stage Two Complaints should be dealt with within 25 days, although in certain cases this can be extended to 65 days
- Stage Three. This is a Review Panel to which Complainant's who are not satisfied with a Stage Two response can proceed their Complaint to, which the Council is required to establish. The Panel makes recommendations to the Service Director who makes

decisions about the complaint and any action to be taken. Complaint's Review Panels are made up of three independent panelists. There are various timescales relating to Stage 3 complaints. These include:

- setting up the Panel within 30 days
- producing the Panel's report within a further 5 days
- producing the Local Authority's response within 15 days.

2.3A further option for Complainant's to progress a complaint is the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), who is empowered to investigate where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint. Complainant's can refer their complaint to the LGO at any time, although the Ombudsman normally refers the matter back to the Council if it has not been considered under the Council's procedure.

2.3 Accessibility of the Complaints procedure.

- a) Complaints Leaflets – Child friendly leaflets are distributed to Children's homes. Children are given a copy of the Complaints leaflet when a Children's Social Care assessment is undertaken and/or at review meetings.
- b) Community Languages Leaflets - these are available in Chinese, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu and Polish. In addition, one of the Complaints Manager speaks three languages.
- c) Internet – The Complaints procedure is available on the Kirklees Local Authority website.
- d) Pledge – Children and young people can access the Complaints procedure through the internet using the pledge link:
<http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/young-people/in-care-in-kirklees/our-pledge.aspx>
- e) Children's Rights Service - this service advocates on behalf of a young person to access the Complaints procedure and all children and young people who make a complaint are informed of the Children's Rights Service.
- f) Visually impaired – The Complaints procedure is available in braille, CD, video and large print.
- g) Links with Complaints Officers: Complaints are also received via other designated Complaints Managers from other services in the Local Authority including the Complaints Managers for Adult and Corporate Complaints.

3. Compliments

3.1 Statistical summary of compliments received from 1 April 2019 – 31st March 2020.

Compliments received:

Service Area	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/1	2019/20
Disabled Children's Service	1	0	3	4	2
Assessment and Intervention	4	15	20	5	10
Children's Residential	9	2	2	1	0

Children & Disability Residential	2	2	4	6	5
Fostering/Placements	9	11	0	2	8
Looked After and Care Leavers	2	12	13	3	1
Youth Offending Team	0	2	0	0	0
Childrens Rights	6	1	2	2	7
Family Support / Early Help	0	0	0	0	1
Adaptions Team	3	0	0	0	0
Child Protection & Review	1	2	5	1	0
Emergency Duty Team	0	0	1	1	0
Integrated Youth Support	3	2	0	0	0
Other areas within CHYPS					2
	40	49	50	25	36

3.2 There is a 50% increase in the number of compliments registered compared to the previous year. Most compliments received were regarding the Assessment and Intervention service, which received over a 100% increase from the number of compliments received last year. However, it is difficult to accurately determine the actual number of compliments received about Children's Social Care, because many compliments are received directly by front line staff and managers, and these are not always forwarded to the Complaints Unit for registration.

3.3 The Complaints and Compliment team encourage compliments to be forwarded for formal registration. When compliments are received, they are shared with managers and can be used in the staff member's annual appraisal. Compliments can also be used to share and highlight good practice. Examples of compliments received included:

- A Family Court Judge complimenting a Social Worker on the standard of the evidence they presented and how they portrayed themselves in Court. These comments were also reflected in the official judgement of the Court.
- A Police Officer complimenting a Social Worker for going to extra mile following an incident, to ensure that the child involved was safe.
- A Foster Carer complimenting the work of the Fostering Team.
- A young person complimenting the Children's Rights team
- A school safeguarding lead complimenting a Social Worker from Looked After Children Service.
- A parent complimenting a Social Worker from the Disabled Children's Service

4. Complaints

4.1 Of the 328 contacts the Complaints Unit received in 2019/2020, 157 of these contacts did not proceed to the formal complaints process and were dealt with under the Early Resolution procedure. When matters are resolved in this way, the Complaints Unit agrees with the person raising the concern /complaint that informal resolution is appropriate without denying the complainant's right to use the complaints procedure.

4.2 Other contacts did not proceed for reasons such as; they related to another service; despite making initial contact the complainant did not then follow this up; the matter was already in legal proceedings meaning that issues raised need to be brought to the attention of the presiding Judge in the first instance; or it may have been that the contact was based on an enquiry which was able to be answered satisfactorily by the complaints unit.

4.3 Below is a breakdown of the Outcome of the Complaints Team Interventions:

Outcome of the Complaints Team Intervention	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Service Resolved Informal Complaint (Local Resolution)	7	8	28	23	157
Legal Proceedings Ongoing/Risk Insurance	11	7	19	12	19
Complainant does not qualify due to confidentiality	0	1	5	3	0
No further contact from complainant	1	1	1	2	14
Complaint not resolved	1	2	0	1	2
Referred to LGO	0	1	0	3	1
Complainant/service advised response satisfactory	72	44	55	82	-
Complaint withdrawn	1	2	1	2	3
Cllr or MP enquires	6	17	12	3	6
Referred to Other Service	4	5	11	19	45
Not related to Social Care	0	0	0	2	7
Complaint did not proceed	-	-	-	-	6
Enquiry	-	-	-	-	14
Total	103	88	132	155	274

NB: The remaining number of complaints were dealt with under the statutory Complaints procedure

4.4 The number of Complainant's satisfied without recourse to the Complaints procedure has increased significantly, in 2018/19 approximately 16% of the overall figure was resolved by the service, in 2019/20 75% of the contacts were resolved in this manner. This has been due to various factors, including: Responding Managers eagerness to engage in Early Resolution; Complaints Managers playing an active role in mediating and advising on how to best seek resolution; the Complaint team quality assuring responses to and reporting monthly on Complaints, Performance and Learning from Complaints.

4.5 Responding managers are keen to speak with Complainant's prior to responding in writing, and Complaints Manager's provide mediation between the service complained about and the Complainant where appropriate, to further the aim of resolving as many complaints as possible in this manner. The figures clearly show that this approach has been successful in seeking Early resolution and reducing the number progressing to the formal Complaint's procedure.

5. Early Resolution

NB: this is the first year that the Annual Report has reported on the data relating to Complaints which have been resolved using Early Resolution. Due to this it is not possible to produce comparable data.

5.1 The Complaints team play a key role in mediating between Complainants and Children's Social Care, and the approach of the team is that it is in the best interest of both the Complainant and the Service to try and resolve complaints as close to the root as possible. Responding Managers are therefore encouraged to make early contact with the Complainant, to provide reassurance that their complaint is being listened to and establish of the feelings of the complainant, which helps to assist in putting measures in place to achieve early resolution. The approach also helps to improve the relationship

between the Complainant and the Service, and enables issues raised to be resolved without the Complainant feeling the need to resort to the formal complaints process.

6. Methods of initial contact with the Children’s Complaints Team:

6.1 There has been a significant increase in the number of people choosing to contact the unit via either telephone or e-mail, as evidenced in the table below

Method of Contact made with the Complaints team	2019/20
Leaflets	6
In Person	3
Letter	18
Email	43
Telephone	65
Via the Ombudsman	0
Internet.	21
Other	1
Total	157

6.2 The table below indicates who made the initial contact with the Complaints team and their relationship with the child.

Complainant – How Involved with the Child	2019/20
Parent	90
Young Person	26**
Relative	26
Foster Carer	5
Other Person	7
Other Agency	2
Solicitors	1
Total	157

NB: the figure relating to young person in the table above differs from the table below as it captures who made the initial contact.

6.3 Over 50% of all complaints received are made by parents who have been involved with Children’s Services, and most of the complaints received from young people come via the Children’s Rights Service who are advocating on behalf of the young person. A young person is classed as anyone under the age of 21. If the contact is made independent of the Children’s Rights Service, a young person is informed of their right to contact the team to access support.

7. Complaints by Service Area

Service Area	2019/20
Assessment and Intervention (North and South)	86
Disabled Children’s Service	12
Duty and Advice (North and South)	7
Children’s Residential	2
Children & Disability Residential	2
Fostering/ Placement	15
Looked After Children and Care Leavers	28
Family Support / Early Help	1

Child Protection & Review Unit	4
Contact Centre	2
Emergency Duty Team	1
Other	5
Total	165*

NB: The total figure is higher due to some complainants making a complaint about more than one service

7.1 The service that received the most complaints at the Early Resolution stage in 2019/20 was the Assessment and Intervention service, this figure is comparable with the involvement and work of the service. The Looked After Child Service received the second highest proportion of complaints, this service also incorporates the Connected Persons Team, who work with families who are subject to Special Guardianship Orders. The teams and families are likely to be managing new situations regarding the care of children, and it can be time where change may happen, such as a placement move.

8. Recorded Issues

Issue Complained About	2019/20
Delay in Service Provision/ Failure to provide a service/ standard /quality of service provided	51
Failure to consult /communicate/ lack of communication	78
Confidentiality	10
Welfare Issue	10
Inappropriate Management	4
Inaccurate Decision Making	11
Issues relating to Staff	38
Provision/accuracy of Information	18
Financial Problems	15
Contact Arrangements	22
Total	257*

NB: *this figure is higher due to some complainant's making more than one complaint.

8.1 The issue that was most complained about was a lack of communication, followed by issues relating to a service that was or was not, provided. Complaints relating to staff are often raised in conjunction with another issue such as lack of communication or the standard of service that was provided. Contact Arrangements continue to be raised as an issue, the majority being at the stage when the matter is with Assessment and Intervention teams. Issues complained about include Contact such as the location, the assigned contact worker, the frequency, and/ or restrictions in place regarding the contact sessions. Contact is a very difficult area to achieve the expectations and wishes of all those involved and the number of complaints received is proportionately low in comparison to the number of Contact arrangements which are undertaken across all Children's Social Care team on an annual basis.

8.2 There has been an increase in the number of complaints made by parents/ relatives who are estranged from the main carer of a child. One reason for this could be an impact of legal aid being removed for parents who wish to undertake Private Law Proceedings, meaning that such proceedings are now very costly to the parent who is raising them. Therefore, an option available to them is to seek influence from the Local Authority in terms of these arrangements.

Issue	Not upheld	Partially upheld	Upheld
Delay in Provision/ failure to provide a service/ standard/quality of service provided	22	15	25
Failure to consult /communicate	38	45	23
Confidentiality	2	2	3
Welfare Issue	19	2	0
Inaccurate Decision Making	9	0	0
Issues relating to Staff	16	28	7
Provision/accuracy of information	15	17	15
Financial Problems	4	2	0
Contact Arrangements	17	12	2
Total	142*	123*	75*

NB: Withdrawn overall = 10. The total numbers differ from the number of issues complained about as once discussions and investigations have taken place issues and findings can change.

8.3 Most issues raised were not upheld following investigations being undertaken by the relevant responding manager.

8.4 Although the issue of failure to consult / listen /communicate is high in the number of partially agreed complaints, it is also relatively high in the complaints which were not agreed and there was a 50% drop in the number of complaints which were agreed relating to this area. It can be said that this is one issue which is often raised in conjunction with other issues such as issues relating to staff, which would account for why the numbers in each table are higher than the other issues raised. It is an area of development that the service is aware of and focus will be had on this in the coming year in conjunction with the Learning and Development team.

8.5 Over 50% of the Contact issues raised were not upheld, the majority were partially upheld, with less than 1% being upheld. Similarly, over 50% of complaints received relating to a delay /quality of service/ provision, were either not upheld or only partially upheld, whilst over 80% of complaints which related to staff were either not upheld or only partially upheld. Of the complaints relating to welfare issues, a large majority were not upheld.

9. Complaints made by Young People

9.1 Of the total number of complaints registered as Local Resolution, 29 were raised by young people. All the complaints made by young people and registered under Early Resolution were resolved to the satisfaction of the young person and did not require escalation. When a complaint is made by a young person, team managers try to either meet or have a discussion with the young person prior to responding to their complaint; to provide reassurance that they are being listened to and ensure that all issues which are concerning the young person are identified and addressed at this stage. Advocates from the Children's Rights Service also assist in this approach by providing liaison between young people and Children's Social Care.

Service Area	2019/20
Assessment and Intervention	3
Duty and Advice	1

Children Residential	1
Children & Disability Residential	0
Fostering/ Placement	2
Looked After and Care Leavers	21
Child Protection & Review	1
Total	29

9.2 The table below shows that many of the issues raised related to a delay in or a failure to provide a service, or that the service which was provided was not of the quality it should have been and that there had not been effective communication. These issues largely related to the Looked After Children and Care Leavers teams.

9.3 The second highest number of complaints related to Financial Issues, where a young person disagreed with the Local Authority over how much money they were to receive or how this money could be spent.

9.4 Contact arrangements continue to raise concern for young people, but only 0.3% of the complaints featured contact arrangements as an issue and they related to the Fostering /Connected Person team, Looked After Children teams and Duty and Advice. The issue of contact can often be a difficult one to respond to in line with what the Young Person's wishes and feelings may be, and often arrangements are put in place by Courts, therefore it is positive that these complaints were able to be resolved.

Issue	2019/20
Delay in Service Provision/ Failure to provide a service/ standard /quality of service provided	11
Failure to consult / communicate / lack of communication	11
Welfare Issue	2
Inappropriate Management	3
Inaccurate Decision Making	4
Issues relating to Staff	3
Access to records	1
Financial Problems	7
Contact Arrangements	3
Loss / Damage to property	1
Other	2
Total	48*

NB: *Some young people raised complaints about more than one issue.

10. Stage One Complaints

10.1 Below shows the number of people who made complaints and enquiries through the stages of the statutory Childrens Act Complaints Services procedure over the last 5 years:

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Stage One	74	202	152	85	18
Stage One –Corporate	-	-	-	-	(14)
Stage Two	2	5	5	5	3

Stage Two - Corporate	-	-	-	-	(1)
Stage Three	1	1	1	2	1
Stage Three – Corporate	-	-	-	-	(2)
Ombudsman	1	2	5	4	7
Total	78	210	163	96	29 (17)

10.2 In 2019/20 18 complaints were registered at Stage One. This is a significant reduction of approximately 75% compared to the previous year and again is evidence of the collective effort which has been made to resolve complaints to the complainant's satisfaction at the Early resolution stage.

11. Stage 1 Complaints - Preferred methods of initial contact:

11.1 It can be noted from the table below that most of the preferred methods of initial contact with the Complaints Unit is by telephone and email.

Methods of contact	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Leaflets	23	32	10	4	0
In Person	1	1	3	2	0
Letter	8	18	31	34	3
Email	12	58	52	13	5
Telephone	22	76	35	15	6
Via the Ombudsman	0	0	0	0	0
Internet	8	13	19	17	4
Other	0	4	2	0	0
Total	74	202	152	85	18

12. Stage One Complaints – How Involved (relationship with child).

12.1 Approximately 70% of the Stage One complaints received came from parents who had been involved with Children's Social Care. There was a significant drop in the number of Stage One complaints received from young people (20%) this compares to approximately 50% the previous year. It is the view of the Children's Complaints team that the young people receiving a service within Kirklees do an awareness of the complaints procedure and how they can access this to voice their concerns, and what the figures evidence is a improved joined up working between the Complaints Unit, Children's Social Care and the Children's Rights Service, to resolve the issues for young people as soon as possible preventing the need for matters to be registered at a formal stage.

Complainant – How Involved	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Parent	35	114	77	30	13
Young Person	30	53	50	43	3
Relative	6	24	18	8	1
Foster Carer	2	10	5	4	1
Other Person	1	1	2	0	0
Solicitors	0	0	0	1	0
Total	74	202	152	85	18

13. Service Area Stage One Complaints

13.1 Below is a breakdown of the complaints by service area. Most of the complaints received relate to; Children Looked After and Care leavers, and Children's Social Care Assessment and Intervention service area.

Service Area	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Assessment and Intervention	24*	101*	60*	25*	9
Disabled Children's Service	6	12*	9	6	3
Children Residential	16*	20	6	4	0
Children & Disability Residential	0	2	1	0	0
Fostering/ Placement	4	12*	5*	4*	2
Looked After and Care Leavers	21*	51*	68*	48*	3*
Family Support /Early Help	1	9*	1	1	0
Child Protection & Review	5*	2*	1	28*	1
Contact Centre	2	0	2	1	0
Emergency Duty Team	0	1	0	0	1*
Integrated Youth Support	0	1	0	0	0
Other	2	1	3	1*	0
Total	81	212	156	94	19

NB: *One complainant raised issues about more than one service. The services that they complained about were: Looked After and Care Leavers; Child Protection & Review unit and the Emergency Duty Team.

13.2 The table below highlights the types of issues raised at Stage One:

Issue	Total 2015/16	Total 2016/17	Total 2017/18	Total 2018/19	Total 2019/20
Delay in Service Provision/ failure to provide a service/ standard /quality of service provided	4	8	17	1	10
Failure to consult/communicate/ lack of communication	23	115	68	36	14
Welfare Issue	5	31	14	0	0
Inappropriate Management	1	4	1	0	0
Inaccurate Decision Making	6	33	27	4	5
Issues relating to Staff	24	61	45	26	11
Bullying by Service User	2	9	1	1	0
Service Provision/Assess	15	32	27	24	5
Provision /accuracy of Information	6	27	18	11	0
Financial Problems	4	14	17	10	1
Contact Arrangements	5	25	22	13	6
Other	7	20	0	0	4
Total	102	379	257	126	56*

NB: *The number of issues highlighted is significantly more than the number of complaints received, due to Complainants raising more than one issue, or upon further exploration more issues become apparent.

13.3 There was a total of 56 initial issues raised by Complainants at Stage One, some Complainant's raised more than one issue, however this is a significant reduction of over 50% in comparison to the number of issues raised in 2018/19.

13.4 Most of the issues related to failure to consult /communicate, issues relating to staff, service provision and assessment, however there was a decrease in the number of complainants raising an issue relating to all these areas compared with the previous year, i.e. approximately 25% of complaints registered in 2019/20 relating to failure to consult compared with approximately 40% in 2018/19.

14. Stage One Complaints made by Young People

14.1 From the total number of complaints registered at Stage one, 3 were registered by young people (approximately 16% of the total number of complaints received), which is a significant reduction compared to 2018/19, where they represented approximately 50%. The complaints concerned issues relating to staff and/or the failure of services to be provided. Following investigations, the issues were not upheld, and the young people either accepted the responses they were provided / did not seek to escalate his complaint to the next stage. All three young people were supported by the Children's Rights team in the making their complaints.

14.2 The table below shows the service areas complained about by young people at Stage One:

Service Area	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Assessment and Intervention	3	2	0
Disabled Children's Service	2	0	0
Children Residential	5	4	0
Children & Disability Residential	0	0	0
Fostering/ Placement	1	3*	0
Looked After and Care Leavers	39	36*	3*
Contact Centre	0	1	0
Emergency Duty Team	0	0	1*
Other	0	2*	0
Total	50	48	4

NB: One Young Person complained about more than one service

15. Outcome of Stage One Complaints

15.1 There were 18 Complainants who had complaints registered at Stage One, with some relating to more than one issue. Below is a breakdown of the outcome of Stage One complaints received over the last five years and the outcome of investigations completed.

Complaints Not Upheld:

Issue	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Delay in Provision/ failure to provide a service/ standard /quality of service provided	0	5	0	0	7
Failure to consult /communicate	9	44	26	6	3
Welfare Issue	4	14	8	0	0
Inappropriate Management	0	0	1	0	0

Inaccurate Decision Making	6	23	16	3	4
Issues relating to Staff	16	37	20	14	9
Service Provision/Assess	12	6	11	11	0
Provision/accuracy of information	3	15	7	2	1
Financial Problems	4	9	13	5	0
Contact Arrangements	1	16	14	9	6
Other	1	9	0	0	1
Total	56	178	116	50	31*

Stage One Complaints Partially Upheld:

Issues	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Delay in Service Provision/ failure to provide a service / standard /quality of service provided	0	3	3	1	8
Failure to consult / listen /communicate	13	49	30	15	0
Welfare Issue	0	5	3	0	0
Inappropriate Management	0	2	0	0	0
Inaccurate Decision Making	0	4	7	1	0
Issues relating to Staff	5	11	21	9	0
Bullying by Service User	0	1	0	0	0
Service Provision /Assess	2	3	11	6	0
Provision/accuracy of information	1	3	9	8	0
Financial Problems	0	4	3	3	1
Contact arrangements	3	6	8	2	1
Other	5	4	0	0	0
Total	29	95	95	45	10*

Stage One Complaints Upheld

Issue	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Delay in Service Provision/ Failure to provide a service/ standard /quality of service	4	0	14	0	8
Failure to Consult /communicate	1	22	12	15	19
Welfare Issue	1	12	3	0	0
Inappropriate Management	1	2	0	0	0
Inaccurate Decision Making	0	6	4	0	0
Issues relating to Staff	3	13	4	3	1
Bullying by Service User	2	8	1	1	0
Service Provision /Assess	1	23	5	7	0
Provision/accuracy of information	2	9	2	1	4
Financial Problems	0	1	1	2	0
Contact Arrangements	1	3	0	2	0
Other	1	7	0	0	0
Total	17	106	46	31	32*

NB: *these numbers differ as once discussions take place between the responding Manager and the Complainant issues can be added or withdrawn.

16. Stage Two Complaints

16.1 Prior to complaints being considered at Stage Two Complaints Managers explore with the Complainant and the Service all reasonable options for resolution. Where this is not feasible Complaints are registered at Stage Two. Of the Stage One complaints in the last five years:

- 2 of 74 proceeded to Stage Two in 2015/16
- 5 of 202 proceeded to Stage Two in 2016/17
- 5 of 152 proceeded to Stage Two In 2017/18
- 5 out of 85 proceeded to a Stage Two in 2018/19, and in
- 2019/20, 3 of 18 proceeded to Stage Two.

16.2 Breakdown of Stage Two complaints by service area:

Service Area	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Disabled Children's Service	0	0	1	2*	2*
Assessment and Intervention	*2	0	2*	1	1*
Duty and Assessment	*2	1*	0	1	0
Child Protection & Review	0	1	0	0	1*
Fostering/Placements	0	3*	1*	1*	1
Looked After and Care Leavers	0	1	2	1*	0
Family Support/ Early Help	0	0	0	1*	0
Other service area	-	-	-	-	1
Total	4	6	6	7	6

* NB: Complainant made complaints about more than one service.

Although there were only three complaints registered at Stage Two, each related to more than one issue. When an investigation commences for Stage Two the complainant is given the opportunity to meet with the Investigating Officer and at this time the Complainant may raise new issues that were not investigated at Stage One. The following table shows the types of issues and the outcomes of Stage two complaints on conclusion:

Issues	Partially Agreed	Agreed	Not Agreed
Financial problems	0	0	1
Failure to Consult/Listen	0	3	9
Delays/Quality in Service Provision	0	16	0
Failure to provide service	0	0	1
Information not provided	0	0	8
Total	0	19	19

17. Stage Three complaints - Review Panel Hearings.

17.1 Complainants who are not satisfied with Stage Two responses have a right to have their complaints considered by three independent people who form the Stage Three Panel. However, prior to complaints being considered by a Stage Three Panel, a Complaints Manager explores all reasonable options for resolution with the Complainant and the Service. In 2019/20 one complaint which proceeded to Stage Three, this related to three areas of complaint, Standard / Quality of service Lack of Communication and Delay in provision /assessment; separate elements of the complaint were upheld, partially upheld and not upheld. Notably, areas for service improvement /development which related directly to the learning from the complaint had been identified and were progressing prior to the outcome.

18. Ombudsman Complaints and Enquiries:

18.1 Complainants have the right to refer their complaint(s) to the Local Government Ombudsman at any time. The Ombudsman will decide whether to investigate for maladministration. The terminology used by the Ombudsman is outlined below:

Outcome	Definition
'Preliminary' or 'informal Enquiries	Requesting basic information in the preliminary stages.
Investigation discontinued – injustice remedied	Investigation stopped without any recommendations because the Local Authority may have put things right.
Not to initiate an investigation	No or insufficient evidence to suggest an investigation is appropriate.
Outside Jurisdiction	The issue is not one the Ombudsman can deal with.
Investigation complete, satisfied with authority's actions, not appropriate to issue report	This is now covered under one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upheld: Maladministration and Injustice • Upheld: Maladministration, No Injustice • Not upheld: No Maladministration
Investigation complete – Maladministration and injustice	Investigation completed with evidence of maladministration and injustice caused to the complainant.
Ongoing /pending	Awaiting final decision
To discontinue investigation	Investigation has been stopped. No further action is needed as the injustice caused to Mr. X by the alleged fault is not so significant that the Ombudsman would recommend a remedy
Assessment /enquiry	Collecting basic information prior to being passed to an investigator
Not upheld; no further action	No fault found & no further action required.
Closed after initial enquiries. Out of jurisdiction	Early decision made not to investigate complaint. May be out of jurisdiction/ cannot lawfully investigate /inappropriate to investigate. Early assessment may show an investigation could not achieve anything.
Upheld; maladministration & injustice	Authority found to be at fault evidence of injustice caused to the complainant. Recommend how the organization should put things right.

18.2 Ombudsman complaints and enquiries

18.3 In the reporting period, very few complaints were considered by the Local Government Ombudsman. Of those referred only two proceeded to investigation and only one was found to have maladministration and injustice. This finding was in relation to the way the complaint was initially investigated as oppose to any actions by the services involved. With regard to the remaining five contacts the Ombudsman was satisfied that the Local Authority had considered the complaints appropriately

Outcome	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
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Assessment/enquiry	0	0	2	2	0
investigation discontinued – injustice remedied	0	0	0	0	1
Not to initiate an investigation	0	0	0	0	2
Closed after initial enquiries, out of jurisdiction	1	1	1	2	1
Not upheld; no maladministration	0	0	0	0	1
Upheld; maladministration & injustice	0	1	1	0	1
Ongoing/pending	0	0	1	0	0
To discontinue investigation	0	0	0	0	1
Total	1	2	5	4	7

19. Performance.

19.1 The tables below show that all complaints were acknowledged by the Complaints team within 3 working days, and of the complaints responded under the Local /Early Resolution process and /or Stage one of the Statutory process the majority were responded to within 20 working days. The small number of Stage One complaints that took longer than 20 working days to respond to were complex, and the Complainants were kept informed of the progress of their complaint.

Complaints acknowledged

Year	Total	Within 3 working days	After 3 working days
2015/16	74	74	0
2016/17	202	202	0
2017/18	152	152	0
2018/19	85	85	0
2019/20	18	18	0

Local /Early Resolution Response times

Total	Within 20 working days	After 20 Working Days
158	125	33

Response times to Stage One Complaints:

Stage One responses	Total	Average number of days	Within 20 working days	After 20 working days
2015/16	74	16.4	62	12
2016/17	202	20	149	53

2017/18	152	12.9	129	23
2018/19	85	10	80	5
2019/20	18	10	15	3

19.2 The Childrens Act requires complaints from children and young people registered at Stage one to be responded to within 20 working days including the allowed extension. As a matter of good practice and in acknowledgement that children and young peoples' voices must be heard and responded to in a timely manner, the Complaints team has reduced this time scale, and all responding managers are asked to respond to children /young people within 6 working days, where possible.

19.3 The table below shows that 100% of the Stage One complaints from children and young people were responded to within the statutory time scales of 20 working days and that 33%of complaints were responded to within 10 working days. Available data does currently indicate how many of these were responded to within the local target of 6 working days and therefore this is something which the Complaints Unit will progress over the forthcoming year.

Stage One Young People complaint responses	Total	Average Days	Within 6 working days	Within 10 working Days	Within 20 working days	After 20 working days
2017/18	50	8.7	12	33	5	0
2018/19	43	8.3	15	24	4	0
2019/20	3	15	0	1	2	0

19.4 The maximum permitted time for a Stage 2 investigation to be carried out is 65 working days. Adherence to timescales is influenced by external factors such as the number of people to interview, and the availability of the Investigating Officer and the Responding Manager, when delay is incurred Complainants are kept informed. The table below shows Stage Two Complaint response times.

Stage Two Response	Total	Average Days	Within 25 Working Days	Within 65 Working Days	After 65 Working Days
2015/16	2	105	0	0	2
2016/17	5	70	1	2	2
2017/18	5	84	0	0	5
2018/19	5	79	0	1	4
2019/20	3	71	0	2	1

20. Compensation payments.

Under Section 92 of the Local Government Act 2000, Local Authorities are empowered to remedy any injustice arising from a complaint. If the Ombudsman finds the Council guilty of maladministration, then it can recommend that the Council pays a Complainant compensation or a payment. In this reporting period there was one compensation recommendation made by

the Ombudsman; this related to the length of time it took a complaint to progress through the statutory process.

21. Service Improvements /Learning from Complaints

21.1 At all stages, any lessons / findings identified from Complaints are expected to be followed up by managers with the relevant staff to inform individual learning and development; whilst themes and patterns for learning identified from complaints is shared with the Learning and Development Service. To strengthen embedding learning across the Service, the Complaint team and Learning and Development team have strengthened pathways to review complaints and compliments to ensure that key messages influence practice.

21.2 The Compliments and Complaints team monitors the implementation of recommendations agreed at the Stage Two and Three process of the Complaints procedure, and those made by the Local Government Ombudsman.

22. Diversity Monitoring

22.1 The purpose of collecting information on ethnicity, gender and disability is to be able to measure the extent to which the Complaints Procedure is reaching all service users and/or their carers. This is also a requirement of Ofsted. The majority of complainants in the reporting period were recorded as White / British, with the next largest ethnic group being Asian / Pakistani; although a significant number of Complainants did not provide information relating to their ethnicity as indicated in the table below.

Ethnicity	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
White/British	44	74	77	42	79
Mixed White/Asian	1	3	1	0	2
Mixed White/Black Caribbean	3	8	0	2	3
Asian/Pakistani	4	17	8	9	12
Asian Other	-	-	-	-	3
Black African	1	2	1	1	2
Not Stated	19*	93*	63*	29*	66*
Asian/Indian	1	0	0	0	1
Black Caribbean	1	3	0	0	1
Bangladeshi	-	-	-	-	1
Other	0	2	2	2	1
Total	74	202	152	85	175

* NB: Complainants that did not provide information on ethnicity were mainly relatives or parents.

Gender of Complainants

Gender	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Female	41	124	98	51	110
Male	27	70	49	29	59
Joint e.g.: Mr. & Mrs.	6	8	5	5	6
Total	74	202	152	85	175

23. Present position and future developments:

Present position:

- Response performance to complaints continues to improve this is supported by the Senior Leadership continuing to influence and support Early Resolution management of complaints.
- A high number of complaints continue to be resolved through Early Resolution leading to a significant reduction in the number of complaints requiring registering through the statutory Complaints procedure.
- The voice of the child is apparent in the process of managing complaints, all responding managers are asked to ensure that children and young people are spoken with; and the Children's Right's Service advocate on behalf of the children and young people to ensure that they are satisfied with Complaint responses and outcomes.
- The Children's Services Complaints Managers attend the Yorkshire and Humberside Complaints Managers Group to share best practice, knowledge, and aid service development.
- The Complaints Managers continue to liaise with the Learning and Development Manager to ensure that learning from complaints is embedded within training and development opportunities.
- Robust partnership working with the Children's Rights team has been established to help young people achieve Early Resolution outcomes wherever possible.
- The Complaints Annual report is presented to the Corporate Parenting Board and Complaints reports are regularly reports shared with Senior Leader /Management teams.

Future Developments:

- To raise the profile of Complaints in a positive manner, to reinforce the ethos of a family focused and restorative approach to complaint management.
- Complaints Managers to attend Children's Services Senior Manager meetings and Team Meetings to; refresh understanding of the Complaints procedures and continue to promote Early Resolution and the need for effective recording of learning from complaints.
- The Complaints team will review the current procedures for capturing learning from complaints and compliments with a view to developing a more effective process from which meaningful data can be extracted and shared, to inform best practice across the Service and within teams.
- Strengthen the Early Resolution procedure in line with the Council's Restorative Practice model.

If you would like to comment on this report, please contact:

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Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2020/21

Date of Meeting	Issues for Consideration	Officer Contact
<p align="center">1st July 2020</p> <p>Pre-meeting 9.30 am – 10.00 am Public Meeting 10.00 am – 12 noon Meeting Room 3, HTH</p> <p align="center">Deadline for reports 19th June 2020</p>	<p align="center">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Educational attainment and progress – LAC outcomes data 2018 SFR analysis</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p align="center">Public Items:</p> <p>Minutes of 10th Feb and 4th March</p> <p>Attendance by Karl Battersby, Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure on role of corporate parent</p> <p>One Adoption WY Annual Report 6 monthly report</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes</p> <p>Summary of educational outcomes for 2018</p> <p>OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Overview of number of children in Care (snapshot) including age profile</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p>	<p align="center">J Tolley</p> <p align="center">J Bragg/S Comb/J Tolley</p> <p align="center">H Kilroy</p> <p align="center">K Battersby</p> <p align="center">J Bragg/S Comb/J Tolley</p> <p align="center">J Tolley</p> <p align="center">S Comb/J Bragg/T Brailsford</p> <p align="center">J Bragg</p> <p align="center">A Quinlan</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

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	Mental Health and Emotional Support to children and young people in care (standard item)	
<p>30th September 2020</p> <p>Pre-meeting 9.30 am – 10.00 am Public Meeting 10.00 am – 12 noon Meeting Room 3, HTH</p> <p>Deadline for reports 18th September 2020</p>	<p align="center">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p align="center">Public Items:</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes</p> <p>OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Statement of Purpose for Fostering Service (Annual)</p> <p>Statement of Purpose for Residential care</p> <p>Overview of number of children in Care (snapshot) including age profile</p> <p>One Adoption WY Annual Report 6 monthly report</p> <p>Annual report on the health of looked after children</p> <p>Annual Report on Private Fostering (defer)</p> <p>Mental Health and Emotional Support to children and young people in care (to include interim update on cahms review)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Ad-hoc Task and Finish Group (Risk Register)</p>	<p>J Bragg/S Comb/J Tolley</p> <p>S Comb/J Bragg/J Tolley</p> <p>J Bragg/S Comb/T Brailsford</p> <p>A Quinlan</p> <p>L Counce</p> <p>J Bragg</p> <p>S Whiteley (One Adoption)</p> <p>G Addy</p> <p>A Quinlan</p> <p>Stewart Horn</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>CLlr Kendrick</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

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	Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2020/21	H Kilroy
<p>3rd November 2020</p> <p>Pre-meeting 9.30 am – 10.00 am Public Meeting 10.00 am – 12 noon Mtg Room 3, HTH</p> <p>Deadline for reports 23rd October 2020</p> <p>Apologies: E McShane</p>	<p align="center">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p>Head Teachers Report on educational outcomes of looked after children</p> <p align="center">Public Items:</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes</p> <p>OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Annual report on Children’s Rights and Independent Visitors Scheme (1st April 18 to 31 March 19) to include a 6 monthly update (Apr 19 to Sept 19)</p> <p>Overview of number of children in Care (snapshot) including age profile</p> <p>Annual report on Complaints and Compliments for Children in Care</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2020/21</p>	<p>S Comb/J Tolley</p> <p>J Tolley</p> <p>J Bragg/S Comb/J Tolley</p> <p>S Comb/J Bragg/T Brailsford</p> <p>M Tiernan/A Gledhill</p> <p>J Bragg</p> <p>Y Mughal</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>H Kilroy</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

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<p>13th January 2021</p> <p>Pre-meeting 9.30 am – 10.00 am Public Meeting 10.00 am – 12 noon Mtg Room 3, HTH</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 4.1.2021</p>	<p align="center">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report</p> <p align="center">Public Items:</p> <p>Attendance by Richard Parry, Strategic Director for Adults and Health on role of corporate parent</p> <p>Annual report on Review of Foster Carer Handbook</p> <p>Annual Report on Private Fostering</p> <p>Annual report on Youth Offending Team relating to their work with children in care and comparative data for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19</p> <p>One Adoption Agency 6 monthly Report (April to Sept)</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report – CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes</p> <p>OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Overview of number and age of children in Care</p> <p>Social Worker stability and the reasons for changes and moves</p> <p>Thriving Kirklees (Report and Action Plan)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2020/21</p>	<p>J Tolley/J Bragg/S Comb</p> <p>Richard Parry</p> <p>Andy Quinlan</p> <p>Andy Quinlan</p> <p>Charlotte Jackson/Ian Mottershaw</p> <p>Suzanne Whiteley (One Adoption)</p> <p>J Bragg/S Comb/J Tolley</p> <p>S Comb/J Bragg</p> <p>J Bragg</p> <p>J Bragg</p> <p>Stewart Horn</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>Helen Kilroy</p>
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Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2020/21

<p align="center">23rd February 2021</p> <p>Pre-meeting 9.30 am – 10.00 am Public Meeting 10.00 am – 12 noon Mtg Room 3, HTH</p> <p>Deadline for reports 12 February 2021</p>	<p align="center">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p align="center">Public Items:</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes</p> <p>OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Overview of number of children in Care (snapshot) including age profile</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2020/21</p>	<p align="center">J Bragg/S Comb/J Tolley</p> <p align="center">S Comb/J Tolley/J Bragg</p> <p align="center">S Comb/J Bragg/T Brailsford</p> <p align="center">J Bragg</p> <p align="center">Board Members</p> <p align="center">H Kilroy</p>
<p align="center">23rd March 2020</p> <p>Pre-meeting 9.30 am – 10.00 am Public Meeting 10.00 am – 12 noon Mtg Room 3, HTH</p> <p>Deadline for reports 13th March 2020</p>	<p align="center">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p align="center">Public Items:</p> <p>Review of Membership and Terms of Reference of the Board (prior to Council AGM)</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report - CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes</p> <p>OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Overview of number and age of children in Care</p>	<p align="center">J Bragg/S Comb/J Tolley</p> <p align="center">H Kilroy</p> <p align="center">S Comb/J Tolley/J Bragg</p> <p align="center">S Comb/J Bragg/T Brailsford</p> <p align="center">J Bragg</p>

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	Statement of Purpose for Registered Children’s Homes (Annual)	L Counce
	Statement of Purpose for Fostering Service (Annual) Mental Health and Emotional Support to children and young people in care (standard item)	A Quinlan Board Members
	Updates from Board Members on interaction with services	H Kilroy
	Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2020/21	

Standard reports (as on Agenda Plan)

Future reports (dates yet to be agreed):

Staying Put Fostering for Children in Care

Supported Lodgings Scheme

Annual reports:-

- 6 monthly report on Children’s Rights (Oct to March) (M Tiernan/A Gledhill) – June 2020 (same month every year)
- 6 monthly report on Independent Visitors Scheme (Oct to March) (M Tiernan/A Gledhill) – June 2020 (same month every year)
- Annual Report on Children’s Rights and Independent Visitors Scheme (April 19 to March 20) – (M Tiernan/A Gledhill) – June 2020 (same month every year)
- Annual report on Complaints and Compliments for Children in Care (Y Mughal) – October 2019 (same month every year)
- Annual report on children who go missing from care (Lead Officer tbc) – date tbc
- Annual report on the work of the leaving care service (J Bragg) – date tbc
- Annual report on children and young people placed outside the Kirklees boundary (S Comb) – date tbc
- Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report (S Comb) – date tbc
- Annual Health Report (G Addy) – September 2019 (same month every year)
- Annual Report on Private Fostering (A Quinlan) – September 2020 (same month every year)
- Annual review of the Foster Caring Handbook (A Quinlan) – July 2020
- Annual Report on Kirklees Fostering Service (A Quinlan) – June 2020 (same month every year)

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Quarterly reports:

- Fostering Agency Report (April to June) (A Quinlan) – date to be confirmed
- Fostering Agency Report (July to Sept) (A Quinlan) – date to be confirmed
- Fostering Agency Report (Oct to Dec) (A Quinlan) – date to be confirmed
- Fostering Agency Report (Jan to March) (A Quinlan) – date to be confirmed

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